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## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

UP MOVE TO SHIFT 17 OBCS TO SC OPPOSED-

### About the news-

The recent move of the UP government to change OBC status of some castes to the SC status has come under criticism. **Article 341 sub clause (2) of the Constitution, says that the power to make changes in the SC list lay only with Parliament.** Thus the act of the UP government is in violation of the Constitution and transgression of Parliaments Jurisdiction. It is the Parliament's prerogative to shift one category of caste to another.

On June 24, the government directed district magistrates and commissioners to issue caste certificates to 17 OBCs - Kashyap, Rajbhar, Dhivar, Bind, Kumhar, Kahar, Kewat, Nishad, Bhar, Mallah, Prajapati, Dhimar, Batham, Turha, Godia, Manjhi and Machua.

The BJP government in UP is not the first to move on the 17 most backward castes in the OBC list. In 2005, the SP government of Mulayam Singh Yadav passed the first order to include 11 of these castes but the order was stayed and the proposal sent to the Centre. Subsequently, the BSP government of Mayawati quashed the notification.

**Level 1Q) Trace the origins of the SC and ST in India? What are the provisions for SC in the constitution?**

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## NAGALAND TO COME UP WITH ITS OWN VERSION OF NRC -

### About the news?

Nagaland government has decided to set up a Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN) with **the aim of preventing fake indigenous inhabitant acquiring the certificates. The RIIN will be the master list of all indigenous inhabitants of the state of Nagaland.**

Four years after Assam started revising the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the Nagaland government has initiated a move to implement its **own version of citizenship register, only for indigenous communities of the state.**

The Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland, seen as a localised version of the National Register of Citizens in Assam, will be the first official master list of Nagaland's indigenous inhabitants.

### What is the aim of the RIIN?

*The aim of RIIN is to prevent people from acquiring fake indigenous inhabitants' certificates.*

### Who is an indigenous inhabitant?

- **Nagaland has 16 recognised tribes** — Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Dimasa Kachari, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Yimchungrü and Zeliang. The Kachari and Kuki are non-Naga tribes while the Zeliang comprises two Naga communities — Zeme and Liangmai.
- Entry in RIIN is virtually guaranteed for people belonging to these communities.
- Others such as the Gurkhas living in Nagaland prior to statehood (on December 1, 1963) have been recognised as indigenous. But the definition of 'indigenous inhabitant' has been elusive because of issues beyond the tribal-non-tribal divide. There have concerns over Nagas from other areas such as Manipur getting jobs by claiming to be indigenous besides IBIs (Illegal Bangladeshi Immigrants) "taking over" large swathes of agricultural lands.
- Another worry is the **Naga custom of adopting new communities such as Sumiya – children of Muslim men and Sumi Naga women** – who own large swathes of cultivable land.
- Organisations such as the Naga Students' Federation have called for accommodating 'Nagas by blood and not by adoption'. Some political parties have asked whether or not the "adopted non-Nagas" will be given indigenous rights.
- A pressure group called the Joint Committee on Prevention of Illegal Immigrants sought to end confusion and "prevent inconsistent enumeration" by suggesting

December 1, 1963 as the cut-off date for considering people other than the recognised tribes of Nagaland as indigenous inhabitants.

### **How will the list be prepared?**

The RIIN list will be based on “an extensive survey”. It will involve official records of indigenous residents from rural and (urban) wards and would be prepared under the supervision of the district administration. The preparation of the list will start from July 10, 2019, and the whole process will be completed within 60 days from the start.

The database will note each family’s original residence, current residence as well as the concerned Aadhaar numbers. This provisional list will then be published in all villages, wards and on government websites by September 11, 2019. Over the next 30 days, that is by October 30, 2019, claims and objections will be entertained.

### **What will the unique identity look like?**

- Based on the adjudication and verification, **a list of indigenous inhabitants will be finalised and each person will be given a unique ID**. The final list or the RIIN will be created and its copies will be placed in all villages and ward. Electronic copies of the list will also be stored in the State Data Centre.
- **All indigenous inhabitants of the state would be issued a barcoded and numbered Indigenous Inhabitant Certificate**. The process will be conducted across Nagaland and will be done as part of the online system of **Inner Line Permit (ILP), which is already in force in Nagaland**.

### **What is an ILP?**

- **The ILP is a temporary travel document an Indian citizen has to possess to enter ‘protected’ areas of the Northeast.**
- Inner Line Permit (ILP) **is an official travel document required by Indian citizens residing outside certain “protected” states while entering them.**
- **The ILP is issued by the Government of India under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873**, which restricted the entry of ‘British subjects’ or Indians into these areas primarily to protect the British interest in tea and oil. and is obligatory for all those who reside outside the protected states.
- With the ILP, the government aims to regulate movement to certain areas located near the international border of India.
- The restriction continued for ‘Citizens of India’ after Independence to protect tribal cultures in the north-eastern region and to regulate movement to certain areas near the international border. **Apart from the entire State of Nagaland barring its commercial hub Dimapur, the ILP is applicable in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.**

In case anyone who is left out of the RIIN, he/she will need to file an application before Home Commissioner who will get the matter verified and take necessary action for updating the RIIN if needed.

### **Level 1Q) What is the purpose of the RIIN? Why is ILP issued?**

#### **Prelims- RIIN, ILP, Tribes in India.**

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EC SETS UP TEAMS TO PROBE THE VVPAT MISMATCH IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

#### **About the news-**

After reports of mismatches between the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips and the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) count in eight cases during the Lok Sabha election the Election Commission of India (ECI) has set up teams to probe seven of the cases. Of 1.25 crore votes counted, 51 did not match which is 0.0004% has had no impact on the final election results in the eight cases has had no impact on the final election results in the eight cases, says panel. The mismatches were reported from Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Andhra Pradesh.

**VVPAT machine is a device which dispenses a slip with the symbol of the party for which a person has voted.**

1. The mismatches mark the first time there were any, since VVPAT recounts were implemented in the 2017 Assembly elections.
2. Under the electoral rules, if there is any discrepancy in the match, the VVPAT count prevails.
3. An analysis of these cases will be done at the level of the District Electoral Officer and Chief Electoral Officer and, if necessary, later with the independent Technical Expert Committee (TEC) of the EC.

Ahead of the recent Lok Sabha election, several opposition parties had questioned the reliability of the voting machines and urged the EC to go back to the ballot paper system. But the EC has asserted that EVMs are "here to stay" and that it won't go back to ballot papers.

It was decided by the Supreme Court that random matching of VVPAT slips with EVMs will take place in **five polling booths per assembly segment during the counting of the votes**, the exercise was held in 20,600 of the 10.35 lakh polling stations on May 23 when votes for the Lok Sabha elections are counted.

So far, **paper audit trail checks were done in only one polling station per assembly segment selected randomly by a draw of lots or lottery system**, though the VVPAT machines are deployed in all the polling stations.

India has 4,120 assembly seats, multiplied by five, the paper audit trail checks took place in 20,600 polling stations spread across these assembly seats.

The panel has set up nearly 10.35 lakh polling stations in the country for the seven-phase election, as compared to nearly 9.28 lakh during the 2014 polls -- an increase of 10.1 percent.

### **Level 1 Q) Explain the Representation of People's Act?**

#### **CAG SAYS GST HAS FAILED TO LIVE UP TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL**

*"On the whole, the envisaged GST tax compliance system is non-functional," stated the report.*

It has been two years since the government launched the indirect tax regime--the Goods and Services Tax— but the technology-driven tax code has **failed to curb evasion** says the CAG report tabled in the parliament.

#### **What are the points discussed in the report?**

The report highlights concerns, including the incomplete task pertaining to the non-intrusive e-tax system, slowdown in revenue growth (10 percent drop), the declining trend in the number of returns filed (April – December 2018), issues surrounding the IT network GSTN, lack of coordination between various arms of the government, operational deficiencies in the payment module, problems in IGST settlement, input tax credit (ITC) frauds and delay in the processing of refunds.

**CAG pointed out that matching invoice of buyers and sellers, an anti-evasion measure** envisaged in the indirect tax regime, was still not in place.

An online system validated input tax credit (ITC) through "invoice matching" was still not in place, CAG said in a report.

#### **NOTE: Input tax credit is the deduction for tax already paid by businesses.**

The return filing system that was in place after the rollout in 2017 was complex and technical glitches in the information technology (IT) backbone Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) led to the elimination of the invoice matching system that was seen as curbing evasion.

The complexity of return mechanism and the technical glitches resulted in roll back of invoice-matching, rendering the system prone to ITC frauds. Thus, on the whole, the envisaged GST tax compliance system is non-functional said the report.

CAG also said there were deficiencies in the GST system, indicating a "serious lack of coordination between the executive and the developers."

### **The GST council to introduce new filing system-**

The GST Council—the highest decision making body of the indirect tax system—has, however, approved a new return filing system, which businesses were able to use on a trial-basis starting July, and which will become mandatory during the second half of 2019-20. The new return filing system was expected to plug loopholes in the return filing system and introduce invoice matching of sales and purchase, curbing evasion in the process.

According to CAG, invoice matching is a “critical requirement”, which will yield benefits.

On the number of returns filed, CAG said while it was expected that compliance would improve as the indirect tax regime stabilizes, there was yet no improvement in the number of GSTR3B (summary return form) returns filed. While 87% taxpayers filed GST3B in April, 2018, this declined to 79% by December, indicating that compliance declined.

### **Government must address issues raised by Comptroller and Auditor General, review indirect tax regime;**

The shift to the goods and services tax (GST) regime marked a significant step towards the creation of a common national market. But the transition to this new indirect tax regime has been marred by implementation glitches. The compliance burden has not significantly eased, nor have revenue collections met expectations. These and many more issues have been dealt with in great detail by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in its audit report on indirect taxes. **This careful report warrants a comprehensive review of the country's new indirect tax regime.**

The audit report affirms the shortfall in government revenues post the shift to GST. It estimates that the Centre's revenues from goods and services (excluding central excise on petroleum and tobacco) fell by 10 per cent in 2017-18, as compared to the revenue of taxes subsumed under GST in 2016-17. It was hoped that over time, as the system stabilises, compliance levels would rise. But, as the audit finds out, there has been no improvement in filing of GSTR-3B returns. This needs further investigation.

The avoidable physical interface with tax officials continues, as invoice matching — which is essentially matching sales and purchases of buyers and sellers — is still not operational, suggesting that the hope of an IT-based interface remains a distant dream. This has also left the system prone to input tax credit (ITC) frauds.

The report has also flagged issues with regard to settlement of claims. It notes that the manner in which the government devolved Rs 67,998 crore under integrated GST to states was “against the provisions of Constitution of India.” It has highlighted the issues of transitional credit (the carry forward of credit from the old tax regime to GST) which could have impacted central GST collections. But the issues don't end here. The IT audit of the goods and services tax network (GSTN) also points towards several shortcomings,

not only in the GST registration but also in the payment module. Inexplicably, even the CAG's access to data, during its audit, was curtailed.

Part of the problem can be traced to the lack of co-ordination between stakeholders. There was also a failure to test the systems before rolling them out.

### **Conclusion-**

**The Report of the CAG gives a good assessment of the working of the GST. The governments can take cues to further reform the shortcomings to fully realise the benefits of the Tax.**

**Level 1 Q)What are the findings of the CAG on the GST, discuss?**

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CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL PASSED

## **PATH TO CONSUMER RIGHTS**

**1986** Consumer Protection Act enforces provides for redressal of complaints about defects in goods or deficiency in services.

**2011** Amendment introduces provision to file complaints online. Bill lapses with dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha

**2015** Consumer Protection Bill introduced with provisions for

product liability, unfair contracts, and setting up of regulatory body.

**2016** Standing Committee gives recommendations on product liability, powers and functions of regulatory body, penalties for misleading ads, their endorsers

**2018** Consumer Protection Bill introduced in January 2018 to replace the 2015 Bill

In a bid to strengthen the consumer rights and provide a mechanism to address consumer grievances, the Lok Sabha passed The Consumer Protection Bill, 2019. The aim of the bill is to resolve consumer complaints related to defected goods services and defiant services.

**The bill was earlier introduced the 16th Lok Sabha in December 2018, but was pending in Rajya Sabha. The bill was reintroduced in the Lok Sabha on July 8, 2019.**

### **Features of the bill-**

The bill if passed in Rajya Sabha will **replace The Consumer Protection Act,1986.**

**Central Consumer Protection Authority:** The new bill proposes Central Consumer Protection Authority for promoting, protecting and enforcing consumer rights to protect them from unfair trade practices. The CCPA if it foresees any sort of

malpractice, it has the power to file an action suit, if required. CCPA can also take immediate action against any customer complaint.

**Celebrities To Be Responsible For Endorsement:** Misleading advertisements may land celebrity endorsers in jail as per the Consumer Protection Bill 2019. Consumers tend to believe the products endorsed by celebrities blindly. The bill seeks to penalise misleading advertisements be it television, radio, print, outdoor ads, e-commerce, direct selling or telemarketing. This will plug a huge gap in the advertising industry, which has been so far monitored by the self-regulatory watchdog Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI).

The **bill holds celebrities responsible for endorsing a product which may mislead the consumers.** It also proposes strict action against advertisers in case of false claims made about the product/services by them in any form of advertisements. However, the media publishing the advertisement will be spared from any action.

The **bill also holds the manufacturer, service provider or seller responsible** for any harm caused to customers due to defective products or deficient services. So next time a celebrity endorses a noodle, pan masala, or any substance that can cause you cancer, they will be held accountable.

**Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission:** Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (CDRCs) will be set up at the district, state, and national levels. A consumer can file a complaint with CDRCs in relation to: (i) unfair or restrictive trade practices; (ii) defective goods or services; (iii) overcharging or deceptive charging; and (iv) the offering of goods or services for sale which may be hazardous to life and safety. Complaints against an unfair contract can be filed with only the State and National Appeals from a District CDRC will be heard by the State CDRC. Appeals from the State CDRC will be heard by the National CDRC. Final appeal will lie before the Supreme Court.

**Product liability-** By introducing product liability as a statutory relief, the Bill seeks to address the shortcomings of the earlier act.

*The 2019 bill strengthens consumers' rights by providing them right to claim relief against harm arising from a product or service. Harm refers to product liability, which as per the bill is the "responsibility of a manufacturer or seller of a product/service to compensate a consumer for any harm caused due to a defective product or service".* A consumer, consumer association, group or government can initiate product liability action against a manufacturer, service provider or product seller on the following grounds:

- Damage to property.
- Personal injury, illness or death.
- Mental agony or emotional distress caused to consumer.

Substantial value addition in a product is made by intermediaries as well a seller in modern trade and digital economy. Considering this, the bill allows consumers to file product liability action against **manufacturers, sellers or service providers** depending on their role in the factor causing harm. Thus, the draft bill imposes liability deferentially on manufacturers, sellers and service providers.

By introducing product liability as a statutory relief, the Bill seeks to address the shortcomings of the earlier act. "The erstwhile Act did not have provisions on product liability which is fairly common in other jurisdictions".

### **Conclusion-**

**On the whole the Consumer Protection Bill seeks to ensure transparency and Accountability in the whole process. It protects the Consumers interests and ensures that the consumer is not cheated.**

**Level 1 Q) The Consumer Protection Bill 2019 further seeks to strengthen the Consumer Rights, explain?**

LOK SABHA CLEARS CODE ON WAGES BILL;

**"The Bill would ensure Right to Sustenance for every worker and intends to increase the legislative protection of minimum wage from existing about 40% to 100% workforce."**

**What is the Code on Wages Bill?**

**The Code on Wages Bill, 2019, amends and consolidates laws relating to wages/bonus and universalises the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector and wage ceiling.**

The historic Bill aims to transform the old and obsolete labour laws into more accountable and transparent ones which is need of the hour. As many as 17 present labour laws are more than 50 years old and some of them even belong to pre-independence era.

Among the four Acts being subsumed in The Code on Wages Bill,

1. The Payment of Wages Act, 1936 belongs to pre-independence era and
2. The Minimum Wages Act 1948 is also 71 years old.
3. The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and
4. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 are also being subsumed in the Code.

The Bill was introduced in last Lok Sabha on 10 August, 2017 and was referred to Parliamentary Standing Committee which submitted its Report on 18th December 2018. Out of 24 recommendations made by standing committee, 17 were accepted by government.

**The salient features of the Code are as following:**

Code on Wages, 2019, which will subsume four existing laws on labour wages - the Payment of Wages Act, 1936; the Minimum Wages Act, 1948;

As per the Code,

- the **central government can fix floor wages**, taking into account living standards of workers, based on the advice of the Central Advisory boards and concerned state governments.
- It **can set different floor wages for different geographical areas**.
- **The minimum wages decided by the central or state governments must be higher than the floor wage**.
- In case the existing minimum wages fixed by the cent or state governments are higher than the floor wage, they cannot reduce the minimum wages- minimum rate of wages fixed or revised by the appropriate Government.

1. **The Code on Wage** universalizes the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector and wage ceiling.

**(Present Situation)** At present, the provisions of both Minimum Wages Act and Payment of Wages Act apply only to workers below a particular wage ceiling working in Scheduled Employments only.

The bill would ensure the "Right to Sustenance" for every worker and intends to increase the legislative protection of minimum wage from existing about 40% to 100% workforce.

Introduction of statutory Floor Wage to be computed based on minimum living conditions, will extend qualitative living conditions across the country to about 50 crore workers. It is envisaged that the states to notify payment of wages to the workers through digital mode.

2. There are 12 definitions of wages in the different Labour Laws leading to litigation besides difficulty in its implementation. The definition has been simplified and is expected to reduce litigation and will entail at lesser cost of compliance for an employer.

An establishment will also be benefited as the number of registers, returns, forms etc., not only can be electronically filed and maintained, but it is envisaged that through rules, not more than one template will be prescribed.

3. At present, many of the states have multiple minimum wages. Through Code on Wages, the methodology to fix the minimum wages has been simplified and rationalised by doing away with type of employment as one of the criteria for fixation of minimum wage.

*The minimum wage fixation would primarily based on geography and skills. It will substantially reduce the number of minimum wages in the country from existing more than 2000 rates of minimum wages.*

4. Many changes have been introduced in the inspection regimes including *web based randomised computerised inspection scheme, jurisdiction-free inspections, calling of information electronically for inspection, composition of fines etc.* All these changes will be conducive for enforcement of labour laws with *transparency and accountability.*
5. There were instances that due to smaller limitation period, the claims of the workers could not be raised. To protect the interest of the workers, *the limitation period has been raised to 3 years and made uniform for filing claims for minimum wages, bonus, equal remuneration etc., as against existing varying period between 6 months to 2 years.*

If workers, especially those in the unorganised sector, don't get their salary on time their families go into despair. This *Bill provides for monthly wage holders to get their salary on time and all sections of society which were outside the ambit of the minimum wages will now get the right to minimum wages.*

It can be said that a historical step for ensuring statutory protection for minimum wage and timely payment of wage to 50 crore worker in the country has been taken through the Code on Wages besides promoting ease of living and ease of doing business.

**Level 1 Q) The Code is a historical step for ensuring statutory protection for minimum wage and timely payment of wage all the workers in the country, comment?**

#### RAJASTHAN SEES EXAM WITHOUT INVIGILATOR

In a recent letter addressed to principals of all government colleges, Borad said that the tests will not only assess the academic knowledge of the students but also their honesty, self-confidence and self-control.

In a first-of-its-kind exercise, about 1 lakh students of government colleges in Rajasthan appeared in an examination which was virtually a test of their honesty. The newly introduced monthly academic test was conducted without invigilators, while no equipment, such as CCTV cameras, were installed in the classrooms to monitor the activities of students.

The test, scheduled for the 29th of every month in the 2019-20 session, will not only assess the academic knowledge of the students but also their honesty, truthfulness, self-control and self-confidence. Teachers left the classrooms after distributing question papers and came back after an hour only to collect the answer sheets when the time was up.

The students' response was overwhelming in all the 237 government colleges across Rajasthan. Their enthusiasm showed how important it was to inculcate ethical values among youths. The State Commissioner said the exam was a "dual test" of the students' intellect and honesty, both of which were important for their success.

**Level 1 Q) Comment on the initiative of the Rajasthan government to assess the honesty of the Students? How will this help?**

### ODISHA IS THE ORIGIN OF THE RASOGOLA

#### **About the news-**

The Odisha government had filed for geographical recognition of the '**Odishara Rasagulla**' with the **GI Registry in Chennai** last year.

The rasagola, a popular dessert of Odisha, has received the geographical indication tag from the Registrar of Geographical Indication after years of controversy around the sweet.

The registration was conferred to 'Odisha Rasagola' under Section 16(I) or of authorized Section 17(3)(c) **of Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999**. The GI number 612 has been registered in favour of the Odisha Small Industries Corporation Limited (OSIC Limited), a government of Odisha undertaking and Utkal Mistanna Byabasayee Samiti, a traders' organisation, in the foodstuff category.

Both Odisha and West Bengal have been contesting the origin of the rasagola. Historical records submitted say the 'Odisha Rasagola' is associated with world famous Puri Jagannath Temple.

Bengalis claim that the Rasgulla was invented in the 19th century by Nobin Chandra Das at his Bagbazar residence in Kolkata, while Odias believe that the tradition of Niladri Bije where Rasgulla is offered started in the 12th century.

In 2015, the Odisha government had formed three committees to identify the origin of the Rasgulla and study its background, but could not come up with much.

#### **Mentioned in Historical Records;**

The reference of rasagola is found in the late 15th-century Odia Ramayana written by Balaram Das. Balaram Das's Ramayana is known as Dandi Ramayana or Jagamohana Ramayana as it was composed and sung at the Jagamohana of the Puri Temple.

In its 'Ajodhya Kanda', another religious script, one comes across elaborate descriptions of chhena and chhena-based products including Rasagola.

Famous Odia writer Fakir Mohan Senapati, famous writer of Odisha, in his writing Utkal Bhramanam published by Utkal Deepika on August 27, 1892 mentioned about the plentiful use of rasagola in Odisha during those days.

Similarly, on December 14, 1893, a poem titled, 'Bali Jatra' was published in the weekly "Indradhanu" written by poet Damodar Pattanayak. The poem was an eye-witness of Cuttack's famous, historic fair, Bali Jatra (Journey to Bali Island of Indonesia) and mentioned that sweets shops were looking attractive in presence of Rasagola and other sweets.

### **What is GI tag?**

The geographical indication (GI) tag is a name or sign used on products originating in a specific geographical location. The tag refers not only to the location but also the quality, and method used to produce something. A GI is a distinctive sign used to differentiate goods on the basis of its unique characteristics. The GI tag for the same product to both the neighbouring states recognizes the two distinct varieties in taste and texture.

A GI tag helps in the branding and marketing of a local product and can attract penalties if copied by anybody outside that geographical region.

With the GI tag, the Rasagulla now appears in Class 30 of GI tagged products that include items such as tea, coffee, cocoa, tapioca, salt, vinegar, mustard, spices, honey, bread and more. The first Odia product to receive a GI tag was Kandhamal Haldi, a type of turmeric produced by tribal farmers in the state's Kandhamal district.

The GI tag for Bengal and Odisha Rasagullas ***recognise two distinct versions of the sweet.***

### **Level 1 Q) GI tag will give a distinct recognition to products, explain?**

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SHAH TO HEAD ROUP TO COMBAT LYNCHING

Group of Ministers (GoM) are **ad hoc bodies or interMinisterial panel** formed to give recommendations to the cabinet on certain emergent issues and critical problem areas. Ministers heading the concerned ministries were inducted into the relevant GoMs and when the advice is crystallised they are disbanded. The system of GoMs was intended to operate as a single window clearance on crucial issues related to various ministries with the objective of expediting policy making and good governance.

While a GoM investigates and reports to the Cabinet, which takes the decision, an EGoM additionally takes decisions on matters it is authorised for, and such decisions have the force of the Government decision.

Both EGoM as well as the GoM get appointed under the Government of India's **Transaction of Business Rules 1961**, Para 6 (4) provides that

'Ad hoc Committees of Ministers including Group of Ministers may be appointed by the Cabinet, the Standing Committees of the Cabinet or by the Prime Minister for investigating and reporting to the Cabinet on such matters as may be specified, and, if so authorised by the Cabinet, Standing Committees of the Cabinet or the Prime Minister, for taking decisions on such matters.'

Rule 6(6) further provides that 'any decision taken by a Standing or Ad hoc Committee may be reviewed by the Cabinet'. Therefore decisions in a matter taken by EGoM remain subject to review by the Cabinet at the latter's discretion.

### About the news-

The **SC issued a notice to the Centre**, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the State governments in a plea seeking the implementation of *its July 2018 judgment laying down several preventive, remedial and punitive measures to combat the crime of lynching.*

On July 24, Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy had informed the Rajya Sabha that the "**Government constituted a GoM to deliberate**" on incidents of lynching and make recommendations.

*A high-level committee headed by Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba submitted its report to the GoM in September 2018, suggesting measures such as tightening of the law by inserting clauses in the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure through parliamentary approval.*

After the Home Secretary's report, the Centre held a series of meetings with social media platforms and asked them to take concrete steps to take down content that fuelled rumours and contributed to lynching.

### Cases of Lynching

In May and June of 2018, more than 20 people were lynched based on fake posts or rumours of child lifting floating on various social media platforms. *The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) does not maintain data with respect to lynching incidents in the country and it is counted among crimes like murder.*

The Centre rapped WhatsApp, saying the platform was being “abused” and it should take “immediate action to end this menace”.

Over the past few months, several instances of Muslim men were assaulted by mobs and forced to chant ‘Jai Shri Ram’. The most notable incident was the lynching of Tabrez Ansari, a 24-year-old who was tied up and thrashed, while being forced to chant ‘Jai Shri Ram’ and ‘Jai Hanuman’.

Protesting such incidents, 49 artists and eminent personalities wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying mob lynching should be stopped immediately. ‘Jai Shri Ram’ has become a provocative war cry with many lynchings taking place in its name

#### **GOM on Lynching headed by Home Minister Amit Shah-**

The Union Home Minister **Amit Shah will head the Group of Ministers (GoM)** that was constituted last year to combat lynchings. The members of the GoM are external affairs minister S. Jaishankar, transport minister Nitin Gadkari, law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and social justice and empowerment Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot.

#### **Other GoMs formed by the government-**

1. GoM on Issues Plaguing the real estate sector after the implementation of GST.
2. GoM on the cess on sugar and the digital payments.
3. GoM to review the Gst composition scheme .
4. GoM to resolve the IT challenges faced in the implementation of the GST.
5. GoM on the Uniform Road Tax structure across the country.

**Level 1 Q)What is a GoM why are they constituted, Give an account of the various Cabinet Committees?**

**Level 2Q) What are the challenges to national integration?**

**Prelims- GoM, EGoM, Cabinet committees, Transactions of Business Rules.**

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UNNAO SURVIVOR'S ACCIDENT: NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN URGES UP POLICE TO ENSURE FAIR, SPEEDY PROBE IN CASE-

A day after the Unnao assault survivor was critically injured in an accident, the MCW urged the UP police to ensure a free, fair and speedy probe in the case. The National Commission for Women on Monday urged the Uttar Pradesh police to ensure a free, fair and speedy probe in the case in which a BJP MLA is an accused.

**About the National Commission for Women-**

The National Commission for Women was set up as statutory body in January 1992.

- To review the Constitutional and Legal safeguards for women ;
- To recommend remedial legislative measures ;
- To facilitate redressal of grievances and
- To advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women.

The objective of the NCW is to represent the rights of women in India and to provide a voice for their issues and concerns. The subjects of their campaigns have included dowry, politics, religion, equal representation for women in jobs, and the exploitation of women for labour. They have also discussed police abuses against women. The first head of the commission was Jayanti Patnaik. Present since November 2018 is Rekha Sharma.

#### **Level 1 Q) Discuss the importance of the National Commission for Women?**

#### **PARLIAMENT STRUCTURE, FUNNCTIONING**

#### **PARLIAMNETARY STANDING COMMITTEES AND THEIR NECESSITY-**

### **Parliamentary committees**

- Why are Parliamentary Committees needed?
- Increases efficiency and expertise of Parliament.
- Review proposed laws , oversee activities of the executive branch and scrutinize government expenditure.
- Forum to build consensus across party lines.
- Help develop expertise in subjects.
- Enables consultation with independent experts and stakeholders.

#### **Background-**

The opposition criticised the government to run through bills without Parliamentary Scrutiny through the committees which is in-dept and an important instrument of parliamentary control.

Parliament is the Central Legislature, its functions are varied such as law making, finance, executive control, and an appointment body. Apart from these there are many functions that it takes up. Due to the paucity of time the there are various mechanisms that help the parliament to have a detailed look at matters. One of them is the Parliamentary Committees.

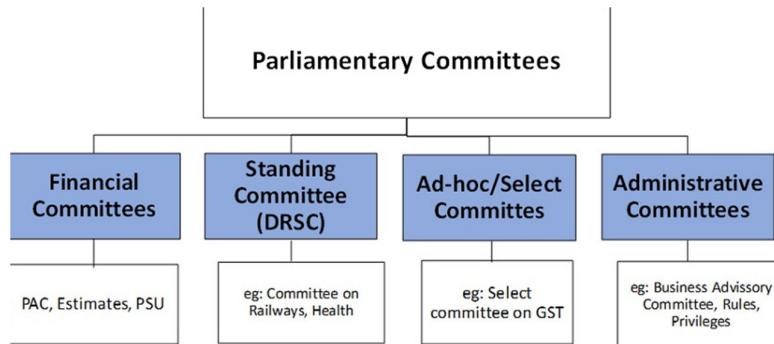
Parliament has broadly two functions, which are law-making and oversight of the executive branch of the government. Parliament is the embodiment of the people's will. Committees are an instrument of Parliament for its own effective functioning.

*Given the volume of legislative business, discussing all Bills under the consideration of Parliament in detail on the floor of the House is impossible. Committees are platforms for threadbare discussion on a proposed law.* At least in principle, the assumption is that the smaller cohort of lawmakers, assembled on the basis of the proportional strength of individual parties and interests and expertise of individual lawmakers, could have more open, intensive and better informed discussions. Committee meetings are 'closed door' and members are not bound by party whips, which allows them the latitude for a more meaningful exchange of views as against discussions in full and open Houses where party positions invariably take precedence.

#### **Committees provide the required expertise-**

Disruptive changes in technology and the expansion of trade, commerce and economy in general throw up new policy challenges that require a constant reform of legal and institutional structures. While law-making gets increasingly complex, lawmakers cannot infinitely expand their knowledge into ever expanding areas of human activities. For instance, we live in an era of metadata being generated by expanding connectivity. The laws and regulations that are required to govern a digital society cannot be made without highly specialised knowledge and political acumen. Members of Parliament may have great acumen but they would require the assistance of experts in dealing with such situations. **It is through committees that such expertise is drawn into law-making.**

Executive accountability to the legislature is enforced through questions in Parliament also, which are answered by ministers. However, department standing committees go one step further and hear from senior officials of the government in a closed setting, allowing for more detailed discussions. This mechanism also enables parliamentarians to understand the executive processes closely.



### **Parliamentary committees-**

The work done by the Parliament in modern times is not only varied and complex in nature, but also considerable in volume. The time at its disposal is limited. It cannot, therefore, give close consideration to all the legislative and other matters that come up before it. A good deal of its business is, therefore, transacted in Committees of the House, known as Parliamentary Committees. Parliamentary Committee means a Committee which is appointed or elected by the House or nominated by the Speaker and which works under the direction of the Speaker and presents its report to the House or to the Speaker and the Secretariat for which is provided by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

By their nature, Parliamentary Committees are of two kinds:

- Standing Committees
- Ad hoc Committees.

Broadly, the Parliamentary Committees may be classified into the following categories:

- (a) Financial Committees
- (b) Departmentally Related Standing Committees;
- (c) Other Parliamentary Standing Committees; and
- (d) Ad hoc Committees.

Standing Committees are permanent and regular committees which are constituted from time to time in pursuance of the provisions of an Act of Parliament or Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. The work of these Committees is of continuous nature. The Financial Committees, DRSCs and some other Committees come under the category of Standing Committees.

Ad hoc Committees are appointed for a specific purpose and they cease to exist when they finish the task assigned to them and submit a report.

The principal Ad hoc Committees are the Select and Joint Committees on Bills. (example-Railway Convention Committee, Joint Committee on Food Management in Parliament House Complex etc) also come under the category of ad hoc Committees.

During the Present sitting of the Lok Sabha there have been instances where many bills have been passed by the Lok Sabha which have not been sent to the Committees. **NOTE- Committees takes a broader discussion and include members of all political parties and therefore takes into consideration all view points.** This bypassing of the scrutiny by the Parliamentary committees has led to criticisms by the Opposition Parties.

Eleven of the 22 Bills introduced in the ongoing session of Parliament have been passed, which makes it a highly productive session after many years. But these Bills have been passed without scrutiny by parliamentary standing committees, their purpose being to enable detailed consideration of a piece of legislation. After the formation of the 17th Lok Sabha, parliamentary standing committees have not been constituted as consultations among parties are still under way. Partly as a result of this, the Bills were passed without committee scrutiny.

#### **Functions of the Parliamentary committees-**

- Considering the Demands for Grants of the Various Ministries and Departments and make reports on them.
- To examine in detail the bill that are referred to them by the LS or the RS.
- To study the annual reports of the various Ministries and departments.
- To study the policy documents when presented to the committees.

#### **So why are the Parliamentary committees important and how have they come into being?**

The institution of Parliamentary Committees also has its origins in the British Parliament. The first Parliamentary Committee was constituted in 1571 in Britain. The Public Accounts Committee was established in 1861. In India, the first Public Accounts Committee was constituted in April 1950.

Parliamentary committees draw their authority from Article 105 (on privileges of Parliament members) and Article 118 (on Parliament's authority to make rules for regulating its procedure and conduct of business). Committee reports are usually exhaustive and provide authentic information on matters related to governance. Bills that are referred to committees are returned to the House with significant value addition. Parliament is not bound by the recommendations of committees.

#### **Level 1Q) Instruments of Scrutiny in the Parliament, Explain?**

SC REJECTS TO EXTEND VISAKA GUIDELINES TO RELIGIOUS PLACES

#### **What is the news about?**

A PIL was moved in the apex court seeking extension of its Vishakha guidelines to religious places, including 'ashrams', 'madrassas' and Catholic institutions, to check the rampant rise in sexual exploitation of women in such places.

Advocate Maneesh Pathak claimed in the petition that ***religious places constitute part of workplace as many women were employed there besides others who were voluntarily engaged with them.*** In **August 1997**, the top court in the ***Vishakha case*** laid down ***as many as 12 guidelines to be followed by the employers to prevent or deter acts of sexual harassments against women.***

### **What are the Visaka Guidelines?**

The guidelines date back to 1997 when the Supreme Court laid them down while passing judgment in a public interest litigation filed by Vishakha and other women's rights groups over the infamous Bhanwari Devi gangrape case. Bhanwari Devi, a social worker from Rajasthan had in 1992 prevented the marriage of a one-year-old girl, inviting wrath of the villagers. The gangrape was allegedly an act of revenge.

The apex court took note of the fact that the civil and penal laws of the time did not adequately provide for specific protection of women from sexual harassment at workplaces, and made it legally binding for employers to observe some guidelines to ensure prevention of sexual harassment of women.

- Prohibition, prevention, redress — these were the three key obligations that were imposed on institutions as the guidelines defined sexual harassment at workplaces.
- The Supreme Court said every organisation must set up an internal complaints committee or ICC to look into matters of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.

### **What is the law that currently governs sexual harassment at workplace?**

- In 2013, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act was passed broadening the Vishakha guidelines.
- Defining sexual harassment in clearer terms, the new law laid down the procedures for complaint and inquiry, and the action to be taken.
- The Act mandates that every organisation with 10 or more employees set up an internal complaints committee of ICC at each office or branch.
- It defines various aspects of sexual harassment and protects all women working at, or even visiting, a workplace, in any capacity. The Act defines as "victim" any woman "of any age whether employed or not", who alleges to have been "subjected to any act of sexual harassment".

### **What constitutes sexual harassment at workplace?**

The Vishaka guidelines define as sexual harassment any unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication). These are:

- Physical contact and advances
- A demand or request for sexual favours
- Sexually coloured remarks
- Showing pornography
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature

The Ministry of Women & Child Development has published a Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act. The handbook has detailed instances of unwelcome behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment at the workplace. These can be, broadly:

- Sexually suggestive remarks or innuendos; serious or repeated offensive remarks; inappropriate questions or remarks about a person's sex life
- Display of sexist or offensive pictures, posters, MMS, SMS, WhatsApp, or emails
- Intimidation, threats, blackmail around sexual favours; also, threats, intimidation or retaliation against an employee who speaks up about these
- Unwelcome social invitations with sexual overtones, commonly seen as flirting
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- According to the handbook, "unwelcome behaviour" is experienced when the victim feels bad or powerless; it causes anger/sadness or negative self-esteem. It adds unwelcome behaviour is one which is "illegal, demeaning, invading, one-sided and power based".

### **Who is an 'aggrieved woman' as per the Act?**

According to the Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace, the Act recognises the right of every woman to a safe and secure workplace environment "irrespective of her age or employment/work status". Any woman coming to any workplace "whether in the capacity of regular, temporary, adhoc, or daily wages basis" is protected under the Act.

It further says such women can be "engaged directly or through an agent including a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the principal employer"; they may be working for remuneration, or on a voluntary basis, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice, or called by any other such name.

The identity of the woman, respondent, witness, any information on the inquiry, recommendation and action taken, cannot be made public, as per the Act.

### **How to file a complaint of sexual harassment at workplace?**

The 2013 Act says the aggrieved woman may make, in writing, a complaint of sexual harassment. However, a written complaint is not mandatory. If she cannot give a

written complaint, any member of the ICC "shall" render "all reasonable assistance" to her for facilitating it. Also, if the woman is unable to make a complaint citing "physical or mental incapacity or death or otherwise", her legal heir may do so.

### **Time-frame for making a complaint to ICC**

According to the Act, the complaint of sexual harassment has to be made "within three months from the date of the incident". If such incidents have taken place over a time, the complaint should be made within three months from the date of the last incident. However, the ICC has the discretion to "extend the time limit".

### **What happens after a complaint is made?**

- Once a complaint is made, the ICC can offer conciliation under Section 10 of the Act. Before starting an inquiry, the ICC may "at the request of the aggrieved woman, take steps to settle the matter between her and the respondent through conciliation". It is to be seen, however, that "no monetary settlement shall be made as a basis of conciliation".
- If conciliation is not an option, the ICC may straightaway forward the complaint to the police under IPC Section 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) that carries a maximum punishment of one year jail with fine. Or, it can start its own inquiry and complete it within 90 days.
- Enjoying powers similar to those of a **civil court**, the ICC can summon and examine any person on oath, can ask for production of related documents before it. During the inquiry, if the woman makes a written request, the ICC "may" also recommend her transfer, a three-month leave, or any other relief it deems fit.
- Once the inquiry is over, the ICC is to provide a report to the employer within 10 days, making available a copy of it to the victim too.

### **What happens to the 'victim' if her complaint is found to be false?**

Section 14 of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act deals with false complainant. If the ICC finds the complaint to be false, the Act says, it may recommend action against the woman or the person who has made the complaint.

### **What happens after the ICC report?**

If the ICC finds the allegations true, it will recommend to the company to take action against the accused for misconduct "in accordance with the provisions of the service rules". In case the company does not have service rules, the recommended action may include disciplinary action, including a written apology, reprimand, warning, censure; withholding promotion/ pay raise/ increment; termination of service; counselling; community service.

The ICC can also recommend financial damages to the complainant. Once the ICC furnishes its recommendations, the aggrieved woman or the respondent can challenge the report in a court of law within 90 days.

## **FOREST RIGHTS ACT ; WHAT IS AT STAKE ?**

### **What is the news about?**

Across India, tribal rights activists are of the view that the proposed IFA amendments will divest tribals and other forest-dwelling communities of their rights over forest land and resources.

DISTRICTS with sizeable tribal populations saw several protests and demonstrations. The protests were organised by the Bhumi Adhikar Andolan. There were two issues that the demonstrators were decrying.

One, the proposed amendments to the Indian Forest Act (IFA), 1927; the concerned amendments to the IFA have been sent to states for consultation.

Two, a move to oust forest-dwellers from forest land;

### **What is the FRA case before the Supreme Court?**

On February 13 this year, the Supreme Court ordered the eviction of lakhs of tribals and other traditional forest dwellers whose claims under The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (or FRA), 2006, had been rejected following a three-tier process. Later, the SC temporarily put on hold the eviction by an order on February 28, giving state governments time to file affidavits on whether due process was followed before claims were rejected.

### **Who are the petitioners, and what is their contention?**

The petitioners are Wildlife First, Nature Conservation Society, and Tiger Research and Conservation Trust. They contend that the protection of forests has been severely affected due to bogus claims under the FRA, and that the bogus claimants continue to occupy large areas of forest lands, including inside national parks and sanctuaries, despite their applications being rejected under the appeals process of the FRA.

### **What are the proposed amendments to the IFA?**

The FRA, enacted in 2006, envisions the forest rights committee of a village as the central unit in managing forest resources. The proposed IFA amendments will revert to giving overriding powers to Forest Department officials. The greater policing powers to the Forest Department include the use of firearms, and veto power to override the FRA. Further, if rights under FRA are seen as hampering forest conservation efforts, the state may commute such rights through compensation to the tribals. The changes also

propose to open up forest land specifically for commercial exploitation of timber or non-timber forest produce.

***Across India, tribal rights activists are of the view that the proposed IFA amendments will divest tribals and other forest-dwelling communities of their rights over forest land and resources.***

#### **What are the demands of those holding agitations ahead of the SC hearing?**

When the apex court passed its order on February 13, the central government had not represented itself in court. These agitations are primarily targeted at exhorting the Centre and state governments to present a defence of the FRA in court.

Other demands include shelving the proposed IFA amendments, which activists have called more draconian than the original colonial-era law.

#### **Analysis-**

The draft Bill reinforces the idea of bureaucratic control of forests, providing immunity for actions such as use of firearms by personnel to prevent an offence. The hardline policing approach is reflected in the emphasis on creating infrastructure to detain and transport the accused, and to penalise entire communities through denial of access to forests for offences by individuals. Such provisions invariably affect poor inhabitants, and run counter to the empowering and egalitarian goals that produced the Forest Rights Act.

India's forests play a key role in moderating the lives of not just the adivasis and other traditional dwellers, but everyone in the subcontinent, through their impact on the climate and monsoons. Their health can be improved only through collaboration. Any new forest law must, therefore, aim to reduce conflicts, incentivise tribals and stop diversion for non-forest uses. This can be achieved by recognising all suitable landscapes as forests and insulating them from commercial exploitation. Such an approach requires a partnership with communities on the one hand, and scientists on the other.

**Level 1Q) Throw light on the Forest resources of India?**

**Level 2Q) Comment on the bureaucratic control over the forests by the FRA Amendment bill?**

#### **CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES**

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**FOUR NEW GOVERNORS APPOINTED-**

In a major reshuffle, President Ram Nath Kovind transferred two Governors and made four new appointments across six States. New Governors will take charge of the Raj Bhavans in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Nagaland and Tripura.

Governor and former Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel has been transferred to U.P., while the former interlocutor for the Naga talks R.N. Ravi has been appointed Nagaland Governor. Senior Supreme Court advocate and former MP Jagdeep Dhankhar will be the new Governor of West Bengal, replacing Keshari Nath Tripathi.

The reshuffle and choice of Governors is politically significant as they are among the first recommendations from the Home Ministry after BJP president Amit Shah took charge. Though appointed by the President, the Home Ministry is the nodal Ministry for the selection of Governors, who act as a bridge between the Centre and the States.

Ms. Anandiben Patel goes to Lucknow with the BJP government in the State facing the Opposition's ire over worsening law and order situation. With her appointment, Uttar Pradesh will get its first woman Governor since its inception in 1950. Though Sarojini Naidu was the first Governor in 1947, the State was then known as the United Provinces.

Mr. Ravi's appointment is significant as it could give a boost to peace efforts, given his role as the Centre's interlocutor in talks with the Naga groups.

#### **Part 6 Chapter 2 - EXECUTIVE**

##### **Governor ARTICLE**

- 153. Governors of State.**
- 154. Executive Power of State**
- 155. Appointment of Governor .**
- 156. Term of office of Governor.**
- 157. Qualifications for Appointment as Governor.**
- 158. Conditions of Governor's office.**
- 159. Oath or affirmation by the Governor.**
- 160. Discharge of the functions of the Governor in certain contingencies.**
- 161. Power of Governor to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit 161 or commute sentences in certain cases.**

#### **Governor appointment part of Unitary Features-**

Appointment of the Governor by the Centre is seen as one of the Unitary Features of India though it is a Federation. The Role of the governor has also come in for criticisms very frequently and is one of the issues in the Centre state relations. Conventionally the Centre always appoints a person who is a party member or a person loyal to the party. It is said that the Governor should be appointed after the consultation of the CM, but this is never practised.

#### **Eligibility-**

**The following are the eligibility criteria for the appointment of the Governor in a particular state:**

1. He or she must be a citizen of India.
2. He or she must have completed 35 years of age.
3. He or she must not hold any other office of profit.
4. He or she must not be a member of the Legislature of the Union or of any other state. There is no bar to the selection of a Governor from amongst the members of the Legislature, provided that on appointment, he or she immediately ceases to be a Member of the Legislature.

**Level 1Q) Explain the Unitary Features of the Indian Constitution and Discuss the Role of the Governor?**

**Prelims- Part 6, Features of the Indian Constitution, Federal and unitary.**

#### **15<sup>TH</sup> FINANCE COMMISSION PANEL TERM EXTENDED TILL NOV 30<sup>TH</sup>**

The Union Cabinet has approved extending the term of the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission to November 30, 2019 and also expanding the terms of reference of the Fifteenth Finance Commission to address the funding requirements for defence and internal security as also.

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposed amendment to enable the Fifteenth Finance Commission to address serious concerns regarding the allocation of adequate, secure and non-lapsable funds for defence and internal security of India.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Terms of Reference –**

- Review the current status of:
  1. finance,
  2. deficit,
  3. debt levels, and
  4. cash balances and fiscal discipline efforts of the Union and the States.
- Recommend a fiscal consolidation roadmap for sound fiscal management.
- Take into account the responsibility of the Central Government and State Governments to adhere to appropriate levels of general and consolidated government debt and deficit levels.
- Foster higher inclusive growth in the country, guided by the principles of equity, efficiency and transparency.
- Examine whether revenue deficit grants be provided at all.
- Review the present arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives, with reference to the funds constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and make appropriate recommendations thereon.

Other key issues for consideration by the commission are as under:

- Impact on the fiscal situation of the Union Government of substantially enhanced tax devolution to States following recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission, coupled with the continuing imperative of the national development programme including New India – 2022;
- Impact of the GST, including payment of compensation for possible loss of revenues for 5 years, and abolition of a number of cesses, earmarking thereof for compensation and other structural reforms programme, on the finances of Centre and States.
- Efforts made by the States in expansion and deepening of tax net under GST;
- Efforts and progress made in moving towards replacement rate of population growth;
- Progress made in increasing tax/non-tax revenues, promoting savings by adoption of Direct Benefit Transfers and Public Finance Management System, promoting digital economy and removing layers between the government and the beneficiaries;
- Progress made in sanitation, solid waste management and bringing in behavioural change to end open defecation.

**Level 1 Q) What is the importance of a Finance Commission in a federal set up Like India? Prelims- FC, Previous ones.**

#### CENTRE-STATE AND INTER STATE ISSUES

- GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363
- APPSC GROUP 1 FREE TEST SERIES- starts September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019**  
 Discussion will include-
- 1.What questions can be expected from various topics.
  - 2.How to write good answers.
  - 3.What points to remember.
  - 4.How to score well even if you are not aware of the issue.
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UPSC PRELIMS CUM MAINS 2020 LONG TERM STARTS -14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019

1. All Chapters of GS PAPERS to be covered ( 40 TESTS ) WEEKLY
2. MAINS AND PRELIMS TESTS.
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CABINET APPROVES INTER-STATE RIVER WATER DISPUTES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019- “ONE TRIBUNAL FOR ALL RIVER WATER DISPUTES:”

**About the news ;**

The Inter-State River Water disputes(Amendment) Bill, 2019 was approved by the cabinet. The Bill provides for the adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers and river valley thereof. The 2019 bill will amend the existing Act of 1956.

**How will the new bill help ?**

It will further streamline the adjudication of inter-State river water disputes. **The Bill seeks to amend the Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 with a view to streamline the adjudication of inter-state river water disputes and make the present institutional architecture robust by constituting a single tribunal with different benches and fixed timeline for adjudication.**

**What will be the Impact?**

Constitution of a single tribunal with different benches along with **fixation of strict timelines** for adjudication will result expeditious resolution of disputes relating to inter-state rivers. The amendments in the Bill **will speed up** the adjudication of water disputes referred to it.

## RESOLVE DISPUTES DIFFERENTLY

### PROPOSED LAW

#### FIRST LEVEL

- Try to resolve it without Tribunal
- Set up Disputes Resolution Committee (DRC) by the Centre
- Members of the DRC will be taken from relevant fields
- Time limit to resolve dispute by DRC: Max. 18 months

#### SECOND LEVEL

- To be referred to Tribunal if dispute remains unresolved
- There'll be single Tribunal with multiple Benches
- Tribunal will consist of chairperson,

### PRESENT LAW

- vice-chairperson and maximum six members
- Chairperson will assign dispute to a Bench
- Chairperson, vice-chairperson and max. six members will be selected on recommendation of a selection committee (Selection committee consists of PM or his/her nominee; CJI or his/her nominee; Union law minister and Union Jal Shakti minister)
- A separate Tribunal has to be established for each inter-state river water disputes
- There is no time limit for adjudication by a Tribunal
- No upper age limit for chairperson or a member
- States can move Supreme Court if not accept awards of Tribunal

### TRIBUNALS FUNCTIONING UNDER PRESENT LAW

#### TIME TAKEN

**Ravi-Beas** | 33 years till now

STATES: PUNJAB, HARYANA AND RAJASTHAN

**Krishna** | 15 years (sub-judge)

MAHARASHTRA, KARNATAKA, TELANGANA & AP

**Vansadhara** | 9 years (sub-judge)

ODISHA AND ANDHRA PRADESH

**Mahadayi** | 8 years till now

GOA, KARNATAKA AND MAHARASHTRA

**Mahanadi** | 1 year till now

ODISHA AND CHHATTISGARH

### Features-

1. Once it becomes law, the amendment will ensure the transfer of all existing water disputes to the new tribunal. All five existing tribunals under the 1956 Act would cease to exist.
2. The amendments to the Inter-State River Waters Disputes Act of 1956 that provides for setting up of a separate tribunal every time a dispute arises.
3. The main purpose is to make the process of dispute settlement more efficient and effective. Under the 1956 Act, nine tribunals have so far been set up. Only four of them have given their awards. One of these disputes, over Cauvery waters between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, took 28 years to settle. The Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal was set up in April 1986 and it is still to give the final award. The minimum a tribunal has taken to settle a dispute is seven years, by the first Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal in 1976.
4. The amendment is bringing a time limit for adjudicating the disputes. All disputes would now have to be resolved within a maximum of four-and-a-half years.
5. The multiplicity of tribunals has led to an increase in bureaucracy, delays, and possible duplication of work. The replacement of five existing tribunals with a

permanent tribunal is likely to result in a 25 per cent reduction in staff strength, from the current 107 to 80, and a saving of Rs 4.27 crore per year.

6. **Two level approach-** The current system of dispute resolution would give way to a new two-tier approach. The states concerned would be encouraged to come to a negotiated settlement through a Disputes Resolution Committee (DRC). Only if the DRC fails to resolve the dispute will the matter be referred to the tribunal.
7. In the existing mechanism, when states raise a dispute, the central government constitutes a tribunal. Currently, the tribunal has to give its award **within three years**, which can be **extended by another two years**. In practice, tribunals have taken much longer to give their decisions.
8. Under the **new system**, the Centre would set up a DRC once states raise a dispute. The DRC would be headed by a serving or retired secretary-rank officer with experience in the water sector and would have other expert members and a representative of each state government concerned. The DRC would try to resolve the dispute through negotiations **within a year and submit a report to the Centre. This period can be extended by a maximum of six months.**
9. If the DRC fails to settle the dispute, it would be referred to the permanent tribunal, which will have a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a maximum of six members — three judicial and three expert members. It would have to finalise its decision within two years, a period that can be extended by a maximum of one more year — adding up to a maximum of four-and-a-half years.( DRC 1 and half years and Tribunal 3 years ).
10. The decision of the tribunal would carry the weight of an order of the Supreme Court. There is no provision for appeal. However, the Supreme Court, while hearing a civil suit in the Cauvery dispute, had said the decision of that tribunal could be challenged before it through a Special Leave Petition under Article 136 of the Constitution.

**Level 1 Q)One Tribunal for all river water disputes, explain?**

**Prelims – Features of the bill, river water disputes, states involved, articles in the constitution.**

- GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363

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EXECUTIVE

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SPEAKER DISQUALIFIES 14 MORE REBEL MLA'S -

**About the news-**

Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar has disqualified 14 more rebel MLAs - till the end of the Assembly term in 2023 under the ANTI DEFLECTION LAW ( 10<sup>th</sup> schedule ) with immediate effect, a day ahead of the trust vote. This has reduced the strength of the

House to 208. The total disqualifications came up to 17. 11 from Congress and 3 from JDS - in addition to the three rebel Congress MLAs he had disqualified on July 25.

The disqualification has reduced the strength of the house top 208. Now the simple majority is 105, which is equal to the strength of BJP in the house. In addition to this, the party had the support of one independent MLA, H. Nagesh, taking their strength to 106. This has helped Mr. Yediyurappa sail through the trust vote.

### **Vacation of seats in the Legislature-**

#### **Article 190. Vacation of seats.-**

- (1) No person shall be a member of both Houses of the Legislature of a State and provision shall be made by the Legislature of the State by law for the vacation by a person who is chosen a member of both Houses of his seat in one house or the other.
- (2) No person shall be a member of the Legislatures of two or more States specified in the First Schedule and if a person is chosen a member of the Legislatures of two or more such States, then, at the expiration of such period as may be specified in rules made by the President, that person's seat in the Legislatures of all such States shall become vacant, unless he has previously resigned his seat in the Legislatures of all but one of the States.
- (3) If a member of a House of the Legislature of a State.-(a) becomes a subject to any of the disqualifications or (b) resigns his seat by writing under his hand addressed to the speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, and his resignation is accepted by the Speaker or the Chairman, his seat shall thereupon become vacant:
- (4) If for a period of sixty days a member of a House of the Legislature of a State is without permission of the House absent from all meetings thereof, the House may declare his seat vacant, Provided that in computing the said period of sixty days no account shall be taken of any period during which the House is prorogued or is adjourned for more than four consecutive days.

### **Disqualification of Members -**

#### **Article 191. Disqualifications for membership.-**

- (1) A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of a State-
  - (a) if he holds any office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State specified in the First Schedule, other than an office declared by the Legislature of the State by law not to disqualify its holder;
  - (b) if he is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court;
  - (c) if he is an undischarged insolvent;

- (d) if he is not a citizen of India, or has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a foreign State, or is under any acknowledgment of allegiance or adherence to a foreign State;
- (e) if he is disqualified by or under any law made by the Parliament.

## KARNATAKA CM TO SEEK TRUST VOTE

### **Explaining Trust vote?**

A '**No confidence motion**', or a '**vote of confidence**', or a '**trust vote**', is sought by the government in power- presently in the Karnataka(Congress JD(U) coalition)- on the floor of the House.

The cornerstone of Parliamentary government is '**Collective Responsibility**' of the ministers to the Legislative Assembly. The government can function only as long as it enjoys the confidence of the house. During any circumstance when the government loses the support or the confidence of the house, it will have to prove its majority to continue as the government. A No Confidence motion is usually moved against the government of the day, if the government fails to prove its majority then it will have to resign and this will call for elections. But to avoid disruptions due to elections the governor can either choose a person of his choice whom he feels can garner the support of the majority or if another party is ready to form the government then they will have to prove their majority on the floor of the house. Thus the Party or a coalition that enjoys absolute majority forms the government.

In the absence of a clear majority, when there is more than one individual staking claim to form the government, the governor may call for a special session to see who has the majority to form the government. Some legislators may be absent or choose not to vote. The numbers are then considered based only on those MLAs who were present to vote.

### **Parliamentary practice-**

**The No Confidence motion is a part of many parliamentary democracies such as Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and UK but with certain variations.**

In India, a motion of no confidence can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the Parliament of India). The motion is admitted for discussion when a minimum of 50 members of the house support the motion. If the motion carries, the House debates and votes on the motion. If a majority of the members of the house vote in favour of the motion, the motion is passed and the Government is bound to vacate the office.

***Acharya Kripalani moved the first-ever no confidence motion on the floor of the Lok Sabha in August 1963, immediately after the disastrous India-China War.*** As of July

2018, 27 no-confidence motions have been moved. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi faced the most number of no-confidence motions – 15 times, followed by Lal Bahadur Shastri and P. V. Narasimha Rao (thrice each), Morarji Desai (twice) and Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. All the no-confidence motions have been defeated except when Prime Minister Morarji Desai resigned during the discussions on 12 July 1979. The most recent no-confidence motion was against the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha government by Narendra Modi, however the motion could not be allowed by the speaker who said the house was not in order.

## KARNATAK REBEL MLA'S NEED NOT ATTEND HOUSE SAYS SC

### **Background-**

There have been resignations of 15 MLA's in Karnataka from the Congress JD(U) coalition. The members submitted their resignation to the Speaker of the house. As the Speaker sought time to look into their resignations the MLA's filed a petition in the SC against the Speakers delay in deciding on the resignations.

Though BJP emerged as the single largest party with 105 seats after the 2018 elections, Congress and JD(S) struck an out of blue alliance, stitching up 115 strength in the 224-members house.

**NOTE:** there is no time frame within which the speaker can decide on the resignation. It is only said that the Speaker can determine whether the resignations are voluntary or not. The Speaker had the constitutional duty under Article 190(3)(b) to ensure that resignations were voluntary and were not caused by any coercion or inducement.

The legislators had filed two petitions against the Speaker's delay in accepting their resignations. The Speaker, Ramesh Kumar had sought more time to go over most resignations and "seek clarity" on them before deciding whether he would accept them, while he had found faults in some of the other resignation letters.

On July 19<sup>th</sup> ***the SC passed an interim order saying that the MLA's cannot be compelled to attend the house and that they had the liberty to skip the sittings of the house.*** The SC also refused to fix a time frame for the Speaker to decide on the resignations submitted by the MLAs. The Speaker may decide within appropriate time frame said the SC.

- The court also said Karnataka Assembly Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar was free to decide on the resignations of the rebel legislators within such a time frame as he deemed appropriate.
- As the court order virtually sounded the death knell for Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy in the battle for numbers on the floor of the House.

- The apex court dismissed the party whip issued by the Congress and the JD(S) where all MLAs were asked to attend the proceedings in the Karnataka Assembly on July 18, saying that "MLAs cannot be compelled to participate in the proceedings of the house."
- The bench said there are rival submissions on the issue of resignation and disqualification of MLAs and that it was "imperative to maintain Constitutional balance".
- The Congress expressed reservations and said it nullified the whip and provided "blanket protection" to MLAs. The court order came a day before the Congress had to face the floor test. Thus the order reduced the strength of the party by saying that the MLA's canot be compelled to attend the house.

### **3 conditions were possible after the SC verdict-**

- **If speaker would have accepted the resignations – then the strength would be in favour of the BJP.**
- **If the resignations were not accepted, the MLA's would have had to participate in the vote.**
- **If they participate and they abstained from voting then test would have been in favour of the BJP.**
- **If the speaker disqualifies the MLA's then they would not be able to contest until 2023, which has happened.**

The order of the SC meant that the MLA's could skip the trust vote without facing Disqualification from the house. According to the 10<sup>th</sup> Schedule a member will face disqualification if he votes against the party orders or skips the voting. Larger issues regarding powers of Court to issue directions to Speaker of Legislative Assembly will be examined later, said the CJI-led bench.

### **Level 1 Q) Did the SC restore the constitutional balance during the Karnataka MLA's plea? Discuss?**

#### **YEDURAPPA WINS THE TRUST VOTE**

The BJP government in Karnataka headed by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa proved its majority with ease in the Assembly by winning the confidence motion by voice vote.

The Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar, who had disqualified 17 rebel MLAs of the Congress and the JD(S) resigned. The new government will have to elect a new speaker. The 17 disqualifications had put the BJP in a comfortable position in the passage of the confidence motion, with the effective strength of the House down to 208 where the BJP enjoys the support of 106 MLAs.

The elections will have to be held for all the 17 seats. The BJP won the trust vote comfortably but it faces a challenge of winning at-least 8 seats in the 17 seats by-polls to touch the majority mark of 113 seats. The 17 MLA's have challenged the disqualification in the SC. All eyes are on the SC judgement, if whether the SC will uphold the speakers decision or not. Earlier the SC had asked the speaker to decide fast on the resignations and not to force the MLA's to attend the Assembly after their resignation.

### LIMITS OF ANTI DEFLECTION

The prolonged political crisis in Karnataka has demonstrated the ways in which the nearly 35-year-old anti-defection law can be used and abused. Here's how the law was enacted, and how it has performed.

*The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, inserted by The Constitution (52nd Amendment) Act, 1985, when Rajiv Gandhi's government was in power.*

#### **The 1967 elections**

The seeds of the anti-defection law were sown after the general elections in 1967. The results of those elections were a mixed bag for the Congress. It formed the government at the Centre, but its strength in Lok Sabha fell from 361 to 283. During the year it lost control of seven state governments as MLAs shifted their political allegiance.

The legislative journey of the anti-defection law is long and chequered. It involves

- the institution of Parliament that designed it,
- the office of the Speaker of Legislatures that implements it, and
- the judiciary that interprets the law.
- MPs, MLAs, and their political parties are the principal stakeholders who are impacted by the anti-defection law.

It is a law whose unintended consequences outweigh its purpose — and its journey after its passage in 1985 mirrors the continuing political instability in the country.

#### **How did the Law Evolve?**

In this backdrop, P Venkatasubbaiah, a Congress MP in Lok Sabha who served in the Cabinets of both Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, proposed the setting up of a high-level committee to make recommendations to tackle the "problem of legislators changing their allegiance from one party to another".

#### **Y B Chavan Committee -**

A committee to examine the problem of political defections was set up . The then Home Minister, Y B Chavan, headed the committee. The panel defined defection — and an

exception for genuine defectors. According to the committee, *defection was the voluntary giving up of allegiance of a political party on whose symbol a legislator was elected, except when such action was the result of the decision of the party.*

In its report, the committee noted "*that the lure of office played a dominant part in decisions of legislators to defect*". It pointed out that out of 210 defecting legislators in seven states, 116 were given ministerial berths in governments which they helped form by their defections.

**To combat this, the committee recommended a bar on defecting legislators from holding ministerial positions for a year** — or until the time they got themselves re-elected. It also suggested a smaller Council of Ministers both at the levels of the Centre and the states. The committee was in favour of political parties working together to help evolve a code of conduct to effectively tackle disruptions.

#### **Early attempts at the law-**

Following the report of the Y B Chavan committee, two separate legislative attempts, both unsuccessful, were made to find a solution to defections.

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

#### **The Tenth Schedule**

The Bill to amend the Constitution was introduced by Rajiv Gandhi's Law Minister Ashoke Kumar Sen, the veteran barrister and politician who had also served in the Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru. The statement of objects and reasons of the Bill said:

"The evil of political defections has been a matter of national concern. If it is not combated, it is likely to undermine the very foundations of our democracy and the principles which sustain it."

The 52<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act by which the Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution, did three broad things.

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

3. Three, it made the Presiding Officer of the concerned legislature the sole arbiter of defection proceedings.

The Bill was debated in Lok Sabha on January 30, the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, and was passed by Rajya Sabha the following day. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi referred in Parliament to the ***Mahatma's seven social sins, the first one being politics without principles.***

### **The immediate challenges**

No sooner was the law put in place that political parties started to stress-test its boundaries. The issue of what constitutes a split in a political party rocked both the V P Singh and the Chandra Shekhar governments. The role of the Presiding Officers also became increasingly politicised.

The intervention of the higher judiciary was sought to decide questions such as what kinds of conduct outside the legislature would fall in the category of defection, and what was the extent of the Speaker's power in deciding defections. The Supreme Court, while upholding the supremacy of the Speaker in defection proceedings, also held that the Speaker's decisions were subject to judicial review.

### **The 2003 Amendment to the law-**

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

The committee observed: "*The provision of split has been grossly misused to engineer multiple divisions in the party, as a result of which the evil of defection has not been checked in the right earnest. Further it is also observed that the lure of office of profit plays dominant part in the political horse-trading resulting in spate of defections and counter defections.*"

The one-third split provision which offered protection to defectors was deleted from the law on the committee's recommendation. The 91<sup>st</sup> Amendment 2003 also incorporated the 1967 advice of the Y B Chavan committee in limiting the size of the Council of Ministers ( 15% of the strength of the Lower House or Lok Sabha in the centre and 15% of the size of the State Legislative Assembly), and preventing defecting legislators from joining the Council of Ministers until their re-election. However, as events in the years and decades since have demonstrated, these amendments have had only limited impact.

### **The violation of the law**

- The removal of the split provision prompted political parties to engineer wholesale defections (to merge) instead of smaller 'retail' ones.

- Legislators started resigning from the membership of the House in order to escape disqualification from ministerial berths.( example the Present Karnataka MLA's)
- The ceiling on the size of the Council of Ministers meant an increase in the number of positions of parliamentary secretaries in states.( example Delhi and )
- The Speakers started taking an active interest in political matters, helping build and break governments. The anti-defection law does not specify a timeframe for Speakers to decide on defection proceedings.( example the Speaker of Karnataka recently)
- When the politics demanded, Speakers were either quick to pass judgment on defection proceedings or delayed acting on them for years on end.( example- they were many MLA's and MP's that resigned from the Congress and Joined the BJP, but the speaker did not take any action on that).

The long drawn-out events in the Karnataka Vidhan Sabha have shown that even after three decades, the anti-defection law has not been able to stop political defections.

### **Level 1 Q) Has the Anti Defection Law been able to live up to its objective?**

#### **JUDICIARY**

##### **CATTLE TRADERS MOVE THE SC AGAINST THE 2017 RULES-**

##### **About the news?**

**The Supreme Court is hearing a petition challenging the Centre's notification that bans sale and purchase of cattle from animal markets for slaughter, a move that has triggered howls of protests.**

An association of Cattle Traders and transporters has approached the SC against the 2017 rules. The rules have been used to seize and forfeit their cattle. They said that they are being forcibly deprived of their cattle which are then sent to the Gaushalas.

The traders told the court that the seizer and the forfeiture of their livestock which is a means of livelihood for many was happening on the strength of the 2017 rules. The petition concerns the ***Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Rules 2017***, that was notified in May 2017.

The government's May 25 order bans sale of cattle, including cows, for slaughter and restricts cattle trade to farm owners, a decision that will hit poor farmers and squeeze supplies to the country's Rs 1 lakh-crore meat industry.

Cows are considered holy by many Hindus and have gained in importance since Prime Minister Narendra Modi stormed to power in 2014. Cow slaughter is banned in states

except in most parts of north-east India and Kerala. Several states have said they wouldn't implement the order, as the Centre can't dictate food habits.

The Madras high court has stayed the order for four weeks as other states, too, threaten to challenge the ban, which they say is against the spirit of federalism.

#### **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Rules 2017-**

The basic purpose of the Rule is to ensure welfare of the animals in the cattle market and ensure adequate facilities for housing, feeding, feed storage area, water supply, water troughs, ramps, enclosures for sick animals, veterinary care and proper drainage etc. To facilitate this, two Committees have been constituted, namely the District Animal Market Monitoring Committee for registration of animal market and Animal Market Committee at the local authority level for management of the markets.

The prime focus of the regulation is to protect the animals from cruelty and not to regulate the existing trade in cattle for slaughter houses. It is envisaged that welfare of cattle dealt in the market will be ensured and that only healthy animals are traded for agriculture purposes for the benefits of the farmers. The livestock markets are intended to become hubs for trade for animal for agriculture through this process and animal for slaughter will have to be bought from the farmers at the farms. The notified rules will remove the scope of illegal sale and smuggling of the cattle which is a major concern. The specific provisions apply only to animals which are bought and sold in the notified live stock markets and animals that are seized as case properties. These rules do not cover other areas.

July, 2015 to frame guidelines to prevent animals from being smuggled out of India for the Gadhimai Festival held in Nepal where large scale animals sacrifices took place.

On 12th July, 2016 the Hon'ble Supreme Court by the way of a final order directed this Ministry to frame rules under Section 38 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1960.

#### **Level 1 Q) What are the criticisms against the Prevention of Cruelty to the Animal Rules?**

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SC TO HEAR PLEAS CHALLENGING IMPLEMENTATION OF 10 PERCENT QUOTA FOR GENERAL CATEGORY POOR-

#### **About the news-**

A batch of pleas challenging the implementation of the Constitution Amendment that gives 10 percent reservation in jobs and education for economically weaker section (EWS) of the General category were submitted to the SC.

#### **Argument-**

The plea has challenged the 103rd Constitutional Amendment saying it was against the basic structure of Constitution, which does not allow for any reservation based on economic criteria. The 50 percent ceiling limit cannot be breached.

An organization, Youth for Equality, had also sought the quashing of the bill, stating that it violated the "equality code of the Constitution" as reservation on economic grounds cannot be restricted to general category.

By way of the present amendments, the exclusion of the OBCs and the SCs/STs from the scope of the economic reservation essentially implies that only those who are poor from the general categories would avail the benefits of the quotas, the organisation had contended.

In March, the Centre, in its affidavit to the top court stated that the Constitution Amendment has not violated the basic structure of the Constitution or the Supreme Court ruling of 1992 which had put 50 percent cap on the reservation.

### **Indra Sawhney Case 1992-**

The Pleas argue that the 10% violate the 50% limit and is against the court decision. The economic reservation violated the 50% reservation ceiling limit fixed by a nine-judge Bench in the Indra Sawhney case. Further, the 1992 judgment had barred reservation solely on economic criterion.

In a 6:3 majority verdict, the apex court, in Indra Sawhney, had held that "a backward class cannot be determined only and exclusively with reference to economic criterion... It may be a consideration or basis along with and in addition to social backwardness, but it can never be the sole criterion". After a gap of 27 years, the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act of 2019 has provided 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the "economically backward" in the unreserved category.

The Act amends Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution by adding clauses empowering the government to provide reservation on the basis of economic backwardness. This 10% economic reservation is over and above the 50% reservation cap.

### **Level 1Q)What is the 103<sup>rd</sup> Amendment about? What is the Indra Sawhney Case about? Prelims – 103<sup>rd</sup> amendment, Indra Sawhney case.**

VISAKA RULES MUST APPLY TO THE JUDICIARY SASYA FORMER JUSTICE AP SHAH-

### **About the news-**

Former chief justice of Delhi High Court AP Shah termed as "questionable" the process followed by an in-house inquiry committee in dealing with sexual harassment allegations against Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi by a former woman employee of the Supreme Court.

A three-member in-house inquiry committee of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice SA Bobde, had given a clean chit to the CJI saying it "has found no substance" in the allegations of sexual harassment levelled against him.

Shah said that the entire process was "shrouded in secrecy" in the name of protection of judicial independence. A three-member in-house inquiry committee of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice SA Bobde, had given a clean chit to the CJI saying it "has found no substance" in the allegations of sexual harassment levelled against him.

Shah said that the entire process was "shrouded in secrecy" in the name of protection of judicial independence. He said that a committee of judges was set up to look into the matter with the "judges being selected by the Chief Justice of India himself".

"The process of inquiry was also questionable," he said, adding that the complainant was not allowed to be represented by "lawyer" or "a next friend" and the in-house process was not explained to her.

He said that a committee of judges was set up to look into the matter with the "judges being selected by the Chief Justice of India himself".

"The process of inquiry was also questionable," he said, adding that the complainant was not allowed to be represented by "lawyer" or "a next friend" and the in-house process was not explained to her."

**Level 1Q) You are the a newly appointed SP of an area. You are approached by a woman who complains of sexual Harassment at office by the boss frequently and towards many more women in the office. When you inquire you find that the company lacks the mechanism specified under the Sexual Harassment At workplace Act. While speaking to the Management you come to know that your brother in law is a major partner in the company. You get a call from your brother in law saying that the woman who complained is of bad character and that you should leave the matter to him. What action will you take.**

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#### PLEA TO DECRIMINALISE ABORTION

##### About the news?

- A PIL was filed in the SC to Decriminalise Abortion and allowing women the right to exercise their reproductive choice. Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971 imposes severe restrictions on the reproductive choice of a woman, her personal liberty and bodily autonomy. The court asked the government to respond to the petition.

- Petition, stated that the act allows abortion only to save the life of the mother. It submitted that the restrictions and exceptions in the act violate the women rights.
- The plea also asserted that section 3(2) (b) of the act is violative of Articles 21 of the Constitution.
- Section 3(2) (b) restricts the right to seek an abortion on the ground of risk to the life of pregnant woman, grave injury to her physical or mental health and substantial risk that if the child were born, it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities.
- The Indian Penal Code was enacted including sections 312-316 which criminalized abortion unless it was for the purpose of saving the life of the woman, submitted the plea.
- "The impugned provisions and the lack of access to safe abortions affects the fundamental right to health, reproductive choice and right to privacy of women of the country," it added.
- The MTPA provision amounts to hostile discrimination against single women
- The object of MTPA is to enable a woman to terminate an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy since a pregnancy entails several physical, mental and socio-economic consequences. Keeping the object in view there is no rationale for not affording the same protection to an unmarried woman," it said while adding that it is violative of Article 14 of the Constitution.

The law allows a woman to abort only if continuance of the pregnancy, according to a medical practitioner, involves

- a risk to her life;
- grave physical or mental injury;
- or risk of serious foetal abnormalities.

This is the case even in case the pregnancy is less than 12 weeks old. The first trimester of pregnancy entails lesser risk for abortion.

The petition said abortion, as per the 1971 Act, is not permissible after 20 weeks of pregnancy. ***This is excessive and harsh.*** The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill 2014 and Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill 2017 have proposed to enhance the cap for termination of pregnancy to 24 weeks.

Several genuine cases had come up where foetuses with serious risk of abnormalities causing grave risk to the physical and mental health of the mother were noticed after the 20-week period. "As a result, many women were forced to move the Supreme Court for permission to end their pregnancy. This had led to a lot of mental and financial hardship to pregnant women".

The SC has been increasing the scope of the "right to life" article 21 through various judgments. Its wait and watch. If given a favourable judgement this will be another

case of expansion of the scope of the Article 21 thus widening the meaning of Right to Life. Also the changes will protect the rights of women, especially single women.

### **Level 1Q) Why was the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act in News?**

#### **SC STARTLED BY THE DELAY IN THE CHILD RAPE CASES**

##### **About the news?**

The SC was startled by the statistics that showed that as many as 24,000 child rape cases had been registered between January and June this year.

The court wondered how there was delay in giving justice to children subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation despite the enactment of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

The court is trying to identify the handicaps facing law enforcement and trial proceedings.

The POSCO Act calls for exclusive courts, devoted public prosecutors, special forensic department, child-friendly courts and sensitised judges and court staffers to create a conducive atmosphere for children to testify without fear.

The CJI, referring to a report prepared by the Supreme Court which has become the basis of this suo motu petition, orally said 796 child rape cases were registered in the past six months (January and June 2019) in Delhi alone. But only two had been disposed of. This shows the manner in which justice is being denied to the victims.

In fact, the court report said trial could be completed in only 900 of 24,000 cases across the country from January to June. The Bench is looking into ways for speedy investigation and trial of child rape cases.

#### **SC DIRECTS CENTRE TO SET UP EXCLUSIVE COURT IN EACH DISTRICT TO DEAL WITH POCSO CASES-**

The SC directions for setting up of a centrally-funded exclusive court in all districts where 100 or more cases have been set up under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The bench said the Centre would have to appoint trained, sensitised prosecutors and support persons to deal with the POCSO cases and also directed the chief secretaries of states and union territories to ensure timely submission of forensic reports in such cases.

It asked the Centre to apprise it about the status of compliance of the order in 30 days and to make the money available for setting up of POCSO courts and appointment of

prosecutors and others. The top court noted that collection of further nationwide data on child rape cases would delay implementation of POCSO law.

## BILLS AND LEGISLATIONS

### NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION BILL; WHAT CHANGES IN MEDICAL EDUCATION ARE BEING BROUGHT? WHAT IS THE OPPOSITION?

The Bill *seeks to replace the Indian Medical Council*, which was taken over by the government earlier in the month, for better development and regulation of medical education, medical profession and medical institutions in India

After an aborted attempt during the previous Lok Sabha, the central government has made a fresh bid ***to replace the controversial Indian Medical Council (IMC) with a National Medical Commission (NMC) to regulate medical education and practices in India.*** While the Medical Council of India (MCI) was an autonomous body with two-third of its members (160 plus) being directly elected by the medical fraternity, the new one would have 25 members with no directly elected member.

Earlier in the month, the government had passed the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill of 2019 to supersede the IMC on the ground that it had failed to discharge its duties and indulged in corrupt practices.

#### What the Bill provides

The National Medical Commission Bill of 2019 proposes to have four autonomous boards to take care of its different functions:

- (i) Under-Graduate Medical Education Board to set standards and regulate medical education at undergraduate level
- (ii) Post-Graduate Medical Education Board to set standards and regulate medical education at postgraduate level
- (iii) Medical Assessment and Rating Board for inspections and rating of medical institutions and
- (iv) Ethics and Medical Registration Board to regulate and promote professional conduct and medical ethics and also maintain national registers of (a) licensed medical practitioners and (b) Community Health Providers (CHPs).

The CHPs are a new class of medical practitioners to be given licenses to practice modern medicine at mid-level to those "connected with modern scientific medical profession", the criteria for which would be specified later. Their number would be one-third of the total number of licensed and registered medical practitioners.

As for admissions and licensing, the Bill provides for a National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to all undergraduate and post-graduate "super-speciality" medical education, while providing for another one, National Exit Test (NEXT) for granting "license" to practice and admission to postgraduate "broad-speciality courses".

So far, all admissions are through the NEET and no licensing is required for practice but a medical practitioner has to register with a state medical council for this.

The Bill also proposes for the NMC to "frame guidelines for determination of fee and other charges" for 50% of seats in private medical institutions and deemed to be universities.

Currently, state governments determine fees for 85% of seats in such institutions and the rest are left for the management.

Other powers of the NMC include permission to establish new medical colleges, start post-graduate courses, increase the number of seats, recognition of medical qualifications in and outside India etc.

### **Reasons for change**

- The Statement of Object and Reasons of the Bill says the IMC had failed to keep pace with time and various bottlenecks had crept into the system with serious detrimental effects on medical education and, by implication, on delivery of quality health services.
- A Parliamentary panel which had looked into the matter had recommended restructuring and revamping of the regulatory system of medical education and practice.
- It had also recommended separation of functions by forming four autonomous boards and appointment of regulators through selection, rather than election.

### **IMA's four major concerns**

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) - the apex body representing the medical fraternity in India which had earlier opposed the government takeover of the MCI has strong reservations about the NMC too. Dr RV Asokan, secretary-general of the IMA, lists four major ones.

The **first** one is over the CHPs being allowed to practice modern medicine. The Bill does not define who they are or what qualifications they hold and yet they are to be given licenses to the extent of one-third of the total number of licensed medical practitioners in India.

Dr Asokan says this may open the door for persons with inadequate training in modern medicine to practice, putting patients at risk and lowering standards of healthcare.

He fears those with some connections with modern medicine like pharmacists, practitioners of other systems of medicines with a bridge course, ophthalmologists and even existing healthcare workers at the primary health centres may get licenses to practice modern medicine.

"They may not have sufficient background in the study of anatomy, physiology or pathology etc. which form the basis of modern medicine. Besides, their significant presence will endanger patient safety and dilute healthcare in the country, especially in the rural areas", he comments.

Dr Asokan points out that about 68,000 medical graduates pass out of more than 500 medical colleges every year. As only 23,000 of them qualify for post-graduation courses, the rest (45,000) end up looking for jobs or loiter around coaching institutions.

"Here the government is providing an opportunity for unqualified or partially qualified persons to practice while the qualified ones are available and frustrated because of unemployment", he observes, adding that this is another attempt at lateral entry for the unqualified or partially qualified that the government had proposed in an earlier Bill but was forced to withdraw due to protests.

The IMA's **second** major objection is to the proposed National Exit Test (NEXT) for giving both licenses for practice (to those who have already cleared the MBBS exam) as well as for admission to post-graduate "broad-speciality courses".

Dr Asokan says the two objectives can't be reconciled since the level of knowledge and training required for both are very different. While for practising medicine, a minimum level of competence is required (passing the MBBS), admission to post-graduate courses calls for a higher level of competence and only the cream of the profession gets selected.

In the last NEET exam, only 70,000 of 1.43 lakh candidates qualified for post-graduate courses. What will the rest 73,000 qualified MBBS doctors do? They will not be licensed to practice, thus defeating the very objective of providing greater number of trained health manpower", he comments.

The **third** major objection is to "frame guidelines" to determine fees and all other charges for 50% of seats in private medical institutions and deemed to be universities (the MCI did not have such powers).

Dr Asokan says at present state governments "regulate" fees for 85% of such seats and the rest (15%) are for the management to decide. "Now the NMC proposes to only frame guidelines for regulating fees for 50% of seats.

This is further dilution of the power to fix fees where all 100% of seats may be available for the highest bidder, thereby increasing the cost of medical education. It is a reservation for the rich", he says.

The IMA has **fourth** major objection. This is about the power the Bill gives to the central government to give policy and other directives to the NMC and its autonomous boards which will be binding and final.

This is contradictory to the very concept of autonomy of the four boards. The central government has also been empowered to give directives to state governments for implementing provisions of the Bill, which will also be binding, reflecting the anti-federal character of the Bill.

### **Level 1Q) What are the objections to the NMC bill?**

#### DRAFT TENANCY LAW CAPS SECURITY DEPOSITS-

##### **About the news?**

Centre has proposed a model tenancy law to regulate renting of houses. The announcement was made while presenting the Union Budget 2019. The current tenancy laws are "archaic" as they do not address the relationship between the lessor and the lessee fairly.

The model tenancy law is aimed at promoting rental housing in urban areas in view of the large migration of population from rural areas to cities. About 11 million properties are lying vacant as landlords either fear they would lose their property if they rent it out or prefer keeping their premises empty rather than risk likely litigation. The government wants to put a system in place that encourages people to rent out their properties.

##### **The other proposals of the Model Tenancy Act-**

1. **Security deposits:** In urban cities like Mumbai, property owners tend to take four-five times the rent as security deposit. In a relief for tenants, the draft proposes to limit the security amount to two months' rent.
2. **Overstaying to attract hefty amount:** Tenants who overstay in premises beyond their agreement would end up paying two times the rent for the first two months and four times afterwards.
3. **Authority to regulate renting:** In order to balance the interests of both the owners and tenants, states would set up Rent Courts and Rent Tribunals for addressing any disputes. An authority would also be appointed to look into the details of the rent agreement like the rent and tenure.
4. **Defaulting on rent:** If a tenant fails to pay the rent for two months, the rent court can be moved. If the tenant pays the dues within a month after the matter has been taken up with the authority, he/she would be allowed to stay. However, this won't be valid if the rent default exceeds a year.
5. **Repairs and damages:** The details of fixing minor and major repairs should already be mentioned in the rent agreement. If the owner then refuses to carry any repair out, the tenant can deduct the amount from the rent. Similary, if a

tenant refuses to carry out repairs, the owner can deduct the amount from the security deposit. In case the property becomes inhabitable due to any damage, the tenant can vacate the house after giving 15 days' notice.

The draft policy has suggested a host of fiscal incentives to encourage rental housing with a view to achieve the goal of housing for all by 2022.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS BILL CLEARED

The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 amends the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

1. The Present Act provides for a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), State Human Rights Commissions (SHRC), as well as Human Rights Courts.
2. **Amendment expands the Choice of Chairperson-** Under the Act, the chairperson of the NHRC is a person who has been a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Bill amends this to provide that a person who has been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or a Judge of the Supreme Court will be the chairperson of the NHRC.
3. **Amendment provides for a women member -** The Act provides for two persons having knowledge of human rights to be appointed as members of the NHRC. The Bill amends this to allow three members to be appointed, of which at least one will be a woman.
4. **Amendment expands membership-** Under the Act, chairpersons of various commissions such as the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, and National Commission for Women are members of the NHRC. The Bill provides for including the chairpersons of the National Commission for Backward Classes, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities as members of the NHRC.
5. **Amendment expands the choice of Chairperson of SHRC:** Under the Act, the chairperson of a SHRC is a person who has been a Chief Justice of a High Court. The Bill amends this to provide that a person who has been Chief Justice or Judge of a High Court will be chairperson of a SHRC.
6. **Bill brings changes in the Term of office:** The Act states that the chairperson and members of the NHRC and SHRC will hold office for five years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier. The Bill reduces the term of office to three years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier. Further, the Act allows for the reappointment of members of the NHRC and SHRCs for a period of five years. The Bill removes the five-year limit for reappointment.
7. **Bill brings changes to Powers of Secretary-General:** The Act provides for a Secretary-General of the NHRC and a Secretary of a SHRC, who exercise powers as may be delegated to them. The Bill amends this and allows the Secretary

General and Secretary to exercise all administrative and financial powers (except judicial functions), subject to the respective chairperson's control.

8. **Changes to Union Territories:** The Bill provides that the central government may confer on a SHRC human rights functions being discharged by Union Territories. Functions relating to human rights in the case of Delhi will be dealt with by the NHRC.

**LEVEL 1Q) What are human rights, how are they different from Fundamental Rights, What are the changes brought by the Protection of the Human Rights Bill 2019?**

**Prelims- Fundamental Rights, NHRC its composition and structure, SHRC, About Human Rights.**

#### THE MOTOR VEHICLES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

The bill provides for higher penalties for violations and protection of good samaritans, facilitate grant of online learning licence, simplified provisions for insurance to provide expeditious help to accident victims and their families. Another important feature of the Bill is that new vehicles will be registered at the dealer level and it will eventually remove buyers' interface with registration authorities.

The provisions in the legislation are not binding on states and it is up to them to implement it.

According to Ministry of Road Transport, around 30 per cent of driving licences in the country are bogus. About 1.5 lakh people die and 5 lakh people get injured in road accidents every year.

#### Features of the Bill-

The Bill seeks to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to provide for road safety. The present Act provides for grant of licenses and permits related to motor vehicles, standards for motor vehicles, and penalties for violation of these provisions.

- **Compensation for road accident victims:** The central government will develop a scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims during golden hour. The Bill defines golden hour as the time period of up to one hour following a traumatic injury, during which the likelihood of preventing death through prompt medical care is the highest. The central government may also make a scheme for providing interim relief to claimants seeking compensation under third party insurance.
- **Increases minimum compensation for hit and run cases-** The Bill increases the minimum compensation for hit and run cases as follows: (i) in case of death, from Rs 25,000 to two lakh rupees, and (ii) in case of grievous injury, from Rs 12,500 to Rs 50,000.

- **Compulsory insurance and Motor Vehicle Accident Fund:** The Bill requires the central government to constitute a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India. It will be utilised for: (i) treatment of persons injured in road accidents as per the golden hour scheme, (ii) compensation to representatives of a person who died in a hit and run accident, (iii) compensation to a person grievously hurt in a hit and run accident, and (iv) compensation to any other persons as prescribed by the central government.
- **Good samaritans:** The Bill defines a good samaritan as a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the scene of an accident. The assistance must have been (i) in good faith, (ii) voluntary, and (iii) without the expectation of any reward. Such a person will not be liable for any civil or criminal action for any injury to or death of an accident victim, caused due to their negligence in providing assistance to the victim.
- **Recall of vehicles:** The Bill allows the central government to order for recall of motor vehicles if a defect in the vehicle may cause damage to the environment, or the driver, or other road users. The manufacturer of the recalled vehicle will be required to: (i) reimburse the buyers for the full cost of the vehicle, or (ii) replace the defective vehicle with another vehicle with similar or better specifications.
- **National Transportation Policy:** The central government may develop a National Transportation Policy, in consultation with state governments. The Policy will: (i) establish a planning framework for road transport, (ii) develop a framework for grant of permits, and (iii) specify priorities for the transport system, among other things.
- **Road Safety Board:** The Bill provides for a National Road Safety Board, to be created by the central government through a notification. The Board will advise the central and state governments on all aspects of road safety and traffic management including: (i) standards of motor vehicles, (ii) registration and licensing of vehicles, (iii) standards for road safety, and (iv) promotion of new vehicle technology.
- **Offences and penalties:** The Bill increases penalties for several offences under the Act. For example, the maximum penalty for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs has been increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 10,000. If a vehicle manufacturer fails to comply with motor vehicle standards, the penalty will be a fine of up to Rs 100 crore, or imprisonment of up to one year, or both. If a contractor fails to comply with road design standards, the penalty will be a fine of up to one lakh rupees. The central government may increase fines mentioned under the Act every year by up to 10%.
- **Taxi aggregators:** The Bill defines aggregators as digital intermediaries or market places which can be used by passengers to connect with a driver for transportation purposes (taxi services). These aggregators will be issued

licenses by state. Further, they must comply with the Information Technology Act, 2000.

**Level 1 Q) Discuss the features of the Motor Vehicle Bill and why they are important?**

RTI BILL – CIC ORDERS WILL NOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY SAYS FIRST CIC-

**About the news-**

The First Chief Information Commissioner of India Wahajath Habibullah expressed his concerns to the changes being brought to the functionaries (CIC, SIC etc) through the amendment bill.

He said, "Today, we issue orders even to Secretaries of the Government of India. There is some kind of implicit fear. But if the status of the Commission is brought down, why would they bother?"

The Bill proposes to allow the Centre to set the tenure and salaries of both State and Central Information Commissioners, leading to concerns that the autonomy and authority of the Commissions could be weakened. Currently, Central Information Commissioners hold a status equal to Election Commissioners and Supreme Court judges. The Centre has argued that this is an anomaly needing correction, as the CIC is a statutory body, while the Central Election Commission is a constitutional body.

"If an Information Commissioner is beholden to the government for salary and tenure, then surely he is under obligation," asserted Wajahat Habibullah.

"Of course, he will have second thoughts even if he is a person of integrity. It gives the government leverage... and greatly compromises the authority of the law," added Mr. Habibullah, who has joined six other former Commissioners in urging the Centre to withdraw the amendments. "Everybody in power dislikes transparency," said RTI activist and former Commissioner Shailesh Gandhi.

Sridhar Acharyulu, a law professor who recently retired as a Commissioner, noted that under the federal structure, the Centre could not decide salaries of State Commissioners, who were paid by States.

**Criticisms and concerns about the RTI Amendment-**

- The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019 deal a deathblow to the Right to Information (RTI).
- It seriously ***undermines the autonomy of Information Commissions because it reduces the stature of Commissioners,*** which is currently equivalent to that of the Election Commissioner or a Supreme Court judge. Ever since it came into

existence in 2005, the Information Commission has had enough authority to issue directions to anybody, including the cabinet secretary and principal secretary regarding the disclosure of information under the RTI Act.

- At present, the Information Commissioner has a fixed tenure of five years or until he or she attains 65 years, whichever is earlier. It is difficult to remove the Commissioner from office within this term.
- If this Bill is passed, the guarantee for the Commissioner's term and stature for five years will no longer remain. This means the legislative safeguard to the term of Commissioner is abolished and the government of the day will be empowered to prescribe any term, stature or salary.
- The statements of objectives has clearly stated that the Central Information Commissioner is not equal to the Chief Election Commissioner and hence the need for an amendment to reduce his or her stature.
- It will ***seriously dent the present independence of the Commissioners and make them subordinate to government departments.***
- Already the governments are choosing retiring babus, who are very loyal to them as Information Commissioners, so that they do not act independently, as they are supposed to according to the RTI Act. With this Bill, the persons selected as Information Commissioners with reduced stature, term and salary will be further submissive to chief ministers and prime ministers, thus depriving citizens of their right to information. This will kill the RTI entirely.
- The 2019 Bill is based on two wrongful propositions – that RTI is not a Constitutional right and secondly, that the previous government had erred in equating the Chief Information Commissioner with the Chief Election Commissioner. ***The Supreme Court has proclaimed the RTI as a constitutional right emanating from Article 19(1)(a) which guarantees freedom of speech and expression.***
- The Central Election Commission enforces the right to vote, which is part of expression right under Article 19(1)(a) and is further explained in Article 324. In a way, the Central Election Commission enforces only a small part of the right to expression, while the Central Information Commission is entrusted with the enforcement of the wider aspect of the expression.
- Without receiving information, no citizen can express his views or criticise the wrong policies of the government. If RTI requests are answered according to law, it will directly impact governance, especially public delivery systems, and expose corruption widespread among lakhs of government offices spread all over the nation. This wrongful measure will make the Commissioners spineless and powerless when it comes to issuing any disclosure order. They will thus fail to implement the objectives of the RTI Act.
- The 2019 amendment thus adversely effects RTI and Article 19(1)(a) by undermining the independence of Information Commissions and facilitating the

government of the day with huge power of meddling with the statute of Commissioners.

- The bill takes away the power of the states whose power to appoint independent Commissioners is being removed and given to the Centre instead.

### **Level 1Q) Critically analyse the amendments to the RTI act?**

#### **Prelims – RTI act and its features, recent amendments.**

#### **BILL TO BAN UNREGULATED DEPOSITS PASSED BY THE PARLIAMENT-**

After being unanimously passed by Parliament, the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019 (the Act), got the president's assent on July 31. Given the extent of unregulated deposits and lending that have been part of the country's informal economy, this law has been brought to protect the interests of depositors and holding deposit-takers accountable.

The government had passed an Ordinance in February to deal with this issue. The Act aims to curb unregulated and fraudulent deposit-taking schemes, such as the Saradha group Ponzi scheme Scam .

Ponzi schemes induce unsuspecting depositors with promises of huge returns, invest heavily in marketing operations to build an ever expanding chain of investors and pay off some investors from the deposits of new participants than from any return on genuine investments. Such schemes lead to a large number of people losing money.

The bill **will help tackle this menace of illicit deposit-taking activities, which exploit regulatory gaps and lack of strict administrative measures.** It aims to protect people from being robbed of their hard-earned savings by operators of such schemes.

The bill **proposes compulsory registration of deposit-taking schemes with a list of specified financial sector regulators or with the Central or state government.** It also allows police officers of a certain rank to search the premises of deposit takers and seize property linked to an offence under this statute. The bill also proposes setting up a competent authority empowered to provisionally attach the property of any deposit taker or all the deposits received. This authority will have powers similar to those of a civil court.

The bill also provides for **penalties for running unregulated deposits**, fraudulently defaulting on regulated deposit schemes, and wrongfully inducing depositors to invest in such schemes by falsifying facts.

Once the new bill is signed into law, designated courts will be set up to hear cases under it. The bill also envisages the creation of a central **online database of all deposit takers**.

**Level 1 Q) The Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019 protects the money of the people, explain?**

#### RAJYA SABHA CLEAR CHANGES TO THE INSOLVENCY CODE

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT	
Amendments	Impact
Deadline for resolution increased to 330 days	Putting pressure on all stakeholders to complete resolution within the stipulated timeframe
Making resolution plans binding on government agencies	Curbing instances of harassment of bidders by government authorities
Primacy of CoC in the matter of commercial considerations	Financial creditors to take precedence over other creditors when it comes to distributing resolution amount
CoC may take the decision to liquidate the corporate debtor	Restores financial creditors' power of decision to liquidate a debtor
Mergers, demergers, amalgamations are part of the resolution plan	Better chances of resolution

This is the third time the government has brought in amendments to the IBC since its enactment into law in 2016. Eight amendments as part of efforts to ensure that the code remains vibrant.

Among other things, the Bill seeks to ensure timely admission of insolvency cases and completion within the newly set deadline of 330 days (it was 270 days earlier). The resolution plan under the corporate insolvency resolution process will also be binding on the Centre, State and local authorities.

The changes being brought in now are in response to events that eroded legislative intent of the IBC. The Finance Minister referred to the Essar Steel insolvency case where the lenders and operational creditors have been treated at par by the bankruptcy court for distribution of auction proceeds. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) had recently ruled in the Essar Steel Ltd's case that the Committee of Creditors (CoC) had no role in distribution of claims and brought lenders (financial creditors) and vendors (operational creditors) on a par.

The amendments give committee of creditors of a loan defaulting company explicit authority over the distribution of proceeds in the resolution process.

### **Level 1 Q) Briefly explain changes to the IBC ?**

#### **PRIVATE BILL URGES STATE FUNDING OF ELECTION FUNDING**

##### **About the bill-**

Congress MP Rajeev Gowda on Friday moved a private member's bill in the Rajya Sabha that seeks removal of the limit and state funding of elections as part of reforms to the way polls are financed in India.

The MP said that the limit was counter productive and only helped those with black money to bribe individual voters and crippled honest candidates, Mr. Gowda mooted The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, makes two key proposals. One, the current per candidate expenditure limit of ₹70 lakh should be lifted and two, there should be state funding to ensure a "cleaner polity", which is a public good.

Quoting former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee who had said that "All MPs start their parliamentary careers with a lie," Mr. Gowda said that the former PM was referring to MPs typically under-declaring how much they had spent on their elections. "Telling the truth would result in disqualification under the current law," Mr. Gowda said.

The MP said instead of imposing a limit, transparency should be brought in. "Let sunlight be the best disinfectant," he said. All the expenses should be put in the public domain. The candidates should be allowed to legitimately raise funds. "Candidates who can raise white money openly cannot spend more than ₹70 lakh in parliamentary elections. Hence, compared to those who spend money covertly, clean politicians are crippled by the system," he asserted. An amount of ₹70 lakh was not enough even to send postcards to 20 lakh odd voters in each constituency, he argued.

##### **State Funding of Elections-**

A few government reports have looked at state funding of elections in the past, including:

- 1. Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections (1998)**
- 2. Law Commission Report on Reform of the Electoral Laws (1999)**
- 3. National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2001)**
- 4. Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008)**

## COMPANIES BILL TIGHTENS CSR COMPLIANCE

### **About the Bill-**

The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2019 seeks to amend the Companies Act, 2013 and is aimed at tightening the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) compliance, transferring certain responsibilities to the National Company Law Tribunal and re-categorising certain offences as civil offences. It replaced an ordinance promulgated earlier.

The Bill would ensure further ease of doing business for companies. This will ensure better governance and is company-friendly.

**CSR NORMS-** Companies used to comply with the requirement fully or partly and then explain and get away with it. Now, there would be a provision wherein the unspent CSR amount would be transferred to an escrow account for three financial years. Subsequently, if the amount remain unspent then the same would be moved to funds specified in Scheduled VII of the Companies Act. Under the Act, certain class of profitable companies are required to shell out at least two per cent of their three-year annual average net profit towards CSR activities. CSR is applicable to all those companies which have Rs 5 crore profit or Rs 1,000 crore turnover or Rs 500 crore net worth.

India has become the first country to make CSR spending mandatory through a law. The companies will have one year to firm up the CSR proposal and another three years to spend funds. In case money remains unspent for one plus three years, it will have to be moved to an escrow account.

**Re- Categorisation of certain offences-** The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2019 re-categorizes 16 of these offences as civil defaults, where adjudicating officers appointed by the Central Government may now levy penalties. Further, the Bill amends the penalties for some other offences.

**De Bar ing erring Auditors-** Under the Companies Act, 2013, the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) debar a member or firm from practicing as a Chartered Accountant for a period between 6 months to 10 years, for proven misconduct. The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2019 amends the punishment to provide for debarment from appointment as an auditor or internal auditor of a company or performing a company's valuation, for a period between 6 months to 10 years.

The bill will also empower the **Registrar of Companies (ROC)** to initiate action for the removal of the name of the company from the Register of companies if it is not carrying on any business or operation in according with the company law.

**Disqualification of Director-** A new clause has been inserted under Section 164 of the Companies Act, 2013 to state that violation of Section 165(1) of the Companies Act, 2013 shall be a ground for disqualification of a director, if he/ she breaches the limits of maximum directorship allowed thereunder.

#### **Conclusion-**

**The amendments will ensure more accountability and better enforcement to strengthen the corporate governance norms and compliance management in corporate sector. The bill also aims to strengthen provisions that enable the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) to ensure speedy and more effective enforcement.**

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## RIGHT TO INFORMATION BILL 2019

### TERM

**2005 ACT:** Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and Information Commissioners (ICs) at central and state levels will serve for five years.

**2019 BILL:** Central government will notify the term of office.

### SALARY

**2005 ACT:** At central level, salary of CIC and ICs equivalent to salary of Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners, respectively. At state level, equivalent to salary of Election Commissioners and Chief Secretary, respectively.

**2019 BILL:** Salaries, allowances, and other terms and conditions of service of central and state CIC and ICs will be determined by the central

government.

### DEDUCTIONS

**2005 ACT:** At the time of appointment, if CIC and ICs (at central and state levels) are receiving pension or any other retirement benefits for previous government service, their salaries will be reduced by an amount equal to that pension. Previous government service includes service under: (i) the central government, (ii) state government, (iii) corporation established under a central or state law, and (iv) company owned or controlled by the central or state government.

**2019 BILL:** The Bill removes these provisions.

*Source: PRS Legislative Research*

**RTI Act amendments:** Government has introduced amendments giving itself powers to set salaries and service conditions for Information Commissioners. How does it change the existing Act, and why is the Opposition protesting?

The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which proposes to give the Centre the powers to set the salaries and service conditions of Information Commissioners at central as well as state levels. The government's move triggered protests from the Opposition.

### **What are the changes?**

The Bill amends **Sections 13 and 16 of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005**. Section 13 of the original Act sets the term of the central Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners at **5 years or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier**.

The amendment proposes that the appointment will be "**for such term as may be prescribed by the Central Government**".

Again, **Section 13 states that salaries, allowances and other terms of service** of "the Chief Information Commissioner shall be the same as that of the Chief Election Commissioner", and those of an Information Commissioner "**shall be the same as that of an Election Commissioner**".

The **amendment proposes that the salaries, allowances and other terms of service** of the Chief Information Commissioner and the Information Commissioners "**shall be such as may be prescribed by the Central Government**".

Section 16(deals with **State Information Commissioners**) of the original Act deals with state-level Chief Information Commissioners and Information Commissioners. It sets the **term for state-level CICs and ICs at 5 years (or 65 years of age, whichever is earlier)**. The amendment proposes that these appointments should be for "**such term as may be prescribed by the Central Government**".

And while the original Act prescribes **salaries, allowances and other terms of service of the state Chief Information Commissioner** as "**the same as that of an Election Commissioner**", and the **salaries and other terms of service of the State Information Commissioners** as "**the same as that of the Chief Secretary to the State Government**", the amendment proposes that these "**shall be such as may be prescribed by the Central Government**".

### **Why are Opposition parties protesting?**

The original Act had quantified the tenures, and defined the salaries in terms of existing benchmarks. The amendments are being viewed as implying that, in effect, the terms of appointment, salaries and tenures of the Chief Information Commissioners and Information Commissioners can be decided on a case-to-case basis by the government. The Opposition has argued that this will take away the independence of the RTI authorities.

### **Over the last 14 years, how far has the RTI Act served the purposes?**

The RTI Act is regarded as one of the most successful laws of independent India. It has given ordinary citizens the confidence and the right to ask questions of government authorities. According to estimates, nearly 60 lakh applications are being filed every year. It is used by citizens as well as the media. The law is seen as having acted as a deterrent for government servants against taking arbitrary decisions.

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#### NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019 PASSED BY LOK SABHA-

##### **What are the changes being made to the bill?**

1. The agency can investigate terror attacks on Indians or Indian Facilities abroad.
2. The government can designate any sessions court as NIA special court.
3. Additionally the NIA can investigate cases under the Explosives Substances Act, Atomic Energy Act,
4. Manufacture or the sales of prohibited arms and Cyber Terrorism.

The Rajya Sabha too passed the Bill unanimously.

The Bill grants NIA powers to conduct investigations outside India and widens its mandate to probe human trafficking, counterfeit currency, manufacture or sale of prohibited arms, cyber terrorism and offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

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#### AMENDMENT TO THE MOTOR VEHICLES BILL INTRODUCED -

- The motor vehicles bill was approved by the Lok Sabha in 2017 but failed to muster support in the Rajya Sabha.
- The transport ministry hopes to get the bill, which lapsed with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha.

The Cabinet has approved amendments in the three-decades-old motor vehicles law, to turn around India's reputation as a country with one of the world's deadliest roads.

The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill seeks to amend more than five dozen sections and introduce more than 20 new sections. It aims to revamp the transportation rules and improve road safety through steps such as stiff penalties for traffic rule violations, upgrade of technology, and curbing corruption.

The bill will also have provisions to promote alternative technology and innovation in line with the Union government's focus on promotion of electric vehicles as one of the ways to curb vehicular pollution.

As many as 146,000 people died in road accidents in India in 2015, according to the road transport and highways ministry. About 300,000 people were injured in road accidents in the same year.

The bill also proposes higher penalties in case of violations such as driving without a license, speeding, dangerous driving, and drunk driving as part of measures to promote safety on the roads.

The proposed amendments will seek to ensure that citizens who come forward and rescue accident victims are not harassed. The bill also caps the maximum liability for third party insurance at ₹10 lakh if there is a fatality and ₹5 lakh in case of serious injury because of an accident.

If the amendments become a reality, it will also make Aadhaar mandatory for obtaining a driving licence and for vehicle registration. Linking Aadhaar with the licence is a great move as it will ensure that there is no duplicity or fake licences.

It also proposes different categories for validity of driving licence, depending on the age of the applicant. For instance, the validity of the driving license will be 10 years if the license holder is between 30-50 years, as opposed to 20 years right now.

#### DAM SAFETY BILL GETS A NOD FROM CCEA

A version of the Bill was first introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2018 (***which subsequently lapsed***). It aims to put in place a systematic procedure to ensure that India's 5,600 dams are made and maintained safely.

Various editions of the Bill have been introduced since 2010 but it has never been successfully passed, largely due to opposition by States at various times. Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Odisha have opposed the Bill on the grounds ***that it encroaches upon the sovereignty of States to manage their dams.*** The Bill ***lays the onus of the dam safety on the dam owner and provides for penal provisions for wilful "commission and omission of certain acts."***

The Bill also provides for establishment of a **National Dam Safety Authority** as a regulatory body to implement the policy.

Every state will have to establish a '**State Dam Safety Organisation**' which will be manned by officers from the field dam safety.

The CCEA also approved the ₹1,600-crore pre-investment expenditure for the ***Dibang Multipurpose Project in Arunachal Pradesh, India's largest hydropower project.***

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## CABINET NOD FOR NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION BILL

The Union Cabinet approved the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill which seeks to replace the **Medical Council of India (MCI)** and usher in **mega reforms in the country's medical education sector**. The Bill will be introduced in the current session of parliament. It was first introduced in Parliament in December 2017, but lapsed with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha.

The NMC bill proposes a common final year exam for the MBBS called the National Exit Test (NEXT) for admission to the post graduate medical courses and for obtaining a license for practising medicine. It would act as a screening test for the foreign medical graduates. The common final year MBBS exam, to be known as the National Exit Test, would serve as licentiate exam, as screening test for foreign medical graduates and for admission to PG medical courses .

Besides this a National Entrance Test- NEET- a common counselling and NEXT will also be applicable to institutes of national importance like AIIMS in order to achieve a common standard in medical education sector in the country.

According to the amendments made in the fresh NMC Bill, entry to PG programmes will be on the basis of the results of the National Exit Test (NEXT), which will be held as a comon exam across the country. So, candidates will not have to appear in a separate exams for admission to PG colleges.

The Bill provides for setting up of a National Medical Commission (NMC) in place of the MCI for development and regulation of all aspects of medical education, profession and institutions.

It also provides for setting up a Medical Advisory Council to advise and make recommendations to the panel.

According to the bill, the Medical Assessment and Rating Board (MARB) will assess medical colleges and develop a ranking system which will enable students choose institutes in a much more informed manner. These measures will ensure a transparent admission process and also bring down admission fee.

According to the proposed legislation, NMC will have four autonomous boards – Undergraduate Medical Education Board, Postgraduate Medical Education Board, Medical Assessment and Rating Board and Ethical and Medical registration Board.

The NMC and the autonomous boards will ensure dynamic and modern educational environment, reduce emphasis on physical infrastructure, achieve global standards and bring in an effective grievance redressal mechanism.

In the Bill, the strength of the autonomous boards has been increased from three to five and it includes two part-time members, of whom one doctor would be selected by the government and the other elected from the State Medical Council.

The Medical Assessment and Rating Board will grant permission to medical colleges for starting PG course and for increasing the number of seats based on the standards set by the undergraduate and postgraduate boards. The annual renewal of permission for new medical colleges before recognition is being done away within the bill.

The functioning of the Medical Council of India(MCI) has been under scrutiny for long especially with regard to the grant of permission to medical colleges. The Centre in July 2014 had constituted a Group of Experts (GoE) under the chairmanship of Dr. Ranjit Rai Choudary to study the Indian Medicall Council Act 1956, and Make recommendations to the government to make the MCI modern and suited to the prevailing conditions.

The GoE submitted its report in September 2014 wherein it recommended for the establishment of the National Medical Commission in place of the MCI, with four independent boards under it to oversee the under graduate education, post graduate education, assessment and rating, ethics and medical registration and formation of a National Advisory Council.

The Departmental related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare in its 92<sup>nd</sup> report severely indicted the MCI and recommended that the government should bring anew comprehensive bill in the Parliament to replace the body.

After its introduction in the lower house in 2017, the bill, which aimed at repealing the IMC Act 1956 and included the contentious provision of a bridge course to allow practitioners of alternative medicines to pursue allopathy was referred to a Departmental Related Parliamentary standing Committee after the massive protests from the medical fraternity.

The parliamentary panel gave its recommendations in March 2018 following which the health ministry scrapped the “Bridge Course” and also made some other changes as suggested by the panel before moving the official amendments in the Lok Sabha.

## PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

### CENTRE NOTIFIES PENSION FOR THE SMALL TRADERS

#### **Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan, Yojana 2019**

Under the scheme, those who are self-employed and working as shop-owners, retail traders, rice mill owners, oil mill owners, workshop owners, commission agents, real estate brokers, small hotel owners, restaurant owners and other small traders will be eligible for pension.

Small traders between 18 and 40 years of age, having an annual turnover of less than ₹1.5 crore would qualify to apply for the scheme. To be eligible, the applicants should not be covered under the National Pension Scheme, Employees' State Insurance Scheme and the Employees' Provident Fund or be an Income Tax assessee.

The scheme gives the subscribers ₹3,000 a month after they turn 60, once they have contributed to the scheme every month from the time of enrolment and till that age. The government would match the monthly contribution, an amount that would depend on the age at which the applicant enters the scheme. For example, an 18-year-old would have to pay ₹55 a month, while a 40-year-old would need to pay ₹200 a month.

The scheme will benefit over 3 crore self-employed workers in the country. The government has earmarked Rs.750 crore for the scheme in the Budget 2019-20.

Government will establish a pension fund to run the scheme. The Life Insurance Corporation of India has been chosen as pension fund manager responsible for managing the pension fund, central record keeping agency and responsible for the Pension Pay Out.

#### **Level 1 Q)What are the features of the Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan, Yojana 2019?**

#### **TELANGANA BECOME THE FIRST STATE FOR THE ONE NATION ONE CARD SCHEME**

The Centre decided to implement the one-nation-one-card project on a pilot basis in two clusters comprising Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra and Gujarat from August 1.

Accordingly, PDS consumers in Telangana could get the commodities from any shop in AP using the card issued to them by the Civil Supplies department and vice versa. The same will be the case with consumers in Maharashtra and Gujarat which is identified as second cluster for implementation of the pilot project.

Telangana has achieved yet another milestone going by the Civil Supplies department's claims. The State's model of portability of ration cards enabling people to get the commodities supplied through the Public Distribution System from anywhere across the State through the same ration card has become an inspiration for the country. The project has become a key component of the Central government's proposal for

introducing “one-nation-one-card” project to be implemented across the country from June next year.

Hyderabad recorded the highest number of 42 lakh transactions owing to the huge number of migrant people who live here for their employment followed by Medchal (29 lakh), Ranga Reddy (18 lakh), Nizamabad (10 lakh) and Warangal (9 lakh). Enthused by the success of the project, the Centre decided to implement it on a pilot basis in two clusters and communicated the eligibility criterion relating to the beneficiaries under the national portability.

Accordingly, beneficiaries under the NFSR (National Food Security Act) would be eligible for the scheme and the Aadhaar number of at least one beneficiary should be seeded to his/her ration card. The ration card thus seeded should be tagged to the FPS in their home State — either Telangana or Andhra Pradesh. The beneficiaries living in the two States could draw their ration from any FPS located in either of the States.

#### **LAW COMMISSION TO BE FORMED SOON**

**About the news :**

Law Ministry has initiated the process of setting up the Law Commission. It is a body which gives advice to the government on complex legal issues. The three-year term of the 21st Law Commission ended on August 31 last year.

The Cabinet approves reconstitution of the law panel for a period of three years. It is usually headed by a former Supreme Court judge or a former Chief Justice of a High Court.

#### **Proposal to make the Law Commission a Statutory Body;**

In 2015, a proposal was mooted to make the law panel into a permanent body either through an Act of Parliament or an executive order (resolution of the Union Cabinet). The move was shelved after the Prime Minister's Office felt that the present system should continue.

In 2010 also, the then UPA government had prepared a draft Cabinet note to give statutory status to the Law Commission, and the Law Ministry had mooted to bring the Law Commission of India Bill, 2010. But the idea was shelved.

The 21st commission, under Justice B.S. Chauhan (retd), had submitted reports and working papers on key issues such as simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies and a uniform civil code. While the Law Commission had supported simultaneous polls, it had said that the time was not ripe for a common code.

#### **About Law Commission ;**

Law Commissions were constituted by the Government from time to time and were empowered to recommend legislative reforms with a view to clarify, consolidate and codify particular branches of law where the Government felt the necessity for it. *The first such Commission was established in 1834 under the Charter Act of 1833 under the Chairmanship of Lord Macaulay which recommended codification of the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and a few other matters. Thereafter, the second, third and fourth Law Commissions were constituted in 1853, 1861 and 1879 respectively which, during a span of fifty years contributed a great deal to enrich the Indian Statute Book with a large variety of legislations on the pattern of the then prevailing English Laws adapted to Indian conditions.* The Indian Code of Civil Procedure, the Indian Contract Act, the Indian Evidence Act, the Transfer of Property Act. etc. are products of the labour of the first four Law Commissions.

First Law Commission of Independent India was established in 1955 with the then Attorney-General of India, M. C. Setalvad, as its Chairman. Since then twenty one more Law Commissions have been appointed, each with a three-year term and with different terms of reference.

#### **How does the Commission function?**

The Commission's regular staff consists of about a dozen research personnel of different ranks and varied experiences. A small group of secretarial staff looks after the administration side of the Commission's operations.

Basically the projects undertaken by the Commission are initiated in the Commission's meetings which take place frequently. Priorities are discussed, topics are identified and preparatory work is assigned to each member of the Commission. Depending upon the nature and scope of the topic, different methodologies for collection of data and research are adopted keeping the scope of the proposal for reform in mind.

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Discussion at Commission meetings during this period helps not only in articulating the issues and focussing the research, but also evolving a consensus among members of the Commission. What emerges out of this preparatory work in the Commission is usually a working paper outlining the problem and suggesting matters deserving reform. The paper is then sent out for circulation in the public and concerned interest groups with a view to eliciting reactions and suggestions. Usually a carefully prepared questionnaire is also sent with the document.

Once the data and informed views are assembled, the Commission's staff evaluates them and organises the information for appropriate introduction in the report which is

written either by the Member-Secretary or one of the Members or the Chairman of the Commission. It is then subjected to close scrutiny by the full Commission in prolonged meetings. Once the Report and summary are finalised, the Commission may decide to prepare a draft amendment or a new bill which may be appended to its report. Thereafter, the final report is forwarded to the Government.

## NCRB'S ANNUAL 'CRIME IN INDIA' REPORT FOR 2017 TO BE PUBLISHED SOON

**NCRB was set-up in 1986 to function as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators based on the recommendations of the Tandon Committee to the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the MHA's Task force (1985).**

**Subsequently, NCRB was entrusted with the responsibility for monitoring, coordinating and implementing the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) project in the year 2009. The project connects 15000+ police stations and 6000 higher offices of police in the country. On 21st August 2017, NCRB launched National Digital Police Portal. It allows search for a criminal / suspect on the CCTNS database apart from providing various services to citizens like filing of complaints online and seeking antecedent verification of tenants, domestic helps, drivers etc. (<https://digitalpolice.gov.in/>).**

The Bureau has also been entrusted to maintain National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO) and share it with the States/UTs on regular basis. NCRB has also been designated as the Central Nodal Agency to manage technical and operational functions of the 'Online Cyber-Crime Reporting Portal' through which any citizen can lodge a complaint or upload a video clip as an evidence of crime related to child pornography, rape/gang rape. NCRB also deals with associated work of Cyber Crime Prevention against Women & Children (CCPWC) through this portal.

The Central Finger Print Bureau under NCRB is a national repository of all fingerprints in the country and has more than one million ten-digit finger prints database of criminals both convicted and arrested and provides for search facility on Fingerprint Analysis and Criminal Tracing System (FACTS).

### About the news-

**There were questions raised about NCRB not publishing its crime data for 2017, happened for the first time since 1953.**

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under Union Ministry of Home Affairs has been the executive body in bringing out comprehensive information on the crime scenario in the country. NCRB, however, released the last 'Crime in India' data for the year 2016 at the end of 2017. While the similar crime information for the year 2017 was expected to be out by the end of 2018, it has not been the case. The bureau has not even released its

annual report on 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides (ADSI) for the year 2016, a crucial source for farmers' suicides.

### In detail

The annual 'Crime in India' report, compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for the year 2017, will be released soon. The report for the year 2018, however, will have to wait longer since the NCRB has decided to publish the 2017 report first.

A couple of states have not given the required data. NCRB is developing software on the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) to cull data automatically and publish the report. **This will help reduce dependence on the states.**

Out of the 15,816 police stations across the country, the CCTNS connects with almost 15,000. The CCTNS has a database of the crimes and photographs of criminals and missing children, among other things, and helps state and central governments in forming policies.

States crime records bureau collect data from District Crime Record Bureaus and submit it to the NCRB by the end of calendar year every year. The Bureau also collects data of the cities with over a 10 lakh population separately. Data compilation related to the crime was done for the first time in 1953. The data was compiled from annual police administration reports of the various states then.

The NCRB report has been a politically contentious issue, with the Opposition accusing the government of not releasing the report because the data is against the government.

The data for 2014-16 showed that states led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had the highest crime rates against Scheduled Castes (SCs). Madhya Pradesh, which was being ruled by a BJP dispensation when the data was released, led in crimes against the SCs.

### SHG'S

#### TRIBAL SHG WOMEN MAKE A ORGANIC REVOLUTION (CASE STUDY)

Even as organic agriculture is gaining momentum in the country, a self-help group of tribal women in Wayanad district of Kerala is scripting a success story in production of 13 different varieties of bio agents to support organic farming.

Eight members of the Sabari Swasraya Sanghom of Nellarachal tribal hamlet were guided to biotechnology by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) under the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) at Ambalavayal, a decade ago. They began their venture with production of trichoderma and pseudomonas, biocontrol agents to fight quick wilt disease in various crops, and are producing 13 varieties of bio agents now. "When the

Kendra met them on a field visit, they were facing a hard time since their paddy fields had been submerged [in water] from the Karapuzha irrigation project," said N.E. Safia, head of the KVK.

The Kendra gave them training for six months in fungal and bacterial culture and packing, she added.

Last year alone, the members produced nearly 183 tonnes of bio agents, including 16 tonnes of bio fertilizers such as azospirillum, azotobacter, rhizobium, bio potash and vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhiza; 80 tonnes of biocontrol agents like pseudomonas and trichoderma as well as 20 tonnes of bio pesticides, including beauveria, verticillium, pochonia, paecilomyces and metarhizium, said Sruthi Krishnan, research assistant, microbiology, KVK.

The KVK's income was in excess of ₹1.67 crore from the sale of the products last year. Under an MoU with Kerala Agricultural University, group members will get 35% of the income, Ms. Sruthi said. Now, the unit is gearing up to produce pseudomonas and trichoderma.

"When we started off, the various scientific processes in the lab posed a challenge, but now we are acquainted with them.",

Now, each group member gets an average monthly income of ₹8,500. A major share of the produce was procured by the Agriculture Department and the Spices Board for supply to farmers. "Our products have good demand in the market. Many times, we are unable to meet the demand.

## ECONOMY

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### CENTRAL EQUIPMENT IDENTITY REGISTER (CEIR)-

#### **Background-**

The National Telecom Policy of 2012 calls for the establishment of a National Mobile Property Registry to address the issue of "security, theft, and other concerns including reprogramming of mobile handsets". Based on this, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the Ministry of Communications initiated a Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) for mobile service providers. The DoT issued a memorandum in July 2017 announcing the CEIR with a pilot project led by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited in Maharashtra. In January 2018, this project was handed over to the Centre for Development of Telematics (CDOT). Now, it is all set to roll out.

### **What is CEIR?**

The order of the DoT says, **every mobile network provider in India has an Equipment Identity Register (EIR), or a database of the phones connected to its network. These EIRs will now share information with a single central database, the CEIR. In essence, it will be a repository of information on all mobile phones connected to networks across India.** There were over 1,026 million active wireless phone connections by the end of 2018, according to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

The CEIR will have information on the device's International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number (every phone or mobile broadband device has this unique 15 digit code that precisely identifies the device), model, version, and "other information". It will also know if the phone is blacklisted, and the reason why it has been blacklisted.

**Phones are identified based on the IMEI number**, which you can find under the battery in many mobiles or by dialling '\*#06#' on the device. Mobile phone manufacturers assign IMEI numbers to each device based on ranges allotted to them by the **Global System for Mobile Communications Association**. Dual SIM phones will have two IMEI numbers.

### **What is the purpose of a CEIR?**

Such centralised databases are meant to identify and block stolen or illegal mobile phones across networks. Currently, when a customer reports a mobile phone as missing or stolen, mobile service providers have the ability to blacklist the phone's IMEI in their EIRs and block it from accessing their network. But if the SIM is changed to a new network, it can continue to be in use. With a CEIR, all network operators will be aware that the phone is blacklisted.

The CEIR will also access the GSMA's database of IMEI numbers to check whether the phone is authentic. There are cases of phones being in use with duplicate IMEI numbers, or with all zeroes instead of an authentic IMEI number.

### **What are the issues with having a CEIR?**

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) raised a key issue with the CEIR — who should maintain such a high-value database? Should it be the service provider, or a neutral third party?

In their responses to the consultation paper, many major service providers preferred having a third party, ranging from international bodies to TRAI itself as suggested by the BSNL. The CDOT, which is reportedly readying to roll out the service, is an autonomous entity under the DoT.

Another major issue is cloning, or reprogramming stolen or unauthorised mobile phones to attach existing genuine IMEI numbers. Blocking cloned IMEI numbers could

result in the authentic ones also being blocked. While the actual numbers on phones in circulation with cloned or inauthentic IMEIs are hard to pin down, Parliament, in 2012, was informed of two cases of 18,000 phones using the same IMEI number.

In 2015, the government banned the import of mobile phones with fake IMEI numbers. In 2017, the DoT framed the “prevention of tampering of the Mobile Device Equipment Identification Number, Rules, 2017” that makes it punishable to tamper with the IMEI number of a device or knowingly use such a device. However, tools to reprogramme phones remain available online, and cases of such activities are reported frequently. On this issue, the DoT memorandum of 2017 says the IMEI Cloning and Duplication Restriction (ICDR) software is to be integrated in the CEIR.

### **Advantages of the CEIR-**

- It will bring down the number of counterfeits handsets and bring down theft.
- It will block all services on stolen or lost mobile phones on any network even if the SIM card is removed or the IMEI number of the handset is changed.
- It will protect consumer interest and facilitate law enforcement authorities for lawful interception.
- CEIR will connect the IMEI database of all mobile operators. It will act as a central system for all network operators to share blacklisted mobile terminals so that devices placed under the said category in one network will not work on the other, even if the SIM card in the device is changed.

**The IMEI number -- a unique 15-digit serial number of mobile devices -- is allocated by global industry body GSMA and bodies authorised by it.**

### **Level 1Q)What is CEIR, What are the advantages of it?**

**Prelims- IMEI, GSMA, CEIR, DoT, TRAI.**

## **UNION BUDGET**

### **BUDGET 2018-19 HIGHLIGHTS**

The key highlights of Union Budget 2019 are as follows:

### **10-point Vision for the decade**

- Building Team India with Jan Bhagidari: Minimum Government Maximum Governance.
- Achieving green Mother Earth and Blue Skies through a pollution-free India.
- Making Digital India reach every sector of the economy.

- Launching Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan, other Space and Satellite programmes.
- Building physical and social infrastructure.
- Water, water management, clean rivers.
- Blue Economy.
- Self-sufficiency and export of food-grains, pulses, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables.
- Achieving a healthy society via Ayushman Bharat, well-nourished women & children, safety of citizens.
- Emphasis on MSMEs, Start-ups, defence manufacturing, automobiles, electronics, fabs and batteries, and medical devices under Make in India.

### **Towards a 5 Trillion Dollar Economy**

- “People’s hearts filled with Aasha (Hope), Vishwas (Trust), Aakansha (Aspirations)”, says FM.
- Indian economy to become a 3 trillion dollar economy in the current year.
- Government aspires to make India a 5 trillion dollar economy.
- “India Inc. are India’s job-creators and nation’s wealth-creators”, says FM.

### **Need for investment in:**

- Infrastructure.
- Digital economy.
- Job creation in small and medium firms.

Initiatives to be proposed for kick-starting the virtuous cycle of investments.

Common man’s life changed through MUDRA loans for ease of doing business.

### **Measures related to MSMEs:**

- Pradhan Mantri Karam Yogi Maandhan Scheme
- Pension benefits to about three crore retail traders & small shopkeepers with annual turnover less than Rs. 1.5 crore.
- Enrolment to be kept simple, requiring only Aadhaar, bank account and a self-declaration.
- Rs. 350 crore allocated for FY 2019-20 for 2% interest subvention (on fresh or incremental loans) to all GST-registered MSMEs, under the Interest Subvention Scheme for MSMEs.
- Payment platform for MSMEs to be created to enable filing of bills and payment thereof, to eliminate delays in government payments.

### **National Common Mobility Card (NCMC)**

- India's first indigenously developed payment ecosystem for transport, based on National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) standards, launched in March 2019.
- Inter-operable transport card runs on RuPay card and would allow the holders to pay for bus travel, toll taxes, parking charges, retail shopping.

**Massive push given to all forms of physical connectivity through:**

- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.
- Industrial Corridors, Dedicated Freight Corridors.
- Bhartamala and Sagarmala projects, Jal Marg Vikas and UDAN Schemes.
- State road networks to be developed in second phase of Bharatmala project.
- Navigational capacity of Ganga to be enhanced via multi modal terminals at Sahibganj and Haldia and a navigational lock at Farakka by 2019-20, under Jal Marg Vikas Project.
- Four times increase in next four years estimated in the cargo volume on Ganga, leading to cheaper freight and passenger movement and reducing the import bill.
- Rs. 50 lakh crore investment needed in Railway Infrastructure during 2018-2030.
- Public-Private-Partnership proposed for development and completion of tracks, rolling stock manufacturing and delivery of passenger freight services.
- 657 kilometers of Metro Rail network has become operational across the country.
- Policy interventions to be made for the development of Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), to achieve self-reliance in aviation segment.
- Regulatory roadmap for making India a hub for aircraft financing and leasing activities from Indian shores, to be laid by the Government.
- Outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore for 3 years approved for Phase-II of FAME Scheme.
- Upfront incentive proposed on purchase and charging infrastructure, to encourage faster adoption of Electric Vehicles.
- Only advanced-battery-operated and registered e-vehicles to be incentivized under FAME Scheme.
- National Highway Programme to be restructured to ensure a National Highway Grid, using a financeable model.
- Power at affordable rates to states ensured under 'One Nation, One Grid'.
- Blueprints to be made available for gas grids, water grids, i-ways, and regional airports.
- Cross subsidy surcharges, undesirable duties on open access sales or captive generation for industrial and other bulk power consumers to be removed under Ujjwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY).
- Package of power sector tariff and structural reforms to be announced soon.
- Reform measures to be taken up to promote rental housing.
- **Model Tenancy Law** to be finalized and circulated to the states.

- Joint development and concession mechanisms to be used for public infrastructure and affordable housing on land parcels held by the Central Government and CPSEs.

#### **Measures to enhance the sources of capital for infrastructure financing:**

- Credit Guarantee Enhancement Corporation to be set up in 2019-2020.
- Action plan to be put in place to deepen the market for long term bonds with focus on infrastructure.
- Proposed transfer/sale of investments by FIIs/FPIs (in debt securities issued by IDB-NBFCs) to any domestic investor within the specified lock-in period.

#### **Measures to deepen bond markets:**

- Stock exchanges to be enabled to allow AA rated bonds as collaterals.
- User-friendliness of trading platforms for corporate bonds to be reviewed.

#### **Social stock exchange:**

- Electronic fund raising platform under the regulatory ambit of SEBI.
  - Listing social enterprises and voluntary organizations.
  - To raise capital as equity, debt or as units like a mutual fund.
- SEBI to consider raising the threshold for minimum public shareholding in the listed companies from 25% to 35%.
  - Know Your Customer (KYC) norms for Foreign Portfolio Investors to be made more investor friendly.
  - Government to supplement efforts by RBI to get retail investors to invest in government treasury bills and securities, with further institutional development using stock exchanges.

#### **Measures to make India a more attractive FDI destination:**

- FDI in sectors like aviation, media (animation, AVGC) and insurance sectors can be opened further after multi-stakeholder examination.
  - Insurance Intermediaries to get 100% FDI.
  - Local sourcing norms to be eased for FDI in Single Brand Retail sector.
- Government to organize an annual Global Investors Meet in India, using National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) as an anchor to get all three sets of global players (pension, insurance and sovereign wealth funds).

- Statutory limit for FPI investment in a company is proposed to be increased from 24% to sectoral foreign investment limit. Option to be given to the concerned corporate to limit it to a lower threshold.
- FPIs to be permitted to subscribe to listed debt securities issued by REITs and InvITs.
- NRI-Portfolio Investment Scheme Route is proposed to be merged with the Foreign Portfolio Investment Route.
- Cumulative resources garnered through new financial instruments like Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs), Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) as well as models like Toll-Operate-Transfer (ToT) exceed Rs. 24,000 crore.

**New Space India Limited (NSIL)**, a PSE, incorporated as a new commercial arm of Department of Space. To tap the benefits of the Research & Development carried out by ISRO like commercialization of products like launch vehicles, transfer to technologies and marketing of space products.

### **Direct Taxes**

- Tax rate reduced to 25% for companies with annual turnover up to Rs. 400 crore
- Surcharge increased on individuals having taxable income from Rs. 2 crore to Rs. 5 crore and Rs. 5 crore and above.
- India's Ease of Doing Business ranking under the category of 'paying taxes' jumped from 172 in 2017 to 121 in the 2019.
- Direct tax revenue increased by over 78% in past 5 years to Rs. 11.37 lakh crore

### **Tax Simplification and Ease of living - making compliance easier by leveraging technology:**

#### **Interchangeability of PAN and Aadhaar**

- i. Those who don't have PAN can file tax returns using Aadhaar.
- ii. Aadhaar can be used wherever PAN is required.

#### **Pre-filling of Income-tax Returns for faster, more accurate tax returns**

- i. Pre-filled tax returns with details of several incomes and deductions to be made available.
- ii. Information to be collected from Banks, Stock exchanges, mutual funds etc.

#### **Faceless e-assessment**

- i. Faceless e-assessment with no human interface to be launched.

- ii. To be carried out initially in cases requiring verification of certain specified transactions or discrepancies.

### **Affordable housing**

- i. Additional deduction up to Rs. 1.5 lakhs for interest paid on loans borrowed up to 31st March, 2020 for purchase of house valued up to Rs. 45 lakh.
- ii. Overall benefit of around Rs. 7 lakh over loan period of 15 years.

### **Boost to Electric Vehicles**

- i. Additional income tax deduction of Rs. 1.5 lakh on interest paid on electric vehicle loans.
- ii. Customs duty exempted on certain parts of electric vehicles.

### **Relief for Start-ups**

- Capital gains exemptions from sale of residential house for investment in start-ups extended till FY21.
- 'Angel tax' issue resolved- start-ups and investors filing requisite declarations and providing information in their returns not to be subjected to any kind of scrutiny in respect of valuations of share premiums.
- Funds raised by start-ups to not require scrutiny from Income Tax Department- E-verification mechanism for establishing identity of the investor and source of funds.
- Special administrative arrangements for pending assessments and grievance redressal -No inquiry in such cases by the Assessing Officer without obtaining approval of the supervisory officer.
- No scrutiny of valuation of shares issued to Category-II Alternative Investment Funds.
- Relaxation of conditions for carry forward and set off of losses.

### **NBFCs**

Interest on certain bad or doubtful debts by deposit taking as well as systemically important non-deposit taking NBFCs to be taxed in the year in which interest is actually received.

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#### UNION BUDGET 2019-20 IN DETAIL-

##### **Union budget 2019-20 TAXES:**

In a radical move, the Union Budget has proposed an increase in the effective tax rate paid by high net-worth individuals (HNIs) by hiking the surcharge paid by those earning more than ₹2 crore and ₹5 crore a year.

In view of rising income levels, those in the highest income brackets need to contribute more to the nation's development said the Finance Minister.

According to the government, this increase in the surcharge is expected to earn the government an additional ₹12,000 crore a year.

Growth of direct tax revenue, which she said stood at 78% from ₹6.38 lakh crore in financial year 2013-14 to around ₹11.37 lakh crore in financial year 2018-19. She added that direct tax collections are now growing in double digits every year.

**Government is reducing corporate tax rates**, the companies with a turnover of up to ₹400 crore a year would now have to pay tax at 25%. This turnover limit was earlier ₹250 crore a year. The new limit will now cover 99.3% of companies. The government progressing towards a lower corporate tax regime this will bring more companies into the tax net. The Revenue secretary however said that the loss for the government will be Rs.4000cr.

**Ease of Filing and Faceless Filing-** a number of measures, such as **electronic faceless assessments**, to improve transparency in income tax assessment process **and also to ease the return filing process for tax filers**. The existing system of scrutiny assessments in the income-tax department involves a high level of personal interaction between the taxpayer and the department, which leads to certain undesirable practices on the part of tax officials. "To eliminate such instances, and to give shape to the vision of the Prime Minister, a scheme of faceless assessment in electronic mode involving no human interface is being launched this year in a phased manner."

To start with, such e-assessments are to be carried out in cases requiring verification of certain specified transactions or discrepancies. Under the new system, cases selected for scrutiny will be allocated to assessment units in a random manner and notices will be issued electronically by a Central Cell, without disclosing the name, designation or location of the Assessing Officer. This Central Cell will be the single point of contact between the taxpayer and the Income Tax Department.

In a bid to ease the return filing process, Ms Sitharaman said that taxpayers will be able to access pre-filled tax returns which will contain details of salary income, capital gains from securities, bank interest, and dividends etc. and tax deductions.

#### **Petrol Diesel levies Hiked by 2 per litre-**

In a move that will hit the pockets of the common man, the Union Budget 2019-20 proposes hiking the duty and cess on petrol and diesel by ₹2 per litre each. The government increased the **Special Additional Excise Duty and Road and**

**Infrastructure Cess** each by one rupee a litre on petrol and diesel." This means that the special additional duty (SAD) will go up to ₹8 per litre for petrol and ₹2 per litre for diesel. The Road and Infrastructure Cess on petrol will increase to ₹9 per litre for both fuels.

In a bid to spur the 'Make in India' goal and to bring domestic manufacturing on a level-playing field, that basic customs duty is being increased on items such as cashew kernels, PVC, vinyl flooring, tiles, metal fittings, mountings for furniture, auto parts, certain kinds of synthetic rubbers, marble slabs, optical fibre cable, CCTV camera, IP camera, digital and network video recorders etc.

Further, the government proposed removing exemptions from customs duty for certain electronic items being manufactured in India.

The Budget also proposes customs duty reduction on certain raw materials and capital goods, including certain inputs of CRGO sheets, amorphous alloy ribbon, ethylene di-chloride, propylene oxide, cobalt matte, naphtha, wool fibres, inputs for manufacture of artificial kidney and disposable sterilised dialyser, and fuels for nuclear power plants.

#### **Aadhaar can be interchanged with PAN for filing tax returns:**

- The Union Budget 2019-20 has proposed to make Aadhaar interchangeable with PAN, thereby allowing people without PAN to file income tax returns using only their Aadhaar.
- The government also proposed allotting Aadhaar to non-resident Indians, arriving in India, on an expedited basis. So far, non-resident Indians with an Indian passport had to wait for 180 days after their arrival in India before they can apply for Aadhaar. The Budget proposed to remove this waiting time.
- More than 120 crore Indians now have Aadhaar. According to data with the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), 42 crore PAN cards have been issued, of which only 23 crore have been linked with Aadhaar.

#### **Government eases ANGEL TAX norms benefit to the START-UPS-**

- To encourage start-ups in the country, the government has announced a series of measures for the sector, including easing of the much-debated **angle tax**. The Finance Minister has also proposed **to start a television programme within the DD bouquet of channels exclusively for start-ups**.
- To resolve the so-called 'angel tax' issue, the start-ups and their investors who file requisite declarations and provide information in their returns will not be subjected to any kind of scrutiny in respect of valuations of share premiums.

- Additionally, the issue of establishing identity of the investor and source of his funds will be resolved by putting in place a mechanism of e-verification. With this, funds raised by start-ups will not require any kind of scrutiny from the Income Tax Department.
- *Angel tax is applicable to unlisted companies that have raised capital through sale of shares at a value above their fair market value. This excess capital is treated as income and taxed accordingly. This tax predominantly affects start-ups and the angel investments they attract.*
- At present, start-ups are not required to justify fair market value of their shares issued to certain investors, including Category-I Alternative Investment Funds (AIF), the Minister has proposed to extend this benefit to Category-II Alternative Investment Funds also.
- So far, 19,665 start-ups are recognised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). They are eligible for availing tax and other incentives.

### **The start-ups in India face three challenges,**

- i. High credit cost
- ii. Lack of timely and adequate funding
- iii. Various regulatory bottlenecks

Government has promised to lessen the regulatory requirement for start-ups and cut the tax compliance burden. By 2024, the government promises to help set up at least 50,000 new startups and 500 new incubators, as also 100 innovation zones in urban local bodies.

As part of the Startup India action plan, Modi had in 2016 announced a Rs 2,000-crore credit guarantee fund. That apart, a Rs.10,000-crore fund managed by the Small Industries Development Bank of India was announced.

Meanwhile, the angel tax issue has continued to roil India's startup space. The government in February eased certain tax norms for startups after facing huge pressure from the industry.

It also changed some definitions. Under the new norms, an entity is now recognised as a start-up for 10 years instead of 7 years earlier.

### **MSME's hail the move to raise the corporate tax limit-**

- The MSME's has cheered the extension of a lower corporate Tax rate of 25% to all companies with an annual turnover of 400Crore. Currently this rate is applicable to only companies with annual turnover of upto 250 crore. That is only 0.7% of the companies are benefitted from the rate. But now 99.3% of the companies will be covered. The widening of the annual turnover from

250 crore to 400 crore will reduce the tax liabilities for a large number of companies and boost their profits in the long term.

#### **Government slaps 10% duty on Newsprint-**

- The government imposed 10% import duty on newsprint and 5% import duty on printed books. There was no import duty on newsprint so far. To encourage domestic publishing and printing industry, 5% custom duty is being imposed on imported books.
- Under this, printed books including covers for printed books and printed manuals, will attract duty. In addition, imported newsprint, uncoated paper used for printing of newspapers and lightweight coated paper used for magazines will now attract 10% custom duty. This decision is expected to have a significant impact on the industry as most of India's newsprint requirements are met through imports.

#### **ECONOMY-**

#### **Government revises the Fiscal Deficit Target downwards to 3.3%-**

- The government is estimating a fiscal deficit of 3.3% of GDP in financial year 2019-20, lower than the 3.4% estimated earlier in the interim Budget presented in February. A move that signals government's commitment to Fiscal Consolidation.
- The main reason for this is an increase on the revenue side, while expenditure is being controlled. Notably, the government has cut the allocations for several major schemes. Most significant of these is the ₹4,334 crore cut for the Swachh Bharat scheme.
- To achieve this goal, it is relying on one-off disinvestment income, as well as higher taxes on the rich, and increased excise duties on petrol, diesel, precious metals and tobacco products.
- The government has budgeted a higher disinvestment target for 2019-20 of ₹1.05 lakh crore, compared to the ₹80,000 crore budgeted in the previous year. Apart from this the government had budgeted a dividend from the Reserve Bank of India amounting to about ₹90,000 crore.

#### **Level 1Q) How is the government meeting its Fiscal Deficit Target of 3.3 %?**

#### **Rs 1.05 lakh crore disinvestment target for 2019-20:**

- The Central government has set to generate Rs 1.05 lakh crore through disinvestment of public sector undertakings during the current financial year - 2019-20. The strategic disinvestment of Air India (AI) will be reinitiated while presenting the Union Budget 2019-20.

- The target was Rs 90,000 crore projected in the Interim Budget 2019-20 in February.
- The government is considering reducing its majority shareholding in some companies to below 51%. The government will undertake the strategic sale of the PSU's. It will also continue to do consolidation of the PSU's in the Non Finance space as well. With disinvestment the Reform Agenda will also be fulfilled. The Reason given by the finance minister is to open up the market to the small retail investors.
- However, the leading trade unions have raised their strong dissent over the government's decision to sell off public sector undertakings (PSUs).

#### **Level 1 Q) Comment on the Disinvestment target of the government?**

##### **Slew of steps taken to boost digital payments-**

- To push digital payments and to discourage the practice of making business payments in cash, the government has proposed to levy TDS of 2% on cash withdrawal exceeding ₹1 crore in a year from a bank account.
- There are low-cost digital modes of payment such as BHIM UPI, UPI-QR Code, Aadhaar Pay, certain Debit cards, NEFT and RTGS that can be used to promote less cash economy, the government has proposed **no charge or merchant discount rate (MDR) for companies with more than Rs 50 crore turnover accepting payments through digital means**. The MDR will instead be borne by supporting banks and the Reserve Bank of India. The payments industry has welcomed the proposals saying these would help create a robust payments infrastructure in the country. However, the industry leaders underlined the need for sufficient Internet penetration and data reach to achieve the aspirations.
- For any digital transaction, a small fee, known as MDR, is levied to support the back-end technology infrastructure powering digital payments between two banks (bank of the sender and bank of the receiver). In the current scenario, this fee is typically borne by the merchant who receives payments. While merchants using Point of Sale (PoS) terminal have long paid about 1-2 per cent of transaction fee on debit or credit cards, mobile payments firms have so far borne the expense themselves to promote adoption of mobile payments. On UPI transactions, MDR is around Rs12-15 per transaction.
- In 2017, the government had waived off MDR on transactions up to Rs 2,000 made through debit cards, BHIM and other UPI-enabled payments apps for a period of two years starting 1 January 2018.
- Further, for individuals to use digital modes of payments, the government has proposed to levy 2 per cent tax on cash withdrawals in excess of Rs 1 crore in one financial year.
- Necessary amendments to the Income Tax Act and the Payments and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 will be brought about to give effect to these provisions.

- The budget facilitates the transformation of the economy from cash-driven one to a less-cash economy.

**Level 1 Q) The budget facilitates the transformation of the economy from cash-driven one to a less-cash economy, explain?**

#### **Budget 2019-20: Growth capital for public sector banks**

The government allocates ₹70,000 crore after cleaning up the balance sheets of the State-run banks. The government has now provided additional capital to them to boost credit growth, apart from meeting regulatory requirements.

According to bankers, about 50% or ₹35,000 crore will be the growth capital after meeting regulatory requirements. The infusion is higher than what the market expected, around ₹50,000 crore.

#### **Budget 2019-20: Big boost for disaster management-**

- The Ministry for Home Affairs saw a little over 5% increase in its Budget allocation compared to the last fiscal. It has been allocated ₹1,19,025 crore in the Union Budget 2019-20, which is ₹5,858 crore more than the last fiscal with special focus on disaster management, cyber crime infrastructure and freedom fighters' pension. The revised estimate of 2018-19 was ₹1,13,167 crore.
- ₹100 crore has been allocated for **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre**, compared to ₹6 crore assigned for it last fiscal.
- Total funds for disaster management have been earmarked at ₹577.93 crore, a jump from ₹284.82 crore last year. Of this, the component for **National Cyclone Risk Mitigation** has been increased from ₹3.03 crore to ₹296.19 crore.
- ₹953 crore has been allocated for **freedom fighters' pensions**, while ₹2,129 crore has been proposed for the development of infrastructure along the Pakistan, China, Bangladesh and Bhutan borders.
- **The Central Reserve Police Force** has been allocated ₹23,963.66 crore, and the Border Security Force ₹19,650.74 crore.
- The total allocation to Central Armed Police Forces, including CRPF, Border Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Central Industrial Security Force, Sashastra Seema Bal, Assam Rifles and National Security Guard, is ₹71,713.9 crore. It was ₹67,779.75 crore in 2018-19.

- The Intelligence Bureau has been allocated ₹2,384 crore, as against ₹2,056 crore in the last fiscal. The Special Protection Group has been allocated ₹535.45 crore, up from ₹411.68 crore in 2018-19.
- The Budget allocated ₹3,462 crore for modernisation of police forces, ₹825 crore for border area development programme, and ₹842 crore for relief and rehabilitation for migrants and repatriates in Jammu and Kashmir.
- As the preparation for the 2021 census has begun, it allocated ₹621.33 crore for census, survey and statistics. An amount of ₹50 crore is proposed for special industry initiative in J&K and ₹78 crore for the propagation of the Hindi language.

**Level 1 Q) the budget has given a boost to Disaster Management, comment on its importance?**

#### **INVESTOR - Budget 2019-20**

##### **Budget 2019-20 New ideas: Global investor meet, social stock exchange:**

- Launching of a social stock exchange, organising a global investor meet and merging of NRI investment with that of the foreign portfolio investor (FPI) segment are some of the market-friendly measures that the Budget has proposed.
- While a detailed analysis or blueprint is not available with regard to social stock exchange, the Budget announcement was for creation of a platform to list social enterprises and voluntary organisations working towards social welfare. Listing of such organisations will enable them to raise debt or equity funds, the Budget announcement said.
- There are only a few international examples and they follow different models. In London, it acts more as a directory connecting social enterprises with potential investors, while in Canada the SVX is an online platform where even retail investors can invest in funds or companies with social impact. In India, the finance minister said the exchange will come under the ambit of the Securities and Exchange Board of India.
- For the first time, the Centre has proposed to organise an annual global investors meet in India. The Budget announcement said it will be done by the National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) as the anchor, to get together all the three sets of global players — top industrialists/corporate honchos, top pension/ insurance/ sovereign wealth funds and top digital technology/ venture funds.
- The Budget has also proposed to increase the statutory limit for FPIs in companies from 24 per cent to the specific sector-based foreign investment limit which could be as high as 75 per cent. FPIs will be permitted to

subscribe to listed debt securities issued by REITs and InvITs. Also, another proposal is to merge NRI portfolio investment schemes with the FPI route, which would allow NRIs better flexibility in investing.

**Level 1 Q) Discuss about the Social Stock Exchange being mooted by the Budget 2019-20?**

**KYC norms for investors to be FPI friendly-**

- Foreign investors are a key source of capital to the Indian economy, thus the government is planning to take all possible steps to encourage more foreign investment in the Indian capital markets by making it easier for such investors to come to India and invest in a hassle-free manner.
- The government has proposed to rationalise and streamline the existing Know Your Customer (KYC) norms for FPIs to make it more investor friendly without compromising the integrity of cross-border capital flows.
- The importance of the government proposal can be gauged by the fact that foreign investors are often looked upon as prime drivers of any bull run in the Indian equity market and have been pumping in huge money in the stock market.
- Data show that in the current calendar year, FPIs are net buyers at nearly ₹75,000 crore with March seeing a record flow of nearly ₹34,000 crore.
- This assumes significance also due to the fact that the government plans to raise the limit of foreign holding in select public sector entities while eyeing ₹1.05 lakh crore through disinvestment.
- The government has also proposed **merging the investment route for Non-resident Indians (NRIs) with that for the FPIs**. "Even though India is the world's top remittance recipient, NRI investment in Indian capital markets is comparatively less. With a view to provide NRIs with seamless access to Indian equities, the government has proposed to **merge the NRI-Portfolio Investment Scheme Route with the Foreign Portfolio Investment Route**.
- The government proposal of rationalising the KYC norms for FPIs and merging the NRI portfolio investment scheme route with the FPI route, shows that the government is focussed on the growth of the financial services sector to help India become a \$5 trillion economy.

**Level 1 Q) what are the steps taken by the government in the budget to boost investment in the country, discuss in detail?**

**Budget 2019-20 Infrastructure-**

**(seeee) PPP Model in the Railways-**

The Finance minister has proposed a capital expenditure of Rs 1,60,175.64 crore for the Railway Ministry for 2019-20. This is the highest ever allocation for the Railways.

The Railway will require an investment of about 50 lakh crore till 2030 and therefore pitched for the PPP model for investment to achieve faster development.

The outlay comprises Re 65,873 crore from the budget, 267.64 crore from the Nirbhaya fund, 10,500 crore from the internal resources and 83,571 crore from extra budgetary support.

### **Union Budget 2019-20: Tax break to rev up electric vehicle sales**

- Budget 2019 proposes to offer additional income tax exemption of ₹1.5 lakh to vehicle buyers, while also pitching to make India a global manufacturing hub for such vehicles. This will benefit the taxpayers who take loan to purchase a EV. The loan is required to be taken on or before March 31, 2023.
- Electric vehicles are expected to be nearly twice the cost of the comparable ICE vehicle. To further help bring down the prices, the government has moved the GST Council to lower the rate on electric vehicles from 12% to 5%.
- The industry and NITI Aayog are at loggerheads over the latter's proposal to sell only electric three wheelers post-March 2023, and electric two wheelers in the 150cc and below segment, post-March 2025 onwards.
- In February this year, the Cabinet had approved the second phase of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles or FAME scheme, with an outlay of ₹10,000 crore for three years. This came into effect from April 1, 2019.
- The main objective of the scheme is to encourage faster adoption of electric vehicles by way of offering upfront incentive on purchase of electric vehicles and also by establishing the necessary charging infrastructure. Only advanced battery and registered e-vehicles will be incentivised under the scheme with greater emphasis on providing affordable & environment friendly public transportation options for the common man.
- Electric vehicle start-ups believe bringing down customs duty on lithium-ion cells to nil would further cut down the cost of batteries and help local battery manufacturers to scale-up the business.

### **Level 1 Q) Budget further boosts the adoption of electric vehicles, discuss?**

#### **New package in the offing to ensure "Power for All"-**

To ensure un-interrupted power for all the government is planning a power package with New Tariff policy. The government is Planning for an ONE NATION ONE GRID.

The government is planning the much need reforms in the Power Tariff area.

**High-level panel**-The Finance Minister proposed to set up a high-level empowered committee to look into retirement of old and inefficient power plants and address low capacity utilisation of gas-based power plants.

**Work with the states**- The government is going to work with the State governments to remove the barriers in the implementation of the ambitious UDAY scheme ( like cross subsidy surcharge ) for the turnaround of power distribution companies. **The government had launched the UDAY scheme in 2015 for the financial and operational turnaround of power discoms.** The distribution sector holds the key to the long-term fortunes of the power sector as discoms have so far been the weakest link in the electricity value chain.

The announcement of pursuing a 'One Nation One Grid' concept is a positive move and will prove beneficial in achieving the government's goal of power for all by 2020. Government's move to focus of driving structural reforms in the power sector is commendable, and will definitely help in propelling the sector towards the path of growth. This will fuel investments and address the issues concerning stressed power plants.

#### **Level 1 Q) How is the government achieving the goal of Power for All ?**

##### **Union Budget 2019-20: Ambitious plans for aviation**

- The aviation sector is set to get a major boost with the government proposing to make India a hub of maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) activities and aircraft financing, besides relaxing foreign direct investment rules for overseas carriers.
- Further, aircraft leasing businesses, including leveraging opportunities at the financial special economic zone—International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)—will also be on the agenda.
- The Aviation Ministry has been allocated Rs4,500 crore in the Budget for the current financial year, which is 115 per cent less than Rs 9,700 crore that was given to it during 2018-19 fiscal.
- 480 crore for the Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN under which there is proposal for the revival of 50 airports and viability gap funding for North East Connectivity.
- The centre has allocated 1 lakh crore for the turnaround of Air India. Air India Asset holding Private Ltd has been created as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for the financial restructuring of the debt laden air carrier. The government has allocated 2600 crore for this SPV this year. Air India has 58,000 crore debt as of 2018-19.

- Having maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities has been a long-standing demand of industry.
- Aviation experts noted that the government will have to create a level playing field in terms of rationalising tax levies on MRO and aircraft leasing activities to fulfill its ambitions. For instance, the domestic MRO activities are taxed at 18% as compared to 5% in nearby countries Sri Lanka, Singapore and Thailand, forcing airlines to do service jobs on aircraft overseas. These services include periodic engine checks, propellers and airframes, besides the intensive and multiple checks at the end of lease tenor of aircraft. The proposed enhancement of foreign direct investment in aviation could ease divestment of national carrier Air India and Jet Airways, which is facing bankruptcy proceedings.
- The ministry of civil aviation had set up a working group last year to formulate policies for aircraft leasing in India. As per the ministry, passenger traffic is expected to grow six-fold to 1.1 billion by 2040 and the number of operational airport would double to 200 till that period. The fleet size of domestic airlines is poised to reach 2,350 planes in 2040 from 600-odd currently. According to plane makers Boeing and Airbus, this would translate into \$5 billion financing each year.

**Level 1 Q) Analyse the Budget provisions with regard to the Aviation Sector?**

**Union Budget 2019-20: Interlinking of Highways through a Grid Proposed-**

- The government has proposed to restructure the National Highways programme to ensure inter-linking of highways through a grid. The National Highway Grid of desirable length and capacity will be created.
- The GRID is expected to connect 12 major ports, 45 out of 53 million plus cities and 26 State capitals apart from linking tourist destinations and religious places.
- The total allocation for the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has gone up from ₹78,625.50 crore to ₹83,015.97 crore, with a sizeable increase for road works.

**Union Budget 2019-20: Call for port-led development**

- The budget stressed the need to enhance port-led development through the Sagarmala scheme and develop inland waterways to use rivers for cargo movement to decongest road and rail networks, reduce the cost of transportation as well as cut oil import bill.
- Sagarmala would enhance port connectivity, modernisation and port-linked industrialisation. The Finance Minister said that the cargo volume on the Ganga was expected to grow four times in the next four years. While a multi-modal terminal at Varanasi was launched last year, two more terminals **at Sahibganj in**

**Jharkhand and Haldia in West Bengal apart from a navigation lock at Farakka would be completed within the current fiscal.**

- The allocation for Sagarmala and the Inland Water Transport Authority of India was enhanced, though the total allocation for the Ministry of Shipping saw a marginal decline of 2% to ₹1,902.56 crore.
- The net allocation for Sagarmala schemes has gone up from ₹381 crore to ₹550 crore, an increase of 44%. The contribution to the Inland Water Transport Authority of India, too, went up from ₹384.95 crore in the last fiscal to ₹450 crore, a 17% increase.

### **Level 1 Q) The budget calls for Port Led development?**

#### **Union Budget 2019-20: Air India disinvestment set to take off again**

- The government will re-initiate disinvestment of national carrier Air India as well as open up Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in aviation.
- There is 100% FDI allowed in aviation, but foreign airlines can only invest up to 49% in an Indian airline. Also, foreign investment in Air India is capped at 49%.
- The government's decision to revisit privatisation of Air India follows an attempt last year that met with failure when no private player came forward to express an interest in the debt-laden carrier.
- The wants to create a congenial environment for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) industry, which could leverage India's engineering advantage and potential.
- The current taxation regime discriminates against domestic MROs where it is cheaper for airlines to send aircraft for maintenance to foreign countries rather than getting them serviced within India.
- The government may also plan a grid for regional airports being developed under the government's UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme aimed to take air travel to the masses and enhance air connectivity between Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.
- The budget allocation for the Ministry of Civil Aviation has seen a drastic reduction of 53%. The total allocation for 2019-2020 is ₹4,500 crore as against ₹9,700 crore last fiscal.

#### **Budget 2019-20 SOCIAL -**

##### **Centre slashes funds for Ganga Clean Up-**

The government has significantly slashed allocations to its marquee plan to clean the Ganga.

The government's allocation to the 'National Ganga Plan and Ghat works' shows only ₹750 crore for 2019-2020, a sharp fall from ₹2,250 crore allotted last year. Last year,

the government has only managed to spend ₹750 crore, the revised estimates for 2018-19 show.

#### **Gandhipedia 'to sensitise society'**

- A “Gandhipedia” was being developed in order to sensitise society, particularly the youth, about Gandhian values.
- With the government marking the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi with several programmes throughout the year, an encyclopedia-like “Gandhipedia” would be among the efforts to spread his values.
- The Rashtriya Swachhta Kendra would be inaugurated at Gandhi Darshan at Rajghat on October 2 this year.
- A Gandhipedia is also being developed by National Council for Science Museums to sensitise youth and society at large about positive Gandhian values.

#### **Level 1 Q) Write about the 7 sins of Gandhiji?**

##### **No specific Funds for Jal Jeevan Mission-**

- The new Jal Jeevan Mission will need to converge with other Central and State government schemes.
- The budget for the National Rural Drinking Water Mission, a key component of Jal Jeevan Mission, has been doubled from last year's revised estimates to more than ₹10,000 crore.
- Jal Jeevan Mission would focus on “**integrated demand and supply side management** of water at the local level, including creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability like rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and management of household waste water for reuse in agriculture.”
- To achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across the country, the Jal Jeevan Mission would converge with other Central and State government schemes.
- The ongoing Jal Shakti Abhiyan, a water conservation campaign in 256 water-stressed districts also has no separate allocation, depending on funds available under existing schemes, mostly in the rural development sector.
- With regards to Swachh Bharat, the plan is to build on the success of the open defecation free movement of the last five years by sustaining behavioural change and harnessing the latest technologies available to transform waste into energy. The government has expanded the “to undertake sustainable solid waste management in every village”. Despite this new challenge, the programme has had its budget scaled back substantially, with an allocation of ₹12,644 crore compared to last year's revised estimates of ₹16,978 crore.

#### **Level 1 Q) What is the Jal Jeevan Mission All about?**

##### **Budget 2019-20 Laying the ground for Affordable housing -**

- For realisation of the goal of 'Housing for All' and affordable housing, a tax holiday has already been provided on the profits earned by developers of affordable housing.
- Increased tax deductions for interest paid on loans for houses up to ₹45 lakh, construction of 1.95 crore rural houses and finalisation of a **Model Tenancy Law to be announced soon.**
- In order to "provide a further impetus", the government has provided an additional deduction up to ₹1.5 lakh for interest paid on loans borrowed up to March 31, 2020 for buying "an affordable house valued up to ₹45 lakh" as against ₹2 lakh earlier will now be available until March 31, 2020. This can help attract first-time homebuyers. This will create new demand for houses of up to ₹45 lakh in the current year, which is a big positive for the affordable housing developers.
- Therefore, a person purchasing an affordable house will now get an enhanced interest deduction up to ₹3.5 lakh. This will translate into a benefit of around ₹7 lakh to the middle class home-buyers over their loan period of 15 years.
- The government has completed 1.54 crore rural homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin in the past five years and 26 lakh houses under PMAY-Urban. In the second phase of PMAY-G, during 2019-2020 to 2021-2022, 1.95 crore houses are proposed to be provided to the eligible beneficiaries. These houses are also being provided with amenities like toilets, electricity and LPG connections.
- Affordable home buyers and real estate developers will stand to benefit from the Union Budget. While tax benefits will encourage more people to buy homes, developers will benefit as the liquidity problem is being addressed through recapitalisation of PSU banks and support to securitisation for NBFC assets. This will help in providing liquidity and credit flow to cash-strapped developers.

**Level 1 Q) Discuss about the PMAY yojana and what steps is the government taking to achieve its goal of Housing for All?**

**Union Budget 2019-20: Women-led initiatives and child protection services get a boost**

- The Women and Child Development Ministry saw a **17.7% increase in its budgetary allocation, from ₹23,356.50 crore last fiscal to ₹27,584.37 crore during 2019-2020.**
- Anganwadi services have seen an 11% hike in their grant to ₹19,834 crore. Other schemes that have seen a noticeable hike include child protection services (62% with an allocation of ₹1,500 crore), and working women hostels which got a two-fold hike at ₹165 crore.

- For schemes on the safety of women, ₹500 crore has been set aside for the **Nirbhaya Fund**.
- The Minister said that every verified member of a Self Help Group possessing a Jan Dhan Bank account would be given ₹5,000 over and above their savings and at least one woman per SHG would be eligible for a loan of up to ₹1 lakh under MUDRA scheme.
- The Centre's programmes of maternity benefit and child protection services also got a major boost in the budget.
- The allocation for the **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**, a maternity benefit programme, was more than doubled to Rs 2,500 crore from Rs 1,200 crore. Under the programme, Rs 6,000 is given to pregnant women and lactating mothers for the birth of the first living child.
- The allocation for the **Child Protection Services programme** under the Integrated Child Development Services was increased to Rs 1,500 crore from Rs 925 crore.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pet project '**Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**' will get Rs 280 crore in the current financial year.
- The **National Nutrition Mission**, which strives to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia and low-birth weight babies and aims to benefit 10 crore people across the country, was allocated Rs 3,400 crore.
- The allocation for the **Mahila Shakti Kendras** has been increased from Rs 115 crore to Rs 150 crore.
- The allocation for the **National Creche Scheme** was also enhanced from Rs 30 crore to Rs 50 crore, which will enable working women to safely leave their children in creches while they are away at work.
- Similarly, the allocation for **Working Women's Hostel** scheme saw an increase of over three times from Rs 52 crore to Rs 165 crore.
- On the issue of providing safety for all women, the budget for **Ujjawala**, a scheme for prevention of trafficking, rescue and rehabilitation of the victims, has been increased from Rs 20 crore to Rs 30 crore. And the allocation for the Widows home has been increased from 8 crore to 15 crore. **Mission for Protection and Empowerment of Women** was increased from Rs 1,148 crore to Rs 1,315 crore.
- The government announced setting up of a committee to assess budgetary allocation through a gender lens.

**Level 1 Q) Discuss the Social sector initiatives of the budget 2019-20?**

**Union Budget 2019-20: ₹50 crore allocated for appointing Hindi teachers in non-Hindi speaking State-**

- The budget allocated ₹50 crore in this year's Budget to support the appointment of Hindi teachers in non-Hindi speaking States.

- The new scheme will also provide financial assistance for the appointment of Urdu teachers in any locality where more than 25% of the population is from an Urdu-speaking community, as well as Modern Indian Language Teachers to teach a third language in those schools of Hindi speaking States that demand them.
- The three-language formula has been official Central policy for decades, but has long been opposed in a number of non-Hindi speaking States, especially Tamil Nadu. It came back into the spotlight when the draft National Education Policy was released in May. It was later amended to allow for the teaching of any Indian language as the third language, apart from English and the mother tongue. This new scheme seems to enable the implementation of the original formula by supporting the appointment of Hindi teachers, but not other language teachers, in non-Hindi speaking States.
- Allocations have risen for mid-day meals as well as for **Samagra Shiksha**, the flagship scheme for school education, leading to an overall 12% rise in allocation to the department.
- Stating that India has the potential to become a hub for higher education, the Finance Minister proposed to start a “Study in India” programme to encourage foreign students to enrol in Indian higher educational institutions.
- In fact, the scheme had already been given ₹50 crore last year and the allocation has been increased to ₹65 crore this year. Overall, the department’s budget rose by 14%.

**Level 1 Q)What is the 3 language formula of the government, why is it being opposed?**

#### Union Budget 2019-20: Bhutan gains, Chabahar loses in Budget pie

- The government has allocated ₹45 crore for India’s building activities in the port of Chabahar Iran. This is a reduction from the previous year’s allocation of ₹150 crore.
- However, the outlay for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has substantially hiked the allocation for Bhutan, one of India’s closest neighbours nestled in the Himalayas, and bolstered passport and emigration services.
- India is at the forefront of the construction of Chabahar port which is a major regional initiative from India. India’s works at the port received a waiver from the anti-Iran sanctions of the U.S.
- A major share of the total budget allocation of ₹17,884.78 crore is for Bhutan which got ₹2,801.79 crore, gaining substantially from the previous allocation of ₹2,510 crore.
- Both Nepal and Mauritius have maintained a high priority in allocation and have received ₹1,050 crore and ₹1,100 crore respectively.

- In terms of regional allocation, Latin America, home of Brazil and Argentina among other countries, received the lowest of the MEA's expenditure allocation with a meagre ₹15 crore. Afghanistan's allocation has also come down from ₹470 crore to ₹400 crore.
- India has however cut its contribution to the United Nations to ₹275 crore from ₹307 crore.
- It will increase allocation for the BIMSTEC regional grouping of the Bay of Bengal community to ₹8 crore, which is equivalent to the SAARC allocation.
- South Asian University will receive ₹317.50 crore and Nalanda University will get ₹220 crore.

## TRANSPORTATION

**SLOWDOWN DEEPENS: SALE OF PASSENGER CARS FALL FOR THE 8<sup>TH</sup> CONSECUTIVE MONTH-**

### **Topic useful in (Economy- Auto Industry)**

WITNESSING ITS worst run ever, domestic passenger car sales fell for the eighth consecutive month, with June 2019 numbers falling by 17.54 per cent to 2,25,732 units from 2,73,748 units in the same month last year.

Passenger vehicle sales have witnessed a fall in 11 out of the last 12 months with October 2018 being the only exception with marginal expansion. The decline was across the board with both two-wheeler and car sales witnessing a double-digit decline.

#### **Reason for the slowdown-**

**The SLIDE is a result of sluggish demand and liquidity crunch faced by NBFC financiers. This has made automakers announce temporary factory closures to trim mounting stocks. Recovery will mainly depend on credit availability.**

According to data released by Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), passenger car sales fell 24.97 per cent in this month, and two-wheeler sales by 11.69 per cent. Commercial vehicle sales declined 12.3 per cent in June, while three-wheeler sales fell by 8.8 per cent.

Overall, vehicle sales across categories registered a decline of 12.34 per cent to 19,97,952 units from 22,79,186 units in June 2018.

Slowdown started last July, it intensified following the IL&FS crisis that resulted in a liquidity squeeze in the market. With pressure mounting on NBFCs since February 2019, credit availability to consumers has gone down significantly in large and smaller cities, leading to a sharper fall in car sales numbers.

**Level 1Q)The government is focussing on expanding the Sale of EV's, give an account of the Auto Sector in India?**

#### ELECTRIC VEHICLES-

##### GST ON EV AND CHARGERS CUT TO 5 PERCENT

The high-powered GST Council decided to reduce the tax rate on electric vehicles (EVs) to 5 per cent from the existing 12 per cent, effective from August 1. It also slashed the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on EV chargers from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.

The council also approved GST exemption for hiring of electric buses by local authorities.

GST rate for petrol, diesel cars and hybrid vehicles are already in the highest bracket of 28 per cent plus cess.

The government is promoting EV's in a big way, the tax rate cut is a move for furthering the goal of faster adoption of EV.

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#### LITHIUM ION GIGA UNITS MOOTED-

***India plans to convert approximately 30 to 40 percent of its vehicular count into electric by 2030.***

#### **About the news-**

To push the adoption of EV's in the country the government think tank NITI ayog has proposed the establishment of Lithium Ion Giga Factories in India for the Manufacture of Lithium- Ion batteries.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and Libcoin are in dialogue to form a world class consortium to initially build 1GWh lithium ion battery plant in India. Its capacity will be scaled up to 30GWh in due course. With this, India has finally taken steps into its energy security and clean energy commitment to the world.

The term 'gigafactory' was first coined by EV pioneer Elon Musk, who owns Tesla, the world's biggest carmaker which has a portfolio of only EVs. 'Gigafactory,' a term popularised by Musk, refers to a huge battery manufacturing centre where the Li-ion batteries that go under the hoods of EVs are crafted.

The PMO first mooted the idea of manufacturing EVs domestically, so that they would be outside the ambit of import duties, thereby, significantly lowering their price tags.

#### **Importance of Electric vehicles-**

Various Indian cities including Delhi have been struggling to cut down their pollution level for last several years and electric transportation has been considered as one of the viable approaches to cut down emission. The number of electric cars in the world already hit million-mark last year and the International Energy Agency has projected almost 140 million electric cars globally by 2030, if countries meet Paris climate accord targets, in which India has already committed to actively participate.

India has seen a major shift towards electric vehicles over the last few years. Policy makers have shown strong intent in formulating various policies to push electric mobility in the country. India is also receiving a \$300 million aid from World bank for its EV's program.

### **Level 1Q)What steps is the government taking to faster adoption of EV's?**

CENTRE RATIFIES CONVENTION TO CURB COMPANY PROFIT SHARING-

#### **About the news-**

In a step that will help the government to save its tax revenue, the government had ratified the international agreement to curb "**Base Erosion and Profits Shifting (BEPS)**". This will help the government to stop companies from moving their profits out of the country and depriving the government of tax revenue.

India has ratified the "**Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (multilateral instruments (MLI))**", which was signed by the Finance Minister in Paris on June 7, 2017 on behalf of India, along with representatives of more than 65 countries.

The Cabinet last month approved ratification of the convention, which will modify India's treaties in order to curb revenue loss through treaty abuse and base erosion and profit shifting strategies by ensuring that profits are taxed where substantive economic activities generating the profits are carried out and where value is created.

Out of 93 CTAs notified by India, 22 countries have already ratified the MLI as on date and the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with these countries will be modified by MLI. For the remaining CTAs, effect of MLI will take place as and when these countries ratify the MLI.

The multilateral convention is an outcome of the OECD/G20 project to tackle base erosion and profit shifting, which is resorted to by multinational corporations through tax planning strategies by exploiting gaps and mismatches in tax rules.

It helps them artificially shift profits to low or no-tax locations, resulting in little or no overall corporate tax being paid. After this convention, 90 countries have now implemented the automatic exchange of financial account and tax information.

## What is BEPS?

**Base erosion and profit shifting refers to the phenomenon where companies shift their profits to other tax jurisdictions, which usually have lower rates, thereby eroding the tax base in India.**

The MLI is a result of concerted work by the G20 countries to tackle the issue of base erosion and profit shifting, something that affects them all. India was part of the Ad Hoc Group of more than 100 countries and jurisdictions from the G20, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and other interested countries, which worked on the finalising the text of the Multilateral Convention.

### **Level 1Q) Why was the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting in news?**

Prelims- MLI, BEPS, OCED.

## INDIA RISES IN GLOBAL INNOVATION RANKING

- India has jumped five places to rank 52 in the **Global Innovation Index 2019**, up from the 57 it had in last year's rankings.
- The GII has been jointly developed by Cornell University, Paris-based business school Insead and WIPO, and includes more than 80 indicators exploring a broad vision of innovation, including political environment, education, infrastructure and business sophistication.
- India's rise in the rankings has been a consistent trend over the last few years. It had ranked 81 in 2015, which rose to 66 in 2016, 60 in 2017 and 57 in 2018.
- India continues to be the most innovative economy in central and southern Asia — a distinction held since 2011 — improving its global rank to 52 in 2019.
- India is consistently among the top in the world in innovation drivers such as ICT services exports, graduates in science and engineering, the quality of universities, gross capital formation — a measure of economy-wide investments — and creative goods exports.
- The report also highlighted that India stands out in the world's top science and technology clusters, with Bengaluru, Mumbai, and New Delhi featuring among the top 100 global clusters.
- Innovation has been a feature since ancient India. Aryabhata invented the zero, which probably is the mother of all inventions involving science and mathematics and astronomy.
- India has made a number of changes in its IPR regime to increase efficiency and that the nation had cut down the time required to issue patents.
- According to the index, Switzerland is the most innovative economy, followed by Sweden, US, Netherlands and United Kingdom.

- China, which has invested heavily in research and development, moved up three positions to rank 14. Israel managed to secure the 10th rank, marking the first time an economy from the Northern Africa and Western Asia region broke into the top 10.

## Global Innovation Index 2019

The Global Innovation Index is computed as an average of the scores across input pillars (describing the enabling environment for innovation) and output pillars (measuring actual achievements in innovation)



<b>1</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>67.24</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>63.65</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>61.73</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>61.44</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>61.30</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>59.83</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>58.44</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Singapore</b>	<b>58.37</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>58.19</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Israel</b>	<b>57.43</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>54.68</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>53.88</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>50.34</b>
<b>52</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>36.58</b>
<b>89</b>	<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>28.45</b>
<b>105</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>25.36</b>
<b>116</b>	<b>B'desh</b>	<b>23.31</b>

### Importance of Innovation-

India's hope of increasing the size of the economy to \$5 trillion cannot happen without significant innovation.

**Level 1Q) What steps are being taken to improve innovation and R&D in the country? Prelims- GII, WIPO.**

### WHAT'S RCEP & WHY INDIA IS MOVING WITH CAUTION ON THE 16-NATION FREE TRADE PACT-

The RCEP is a proposed mega free trade agreement (FTA) that is presently being negotiated between 10 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) members — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam — and their six trading partners India, China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea.

The pact, once implemented, will become the largest trading bloc — even bigger than the European Union (EU). Before Beijing, 26 rounds of negotiations have taken place so far on RCEP since 2012.

The negotiations on the mega trade deal were officially launched in November 2012 at the 21st ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The RCEP negotiations include

- trade in goods and services,
- investment,
- economic and technical cooperation,
- intellectual property,
- competition,
- dispute settlement,
- e-commerce, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and other issues.

The 16 members of the RCEP account for a total gross domestic product (GDP) of about \$50 trillion with a share of 28 per cent of global trade. Together, these countries boast of 50 per cent of the world's population. Thus, once implemented, it will be bigger than the European Union as a trading bloc.

### **Why RCEP was conceived?**

- The RCEP was conceived by ASEAN and China as an answer to the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which was later renamed as Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) after America's exit from the deal in 2017. The TPP was formally signed in 2016.
- The TPP was conceived during the era of former US President George Bush, but it was concluded by Barack Obama's administration. In 2015-16, the US and EU also started negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which is now shelved.
- With the US pulling out of it, the TPP currently has 11 members — Japan, Australia, Peru, Malaysia, Vietnam, New Zealand, Chile, Singapore, Canada, Mexico and Brunei Darussalam.
- Under the TPP, Obama aimed at introducing global trading rules that would be over and above the norms set by the Geneva-headquartered World Trade Organisation (WTO) or 'gold standards' for doing multilateral trade. The TPP also addresses sustainable development issues related to labour laws, environmental standards, climate change concerns and inequality.
- US President Donald Trump had pulled out of the TPP saying it's a "potential disaster for our country" and harmful for US manufacturing.
- The RCEP was also conceived as mega trade pacts among western nations were proving to be a threat to the relevance of the WTO.
- Some of the countries that are part of the TPP are, however, also members of the RCEP such as Australia, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and New Zealand.

- Meanwhile, with change of governments in most RCEP countries, the mandate and demand of each country also underwent a change.

**INDIA AND RCEP**

65% of India's goods trade deficit in 2017-18 was with RCEP nations.  
Will the pact balloon India's trade deficit further? (in \$ billion)

	India's export to	India's import from	Total trade	Deficit
<b>China</b>	13.1	73.3	<b>89.4</b>	<b>63.1</b>
<b>Asean</b>	33.8	47	<b>80.8</b>	<b>13.3</b>
<b>S Korea</b>	4.4	16.4	<b>20.8</b>	<b>11.9</b>
<b>Australia</b>	3.8	13.9	<b>17.8</b>	<b>10.2</b>
<b>Japan</b>	4.7	10.9	<b>15.7</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>	0.35	0.64	<b>0.99</b>	<b>0.29</b>
<b>RCEP</b>	60.2	165.2	<b>225.4</b>	<b>105</b>

	Export	Import	Total trade	Deficit
<b>India's global trade (\$ bn)</b>	300	461.2	<b>761.4</b>	<b>161.4</b>
<b>Share of trade with RCEP</b>	20.1%	35.8%	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>65.1%</b>

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- Concerns of India over the RCEP-

- India was never invited to join the TPP by the US, but New Delhi was keen on joining the RCEP. Hence, in 2013, mostly at the behest of Japan, India joined the bandwagon.
- However, rising concerns over gradual tariff reduction on goods from all member-countries, especially China, have made Indian industries and farming community jittery.
- Rise in India's trade deficit with East and Southeast Asian economies has also proved to be a major setback for New Delhi in moving ahead with the RCEP talks.
- Apart from concerns over Chinese and other Southeast Asian goods flooding Indian markets with cheap imports, New Delhi is particularly irked that it has not been able to garner anything beneficial for its domestic constituency as far as trade in services is concerned.
- Trade liberalisation of the RCEP partners with respect to services has been a thorny issue from the Indian perspective.

#### India Not Negotiating RCEP ?

- While India remains committed to the trade pact, the government is now expected to walk the tightrope by maintaining a critical balance between safeguarding the interests of Indian industries as well as farmers, and also not

come across as a spoilsport in multilateral trading system. Thus, concluding the deal by the year-end might be a difficult task.

- On the other hand, not negotiating the RCEP may prove to be costly for India in terms of its foreign policy endeavours. This is because almost all member-countries of the deal continue to play a pivotal role in India's 'Act East' policy. There is no denying the fact that India's entry into such a giant club of economies will strengthen its strategic muscle.
- Experts say RCEP will give Indian exporters a window to be a part of global value chains.
- It will give New Delhi a chance to stall some of its unfair practices such as doling out subsidies unethically and stalling Indian pharmaceutical products, among others, on the pretext of quality control.

**Level 1 Q)What are the concerns of India on the RCEP, Why is it important for India to join?**

#### DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY ON E-COMMERCE

A draft National e-Commerce policy has been prepared and placed in public domain, which addresses six broad issues of the e-commerce ecosystem viz.

- e-commerce marketplaces;
- regulatory issues;
- infrastructure development;
- data;
- stimulating domestic digital economy and
- export promotion through e-commerce.

The Department of Commerce initiated an exercise and established a Think Tank on '**Framework for National Policy on e-Commerce**' and a Task Force under it to deliberate on the challenges confronting India in the arena of the digital economy and electronic commerce (e-commerce).

The government will come out with a national e-commerce policy within 12 months to facilitate achieving holistic growth of the sector.

#### SUGAR BUFFER INCREASED, GOVERNMENT HELPS TO PAY FARMER DUES

The government has announced the creation of a sugar buffer stock of 4 million tonnes in view of bumper domestic production and pending sugarcane arrears of more than ₹ 15,000 crore.

It also decided to keep the fair and remunerative price for sugarcane unchanged at Rs 275 per quintal for the 2019-20 marketing season starting from October. The mills will have to pay farmers a minimum Rs 275 a quintal for their cane purchases.

#### **Objective of the Buffer stock-**

To protect the interest of sugarcane farmers and ensure dues are paid on time, the government has decided to create a buffer stock of 4 million tonnes of sugar, one million tonnes higher than the last year.

The government will spend an estimated ₹ 1,674 crore for this purpose. The buffer stock will help maintain demand-supply balance and to stabilise sugar prices. This would improve the liquidity position of sugar mills. The reimbursement available under the scheme would be directly credited into farmers' account on behalf of sugar mills against their cane price dues.

In August 2018, the Centre had created a buffer stock of 3 million tonnes of sugar, costing ₹ 1,175 crore to the exchequer, to improve the liquidity position of the sugar mills, enabling them to clear cane price arrears of farmers and stabilise domestic sugar price.

India's sugar output is likely to be 32.95 million tonne in the current 2018-19 marketing year (October-September), as against the annual domestic demand of 26 million tonnes.

#### **INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE PROPOSES A BAN ON CRYPTOCURRENCIES**

##### **About the news-**

An inter-ministerial committee set up by the government on virtual currencies has proposed banning of private cryptocurrencies in India by enacting a law and imposing fines and penalties for carrying on activities related to such cryptocurrencies.

The **committee headed by finance secretary Subhash Chandra Garg** has proposed a draft bill "Banning of Cryptocurrency & Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2019", which has been placed in the public domain.

The recommendations, if accepted by the government, will be a blow to digital currency aspirants in India such as Facebook as well as exchanges currently operating in the country by circumventing Reserve Bank of India (RBI) norms by undertaking peer-to-peer trading. However, the committee wants the RBI and the government to look at the introduction of an official digital currency in the country.

#### **GLOBAL PRACTICES**

There are around 2,116 cryptocurrencies globally with a market capitalisation of \$119.46 billion. Other than bitcoin, other popular ones include **ethereum, ripple and**

**cardano.** There is wide divergence in the treatment of virtual currency globally. For example, while Japan has recognised bitcoin as a means of payment, China has imposed a complete ban. However, no country treats virtual currencies as legal tender.

### **Supported the use of DLT or Blockchain Technology-**

The committee **has suggested the use of distributed-ledger technology (DLT) in India, especially in financial services.** The DLT-based systems can be used by banks and other financial firms for processes such as loan-issuance tracking, collateral management, fraud detection and claims management in insurance and reconciliation systems in the securities market.

### **Committee identified possible areas for use of Blockchain-**

The committee identifies the potential use cases for blockchain technology in areas such as payments systems including cross-border and small value payments; data identity management or know-your-customer requirements by various financial entities; insurance; collateral and ownership (including land) registries; loan issuance and tracking; e-stamping; trade financing; post-trade reporting; securities and commodities and internal systems of financial service providers.

It has also suggested the use of DLT to reduce compliance costs for know-your-customer (KYC) requirements and that MeitY and the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) play a supportive role for exploring and building the uses of blockchain for enabling trade financing, payments, data identity manage or KYC requirements. Insurance, collateral and ownership (including land) registries, e-stamping trade financing, post trade reporting are some of the areas where committee feels DLT can be used effectively.

### **Recommended complete ban on foreign cryptocurrencies-**

The committee recommended a complete ban on cryptocurrencies issued by foreign private enterprises. This should cover exchanges, investors, traders and other financial intermediaries, it said. It proposed that dealing in them should be made a criminal offence.

### **Supported a Official Digital Currency in India-**

The Panel supported a Official Digital currency for India. The panel recommended the establishment of a specific group by the Department of Economic Affairs with participation by the RBI, Department of Financial Services and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for examining and developing an appropriate model of digitalcurrency in India. When a decision is taken on the CBDC, RBI should be the regulator the panel said.

**Level 1Q)What are the possible areas that the Blockchain Technology can be used? What are the concerns about Digital currency?**

## PUBLIC FINANCE

### WHY IS INDIA OPTING FOR OVERSEAS BONDS-

#### About the news-

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the Budget speech, plans to raise a portion of its gross borrowing from overseas markets. Some say it is a risky move , government says it will boost private investment.

The government and the RBI are preparing to issue the first Oversea Soveriegn Bond by September. The policy announcement was made that India will be issuing the first Sovereign Bond.

**India's sovereign external debt to GDP ratio is among the lowest around the world, at less than 5%.** *Against this background, the government will start raising a part of its gross borrowing programme in external markets in external currencies.* This, would also have a beneficial impact on the demand for government securities in the India.

#### This a Shift in the government's Economic Policy -

- The move to raise funds overseas using the Sovereign Borrowing route marks a **dramatic shift in the government's Economic Policy**. While the issue has been discussed and debated for long, successive governments have shied away from taking a plunge.
- **The Sovereign bond route has been taken by the government at a time when the government is faced with funds crunch and has to stick to the Fiscal Consolidation Roadmap.**
- Overseas markets are flush with funds and are on a constant lookout for a better return on their investment. The government is confident that the Indian bonds will give good returns to the investor. In 2017 the Moody's had upgraded India's local and foreign currency issuer rating to Baa2 from Baa3 for the first time in 13 years. This will give a further push.

#### What is an overseas bond issue?

A government bond or sovereign bond is a form of debt that the government undertakes wherein it issues bonds with the promise to pay periodic interest payments and also repay the entire face value of the bond on the maturity date. **So far, the government has only issued bonds in the domestic market.**

#### What are the advantages ?

Demand for Indian Bonds will increase in the oversea markets.

**Boost Private investment.** ( how - The government has been arguing that the quantum of its borrowing within India is 'crowding out' the private sector. In other words, it is saying that government borrowing is at such a level that there are not enough funds available for the private sector to meet its credit and investment needs. If the private sector cannot borrow adequately, then it cannot invest as it wants to, and that cripples one major engine of economic growth.)

Therefore, borrowing overseas allows the government to raise funds in such a way that there is enough domestic credit available for the private sector.

The overseas borrowing programme allows the government to maintain its gradual reduction of the fiscal deficit.

The appetite of the international market for Indian bonds and their price will also say a lot about how India is viewed globally on the risk factor. For example, if the rate at which India can borrow overseas is low, then this would mean the global market assigns a low risk to India defaulting.

### **What are the risks?**

1. **If the currency value depreciates then repaying the debt will become a burden. As the government will have to pay more rupees at that time.** For example In the 1970s, several of the South American countries such as Brazil and Mexico borrowed heavily overseas when the global market was flush with liquidity. But then, when their currencies depreciated sharply a decade later, these countries were in big trouble as they could not repay their debt.
2. Another risk to India from overseas borrowings is that this would lead to a quicker increase to its foreign exchange reserves, which would lead to a stronger rupee at a time when it is already appreciating against the dollar. This will discourage exports as they will become costly.
3. On the other hand, a rupee depreciation for whatever external reason would prove even more disastrous as it would make it far more expensive for India to repay its external debt. Imports will become costlier.
4. The third problem with an overseas bond issue is that the government would not be able to inflate itself out of trouble. That is, in the domestic market, if the government does ever reach the stage where it is finding it difficult to repay its debt, it can simply print more money, let inflation rise quickly and repay its debt. This is not an option in an overseas bond issue. The Indian government cannot print foreign currency to repay its debt.

### **What does it mean for the domestic market?**

According to the government's own reasoning, there are not enough funds in the domestic market to cater to its needs as well as those of the private sector.

This shallowness of the bond market is not a good thing, especially at a time when the government needs the bond market to finance several of its commitments. The Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) scheme, for example, involves State governments taking over the debt of State power distribution companies and issuing bonds to repay that debt. Or take the government's Budget announcement of a further ₹70,000 crore capital infusion in public sector banks. A shallow bond market would make it difficult for the government to expand any of these schemes.

The government should have enough revenue so that it does not need to borrow. However, both direct and indirect tax collections have disappointed, the government is forced to borrow to finance its expenditure through other routes. In such a scenario, it is a welcome move for the private sector that the government is leaving it room to borrow in the domestic market, as the government will leave room for the private sector and borrow a part from the overseas markets.

**Level 1 Q)What are Oversea Bonds, Explain the government's policy of raising money from through Sovereign Overseas bonds?**

**Prelims- revenue sources, Bonds, All about Money.**

#### PMO ASKS THE FINANCE MINISTER TO STUDY THE OVERSEAS BOND ISSUES

##### **About the news-**

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) wants the finance ministry to reassess the idea of issuing **foreign currency overseas sovereign bonds**.

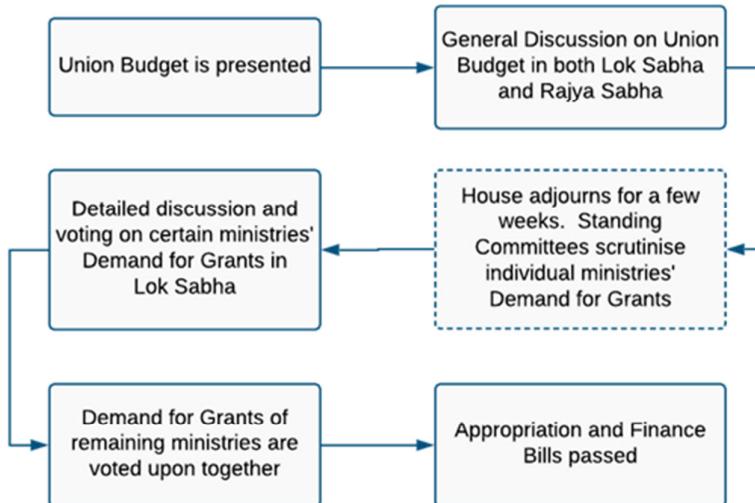
The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget 2019-20 announced that the government would start raising a part of its gross borrowing programme from the external markets in foreign currencies. The minister added that India's sovereign external Debt to GDP level is among the lowest globally at less than 5 percent.

The idea of the government has been criticised by many economists and allies of the government as they argued that it would create long term economic risks by exposing the government's liabilities to currency fluctuations.

The government wants to mobilise Rs.70,000 crore through this route as a part of diversification of the government's resource mobilisation and leaving more funds for the private sector.

#### LS CLEARS APPROPRIATION BILL

##### **Budget process-**



The Lok Sabha passed the Appropriation Bill-2019 allowing the Union government to withdraw ₹98.18 lakh crore from the Consolidated Fund of India to meet its expenditure during 2019-20.

The Bill, moved by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, was passed by a voice vote after the House approved demands for grants for several Ministries which were collectively put to vote and passed by applying guillotine.

With the passage of the Appropriation bill, the government has sought the approval of the Lok Sabha for expenses for this entire financial year.

The Finance Bill 2019, contains the tax proposals of the government for the fiscal. The budgetary exercise for 2019-20 will be completed with the passage of the Finance Bill by Parliament. After its passage in the Lok Sabha, it will go to the Rajya Sabha.

In view of the general elections, the government in February came out with an interim Budget seeking Parliament nod for meeting expenses for four months (April-July 2019-20). With the passage of the Appropriation bill, the government has sought the approval of the Lok Sabha for expenses for this entire financial year.

### **Appropriation Bill;**

Appropriation Bill gives power to the government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India for meeting the expenditure for the financial year.

Post the discussions on Budget proposals and the Voting on Demand for Grants, the government introduces the Appropriation Bill in the Lok Sabha. It is intended to give authority to the government to withdraw from the Consolidated Fund of India the amounts so voted for meeting the expenditure during the financial year.

### **Annual Financial Statement;**

Article 112 of the Constitution requires the government to present to Parliament a statement of estimated receipts and expenditure in respect of every financial year, from April 1 to March 31. This statement is called the annual financial statement. It is divided into three parts, Consolidated Fund, Contingency Fund and the Public Account. For each of these funds, the government has to present a statement of receipts and expenditure.

### **Finance Bill;**

A Finance Bill is a Money Bill as defined in Article 110 of the Constitution. The proposals of the government for levy of new taxes, modification of the existing tax structure or continuance of the existing tax structure beyond the period approved by Parliament are submitted to Parliament through this bill.

The Finance Bill is accompanied by a Memorandum containing explanations of the provisions included in it. The Finance Bill can be introduced only in Lok Sabha. However, the Rajya Sabha can only **recommend amendments** in the Bill. The bill has to be passed by the Parliament within 75 days of its introduction.

### **Level 1 Q) Explain the budget process ?**

**Prelims – entire process, Articles in the constitution, Financial control (committees, motions etc).**

## TOURISM

### LIST OF “ICONIC TOURIST SITES” MAY BE REVIEWED

#### **About the news-**

The “**17 iconic tourism sites**” would turn the places into world class tourist destinations and serve as a model for other tourism sites.

In July 2018, then Tourism Minister K.J. Alphons had said 17 ‘iconic tourist sites’ would be developed. These were Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri in Uttar Pradesh, Ajanta and Ellora caves in Maharashtra, Humayun’s Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar in Delhi, Colva Beach in Goa, Amer Fort in Rajasthan, Somnath and Dholavira in Gujarat, Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, Hampi in Karnataka, Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, Kaziranga in Assam, Kumarakom in Kerala and Mahabodhi in Bihar.

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In her Budget 2019-2020 speech on July 5, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had mentioned the project again.

**Prelims – map marking, about the places and the states they are located.**

**Level 1 Q) Write about the importance of tourism to India? Assess the tourism potential of India?**

**About the news-**

*The Blue Flag Programme for beaches and marinas is run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education).*

*It started in France in 1985 and has been implemented in Europe since 1987, and in areas outside Europe since 2001, when South Africa joined.*

*Japan and South Korea are the only countries in South and southeastern Asia to have Blue Flag beaches. Spain tops the list with 566 such beaches; Greece and France follow with 515 and 395, respectively.*

Twelve Indian beaches are in the race for the 'Blue Flag' challenge, which started in France in 1985. 'Blue Flag' certification, is an international recognition conferred on beaches that meet certain criteria of cleanliness and environmental propriety.

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



These beaches are at

1. Shivrajpur (Gujarat),
  2. Bhogave (Maharashtra),
  3. Ghoghla (Diu),
  4. Miramar (Goa),
  5. Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka),
  6. Kappad (Kerala),
  7. Eden (Puducherry),
  8. Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu),
  9. Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh),
  10. Golden (Odisha), and
  11. Radhanagar (Andaman & Nicobar Islands).

If approved, beaches are given the qualification for a year and must apply annually to continue meriting the right to fly the flag at their locations. To help Indian beaches meet these criteria, the Ministry has allowed structures such container toilet blocks, change

rooms, shower panels, mini grey water treatment plants in an enclosed structure, mini solid waste recycling plants and off-grid solar photovoltaic panels, provided they are a minimum 10 metres from the high tide line.

### **Level 1 Q) What is a Blue Flag Certification?**

**Prelims – Blue Flag certification. Beaches in India.**

**RURAL CIRCUITS UNDER SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME:**

#### **About the news -**

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the ***Swadesh Darshan Scheme for Integrated Development of theme-based Tourist Circuits for development of tourism infrastructure including last mile connectivity in the country.*** Recognizing the potential of rural tourism in the country, the Ministry has identified Rural Circuit as one of the thematic circuits identified for development under this scheme and is aimed at leveraging tourism as a force multiplier for revitalizing the rural economy and for giving both domestic and international tourists a glimpse of the rural aspect of the country.

Bihar - Development of Bhitiharwa - Chandrahia – Turkaulia.

Kerala- Development of Malanad Malabar Cruise Tourism.

**DEVELOPMENT OF VARIOUS FORTS UNDER HERITAGE CIRCUIT THEME OF SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME-**

The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned the project 'Development of

Rajsamand (Kumbhalgarh Fort)- Jaipur (Nahargarh Fort)- Alwar (Bala Quila)- Sawai Madhopur (Ranthambore Fort and Khandar Fort)- Jhalawar (Gagron Fort)- Chittorgarh (Chittorgarh Fort) Jaisalmer (Jaisalmer Fort) Hanumangarh (Kalibangan, Bhatner Fort and Gogamedi)- Jalore (Jalore Fort)- Udaipur (Pratap Gaurav Kendra)- Dholpur (Bagh-i-Nilofar and Purani Chawni)- Nagaur (Meera Bai Temple) in Rajasthan' under the Heritage circuit theme of Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

## PROMOTING CULTURE & TOURISM: MAJOR SCHEMES

### Susanskrit Bharat, Sanrakshit Bharat

**HRIDAY**  
Rejuvenating the Soul of Urban India

Heritage City Development and  
Augmentation Yojana - HRIDAY

Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and  
Spiritual Augmentation Drive – PRASAD



ADARSH SMARAK YOJANA: 25 ASI monuments  
named as Aadarsh Smaarak for upgradation  
of tourist related amenities

DEDICATED TOURIST TRAINS: Jyotirling circuit,  
Sukhmangal circuit (Bengaluru-Madurai) &  
Dakshin Dham Circuit



RENOVATION OF RIVER GHATS in pilgrim  
cities like Varanasi

### BUDDHIST CIRCUITS UNDER THE SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME –

Buddhist Circuit is one of the fifteen thematic circuits identified for development under the Swadesh Darshan- Integrated Development of Theme-Based Tourism Circuits Scheme of Ministry of Tourism. All sites in the country related to Buddhism including Kapilavastu are covered under the Buddhist Circuit for development.

**Madhya Pradesh** - Development of Buddhist Circuit in Sanchi-Satna-Rewa-Mandsaur-Dhar in Madhya Pradesh.

**Uttar Pradesh** - Development of Srawasti, Kushinagar, & Kapilvastu in Uttar Pradesh.

**Bihar**- Bodhgaya

**Gujarat** - Development of Junagadh- Gir-Somnath- Bharuch-Kutch- Bhavnagar- Rajkot- Mehsana in Gujarat.

**Andhra Pradesh** - Shalihundam-Thotlakonda- Bavikonda- Bojjanakonda- Amravati- Anupu in Andhra Pradesh

**Several other –**

- **Wild Life Circuit** - Development of Panna- Mukundpur- Sanjay- Dubri- Bandhavgarh- Kanha- Mukki- Pench in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Ramayana Circuit**- Development of Chitrakoot and Shringverpur in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Spiritual Circuit** - Bijnor- Meerut- Kanpur- Kanpur Dehat- Banda- Ghazipur- Salempur- Ghosi- Balia- Ambedkar Nagar- Aligarh- Fatehpur- Deoria- Mahoba- Sonbhadra- Chandauli- Mishrikh- Bhadohi in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Heritage Circuit** - Kalinjar Fort (Banda)- Marhar Dham (SantKabir Nagar)- Chauri Chaura, Shaheed Sthal (Fatehpur)- Mavahar Sthal (Ghosi)- Shaheed Smarak (Meerut) in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Heritage Circuit** - Gwalior – Orchha – Khajuraho – Chanderi – Bhimbetka – Mandu in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Spiritual Circuit**- Jewar-Dadri-Sikandrabad-Noida-Khurja-Banda in Uttar Pradesh.

**Level 1 Q) The rich historical past of India laid the base for the tourism in the country, comment?**

**Prelims- map of the above places being developed, historical facts that developed various cities and forts etc.**

#### NATURAL RESOURCES –

#### JAL SHAKTI ABHIYAN FOR WATER CONSERVATION LAUNCHED

##### **What is Jal Shakti Abhiyan?**

The campaign will run through citizen participation during the monsoon season, **from 1st July, 2019 to 15th September, 2019. An additional Phase 2 will be run from 1st October, 2019 to 30th November, 2019** for States receiving the North East retreating monsoons. The focus of the campaign will be on **water stressed districts and blocks**.

During the Mann Ki Baath the PM gave a clarion call to citizens to join hands for water conservation and create a jan-andolan along the lines of the Swachh Bharat Mission, to save water and secure the future. The Prime Minister invited ideas, traditional knowledge, initiatives undertaken, success stories, and films made on water conservation from common citizens, celebrities and NGOs alike.

# JAL SHAKTI MANTRALAYA

## DEPARTMENT OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION



### JAL SHAKTI ABHIYAN (JSA)

Launched on July 1st, the JSA is a collaboration towards water conservation in identified 256 water stressed districts covering 1592 blocks, with over 1000 Central Government officials joining States for focused interventions towards India's water security.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO —

Three simple steps for you to take today:



**Trap rainwater:** After collection, the water can be used to water plants, for laundry and many other purposes.



**Install a wastewater system:** Showers, sinks and even ROs only require a small grey water collection system. The collected water can be used outdoors for cleaning the veranda, watering grass, or even washing the car.

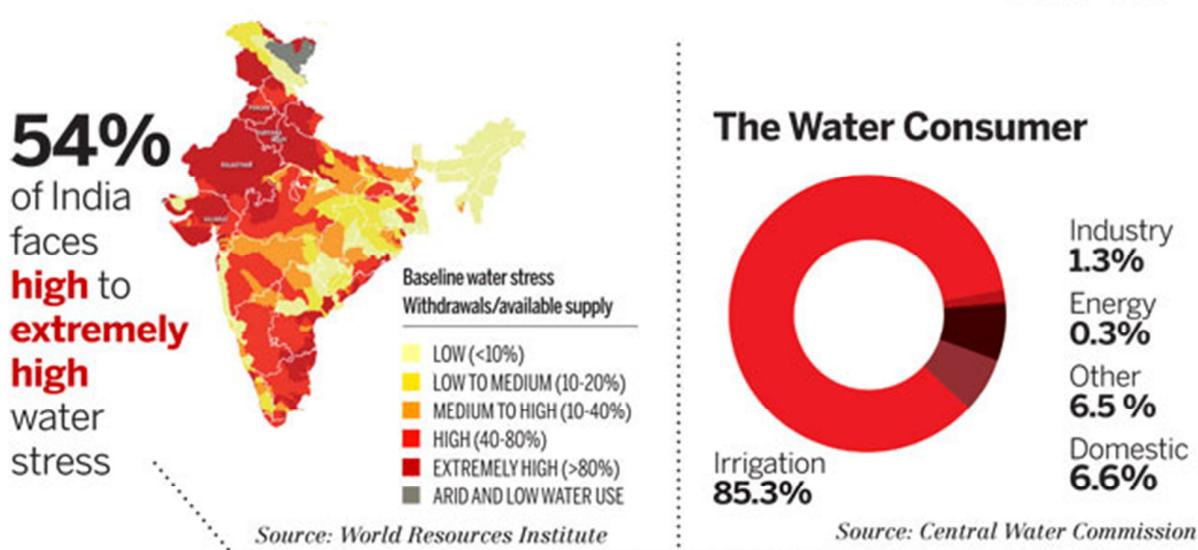
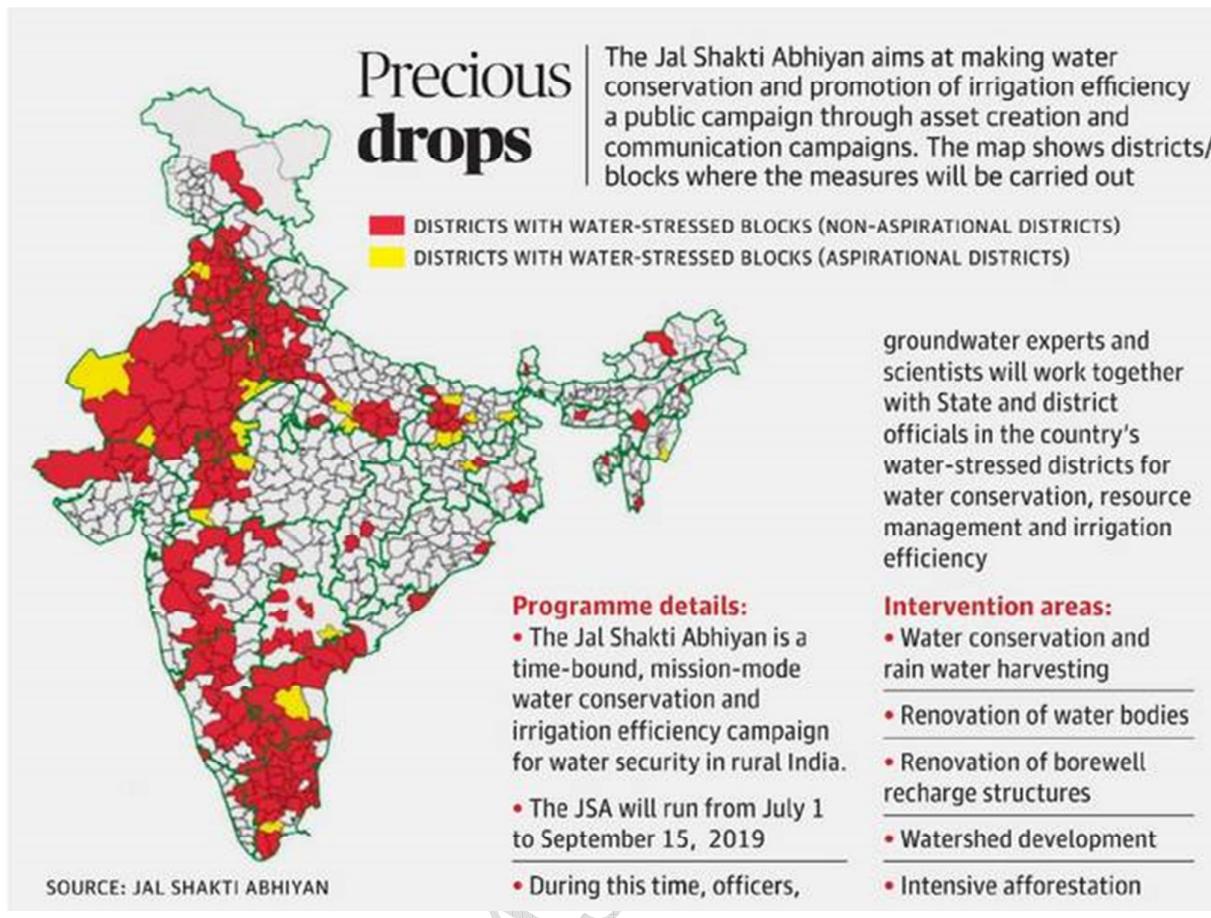


**Spread the message:** Share your water conservation efforts and stories on social media, using #JanShakti4JalShakti



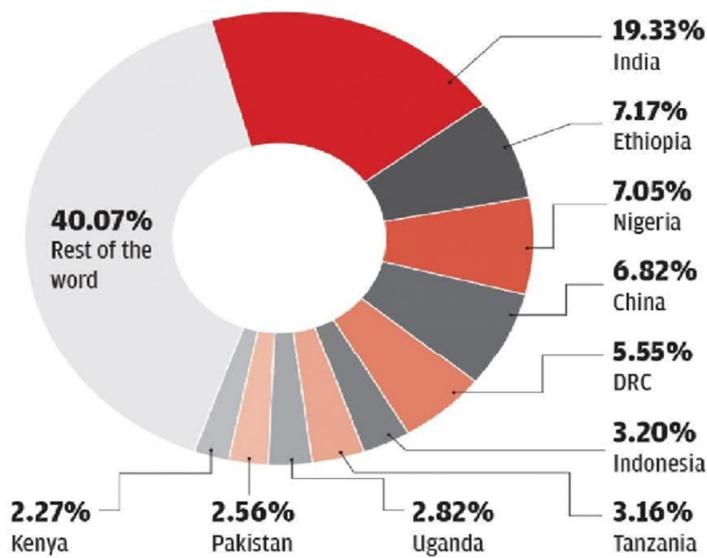
### DID YOU KNOW?

Only 8% of all rainwater is collected in India.



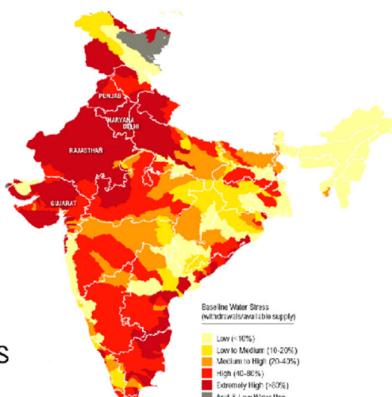
## Waterless countries

Just 10 countries account for 60% of the world population without access to clean water

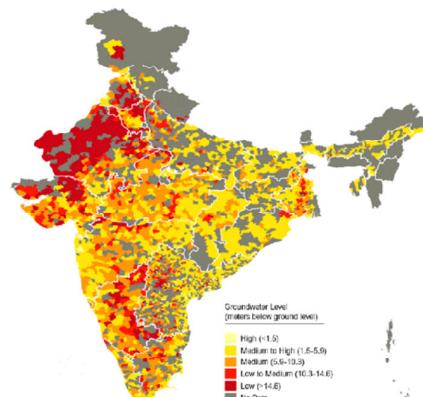


Source: The water gap—The State of the World's Water 2018 report by WaterAid

**54%**  
of India  
Faces  
**High to  
Extremely  
High**  
Water Stress



**54%**  
of India's  
Ground-  
water  
Wells Are  
Decreasing



**Level 1 Q) Comment on the importance of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan ? What will be your strategy to conserve water ?**

**Prelims- Geography , rivers, drought prone areas, flood prone areas, geological structure.**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363  
  
APPSC GROUP 1 FREE TEST SERIES- starts September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019  
Discussion will include-  
1.What questions can be expected from various topics.  
2.How to write good answers.  
3.What points to remember.  
4.How to score well even if you are not aware of the issue.  
5.Related ESSAYS to be discussed.

- GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363

UPSC PRELIMS CUM MAINS 2020 LONG TERM STARTS -14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019

- 1.All Chapters of GS PAPERS to be covered ( 40 TESTS ) WEEKLY
- 2.MAINS AND PRELIMS TESTS.
- 3.Timely Evaluation.
- 4.Guidance on Answer Writing.
- 5.Weekly tests on current topics along with the static topics.

## RAILWAYS

RPF LAUNCHED “OPERATION THIRST”, AN ALL INDIA DRIVE TO CRACK DOWN SELLING OF UNAUTHORISED PACKAGED DRINKING WATER

During peak summer season there is heavy demand of drinking water. Due to closure of schools & festive/marriage season, the number of passenger travelling by railways also increases and so the demand of drinking water.

To curb the menace of unauthorized PDW (PACKAGED DRINKING WATER) in Railway premises, an all India drive named “Operation Thirst” was launched on 08th & 09th July 2019 on the direction of DG/RPF, Railway Board.

According to RPF, the operation was launched in all major railway stations across the country to curb the menace of unauthorised packaged drinking water on railway stations.

#### PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR FUNDING RAILWAYS

##### **Topic useful in - (Resource Mobilisation)**

The government has started its second term by laying out the blueprint for a substantial boost in India’s infrastructure. A key element of that is the upgrade of Indian Railways. However, during the Budget presentation, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman accepted that the government did not have the fiscal space to make the kind of heavy investments that are required to modernise the Railways. As such, she proposed to use ***Public-Private Partnerships*** wherever possible.

##### **Why private investment?**

Modernising Railways requires an investment of Rs50 lakh crore between now and 2030. The capital outlays for Railways is just about Rs1.6 lakh crore per annum, and even completing sanctioned projects would take decades.

Another significant initiative is to “**corporatise**” the seven production units that build coaches, engines, and wheels. A holding company called the ***Indian Railway Rolling Stock Company (IRRC)*** will be put in place and it will control and independently manage all these factories and take care of the bottom line. Railway officials expect the proposed holding company, IRRC, to be one of the biggest rolling stock companies in the world, beating bigwigs such as Bombardier, Siemens, GE, etc. The IRRC has been modelled along the lines of China’s CRRC Corporation Limited, which was created by amalgamating around 40 big and small manufacturing units in 2015 into one corporate entity. The CRRC, a publicly-traded company, is currently the largest rolling stock company in the world.

##### **Concerns regarding the Private investment-**

The powerful trade unions have raised concerns about the “privatisation” of the Railways, and its impact on their members.

With privatisation of the Indian Railways, trade unions fear that moving people and goods by trains will become more expensive affecting the entire country and there may be paring down of permanent employees. There were apprehensions that there could

be large-scale employment of contract workers in the Indian Railways while permanent workers lose their jobs.

Earlier, other trade union bodies like the All India Railway Federation and National Federation of Indian Railwaymen also sought a clear blueprint on how the Railways intended to turnaround production units by corporatising them.

The Railway Minister Piyush Goyal clarified that there was no question of privatising the public and goods carrier. Replying in the Lok Sabha to a debate on Demands for Grants for Railways, Goyal however said that private investment was necessary for the modernisation of Railways.

#### COST OVERRUNS IN MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

As many as 345 projects had cost overruns of Rs.3.28 lakh crore said the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) according to April 2019 data.



#### BROADBAND READINESS INDEX FOR INDIAN STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES (2019-2022)-

##### About the Index -

The Department of Telecom (DoT) and the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop **a Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) for Indian States and Union Territories (UT)**. **The first estimate will be made in 2019 and subsequently every year until 2022.**

The National Digital Communication Policy (NDCP) 2018 acknowledged the need for building a robust digital communications infrastructure. Accordingly, the policy recommended that a BRI for States and UTs be developed to attract investments and address Right of Way(RoW) challenges across India.

National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) envisages USD 100 billion investment in telecom sector by 2022, broadband connectivity at 50 megabit per second speed to every citizen, telecom connectivity at every corner of India and creating 40 lakh jobs.

*This index will appraise the condition of the underlying digital infrastructure and related factors at the State/UT level. Such an exercise will provide useful to attract investment for development of the infrastructure. In the spirit of competitive federalism, the index will encourage states to cross learn and jointly participate in achieving the overall objective of digital inclusion and development in India. The framework will not only evaluate a state's relative development but will also allow for better understanding of a state's strengths and weaknesses that can feed policy making.*

The government wants to ensure that 5G is not limited to urban areas. It should reach rural areas. For this, the centre will have to work with states to ensure that there is 100 per cent penetration of optical fibre cables. Without massive OFC penetration, 5G services will not expand. States have to provide smooth right of way permissions.

The BRI consists of two parts.

- Part I will focus on infrastructure development based on the measurement of nine parameters.
- Part II consists of demand side parameters which will be captured through primary surveys.

It will include indicators such as percentage of households using computers/ laptops with internet connection, percentage of households with fixed broadband connection, internet users as a percentage of the population, smart phones density, percentage of households with at least one digitally literate member, etc. The primary survey will be conducted annually until 2022.

This (Broadband readiness) index will help states in creating digital and high quality communicationinfrastructure, attract investments for creating next generation communication infrastructure.

#### **Level 1 Q)What is Broadband Readiness Index?**

**Prelims- BRI, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology Year Book .**

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LPG PIPELINES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### **Topic useful in (Energy infrastructure)**

LPG pipelines are laid from refineries to LPG bottling plants usually situated outside the city limits. Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) established under the PNGRB Act, 2006, in the year 2007, is the authority to grant authorization for laying of LPG pipelines. Entities that propose to lay, build, operate or expand a pipeline apply to the Board for obtaining an authorisation under this Act.

The total length of LPG pipeline network in the country is 8,296 Km comprising of the following pipelines:-

1. Panipat-Jalandhar LPG Pipeline (Length: 280 Km)
2. Paradip-Haldia-Durgapur LPG pipeline (Length: 673 Km); (extension of pipeline to Patna and Muzaffarpur results in total length of 918 Km)
3. Ennore-Trichy-Madurai LPG pipeline (Length: 615 Km)
4. Kandla-Gorkhpur LPG pipeline (Length: 2757 Km)
5. Jamnagar-Loni LPG pipeline (Length: 1414 Km)
6. Vizag-Secunderabad LPG pipeline (Length: 621 Km)
7. Mangalore-Hassan-Mysuru-Yediyuru LPG pipeline (Length: 356 Km)
8. Uran-Chakan/Shikrapur LPG pipeline (Length: 168 Km)
9. Hassan-Cherlapally LPG pipeline (Length: 680 Km)
10. Mumbai-Uran LPG pipeline (Length: 29 Km)
11. Kochi-Coimbatore-Salem LPG pipeline (Length: 458 Km)

### **BOOST TO RURAL ROAD CONNECTIVITY- CABINET LAUNCHED PMGSY-III**

#### **About the news ?**

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the launch of **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III)**.

***It involves consolidation of Through Routes and Major Rural Links connecting habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals.***

Under the PMGSY-III Scheme, it is proposed to consolidate 1,25,000 Km road length in the States. The Scheme will also include Through Routes and Major Rural Links that connect habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals.

PMGSY-III scheme was announced by the Finance Minister in Budget Speech for the year 2018-19.

#### **How will the program benefit ?**

- This would facilitate easy and faster movement to and from Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals.
- Roads constructed under PMGSY would also be maintained properly.
- Will benefit farmers and students, ensure development of the area and check migration.

### **PMGSY ?**

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

### **Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Area (RCPLWEA)**

Government launched Road **Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism affected Areas in the year 2016** as a separate vertical under PMGSY to provide all-weather road connectivity with necessary culverts and cross-drainage structures in **44 districts (35 are worst LWE affected districts and 09 are adjoining districts)**, which are critical from security and communication point of view. Under the Scheme, 5,066 Km road length has been sanctioned.

### **Progress until now ?**

A total of 5,99,090 Km road length has been constructed under the scheme since inception till April, 2019 (inclusive of PMGSY-I, PMGSY-II and RCPLWEA Scheme).

The CCEA in its meeting held on 9th August, 2018 approved continuation of PMGSY-I & II beyond 12th Five Year Plan and covering of balance eligible habitations under PMGSY-I by March 2019, PMGSY-II, and habitations under identified LWE blocks (100-249 population) by March 2020.

### **Level 1 Q) Write about the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak yojana?**

### **Prelims- About Roads, PMGSY and its features, other infrastructure.**

## **NUCLEAR ENERGY**

### **WHY NUCLEAR WHEN INDIA HAS AN OCEAN OF ENERGY-**

Though the 'highly harmful' source is regarded as saviour on certain counts, the country has a better option under the seas.

India's 6,780 MW of nuclear power plants contributed to less than 3% of the country's electricity generation, which will come down as other sources will generate more.

In the 1950s, the legendary physicist Dr. Homi Bhabha gave the country a roadmap for the development of nuclear energy.

### **What are the backdrops of the nuclear Energy programme?**

#### **India has a 3 stage nuclear programme.**

The first stage would see the creation of a fleet of 'pressurised heavy water reactors', which use scarce Uranium to produce some Plutonium. The second stage would see the setting up of several 'fast breeder reactors' (FBRs). These FBRs would use a mixture of Plutonium and the reprocessed 'spent Uranium from the first stage, to produce energy and more Plutonium (hence 'breeder'), because the Uranium would transmute into Plutonium. Alongside, the reactors would convert some of the Thorium into Uranium-233, which can also be used to produce energy. After 3-4 decades of operation, the FBRs would have produced enough Plutonium for use in the 'third stage'. In this stage, Uranium-233 would be used in specially-designed reactors to produce energy and convert more Thorium into Uranium-233—you can keep adding Thorium endlessly.

Seventy years down the line, India is still stuck in the first stage. For the second stage, you need the fast breeder reactors. A Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) of 500 MW capacity, construction of which began way back in 2004, is yet to come on stream.

#### **NUCLEAR INSURANCE POOL**

##### **About the Pool ;**

The Government has created an ***Indian Nuclear Insurance Pool (INIP) on 12th June, 2015. M/s. General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC-Re), along with several other Indian Insurance Companies, have launched the Indian Nuclear Insurance Pool (INIP) with a capacity of ₹1500 crore to provide insurance to cover the liability as prescribed under Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (CLND) Act, 2010.*** This has addressed issues related to Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (CLND) Act and had facilitated commencement of work in setting up new nuclear power projects.

**The present nuclear power capacity is 6780 MW comprising of 22 reactors.** There are 9 reactors with a capacity of 6700 MW (including 500 MW PFBR being implemented by BHAVINI) under construction. The Government in 2017 has also accorded administrative approval and financial sanction of 12 nuclear power plants totaling to a capacity of 9000 MW. On their progressive completion, the installed nuclear capacity is expected to reach 8180 MW by 2020 and 22480 MW by 2031.

## STEEL

### **Per Capita consumption of steel :**

Year	World (kg)	India (kg)
2018 -19*	224.5	72.8
Source: world steel, World Steel in Figures 2019		Source: JPC

Per capita steel consumption of a country is directly proportional to its level of development. Developed countries have greater per capita steel consumption as steel is used in construction, public infrastructure such as roads, rails, ports etc and by steel intensive industries such as ship building, automobiles, engineering goods, white goods, etc.

With more focus on housing for all under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, highways, rail network, piped water for all households etc., India's per capita steel consumption is increasing every year.

## MSP, SUBSIDIES, PDS

### TN QUESTIONS ONE NATION ONE RATION, WHO WILL BEAR THE EXTRA COST-

States like TN have opposed the One nation One Ration Card, saying it goes against the tents of Federalism and will reduce the states to mere municipalities.

**Indicating that this is an attack on India's federal structure, TN pointed out that PDS is a state subject.**

TN says that 'one nation, one ration card' scheme would undermine the public distribution system, which was being effectively implemented by Tamil Nadu, and would encourage people from other States to settle down in the Southern States.

People of different States have different food habits, and by seeking to control the public distribution system, the Centre is trying to impose a uniform food habit criticised the state.

TN further said that the single national ration scheme will derail the state's universal Public Distribution System (PDS), arguably one of the best PDS models in the world.

The Centre's ambitious plan to bring the entire system under a single network is expected to help a large number of migrant workers, who travel constantly and work in faraway places.

The TN government further asked that it remains unclear who will bear the cost for ration supplied to people from other states when PDS is a state subject. TN already face a huge financial burden to run an effective universal (PDS) scheme. If the demand increases further (to cater to workers from other states), will the Centre bear that additional cost? Or will the state eventually be forced to scrap universal system. Tamil Nadu's PDS scheme serves 1.99 crore ration card-holders.

Centre has given the states and Union Territories time until June 30, 2020 to implement the national scheme.

#### **MARGINAL HIKE IN MSP FOR 14 KHARIF CROPS-**

The Centre has hiked the minimum support price (MSP) for paddy by less than 4% to ₹1,815 per quintal for the 2019-20 season. The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs . MSPs were hiked for 14 major crops of the kharif or summer season, to ensure they remain at a level that is 1.5 times the cost of production.

The ₹65 per quintal increase is much lower than last year's hike of ₹200 per quintal, but will ensure that the MSP remains exactly 50% above the cost of production, not including land costs.

#### **Lower returns**

The only commodities with MSP that will ensure a higher than 50% return over input costs are bajra (85%), urad (64%) and tur dal (60%). However, even for these crops, returns are lower than last year.

The MSP is the rate at which the Centre procures these crops from farmers. However, there is no guaranteed procurement mechanism for most crops. Just over a third of the paddy harvest is bought by the Food Corporation of India for use in the public distribution system. Farmers groups pointed out that MSPs do not actually help the farmer unless procurement can be increased.

In the case of cereals including nutri-cereals, Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other designated State Agencies would continue to provide price support to the farmers. NAFED, SFAC and other designated Central agencies would continue to undertake procurement of pulses and oilseeds. CCI will be the central nodal agency for undertaking price support operations for Cotton. NAFED would supplement efforts of CCI for cotton procurement. The losses, if any, incurred by the nodal agencies in such operations will be fully reimbursed by the government.

With the intention of giving enough policy thrust to income security of the farmers, Government's focus has shifted from production-centric approach to income-centric one. Enhancing the coverage of **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)** to all farmers in its first Union Cabinet meeting on 31st May 2019, is another major step in boosting the income of the farmers. The PM-KISAN yojana was announced in the interim Budget for the year 2019-2020, where the small and marginal landholder farmer families with cultivable land holding upto 2 hectare across the country were assured of Rs 6000 per year.

### **Pradhan Mantri AnnadataAaySanrakshan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA)**

The new Umbrella Scheme "Pradhan Mantri AnnadataAaySanrakshan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA) announced by the government in 2018 will aid in providing remunerative return to farmers for their produce. The Umbrella Scheme consists of three sub-schemes i.e. Price Support Scheme (PSS), Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS) and Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPSS) on a pilot basis.

The increase in MSP for Kharif Crops for 2019-20 season is in line with the principle of fixing the MSPs at a level of atleast 1.5 times of the all India weighted average Cost of production (CoP), which was announced in the last budget 2018-19.

This MSP policy whereby the farmers are assured of a minimum of 50 percent as margin of profit is one of the important and progressive steps towards doubling farmers' income by 2022 and improving their welfare substantively.

The MSP mechanism provides a price guarantee to the farmers for their produce. This is implemented across the country as nearly 86% farmers are in small and marginal category (Agriculture Census 2015-16), the system ensures equity. It also helps in stabilizing prices in the market and thus services the consumers as well.

**Level 1Q)The Government's focus on the agriculture has changed from production centred to income for the farmers , explain? How is it achieving this?**

### **LAUNCH OF PHASE-II OF DBT IN FERTILIZER SUBSIDY**

**Topic useful in (Subsidies , MSP, Fertilisers, Paper 3 Economy)**

#### **Background-**

The government had introduced DBT for *fertiliser subsidy payments to producers* on a pilot basis in 2016, and it was rolled out nationwide in 2018. Under the current system, **100 per cent subsidy on various grades is released to the fertiliser companies**, on the basis of actual sales made by the retailers to the beneficiaries.

**Sale of all subsidised fertilisers to farmers/buyers are made through point of sale (PoS)** devices installed at each retailer shop and the beneficiaries are identified through Aadhaar card and voter identity card, among others.

After the direct benefit transfer (DBT) of fertiliser subsidies to producers, the government is working on its next goal: **Transferring these subsidies directly to the bank accounts of farmers.** The finance ministry and NITI Aayog are working on a proposal to shift DBT in fertiliser from the producer to the consumer.

The Phase 2 of DBT in Fertilisers aims to transfer the subsidy amount to the farmer directly. The Database of the Landed farmers is being procured through PM Kisan. The information will be used to provide fertiliser subsidies directly to farmers' bank accounts.

The plan is that fertiliser subsidies along with the PM Kisan deposits will become sort of a targeted quasi-universal basic income for farmers. To start with the government will use the PM Kisan database and provide fertiliser subsidies directly to the accounts of only small and marginal farmers.

The new initiatives of DBT 2.0 are as under:

1. **DBT Dashboards:** In order to facilitate accurate information gathering and decision-making w.r.t. the position of requirement/supply/availability of various fertilizers at National, State and District levels, the DoF has developed various dashboards. These dashboards provide various reports regarding the Fertilizer Stock position at ports, plants, in States, at District levels; Proportionate requirement for the season and availability of stocks at various levels; Top 20 buyers; Frequent buyers; Retailers not selling fertilizers etc. The reports would facilitate real-time monitoring of the availability and sale of fertilizers within each State/UT.
2. **PoS 3.0 Software:** The Multi-lingual facility would provide Aadhar virtual ID option for registration, login and sale activity in DBT software. It would also have a provision for area-specific, crop-specific recommendations based on Soil Health Card (SHC) data. Further, it would capture sale to farmers, mixture manufacturers, planter association separately.
3. **Desktop PoS Version:** Keeping in view the various operational challenges viz. limited PoS vendors, rush of sales due to peak season etc. the department has developed a multilingual desktop version of PoS software as an alternative or added facility to PoS devices. Retailers with laptops and computer systems can use high-speed broadband service for fertilizer sales. The Desktop software is more robust and secure as the application is developed and handled directly from the central HQ team at DoF.

- Phase-I DBT system in Fertilizers (DBT 1.0) envisaged the release of 100% subsidy on various fertilizer grades to the fertilizer companies on the basis of actual sales made by the retailer to the beneficiaries.
- The Phase-II of DBT will explore the feasibility of direct cash transfer to farmer's accounts. An expert committee under NITI Aayog has been constituted on 28.09.2017 as per the request of the DoF, to suggest a model for the implementation of phase-2.

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#### INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (IM-PDS) ( SUBSIDIES , MSP )

The Department of Food & Public Distribution has launched a new scheme namely "Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)".

Under the Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IMPDS), an online database of ration cards, intra-state access to the Public Distribution System (PDS) will be possible.

The key objectives of the scheme are to ***integrate the existing PDS systems/portals of States/UTs with the Central Systems/portals, introduction of National Portability of Ration Card holders to lift foodgrains from any fair price shop (FPS) across the country***, and also National level de-duplication of ration cards/beneficiary.

As a result of the programme, universal access to PDS food grains will become possible.

***One Nation, One Ration Card scheme would be introduced from July 1, 2020.*** The scheme seeks to facilitate portability of subsidised food grains for internal migrant workers, provided their ration card is digitalised and linked with Aadhar.

'One Nation, One Ration Card' will bring perceptible changes in the lives of vulnerable migrant workers in India. The food rationing and PDS system was begun during the famine of 1940, and was revived in 1970 as a universal food entitlement programme for Indian citizens.

Post-liberalisation, in 1997, the universal food scheme was made a targeted one, covering poor and vulnerable people. Later, in 2013, due to civil society and judicial influence, the landmark National Food Security Act (NFS) was passed by Parliament. It made the right to food a legal entitlement for two-thirds of poor households in India.

From the inception of the food rationing system in India, a series of reforms have been carried out to identify legitimate beneficiaries, fix per capita food grain, include the most vulnerable people, digitalise and authenticate, in order to improve its target and efficiency.

India has been on the move. The mobility of the poor inside the country for employment is quite complex and multifaceted. A majority of poor households practice temporary or seasonal migration in India.

According to some academic estimation, the seasonal rural-to-urban migration in India is somewhere around 10 crore people, who work as informal workers in urban areas.

The incidence of mobility of poor people from poor and backward states is rising mostly due to the current agrarian crisis, unemployment, poverty and vulnerability resulting out of natural disasters.

Among poor households, a large number prefer their male members to migrate whereas some migrate with their families. The key sectors which are accommodating migrating workers are construction, brick kilns, plantations, agriculture, manufacturing, services and other informal sectors.

Usually, the migrant workers in these sectors are excluded from accessing PDS at their place of work. Moreover, most of the anti-poverty, rural employment, welfare and food security schemes were historically based on domicile-based access and restricted people to access government social security, welfare and food entitlements at their place of origin.

That internal migration in India is huge is evident from the 2011 Census data. It indicates that 45.36 crore people or 37 per cent of the total population of India are migrants. On the other hand, migration for work and employment accounted for 10.22 per cent, which is about 4.3 crore people.

#### **Lack of proper migration data a hurdle-**

Migration data on people engaged in informal work within the state and inter-state destinations is yet to be captured through any systematic survey or enumeration.

Similarly, capturing information on the patterns of migration and especially seasonal or circular migration is hardly being done either at the state or national level.

Although there are provisions under the Inter State Migrant Workers Act of 1979 to register inter-state migrant workers, state governments have failed to register such workers and create databases about them, either at source and destination.

To further understand the issue of migration for employment, sample the 64th round National Sample Survey Organisation data for 2007-08. It suggests that nearly 55 per cent of rural households and 67 per cent of urban ones had migrated for employment-related reasons.

#### **Challenges to the implementation of the One Nation One Card Scheme-**

The first hurdles will be to have exact data on the mobility of poor households migrating to work, locating intra- and inter-state destinations and sectors employing the workers.

Secondly, the domicile-based legislation for accessing government schemes and social security needs serious rethinking before making 'One Nation, One Ration Card' portable.

NFSA defines food security as nutritional security. Therefore, portability of Integrated Child Development Services, Mid-Day Meals, immunisation, health care and other facilities for poor migrant households can't be neglected and should be made portable.

Thirdly, the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' is based on two important guiding principles: Aadhar and digitalisation of ration cards. It is feared that both Aadhar and digital ration card may exclude either a person who migrates alone, or migrates with his family or the left-behind vulnerable family member who stays back in the village.

The Rastriya Sawthya Bima Yojna (RSBY), the national health insurance scheme of the Indian government, had an interesting component of splitting the unique insurance card to help both migrants and those left behind.

This component from RSBY may be adopted in devising PDS access to both migrants and those left behind. Moreover, Aadhar seeding and the biometric authentication of eligible migrant workers at the destination may create obstacles for hassle-free access to PDS both, at source and destination.

Finally, there are multiple social security, welfare, food and anti-poverty schemes in India, in addition to an array of labour laws.

On the other hand, the poor and vulnerable population is more mobile today in searching for better livelihoods, wages and opportunities for their families beyond their native villages.

Therefore, the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' should create inclusion in food schemes, both, at source and destination, without negating the very spirit of ensuring household food security of the migrant family.

**Level 1 Q)The One Nation One card scheme will be a boon to the migrants, analyse the challenges to its implementation?**

**Prelims- about the schemes, Migration types and reasons.**

#### AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED ACTIVITIES

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#### BLUE REVOLUTION: INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES

The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying is implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) on Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries with the following components:

- (i) Development of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture,
- (ii) Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post Harvest Operations,
- (iii) National Scheme on Welfare of Fishermen
- (iv) Strengthening of Database & Geographical Information System of the Fisheries Sector,
- (v) Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and other need-based Interventions,
- (vi) Institutional Arrangement for Fisheries Sector,
- (vii) National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and its activities,

The CSS aims and focuses on increasing of fish production in the country and the fish production has increased from 10.26 million metric tonne during 2014-15 to 13.42 million metric tonne (provisional) during 2018-19.

The CSS on Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries inter-alia provides financial assistance to the State Governments and Union Territories (UTs) for

- (i) construction of new fishing harbours and fish landing centres and
- (ii) Up-gradation/expansion/repair/renovation of the existing fishing harbours and fish landing centres to augment fish production. Besides, the CSS also provides financial assistance for strengthening of post harvest infrastructure facilities such as Ice plants, Cold Storages, Ice plants-cum-cold storages.

Under the CSS central financial assistance is provided to the State Governments/Union Territories for providing safety kits to fishermen, consisting of GPS, communication equipment, echo-sounder, lifejackets, lifebuoys, Distress Alert Transmitter(DAT), life-saving appliances (VHF radiotelephones), fish finder, backup battery, search & rescue beacon etc. These devices are provided to facilitate the marine fishermen for safe navigation, easy access to potential fishing areas and ensure safety of fishermen at sea.

The CSS provides financial assistance to the State Governments/Union Territories(UTs) to support the fishermen and fish farmers for aquaculture including pisciculture in the country. The broad activities assisted for promotion of pisciculture are; integrated development of reservoirs, installation of cages/pens in reservoirs, development of freshwater/brackishwater aquaculture, development of water logged area, development of cold water fisheries, productive utilization of inland saline/alkaline waters for aquaculture, rejuvenation of Urban/ Semi-Urban/ Rural Lakes/Tanks,

stocking of fish fingerlings in beels/wetland and promotion of new technology such as Re-circulatory Aquaculture System(RAS), open sea cage culture including seaweed cultivation, bivalve culture and pearl culture.

#### **CREDIT CARDS FOR THE FISHERMAN**

The Government of India has extended the facility of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) to fisheries and animal husbandry farmers to help them meet their working capital needs. The KCC facility will help fisheries and animal husbandry farmers to meet their short term credit requirements of rearing of animals, poultry birds, fish, shrimp, other aquatic organisms and capture of fish.

Under Kisan Credit Card (KCC) facility, for the existing KCC holders the credit limit is Rs. 3 lakh including animal husbandry and fisheries activities whereas the KCC holders for animal husbandry and fisheries have the credit limit of Rs. 2 lakh to meet their working capital requirements for animal husbandry and fisheries activities. Under KCC facility, Interest subvention is available for animal husbandry and fisheries farmers @ 2% per annum at the time of disbursal of loan and additional interest subvention @ 3 % per annum in case of prompt repayment as Prompt Repayment Incentive.

The criteria for eligible beneficiaries under Kisan Credit Card (KCC) for Animal Husbandry and Fisheries is as follows:

#### **I. Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture:**

Fishers, Fish Farmers (individual & groups/partners/share croppers/tenant farmers), Self Help Groups, Joint Liability Groups and Woman groups.

The beneficiaries must own or lease any of the fisheries related activities such as pond, tank, open water bodies, raceway, hatchery, rearing unit, possess necessary license for fish farming and fishing related activities, and any other State specific fisheries and allied activities.

#### **II. Marine Fisheries**

Beneficiaries as listed at 1.1 above who own or lease registered fishing vessel, boat, possess necessary fishing license/permission for fishing in estuary and sea, fish farming/ mariculture activities in estuaries and open sea and any other State specific fisheries and allied activities

#### **III. Poultry and small ruminant**

Farmers, poultry farmers either individuals or joint borrower, Joint Liability Groups or Self Help Groups including tenant farmers of sheep/goats/pigs/poultry/birds/rabbit and having owned/rented/leased sheds.

#### **IV. Dairy**

Farmers and Dairy farmers either individuals or joint borrower, Joint Liability Groups or Self Help Groups including tenant farmers having owned/rented/leased sheds.

#### **FIRST EVER INDIA INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVES TRADE FAIR (IICTF)**

A unique initiative for taking farmers, artisans & other members of cooperatives directly to the global trade arena.

**Aligning with the Agriculture Export Policy 2018 which aims at doubling the agriculture export and integrating Indian farmers and agriculture products with global value chains,** The First Ever India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (IICTF) is going to be held at PragatiMaidan, New Delhi from 11th till 13th October, 2019. Steered by NCDC, the Fair is being conducted with the support of one international organization (NEDAC), three Ministries, four State Governments and several apex level Indian cooperative organizations.

A large number of Indian Cooperatives and International Cooperative Organisations are expected to participate in this three day event which will be held from 11th till 13th October, 2019. Though the international buyers can be from cooperative, corporate, private, government, IICTF covers exhibitors / sellers / buyers who have focus on the Cooperative-to-Cooperative trade on sectors such as agriculture and allied sectors complete value chains, cold chain, dairy, commodities, exports, technology, climate smart agriculture, processing, packaging, storage, machinery, brand promotion, marketing, coop-banking, agri-tech, cyber-security, livestock, fisheries, handloom, handicrafts, textiles, consumer goods, retail, hospitality, insurance, finance, credit, healthcare, products by women groups and capacity development.

The Trade Fair is aimed at promoting cooperative to cooperative trade within India and abroad leading to enhanced rural and farm prosperity.

#### **WHAT IS ZERO BUDGET NATURAL FARMING**

##### **About the news-**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman thrust ***zero budget farming*** came into the spotlight in the first Budget speech of the 17th Lok Sabha earlier this month, calling for a “back to the basics” approach.

***Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices.***

**Promoted by Maharashtrian agriculturist Subash Palekar to reduce the indebtedness of the farmers- a cause for farmer suicides-**

It was originally promoted by Maharashtrian agriculturist and Padma Shri recipient Subhash Palekar, who developed it in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the Green Revolution's methods driven by chemical fertilizers and pesticides and intensive irrigation. He argued that the rising cost of these external inputs was a leading cause of indebtedness and suicide among farmers, while the impact of chemicals on the environment and on long-term fertility was devastating. Without the need to spend money on these inputs — or take loans to buy them — the cost of production could be reduced and farming made into a “zero budget” exercise, breaking the debt cycle for many small farmers.

**“Jeevamrutha” instead of Chemical Fertilisers-**

Instead of commercially produced chemical inputs, the ZBNF promotes the application of jeevamrutha — a mixture of fresh desi cow dung and aged desi cow urine, jaggery, pulse flour, water and soil — on farmland. This is a fermented microbial culture that adds nutrients to the soil, and acts as a catalytic agent to promote the activity of microorganisms and earthworms in the soil.

About 200 litres of jeevamrutha should be sprayed twice a month per acre of land; after three years, the system is supposed to become self-sustaining. Only one cow is needed for 30 acres of land, according to Mr. Palekar, with the caveat that it must be a local Indian breed — not an imported Jersey or Holstein.

**Bijaramrita to treat seeds-**

A similar mixture, called bijamrita, is used to treat seeds, while concoctions using neem leaves and pulp, tobacco and green chillis are prepared for insect and pest management.

The ZBNF method also promotes soil aeration, minimal watering, intercropping, bunds and topsoil mulching and discourages intensive irrigation and deep ploughing. Mr. Palekar is against vermicomposting, which is the mainstay of typical organic farming, as it introduces the most common composting worm, the European red wiggler (*Eisenia fetida*) to Indian soils. He claims these worms absorb toxic metals and poison groundwater and soil.

**Important to double the Farmers income by 2022-**

In order to achieve the Central government's promise to double farmers income by 2022, one aspect being considered is natural farming methods such as the ZBNF which reduce farmers' dependence on loans to purchase inputs they cannot afford. Meanwhile, inter-cropping allows for increased returns. **The Economic Survey has also highlighted the ecological advantages.**

According to National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data, almost 70% of agricultural households spend more than they earn and more than half of all farmers are in debt. In States such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, levels of indebtedness are around 90%, where each household bears an average debt of ₹1 lakh.

A limited 2017 study in Andhra Pradesh claimed a sharp decline in input costs and improvement in yields. However, reports also suggest that many farmers, including in Mr. Palekar's native Maharashtra, have reverted to conventional farming after seeing their ZBNF returns drop after a few years, in turn raising doubts about the method's efficacy in increasing farmers' incomes.

#### **Critics warn of the move without proper assessment-**

ZBNF critics warn against a wholesale move away from that model without sufficient proof that yields will not be affected. Sikkim, which has seen some decline in yields following a conversion to organic farming, is used as a cautionary tale regarding the pitfalls of abandoning chemical fertilizers.

In June 2018, Andhra Pradesh rolled out an ambitious plan to become India's first State to practise 100% natural farming by 2024. It aims to phase out chemical farming over 80 lakh hectares of land, converting the State's 60 lakh farmers to ZBNF methods. Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Karnataka and Uttarakhand have also invited Mr. Palekar to train their farmers.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research is studying the ZBNF methods practised by basmati and wheat farmers in Modipuram (Uttar Pradesh), Ludhiana (Punjab), Pantnagar (Uttarakhand) and Kurukshetra (Haryana), evaluating the impact on productivity, economics and soil health including soil organic carbon and soil fertility.

If found to be successful, an enabling institutional mechanism could be set up to promote the technology.

#### **Level 1 Q) Critically Analyse the Zero Budget Natural farming?**

#### **KRISHONNATI YOJANA**

##### **About the Yojana-**

'Green Revolution- Krishonnati Yojana' is an Umbrella Scheme comprising both Central Sector as well as Centrally Sponsored Schemes/Missions. The 'Green Revolution - Krishonnati Yojana' was approved coterminous with the period of the Fourteenth Finance Commission from 2017-18 to 2019-20. This Umbrella Scheme has the following twelve Schemes/Missions:

- (1) Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH);

- (2) National Mission on Oil Seeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP);
- (3) National Food Security Mission (NFSM)
- (4) National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA);
- (5) Sub-Mission on Agriculture Extension (SMAE);
- (6) Sub-Mission on Seeds & Planting Material (SMSP);
- (7) Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM);
- (8) Sub-Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine (SMPPQ);
- (9) Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Census, Economics and Statistics;
- (10) Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperation;
- (11) Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Marketing (ISAM);
- (12) National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGP-A).

**Level 1 Q) Write about the Krishonnati yojana?**

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**DAIRY INDUSTRY OPPOSES THE RCEP**

**Topic useful in (RCEP and sector wise concerns)**

Dairy players have strongly opposed the idea of opening up the Indian market to global milk producers at the cost of Indian dairy farmers.

Discussions on a proposal for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with milk-producing countries such as New Zealand and Australia under the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) are currently under way. India's dairy players have demanded that the sector be kept outside the proposed FTA agreement.

**Demand and supply – India does not need milk imports-**

Contrary to the perception created by the foreign lobbyists, various agencies, including Niti Aayog, have projected India's milk production to touch 330 mt by 2033, from the current 180 mt. The demand projection is about 292 mt, which clearly indicates India does not require to import milk or milk products to feed its population even after a decade.

There are demands from several countries to open up Indian dairy market so that they can export their surplus milk products at nil or lower import duties. This will be detrimental to the Indian dairy industry and to the livelihood and sustenance for our 10 crore milk producers.

Notably, international data points that New Zealand is an over-producer of milk with annual production of about 22 mt from just 10,000 dairy farmers to feed its 4.8 million population. New Zealand exports about 90 per cent of its total milk production, and hence, is clearly on the lookout for newer markets for its milk.

Currently, India imports mostly whey powder and speciality cheese, that too at higher import duty in the range of 30 per cent. Considering this, the dairy industry, including cooperatives, private dairy players and Indian Dairy Association (IDA), are strongly opposed to the import of dairy products under the HSN 0401 to 0406 categories under the proposed RCEP.

#### **Diary provides Liquidity to the farmers-**

It will be detrimental to our farmers. Because, there is no other agri commodity than milk, which provides liquidity to farmers on a weekly basis. There may be prominence of certain crops in certain States, but milk remains the lifeline of farmers, where he gets the liquidity. If this liquidity stops, it will choke the entire system.

For farmers, milk is the highest valuable crop, giving 27 per cent of agricultural income, which cannot be ignored to realise the mission of doubling farmers' income.

#### **Level 1Q) Analyse the Concerns against the RCEP from the Agriculture and Related sectors?**

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#### **A NEW MINISTRY PROMISES A NEW BEGINNING FOR THE ANIMAL HUSBANDRY-**

Animal husbandry was considered a subsidiary activity, which has changed with the Modi government now according it an independent status.

The department of animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries was, indeed, "under" the ministry of agriculture.

In February this year, the Centre created a separate department of fisheries, carving it out of the erstwhile department of animal husbandry, dairying & fisheries. A subsector contributing nearly 1% to the country's GDP, Rs 48,000 crore worth of exports and livelihoods to millions received the recognition and attention it deserved. This came as a sequel to the unveiling of an ambitious Blue Revolution scheme in 2014 for harnessing the potential of India's marine and inland water resources through fisheries and aquaculture. Nevertheless, both animal husbandry and dairying, and the new department of fisheries, remained "under" the ministry of agriculture.

But in May 2019, with the return of the current government, **a separate Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying got created.**

### **How important is this step?**

**At 125 crore-plus, India's livestock population is the highest in the world.** The country has, for more than a decade now, been the global leader in milk production, with an estimated output of 188 million tonnes in 2018-19 worth Rs 6,54,000 crore — more than the combined value of wheat and paddy — and growing at an annual rate of about 6.5%. Egg production, too, has been growing at a staggering 9.4%, touching 104 billion (numbers) in the fiscal year gone by. Fish production has, likewise, consistently grown at roughly 7%; at 13.7 million tonnes, it is next only to China. Marine products are also India's single largest agricultural export commodity.

Size, however, is only one part. Given the much more daunting challenges ahead, the new ministry has its work cut out for it. While we can take reasonable pride in being the biggest milk producer, one must equally be concerned over our cattle productivity, which, at 1,805 kg per animal per year, is below the global average of 2,310 kg; the corresponding figure for countries such as Israel is as high as 13,200 kg. **The problem of low productivity extends also to fisheries and poultry.**

**Another challenge to the sector is animal diseases that significantly affect production and trade of livestock products.** India is one of the few major countries still plagued by Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis and Peste des Petits Ruminants (sheep and goat plague). These diseases have resulted in denial of access for our dairy and meat products to large overseas markets, as importing entities insist on disease free-status, especially for FMD. Exports apart, they cause financial losses to the tune of thousands of crores, while coming in the way of realising good returns from livestock rearing. Our approach to management of animal diseases hasn't been effective enough: FMD requires a robust vaccination campaign, ensuring coverage of the entire livestock population. The control programme in this highly contagious viral disease, until recently, was confined only to cattle and buffaloes, while excluding sheep, goat or swine. Even this coverage was only partial due to inadequate financial resources. Any vaccination programme is flawed if it covers less than 100% of the population at risk.

Recognising the above reality and learning from past experience, the Centre has now launched an ambitious FMD and Brucellosis control programme, targeting complete control and eradication of these diseases. This single intervention is going to have far-reaching implications, in terms of boosting productivity and profitability from livestock rearing as well as opening up global markets for our products.

Another strategy that can significantly impact productivity is the expansion of artificial insemination. The coverage here, too, is woefully low at 30% of the breedable livestock population. This should increase to a minimum of 50%, along with sourcing of quality semen from good genetic stock. Harnessing technologies such as sex sorted semen and embryo transfer must also receive focused attention. These are only a few illustrative examples of what a new ministry can do, both through central and state schemes, to ensure sizeable contribution of livestock and fisheries for doubling of farmers' income.

A Food and Agriculture Organisation study has shown that one rupee of investment in the livestock sector can generate a return of four rupees. The new ministry's vision ought to, then, extend beyond doubling of incomes. Moreover, the sector shouldn't be just a vehicle for poverty alleviation or securing livelihoods. Rather, it must emerge as a platform for creating an army of rural entrepreneurs. Tending to cattle, pigs or poultry may not be seen as glamorous, but earning good money is certainly an attractive proposition. The sector should be pitched as such — livestock for prosperity.

**Level1 Q) The Government has created a new Ministry of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, Comment on its importance?**

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TECHNOLOGY TO THE AID OF FARMERS (KISAN SUVIDHA MOBILE APP)

**Topic useful in( Technology Aid to the farmers)**

**Kisan Suvidha** is a mobile app developed to help farmers get relevant information instantly. The app provides information on various details such as weather, market prices, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, agriculture machinery, dealers, agro advisories, plant protection and IPM practices etc. Other unique features like extreme weather alerts, market prices of commodity in nearest area and the maximum price in state as well as in India have been added to empower farmers in the best possible manner.

**Technology to double the farmers income-**

1. Digital Technology, which can play a transformational role in modernizing and organizing how rural India performs its agricultural activities, include Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analytics, Block chain Technology, Internet of Things etc.
2. **Development of Kisan Suvidha mobile application to facilitate dissemination of information to farmers on the critical parameters viz., Weather; Market Prices; Plant Protection; input Dealers (Seed, Pesticide, Fertilizer) Farm Machinery; Soil Health Card; Cold Storages & Godowns, Veterinary Centres and Diagnostic Labs.** With market information, Farmers are better informed about markets to sell produce, prevailing market prices and quantity demanded in the market. Thus, they can make informed decisions to sell produce at the right price and right time.
3. The Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) has also compiled more than 100 mobile apps developed by ICAR, State Agricultural Universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras and uploaded on its website. These mobile apps developed in the areas of crops, horticulture, veterinary, dairy, poultry, fisheries, natural resources management and integrated subjects, offer valuable information to the farmers, including package of practices, market prices of various commodities, weather related information, advisory services, etc.

4. Development of mKisan Portal ([www.mkisan.gov.in](http://www.mkisan.gov.in)) for sending advisories on various crop related matter to the registered farmers through SMSs.
5. Launching of e-National Agriculture Market initiative to provide farmers an electronic online trading platform.
6. Implementation of Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure, sub-scheme of Integrated Scheme of Agricultural Marketing, in order to improve/create scientific storage capacity for storing farm produce, processed farm produce and to reduce post-harvest storage loss.
7. Introduction of Soil Health Card Scheme to assist State Governments in providing Soil Health Cards to all farmers across the country once in a cycle of 2 years Soil health card provides information to the farmers on nutrient status of their soil along with recommendations on appropriate dosage of nutrients to be applied for improving crop productivity and soil fertility.
8. Providing subsidies under National Food Security Mission (Oil Seeds and Oil Palm) to farmers on seed components, transfer of technologies, production inputs and water carrying devices. Financial assistance is also being provided under this scheme for block demonstration, frontline demonstration, farmers training to educate farmers to adopt modern techniques of farming to yield good crop economically.
9. Use of space technology for various programmes/ areas such as Forecasting Agricultural Output using Space, Agro-meteorology and Land-based Observations project, Coordinated programme on Horticulture Assessment and Management using geo-informatics project, National Agricultural Drought Assessment and Monitoring System, Rice-Fallow Area Mapping and intensification, geo tagging of infrastructure and assets created under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, and Crop Insurance.
10. Using machine learning process alongwith different computer algorithm for crop classification and area estimation.
11. The Government has also set up 713 Krishi Vigyan Kendras and 684 Agricultural Technology Management Agencies at district level for dissemination of technologies among farm community. In addition, farmers are provided information through Focused Publicity Campaigns, Kisan Call Centres, Agri Clinics and Agri-Business Centres of entrepreneurs, Agri Fairs and exhibitions, Kisan SMS Portal, etc.

**Level 1 Q) What are the Technological interventions is the government taking to help the farmers?**

- GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363

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#### DESERT LOCUST

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) had warned of the threat posed to food security by the Desert Locust-

Desert Locust summer breeding, amplified by heavy rains, can pose a serious threat to agricultural production areas of Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea and parts of Ethiopia and northern Somalia during the next three months. This could result in potentially adverse impacts on the agricultural seasonal yields and local economies affecting food security and livelihoods of the populations in the countries concerned.

Intensive ground and aerial control operations were mounted in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Sudan this year that undoubtedly reduced locust populations but could not entirely prevent swarms from forming and moving to the traditional summer breeding areas in Yemen, Sudan, the Horn of Africa and along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border.

### **Dangerous creatures**

After becoming airborne, swarms of tens of millions of locusts can fly up to 150 km a day with the wind. Desert Locusts (*Schistocerca gregaria*) live about three months, and a female locust lays about 300 eggs. A Desert Locust adult can consume roughly its own weight in fresh food per day — about two grams every day. A very small swarm eats the same amount of food in one day as about 35 000 people.

### **Urgent action needed to prevent the spread and save crops**

Urgent Desert Locust control operations are required to safeguard crops and mitigate the risk of infestation in Yemen, as well as to prevent locust swarms from invading the neighbouring countries.

The Desert Locust situation continues to remain serious along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border and in Yemen.

In India, breeding continues in Barmer, Jaisalmer and Bikaner districts of western Rajasthan where mature swarms are laying eggs and new hatching is causing small groups of gregarious hoppers to form. Ground control operations are underway that have prevented large numbers of hopper bands from forming so far.

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### **FEMINIZATION OF AGRICULTURE**

As per Agriculture Census conducted at an interval of every five years by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, the percentage of female operational holdings in the country have increased from 12.78 percent during 2010-11 to 13.78 percent during 2015-16.

### **Programmes for Women Farmers-**

In line with the provisions of National Policy for Farmers (NPF) (2007), the Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development is already implementing a programme exclusively for women farmers namely, Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), which is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM). The primary objective of MKSP is to empower women by enhancing their participation in agriculture and to create sustainable

livelihood opportunities for them. Funding support to the tune of up to 60% (90% for North Eastern States) for such projects is provided by the Government of India.

The Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare is also promoting mainstreaming of Gender Concerns in agriculture by ensuring flow of funds and benefits to the tune of 30% for women farmers under its beneficiary oriented Schemes and Programmes. Besides, Government is providing additional support and assistance to women farmers, over and above the male farmers under a few selected Schemes.

### **Economic Survey 2017-18 highlighted the increasing Feminisation of Agriculture-**

According to the Economic Survey 2017-18 there is a rise seen in migration of men from rural to urban areas, and this is turning into '**feminisation' of agriculture sector**', as the number of women in multiple roles such as cultivators, entrepreneurs and labourers is increasing. The Survey also stressed the need for an 'inclusive transformative agricultural policy', aimed at gender-specific interventions.

The Survey observed that crucial role of women in agricultural development and allied fields was a fact long taken for granted.

Notably, as per Census 2011, out of total female main workers, 55% were agricultural labourers and 24% cultivators.

However, only 12.8% of the operational holdings were owned by women, which reflected the gender disparity in ownership of landholdings in agriculture. The Survey added that with women predominant at all levels — production, pre-harvest, post-harvest processing, packaging, marketing — of the agricultural value chain it is imperative to adopt gender specific interventions.

### **Level 1 Q) Role of Women in Agriculture, discuss?**

#### **INDIA AND WORLD INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

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INDIA AGAIN ABSTAINS AT U.N. VOTE ON LGBTQ INDEPENDENT EXPERT, DRAWS CRITICISM

#### **About the news-**

India on July 12 abstained at the vote for extending the mandate of an important U.N. official who reports on violence and discrimination against sexual minorities.

India's abstention at the resolution for term-renewal of the **Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the U.N. Human Rights Council** in Geneva

drew widespread criticism from activists especially since it came after the Supreme Court struck down Section 377 and decriminalised the LGBTQ community.

The resolution received support from most of the member countries at the Human Rights Council but India, Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameron, Congo, Hungary, Togo and Senegal abstained during the final voting. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Qatar, Somalia opposed the resolution. India had also abstained during the 2016 vote on appointment of the Independent Expert. The current Independent Expert is Victor Madrigal Borloz of Costa Rica.

**The Resolution numbered L10 Rev 1 granted an extension of three years to the Independent Expert to carry on reporting on incidents of violence against the LGBTQ community all over the world.** The Resolution will help integrating the work of the crucial official into the larger body of global work by the United Nations.

### **What will the Expert do?**

The Expert will submit an annual report to the U.N. General Assembly and the UNHRC. The expert has a mandate of protection of the vulnerable sexual minorities.

The Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. The mandate holder has been invited to assess the implementation of existing international human rights instruments with regard to ways to overcome violence and discrimination against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and to identify and address the root causes of violence and discrimination.

## **INDIA, RUSSIA DISCUSS SPACE COOPERATION**

### **About the news-**

India and Russia held high-level talks here to elevate bilateral cooperation to the next level in the field of space, including assistance in India's maiden human space flight mission 'Gaganyaan'. **The meeting was held between the National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Dmitry Rogozin, Director General of Russia's space agency (ROSCOSMOS).**

Space has emerged as a key area of cooperation between India and Russia in the high technology sector. India shares robust cooperation with Russia in strategic areas of defence, nuclear and space.

There have been frequent contacts between the two space agencies to finalise the details of the Gaganyaan Mission, which will carry Indian astronaut to space in 2022, to coincide with India's 75th anniversary of Independence.

Russia has promised all assistance for India's Human Space Flight Mission and details regarding cooperation for the Gaganyaan Mission were discussed, it also offered support to India in participating in the International Space Station.

Both sides agreed to take a strategic approach to elevate bilateral cooperation to the next level keeping in mind the special and privileged partnership and India's priorities such as Make in India programme.

Cooperation in futuristic technologies including new space systems, rocket engines, propellants and propulsion systems, spacecraft and launch vehicle technology were also discussed.

#### **4 decade old co-operation-**

India's space cooperation with Russia is not new but is a four decade old one. The former Soviet Union launched India's First two satellites, Aryabhatta and Bhaskar from the Baikonur Cosmodrome. Despite the US sanctions on ISRO in early 1990 russia had supplied cryogenic Engines to India to push its GSLV rocket programme, the same project which later helped ISRO develop 4 tonne payload after the GSLV Mk111. The same Rocket GSLV MkIII will launch the Chandrayaan-2 Spacecraft.

#### **Level 1 Q) Comment on the India Russia Space Relation?**

#### **TURKEY DEFIES US AS THE S-400 ARRIVES-**

##### **About the news-**

Turkey has received the first parts of a Russian S-400 missile defence system despite opposition from the US. The move will anger the US, which has warned that Turkey cannot have both the S-400 anti-aircraft defence system and US F-35 fighter jets. Turkey and the US are Nato allies - but Turkey has also been establishing closer links with Russia.

Turkey has signed up to buying 100 US F-35 warplanes and has invested heavily in the F-35 programme. Turkish companies produce 937 of the plane's parts. But Turkey has also pursued an increasingly independent defence policy amid strained ties with the US and Europe. It has purchased Russia's advanced S-400 air defence system for \$2.5bn and sent members of its armed forces to Russia for training.

US defence officials said the S-400 is incompatible with the wider Nato air-defence system in the region. The US said they did not want the F-35 jets to be near S-400 systems because they feared Russian technicians would be able to access the F-35's vulnerabilities.

The US warned that it would exclude Turkey from the F-35 programme if the S-400 deal went ahead, and warned that it could impose economic sanctions. Turkey has argued that the two systems would be located in separate locations, and that the US was slow to offer an alternative missile defence shield.

### **How important is Turkey to the US?**

1. Turkey has the second-largest army in Nato, a 29-member military alliance.
2. It is one of the US's key allies, and is located in a strategic position, sharing borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran.
3. It has also played an important role in the Syria conflict, providing arms and military support to some rebel groups.
4. However, it has seen relations deteriorate with some Nato members and the EU, who have accused Mr Erdogan of adopting an increasingly authoritarian style following a failed coup in 2016.

### **Sanctions expected**

The US is expected to level sanctions against Turkey over its acquisition of the Russian system, penalties mandated by the Countering America's Adversaries. Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) which penalizes countries that purchase military equipment from blacklisted firms. The US could suspend Turkey from the F-35 programme.

### **Who has bought it?**

1. China was the first country to buy the weapon from Russia, ordering several S-400s for an estimated \$3 billion. Deliveries began in April 2018 and the first tests took place at the end of June 2019. Few other details of the missile deal were made public.
2. India bought five S-400 systems for \$5.2 billion. Their delivery is due to begin at the end of next year.
3. Around a dozen other countries — including Iraq, Qatar and Saudi Arabia — have shown interest in the S-400, in some cases as a means of putting pressure on the United States to lower prices on its weapons systems.
4. The S-400 is one of the most modern air defence systems in the world, and comes at a lower price than its U.S. competitor, the Patriot.

### **Level 1Q) Comment on US reservations about the S-400 and its fallout?**

**CHINA SITES INDIA'S ROLE IN REVIVING CORRIDOR-**

After flagging last month the revival of the **Bangladesh China India Myanmar-Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC)** during talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in

Kyrgyzstan capital Bishkek, Chinese President Xi Jinping joined visiting Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina to accelerate the project with New Delhi's support.

After the Wuhan summit, China has been advocating "China-India Plus" cooperation, aimed at adopting a joint approach towards some of the major issues in the region, including the Rohingya refugee crisis along with possible initiatives in Nepal, Afghanistan and Iran.

Chinese President Xi Jinping called the BCIM-EC project as an example of expanding the India-China ties, which had entered a "new phase" after the Wuhan informal summit held last year in April, following last month's talks with Mr. Modi on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek.

***Bangladesh is willing to actively participate in the BRI and accelerate the construction of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM).*** The reference to the BRI and the BCIM during the meetings between Hasina and Chinese leaders were regarded significant from India's point of view.

China's investments in Bangladesh included the construction of 6-km long bridge across the Padma river, as the Ganga is known in the country, costing about USD 3.7 billion and the USD 2.5 billion power plant at Payra near Dhaka.

Under the BRI, China has been routing most of its investments through its multi-billion-dollar global project aimed at financing and building infrastructure projects, especially in developing countries to enhance its influence across the world.

The BRI investments were criticised by the US as debt trap especially after Sri Lanka handed over its Hambantota port as debt swap to China in 2017.

The controversial USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and BCIM are the components of the BRI, which was mooted by Xi in 2013. While the CPEC regarded as the flagship project of the BRI took off, the BCIM failed to make headway.

India has protested to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. China lately is making efforts to revive the BCIM.

After a long gap, Xi raised the BCIM project during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Bishkek on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit early this month.

## Strengthening Ties

The **2,800-km** BCIM corridor proposes to link Kunming with Kolkata, via Mandalay and Dhaka

This is the only trans-regional growth corridor that cuts through the remote north-eastern states of India and connects the region to neighbouring countries



India is of the view that BCIM predates the concept of BRI, therefore, cannot be included in it

**The 2800-km BCIM corridor proposes to link Kunming in China's Yunnan province with Kolkata, passing through nodes such as Mandalay in Myanmar and Dhaka in Bangladesh before heading to Kolkata.**

With an estimated USD 31 billion investments, China has emerged as a major investor in Bangladesh - mainly in the infrastructure and energy sectors - raising concerns in India over growing Chinese influence in the region.

**Level 1 Q) Write about the BCIM? Prelims - same , map.**

### 3 MILITARY LOGISTICS PACT ON THE ANVIL

#### About the news?

India has signed a Logistics support agreement with the US. Similar **Military Logistics Support Agreements (MLSA)** are to be signed with **Australia, Japan, Russia**.

This will further enhance the operational reach of the military in the region. India has already signed such agreements with a few countries beginning with the U.S. The Navy has been the biggest beneficiary of them.

Agreements with Australia, Japan and Russia are in advanced stages and are likely to be concluded by the year-end.

The MLSA with Japan is called the **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)** and with Russia, the **Agreement on Reciprocal Logistics Support (ARLS)**.

The agreements with Australia and Russia will be broadly on the lines of the U.S. one, while the one with Japan is a broader defence cooperation agreement including logistics.

India signed the **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Understanding (LEMOA)** with the U.S. in August 2016 after decade-long negotiations. Since then, it has concluded several such agreements with **France, Oman, the Philippines and Singapore and gained access to the Sabang port in Indonesia.**

The LEMOA with US gives Indian warships and aircrafts access to the American bases in Djibouti, Diego Gracia, Guam and the Subic Bay. India has been given access by Indonesia to the Subang Base. These Pacts and other steps to establish bases in the Indian Ocean Region countries are crucial for India to expand its naval footprint to counter China's strategic moves in the region. China operationalised its first overseas military base at Djibouti in August 2017 apart from already having access to Karachi and other ports in Pakistan for its submarines and warships.

Along the same time the Indian Navy launched the "**Mission Based deployments**", from the Persian Gulf to the Malacca strait with a dozen warships spread across the choke points in the IOR region on the round the clock patrols for any operational eventuality.

#### **What are Logistics Agreements ?**

Logistics agreements are administrative arrangements facilitating access to military facilities for exchange of fuel and provisions, simplifying logistical support and increasing operational turnaround of the military when it is away from India.

**The agreements will provide each countries warships and aircrafts repair, refuelling, and berthing facilities. To avail these services these agreements are being signed.**

The ARLS with Russia is expected to be signed during the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin in September on the side lines of the **Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in Russia**. The pact was long pending given the deep defence and strategic cooperation between the two countries for a long time. The Russian agreement gives India access to its facilities in the Arctic region which is seeing increased global activity as new shipping routes are opening up and resources are becoming available.

India and Japan are moving fast on finalising the ACSA. Maritime cooperation has been a major focus area for the two countries and to enhance Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in the Indo-Pacific region the two countries have already signed the implementing arrangement for deeper cooperation between the Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF).

The biggest beneficiary of the logistics pacts has been the Navy which interacts and exercises the most with foreign navies. *When operating on the high seas, exercises or during humanitarian assistance missions fuel, food and other needs can be exchanged and settled through the established modalities later.*

For instance, under LEMOA with the U.S., India has Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) which includes designating the points of contact for the U.S. military to work with, and a common account for payments. The SOPs are applicable to all three services with each service having a designated LEMOA office. Therefore the agreement benefits all the 3 services. This will improve the operational capabilities of the three services.

### **Level 1 Q) What are Military Logistics Support Agreements, why are they in news ?**

**Prelims- MLSA, and related above.**

#### **AFGHAN GOVERNMENT TO HOLD TALKS WITH TALIBAN IN AUGUST**

Direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban could begin in Norway, marking a potentially crucial step in efforts to end the war.

The Taliban have so far refused to speak to the government of President Ashraf Ghani, which they see as illegitimate, except for at a recent summit where officials attended in a "personal capacity".

The 8<sup>th</sup> round of US-Taliban talks are being held in Doha. US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, is leading a push to forge a peace deal with the Taliban. Progress in reaching a deal that would end America's nearly 18-year military involvement in Afghanistan. Washington has said it wants to see a deal signed by September 1, but any deal requires the Taliban to talk to Kabul. The apparent development comes after Taliban negotiators sat with Afghan representatives at a so-called intra-Afghan dialogue brokered by Germany in Doha this month.

#### **Who are the Taliban?**

The Taliban is an extreme Islamic group, which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. They are fighting because they want their leaders to be in charge of Afghanistan again. The Taliban want to turn the country into what they believe would be the world's purest Islamic country.

#### **What was life like under the Taliban?**

When the Taliban leaders were in control, they banned many things, including education for girls, make-up, kite-flying and films.

But some Afghans still took part in these things in secret, risking extreme punishment if they were found out. The Taliban's strict laws and extreme punishments made them unpopular with other countries.

While they were in control, they allowed a terrorist organisation called al-Qaeda to have training camps there. The group was overthrown in November 2001 by British and US forces, alongside Afghan fighters from a group called the Northern Alliance.

The Taliban movement continues to be a fighting force in Afghanistan and a major threat to the country's government. They continue to carry out attacks across the country, including on military bases and schools.

Many people believe that future peace in Afghanistan can only come if the government negotiates with the Taliban. In early 2019, the US and the Taliban began peace talks aimed at finding a solution to the 17-year conflict in Afghanistan.

The Taliban, who was overthrown in 2001 by a US-led military coalition for sheltering al-Qaeda, the group blamed for the September 11, 2001 attacks in the US, has long demanded a complete withdrawal of foreign troops in order to "end the occupation" in Afghanistan.

About 14,000 US troops and around 17,000 troops from 39 NATO allies and partner countries are in Afghanistan in a non-combative role.

## PAKISTAN

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UNDER PRESSURE PAKISTAN'S BOOKS SAEED AIDE FOR FUNDING LASHKAR-

### **About the news-**

Pakistan lodged 23 cases on charges of terror financing and facilitation against Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief and 26/11 mastermind Hafiz Saeed and a dozen members of the terror group, as well as five banned outfits masquerading as charity organisations.

Pakistan's Punjab Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) said it registered the cases in Lahore, Gujranwala and Multan for collection of funds for terror-financing through assets or properties in the names of trusts or non-profit organisations.

### **Pakistan acts under the Pressure of the FATF-**

Pakistan's move comes days after the G-20 declaration at the Osaka summit on June 28-29 gave primacy to the FATF's "essential role" and called for the effective implementation of its standards.

On June 21, at the FATF plenary session in Orlando, the US — the terror financing watchdog's chair — had told Pakistan that it could face blacklisting at its next session in October if it did not adhere to its commitments to stop access to funds for terror groups.

The FATF had deferred blacklisting of Pakistan, which managed to gain support from China, Turkey and Malaysia.

India has viewed the developments with "caution", and said similar action has been taken in the past without yielding results. India has always stressed that Terror and Talks cannot go hand in hand.

On the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Osaka, Modi, who pitched for a global conference on terrorism. In a joint statement, BRICS, which includes China, had called on all states to prevent financing of terrorist networks and terrorist actions from their territories.

**FATF-** The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions. The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system. The FATF is therefore a "policy-making body" which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas. ***The FATF's decision making body, the FATF Plenary, meets three times per year.***

#### 30000 MILITANTS ACTIVE IN PAKISTAN SAYS IMRAN

India and Afghanistan accuse Pakistan of providing safe haven to the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba and other militant groups, which carry out attacks in the two countries.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has admitted that about 30,000-40,000 "armed people", who have been trained and fought in parts of Afghanistan or Kashmir, were in Pakistan and accused the previous governments of not telling the truth to the US about the militant groups operating in the country.

Khan, who is on a three-day official visit to the US, also admitted to American lawmakers that successive governments in Pakistan did not tell the truth to the United States, in particular in the last 15 years, that there were 40 different militant groups operating in his country.

Khan has said he will reach out to the Taliban to try to convince them to open negotiations with the Afghan government. The Taliban have so far refused to talk directly to the Afghan government.

The Trump administration has intensified its efforts to seek a negotiated settlement of America's longest war in Afghanistan where the US has lost over 2,400 soldiers since late 2001, when it invaded the country after the 9/11 terror attacks. The Trump administration has intensified its efforts to seek a negotiated settlement of America's longest war in Afghanistan where the US has lost over 2,400 soldiers since late 2001, when it invaded the country after the 9/11 terror attacks.

The Admission of the Pakistan PM will add weight to the FAFT decisions. Pakistan's admission will give a push to the global fight on terror.

**Level 1 Q) Pakistan's admission of groups operating on its soil will be a strong point to the global fight on terror, comment?**

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#### FLASH FLOODS IN THE NEELUM VALLEY

A cloudburst caused flash flood in the Neelum Valley of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. A large number of homes in the Laswa area of the valley were damaged and dozens of people were swept away in the flooding caused by relentless rainfall after the cloudburst over night.

The Laswa area of the valley was badly hit where many houses were swept away. There were also reports of landslides in some areas. A flood hit several villages in Golen Gol area of Chitral district after a glacial lake burst its banks overnight, toppling electricity poles and inundating roads and farmlands. The glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) occurred after the **Jam Ashpar glacier** - a popular tourist destination in Chitral - exploded overnight.

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#### PAKISTAN PM VISIT US

Pakistan PM Imran Khan was on a 3 day visit to the US. Issues like the Afghan peace process, Pakistan government's action against terrorism and terror financing and restoration of military aid to Pakistan were the highlights of the trip.

Trump will seek the release of jailed Pakistani doctor Shakil Afridi during his meeting with Mr. Khan. Dr. Afridi had helped the CIA track down Osama bin Laden.

The visit comes against the immediate backdrop of Pakistan detaining several terrorist leaders including Hafiz Saeed. This is the first by a Pakistani prime minister since 2015, aimed at repairing ties damaged by US impatience with Islamabad's seeming inability to rein in terrorist groups active in South Asia.

It also comes after what is seen as a successful round of talks between the US and Taliban in Doha at the end of June with Pakistan seen as playing a role behind the scenes given its influence over the Taliban.

Since the Trump administration took office in January 2017, it has been seen as less tolerant than previous administrations of Pakistan's harbouring of terrorist groups. In one of his first policy speeches on South Asia in August 2017, Trump said the US could "no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organizations, the Taliban, and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond." The US has been "paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting." Trump said.

Trump cut off hundreds of millions of dollars in security assistance to Pakistan. In New Delhi, while there has been some satisfaction that the US has pushed Pakistan to close terrorist camps on its soil, there has also been disquiet over the US 'Afghan policy that indicates a role for the rebel Taliban in government. New Delhi has been worried that the US withdrawal will mean a government in Kabul that is influenced by Pakistan.

Pakistan could seek Washington's help to pressure India to restart peace talks to resolve outstanding bilateral disputes. Tensions have been high between the two countries in recent months especially following the 14 February attack on an Indian paramilitary convoy in Pulwama in Kashmir. New Delhi on its part maintains that talks and terrorist attacks on India cannot go together.

New Delhi will be keenly watching the visit for several reasons including indications of the kind of role Pakistan will play in creating circumstances favourable for a US exit from Afghanistan and whether Pakistan will ask the US to press India to start peace talks.

## CHINA

### HONG KONG PROTESTS

#### **Why did the protests start?**

Protests kicked off in June over concerns that Hong Kong was set to pass a bill that would allow individuals to be extradited to China. Since the British handover in 1997, Hong Kong and China have been party to a "**one country, two systems**" agreement that **offers residents of Hong Kong a greater degree of independence than they would have in China.**

Those who opposed the bill said it jeopardized Hong Kong's semi autonomy from China and, if passed, would endanger Hong Kong-based critics of Beijing, where human rights groups have documented arbitrary detention and torture.

Hong Kong officials initially defended the bill, saying it would protect Hong Kong from criminals fleeing legal systems elsewhere. And Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam insisted the bill would not apply to issues of free speech. But protesters were unconvinced.

Millions of people joined street marches against the bill, paralysing the city. The protests have gone from weekly to almost daily.

The heavy-handed response from police, including violent clashes and the use of tear gas and rubber bullets against demonstrators and the blinding of a woman in one eye, prompted the movement adopt wider pro-democracy goals.

### **What do the protesters want?**

The extradition bill was suspended by the territory's chief executive, Carrie Lam, in mid June, but protesters want it officially withdrawn. In addition to demanding Carrie Lam's resignation, the protesters are calling for:

- complete withdrawal of the proposed extradition bill
- government to withdraw the use of the word "riot" in relation to protests
- unconditional release of arrested protestors and charges against them dropped
- an independent inquiry into police behaviour
- implementation of genuine universal suffrage

### **How has Beijing responded to the protests?**

China has accused foreign powers, particularly the United States, of fomenting the demonstrations in Hong Kong. State media has gone from near silence on the protests and blanket censorship of footage of the demonstrations, to describing protests as "riots". Beijing has described protestors as "radicals", "thugs" and "terrorists" seeking to topple the entire system through their push for independence.

### **What has been the international reaction to the protests?**

The UK, the former colonial power in Hong Kong, has called for an independent investigation into the protests, condemned violence and emphasised the right to peaceful protest. China criticised the intervention and said it was "simply wrong" for Britain's foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, to directly call Lam to "exert pressure".

China asked Washington to explain reports in Communist party-controlled media that US diplomats were in contact with student leaders of the protests. A US state department spokesperson responded by calling China a "thuggish regime" for disclosing photographs and personal details of the diplomat.

Canada's Justin Trudeau and Australia's Scott Morrison have voiced their concern at the handling of the unprecedented political crisis in the wake of the latest airport protest.

Hong Kong's airport is one of the busiest in the world. Protesters have shut the airport forcing the officials to cancel many flights.

### **Level 1 Q) Why are people in Hong Kong Protesting?**

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CHINA STRESSES THE NEED FOR UNITED TRADE FRONT

**About the news-**

Ahead of the next informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, China has flagged its interest in partnering India for building a united front of emerging economies and developing countries to counter trade headwinds.

India and China reset their ties last year at the Wuhan informal summit, after the two countries nearly came to war in 2017, during the Doklam military stand-off.

After the Wuhan summit, China had proposed a joint approach with India to address some of the major issues in the region, including the Rohingya refugee crisis along with possible initiatives in Nepal, Afghanistan and Iran.

## IRAN

### IRAN BREACHES THE LIMIT ON URANIUM STOCKPILE-

#### About the news-

**Iran has announced of enriching more uranium. It has already breached the Limit set under the 2015 deal. This move was triggered by the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal and the failure of the other parties from saving Iran from the US sanctions. Iran has warned that it will not stop unless the sanctions are lifted and relief promised according to the 2015 deal.**

Tensions have been brewing between USA and IRAN after the US had pulled out from the Obama ear Nuclear Deal between Iran and the US. US has imposed sanctions on Iran. Now Iran in retaliation has Iran has breached the limit of its enriched uranium stockpile set in a 2015 deal with major powers.

Iran defied a warning by European co-signatories to stick to the deal despite U.S. sanctions. Iran has exceeded the relevant limit of 300 kg of uranium hexafluoride (UF6).

Enriching uranium to a low level of 3.6% fissile material is the first step in a process that could eventually allow Iran to amass enough highly-enriched uranium to build a nuclear warhead. The IAEA verified that Iran had roughly 200 kg of low-enriched uranium, just below the deals 202.8 kg limit, A quantity of 300 kg of UF6 (uranium hexafluoride) corresponds to 202.8 kg of LEU.

The deal between Iran and six world powers lifted most international sanctions against Iran in return for restrictions on its nuclear work.

Iran says its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes, including generating power. Its regional adversary Israel, which Iran does not recognise, says the program presents it with an existential threat.

In May, Washington piled pressure on Tehran by ordering all countries to halt imports of Iranian oil, and tensions have been growing in the Gulf ever since.

Washington has dispatched extra forces to the Middle East, and U.S. fighter jets came within minutes of conducting air strikes on Iran last month after Tehran downed an unmanned American drone.

Trump has called for negotiations with Iran with "no preconditions", but Tehran has ruled out talks until the United States returns to the nuclear pact and drops its sanctions.

The Tensions between Iran and US is adding to the already fragile situation in the Middle East.

#### **IRAN TESTS MEDIUM RANGE MISSILE**

Iran test-fired a medium-range ballistic missile called Shahab-3 that traveled 1,000 kilometers from its southern launch point into northern Iran. Nevertheless, it served as a signal to the US and Europe and could serve to further increase tensions in the region.

The missile was launched from Iran's southeastern coastline along the Gulf of Oman and landed in northern Iran.

UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the Iran nuclear deal, "called upon" Iran to refrain from activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

#### **The Iran Nuclear Deal-**

Trump administration have repeatedly criticized the 2015 Iran nuclear deal because it did not include Tehran's missile program or what it calls Iran's malign activity in the region. They say they want both included in a future agreement.

The Obama administration and other parties to the deal -- France, the UK, Germany, the EU, Russia and China -- say that it was necessary to focus the pact on nuclear activity in order to reach an agreement, which took years to negotiate.

#### **Recent tensions-**

Iran's missile test comes amid a widening crisis between Iran and Western powers, and friction between the US and its allies over how to deal with Iran.

Recently in mid July, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps seized a British tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most vital shipping routes, saying Iran had been "violating international regulations." The seizure was seen as retaliation for the British navy impounding an Iranian tanker off Gibraltar just days earlier.

In June, Iran shot down an American drone, claiming it was intruding on its territory, throwing the two countries into a military standoff.

More recently, the US and Europe have been at odds over plans to secure shipping in the Persian Gulf. The US had been urging regional and international parties to take part in Operation Sentinel, which Washington casts as an effort to secure freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, crucial waterways for the passage of global oil supplies.

The UK has announced its Navy will accompany British ships where possible and that it will participate in a European-led effort to provide security to shipping through the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic chokepoint controlled by Iran through which 20% of the world's oil supply passes.

**Level 1 Q) The unilateral actions of the US will intensify the already fragile situation in the West Asian Region, discuss?**

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#### IRAN SIZES UK TANKER

##### About the news-



Iran announced the capture of one British-flagged ship in the narrow Strait of Hormuz. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said that its navy had captured the British-flagged oil tanker, Stena Impero. The IRGC accused the tanker of "violating international regulations.". The Stena Impero was heading to Saudi Arabia's port of Al-Jubail from the UAE port of Fujairah when it was seized by the IRGC.

##### Heightened Tensions -

**The Stena Impero's seizure is yet another in an accelerating series of recent maritime episodes involving Iran.**

## Tensions in the Strait of Hormuz

**MAY 8, 2018**

- Trump announces he is pulling out of the nuclear deal with Iran, adding he will initiate new sanctions. "Any nation that helps Iran in its quest for nuclear weapons could also be strongly sanctioned by the United States," Trump says.

**NOVEMBER 5, 2018**

- The United States officially reimposes all sanctions lifted under 2015 Iran nuclear deal. Rouhani vowed to continue oil exports, saying Iran will "proudly break the unjust sanctions."

**APRIL 8, 2019**

- Trump announces the United States will formally designate [Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#) as a [Foreign Terrorist Organization](#), a move some in the administration had opposed over concerns about potential risks to US troops in the Middle East.

**JUNE 2019**

- According to US officials, the US launches two cyber attacks on Iran. One attack was a [retaliatory cyberstrike against an Iranian spy group](#). The other attack was on an Iranian proxy group with forces in Iraq, Syria and inside Iran in the days after Iran shot down a US drone.



**JUNE 20, 2019**

- Iran [shoots down a United States military drone](#). Iran's Revolutionary Guard claims that the drone was shot down after it entered the country's territory, while the US claims the drone was shot down in international airspace.

**JUNE 24, 2019**

- Trump announces new sanctions against Iran [in part to retaliate after the downing of a US drone the previous week](#), with the punitive measures set to target Iran's Supreme Leader, military officials and its top diplomat, Foreign Minister Javad Zarif.

**JULY 1, 2019**

- Zarif announces that [Iran's stockpiles of enriched low-grade uranium have exceeded the 300-kilogram limit](#) set in a landmark 2015 nuclear deal.

**JULY 4, 2019**

- The Iranian oil-carrying vessel Grace 1 is seized by British authorities near Gibraltar. Gibraltar's territorial authorities had reason to believe the ship was "carrying its shipment of crude oil to the Baniyas Refinery in Syria" in violation of European Union sanctions, it said in a statement. Iran called the act "piracy."

**JULY 10, 2019**

- Armed Iranian boats [try unsuccessfully to impede the passage of a British oil tanker](#) in the Persian Gulf, according to two US officials with direct knowledge of the incident.

- **JULY 14, 2019**
  - Over the weekend, Iran seizes an oil tanker that it claimed was carrying 1 million liters of "smuggled fuel."
  
- **JULY 18, 2019**
  - US officials say the US Navy has destroyed an Iranian drone using electronic jamming, in a defensive action after it came too close to naval ship USS Boxer took. However, Iranian officials deny that any of their drones have been downed.
  
- **JULY 19, 2019**
  - Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) announces that its navy has captured the British-flagged oil tanker, Stena Impero. It accuses the British tanker of "violating international regulations."
  - A second tanker, the Liberian flagged MV Mesdar, was also seized,

**Level 1 Q) The Tensions between US and Iran have escalated into a military standoff, explain?**

**BRITAIN PLANS EUROPEAN LED NAVAL MISSION IN THE GULF**

**About the news-**

Britain announced plans to develop and deploy a Europe Led maritime Protection Mission to safeguard the vital Strait of Hormuz in the light of the British seizure of the tanker. 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the global crude oil passes through the narrow strait between Iran and Oman.

Iran had seized the Stena Impero in response to the British Seizure of the Iranian oil tanker off the coast of Gibraltar. The Actions of Iran will only lead to increase in the Western military footprint in the region.

**AFGHANISTAN**

**QUADRILATERAL MEETING ON AFGHANISTAN ( CHINA, RUSSIA, PAKISTAN, US)**

**About the news-**

Representatives of China, Russia, and the US held their 3rd consultation on the Afghan peace process in Beijing on July 10-11 following which they also requested Pakistan to join for a surprise quadrilateral meeting.

China, Russia, and the United States welcomed Pakistan joining the consultation and believe that Pakistan can play an important role in facilitating peace in Afghanistan.

All four countries had agreed to step up coordination and communication and jointly promote reconciliation and peace in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of harbouring the Taliban militants who have been carrying out violent attacks and destabilising the country. Last month, China formally acknowledged that it hosted a Taliban delegation headed by its chief negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar for talks here. The meeting was seen as part of China's stepped-up efforts to enlarge its strategic role in Afghanistan as the US is negotiating its way out of the war-torn country. Baradar has also been holding talks with Khalilzad, the US representative.

China, a close ally of Pakistan, has also been trying to iron out differences between Pakistan and Afghanistan over Kabul's allegations that the Taliban has been making use of Pakistani territory to stage attacks in Afghanistan.

India and China have also conducted a joint programme to train diplomats of Afghanistan. Trump in his new South Asia strategy unveiled in August 2017 had sought a major role for India in bringing peace in Afghanistan.

## INDIA AND UAE

### FOREIGN MINISTER OF UAE CALLS ON PM MODI

#### About the news-

**The UAE Foreign Minister was on a 3 day visit to India to convey the UAE government's greeting on Modi's 2<sup>nd</sup> Tenure.** UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed has resolved to step up cooperation with the Gulf country in key sectors such as trade and energy.

Sheikh Abdullah's visit comes at a time when the issue of energy security is high on India's agenda due to the situation arising out of US sanctions on importing oil from Iran.

The ties between India and the UAE have been on an upswing for the last few years. The UAE is India's third-largest trade partner and fourth-largest energy supplier. The country is also home to a 3.3 million-strong Indian community, largest in the Gulf region.

Modi had visited the UAE in August 2015 during which the two countries decided to elevate their relation to a comprehensive strategic partnership. The prime minister also visited the UAE in February last year.

As the chair of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the UAE invited India as the 'Guest of Honour' at the 46th Council of Foreign Ministers meeting of the grouping in Abu Dhabi in March.

## INDIA AND PAKISTAN

### KARGIL DIWAS

Since 1999, July 26 is celebrated as the Kargil Vijay Diwas in India, every year, to celebrate the victory of operation Vijay.

One of the most prominent wars between India and neighbouring country Pakistan, the Kargil War or the Kargil conflict took place between May 3 and July 26 1999 in the Kargil district of Kashmir and elsewhere along the Line of Control (LOC). In India, the famous Kargil conflict is also referred to as Operation Vijay, which was the name of the Indian operation to clear the Kargil sector.

While the 60-day long war resulted in loss of life on both the sides, India won the war by regaining control of all the previously held territory, re-establishing the status quo ante bellum. To honour the Kargil War's Heroes, who laid down their life for the country, July 26 is celebrated in their memory.

After the signing of **peaceful Lahore Declaration in February 1999**, promising to provide a peaceful and bilateral solution to the Kashmir conflict, some elements of the Pakistani Armed Forces infiltrated into the Indian side of the line of control (LOC). The infiltration, named as '**Operation Badr**', aimed at severing the link between Kashmir and Ladakh and cause Indian forces to withdraw from the Siachen Glacier.

However, the Government of India responded with Operation Vijay, with the war coming to an official end on July 26, 1999, thus marking it as Kargil Vijay Diwas. A total of 527 Indian soldiers bravely lost their lives during the war.

### **Level 1 Q) Why do we celebrate the Kargil Diwas?**

## TRUMPS KASHMIR OFFER AND WHY INDIA INSISTS IN BILATERALISM ON PAKISTAN;

When the visiting Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan met Donald Trump, the US president, Trump told Him that PM Modi had requested him to mediate on the Kashmir issue. India rebutted claims of Donald Trump.

India has reiterated its long standing position that there is no room for mediation in Kashmir or any other India Pakistan issue and that all matters between the two

countries should be resolved through Bilateral Dialogue and only when Pakistan ends Cross Border terrorism in India.

### **Why India Insists on Bilateralism on Pakistan?**

The Indian position has historically stemmed from its mistrust of outsiders meddling in its internal affairs, the strongly felt need to protect its secular nationhood project, and suspicion that mediators viewed Kashmir through Pakistani eyes.

Jawaharlal Nehru, who took Pakistan's invasion in 1947 to the United Nations, was quick to realise his mistake. The UN missions flowing from the resolutions, including the Dixon Mission, which led to the Dixon Plan of 1950 for partition of some areas of Jammu & Kashmir between India and Pakistan (**Ladakh to India, PoK and Northern Areas to Pakistan, with Jammu divided between the two**), plus a plebiscite in the Valley, strengthened India's determination to shut the door on international mediation.

The framework for bilateral resolution of problems between India and Pakistan was written into the 1972 Simla Agreement and reiterated 27 years later in the Lahore Declaration. Nonetheless, Pakistan has continued to view the "internationalisation" of the Kashmir issue as its best bet towards reversing J&K's accession to India, and has used every global forum to criticise India's "illegal occupation" of Kashmir.

While India has mostly succeeded in conveying that it would brook no third-party mediation, Trump's offer is not the first time that an American leader has sought to "help" India and Pakistan resolve the Kashmir dispute.

In 1993, Robin Raphel, who headed the State Department's newly created South Asia division in the first Clinton Administration, sought to junk the Instrument of Accession, and asserted that for the US, Kashmir was "disputed territory", undermining years of Indian diplomatic efforts.

As New Delhi's post-liberalisation economic clout grew, Raphel's influence in the State Department faded. Clinton 2.0 embraced the Indian stand on bilateralism.

The United Kingdom, which has a large diaspora from the PoK, has also shown interest in being a mediator.

There could be several reasons for Trump trying to wade into Kashmir. For one, he may think it is easy. In February this year, he claimed to have defused the India-Pakistan standoff that arose from the Pulwama attack. The US is said to have played a part in the release of an Indian Air Force pilot who was captured across the LoC.

The US also played a role in forcing China to agree to the designation of Jaish chief Masood Azhar as a "global terrorist". And most recently, Trump took credit for the arrest of Hafiz Saeed. Perhaps, the US President thinks he is already half way to solving the problem. He may also believe that if his Administration succeeded in dragging the

Taliban to the negotiating table in Afghanistan, it can do the same with India and Pakistan.

## WHY DOES INDIA SAY NO TO KASHMIR MEDIATION

### **Background-**

U.S. President Donald Trump claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sought mediation in Kashmir when they met during the G-20 summit in Osaka. In Parliament, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar categorically said that Mr. Modi did not request Mr. Trump to "mediate or arbitrate" on the Kashmir issue.

He said India remains committed to discussing all issues with Pakistan bilaterally.

### **Why does India refrain from taking help?**

- India's firm position against mediation on Kashmir or any other issue stems from several reasons, most notably a historical suspicion, since the 1950s and 1960s, as mediated talks by the United Nations and World Bank, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia have been unsuccessful in resolving the issues between India and Pakistan.
- At best, the attempts have worked for diffusing tensions, or calling off hostilities at the Line of Control and the International Border, but not in terms of their rival claims over Jammu and Kashmir.
- Another reason is that India sees itself as a regional leader, and does not require any assistance in sorting out its issues with other regional countries. In addition, the widespread belief is that mediation favours the weaker party by levelling the playing field, and with its stronger conventional and non-conventional military prowess, India has seen no significant gain from bringing a third-party into its 70-year-old conflict with Pakistan.

### **When did the UN try to mediate?**

- The mediation by the UN were made after India took its complaint against Pakistan's forced occupation of parts of Kashmir (PoK) to the UN Security Council on January 1, 1948.
- The UN then set up the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) which proposed mediating a resolution along a three-point action plan: Pakistani demilitarisation of the Kashmir region, followed by Indian reduction in military presence, and a proposed final resolution by an impartial U.N. administered plebiscite to "determine the wishes of the Kashmiri people".
- The deal never got off the ground as Pakistan never agreed to demilitarise, and India under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made it clear that a plebiscite would never be accepted. Where the UNCIP was successful was in mediating a

- ceasefire in 1949, and negotiating the geographical location of the cease-fire line which would be monitored by the United Nations Military Observer Group In India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).
- Individual U.N. representatives continued to visit both sides from 1949 to 1953 but failed to improve the atmosphere for a resolution, or to convince either side to demilitarise the two sides of the LoC.
  - GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363
  - UPSC PRELIMS CUM MAINS 2020 LONG TERM STARTS -14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019**
    - 1. All Chapters of GS PAPERS to be covered ( 40 TESTS ) WEEKLY
    - 2. MAINS AND PRELIMS TESTS.
    - 3. Timely Evaluation.
    - 4. Guidance on Answer Writing.
    - 5. Weekly tests on current topics along with the static topics.
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Discussion will include-

    - 1. What questions can be expected from various topics.
    - 2. How to write good answers.
    - 3. What points to remember.
    - 4. How to score well even if you are not aware of the issue.
    - 5. Related ESSAYS to be discussed.
  - The first United Nations Representative for India and Pakistan (UNRIP) appointed to mediate the dispute was Sir Owen Dixon, an Australian jurist, who was followed by Frank Graham, an American diplomat, who gave up after his proposal was rejected by New Delhi and Karachi (then the capital of Pakistan) in April, 1953.

- The only exceptions to this dismal record were the 1960 World Bank guaranteed Indus Water Treaty, and a territorial agreement on the Rann of Kutch, mediated successfully by the British government in 1965.
- Soviet Premier Kosygin also moderated between Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistani President Ayub Khan to broker the 1965 Tashkent peace agreement, but the treaty has always been marked by suspicion and doubts, tainted by Shastri's sudden death at Tashkent.

### **What about the U.S.?**

- A particularly bitter episode for India came from mediation attempts by the U.S. and the U.K. after the 1962 Sino-Indian war. The U.S. had provided India with planes and military hardware worth about \$60 million during the war, and the price, said American officials, was that India should agree to mediated talks with Pakistan on Kashmir.
- Says Ashoka University Professor Rudra Chaudhuri (author of Forged in Crisis: India and the United States since 1947, and also the director of Carnegie India), "The mediation was accepted because Nehru was in shock after the defeat to China, and the U.S. made it clear that any further military assistance was contingent on India's cooperation on Kashmir talks."
- On November 21, 1962, the day the war ended, a team of 24 American negotiators headed to India, led by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Averell Harriman. They worked, along with U.S. Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith and British High Commissioner Paul Gore-Booth to bring India to the table for six rounds of talks between Foreign Minister Swaran Singh and Pakistan Foreign Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Eventually, however as India regained its confidence, the talks floundered, and ended in 1963 after Nehru made it clear that India would never give up the Kashmir Valley.
- **Will India remain opposed to mediation?**
- After winning the war with Pakistan that saw the creation of Bangladesh, India, in 1972, negotiated the **Shimla Agreement**, which did away with any idea of future mediation between the two countries. According to the Agreement signed on July 2, 1972 by Indira Gandhi and by then President Bhutto, the two countries "***resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them***".
- In February 1999, the **Lahore declaration** signed by Nawaz Sharif and Atal Behari Vajpayee also affirmed the **bilateral nature of issues and their resolution**. Thus, even when Mr. Trump spoke , India's response, in Parliament, was to invoke the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration saying that they "provide the basis to resolve all issues between India and Pakistan bilaterally". These bilateral efforts are at an end at present, and little has moved since the last

negotiations on Kashmir in 2003-2008, when Indian and Pakistani negotiators discussed the four-step formula.

- India has maintained its opposition to third-party mediation, however, and despite offers from several leaders including South African President Nelson Mandela, UN Chief António Guterres, and more recently, the Norwegian Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, India has said, "thanks, but no thanks".

**Level Q) Discuss the Reasons that India is against third party interference in bilateral issues ?**

**Prelims- Lahore Agreement, Shimla Agreement.**

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**VISA FREE YEAR LONG ACCESS TO KARTARPUR SAHIB**

Pakistan agreed to give year-long visa-free access for Indian pilgrims to the holy Gurdwara of Kartarpur Sahib.

It was agreed to allow visa-free travel for the Indian passport-holders and OCI card-holders seven days a week. Throughout the year, 5,000 pilgrims will be allowed to visit the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara per day. **The Kartarpur Sahib corridor links India's Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district with Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara in Pakistan's Punjab province. The Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara across the Ravi river is built on the historic site where Guru Nanak Dev spent his final days. The place is highly revered by the Sikh community.**

The corridor is set to be completed by October 31 and could strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries. The construction of the 4.2 km long corridor will be over by end of September, well before the anniversary celebrations in India and Pakistan. A large portion of the corridor falls in Pakistan's territory.

Two formal meetings have been held on the Corridor until now . The Indian delegation comprised representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Government of Punjab and the National Highway Authorities of India (NHAI).

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**INDIA WINS THE CASE AT THE ICJ- REVIEW JADHAV SENTENCE AND GRANT CONSULAR ACCESS SAYS ICJ-**

India won a legal and diplomatic victory over Islamabad at the ICJ, that asked Pakistan to Review the death sentence to Kulbhushan Jadhav. He was held on Espionage and terrorism charges and trialed by a military court who has awarded Kulbhushan the Death sentence. India challenged Pakistan's action of not providing consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav, by doing so Pakistan violated the Vienna Convention on Consular

Access. *The 1963 Vienna Convention defines a framework for consular relations between countries.*

The ICJ affirmed Kulbhushan's right to consular access and slammed Pakistan for not doing so.

The ICJ's verdict, granting consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav and directing Islamabad to *review and reconsider his conviction and sentencing*, is being perceived as a major diplomatic and legal success for India, which has consistently tried to isolate Pakistan on the global stage over the last few years.

In reality, Pakistan has to only grant consular access and can conduct "review and reconsideration" at its "choosing" — this, in effect, puts off Jadhav's execution for the time being.

### **India's big win and Diplomatic success to India;**

- In a major victory for India, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague has given a verdict favourable to the country and granted a new lease of life to Kulbhushan Jadhav who has been languishing in Pakistan's 'military' prisons for more than three years.
- The judgement was unanimous but one. Pakistan's judge ad hoc, Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani was the only one with a dissenting opinion, but couldn't sway anyone else onto his side.
- The reason why ICJ did not do that is because such matters do not fall under the world court's jurisdiction. Therefore, on all areas where ICJ has jurisdiction, India was the clear victor. New Delhi wanted consular access, review of the case, annulment of death sentence - on all three counts, the government got relief.
- While the ICJ did not exceed purview of its jurisdiction, the basic rights over which India approached the World Court were addressed.
- ICJ ruled in favour of India concluding that Pakistan breached Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) by denying consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav.
- On "review" and "reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence, the court added that Pakistan is to provide "appropriate reparation in this case" so as to ensure reversal of the rights violated, but added that it would be "by the means of its (Pakistan) own choosing." This opens the space for interpretation and India will wait to see whether the case will start afresh in a civil court or will Jadhav continue to be tried in military courts.
- The final and very important aspect of the verdict is ICJ's ruling on the death sentence. The ICJ declared that a "continued stay of execution constitutes an indispensable condition for the effective review and reconsideration of the conviction and sentence of Mr. Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav." It effectively means that Jadhav cannot be hanged until the time a fair trial is carried out in Pakistan.

- While officials on Indian side say that the verdict of the ICJ is binding, there have been violators in the past. The two cases that were cited by India - LaGrand (Germany vs USA) and Avena (Mexico vs USA) - were cases in which the world court decided in favour of the states that requested compliance with international obligations, including Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, yet the US overrode the rulings and executed the nationals of the sending nations.
- India will have to wait and see if Pakistan honours its commitment to international treaties and abides by the rulings of the world court.

### **Level 1 Q) Describe India's Victory at the ICJ?**

#### **INDIA AND UK**

##### **'DESIGNED IN UK - MADE IN INDIA' STRATEGY FOR INDIA - UK PARTNERSHIP IN RESEARCH AND SERVICES-**

Recently the India UK Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting was held in London.

India – UK trade and economic relations are reviewed annually by the JETCO at the level of Commerce and Industry Minister. Till date, 12 meetings have already taken place and the last meeting was held on 11th January, 2018 in London. The India – UK JETCO was established on 13th January, 2005, to further develop a strategic economic relationship and nurture business led vehicles to enhance bilateral trade and investment.

JETCO is a powerful forum through which both the countries will identify the areas of mutual cooperation and that it can be a platform where both countries and their businesses may resolve their trade-related issues.

On the side lines of the event, India and the UK agreed to set up three new bilateral working groups to tackle barriers in specific sectors including food and drink, healthcare and data services.

Manufacturing in India, in a cost-competitive environment, could be the key for British companies to expand their footprints to other parts of the world. 'Designed in the UK - Made in India' will be the new focus area for this partnership. Similarly, in the services sector, India will provide huge technical expertise to the British companies.

#### **INDIA – RUSSIA**

##### **SECOND INDIA-RUSSIA STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DIALOGUE HELD**

The IRSED was established following a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation during the 19th edition of the Annual India-Russia Bilateral Summit, which was held on October 5, 2018, in New Delhi.

The First India-Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue was held in St. Petersburg between November 25-26, 2018.

### **Focus was on 6 core areas;**

The Second meeting of the IRSED focussed on six core areas of cooperation, namely,

1. Development of Transport Infrastructure and Technologies;
2. Development of Agriculture and Agro-Processing sector;
3. Small and Medium Business support;
4. Digital Transformation and Frontier Technologies;
5. Cooperation in Trade, Banking, Finance, and Industry;
6. Tourism & Connectivity.

### **How will the dialogue help ?**

The dialogue will help enhance strategic economic cooperation between our countries.

## INDIA AND USA

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**USA DRAGS INDIA TO THE WTO ON CHARGES OVER DUTY HIKE ON 28 AMERICAN GOODS-**

### **About the news-**

- **In response to US steel and aluminium tariffs last year, New Delhi imposed higher customs duties on products including almond, pulses, walnut, chickpeas, boric acid**
- **US has sought consultations with India under the aegis of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism**

The United States has dragged India to the World Trade Organisation requesting dispute consultations on the 'retaliatory duties' imposed by the country on 28 US goods last month.

While India has imposed the duties as a tit-for-tat move against the US decision to impose unilateral additional tariffs on steel and aluminium imported from the country last year, Washington claims that the tariffs flout WTO rules.

The US claims that the additional duties, which India imposed through a series of notifications issued between June 2018 and June 2019, are inconsistent with provisions

of the WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade by unfairly discriminating against US imports vis-à-vis those from other WTO members and by according less favourable treatment to US goods.

### **What is GATT?**

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a WTO pact, signed by all member countries of the multi-lateral body, aims to promote trade by reducing or eliminating trade barriers like customs duties.

The US has alleged that the duties imposed by India appears to be inconsistent with two norms of GATT.

India's argument in support of its duties is that retaliation is permitted under the WTO's Agreement on Safeguards.

But the US maintains that its tariffs are not a safeguard measure but were taken under Section 232 of the US Trade Expansion Act of 1962 on grounds of national security.

If the dispute consultations between the two countries fail to resolve the matter the US can ask the WTO to set up a panel to decide on the matter.

India's exports to the US in 2017-18 stood at \$47.9 billion, while imports were at \$26.7 billion. The trade balance is in favour of India.

### **Level 1 Q) What are the challenges India US relationship is facing?**

#### **SENATE GRANTS INDIA NATO LIKE STATUS-**

The U.S. Senate has passed a legislative provision that brings India at par with America's NATO allies and countries like Israel and South Korea **for increasing defence cooperation and advanced technology transfer. The bill further provides for increased US-India defence cooperation in the Indian Ocean in the areas of humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism, counter-piracy and maritime security.**

*The US recognised India as a "Major Defence Partner" in 2016, a designation that allows India to buy more advanced and sensitive technologies from America at par with that of the US' closest allies and partners, and ensures enduring cooperation into the future.*

The **National Defence Authorisation Act or NDAA** for the fiscal year 2020, that contained such a proposal was passed by the U.S. Senate. The bill would be signed into law after both the chambers of the U.S. Congress — the House of Representatives and the Senate — passes it.

India is now on a par with America's NATO allies Japan, Australia and South Korea following passage of a bill in a key move to increase defence partnership including advanced technology transfer.

**Over the past year, the United States and Indian militaries participated in five major exercises, executed more than fifty other military exchanges, and further operationalized the 2016 Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA). Defence sales are at an all-time high, with India operating US sourced platforms such as P-8s, C-130Js, C-17s, AH-64s, CH-47s, and M777 howitzers.**

They signed a Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), which, "will facilitate access to advanced defence systems and enable India to optimally utilize its existing U.S.-origin platforms." COMCASA follows the signing of the U.S.-India Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016 and the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) in 2002.

**Level 1 Q) Comment on the expanding India and US defence relations?**

**Prelims – LEMOA, COMCASA, NDAA, GSOMIA, NATO.**

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT**

**CENTRE TO LAUNCH DEEP OCEAN MISSION IN OCTOBER**

**About the news-**

## DEEP OCEAN MISSION

- Deep Sea Mining through 'Underwater Vehicles' and 'Underwater Robotics'
- Asserting exclusive rights to explore polymetallic nodules from seabed **over 75,000 sq km of areas in international water**
- Estimated polymetallic nodules resource potential: **380 million tonnes (MT)**

- Development of ocean climate change advisory services
- Technology for sustainable utilisation of marine bio-resources

### THESE POLYMETALLIC NODULES CONTAIN

Manganese **92.6 MT**

Nickel **4.7**

Copper **4.3**

Cobalt **1**

(\*figures are rounded off)

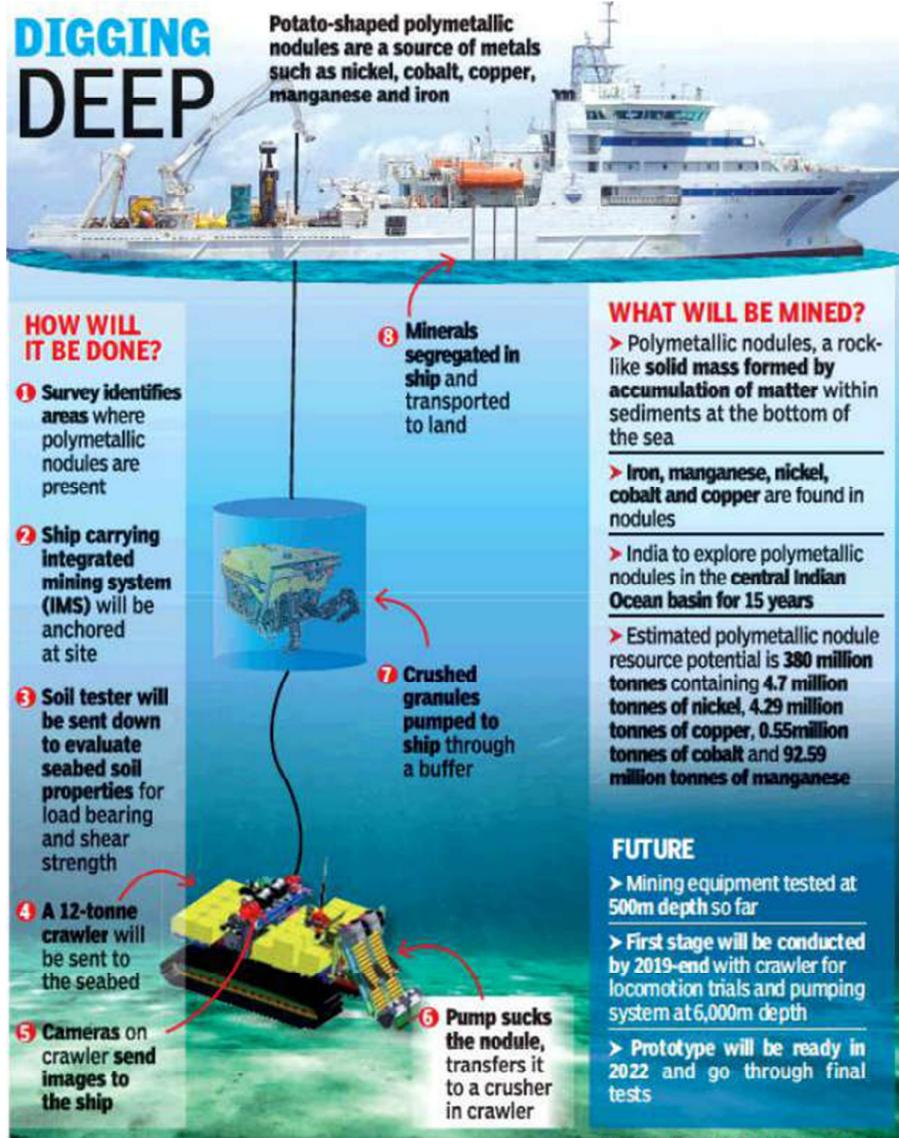
- Deep ocean survey and exploration
- Energy from the ocean and offshore-based desalination
- Krill fishery from southern ocean

The 'Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)' to be led by the Union Earth Sciences Ministry will commence from October 31. The mission proposes to explore the deep ocean similar to the space exploration started by ISRO about 35 years ago. A major thrust of the mission will be looking for metals and minerals.

The Ministry had unveiled a blueprint of the programme last July. Among the key deliverables are an offshore desalination plant that will work with tidal energy and developing a submersible vehicle that can go to a depth of at least 6,000 metres with three people on board.

**A remotely Operable submersible (ROSUB ) capable of operating at the debts of 6000 mts has already been deployed and tested.**

**A remotely operable soil testing equipment has also been deployed that can properties of the mining in the Central Indian Ocean Bed( CIOB). These technical developments are funded by a centrally sponsored scheme called, Ocean Services Technology Observation resources Modelling Science ( O-SMART). O-SMART has other components such as Early Warning system for disasters, setting up of Marine Coastal Observations for marine pollution and acquisition of coastal research vessels.**



### Importance-

The mission will help in leveraging the 'Blue Economy' for the country's economic growth. Several organisations of the government are involved in this such as the ISRO, ICAR, DBT, DST, DRDO.

**India has been allotted a site of 75,000 sq. km. in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) by the UN International Sea Bed Authority for exploitation of polymetallic nodules (PMN).** These are rocks scattered on the seabed containing iron, manganese, nickel and cobalt. Being able to lay hands on even 10% of that reserve can meet the energy requirement for the next 100 years. It has been estimated that 380 million metric tonnes of polymetallic nodules are available at the bottom of the seas in the Central Indian Ocean. India's Exclusive Economic Zone spreads over 2.2 million sq. km. and in the deep sea, lies "unexplored and unutilised".

**Level 1 Q) What is O-SMART, What are the aims of the Deep Ocean Mission of the government? Prelims- Indian Ocean, Marine Resources, O-SMART and its components.**

## HEALTH

WHO RECOMMENDS USE OF INNOVATIVE HIV DRUG-

### Topic useful in( Health)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended the use of the HIV drug '**dolutegravir (DTG)**' as the preferred first-line and second-line treatment for all populations, including pregnant women and those of childbearing potential.

Initial studies had highlighted a possible link between DTG and neural tube defects (birth defects of the brain and spinal cord) in infants born to women using the drug at the time of conception. This potential safety concern was reported in May 2018 from a study in Botswana that found 4 cases of neural tube defects out of 426 women who became pregnant while taking DTG. Based on these preliminary findings, many countries advised pregnant women and women of childbearing potential to take efavirenz (EFV) instead.

It noted that DTG is more effective, easier to take and has fewer side effects than alternative drugs. It also has a high genetic barrier to developing drug resistance, which is important, given the rising trend of resistance.

New data from two large clinical trials comparing the efficacy and safety of DTG and Efv in Africa have now expanded the evidence base. The risks of neural tube defects are significantly lower than what the initial studies may have suggested.

In 2019, 12 of the 18 countries surveyed by WHO reported pre-treatment drug resistance levels exceeding the recommended threshold of 10%. All the above findings informed the decision to update the 2019 guidelines.

In 2019, 82 low- and middle-income countries reported to be transitioning to DTG-based HIV treatment. ***The new recommendations aim at helping more nations improve their HIV policies.***

### Status of HIV AIDS in India-

The Government of India estimates that about 2.40 million Indians are living with HIV (1.93 -3.04 million) with an adult prevalence of 0.31% (2009). Children (<15 yrs) account for 3.5% of all infections, while 83% are in the age group 15-49 years. Of all HIV infections, 39% (930,000) are among women. India's highly heterogeneous epidemic is largely concentrated in only a few states — in the industrialized south and west, and in

the north-east. The four high prevalence states of South India (Andhra Pradesh – 500,000, Maharashtra – 420,000, Karnataka – 250,000, Tamil Nadu – 150,000) account for 55% of all HIV infections in the country. West Bengal, Gujarat, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are estimated to have more than 100,000 PLHA each and together account for another 22% of HIV infections in India.

The Indian epidemic is concentrated among vulnerable populations at high risk for HIV. The concentrated epidemics are driven by unprotected sex between sex workers and their clients and by injecting drug use with contaminated injecting equipment. Several of the most at risk groups have high and still rising HIV prevalence rates. According to India's National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), the bulk of HIV infections in India occur during unprotected heterosexual intercourse. Consequently, and as the epidemic has matured, women account for a growing proportion of people living with HIV, especially in rural areas.

### **Level1 Q) Why was dolutegravir (DTG) in news? Problem of HIV AIDS in India?**

**WHO BRINGS IN NORMS OF SELF-CARE INTERVENTIONS-**

#### **About the news-**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched its first guidelines on self-care interventions for health. The organisation has ***estimated that by 2035 the world will face a shortage of nearly 13 million healthcare workers and the fact that currently at least 400 million people worldwide lack access to the most essential health services. And therefore it promotes SELF CARE FOR BETTER HEALTH.***

In **its first volume**, the guidelines focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Some of the interventions include self-sampling for human papillomavirus (HPV) and sexually transmitted infections, self-injectable contraceptives, home-based ovulation predictor kits, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) self-testing and self-management of medical abortion.

These guidelines look at the health benefits of certain interventions that can be done outside the conventional sector, although sometimes with the support of a health-care provider. They do not replace high-quality health services nor are they a shortcut to achieving universal health coverage.

#### **What is meant by Self Care?**

- **Self care means-** the organisation says that it is the "*the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider*".

- Most of us already practice self-care that protects our health each and every day, for example in eating healthy, doing exercise or ensuring we get enough sleep. Sometimes these acts are not sufficient to protect us and additional support from health professionals is needed.
- **From a public health perspective**, self-care plays an important role both for individuals and for health systems. For individuals, the capacity and ability to make informed decision and make use of available health resources is an important contributor to the successful management of a health condition. For many people in low-resource settings where access to professional medical care is challenging, self-care may be their only option. For others it may be their preferred option. The contribution of self-care may also help avoid stigma, bring improved mental well-being and increase the agency and autonomy, particularly for vulnerable populations.
- **For the health system too**, there are many advantages to promoting self-care interventions, while still remaining responsible and not putting additional burden on individuals. Health systems can thus optimise self-care as one of the most innovative approaches to improving health coverage for all.

In launching this guideline, WHO recognises how self-care interventions could expand access to health services, including for vulnerable populations. Through Self Care people will be able to access, control, and have affordable options to manage their health and well-being.

The guidelines, meanwhile, will be expanded to include other self-care interventions, including for prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases. WHO is establishing a community of practice for self-care, and will be promoting research and dialogue in this area during the self-care month between June 24 and July 24.

**Level 1 Q) Discuss about the recent guide to SELF CARE released by the WHO?How will it help? Prelims- same .**

#### AYUSH GRID PROJECT

##### **What is the grid about?**

The AYUSH GRID Project is the digitisation of the AYUSH services. A MOU in this regard was signed by the Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology (MEITY) and the Ministry of AYUSH. This will be a push to the e-governance goals of the government and also digitise AYUSH services. This will be beneficial for all stakeholders of AYUSH including citizens of the country and in turn will help to achieve various national and international goals in healthcare.

Ministry of AYUSH has conceptualised AYUSH GRID project for digitising its healthcare delivery at all levels. ***This GRID will serve as a backbone for the entire sector covering***

***the healthcare systems such as Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Homeopathy.***

The AYUSH GRID is envisaged as an omnibus digital eco system that would lead to all round development of the AYUSH sector in the fields of healthcare delivery at all levels, research, education, schemes and various healthcare programs.



The main components of the AYUSH GRID are -

1. Healthcare services
2. Education
3. Research
4. Central sector and centrally sponsored schemes
5. Training
6. Citizen centric services
7. Drug Licensing portal
8. Media Outreach

The GRID will develop and network of people, knowledge, and technology for the radical and sustainable transformation of the AYUSH sector and also play a vital role in taking care of the holistic healthcare needs and socio economic wellbeing of the Indian citizens and extending the benefits to the world.

#### **AYUSH and steps for its development-**

Health care is a state subject and the concerned state government adopts various measures to improve the government health delivery system, including AYUSH systems of healthcare.

At the Central level the Ministry of AYUSH also takes various initiatives to achieve this goal, mainly through interventions in areas like AYUSH education, AYUSH research, establishing and running national level institutes, setting guidelines for the drug regulation, setting benchmarks for AYUSH digitisation and forging international collaboration in relevant activities.

**To promote AYUSH systems the central government has taken a number of steps.  
Like**

1. Centrally sponsored scheme National SYUSH mission.
2. Mainstreaming AYUSH under the National Health Mission.

3. Mainstreaming AYUSH under the National Health Policy 2017 and
4. Promoting and strengthening the AYUSH sector.
5. Providing financial support through the Centrally Sponsored schemes and Central Sector Schemes for various activities such as infrastructure development and supply of medicines to the dispensaries and the hospitals in the states.

Central Regulatory bodies, Central Research Councils, National Institutes, All Indian Institutes, National Medicinal Plants Board, Pharmacopoeia Commission of India Medicines and Homeopathy and Pharmacopoeia Laboratories of AYUSH have been set up and the network of AYUSH institutions in the states is being expanded and strengthened. Under the strategies of mainstreaming AYUSH, AYUSH facilities are being set up in the PHCs, CHCs, and District hospitals through National AYUSH mission.

#### **Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology and Health-**

The government has already launched many e-HEALTH projects for example, MeitY led Health initiatives such as **e-Hospital, e-Aushadhi, e-Rakt Kosh, Online Registration System (ORS) and e-Shushrut** for digitizing the internal workflows and processes of hospitals enabling the efficient and online delivery of Health care services across the country. MeitY has also sponsored a number of R&D projects for development of Medical Electronics Devices and Systems such as Medical and Imaging equipment, establishing centre of excellence in medical electronics. MeitY has also launched an online information guide called Vikaspedia, a portal for the various social sectors including Health and it offers information in 23 languages.

#### **Level 1 Q) What is the AYUSH GRID, what are the steps taken to promote AYUSH by the government, give details?**

#### **STATE WISE ESTIMATED INCIDENCE OF CANCERS IN INDIA**

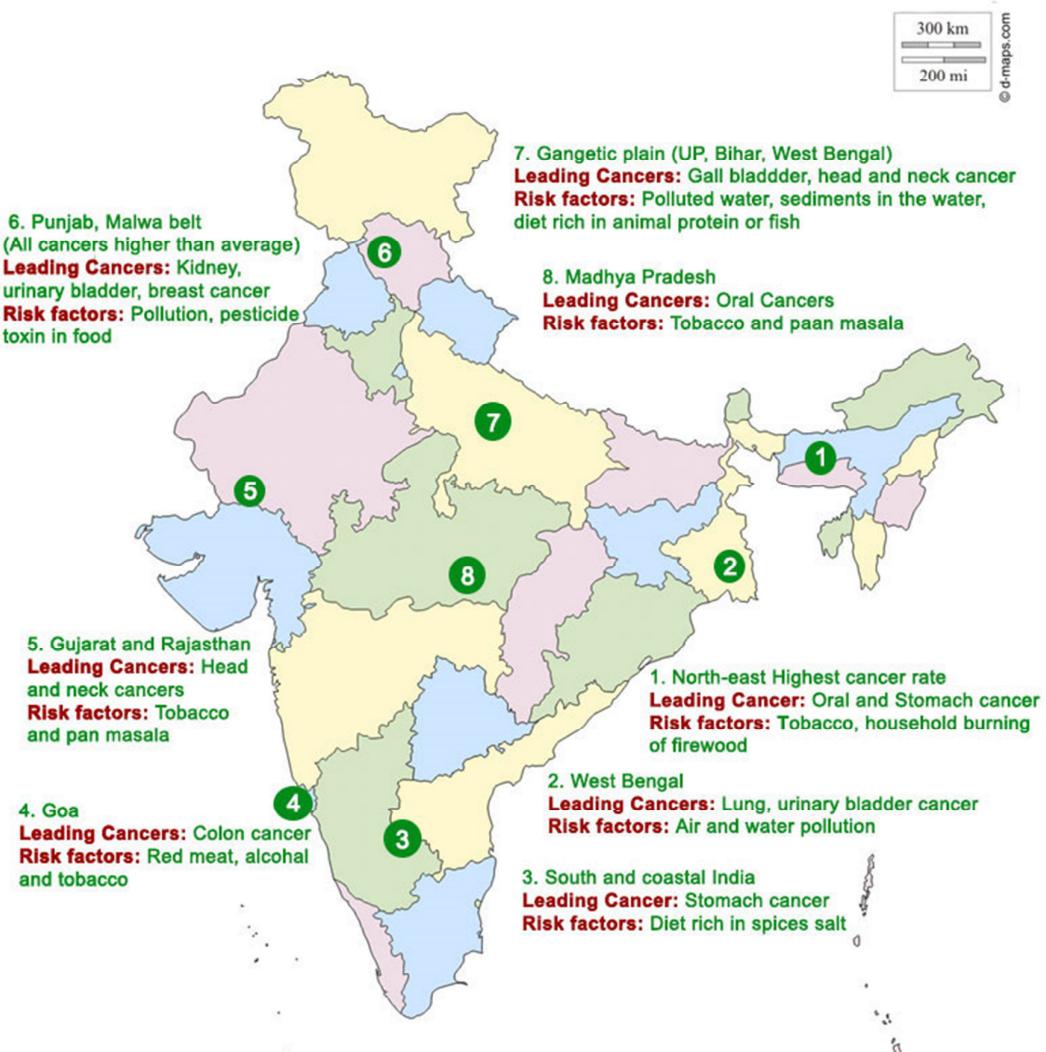
##### **The status of cancer by ICMR-**

Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, the country's most and second-most populous states, also recorded the highest incidence of cancer by absolute numbers in the three years between 2016 and 2018 estimated by an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) report.

The estimated incidence of cancer cases (for both men and women) in Uttar Pradesh were 2,45,231; 2,57,353; and 2,70,053 for the years 2016, 2017, and 2018 respectively. The corresponding numbers for Maharashtra were 1,32,726; 1,38,271; and 1,44,032. Among the lowest estimated incidence was seen in Haryana and Assam, the smaller among the major states.

The absolute numbers suggested the fastest year-on-year increase in the incidence of cancer was estimated for Bihar (5.38% from 2016 to 2017, and 5.37% from 2017 to 2018), the country's third most populous state as per the 2011 Census. The central government was "implementing Strengthening of Tertiary Care Cancer facilities scheme to support setting up of State Cancer Institutes (SCI) and Tertiary Care Cancer Centres (TCCC) in different parts of the country".

## Geographical distribution and burden of cancers in India



NEW MEDICINES TO TACKLE CANCER, CARDIAC DISEASES MAY SOON BECOME PART OF THE ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST.

**What is the news about?**

The WHO has earlier this month released a Revised list of Essential medicines.

**The prices of some drugs used for treating cancer, cardiac diseases and diabetes are likely to be cut as the government initiates a new process to identify essential medicines and bring some of them under price control.**

**A newly-constituted committee on the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) will meet stakeholders to shortlist drugs that should be available in adequate numbers and assured quality.**

The NLEM committee, headed by Balram Bhargava, secretary, department of health research and director-general of the Indian Council of Medical Research, will decide on essential medicines and send the list to a second committee, comprising Rajiv Kumar, vice-chairman of NITI Aayog, Preeti Sudan, secretary of the health ministry, and P. Raghavendra Rao, secretary of the department of pharmaceuticals, for deciding which ones are to be brought under price control.

#### **In detail-**

New medicines related to cancer, cardiac diseases, antibiotics may soon become part of the **National List Of Essential Medicines(NLEM)**. This list forms the basis for price regulation in India. The Standing National Committee On Medicines is conducting a stakeholder meeting to decide on the list and revise the NLEM 2015. Representatives from the pharmaceutical companies, industry, civil society have attended the meeting.

Currently there are 376 medicines under the NLEM list that directly come under the price control. In addition to these the government at the centre has the power to bring any drug under the price control as per the Drug Price Control Order 2013. Earlier this year the government used this provision to cap the trade margins of 42 Cancer Drugs at 30% expanding the span of price control to undue profiteering by Chemists and Drug stockists.

Over 150 countries use WHO's Essential Medicines List to guide the decisions about which medicines represent the best value for money based on evidence and health impact. Even India's NLEM is primarily guided by the UN agency's list which prioritises critical health products that should be widely available and affordable throughout health systems.

#### **The Updated List of WHO-**

The updated essential medicines list of WHO incorporates five new cancer therapies and two immunotherapies for advanced melanoma.

The medicines list also tackles strokes with the inclusion of new oral anticoagulants, biologics for chronic illnesses including rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease, and heat-stable carbetocin for preventing postpartum haemorrhage.

On diagnostics, the WHO makes tackling cancer a priority with an emphasis on tests to ensure timely diagnosis. It includes tests for 12 cancers in the list as well as anatomical pathology to be made available in specialized labs.

### **Procedure for the Price control;**

- Once a drug is on the NLEM the Department of Pharmaceuticals notifies it under the Drug Price Control Order 2013, for price control. Following this the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), India's drug price control watchdog caps the ceiling price of these medicines.
- Medicines and devices listed in NLEM must be sold at the price fixed by NPPA, while those in the non-scheduled list are allowed a maximum annual price hike of 10%.
- The NLEM list is reviewed every three years to include or exclude drugs.
- The NLEM forms the basis for price regulation in India.

### **Impact if implemented;**

Many life-saving drugs for cancer and other diseases will become affordable thus reducing out of pocket expenses.

### **Level 1Q) Explain the Price Control of Drugs in India, What is NLEM?**

**Prelims- WHO, NLEM, Drug Control Order, NPPA.**

### **30 METRE TELESCOPE, IT IS FACING PROTESTS, WHY IS IT SPECIAL?**

Hawaii saw protests against plans to start construction of a giant telescope atop Mauna Kea, the US state's highest mountain at 14,000 feet. Already the site of a number of observatories and 13 large telescopes, ***Mauna Kea is considered sacred by native Hawaiians who believe that such constructions defile the mountain.*** After a Supreme Court order recently cleared construction of the newest one, called the "Thirty Metre Telescope", locals blocked access to the roads last week, leading to several arrests.

"Thirty Metre" refers to the 30-metre diameter of the mirror, with 492 segments of glass pieced together, which makes it three times as wide as the world's largest existing visible-light telescope. The larger the mirror, the more light a telescope can collect, which means, in turn, that it can "see" farther, fainter objects.

### **Uses of the Telescope-**

- One of its key uses will be the study of exoplanets, many of which have been detected in the last few years, and whether their atmospheres contain water vapour or methane — the signatures of possible life. For the first time in history we will be capable of detecting extraterrestrial life.

- The study of black holes is another objective. While these have been observed in detail within the Milky Way, the next galaxy is 100 times farther away; the Thirty Metre Telescope will help bring them closer.
- If the Thirty Metre Telescope cannot be built on Mauna Kea, Spain's Canary Islands is a backup site.

The telescope is being built by an international collaboration of government organisations and educational institutions, at a cost of \$1.4 billion.

### **Level 1 Q) What is the 30Metre Telescope, why was it in news?**

#### **LOOKING A OUTSNDING EXAMPLE OF PHLLIPNIES SAVING ITS FORESTS**

Global warming, largely caused by industrial development and consumer demands, has been causing havoc across the world. Temperatures are shooting up, floods have been ravaging South China and Northeast India, unseasonal rains and, ironically, delayed and poor monsoon rains are experienced. A major solution to mitigate such climate changes is to reduce the levels of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide, which cause this warming. In an effort to try and limit this warming, many countries across the world are gathering together and agreeing to make efforts to limit the rise in temperature to no higher than 1.5 degrees by the year 2050.

The major way to do so is to increase the number of plants, trees and forests across the world. They all absorb carbon dioxide from the air, and with the help of sunlight and water, produce food (staple for us) and oxygen (which we breathe). And the wood and timber they offer are used by us in buildings and furniture. They are thus justly named in Sanskrit as Kalpataru — the wish-giving tree.

#### **What is a forest?**

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines a “forest” as a land area of at least 0.5 hectares, covered by at least 10% tree cover, without any agricultural activity or human settlement.

#### **Leading by example**

But the most outstanding example of reforestation is Philippines, an archipelago of 7,100 islands, with a total land area of 3,00,000 sq km and a population of 104 million people. Way back in 1900, about 65% of its land mass was covered in forest canopy. Large-scale commercial deforestation continued after that, so by 1987, it was reduced to 21%. The government thereafter committed itself to steady reforestation, and by 2010, the forest covered 26%. It has now introduced a remarkable programme in which it makes it mandatory for each elementary, high school and college student to plant 10

trees before graduating. The sites where they plant and the location-appropriate plant are advised to them;

### **In India-**

In India with its 7,08,273 sq km land area, 21.54% has tree cover. And between 2015 and 2018, we have added 6,778 sq km. Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover, followed by Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Arunachal Pradesh while Punjab, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan have the least. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Odisha have improved their forest canopy somewhat (<10%). Private groups, notably The Guru Nanak Sacred Forest in Ludhiana, Punjab, the middle-of-the-town forest in the heart of Raipur, the "Afforest" group of Shubhendu Sharma are some notable non-government initiatives. Readers will surely add more. (On an aside, who can forget the centenarian Salumarde Thimmakka, who has planted 385 banyan trees and 8,000 other trees, or Sunderlal Bahuguna of the Chipko movement of Uttarakhand?).

### **CCMB TO SEQUENCE 30 GENOMES A DAY**

#### **New NGS facility at Hyderabad-**

Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) facility, fourth such facility in the country, which can sequence 30 human genomes a day, was inaugurated by Union Minister of Science and Technology Harsh Vardhan at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), a CSIR lab in Hyderabad. It costs around ₹1 lakh to sequence one genome using this facility.

This state-of-the-art genome sequencing facility would be of help, especially to patients suffering from rare genetic disorders.

Much of the existing body of knowledge for therapies for these diseases comes from studies done with Caucasian populations. This facility would help in generating large-scale genomic data from Indian populations, which was critical for genetic diagnosis and therapy.

The CCMB can now sequence up to 30 human genomes or 384 diagnostic samples in a day. For a country like India, with its heavy genetic disease burden, prenatal genetic screening and counselling are essential in preventing genetic disorders.

This opens up multiple avenues in investigating fundamental biology of individual cells in tissues as well as fighting disease like cancer through understanding the heterogeneity in cell populations. By using the facility, scientists hope to find genetic cause of rare diseases and develop kits which can be used to find population at the risk of genetic or other rare diseases. These services would be available to hospitals, industry, and academicians by paying charges.

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## COLISTIN BANNED IN ANIMAL FOOD INDUSTRY

### **About the news-**

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued an order prohibiting the manufacture, sale and distribution of colistin and its formulations for food-producing animals, poultry, aqua farming and animal feed supplements.

The order, directed manufacturers of colistin and its formulations (since it is also used to treat humans) to affix a label on the container reading thus: Not to be used in food producing animals, poultry, aqua farming and animal feed supplements: on the package, insert and promotional literature.

### **With the aim to reduce Ant- Microbial Resistance-**

- Colistin is a valuable, last-resort antibiotic that saves lives in critical care units and in recent years, medical professionals have been alarmed by the number of patients who have exhibited resistance to the drug.
- Therefore, any move to ensure that arbitrary use of colistin in the food industry, particularly as growth supplements used in animals, poultry, aqua farms, would likely reduce the antimicrobial resistance within the country.

Late last year, researchers from Apollo Cancer Hospital, Chennai, and Christian Medical College, Vellore, claimed, in a paper in the Journal of Global Antimicrobial Resistance, that samples of raw food lifted from across Chennai had tested positive for colistin-resistant bacteria.

Excessive use of any drug leads to resistance. If you can cut the use of colistin as a growth factor in animals and limit it to therapeutic usage only, the chances of developing resistance to it goes down.

Awareness programmes need to be conducted for farmers, telling them about the danger of using colistin in feed. Most are not aware of the presence of colistin, since it comes mixed in the feed. Since the bulk of colistin (nearly 95%) is imported from China, it would also be easy to stop importing it within a short time.

### **AWaRe-**

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently released AWaRe, an online tool aimed to ensure safer antibiotic use and reduce antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a global public health threat. As part of this, colistin has been marked 'Reserved', meaning it should only be used as a last resort when all other antibiotics have failed.

Apparently, colistin is also listed as a highest priority critically important antibiotic (HPCIA) in the WHO's list of critically important antimicrobials for human medicine. But

it is allowed to be used for non-therapeutic purposes in animals. This includes its use for growth promotion (for example fattening of broiler poultry in less time and with less feed) as well as for preventing diseases in healthy animals.

**Being an HPCIA implies that colistin is the sole or one of limited available therapies** to treat serious bacterial infections in people. Colistin is the last resort drug against multidrug resistant gram-negative infections such as pneumonia and bacteremia in critically ill patients in intensive care units. **When colistin fails, doctors are left with the limited option of using fosfomycin that costs nearly Rs 24,000 per day.** This is very expensive and hence would be unaffordable to many patients. We would lose lives due to colistin-resistance if it is not timely contained.

Colistin-resistant bacteria were found in food samples in India in meat, mutton, fish, fruits and vegetables in 2018. Indiscriminate colistin use by several companies such as Venky's for raising poultry in India was also reported by an international news agency.

Other companies that sell colistin containing feed for animal use in the country include, Vetline — which sells colistin-containing feeds under the brand names Coligro-100 and Progro-vet. These are marketed for treatment and prevention of bacterial infections and as antibiotic growth promoter for better feed conversion and hence increased weight gain in broilers respectively.

#### **Actions to ban its use -**

Indian National Action Plan on AMR aims to restrict and phase out non-therapeutic use of antimicrobials such as their use as growth promoters and disease prevention in animals.

A year later, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DADF) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare issued a letter to the CDSCO (Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation), the apex drug regulator of India, recommending a ban on growth promotional use of colistin in animal feed as a premix or supplement.

Based on this letter, the CDSCO's Drug Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) also recommended prohibiting colistin and its formulations for use in food producing animals, poultry and aqua farming as well as in animal feed supplements

#### **Colistin use worldwide**

- Globally, several countries have banned colistin for animal use. In China, for instance, colistin was banned for use in food animals in 2016 after mcr-1 gene, which confers resistance to colistin, was detected in food samples.
- But, contrary to the practice in its own territory, China exported nearly 100 metric tonnes of colistin-premixed animal feed, supplements and additives per year (October 2015-16) to India.

- Japan and Malaysia also prohibit colistin use in food animals and Australia does not register colistin for use in food producing animals.
- Many countries, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore and those of the European Union (EU), prohibit antibiotic use as growth promoters in animal feed. This by definition would also include prohibiting colistin.
- The EU, in fact, is also considering a ban on preventive mass medication in animals which will come into enforcement from 2022. This means that colistin would also not be used for disease prevention post 2022 in the EU.
- The IACG (Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance) in its April 2019 report to the secretary-general of the United Nations has recommended an urgent action from member states, which includes India, to phase out use of antimicrobials for growth promotion in animals starting with an immediate end to the use of HPCAs that includes colistin.

**Level 1 Q) Assess the recent order of the government to ban the use of Colistin in food industry?**

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**MP YET TO FORM TIGER PROTECTION FORCE**

Madhya Pradesh is yet to constitute the battalion, even as the State has registered the most number of tiger deaths due to poaching since 2012. The state has recorded most number of deaths due to poaching from 2012-2018.

According to an agreement, the State Forest Department was supposed to raise, arm and deploy the force in the reserves within two years of the agreement. However, in the absence of an independent elite unit to protect tigers in the State, 30 deaths due to poaching have been reported between 2012 and 2018.

Famous as the ‘Tiger State’ at least until 2006 when it boasted the most number of tigers with an estimated 300 in its six reserves, Madhya Pradesh lost out to Karnataka in 2010 and fell behind Uttarakhand too in 2014, according to the Status of Tigers in India report.

After Maharashtra and Karnataka deployed the force in their reserves, tiger mortalities due to poaching there have come down significantly. Apart from the two States having the with STPFs, which are partially funded by the Centre, on July 1, Assam constituted a Special Rhino Protection Force on July 1 comprising 82 constables, trained over 43 weeks, to tackle rhino and tiger poaching in the Kaziranga National Park.

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**ALGOBAT FOR CRICKET LOVERS**

A high performing bat called the ALGOBAT is being developed at the Canada University of British Columbia where scientists have developed a novel algorithm that optimises the geometry of the bat and helps it harder and further.

The University has been using Machine learning and Genetic Algorithms to teach a computer to maximise the performance of the cricket bat they have named Algobat.

The idea is to optimise the back profile of the bat in order to minimise the vibrations of the bat when the ball hits it. Therefore more energy would transfer to the ball and the ball would fly further. Computer modelling and Optimisation Algorithms are being used to achieve this goal.

Cricket is the second most famous sport after Football and many aspiring young who cannot afford a costly bat for practice. The university aims to cater to the needs of such aspiring cricketers by developing a cheaper alternation to the costly one.

## SPACE

### HOW WILL CHANDRAYAAN2 STUDY THE MOON?

#### **Why is India's first attempt at a powered lunar landing important?**

When Chandrayaan 1, India's first moon mission was launched on October 22, 2008, from Sriharikota, using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), India became the fourth country to plant its flag on the lunar surface. On the moon, the mission conclusively detected traces of water along with magnesium, aluminium and silicon.

India launched its second lunar mission, Chandrayaan 2, from Sriharikota, using the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark III rocket. The launch was planned on July 15<sup>th</sup> a day short of the 50th anniversary of the launch of the American mission Apollo 11 which took humans to the moon and back.

The first moon landing occurred on July 20, 1969, on the Apollo 11 mission which was launched on July 16.

#### **What is special about Chandrayaan 2?**

Chandrayaan 2 will be the first mission to reach and study the south pole of the moon. It is made up of an orbiter, a lander named 'Vikram', after Vikram A. Sarabhai, the founding father of space science research in India, and a rover named 'Pragyan', which means 'wisdom'. At about 3,877 kg, the spacecraft weighs nearly four times its predecessor, Chandrayaan 1. It will be launched by the GSLV Mark III, the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO's) most powerful and massive launcher. While Chandrayaan 1 sent its lander crashing into the moon, Chandrayaan 2 will use rocket

technology to soft land 'Vikram', carrying its 'Pragyan' rover in a suitable high plain on the lunar surface, between two craters, Manzinus-C and Simpelius N, at a latitude of about 70° South. This landing is scheduled for September 6 this year. The total cost of the project is about ₹978 crore. The lander-rover combo has an expected lifetime of 14 days, while the orbiter will continue for a year.

### **What is the success rate of "soft-landing" on the moon?**

There have been 38 attempts so far at "soft-landing" on the moon, with a success rate of 52% according to the ISRO website.

### **How does the 'Pragyan' rover operate and what determines its lifetime?**

The time taken for the moon to complete one rotation on its axis is approximately equal to 29.5 earth days. This is also equal to the time it takes to complete one orbit around the earth. That is why the same side always faces the earth. But because it takes 29.5 earth days to complete one rotation, every point on its surface experiences daylight for about half the time, or a little more than 14 days at a stretch. Moon days are nearly 14 earth days long. Note that the landing is scheduled for September 6, when we will see the first quarter of the moon. This is a date when the lander will land at a point that is facing the earth and which has started receiving sunlight.

This point will receive light for nearly another fortnight which will match the expected lifetime of the lander-rover combo. Since the 'Vikram' lander and 'Pragyan' rover are powered by solar energy, they will be energised during this period by sunlight on the moon. Once night falls, this energy will not be available as they are plunged into a dark and cold -180° Celsius environment. If the lander-rover duo should kickstart after another half-rotation when day breaks once again, it will be a bonus for the ISRO.

The mission is not designed to survive this extreme cold, unlike some U.S. and Chinese missions which survived on the "dark" side of the moon using special sources of warmth.

### **Why should we have this mission? Why should we study the moon?**

The moon offers a pristine environment to study. It is also closer than other celestial bodies. Understanding how it formed and evolved can help us better understand the solar system and even earth itself. With space travel taking shape and exoplanets being discovered everyday, learning more about earth's celestial neighbour can help in advanced missions. Finally, it is a piece of the larger puzzle as to how the solar system and its planets have evolved.

### **How will the mission study the moon?**

Using the **Terrain Mapping Camera 2** which is on board the orbiter, the mission will produce images of the moon remotely from a 100 km lunar polar orbit. While the moon rotates about its axis, along its east-west direction, say, the lunar polar orbit will be in

the perpendicular direction, along the lunar north-south direction. Thus, as the moon rotates, the orbiter gets a view of its entire surface from overhead. This data collected by the orbiter will be used to produce a 3D image of the moon's terrain. This is just one of the eight instruments, or payloads, on board the orbiter.

The lander carries three such payloads, some of which will measure the electron density and temperature near the lunar surface; the vertical temperature gradient, and seismicity around the landing site.

The rover will carry two instruments or payloads which will collect and test samples from the moon's surface to identify what elements they contain. The rover moves on six wheels and once let down on the moon, can travel about 500 m from the lander.

### **Level 1 Q) Give a detailed explanation of the Chandrayaan2 Mission?**

#### **Tale of two lunar missions**

A look at how Chandrayaan-2 is different than its predecessor

	Chandrayaan-1	Chandrayaan-2
Launch year	October 2008	July 2019
Launch vehicle	PSLV [C11, light lift vehicle]	GSLV MkIII [far more powerful]
Spacecraft size	1,380 kg	3,850 kg
Mission & life	Orbiter 1 year [failed 4 months prematurely]	Orbiter 1 year; lander and rover 14 earth days
Cost	₹540 crore	₹978 crore
Payloads	11, Indian & international	14 Indian (many same as on CY1) 1 from NASA 8 on orbiter 4 on lander 2 on rover
What it achieved	Detected presence of water	Aims to be first country to land on and explore the lunar south pole
Specialty	Crashed the tri-coloured Moon Impact Probe near the southern lunar hemisphere	Will try to safely place the Vikram lander near the south pole



### **Level 2 Q) Differentiate between the Chandrayaan1 and the Chandrayaan2 Missions?**

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#### VIKRAM LANDER TESTED OVER THE CHALAKERE CRATER-

In order to test the Chandrayaan-2 lander Vikram, ISRO recreated lunar surface at its facility in Challakere Science City, Bengaluru.

To simulate the lunar surface at the test facility, professional crushers broke down the rocks brought from around Salem in Tamil Nadu to the micro grain sizes sought by the ISRO-led team.

For testing the lander, ISRO had a large test bed created at its new R&D campus at the Challakere Science City, some 400 km from Bengaluru. Vikram's set of sensors, called the Hazard Detection and Avoidance (HDA) system, is a critical part of the mission.

In the actual descent to the Moon, the lander hovers for a few seconds over a site and the sensors must assess whether the spot is flat enough for the lander's legs: whether it has rocks that might topple the lander, and whether the lander can be steady to release the rover within it. If the spot is not safe, it must quickly rise and shift to a neighbouring spot and again assess if it is suitable to land on, all in seconds.

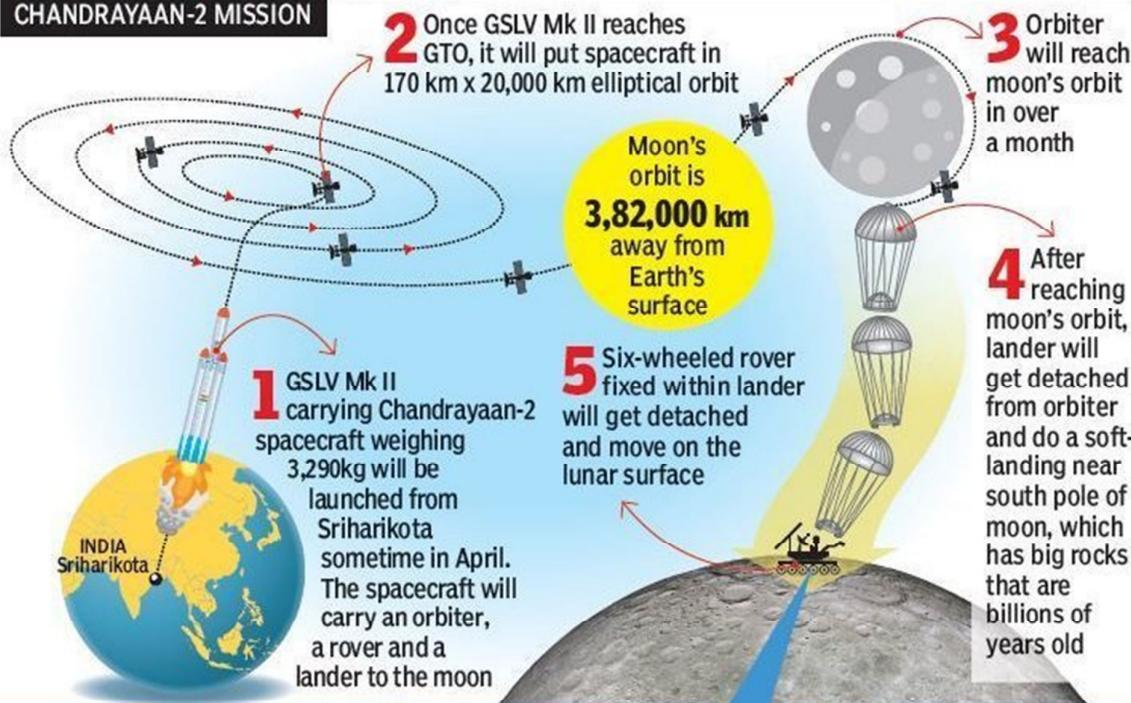
In 2016, the URSC created several artificial 'lunar' craters at the Challakere site. Late that year the team put a test bed of lander sensors in a small ISRO plane and flew it over the craters to see if the sensors could read the terrain and find the right landing spot.

The success of the landing depends on the sensors' correctly guiding the lander to a safe site; and the fuel in the lander lasting for duration of the whole exercise.

# JOURNEY TO MOON

## CHANDRAYAAN-2 MISSION

Graphic: Arpit Sharma



Rover has been designed in such a way that it will have power to spend a **lunar day** or **14 Earth days** on moon's surface

It will walk up to **150-200 metres** and conduct **several experiments** and **on-site chemical analysis** of lunar surface

Rover will send data & images of moon back to Earth via the orbiter in **15 minutes**

## CHANDRAYAAN II



- Chandrayaan 2 is India's second lunar mission with three modules: the Orbiter, Lander (Vikram) and Rover (Pragyan).**
- The Orbiter and Lander will be mechanically interfaced and stacked together as an integrated module inside the launch vehicle, GSLV MK-III.**
- The Orbiter and Lander modules would be interfaced mechanically and stacked together as an integrated module and accommodated inside the GSLV MK-III launch vehicle. Rover is housed inside Lander.**
- After the launch into an earth-bound orbit by GSLV MK-III, the integrated module would reach the moon orbit using the orbiter propulsion module.**
- Chandrayaan spacecraft, with a mass of 3.8 tonne, will have three modules comprising of the Orbiter, Lander (Vikram) and Rover (Pragyan).**

## Key Components

01

### LANDER (VIKRAM)

- This is the first time that ISRO is attempting to soft-land a module in extra-terrestrial Space.
- Once the Lander and Rover, enter the Moon's gravity, they would be in a state of free fall. That could end up in crash-landing and destruction of instrument.
- Because of lack of air to provide drag, these instruments cannot make use of parachute like technologies.
- To enable a smooth landing, the speed of the Lander just ahead of touchdown should be 3.6 kilometres per hour or less.

02

### ROVER (PRAGYAAN)

- The Rover, a six-wheeled solar-powered vehicle, will detach itself and slowly crawl on the surface, making observations and collecting data.
- It is designed in such a way that it will have power to spend a lunar day or 14 Earth days on Moon's surface.
- The mission cost of Chandrayaan-2 with regard to the satellite was Rs 603 crore. Cost of GSLV MK III is Rs 375 crore.
- According to the ISRO, Orbiter, with scientific payloads, would orbit around the moon. Lander would soft land on the moon at a predetermined site and deploy Rover.
- The scientific payloads on board Orbiter, Lander and Rover are expected to perform mineralogical and elemental studies of the lunar surface.

## Mission moon 2.0

A look at the four key components of Chandrayaan 2 – launcher, orbiter, lander and rover

**Launcher – GSLV Mk-III** | It will carry Chandrayaan 2 to its designated orbit. This three-stage vehicle is India's most powerful launcher to date, and is capable of launching 4-ton class of satellites to the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit

 <p>SOURCE: ISRO</p>	<b>ORBITER</b>  <p>Weight: 2,379 kg Power generation capability: 1,000 W Capable of communicating with the Indian Deep Space Network at Byalalu and the Vikram lander. It will be placed in a 100X100 km lunar polar orbit</p>	<b>LANDER – VIKRAM</b>  <p>Weight: 1,471 kg Power generation capability: 650 W Named after Vikram Sarabhai, the Father of the Indian space programme, it is designed to function for one lunar day, equivalent to about 14 Earth days</p>	<b>ROVER – PRAGYAN</b>  <p>Weight: 27 kg Power generation capability: 50 W This 6-wheeled robotic vehicle can travel up to 500 m and uses solar energy for its functioning. It can only communicate with the lander</p>
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## ISRO'S LUNAR TOUCHDOWN HAS DRY RUN ON SOIL FETCHED FROM TAMIL NADU

### **About the news-**

To execute the indigenously developed cryogenic stage for its GSLV MkII rocket ISRO needed lunar 'soil' with almost all its features and texture, lunar temperatures, low gravity and the same amount of sunlight as on the moon.

For recreating the terrain, an option was to import simulated lunar soil from the U.S. — at an exorbitant \$150 a kg (the then prevailing price). The facility needed about 60-70 tonnes of soil.

Geologists of various national agencies had found that a few sites near Salem in Tamil Nadu had the '**anorthosite**' rock that somewhat matches lunar soil in composition and features.

Professional crushers broke down the rocks and soil to the micro grain sizes sought by the ISRO-led team. Transporters moved the tonnes of this 'lunar earth' to ISITE at Bengaluru. The team spread the soil trucked in from Salem up to a height of about 2 metres. Studios were hired to illuminate the facility exactly as sunlight would play on the lunar terrain.

On the Moon, the metre-long rover, weighing 27 kg, must move for about 500 metres during its expected life of **14 Earth days (one lunar day)**. Rover tests began as early as in 2015. The ISRO team had to reckon with the **weak lunar gravity, about 16.5% of Earth's. The rover's weight was artificially reduced using helium balloons.**

Previous missions by other countries have suggested that the southern part of the Moon is mineral rich with the promise of water, which was first confirmed by the Chandrayaan-1 mission.

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## THIRD TRIP IN THE WORK TO BRING BACK SAMPLES

### **About the news-**

After the launch of the Chandrayaan-2 mission there are indications that that is a another lunar journey in the offing around 2024 to bring soil and rock samples back from the South Pole of the Moon.

Through the sample return mission India and Japan seek to deepen their relation into outer space.

The ISRO has initiated talks on this with the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). This was discussed during the Asia Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) meet in Bengaluru.

### How will their co-operation in Outer space help-

- A joint moon mission makes sense also because it is easier to pool resources when up against the economically stronger countries: China, US, and Russia. Besides, there are many lessons that Japan can offer India, such as its success with public-private collaboration in the space launch and exploration sector: for nearly two decades, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries has been the primary manufacturer and operator of JAXA's expendable launch system. New Delhi is mulling over privatising the manufacturing, management, and launch operations of its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle by 2020.
- The partnership will also stimulate the development of several crucial technologies, such as the electric ion propulsion (EIP) engines. ISRO recently demonstrated its EIP engines on the South Asia Satellite, a strategic undertaking of prime minister Narendra Modi's Neighbourhood First Policy. JAXA's EIP engines have performed intricate and autonomous manoeuvring of the Hayabusa space probe (launched in 2003) that touched the surface of asteroid Itokawa, 300 million miles away from the Earth (pdf).
- Crucial for any extraterrestrial sample-return mission is the construction of non-polluting and non-contaminating clean-room infrastructure for the storage of extra-terrestrial samples. JAXA's Hayabusa series of sample-return missions has resulted in collaborations with companies, like the Hitachi High-Tech Corporation, to develop this. Such infrastructure will also be crucial for space-station based manufacturing, which is an anticipated major industrial sector in the coming decades.
- India and Japan currently possess one Deep Space Communication Network (DSCN) antenna each: Karnataka and one in Nagano, Japan. All their outer space missions have been dependent so far on the US DSCN global triad based in California, Spain, and Australia. China, Russia, and Europe possess an independent DSCN global triad, which they regard as a national priority. Tokyo and New Delhi should use their partnership to build a DSCN infrastructure each—the state-of-the-art 70 m antenna—on each other's land parcels.
- Lunar exploration technologies that seemed fantasies in the past are now becoming imminent possibilities. The rush to acquire them is resulting in a space race in Asia that is additionally yielding scientific research and techno-economic growth. It is, therefore, important that the new India-Japan outer-space partnership use the lunar mission as an opportunity to fill the gaps, techno-economic and otherwise.

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CHANDRAYAAN-2 LIFTED OFF ON JULY 22<sup>ND</sup> FROM SRIHARIKOTA-  
CHANDRAYAAN-2 LAUNCH: 15 COMPLEX MANOEUVRES BEFORE CRITICAL  
DESCENT ON SEPTEMBER 7

Chandrayaan-2, the sequel to Chandrayaan-1, consists of three modules —

1. Orbiter,
  2. Lander
  3. Rover.
- The Orbiter will orbit the Moon from 100 kilometres away, while the Lander will carry the Rover module to the surface of the Moon. As the Lander makes a soft-landing,
  - The Rover will detach itself and slowly crawl on the surface to record observations and collect data. The Rover, **called 'Pragyaan' (wisdom)**, is a six-wheeled solar-powered vehicle.
  - *The Lander module is named 'Vikram', after Vikram Sarabhai.*

The spacecraft has to undergo at least 15 complex manoeuvres over the next one-and-a-half months before the final, and most critical of all — the landing of the Vikram lander and Pragyan rover on the lunar surface on September 7.

Most manoeuvres will be performed in the first 25 days when the spacecraft will incrementally raise its orbit around the earth, and gain strength for the journey to the moon.

#### **These are the crucial phases of the mission:**

July 22 to August 13: Chandrayaan-2 was in an orbit which, at its nearest, was 170 km from earth, and, at its furthest, 39,120 km. It will undergo at least five orbit raising manoeuvres over the next 20 days.

August 13: Leaves earth orbit, and begins its seven-day journey to the lunar orbit.

August 20: Enters lunar orbit. Starts circling the moon at a distance of 100 km.

September 2: Vikram and Pragyan will separate from the orbiter, lower themselves in an orbit closer to the moon and continue to go around it.

September 7: The final descent to the lunar surface. This should take 10-20 minutes, depending on how soon Vikram is able to find a suitable landing place. It has cameras on board to guide it, and avoid landing in a crater. The same day, Pragyan will emerge from Vikram and start roaming the lunar surface at an extremely slow pace of 1 cm per second.

***Vikram and Pragyan will be operational for 14 days. The orbiter will have a life of one year.***

#### **The Search for Water on the Moon;**

The ***search for water on the moon is one of the main objectives of Chandrayaan-2.*** At least three of 14 instruments on board will look for additional evidence and signs of

water. Two camera-based instruments and one synthetic aperture radar will prepare different kinds of high-resolution lunar maps. At least four instruments will study the composition of the lunar surface, and try to detect the different minerals and elements present there.

Chandrayaan-2 is attempting to become **the first spacecraft to land near the lunar south pole**. All 28 lunar landings on the moon including the human landings, have happened around the lunar equatorial region. Recent studies however point to great scientific potential in exploring the polar regions of the moon. This region is filled with large and small craters. This region is extremely cold with the temperatures ranging from 200 degrees Celsius.

*Unlike the Earth the Moon does not have a tilt around its axis. It is almost erect, because of which some areas in the polar regions never receive sunlight.* Anything that remains frozen almost eternity. Scientists believe that the rocks in these craters could have fossil records that can reveal information about the early solar system. In addition there is evidence of large amount of ice trapped in the craters of these regions.

#### Level 1 Q) Describe the Chnadrayaan 2 Mission?

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UPSC PRELIMS CUM MAINS 2020 LONG TERM STARTS -14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019

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- GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363

APPSC GROUP 1 FREE TEST SERIES- starts

September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019

Discussion will include-

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## BIODIVERSITY

### SOON CONTRACEPTIVES FOR ANIMALS-

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) has launched a project for undertaking 'immunocontraceptive measures' for population management of four species of wild animals — **elephant, wild boar, monkey and blue bull (Nilgai)**.

The pilot project will begin in Uttarakhand and will cover the rest of the country.

### Human animal Conflict-

Human Animal conflict is becoming a major challenge in managing the wildlife in the country and human elephant conflicts causes the maximum number of causalities every year. According to the Ministry data nearly 494 persons were killed by the elephants last year. Between 2014-19 2398 people died in the country with West Bengal accounting for the maximum number of such deaths.

***Immunocontraception is a technology that uses a female animal's immune system to build a protein around the egg that prevents it from fertilising.***

The Birth control method has been tried in Africa in areas like the Kruger National Park but added that the implementation of such project in India will not be a simple task. In Africa the technology was used on a private reserve with a relatively small elephant population, where every individual can be easily identified.

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## INDIA HAS 3000 TIGERS UP FROM THE 2014 CENSUS

The PM released the 4<sup>th</sup> Tiger Census since 2014 called **All India Tiger Estimation count**. According to the census India has increased its tiger population by a 3<sup>rd</sup> since 2014 which stood at 2226 in 2014. The Tiger census is held once in 4 years. Nearly 3,000 tigers now reside in India, that's more than 80% of the world's tiger population.

Since 2006, the Wildlife Institute of India — an Environment Ministry-funded body — has been tasked with coordinating the exercise. That year, it emerged that India had only 1,411 tigers. This rose to 1,706 in 2010 and 2,226 in 2014 on the back of improved conservation measures and new estimation methods.

This growth has not been uniform across all 18 states where tigers are found. The count has decreased drastically from 46 to 19 in Chhattisgarh. In Odisha, it has been on a continual decline over the years and now stands at 28. India has 2,967 tigers, a third more than in 2014.

The tiger bearing habitats were divided into five landscape regions—

1. *Shivalik-Gangetic plains,*
2. *Central India and the Eastern Ghats,*
3. *Western Ghats,*
4. *North Eastern Hills and Brahmaputra Flood Plains and*
5. *The Sundarbans.*

1. Madhya Pradesh **saw the highest number of tigers** at 526, closely followed by Karnataka (524) and Uttarakhand (442).
2. Chhattisgarh and Mizoram **saw a decline in tiger population** and all other States saw a “positive” increase.
3. While Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of tigers.
4. Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu registered the “maximum improvement” since 2014.
5. India accounts for many of the 3,500-odd tigers that are scattered among Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russian Federation, Thailand and Vietnam. These are the Tiger Range countries.
6. In 2010, these countries agreed to put in efforts to double the tiger population — in sum — by 2022.

The latest survey is the culmination of 15 months of forest officials surveying 381,400 square kilometres of forested habitat, installing 26,760 camera traps and wildlife biologists ferreting through 35 million images of wildlife — 76,523 of which were tigers

(there can be multiple images of the same tiger). Nearly 83% of the estimated tiger population was captured in these images.

India now takes the lead in being the biggest and safest habitat in the world for tigers. India decided to strengthen the conservation of tigers in its country. In an effort to protect the endangered species, the National Tiger Conservation Authority was created to count the population.

### **Level 1Q) Give details of the All India Tiger Estimation count?**

#### **Prelims- Tiger Reserves, highlights of the Count?**

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#### **NEW SPECIES OF LIZARD NAMED AFTER HINDU GOD INDRA**

A team of researchers has discovered a new specimen of a Micro-raptor -- Volant dromaeosaurid *Microraptor zhaoianus* -- with the remains of a nearly complete lizard preserved in its stomach. The researchers have named the lizard after Lord Indra.

The lizard is unlike any previously known from the Cretaceous and represents a new species- **Indrasaurus wangi**. The name **Indrasaurus** was inspired by a Vedic legend in which the **god Indra was swallowed by a dragon during a great battle** (the dragon here referring to Microraptor).

The new lizard had teeth unlike any other previously known from the Jehol Biota, thus expanding the diversity of this clade and possibly suggesting a unique diet for this new species.

This is the fourth documented occurrence of a Microraptor preserving stomach contents - this dinosaur is now known to have fed on mammals, birds, fish, and lizards, supporting the interpretation that it was an opportunistic predator.

The lizard is nearly complete and articulated, showing that it was swallowed whole and head first, meaning that Microraptor fed in a manner similar to living carnivorous birds and lizards.

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#### **7000 SPECIES ADDED TO THE ICUN UPDATED NEW RED LIST**

Humankind's destruction of nature is driving species to the brink of extinction at an "unprecedented" rate, the leading wildlife conservation body warned as it added more than 7,000 animals, fish and plants to its Red List of Threatened Species.

From the canopies of tropical forests to the ocean floor, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said iconic species of primates, rays, fish and trees are now classified as critically endangered. The group has now assessed more than 105,000 species worldwide — around 28,000 of which risk extinction.

While each group of organisms face specific threats, human behavior — including overfishing and deforestation — is the biggest driver of plummeting populations.

In May the United Nations released its generational assessment of the state of the environment. It made for grim reading.

The report warned that as many as 1 million species are now at risk of extinction — many within decades — as human consumption of freshwater, fossil fuels and other natural resources skyrockets.

It found that more than 90 percent of marine fish stocks are now either overfished or fished to the limit of sustainability.

The IUCN singled out a number of sea and freshwater fish that now occupy its highest threat category of “critically endangered” — the next step beyond that on the Red List is extinction.

Wedgefishes and giant guitarfishes, known collectively as rhino rays due to their elongated snouts, are now the most imperiled marine families on Earth.

The False Shark Ray is on the brink of extinction after overfishing in the waters off of Mauritania led to its population collapsing 80 percent in the last 45 years.

Prime culprits are humans hunting the animals for bushmeat and “severe habitat loss” as forest is converted to land to grow food. 40 percent of all primates in West and Central Africa are now threatened with extinction, according to the IUCN.

**Level 1 Q) What is the mandate of the ICUN and What is the Red list all about? Enumerate the levels of Criticality defined by the ICUN?**

#### BREAKTHROUGH TECHNIQUE TO ERADICATE MOSQUITOES

A breakthrough technique harnessing two methods to target disease-carrying mosquitoes was able to effectively eradicate buzzing biters in two test sites in China, according to research.

The mosquitoes targeted are a type that is particularly difficult to control called ***Aedes albopictus*—more popularly known as the Asian tiger mosquito**—which are a major vector for diseases including Zika and dengue.

Researchers harnessed two population control methods: the use of radiation—which effectively sterilises mosquitoes—and a strain of bacteria called Wolbachia that leaves mosquito eggs dead on arrival.

They conducted a two-year trial at two sites on river islands in Guangzhou, where Asian tiger mosquitoes are to blame for the highest dengue transmission rate in China.

## Radiation and bacteria

- The research builds on two existing methods: radiation-based **Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) and Incompatible Insect Technique (IIT)**.
- SIT works by releasing radiation-sterilised male mosquitoes into an environment to mate with wild female mosquitoes, reducing the size of the population over time as females fail to reproduce.
- But irradiation of male mosquitoes tends to reduce both their mating competitiveness and their survival rates, undermining the technique's effectiveness.
- The **IIT method involves a bacteria called Wolbachia**. When males infected with it mate with female mosquitoes that aren't infected, their eggs don't hatch.

The technique doesn't work if the female mosquitoes are infected with the same Wolbachia strain, and successful mating by mosquitoes that both carry the bacteria undermines the technique by producing more female mosquitoes infected with Wolbachia that are resistant to the process.

Preventing the release of Wolbachia-infected female mosquitoes is difficult, with sex-sorting techniques usually resulting in a "female contamination rate" of about 0.3 percent.

To overcome that, researchers decided to subject their Wolbachia-infected lab-reared mosquitoes to low-level irradiation, which rendered the females sterile but left the males able to reproduce.

This allowed the team to avoid the onerous sex-screening process and meant they could release significantly more mosquitoes at a time: in some cases more than 160,000 male mosquitoes per hectare, per week.

***The Tests can be used against mosquitoes that carry disease, including malaria.***

## INDIA HOME TO 1256 SPECIES OF ORCHID – 1<sup>ST</sup> COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY

- The Botanical Survey of India has come up with the first comprehensive census of orchids of India putting the total number of orchid species or taxa to 1,256.
- Orchids of India : A Pictorial Guide*, a publication detailing all the species of India was unveiled earlier this month by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The 1,256 species or taxa of orchids belong to 155 genera and 388 species are endemic to India.

## Three life forms

Orchids can be broadly categorised into three life forms:

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**APPSC GROUP 1 FREE TEST SERIES- starts**

**September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019**

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- epiphytic (plants growing on another plants including those growing on rock boulders and often termed lithophyte),
- terrestrial (plants growing on land and climbers) and
- mycoheterotrophic (plants which derive nutrients from mycorrhizal fungi that are attached to the roots of a vascular plant).

About 60% of all orchids found in the country, which is 757 species, are epiphytic, 447 are terrestrial and 43 are mycoheterotrophic.

The epiphytic orchids are abundant up to 1800 m above the sea level and their occurrence decreases with the increase in altitude. Terrestrial orchids, which grow

directly on soil, are found in large numbers in temperate and alpine region whereas mycoheterotrophic orchids, mostly associated with ectomycorrhizal fungi, are found in temperate regions, or are found growing with parasites in tropical regions.

A State-wise distribution of orchid species point out that the Himalayas, North-East parts of the country and Western Ghats are the hot-spots of the beautiful plant species.

### State-wise distribution

- The **highest number of orchid species is recorded from Arunachal Pradesh** with 612 species, followed by Sikkim 560 species and West Bengal; Darjeeling Himalayas have also high species concentration, with 479 species.
- While north-east India rank at the top in species concentration, the Western Ghats have high endemism of orchids. There are 388 species of orchids, which are endemic to India of which about one-third (128) endemic species are found in Western Ghats. Kerala has 111 of these endemic species while Tamil Nadu has 92 of them.
- Among the **10 bio geographic zones of India**, the Himalayan zone is the richest in terms of orchid species followed by Northeast, Western Ghats, Deccan plateau and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- The first authentic inventory and will be useful for researchers, growers, nature lovers and people with different backgrounds.

## BIODIVERSITY IN INDIA



- |                     |
|---------------------|
| 1. Trans Himalaya   |
| 2. Himalaya         |
| 3. Desert           |
| 4. Semi Arid        |
| 5. Western Ghats    |
| 6. Deccan Peninsula |
| 7. Ganggetic Plain  |
| 8. Coasts           |
| 9. North East       |
| 10. Islands         |

- With only 2.4 % of the world's area, India accounts for 7-8 % of the world's recorded plant and animal species.
- India's ten biogeographic zones possess an exemplary diversity of ecological habitats like alpine forests, grasslands, wetlands, coastal and marine ecosystems, and desert ecosystems.
- HENCE , we can conclude that INDIA HAS LARGE SPECIES AS WELL AS ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY.

CITES bans trade of any orchid-

- Marked by extremely beautiful flowers with unique shape and ornamentation, orchids have complex floral structure that facilitates biotic cross-pollination and makes them evolutionarily superior to the other plant groups.
- Another interesting factor is that the *entire orchid family is listed under appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and hence any trade of wild orchid is banned globally.*

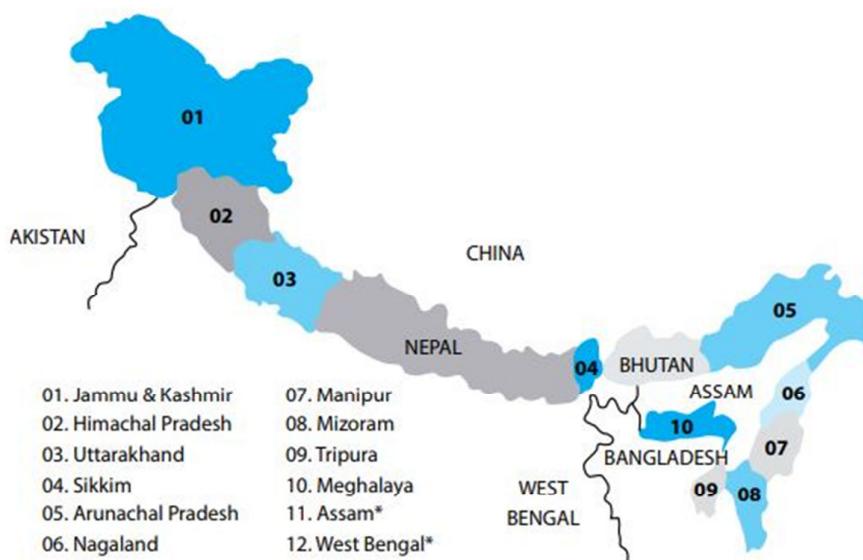
**Level 1 Q) What are the highlights of the first comprehensive Survey of the Orchids in India?**

## CONSERVATION

### HIMALAYAN STATES DEMAND GREEN BONUS

**Topic useful in (Physiographic Features of India - Development)**

**About the News-**



The 'Himalayan Conclave' was held at Mussoorie, to deliberate on issues like conservation of the Himalayan ecology, biodiversity and the cultural heritage. All the Himalayan States were its participants (Himalayan states -- Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur -- took part in the conclave. The only absence was of Assam, which has been ravaged by the floods.).

*It is for the first time that the Himalayan states have come on a single platform to take a unanimous stand on the issue of green bonus and a separate ministry to deal with problems unique to them.*

The Uttarakhand CM demanded that all the participating states want a 'green bonus' should be granted to them (Himalayan States) for the ecological services being provided by them.

The states expressed concern for the lack of development that they were facing due to the restrictions by the NGT and its ecologically sensitive character. The cost of development schemes in the Himalayan states is high. Therefore, attention should be given by the Center for various development schemes in this regard. Himalayan states have a dual responsibility of maintaining economic development and ecological balance.

They said that they played a great role in the PM's Water Conservation Efforts as they states have the origin of many rivers that are important source of Fresh water.

Himalayan states were also at a disadvantage due to the large swaths of land that fell under the ecologically sensitive areas where all sorts of development activities could not be carried out.

The Himalayan states also demanded a separate ministry to deal with problems endemic to them and a green bonus in recognition of their contribution to environment conservation. Ten out of 11 states took part in the conclave.

#### **Mussoorie Resolution-**

**At the end of the conclave a Mussoorie Resolution as adopted. Making a pledge to conserve and protect their cultural heritage, biodiversity, glaciers, rivers, and lakes besides making their own contribution to the nations prosperity.**

The Conclave has been termed historic by the chairman of the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission N.K Singh as it will help put forward the problems faced by the Himalayan states and also framing policies for their development and growth. The Himalayan states are not only important from the environmental point of view but also from security as they are border states.

Plans to stem migration, organic farming, Start-ups, and boost to the rail and road connectivity is being focussed by the Centre said the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman who was present at the Conclave.

#### **Level 1 Q) Importance of the Himalayas, discuss?**

**Prelims- MAP, Geographical Features, Ecological Resources( Forest, Wildlife).**

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## BENGAL PORT RECORDS COUNTRY'S HIGHEST SEA LEVEL RISE IN 50 YEARS

### **Topic useful in (climate change and its effect on India)**

#### **About the news?**

Of the major ports in India, Diamond Harbour in West Bengal located at the mouth of river Hooghly has recorded the maximum sea level increase, according to data tabled in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Sea level rise is said to be linked with global warming and as per the **fifth assessment report of the International Panel on Climate Change, the global sea level was rising at an average rate of 1.8 mm per year over the last century**. Going by the data from the Ministry of Earth Sciences, four ports — **Diamond Harbour, Kandla, Haldia and Port Blair — recorded a higher sea level rise than the global average**. Chennai and Mumbai, recorded a sea level rise far below the global and the national averages at 0.33 mm per year (1916-2005) and 0.74 mm (1878-2005) respectively.

While recent studies reveal that sea level rise in the country has been estimated to be 1.3 mm/year along India's coasts during the last 40-50 years, at Diamond Harbour the rise was almost five times higher at 5.16 mm per year. The mean sea level rise for Diamond Harbour was based on recordings over the period from 1948 to 2005. This is followed by Kandla port in Gujarat where the sea level rise was 3.18 (1950 to 2005), followed by Haldia in West Bengal, which recorded a sea level rise of 2.89 mm a year (1972 to 2005). Port Blair also recorded a sea level rise of 2.20 mm per year (1916-1964).

#### **Impact of the Sea Level rise?**

Rising sea levels can exacerbate the impacts of coastal hazards such as

- storm surge,
- tsunami,
- coastal floods,
- high waves and
- coastal erosion in the low lying coastal areas in addition to causing gradual loss of coastal land to sea.

The sea level rise is higher in West Bengal, particularly in the Sunderbans delta is because of the deltaic sediment deposition as a result of the mixing of fresh water and saline water.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences explained that global warming not only causes melting of ice and glaciers, but also leads to internal expansion of water in oceans and thus a rise in the sea level. On results of studies on the impact of global warming, the ministry said heavy rainfall and temperature extremes like heat waves and shifts in semi-arid regions

were some of the recent findings which may have linkages with climate change and global warming.

Studies over Indian region have shown a warming trend of 0.6°C on all India average basis, mainly contributed by maximum temperatures.

**Level 1 Q) Discuss the effects of Climate change on the Physiographic Regions of India?**

**Prelims- same , Climate change.**

**ARTIC MISSION TO ‘TRAP’ RESEARCHERS IN THE ICE TO STUDY CLIMATE-  
ABOUT THE NEWS-**

Scientists from 17 nations will take part in the year-long mission as they anchor the ship to a large piece of Arctic sea ice to study impact of climate change on the Arctic and how it could affect the rest of the world.

Scientists plan to sail the ship into the Arctic Ocean, anchor it to a large piece of sea ice and allow the water to freeze around them, effectively trapping themselves in the vast sheet of white that forms over the North Pole each winter.

*This mission is being taken because tests would not be possible at other times of the year or by satellite sensing. Scientists now believe that the cold cap that forms each year is key to regulating weather patterns across the Northern Hemisphere. The polar vortices that blasted cold air as far as Florida last winter and the early summer heat wave in Europe as prime examples of the impact.*

Scientists from United States, China, Russia and other countries will be rotating every two months as other icebreakers bring fresh supplies.

By combining measurements on the ice with data collected from satellites, scientists hope to improve the increasingly sophisticated computer models for weather and climate predictions.

The mission has received funding from U.S. institutions such as the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and NASA.

The MOSAiC mission, which stands for **Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate**, comes about 125 years after Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen first managed to seal his wooden expedition ship, Fram, into the ice during a three-year expedition to the North Pole.

Scientists now believe that the cold cap that forms each year is key to regulating weather patterns across the Northern Hemisphere. The mission is considered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many scientists, even those who are veterans of multiple Arctic expeditions.

By combining measurements on the ice with data collected from satellites, scientists hope to improve the increasingly sophisticated computer models they use to predict weather and climate.

***The interdisciplinary work spans several fields of science, including physics, chemistry and biology. Its overarching purpose — to answer key questions around global warming.***

### **Climate and Artic Region-**

The importance of the relationship between climate change and the Arctic has become very prominent in recent decades. Industrial activities in lower latitudes have led to major increases in greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to the Arctic warming up. In fact, the Arctic is warming at almost twice the global average rate of temperature increase. Furthermore, feedback loops are now turning the Arctic into a net contributor to climate change through rising sea levels due to melting ice and changing weather patterns, and the thawing of permafrost is starting to release endemic Arctic greenhouse gases. The impacts of climate change will affect the EU and the rest of the world.

#### **Multilateral forums that work for the environment and climate change-**

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
- Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)
- International Maritime Organisation (IMO) instruments
- Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Stockholm Convention)
- Minamata Convention on Mercury (Minamata Convention)
- Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention)
- Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)

### **Arctic Council-**

The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. **The standing**

**Arctic Council Secretariat formally became operational in 2013 in Tromsø, Norway.**

### **Who takes part?**

The Ottawa Declaration lists the following countries as Members of the Arctic Council: **Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States.**

In addition, six organizations representing Arctic indigenous peoples have status as Permanent Participants. The category of Permanent Participant was created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous peoples within the Council. They include: the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and the Saami Council.

### **Level 1 Q) Write about the Arctic Council and its mandate ?**

**Prelims- Arctic, Littoral countries, Arctic Council.**

**MONITOR BIOMEDICAL WASTE MANAGEMENT:NGT**

#### **About the news-**

The National Green Tribunal has directed the District Magistrates in all the states to monitor compliance of Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules twice every month.

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Shailesh Singh who sought directions for closure of all hospitals, medical facilities and waste disposal plants that were not complying with the waste management rules.

#### **District Environmental Plan-**

The NGT said that it is necessary to have a District Environment Plan to be operated by a District Committee with representatives from Panchayats, Local Bodies, Regional Officers, state pollution control boards (SPCB) and a suitable officer representing the administration, which may in turn be chaired and monitored by the District Magistrate.

Such District Environment Plans and Constitution of District Committee may be placed on the website of districts concerned. The monthly report of monitoring by the District Magistrate may be furnished to the Chief Secretary and may be placed on the website of the District and kept on such websites for a period of one year.

The NGT directed all the states and union territories to furnish complete inventory of health care facilities and bio-medical waste generation within two months.

It is made clear that if even after two months the States/UTs are found to be non-compliant, the compensation will be liable to be recovered from the said States/UTs at the rate of Rs 1 crore per month till the non-compliance continues.

The green panel had earlier come down heavily on the Uttar Pradesh government over its inability to provide exact figure of hospitals, health care centres and nursing homes in the state and directed it to submit complete information within a month.

## IN THE PROCESSING OF SOLID WASTE CHATTISGARH AND TELANGANA TAKE THE LEAD

### **About the News-**

Solid Waste management is an important mechanism to make cities sustainable. In a reply to the Lok Sabha the Minister has provided this information.

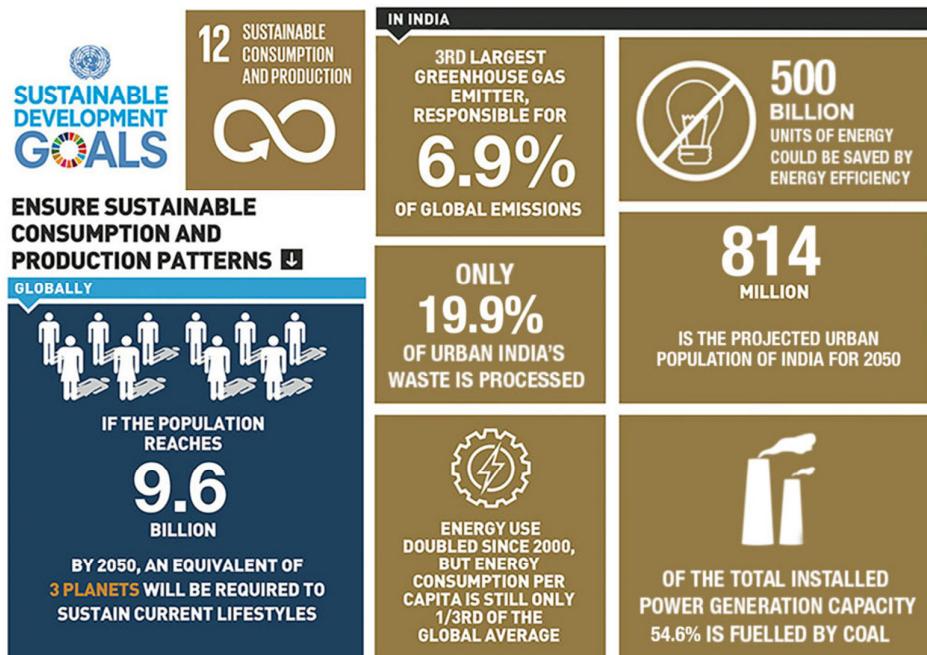
Chhattisgarh and Telangana processed the largest percentage of solid waste they generated in 2018 (until November), according to data provided to Parliament last week. Chhattisgarh generated a total 601,885 MTPA (metric tonne per annum) of waste, and was able to process 84% of it. The corresponding numbers for Telangana were 2,690,415 MTPA and 73%.

Among the larger states, West Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir were those that had processed the smallest percentage of the total waste they generated — 5% and 8% respectively.

**Maharashtra generated the largest quantum of solid waste** — 8,22,38,050 MTPA — and processed 44% of it. Delhi, Gujarat, and Karnataka generated 38,32,500, 37,02,925, and 36,50,000 MTPA, and processed 55%, 57%, and 32% respectively.

According to an annual report prepared by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** for 2016-17, “it is estimated that the total generation of solid waste is approximately 1,50,000 T/day”, of which 90% (1,35,000 metric tonnes/day) was collected. Out of the waste collected, 20% (27,000 MT/day) was processed while the remaining 80% (10,8000MT/day) went to dump sites.

An important component of Swachh Bharat is Solid Waste Management. The Sustainable Development Goals 12.



*Solid Waste Management may be defined as the discipline associated with the control of generation, collection, storage, transfer and transport, processing and disposal of solid wastes in a manner that is in accord with the best principles of public health, economics, engineering, conservation, aesthetics and other environmental considerations.*

The most commonly recognized methods for the final disposal of solid wastes are:

1. Dumping on land
2. Dumping in water
3. Ploughing into the soil
4. Incineration

#### **Methods to process municipal solid waste-**

1) deposition of landfilled solid waste; 2) sorting; 3) mechanical biorefining; 4) direct combustion; 5) anaerobic fermentation and composting; 6) pyrolysis and gasification.

**Note;** *Public health sanitation, conservancy and solid waste management are the responsibility of the Municipalities.* There is urgent need for awareness for proper segregation and treatment of solid waste. Municipalities must be trained for proper handling and disposal. Modern technologies that are energy efficient must be adopted and its time to start recycling and energy generation from them. Otherwise the scarce land resource will be used for their dumping.

**Level 1 Q)Solid Waste Management is a challenge to sustainable cities, explain?**

**Prelims- About Solid Waste management and techniques for processing the Waste.**

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## SPEED RESTRICTIONS AND SOUND ALERTS MOOTED TO PROTECT THE DOLPHINS

The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS), from Sultanganj to Kahalganj on the Ganga in Bihar is the only dolphin sanctuary in the country. The Sultanganj-Kahalganj stretch of National Waterway-1 passes through it.

### **Mitigation efforts by the Ministry of Shipping-**

Experts have pegged the population of the Ganges dolphin in VGDS from 150 to 200. Restricting the speeds of vessels and blowing sirens and horns is how the Ministry of Shipping plans to safeguard the population of the Ganges River Dolphin, in the country's one dolphin reserve through which National Waterway-1 connecting Haldia to Varanasi passes.

The other mitigation measures, according to the Ministry, include fitting vessels with propeller guards and dolphin deflectors to minimise dolphin accidents and using non-toxic paints for painting vessels. The mitigations are based on Comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) study on National Waterway-I including on stretches falling within VGDS.

### **Information about the Gangetic Dolphin-**

- The centre has declared the Gangetic Dolphin as the country's National Aquatic Animal to save the rare fresh water species from extinction.
- The Gangetic Dolphin is blind that catches they prey by emitting a ultrasonic sound to gauge the distance and the mass.
- The Gangetic Dolphin is endangered and is protected under the Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

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## INDIA'S FIRST DRAGON BLOOD OozING TREE

Researchers discover Dracaena cambodiana in Assam's West Karbi Anglong dist. Assam has added to India's botanical wealth a plant that yields dragon's blood — a bright red resin used since ancient times as medicine, body oil, varnish, incense and dye.

This is for the **first time that a dragon tree species has been reported from India.**

In India, the Dracaena genus belonging to the family Asparagaceae is represented by nine species and two varieties in the Himalayan region, the northeast and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. But Dracaena cambodiana is the only true dragon tree species.

### **Important Medicinal Plant-**

Dracaena cambodiana is an important medicinal plant as well as an ornamental tree. It is a major source of dragon's blood, a precious traditional medicine in China. Several antifungal and antibacterial compounds, antioxidants, flavonoids, etc., have been extracted from various parts of the plant.

Recent overexploitation to meet the increasing demand for dragon's blood has resulted in rapid depletion of the plant. For this reason, the species is already listed in the inventory of **Rare and Endangered Plants of China**.

The population size of the dragon tree species in Assam was estimated to be fewer than 50 mature individuals. The habitat of the plant is severely fragmented due to open excavation of a stone quarry and there is decrease in its area of occupancy and number of mature individuals.

The Dracaena seeds are usually dispersed by birds. But due to the large fruit size, only a few species of birds are able to swallow the fruits, thus limiting the scope of its natural conservation.

SAND MINING SC SEEKS REPLY

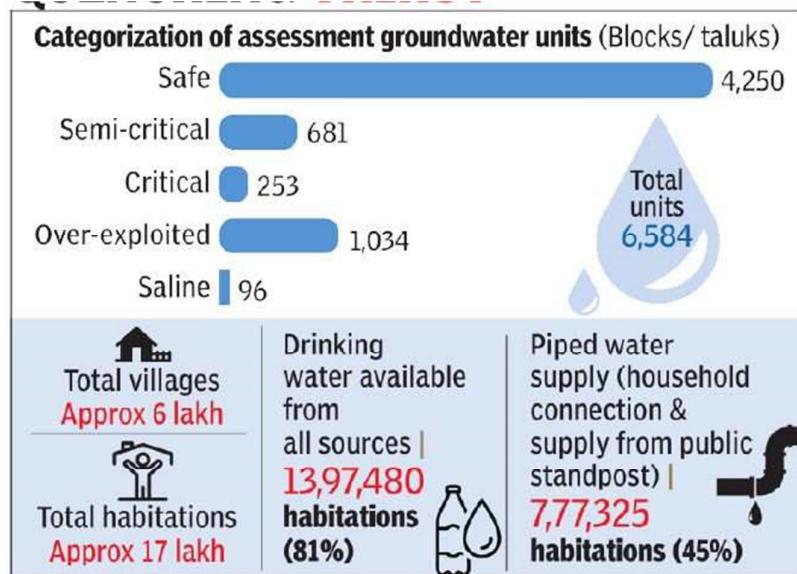
### **Topic useful in (Environmental Degradation)**

The Supreme Court issued a notice and sought the response of the central government and five states -- Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh -- on a plea seeking investigation into ongoing illegal sand mining in these domains. The Plea alleges that the states, have been unable to check the menace of illegal sand mining which has led to significant environmental degradation over the years.

The states should also cancel the mining lease of these companies and going ahead, there no environmental clearance should be accorded to any sand mining project without conducting fresh environmental impact assessment, environmental management plan, and public consultations the Plea said.

GOVERNMENT FOR THE 3D MAPPING OF ALL VILLAGES FOR WATER CONSERVATION-

The Centre is carrying out 3D aquifer mapping of every village in India, to help target water conservation measures at a micro level across the country. Such an exercise will help the government carry out its recharge plan, which includes reuse of treated greywater.



### How will the 3D mapping help?

The ongoing exercise of 3D aquifer (underground layer of water-bearing rock) mapping at micro-level will assist the government in estimating quantity and quality of ground water in a particular village or cluster of villages and help in assessment of sustainable level of ground extraction. The mapping is being undertaken by the Central Ground Water Board on the scale of 1:50,000 in 3D. Currently, 1,034 blocks (ground water assessment units) out of 6,584 are over-exploited, **which means withdrawal of ground water is more than recharge in those particular units.**

***Once the government has the 3D map it will help in predicting the groundwater and educating the stakeholders on the efficient use of the ground water.***

The deficit identified by the government will help it carry out the recharge plan where treated grey water can also be used. Grey Water or Sullage is all the waste water generated in the households except the toilet water.

Managing of Waste Water and Solid Waste have been identified as major focus area by the Swachh Bharat Mission after achieving 100% toilet coverage.

### Level 1 Q) What is the importance of the 3D mapping of the Water Deficit areas?

#### DISASTER MANAGEMENT

TAMIL NADU PLANS 10,000 CHECK DAMS TO TIDE OVER WATER CRISIS

**Topic useful in (Water conservation)**

Grappling with a water crisis in urban and rural areas without a long-term solution, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister announced construction of 10,000 check dams across the state in the current financial year.

MNREGA workers will be used in construction of these check dams, and they will be built along the floodplains, water channels and streams in rural areas to store water for irrigation and recharge groundwater table.

Government has deployed engineers to begin the process to scientifically identify locations for the project considering topography and existing floodplain data in each location.

Monsoon failure in two successive years made the water crisis worse this summer. The delayed arrival of the southwest monsoon, which was forecast in the second week of June, also left Chennai and several regions deprived of groundwater resources.

### **An effort to compensate over-exploitation**

The Tamil Nadu government's plan to build 10,000 check dams are in effect a bid to compensate thousands of traditional water tanks that have disappeared over the decades. The state is now left with hardly 4,000 natural water tanks — against nearly 40,000 that existed earlier. Around 4,000 smaller and bigger water tanks in Chennai metropolitan area and the city is seeing a slow death of some of its major water sources and water systems, including the Palliakranai marshland, due to massive encroachment and destruction, and being used for garbage disposal.

Massive destruction of traditional water tanks in Palar basin (Chennai city is situated here), over-exploitation of groundwater sources in Chennai's suburbs for commercial purposes, and zero water conservation have added to this crisis.

10 million litres of water per day started treaching Chennai in wagons from **Jolarpet**. About 50 wagons, each with a capacity of 55,000 litres, have been brought from Rajasthan for the water transportation project.

### **Level 1Q) How is climate Change affecting Urban Areas?**

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CHINA, RUSSIA, FRANCE SHARE SATELLITE DATA ON ASSAM FLOODS

#### **About the news?**

Large parts of India's North-East and Bihar are grappling with a worsening flood situation. (Image shows flood affected areas of 2019)

India **received satellite data on its flood-hit regions** from eight nations and China was the first to provide it as part of a multi-lateral mechanism for sharing space-based

information for countries affected by natural or man-made disasters. The first set of data on Assam came from the Chinese Gaofen-2 satellite on July 18.

With Assam inundated by floods, several countries including ***China, Russia and France collaborated with India on sharing satellite images of the scale of inundation.*** As signatories to the "***International Charter Space and Major Disasters***", any of the 32 member countries can send a 'request' to activate the Charter. This would immediately trigger a request by the coordinators to space agencies of other countries whose satellites have the best eyes on the site of the disaster.

Based on an activation request by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on July 17, France's National Centre for Space Studies, China National Space Administration and ROSCOSMOS of Russia shared satellite images of the flood situation in the districts of Dhubri, Marigaon, Barpeta, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur in Assam with ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre. ISRO's CARTOSAT satellites too got the Indian space agency its own images.

*Whenever there is a natural disaster, the National Remote Sensing Center (NRSC) and member space agencies of 32 other countries which are a part of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters can activate the platform.*

### **ISRO and its similar services-**

ISRO too had provided information to other space agencies in response to similar requests. In August 2014, for instance, ISRO's CARTOSAT shared images after an activation request from China after an earthquake struck Yunan province and killed 398.

Since 2000, when the Charter came into operation there have been about 600 activations and data from 61 satellites have helped with disaster operations in 125 countries.

India last made a request for satellite data during Cyclone Fani in May. Last year, it made three such requests, including during the Kerala floods and a landslide in Karnataka. India's satellites also routinely provide information to other countries.

### **Importance of the charter and its need?**

Earth-observation satellites capture high-resolution pictures of land and ocean surfaces. Most of these move at great speeds in their orbits around the earth and remain over a particular area for barely seconds. They return to that point only hours — sometimes days later. So even if disaster hits in a country with advanced assets in space, its satellites might not be in the proper place at that time to view the affected area. But some other country's satellite may be. That is why countries have decided to pool their resources and help out a member country that requests information for satellite

pictures and data. This also helps a country access satellite pictures of varying resolutions, different angles, and taken at different times.

Countries have to "activate" a request for satellite data every time they need it.

So far, Korean, Canadian, European and Russian satellites have scanned the area and provided data to ISRO on flood-affected areas in Dhubri, Morigaon, Barpeta, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur districts of Assam.

**Level 1 Q) Why was the *International Charter Space and Major Disasters* in news recently?**      Prelims- Same .

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

'FACIAL-RECOGNITION SYSTEM WILL NOT VIOLATE PRIVACY'-

**About the news-**

- The AFRS, being implemented by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), is a component of Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), a national database of crimes and criminals. The data will only be accessible to law enforcement agencies.
- The Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS) is being developed to help the law enforcement agencies to identify criminals, missing children and unidentified bodies in a scientific and speedy manner. AFRS is similar to fingerprint matching which is commonly used in criminal investigations when fingerprints found at the crime scene match the database.
- AFRS will add another information layer to investigation by allowing matching photograph of suspect or missing person with the photo database of CCTNS.
- At present, there are 7.71 lakh cases of missing persons in the CCTNS database that includes 98,000 children. This software will be used only in respect of such persons who figure on the CCTNS data base -- accused persons, prisoners, missing persons and unidentified found persons including children, and unidentified dead persons and is not going to be used on any other data base. This will also make the process of recovery of missing persons efficient.

**There were questions about the breach of privacy of citizens by the AFRS.**

**Level 1 Q)What is AFRS?**

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES THAT BLOCKCHAIN OFFERS?

**About the news-**

Block chain has been in news, especially in connection with bitcoin, the digital cryptocurrency. The Reserve Bank of India has banned speculation and investment in cryptocurrencies. Of late, however, block chain is seeing a revival, and companies are looking at how to use the tremendous potential of the technology that underpins the cryptocurrency.

### **What is Blockchain?**

It is a foundational technology or a platform that allows designing a secure way to record transactions. It can be circulated on the internet among a group. At its core it is an extremely democratic ledger that cannot be arbitrarily manipulated and easily shareable.

### **How does Blockchain Work?**

Every block in a blockchain is a record of transactions and the more of the latter, the longer the chain. Just as worthless paper transforms into valuable currency with the signature of the RBI governor, blocks are great because they provide an unalterable document of the history of every transaction. In the context of currency, it stores the place, time, value (rupee, for example) and location of a purchase. There is minimal identifying information and every block is linked to a unique 'digital signature' of the transacting participants. Every block is distinguished from another through a unique code which is a string of numbers. When you use your debit or credit card to make a transaction, VISA or Mastercard employ their technology to verify your bank account, connect with banks and process a transaction.

### **How can Blockchain be used?**

Facebook this year announced Libra, a kind of blockchain-backed digital currency. Banks are testing blockchain technology as a replacement for paper-based and manual transaction processing in such areas as trade finance, foreign exchange, cross-border settlement, and securities settlement.

### **Bill to regulate Crypto currencies-**

Cryptocurrencies which are related to the Blockchain technology is being planned to be regulated by a Legislation, for which a Bill is being planned.

Presently, there is no separate law for dealing with issues relating to cryptocurrencies. Hence, all concerned departments and law enforcement agencies, such as RBI, Enforcement Directorate and Income Tax authorities, etc. take action as per the relevant existing laws.

Similarly, police/courts take action on IPC (Indian Penal Code) offences. Further, in view of the risks and dangers associated with cryptocurrencies, (the) government and RBI. Earlier the Reserve Bank of India issued a circular banning regulated entities from providing services to crypto businesses.

According to the draft "Banning of Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill 2019", holding, selling or dealing in cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin could soon land you in jail for 10 years.

The draft has proposed a 10-year prison sentence for persons who "mine, generate, hold, sell, transfer, dispose, issue or deal in cryptocurrencies."

### **Level 1 Q) Explain the uses of the Block chain Technology?**

#### **SOCIAL ISSUES**

**27% OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES HAVE NEVER BEEN TO SCHOOL SAYS UNESCO-**

A report by UNESCO and the Tata Institute of Social Science recommends structural, funding and attitudinal changes to ensure that no child is left out of the right to education.

Citing 2011 census data, the report showed that there are more than 78 lakh children with disabilities in the country between 5-19 years. Only 61% of them were attending an educational institution. About 12% had dropped out, while 27% had never been to school at all.

Experts say the situation is worse than what the statistics show as the government data on enrolment includes home-based education, which often exists only on paper for children with disabilities. "In many parts of rural India, if a parent opts for home-based education, the child may not be getting an education at all. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan teacher is supposed to visit and check, but how often does that happen? The number of excluded children is much higher than government data shows.

Amendments to the RTE Act, 2009 to make it align with the Right of Persons With Disabilities Act, 2016 are among the major recommendations of the report.

#### **Conclusion-**

**Education is the only way that the Persons with Disabilities can be empowered, The government needs to put in place a mechanism to ensure that the educational needs of these students do not take a backseat. Because to ensure that there is Equality and Justice in the society the government needs to ensure that the needs of the Basic Needs of the Backward sections of the society are fulfilled.**

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#### **WHY DO INDIANS MIGRATE?**

In India, most men migrate for work while most women migrate after marriage. However, some States, especially those in the northeast, don't follow this trend.

For instance, 26.1% of Jammu & Kashmir's total male migrants moved out for work while 49.51% of Uttar Pradesh's female migrants moved after marriage.

State	% of male migrants			% of female migrants		
	Work	Marriage	Education	Work	Marriage	Education
J&K	26.1	0.98	3.91	3.32	35.88	<1
Himachal	43.39	1.45	3.63	3.32	53.18	<1
Punjab	37.33	1.66	1.92	3.15	59.99	<1
Uttarakhand	53.17	1.15	2.46	3.07	55.75	<1
Haryana	38.21	2	2.19	2.15	68.76	<1
Delhi	33.3	1.4	2.11	3.98	45.94	D
U.P.	55.82	1.04	1.49	4.04	49.51	<1
Sikkim A	29.35	2.15	13.02	4.29	56.55 A	<1
Arunachal	22.36	0.91	14.56	3.16	40.39	<1
Nagaland	24.95	1.34	7.34	4.82	37.24	<1
Manipur	32.02	1.23	14.96	12.36	23.33	<1
Mizoram	12.49	0.91	6.35	4.15	12.91	<1
Tripura	31.92	1.71	4.68	2.84	54.53	<1
Meghalaya	29.17	9.55	5.34	4.87	50.25	<1
Assam	43.34	2.31	3.3	6.57	47.14	<1
W.B. C	54.56	2.14	1.89	4.48	63	<1
W.B. C	54.56	2.14	1.89	4.48	63	<1
Jharkhand	51.09	3.54	3.72	4.09	70.06	<1
Bihar	54.97	1.11	2.48	4.11	49.28	<1
Odisha	57.62	1.75	1.46	6.11	57.76	<1
Chhattisgarh	46.61	3.01	2.26	8.93	57.7	<1
M.P.	45.35	2.53	2.02	4.12	65.44	<1
Goa	30.11	1.79	3.93	5.09	53.38	<1
Rajasthan	39.9	1.67	1.63	2.86	60.14	<1
Gujarat B	32.84	1.95	2.49	2.99	50.94	<1
Maharashtra	32.65	2.14	1.43	3.67	52.9 B	<1
A.P. (united)	42.27	2.98	3.18	5.72	51.06	<1
Karnataka	35.99	3.41	1.61	5	41.6	<1
Kerala	42.96	2.34	4.81	9.17	36.86	<1
Tamil Nadu	42.95	5.03	1.53	7.23	44.42	<1

A. Migration for work among male migrants and relocation after marriage among female migrants are relatively low in most of the northeastern States.

**B.** After the Northeast, the States in the western and southern regions witnessed relatively lower migration rates of men for work. The States in the south also recorded low migration rates of women post marriage.

**C.** The eastern States recorded some of the highest male migration rates for work.

**D.** In every State, less than 1% of female migrants moved for education. On the contrary, in all the States >1% men migrants moved for education. Relocation for education was more pronounced in the northeastern States.

Close to 10% male migrants in Meghalaya moved out due to marriage while Manipur saw the highest female migration rates for work.

**Level 1 Q) Discuss the causes for migration, illustrate your answer?**

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE A FEW PLACES SEE THE BULK OF IT;**

Cases of sexual harassment at the workplace have gone up year by year since the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 came into effect. Under the category "insult to the modesty of women at office premises", 57, 119, and 142 cases were registered in 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively. These figures are from the National Crime Records Bureau, and 2016 is the latest year for which data are available.

State by state, the data showed huge variations. Of the 142 cases in 2016, Bihar alone accounted for more than half, with 73 cases. This was after no cases had been filed in that state in the previous two years. In a number of states, no case has been filed in any of the three years.

In 2015, a large proportion of the 119 cases was registered in just three states — Delhi (36), Telangana (32) and Maharashtra (27), whose respective counts dropped to 9, 8 and 11 in 2016. Delhi and Maharashtra had the highest counts in 2014, with 11 and 10 cases respectively.

## STATES WITH 10 OR MORE CASES IN 3 YEARS

State	2014	2015	2016
Bihar	0	0	73
Delhi	11	36	9
Maharashtra	10	27	11
Telangana	5	32	8
Karnataka	3	5	9
Andhra	3	3	7
Kerala	6	0	8
West Bengal	4	6	0

### ZERO CASES IN 3 YEARS:

Arunachal, J&K, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, A&N Islands, D&N Haveli, Daman & Diu, Puducherry

Source: NCRB data via Ministry of WCD

NEARLY HALF OF THE SEX OFFENCES CASES NOT BEING INVESTIGATED IN TIME -

### Topic useful in (Crimes against Women and Children – social issues )

Investigation into nearly half the sexual offences cases are not being completed within the stipulated 60-day period, according to an analysis of crime data of seven States. The Reason in many States, the fast-track courts designated to handle rape cases are also handling other criminal cases leading to delay in verdicts.

As per the government data, there are already 664 dedicated special courts with 2,021 public prosecutors and another 1,023 courts are planned.

Even the Supreme Court noted that trial had been completed in only 4% of the 24,000 cases of sexual offences that were filed from January to June.

In February, the Home Ministry launched an analytics tool — ***Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO) to monitor and track time-bound investigation.*** It is part of the ***Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS)*** that connects over 15,000 police stations across the country.

### Data showing the delay-

According to the ITSSO analysis in the seven States — Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand — final reports were submitted only in 26,343 of the 47,662 sexual assault cases within the mandatory period. The cases analysed were filed from April 21, 2018 to February 13, 2019.

In Uttar Pradesh, 592 of the 3,420 pending cases were pending for more than six months. In Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, the cases where the

final report was not submitted by police for more than six months was in 122, 236, 155 and 606 cases respectively.

To check sexual crimes against women and children, the Centre approved the ***Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 last year which prescribed the time-limit for completion of investigation.*** The law was initially promulgated as an Ordinance on April 21, 2018 following an outcry over the rape and murder of a minor girl in Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir and the rape of a woman in Unnao in Uttar Pradesh.

The government plans to set up more courts, it will have to address lacunae like special courts handling other criminal cases apart from sexual offences.

The Empowered Committee on the Nirbhaya Fund approved ₹767.25 crore for setting up 1,023 fast-track courts in November last year, but 10 months later the final nod from the Expenditure Finance Committee is awaited.

Sources in the Ministry of Women and Child Development say 18 States have come on board to set up the new courts and it is now up to the Law and Justice Ministry to appoint judges and public prosecutors for them.

### **Conclusion-**

Justice delayed is Justice Denied, the SC has time again highlighted that timely justice is a Part of the Right To Life and Dignity, as delayed Justice brings unnecessary trauma and pain to the victim and the family members. The Government should act fast on this matter and the required funds should be dispersed in time. Laws are only a prevention mechanism but the real success depends on the working and the implementation of the laws. Gender justice depends on timely redressal of grievance.

**Level 1 Q) What are the challenges faced by women in the society? How far have the laws led to the change in the status pf women?**

**VARIOUS STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS-**

### **About the steps being taken by the government-**

The Government of India has launched Samagra Shiksha - an Integrated Scheme for school education, w.e.f. 2018-19, which is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII and aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education. ***It subsumes the three erstwhile centrally sponsored schemes i.e.***

- ***Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA),***
- ***Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and***
- ***Teacher Education (TE).***

The Samagra Shiksha scheme supports States for ***strengthening of school infrastructure*** including in rural areas.

Samagra Shiksha focuses on ***improvement in quality of education*** by providing support for different interventions like in-service training of teachers and school heads, conduct of achievement surveys at state and national level, composite school grant to every school for providing a conducive learning environment, grants for library, sports and physical activities, support for Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan, ICT and digital initiatives. Along with this Sarva siksha Abhiyan launched in 2001.

The Rashtriya Aavishkar Abhiyan (RAA) was launched on 9th July, 2015 by Late Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Former President of India. ***The RAA is a convergent framework across School Education and Higher Education to motivate children of the age group from 6-18 years in learning Science, Mathematics and Technology through observation, experimentation, inference drawing, model building***, etc. both through inside and outside classroom activities and processes.

**Level 1 Q) What are the steps taken by the government to improve the school education in rural areas?**

- GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363

UPSC PRELIMS CUM MAINS 2020 LONG TERM STARTS -14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019

1. All Chapters of GS PAPERS to be covered ( 40 TESTS ) WEEKLY
2. MAINS AND PRELIMS TESTS.
3. Timely Evaluation.
4. Guidance on Answer Writing.
5. Weekly tests on current topics along with the static topics.

## LABOUR

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CABINET APPROVES CODE ON “OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH AND WORKING CONDITIONS BILL, 2019”

### About the Code-

As a part of labour reforms the Government has decided to merge 44 labour laws into 4 categories. They are

1. WAGES
2. SOCIAL SECURITY
3. INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND WELFARE
4. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

In a big push to labour reforms the cabinet has approved the merging of 13 labour laws into a single Code on "**Occupational Safety , Health and Working Conditions**", which will apply to all the establishments having 10 or more workers. Thus increasing the coverage.

- The code states that the **worker will have to be given an OFFER LETTER** besides an annual medical check-up.
- The proposed code **aims to improve the Ease of Doing Business** and while giving **enhanced protection to the employees** while mandating certain norms. "many of India's Labour Laws though intend to protect the workers have been seen to discourage formal employment while providing incentives for graft.
- The bill **provided for a single license regime for the staffing firms** thus significantly improving the Ease of Doing business.
- The new Bill has envisaged uniform threshold for welfare provisions such as crèche, canteen, first aid and welfare officer.
- Another provision says that a part of the penalty for contravention of provisions leading to death or serious bodily injury to any person may be given to the victim or the legal heirs of the victim by the court.
- The part of penalty would help in rehabilitation of injured worker or provide financial support to the family of deceased.
- The Bills also talk about permitting women to work beyond 7 pm and before 6 am.

**The New Code has been drafted after amalgamation, simplification and rationalisation of the relevant provisions of the 13 Central Labour Acts:**

1. The Factories Act, 1948;
2. The Mines Act, 1952; The Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act, 1986;
3. The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996;
4. The Plantations Labour Act, 1951;
5. The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970;
6. The Inter-State Migrant workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979;

7. The Working Journalist and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service and Misc. Provision) Act, 1955;
8. The Working Journalist (Fixation of rates of wages) Act, 1958;
9. The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961;
10. Sales Promotion Employees (Condition of Service) Act, 1976;
11. The Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966; and
12. The Cine Workers and Cinema Theatre Workers Act, 1981. After the enactment of the Code, all these Acts being subsumed in the Code will be repealed.

### **How will this benefit the labour force?**

This proposal would enhance the coverage of the safety, health and working conditions provisions compared to the present scenario. In line with the PM vision of Sab Ka Saath Sab Ka Vikas.

Safety, Health, welfare and improved Working Conditions are pre-requisite for well-being of the worker and also for economic growth of the country as healthy workforce of the country would be more productive and occurrence of less accidents and unforeseen incidents would be economically beneficial to the employers also. **With the ultimate aim of extending the safety and healthy working conditions to all workforce of the country, the Code enhances the ambit of provisions of safety, health, welfare and working conditions from existing about 9 major sectors to all establishments having 10 or more employees. It is expected to benefit 400 million workers in the informal sector.**

The proposed code enhances the coverage of the workers manifold as it .

### **Level 1 Q) Discuss about the Code of Labour being piloted by the government?**

#### **Prelims- Code and its features.**

#### **SOCIAL WELFARE SCHEMES IN THE COUNTRY**

This information was given by the minister in the Lok Sabha

#### **Schemes for Scheduled Caste (SC)**

- Pre Matric Scholarship for SCs
- Post Matric Scholarship for SCs
- Free Coaching for SCs and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
- Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana
- Strengthening of machinery for Enforcement of Protection of Civil Right Act 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989
- Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna for Boys
- Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna for Girls

- Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for SCs
- Pre-matric Scholarships for the children of those engaged in unclean occupation
- Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan
- National Fellowship for SCs
- Self Employment Scheme of Liberation & Rehabilitation of Scavengers
- National Overseas Scholarship for SCs
- Top Class Education for SCs
- Assistance to Scheduled Castes Development Corporations (SCDCs)
- National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation
- National Safai Karmachari Finance and Development Corporation
- Venture Capital Funds for SCs
- Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for SCs

#### **Schemes for Backward Classes (OBCs)**

- Pre-Matric Scholarship for OBCs students
- Post-Matric Scholarship for OBCs students
- Construction of Hostel for OBC Boys and Girls
- Dr. Ambedkar Scheme of Interest Subsidy on Educational Loan for Overseas Studies for OBCs/EBCs
- Assistance for Skill Development of OBCs/EBCs/DNTs
- National Fellowship for OBCs
- Dr. Ambedkar Post-Matric Scholarship for EBC students
- Scheme for Development of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes (DNTs) (Scholarship of Pre+Post Matric+ Nanaji Deshmukh Hostel)
- National Backward Classes Development Corporation

#### **Schemes for Senior Citizen and Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse**

- Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojna
- Scheme for prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drugs) Abuse.

#### **Scheme for the Persons with Disabilities**

- Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP) Scheme
- Scholarship for Students with Disabilities

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#### **WELFARE SCHEMES FOR DENOTIFIED COMMUNITIES**

The Centrally sponsored schemes being implemented for the welfare of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes are as under:

- Dr. Ambedkar Pre-matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNT Boys and Girls.
- Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme of Construction of Hostels for DNT Boys and Girls.
- Assistance for Skill Development of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)/ De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)/ Economically Backward Classes (EBCs).

#### **Idate Commission -**

A committee under the Chairmanship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog has been set up to complete the process of identification of the De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities that have not yet been formally classified by the National Commission for De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) also known as Idate Commission.

- GENESIS IAS ACADEMY- 9949 363 363

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**September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019**

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#### CABINET APPROVES THE TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) BILL 2019

The Bill provides a mechanism for their social, economic and educational empowerment.

#### **Need for the bill ?**

Transgender community is among one of the most marginalized communities in the country because they don't fit into the stereotypical categories of gender of 'men' or 'women'. Consequently, they face problems ranging from social exclusion to discrimination, lack of education facilities, unemployment, lack of medical facilities and so on. The Bill shall empower the transgender community socially, educationally and economically.

#### **Impact of the bill**

The Bill will benefit a large number of transgender persons, mitigate the stigma, discrimination and abuse against this marginalized section and bring them into the mainstream of society. This will lead to inclusiveness and will make the transgender persons productive members of the society.

#### **Features of the Bill-**

1. The Bill aims at empowering the community by defining and protecting their rights.

2. The bill will bring greater accountability on the part of the central government, state governments and Union Territories for issues concerning transgender persons, besides making all the stakeholders also responsive and accountable for upholding the principles underlying the Bill.
3. The Bill Defines Transgender- "*a transgender is a person whose "gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, gender- queer and person having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra, aravani and jogta.*"
4. A person would have the right to choose to be identified as a man, woman or transgender, irrespective of sex reassignment surgery and hormonal therapy.
5. It also requires transgender persons to go through a district magistrate and "district screening committee" to get certified as a trans-person. The committee would comprise a medical officer, a psychologist or psychiatrist, a district welfare officer, a government official, and a transgender person.
6. The provision that proposed that transgender people will be subject to certification by a District Screening Committee to be acknowledged as a transgender, has also been struck out. According to the new provision, a transgender person may make an application to the district magistrate to obtain a certificate of identity and the DM shall issue to the applicant an identity certificate as transgender person on the basis of the rules which will be formed once the Bill becomes an Act. According to the community members, the clause that transgender people will be subject to certification by a District Screening Committee violated the Supreme Court verdict which states that the only thing needed to acknowledge a person's gender identity is their word for it.
7. The bill prohibits discrimination against a transgender person in areas such as education, employment, and healthcare. It directs the central and state governments to provide welfare schemes in these areas.
8. Offences like compelling a transgender person to beg, denial of access to a public place, physical and sexual abuse, etc. would attract up to two years' imprisonment and a fine.

#### **Level 1 Q) What are the Features of the Transgender Bill 2019?**

#### **STRINGENT PUNISHMENT FOR SEXUAL CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN**

##### **About the news;**

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Amendments in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

The Act, which came into force in 2012, is the first comprehensive law in the country dealing specifically with sexual abuse of children. The amendments to the Act include enhancement of punishment to include death penalty for child sex abuse.

### **What are changes made?**

- It will make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children including death penalty.
- The amendments also provide for levy of fines and imprisonment to curb child pornography.
- The POCSO Act, 2012 was enacted to Protect the Children from Offences of Sexual Assault, Sexual harassment and pornography with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children. The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age. The Act is “Gender Neutral”.
- Sections four, five and six are proposed to be amended to provide option of stringent punishment, including death penalty, for committing sexual assault and aggravated penetrative sexual assault crime on a child to protect the children from sexual abuse,” according to an official statement.
- Amendments are also proposed in Section 9 to protect children from sexual offences in times of natural calamities and in other situations where children are administered, in any way, any hormone or any chemical substance, to attain early sexual maturity for the purpose of penetrative sexual assault. Amendments are also proposed in Section 14 and 15 of the POCSO Act to levy fine for not destroying, deleting or reporting the pornographic material involving a child with an intention to share or transmit it.
- Amendment is proposed to be carried out in Section 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 14, 15, 34, 42 and 45.

### **Need for the amendment?**

Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani cited a report of the National Crime Records Bureau from 2016 indicating an increase in the number of cases registered under the said Act “from 44.7 per cent in 2013 over 2012, and 178.6 per cent in 2014 over 2013, and no decline in the number of cases thereafter”.

The modification is made to address the need for stringent measures required to deter the rising trend of child sex abuse in the country on one hand and to address the menace of relatively new kind of crimes on the other hand.

### **The impact?**

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

- The amendment is aimed to establish clarity regarding the aspects of child abuse and punishment thereof.

**What was the feedback/criticism the amendment Bill received from child rights experts?**

Many have criticised the provision for death penalty that has been added to the Act. Reports by NGOs working with children, as well as the latest National Crime Records Bureau's Crime in India Report, 2016, state that over 94 per cent of the accused in cases registered under The POCSO Act, are known to the victims, including close family members. This may deter victims, or put pressure on them to not file a complaint, given the possibility of death now.

Further, while the Act states that the cases should be heard expeditiously, the pendency rate as per the NCRB is over 89 per cent.

"In a recent case in Mumbai, the mother of a child victim pleaded with the court to not insist on her daughter coming to depose before it, years after the incident, since she had been brought out of the trauma through a lot of counselling with much difficulty. The delays affect the probability of conviction despite the stringent sections," a prosecutor in a Mumbai court said.

The conviction rate is less than 30 per cent under the Act. Last month, the Supreme Court directed the setting up of special courts in each district across the country within sixty days over the alarming rise of pendency.

**Level 1 Q) Why are the changes being criticised to the POSCO Act , Why did the government amend the Act?**

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UNESCO EDUCATION REPORT ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES  
PRESENTED TO VICE PRESIDENT

The report is called 'State of the Education Report for India 2019- Children with Disabilities'. The report is timely as the government is already formulating a new education policy. The government is giving special attentions to the education of children with disabilities as the focus of the government has been towards inclusive and equitable quality education.

The report contains 10 recommendations, including amendments to Right to Education Act to align with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act by incorporating specific concerns of children with disabilities.

SECURITY

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## ARMY'S FIRST INTEGRATED BATTLE GROUP

### **About the news-**

On the heels of the Indian Air Force's airstrikes in Balakot in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province as well as of incidents of cross-border firing in Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian Army has decided to establish three new battle formations along the border with Pakistan by October.

The decision was made after the Indian Army carried out successful tests of the IBG concept at war games last month, with the aim to further strengthen the military's ability to carry out swift strikes during wars. One of these IBGs are established along the Pakistan border, the Indian Army will move to strengthen its forces on the border with China, as well.

### **What are IBG's ?**

IBGs are battle formations with heavy firepower that will combine infantry, armour, artillery, engineers, logistics and support units to bring together all necessities to fight a war. The first three IBGs to be set up along the Pakistan border will have elements from various formations of the Western Command.

The major difference between brigades and IBGs lies in the number of troops in these battalions — a brigade comprises three to four battalions with 800 troops each, whereas the planned IBGs, to be commanded by officers of the rank of a major general, will have around 5,000 troops each.

The IBGs will be smaller, better-equipped fighting units with elements of air power, artillery, armour etc. The establishment of these groups will do away with the older formation of troops, which included around eight to 10 brigades, each with three to four battalions. Instead, an IBG will have just about six battalions.

Brigades are the smallest battle formations in the Indian Army and corps, the largest. The IBGs will be even smaller than brigades, to make them more flexible and allow for faster mobilisation of troops.

### **Aim of the IBG's-**

By forming these specialised battalions, the Indian Army aims to be able to move both troops and equipment swiftly and stealthily into enemy territory at short notice, not leaving the rival side with time to tackle the IBGs. The decision was part of army chief General Bipin Rawat's initiatives to reorganise and right-size the operational structure of the force to make it more effective and lethal during wars.

### **Level 1 Q) Comment on the formations of IBG's for security purpose?**

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## IAF TO ADOPT ASRAAM MISSILE FOR NAVAL FLEET

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is looking to adopt a new European visual range air to air missile across its fighter fleet.

The **Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM)** of European missile-maker MBDA has been approved for fitting on Jaguar jets and the IAF was looking to integrating it on the Su-30MKIs and the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) as well. ASRAAM is widely used as a Within Visual Range (WVR) air dominance missile with a range of over 25km.

HAL is in talks with MBDA for integrating the missile on the LCA and the Su-30MKI as well.

## MISCELLANEOUS

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### JAIPUR MAKES IT TO THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE LIST-

The Walled City of Jaipur, known for its iconic architectural legacy and vibrant culture, on July 6 made its entry into the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. The announcement was made after the 43rd Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at Baku (Azerbaijan).

1. *The historic walled city of Jaipur in Rajasthan, was founded in 1727 AD under the patronage of Sawai Jai Singh II. It serves as the capital city of the culturally-rich state of Rajasthan.*
2. *Unlike other cities in the region located in hilly terrain, Jaipur was established on the plain and built according to a grid plan interpreted in the light of Vedic architecture.*
3. *The streets feature continuous colonnaded businesses that intersect in the centre, creating large public squares called 'chaupars'. Markets, stalls, residences and temples built along the main streets have uniform facades.*
4. *The grid plan is a model that prevails in the West, while the organisation of the different districts refers to traditional Hindu concepts.*
5. *With Jaipur's inclusion, the number of heritage sites across India that are on the UNESCO World Heritage list, has grown to 38 including 30 cultural properties, seven natural properties and one mixed site. Ahmedabad became the first Indian city to get into the prestigious list in 2017.*
6. *Jaipur became the second city of the country after Ahmedabad to get the recognition.*

7. Jaipur is part of the **Golden Triangle circuit** in North India. Other cities that are a part of the circuit are Agra and Delhi. The city is also home to two prominent UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India - Amber Fort and Jantar Mantar

In town planning, it shows an interchange of ancient Hindu, Mughal and contemporary Western ideas that resulted in the form of the city. In addition, Jaipur City is an exceptional example of a late medieval trade town in South Asia and defined new concepts for a thriving trade and commercial hub. In addition, the city is associated with living traditions in the form of crafts that have national and international recognition.

**The World Heritage Committee is composed of representatives of 21 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention who meet annually. The Committee is in charge of implementing the Convention. To date, 1,092 sites in 167 countries have been inscribed on the World Heritage List.**

Myanmar's Bagan, Megalithic Jar Sites in Xiengkhuang - Plain of Jars in Laos and the Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City in China are among the other sites that were included in the World Heritage List.

UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called **the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972**. Map shows the World Heritage site Lists.



**Level 1 Q) Write about the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO 1972?**

**Prelims- About the convention, Map above. Information about the sites.**

#### CLASSICAL STATUS BEING CONSIDERED FOR MARATHI-

##### **About the news-**

A proposal for granting classical language status to Marathi is under active consideration.

As of now, six languages -- **Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia** -- have been given the status of classical languages.

The criteria adopted by the government to determine the eligibility of a language for classical status includes its recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years, body of ancient literature, whether its literary tradition is original and not borrowed from another speech community and other yardsticks.

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### MALABAR RIVER FESTIVAL

The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Malabar River Festival is being held at Iruvazhinji and Chalippuzha rivers in Thusharagiri that welcome kayakers from around the globe to battle the fierce rapids that tumble down the Western Ghats.

Malabar River Festival (MRF) has been nominated as one of the top 5 best whitewater kayak festivals in the world by Kayak Session Magazine, France. Cash prize worth 1 million Indian Rupees goes to winners in various categories.

The narrow streams in Thusharagiri, with the combination of big water, continuous rapids and mild temperatures, make it an attractive destination for white water kayakers.

The Colorado River, US, is the quintessential whitewater rafting experience on every adventurer's bucket list. This waterway wanders for more than 277 miles with the most famous stretch passing through the iconic Grand Canyon.

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### INDIAN SIDE OF KAILASH MANSORAVAR HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN TENTATIVE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES OF INDIA-

This year in April, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) along with Ministry of Environment and Forests sent a proposal to UNESCO to list Kailash Mansarovar into its world Heritage sites. In the proposal, Kailash Mansarovar was categorized under both as a natural as well as a cultural heritage.

Kailash Mansarovar, popularly known as Mount Kailash, is the highest peak in Kailash range located in Lake Mansarovar in the remote south-western portion of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and adjacent districts in the far-western region of Nepal. The Kailash Mansarovar is expanded across an area of 6,836 sq km within India, the area is flanked in the east by Nepal and bordered by China on the north. The Indian site is part of the larger landscape of 31,000 sq km.

Both China and Nepal have proposed the landscape as a world heritage site to UNESCO. As per UNESCO's Operational Guidelines 2017, a site must be on tentative list of UNESCO at least for a period of one year before proposing it for final nomination.

If Kailash Mansarovar officially becomes the part of UNESCO world heritage sites permanently then Uttarakhand will benefit the most as communities living along the pilgrimage route will be incorporated in the plan to develop sustainable tourism for the site.

The Indian portion of the landscape in the State of Uttarakhand comprises four major watersheds viz. the Panar-Saryu, the Saryu-Ramganga, the Gori-Kali and the Dhauli-Kali.

At present, UNESCO's list includes as many as 845 cultural Heritage sites across the world, out of which 29 are from India.

### **Level 1Q) Give a Brief account of Kailash Manasarovar?**

#### **USTAD BISMILLAH KHAN YUVA PURASKAR**

The Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar is conferred upon artists below the age of 40 years with the objective of identifying and encouraging outstanding young talents in diverse fields of performing arts and giving them national recognition early in their life, so that they may work with greater commitment and dedication in their chosen fields.

Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar carries a purse money of Rs 25,000/- (Rupees twenty five thousand only). The Yuva Puraskar will be presented at a special ceremony, by the Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi.

#### **KHARCHI POOJA**

- Kharchi puja is the worship the 14 gods of the dynasty deity of Tripuri people.
- It is performed in the month of July August on the eighth day of new moon.
- The fourteen gods are worshipped by the royal priest Chantai.
- They are all Tripuri by birth, and it is hereditary one. Only members of chantai family descendants are allowed to take the post of Chantai.
- This is the only one puja is exclusively performed by the pujari or the priests belonging to Tripuri people.
- The word Kharchi is derived from two Tripuri words 'Khar' or Kharta meaning or Sin, 'chi' or si meaning cleaning. Final meaning is cleaning of the sins of the people or the kingdom.
- Kharchi puja lasts for seven days, the festival is held at Old Agartala, at the temple premises of fourteen gods. On day of puja, the fourteen deities are carried by members of chantai, taken to river Saidra, it is bathed in the holy water and brought back to temple. They are placed in the temple again, decorated by various flowers, put up vermillion in the forehead of deities.