CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION

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CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

logical . simple . targeted analysis & explanation of relevant news

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

Coverage from varied sources

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

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editorial note

Last Lap: Time to Sprint through!

"Mains is fine but have failed in the interview in earlier attempts?"
"Lord knows what would happen, if I may make it to the interview",
"No matter what the result, I should prepare for the interviews anyways!"

If you are someone who can relate, then you should definitely read this.

With the interviews lined up soon after, it is crucial to utilize this time to prepare and improve your chances and make it to the final list. For this, we have prepared an exhaustive list of dos, don'ts and suggestions that might be helpful for you.

Detailed Application Form(DAF)

The DAF plays a significant part in deciding the course of the interview. Hence, one should go through each entry in the DAF thoroughly to make prompt links. For instance, if your hobby is reading books, you must be aware of the famous book prizes and the books that have been in news.

Visualize

This is a very potent exercise. From this day on, reading news or revising notes should be accompanied with a visual imagination of the interview. This will help you prepare the "issues" in the most holistic manner. Not just that, trying to figure out the questions that can be asked helps prepare you in advance for the interview.

For instance, "Protectionism is trying to overtake globalisation. But what is protectionism? What should be India's strategy in this turning of tide towards protectionism? Asking questions to yourself would improve your perception power as well.

Be prepared ONE last time

Revising can be tough, especially when you have re-read the same notes/ books infinite number of times now. Realize, this is the last push, the last effort. Revise-Revise-&-Revise. All those notes you reckoned during mains, all those newspaper's notes that kept you up late at night. At this point of time, there is nothing better than what you already know. So, when you go for the interview, you go with everything you've got!

Newspaper

Most important of all point. Read at least 2 Newspapers everyday till the interview date. And no matter what, do read the newspaper on the D-day. The interview board is probably sitting there, framing questions in their mind from that day's newspaper, hence make sure you do this.

Dress Sharp

The first impression always leaves a mark on the eye of beholder. In this regard, the way you present yourself out there holds quite an importance. Keeping in mind the sanctity of your role as a civil service aspirant, you need to choose your appearance wisely. Thus, it is highly advised to wear formals for the interview. Make sure your clothes are neat and ironed well and your shoes polished. A good presentation of yourself gives you the much-needed confidence, to excel in any personality test.

Be polite

Yes, you might have your stomach churning upside-down with anxiety in front of the interview board. Still, maintain your calm and be polite. As they say, a smile is the best thing you can wear. Go and win the world with that smile you got!

Don't Guess

You can make an informed and logical guess but don't guess arbitrarily. Let the board know that you are not sure of the answer but would like to make an informed guess.

Don't bluff

Believe in yourself and your capabilities. You might not know everything but what you must know is the difference between being true to yourself and otherwise. If you don't know an answer to the question asked to you, politely convey so to the board members. Refrain from lying. The board members have enough experience on their side to catch one.

A day before

Make sure to cross check all the documents and keep the necessary photo copies. Double check the timing of the interview. Calculate in advance the time required to reach UPSC, as being late can cause unnecessary anxiety.

No time to be complacent

Basking in the glory of clearing the mains examination might appear to be a more attractive alternative but don't let yourself fall for that trap. This is the time that separates you and glory. Utilize it. Work on yourself. Continue studying, read the newspaper. Work on your communication skills. Polish your strengths and try and take control on your weaknesses.

Mock Interviews

Personality test as we know it, is not mere a test of your knowledge base but also a test of what you have lived, learned and made of yourself since the day you were born. All that you gathered and experienced in life is supposed to be poured out in the best form possible in the personality test.

Mock interviews, as headed by very eminent and experienced personalities in the field, help you sail through. This gives you a knack to face the interview board on the D-day with sheer confidence.

A word of advice

An interview is celebration of 'YOU' from start to finish. The preparation for an interview, therefore, should begin by keeping yourself at the centre.

focus

CRITICAL NOTES FOR THE PREPARATION OF GENERAL STUDIES PAPERS

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The purpose of Focus is to expound the applied nature of General Studies to Civil Services aspirants thereby making them aware of the real demand of UPSC exam.

The sources relied for selection and analysis of issues are:

1. The Hindu, The Hindu (Sunday)
2. The Indian Express
3. The Times of India
4. Asian Age
5. The Tribune
6. The Economic Times
7. Hindu Business Line
8. Frontline
9. Economic and Political Weekly
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Dear Students,

FOCUS is the Study Circle's monthly publication of contemporary issues and current affairs analysis. It is in fact a collective effort, by experienced educators in varied themes, of identifying current affairs in light of the UPSC syllabus, supplementing them with background information, explaining their related dimensions, lending them a generalist viewpoint and thus producing critical notes for the preparation of General Studies' syllabus.

The publication, as the name suggests, focuses solely on issues which are relevant to the factual as well as applied aspects of the General Studies' syllabus. That is how Focus covers all anticipated issues and themes for the upcoming Civil Services Examination (CSE).

Features

PART ONE | CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

- **This month edition covers analysis of news from the immediately preceding month.**
- All news/issues are categorized and clubbed syllabus-wise (International Relations, Polity & Governance, Science & Technology, Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude and so on) for efficient study.
- Background information has been added to provide context.
- Related and Additional information-dimensions have been explained to add depth to your understanding.
- Maps and figures have been provided for associative and retentive learning.
- Practice Questions

PART TWO | ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

- Coverage from varied sources

PART THREE | ESSAYS FOR YOU

- Selected essays from Rau's GSI students

For further understanding or discussion in any topic, please consult your respective professors.

Good Luck!
RAU'S IAS STUDY CIRCLE

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PART ONE

CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

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of all relevant news of the month

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER II (MAIN)

GEOPOLITICS

AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS

#GEOPOLITICS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE BBC

IN NEWS

The New administration in USA under Joe Biden is reviewing the US Foreign policy towards Afghanistan. Under Trump administration a peace deal was finalized in Feb 2020. However, the peace talks got stalled and there was a stalemate. In this background to kickstart the Afghan peace process again Anthony Blinken the secretary of State of the USA has proposed a series of steps. Also External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar attended the ninth Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) on Afghanistan in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. He asserted that Afghanistan needs "double peace" which is peace within and around the country. So let us understand Doha agreement that was signed under Trump administration and the latest US approach and India's concerns and stand on the Afghan peace process.

STEPS PROPOSED BY THE US

- US has called for a 90-day reduction in violence and a transitional government formed from both sides.
- This implies an immediate 50% share for the Taliban in an interim government, as a quid pro quo for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire.
- This will be without reference to a mandate from the people as elections will be held only in the future, after the principles guiding Afghanistan's future constitutional and governing arrangements are worked out.
- US is considering the full withdrawal of US forces by May 1, the deadline that was set up under Trump administration.
- Proposed measures call for bringing the two sides together for a United Nations-facilitated conference with foreign ministers and envoys from Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, India and the US, "to discuss a unified approach to supporting peace in Afghanistan".

AFGHAN WAR

- 11th September 2001 attacks in America killed nearly 3,000 people. Osama Bin Laden, the head of Islamist terror group al-Qaeda, was quickly identified as the man responsible.
- The Taliban, radical Islamists who ran Afghanistan and protected Bin Laden, refused to hand him over. So, a month after 9/11, the US launched air strikes against Afghanistan.
- As other countries joined the war, the Taliban were quickly removed from power. But they didn't just disappear - their influence grew back and they dug in.

WHY THE WAR IS STILL GOING ON?

- Lack of clarity about the US strategy.
- Taliban have been trying to maximise their leverage during peace negotiations.
- An increase in violence by Islamic State militants in Afghanistan.
- Taliban's connection with Pakistan.

WHY IS HAS TALIBAN REMAINED A STRONG FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN?

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- The group is making money to the tunes of $ 1.5 bn through the drug trade. Afghanistan is the world's largest opium producer, and most opium poppies - used for heroin - are grown in Taliban-held areas.
- It also receives money from Pakistan and Iran.

WHAT WAS THE US-TALIBAN DEAL?

- The Trump administration made withdrawing troops from Afghanistan a priority.
- The deal signed in February 2020 said that the US and its NATO allies would withdraw all troops in 14 months if the Taliban upheld its promises, including not allowing al-Qaeda or other militants to operate in areas it controlled, and proceeding with national peace talks.
- Although the Taliban, a hard-line Islamist movement, stopped attacks on international forces as part of the historic agreement, it has continued to fight the Afghan government.
- As a condition of starting negotiations with the Afghan government, the Taliban also demanded that thousands of their men be released in a prisoner swap.
- Direct talks then began in Doha in September 2020, but a breakthrough has still not been reached.

ISSUES WITH THE PEACE DEAL

- In the peace deal, US did not insist on a ceasefire.
- USA kept the Afghanistan government out of the peace process.
- Due to this Afghanistan has witnessed continuous violence led by the Taliban.
- The recently held presidential elections witnessed a very low voter turnout.
- As a result the main opposition candidate Abdullah Abdullah did not recognise the elected government.
- He backed off, but only after being appointed the head of the High Council for National Reconciliation that will lead talks with the Taliban
- Due to this the Taliban has an upper hand in the prevailing situation in Afghanistan.

UN SECRETARIAT - 6+2+1 MEETING

- UN Secretariat held a "6+2+1" meeting on regional efforts to support peace in Afghanistan.
- 6 neighbours of Afghanistan (China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), 2 global players (the USA and Russia) and 1 (Afghanistan) attended the meeting.
- India was not invited to this meeting

WHY INDIA WAS NOT INVITED IN THE MEETING?

- It was sighted that India shares no physical boundary with Afghanistan.
- India never announced its support to the US Taliban peace process.
- India's resistance to publicly talking to Taliban has also contributed to absence of invitation.

INDIA'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE PEACE DEAL

- India has thus far not recognized the Taliban, which has had links with terror groups like the Lashkar – e - Toiba and Jaish - e - Mohammad, who have targeted Indians in Afghanistan. India was also not invited to a UN-led regional conference on the peace process.
- India wants the democratically elected government of Ashraf Ghani government to continue in office as it is more friendly towards India.
- Taliban as an organization gets a lot of support from Pakistan and ISI and hence, Taliban, victory in the peace deal would be a blow to India's effort to reach to Central Asia and positively engage Afghan government.
- If Taliban comes to power then there is a high chance that China will get free access to Afghanistan and this will be another blow to India's strategic interests.
- Above all if Taliban comes to power then India's effort to fight terrorism in Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir may also suffer a blow.

INDIA'S STAND ON AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS

- The peace process has to be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled.
- Afghanistan should build national consensus for talks with the Taliban.
- India was among the countries that had refused to recognise the Taliban regime of 1996-2001, as Taliban's growth in Afghanistan was being driven by deep state in Pakistan
- India's stand has been that the peace process has to 'Afghan-led, Afghan-controlled and Afghan-owned'.

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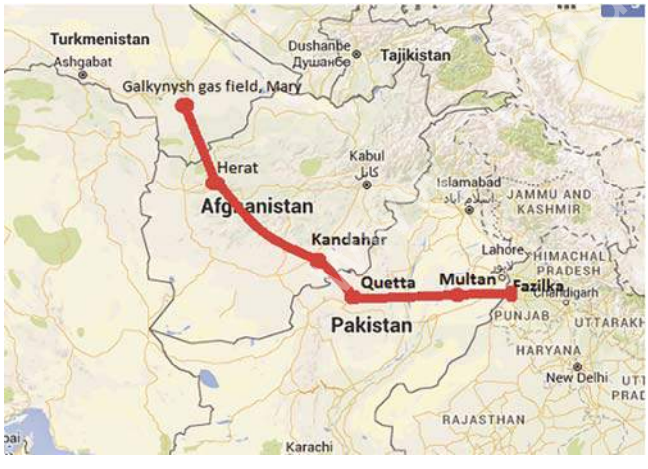
- All initiatives and processes must include all sections of the Afghan society, including the legitimately elected government.
- Any process should respect the constitutional legacy and political mandate.
- Establishment of democratic process with respect for human rights, including women's rights.
- The peace process should not leave any ungoverned spaces where terrorists and their proxies can relocate.

WHY AFGHANISTAN IS IMPORTANT TO INDIA?

Regional Balance of Power: Afghanistan is tied to India's vision of being a regional leader and a great power, coupled with its competition with China over resources and its need to counter Pakistani influence.

- India's ability to mentor a nascent democracy will go a long way to demonstrate to the world that India is indeed a major power, especially a responsible one.
- India's interest in Afghanistan relates to its need to reduce Pakistani influence in the region.
- **Energy Security:** The pipeline project TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), which seeks to connect an energy-rich Central to South Asia, will only see the light of the day if stability is established in Afghanistan



- **Strategic Location**: For access to the landlocked Central Asian countries that border Afghanistan.
- **Natural Resources**
- **Regional Security**: A stable Afghanistan is important for regional security in South Asia.

ABOUT HEART OF ASIA

The **Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process (HoA-IP)** is an initiative of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Turkey, which was officially launched at a conference hosted by Turkey in Istanbul on 2 November 2011.

- It aims to provide a platform to discuss regional issues such as encouraging economic cooperation, encouraging security and political stability for Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours.
- Its three main areas of cooperation: **Political Consultations**, **Confidence Building Measures**, and **Cooperation with Regional Organizations.**

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INDIA AND BANGLADESH

#BILATERAL RELATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

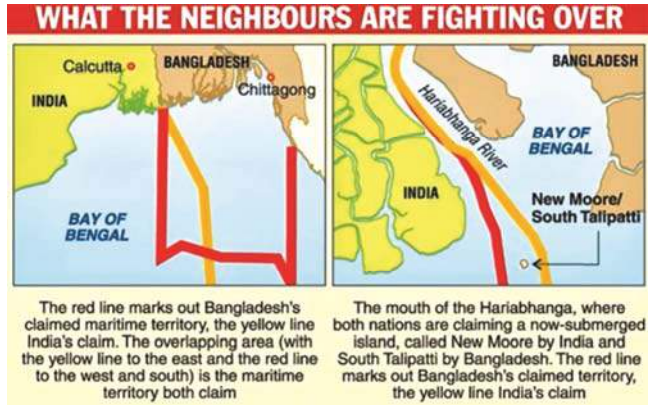
India and Bangladesh are celebrating 50 years of Diplomatic ties. Indian Prime Minister also attended the 50th Independence Day celebrations in Bangladesh. In this context, let us understand the key areas of cooperation and issues between India and Bangladesh.

Historical Perspective: India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as a separate and independent state and established diplomatic relations with the country immediately after its independence in December 1971.

BORDER MANAGEMENT

- India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km. of border, which is the **longest land boundary** that India shares with any of its neighbours.
- **India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA)** came into force in 2015 under which enclaves of India and Bangladesh in each other's countries were exchanged and strip maps were signed.

- Maritime dispute was resolved by the United Nations (UN) tribunal award.



Security in North East States - Bangladesh cooperated with India in sorting out security issues in the Northeast. Bangladesh handed over leaders and shut down their training camps.

- **Ranjan Daimary -** the founder-chief of National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)
- Anup Chetia of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

TRADE PARTNERSHIP

- Bangladesh is India's **largest trading partner** in South Asia.
- Between 2009-10 and 2015-16, the trade deficit grew in India's favor at a staggering 164.4%. **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** from India to Bangladesh is $3.11 billion.
- India has extended 3 Lines of Credits to Bangladesh in the last 7 years amounting to US$ 8 billion. This makes Bangladesh the largest recipient of **Line of Credit (LOC)** funds from India till date.
- Duty Free and Quota Free access is being given to Bangladeshi exports to India under **SAFTA** since 2011.
- Both the countries are working on the prospect of a bilateral **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).**

CONNECTIVITY

- Restored **railway link between Haldibari (India) and Chilahati (Bangladesh)** and noted that this rail link will further strengthen trade and people to people ties between the two sides.

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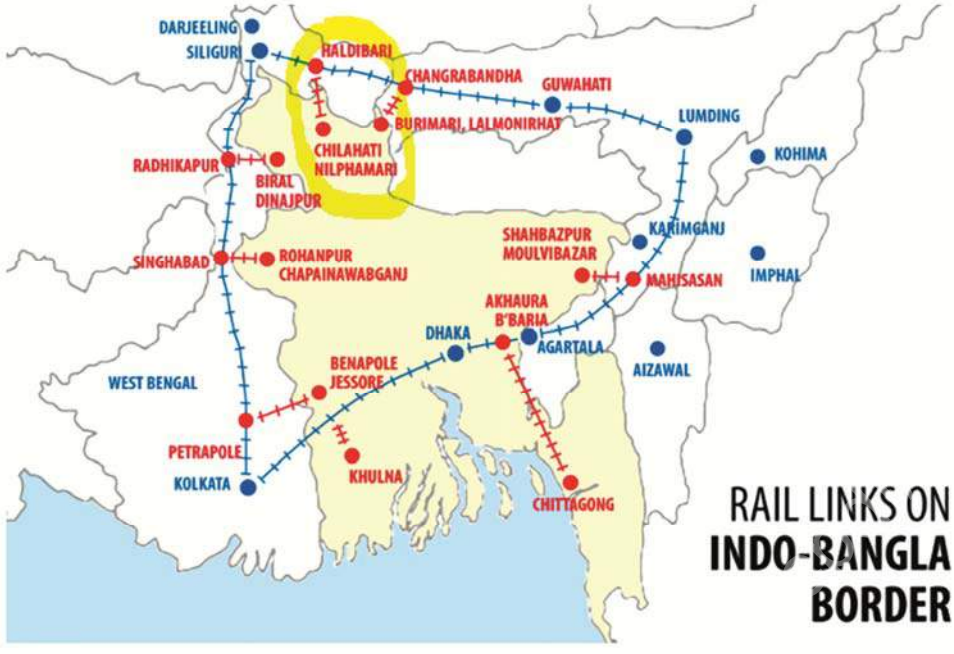
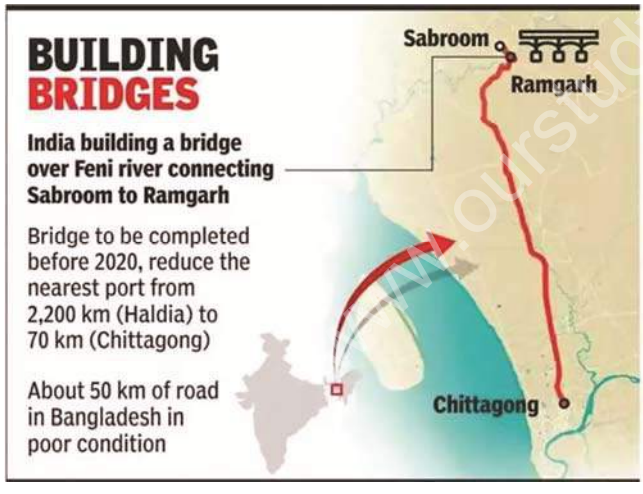


- Direct bus service between Kolkata and Agartala via Bangladesh.
- 1.9-kilometre-long bridge, the Maitri Setu connecting Sabroom (Tripura) in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.



- To facilitate better connectivity and simplify movement of passengers and goods, both the countries agreed to an early operationalization of the **BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal) Motor Vehicles Agreement** through expeditious signing of the enabling MoU for Bangladesh, India and Nepal to commence the movement of goods and passengers, with provision for Bhutan to join at a later date.

TEESTA RIVER WATER SHARING AGREEMENT

- It is long pending because of the non-cooperation of the West Bengal Government. Water is a state subject in India. Hence, for a bilateral agreement on the sharing of Teesta waters, the support of the West Bengal Government would also be needed.
- The river is important for irrigation in the northern parts of Bangladesh. Now Bangladesh is building a reservoir on its own side. For this it is seeking help of China.

Teesta River

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

- Bangladesh supported India in its election to the **United Nations Security Council**.
- Both countries have agreed to continue working together towards achieving early **reforms of the UN Security Council**, combating climate change,

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attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and protection of the rights of migrants.

- Both agree that given the regional and global economic scenarios following the outbreak of COVID 19, regional organisations, such as SAARC and BIMSTEC have an important role to play.
- India has invited Bangladesh to join the New Development Bank (BRICS).

CHALLENGES IN INDIA BANGLADESH RELATIONS

- Although Economic relations are expanding every day, in India's Consolidated FDI policy 2017, Bangladesh is put in the same category as Pakistan.
- Under which a citizen of Bangladesh/Pakistan or an entity incorporated in Bangladesh/Pakistan can invest only under the Government route.
- Despite India-Bangladesh Coordinated Border Management Plan, 294 Bangladeshi Nationals have been killed along the border since 2010.
- Teesta water agreement which was agreed to in 2011 is yet to be signed because of various contentious issues that remain.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) have created a negative impression in Bangladesh of India's intent.
- Bangladesh is China's second-largest arms export destination.
- Chinese firms have been outbidding their Indian counterparts in infrastructure projects.
- Nepal is increasingly becoming closer to China; Bhutan has withdrawn from the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) initiative, Sri Lanka and the Maldives are playing a balancing act, both rooted in Chinese investments; Afghanistan is increasingly under the Taliban's sphere of influence as the US withdraws troops.
- In a thaw in relations, Pakistan's high commissioner to Bangladesh recently met the Bangladesh PM as both sides pledged to improve bilateral relations.

FIRST QUAD SUMMIT

#INDO-PACIFIC

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

Recently, the leaders of the member countries of the quad group participated in the first ever such summit. So let us look at the key highlights of this summit.

WHAT LEADERS SAID? - KEY POINTS

- Commitment to a free and open **Indo-pacific region.**
- Reaffirmation of their commitment to cooperating on Covid-19, security challenges and climate change.
- Pledge to respond to the **economic and health impacts of COVID-19, combat climate change, and address shared challenges, including in cyber space, critical technologies, counterterrorism, quality infrastructure investment, and humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief as well as maritime domains**
- Commitment to **denuclearizing North Korea**
- Commitment to **deliver up to 1 billion doses of the Covid-19** vaccine to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations **(ASEAN) and Indo-Pacific countries** by the end of 2022 **using Indian manufacturing, U.S. and Japanese funding and Australian logistics.**

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ANALYSIS

- Each of the leaders have tried to make it clear that it is not an anti-China club, even when it aims to counter the rising Chinese influence.
- Quad is trying to showcase what democracies can deliver together, both for their own populations and for the broader world.
- Despite such declarations the alliance is widely viewed as an effort to combat **Beijing's growing military and economic power.**
- It's a group of countries all concerned about China, and all trying to hold the line for an open, democratic non-Chinese way forward
- The "Quad" is not a formal alliance in the same way as NATO and thus carries no strict duty to defend one another.

QUAD MEMBERS' ISSUES WITH CHINA

- Relations between US and China have deteriorated with clashes over trade, Covid-19, Hong Kong's autonomy, Taiwan and alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang.
- America has labelled China as America's biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century.
- Japan has had long-standing grievances over contested islands and maritime claims, while Indian and Chinese troops engaged in deadly border clashes over disputed territory in the Himalayas last year.
- Australia has faced trade pressures from Beijing and Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the "Quad" meeting was "an historical moment" and an opportunity to "create a new anchor for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific."
- The group's revitalization also gained a boost last year after India invited Australia to join naval exercises with it, the U.S. and Japan.

SIGNIFICANCE

- India has been a leading manufacturer of the vaccines. This commitment is crucial in the sense that has the support of governments of these countries. The vaccine collaboration is not just between the leading vaccine manufacturing firms. It will address the demand supply gap in Indo-Pacific. It's a success for India's Vaccine diplomacy.
- The countries are also focussing on the creation of **resilient supply chains** for materials such as **rare earth metals**. China produces 60 % of the world's rare earth metals. This collaboration is crucial in countering China's dominance on these metals. They are used in smartphones, automobiles, Electric vehicles and batteries.
- It reflects a continuity in the US Foreign policy.
- It is the first plurilateral summit attended by Joe Biden after assuming the office.

US – China – Alaska Meet

US and Chinese official met in Alaska to discuss the course of current geopolitics. This is first time that a geopolitically relevant meeting has been organized in Alaska. This shows the rising global concern on Climate Change. This submit has come after QUAD's first virtual meeting and series of visits by US official to nations including India.

ANALYSIS

Vaccine diplomacy:

- This is a new buzzword in current geopolitics, and this could bring India at the center stage to fight the global pandemic. India has already shown it vaccine diplomacy by registering the highest number of vaccine exports and donations (over 58 million to 71 nations).
- However, India has to take a word of caution as domestic need of over 300 million has to be met right on time and as there is second wave surge of COVID case, India might end up going slow in its vaccine donation plan.
- QUAD nations other than India, must acknowledge the fact that initiative to provide over a billion doses from the Indian soil should come with a waiver on TRIPS agreement.

How to handle china?

- China is India's foreign policy concern and also the necessity.
- India has been the prime supporter of maritime security and rule based maritime order in East China

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sea (India has strategic relations with Vietnam, high Value trade passes from this area and there is Nine Dash Line issue).

- India has been facing the tough stance from China as seen in recent Galwan clash. However, India cannot take the external help explicitly to counter Chinese aggression. This could be counterproductive and incite further tension in the South Asian arena.
- However, to take balanced approach towards China, India requires to go for three major initiatives: expand more resources, troops, infrastructure, secondly, ensure no recurrence of the People's Liberation Army incursion and lastly focus more on the continental arena rather than maritime arena.

Direction for India:

- India has perceived QUAD just like other grouping and assume same role to assure *strategic autonomy*.
- India has to take best out of QUAD and try to expand its approach on the soft diplomacy. This could provide India a bargaining chip to further meet its desired objectives like entry to United Nation Security Council, entry to Nuclear Supplier Group among other.

INDIA's ONE CHINA POLICY

#BILATERAL RELATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

India has been following the One China Policy with regards to the issue of Taiwan and Hong Kong. However in the context of turbulence in India-China relations owing to the Galwan Valley clash there has been a call for reviewing the One China policy that India has followed till date. Should India move away from its One china policy?

ONE CHINA POLICY AND INDIA

- One China policy is a position enforced by the Communist Party of China (CPC) that rules the country. After it occupied mainland China in 1949, pushing out then ruling Kuomintang Party to Formosa, now known as Taiwan, the communist regime came up with One China policy.
- It staked claim on a much bigger territory of Tibet. China occupied Tibet by 1950 and consolidated its military stranglehold on the region through the decade.
- It has been aiming to capture Taiwan since then but in the face of global opposition, China has not dared to carry out its designs across the Formosa Strait in the South China Sea.
- India was among the first countries to recognise communist rule in China. Through the **1954 Sino-Indian Trade Agreement**, India also acknowledged Chinese control of Tibet.
- India's support to One China policy remained in limbo until 2003. It was during this intervening period that China built its south Tibet claim over Arunachal Pradesh.
- In 2003, then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee signed a joint declaration with his counterpart Wen Jiabao in Beijing. This declaration recognised that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of the People's Republic of China.

INDIA - TAIWAN RELATIONS

- Diplomatic relations have improved between India and Taiwan since 1990s but they do have official diplomatic relations.
- India recognises only the People's Republic of China (in mainland China) and not the Republic of China's claims of being the legitimate government of Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau.
- However, Taiwan views India's rising geopolitical standing as a counterbalance to the PRC's dominance in the region.
- As a part of its "Look East" foreign policy, India has sought to cultivate extensive ties with Taiwan in trade and investment and cultural ties.
- The **India-Taipei Association** was established in Taipei in 1995 to promote non-governmental interactions between India and Taiwan.
- In 2002, the two sides signed the Bilateral Investment Promotion & Protection Agreement.

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- In 2019, India - Taiwan trade volume was US$7 billion, growing at a rate of 20% year on year.
- Major Taiwanese exports to India include integrated circuits, machinery and other electronic products. India is also keen to attract Taiwanese investment particularly in hi-tech and labour-intensive industries. More than 80 Taiwanese companies and entities currently have a presence in India.

CHANGE IN STANCE OF INDIA

- In May 2020, two members of the Indian Parliament virtually attended the newly elected President Tsai's swearing in ceremony and praised Taiwanese democracy, thereby sending what some have termed a warning message to China and signaling a strengthening of relations between the Tsai and Modi administrations.
- In July 2020, the Indian government appointed a top career diplomat, Joint Secretary Gourangalal Das, the former head of the U.S. division in India's Ministry of External Affairs, as its new envoy to Taiwan.
- Ahead of Taiwan's national day on 10 October, the Chinese embassy in India penned a letter to Indian media houses asking them to adhere to the government's One-China policy.
- An advertisement in Indian print media carried an image of the Taiwanese President, Tsai Ing-wen, with the slogan "Taiwan and India are natural partners".
- The Indian External Affairs Ministry brushed away the Chinese criticism by simply saying that the Indian media is free to carry what they want. Significantly, MEA did not re-iterate India's One-China policy.

ARGUMENTS FOR RECONSIDERING ONE CHINA POLICY

- China has never followed the One-India policy.
- It recently announced that it does not accept Ladakh as a Union Territory, and while ignoring Indian objections constructs roads through disputed Gilgit-Baltistan.
- Simultaneously, it diplomatically censures India whenever there are visits by Indian leaders or foreign diplomats to Arunachal Pradesh.
- China has also blocked foreign funding for developmental projects in Arunachal claiming it to be disputed.
- China has supported insurgencies in the North East.

ENERGY DIPLOMACY

#FOREIGN POLICY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

India has released its new rules governing the trade of electricity across its borders. In this context, let us analyze the key aspects of India's energy diplomacy in furthering the neighborhood policy. And also, the impact of these rules on India's energy trade specially in the context of Chinese ambitions in its neighborhood.

WHAT IS INDIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY?

- Under its 'Neighbourhood First' policy, Government is committed to developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with all its neighbours.
- India is an active development partner and is involved in several projects in these countries. India's policy of 'Neighbourhood First' focuses on creating mutually beneficial, people-oriented, regional frameworks for stability and prosperity.
- Our engagement with these countries is based on a consultative, non-reciprocal and outcome-oriented approach, which focuses on delivering benefits like greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, stronger development cooperation in various sectors area, security and broader people-to-people contacts.

INDIA'S ENERGY DIPLOMACY

- The energy sector has been a strong pillar of India's relationship with its neighbours in the recent past. It has signed memoranda of understanding with Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar to inter alia improve power connectivity with these neighbouring countries.
- India already had regional power system integration with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal through high-voltage synchronous (alternating current) and

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asynchronous (high voltage direct current) connections

- India has released various rules in the past relating to the import and export of electricity.
- Accordingly, it is being said that India can rely on this energy diplomacy to strengthen its relationship with its neighbours even as China seeks to isolate it among them

NEW RULES GOVERNING TRADE IN ELECTRICITY ACROSS THE BORDER

- These rules define the contours of the South Asian electricity market, placing clear limits on who can buy from and sell into India.
- It has consequences for the electricity market of neighbouring countries.
- Further these rules attempt to balance the increasing Chinese presence in the region.

RULES OF OWNERSHIP

- The rules discourage the participation of plants owned by a company situated in "a third country with whom India shares a land border" and "does not have a bilateral agreement on power sector cooperation with India".
- Chinese companies hoping to establish plants in Nepal, Bhutan, or Bangladesh will presumably have a hard time making good on their investments with the Indian market cut off.
- The rules place the same security restrictions on tripartite trade, say from Bhutan to Bangladesh through Indian territory.
- To make things even more airtight, the rules establish elaborate surveillance procedures to detect changes in the ownership patterns of entities trading with India.
- India had imposed stringent restrictions that dissuaded everyone other than Indian and government entities from participating. That threatened to undermine private sector participation and promising joint ventures across the region.
- Nepal and Bhutan protested for years, leading to new guidelines in 2018 that tried to find a middle ground; these rules formalise that balancing act.
- They allow private sector participation but exclude Chinese investments.

ISSUES

- It is being said that India is trying to exploit its geographical and economic centrality in the region to diktat these rules of electricity trade. This has irked many neighboring countries.
- Such a political approach towards infrastructure and trade projects might be counter-productive for India, since it also aims increasing its presence in West Asia, South east Asia and Africa through the ambitious **global super-grid called One Sun One World One Grid, or OSOWOG.**

WAY FORWARD

- Thus the need of the hour is a carefully crafted institutional model to tackle such projects.
- Such a model can lock countries into the pool by setting standards for the investors.
- Such a model will be rule based and will likely surpass anything China has to offer.

UK AND INDO-PACIFIC

#GEOPOLITICS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

After the decision of the UK to move away from the European Union, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has tried to re-align his government's policy to safeguard the strategic interest of the British and counter threats posed by the Russia and China on multiple levels. In light of the above developments Britain has initiated two important decisions:

***First, UK will significantly increase its nuclear stockpile** to counter threats posed by increasing military might of Russia ("the most acute threat to British security") and assertiveness of China ("biggest state-based threat to the U.K.'s economic security").*

***Second, UK is looking towards India and Indo-Pacific Region** to ensure that its strategic interests are protected and impact of Brexit on the economy is minimized. For this Britain has expressed its desire to acquire partner*

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status of ASEAN and Mr Boris Johnson will be visiting India to strengthen long standing ties with India.

HISTORY OF UK'S PRESENCE IN THE INDI-PACIFIC REGION

- The UK withdrew east from Suez in 1968 and abandoned its military bases in Singapore and Malaysia.
- The strategy was focused on preserving the balance of power against what was predicted to be a growing Chinese force.
- Since the UK's forward-based presence ended in 1968, the region has been neglected by successive British governments as the defence of Europe against the Soviets took precedence; the Middle East imbroglio would eventually capture the attention of UK foreign policy.
- **The 2008 global financial crash and austerity measures of David Cameroon government** pushed the UK to seek investments from the emerging economies in the Indo-Pacific in an effort to reignite the economy.
- The 2008 financial crisis marked the point at which the value of UK trade to non-EU states exceeded UK exports to the EU.

Yet what ensued was a fixation on pursuing the UK-China economic relationship, which saw the UK allow China's state-owned enterprises access to the UK's critical national infrastructure. Nearly a decade since, PM Boris Johnson is still battling its consequences.

FACTOR LEADING CURRENT TILT IN UK TOWARDS INDO-PACIFIC

- The UK's changing relationship with China has been key to why the concept of the Indo-Pacific has gained salience.
- Even as the UK courted Chinese investments under what David Cameron heralded as the 'golden era' of bilateral relations, it also recognised China as a threat, particularly in the South China Sea.
- From 2012, when the UK signed a defence treaty with Japan, the UK's strategic activity in the region has steadily risen.
- In 2018 the UK challenged China's illegal claims in the South China Sea. At the time, this made the UK the only navy, other than the US, to do so.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE UK'S TILT

Such a strategy is unlikely to revolutionise UK foreign policy. It can nonetheless still be significant: it will declare the UK's political commitment to the region, and will necessitate long-term, strategic thinking that can bring clarity of purpose to UK efforts.

- Like its allies in the region, the UK recognises the importance of a free and open Indo-Pacific to global stability and prosperity
- As the UK makes its deployments, it will be looking to amplify its efforts by entering into the regional security architecture.
- The UK might seek to join the India-France-Australia trilateral or, as the Quad reaches out to other like-minded states, there is the potential for the UK to join the initiative to comprise a 'Quad plus' arrangement.
- On intelligence gathering and sharing – a field the UK leads in – there is potential to cooperate more with key Indo-Pacific states such as Japan and India.
- Trade and investment will be a key dimension of the UK's tilt and the UK's changing relationship with China requires a diversification of trading partners.

THE STAKES IN UK-INDIA PARTNERSHIP

- There has been a conscious effort by the UK to engage more with India for over a decade now. In India, Mr Cameroon saw a rare phenomenon—a vital geo-strategic player, enjoying rapid economic growth and with democratic credentials – and so a natural partner for the UK.
- Ties between the two countries have since strengthened, albeit at a slower pace than the UK desired.
- For India, the UK's immigration policies and a perceived softness on Pakistan-sponsored terrorism have served as particular obstacles to reciprocating UK advances.

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- However, recent political shifts in the UK have afforded an opportunity for a closer UK-India partnership.
- The UK's post-Brexit meritocratic immigration policy, along with its move to co-sponsor a motion at the UN that called out Pakistan's failure to prevent the financing of terrorism, have helped put the relationship on a healthier footing.
- Changing geopolitical realities have now led the UK and India to converge on the Indo-Pacific concept, and compel both to work towards a deeper partnership.
- India has come to the realisation that, alone, the US is incapable of constraining China's most damaging tendencies.
- Compared to its ties with Japan, Australia and France, the UK remains a relatively untapped strategic partner for India—a fact that is driving India to invest more political capital into the relationship.
- On cybersecurity, the UK and India will be working multilaterally in an expanded G7 in the middle of this year to combat Huawei's lead in 5G, and over time, there is potential for greater cooperation between UK and Indian defence officials to help improve the resilience of India's telecommunications network.
- The partnership between Oxford University, AstraZeneca and India's Serum Institute serves as a blueprint for future cooperation on global health initiatives, and demonstrates how the UK and India can work together to counter Chinese influence in the developing world.

STRATEGIC CHOKE POINTS

#GEOPOLITICS

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Container ship M.V. Ever Given got stuck in a dust storm and strong winds on March 23 and ran aground in the Suez Canal blocking traffic on the route. However, the block has been cleared and the ship has course corrected for its route. The ship is operated by Taiwanese transport company Evergreen Marine and is one of the world's largest container vessels.

In this context let look at the maps of some of the important strategic choke points from our prelims perspective

1. SUEZ CANAL

2. BAB EL MANDEB

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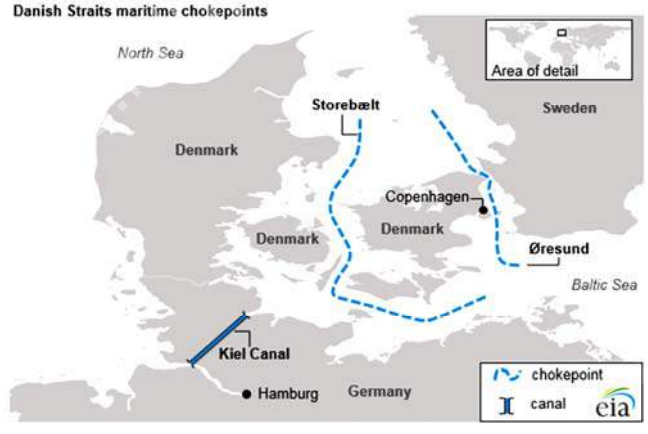
3. STRAIT OF HORMUZ

4. PANAMA CANAL

5. MALACCA STRAIT

6. STRAIT OF BOSPORUS (TURKISH STRAIT)

7. DANISH STRAITS



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STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ANDAMAN & NICOBAR

#GEOPOLITICS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

*In the first-ever official development assistance (ODA) project in Andaman & Nicobar (A&N), Japan has approved grant aid worth ¥4.02 billion, or ₹265 crore, to improve the power supply in the islands, stressing the **strategic geopolitical location of the islands for an open Indo-Pacific.***

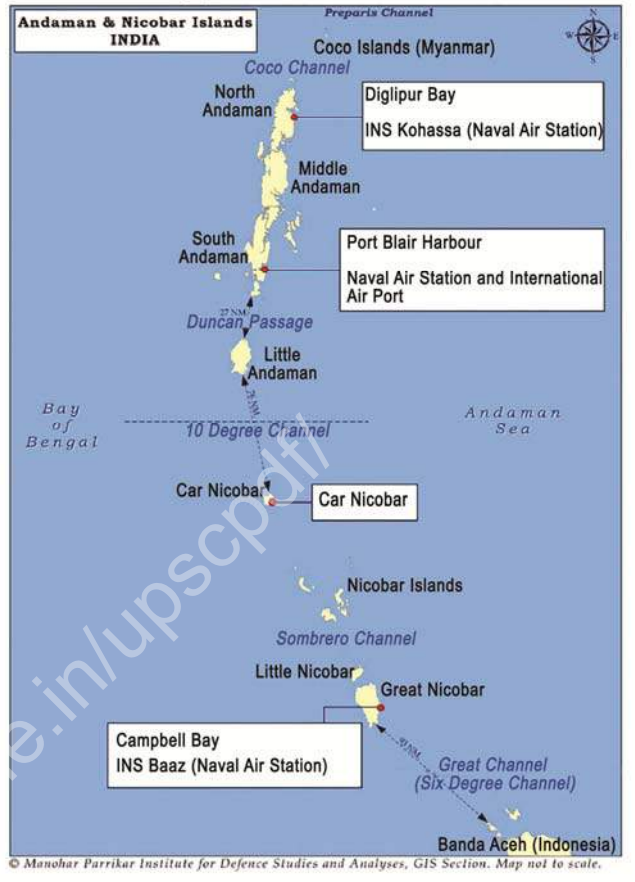
Both India and japan are the members of strategic Quadrilateral security dialogue which aims at stable, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

*Thus, Cooperation between Japan and India on these crucial islands demonstrate the commitment of both countries to realising a **stable, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.***

LOCATION OF ANDAMAN & NICOBAR

- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, are a group of 572 islands. They lie at the juncture of the **Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea**.
- The territory is about 150 km north of **Aceh (in Sumatra) in Indonesia** and separated from Thailand and Myanmar by the Andaman Sea.
- It comprises two island groups, the Andaman Islands (partly) and the Nicobar Islands, separated by the 150 km wide **Ten Degree Channel** (on the 10°N parallel), with the Andaman islands to the north of this latitude, and the Nicobar islands to the south (or by 179 km).
- The Andaman Sea lies to the east and the Bay of Bengal to the west.
- The islands host the **Andaman and Nicobar Command, the only tri-service geographical command of the Indian Armed Forces.**

Geographical Details: The A&N Islands



STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

- Islands provide India a commanding geostrategic presence in the Bay of Bengal and **access to South and Southeast Asia.**
- The **Preparis Channel and Six Degree Channe**l are located to the north and south of the Island chain, respectively.
- All these passages are important trade routes for any shipping destined for Southeast and East Asia.
- The **Six Degree and Ten Degree Channels** in the Andaman Sea which **lead to the Malacca Strait are vital to the sea lanes of communication (SLOCs)** along which flows global commerce, including energy trade, between Asia, Africa and the Pacific.
- The A&N Islands are at the **intersection of the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea**, and further to the Pacific Ocean, an important fulcrum of the strategic concept of the Indo-Pacific.

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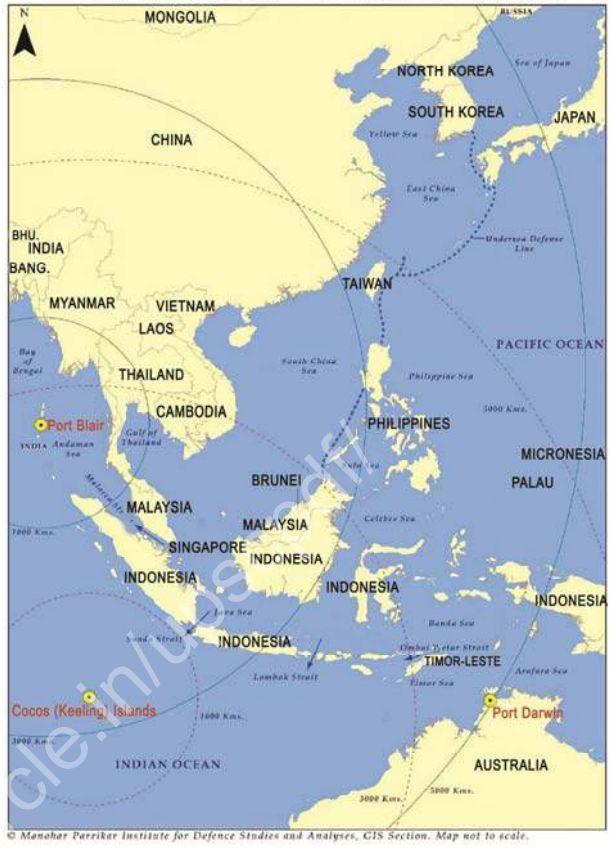
- Owing to its location Andaman & Nicobar Islands are crucial to build better economic relations with **ASEAN region.**
- Islands are also crucial for **India's Act East Policy**.

CHINESE PRESENCE IN THE IOR

- The significance of these islands lies mainly in their location: near the western outlet of the Malacca Strait and well-situated to form part of what Chinese military strategists have called a **"metal chain"** blocking Chinese access to Europe and the Middle East.
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands are also crucial to check the increasing presence of China in the IOR.
- China has been operating in the **Coco islands of Myanmar** since 2009.
- India's concerns about Chinese activity in the eastern Indian Ocean are exacerbated by its belief that China will eventually build a canal across the **Isthmus of Kra in Thailand**, giving Chinese vessels a relatively direct route into the Indian Ocean.
- China has developed new bases, including at Gwadar, Djibouti and the Hambantota.
- This broad-based trend in the evolution of China's presence is also reflected in the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, where Chinese naval and survey vessels have occasionally entered India's EEZ without prior intimation.
- China's economic and strategic engagement with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia in the Bay of Bengal/Eastern Indian Ocean has been noticeable in recent years.

Strategic Surveillance: A&N Islands and keeling (Cocos) Islands



ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR COMMAND

- The Tri-Services Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) has progressively emerged as a lynchpin of India's regional maritime engagement in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea.
- Various multilateral and bilateral maritime engagements viz. the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the MILAN series of exercises, coordinated patrols, and bilateral exercises with littoral states in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea have contributed to this purpose.
- As regional maritime forces have expanded their cooperation with the Indian Navy in recent years, there is a new appreciation in Southeast Asia about India's potential in offsetting China's dominance of littoral-Asia.

INITIATIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLAND

- In 2016, the government identified 26 Islands for promoting and implementing development based on

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sustainable approach to building a thriving economy of the project islands.

- Laying of submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and A&N Islands so as to increase telephone and internet connectivity in the region
- In 2017, the Island Development Agency (IDA) was established for the holistic development of the islands, focusing on community-based tourism. IDA is chaired by Union Home Minister. Other members are the Cabinet secretary, home secretary, secretary (environment, forests and climate change), secretary (tourism) and secretary (tribal welfare).
- The 2016 Indo-Japan Joint Statement on Bilateral Cooperation envisioned to develop "Smart Islands" on the line of the 'Smart Cities' project.
- The 'Sustainable Development of Little Andaman Island - Vision Document', is the NITI Aayog's proposal to leverage the strategic location and natural features of the island.
- A free trade zone will be developed as per the plan document of NITI Aayog and will compete with Singapore and Hong Kong.
- NITI Aayog is also working on a revenue model to build sea connectivity projects in the public-private partnership mode, especially for ships carrying automobiles.
- Recently, the Prime Minister has declared that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be developed as a maritime and start-up hub.

GANDHI PEACE PRIZE

#PEACE AWARDS

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

IN NEWS

*The **Culture Ministry** announced that the **father of the nation of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** and the former **Sultan of Oman, the late Qaboos bin Said Al Said**, will be awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2020 and 2019, respectively.*

ABOUT THE AWARD

- Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by Government of India since 1995, the 125th Birth Anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex.
- The award carries an amount of Rs. 1 crore, a citation, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft/ handloom item.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: The Gandhi Peace Prize recognizes the immense and **unparalleled contribution of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in inspiring the liberation of Bangladesh**, bringing stability to a nation born out of strife, laying the foundation for the close and fraternal relations between India and Bangladesh, and promoting peace and non-violence in the Indian subcontinent.

Sultan Qaboos: His Majesty Sultan Qaboos was a visionary leader whose twin policy of moderation and mediation in addressing international issues won him praise and respect across the globe. He played an important role in supporting peace efforts in various regional disputes and conflicts. H.M. Sultan Qaboos was the architect of the special ties between India and Oman. He had studied in India and always maintained a special relationship with India. Under his leadership, India and Oman became strategic partners and our mutually beneficial, comprehensive partnership strengthened and scaled newer heights.

ARMS IMPORTS

#REPORT/ORGANIZATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Arms imports decreased by 33% between 2011–15 and 2016–20 while India continues to remain the second largest arms importer after Saudi Arabia, according to a report from Swedish think tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). As per the Report, there has been an overall drop in arms imports between 2011–15 and 2016–20 seems to be mainly due to its complex and lengthy procurement processes, combined with its

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attempts to reduce its dependence on Russian arms by diversifying its network of arms suppliers.

- **SIPRI Report:** only public resource that provides consistent information, often estimates, on all international transfers of major arms. The International transfers of major arms stayed at the same level between 2011–15 and 2016–20.
- **Largest Arms Exporter: United States** remains the largest arms exporter, increasing its global share of arms exports from 32 to 37 per cent between 2011–15 and 2016–20. US is followed by Russia, France, Germany and China.
- **The Five Largest Arms Importers** are Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China.

NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK

ORGANIZATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister has urged the New Development Bank (NDB) to consider working closely with India's new development financing institution for funding infrastructure.

ABOUT NDB

- It is a multilateral development bank jointly founded by the **BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in 2014.**
- **Fortaleza Declaration** of the 2014 BRICS Summit (6th) stressed that the NDB will strengthen cooperation among BRICS and will supplement the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global development thus contributing to sustainable and balanced growth.
- All the BRICS Member countries **hold an equal stake in the bank** and the NDB works on their consultative mechanism.
- Objective is to support infrastructure and sustainable development efforts in BRICS and other underserved, emerging economies.
- **Headquartered**: **Shanghai**, China.
- **Observer status** in the **United Nations General Assembly.**
- **Objectives:**
  - Fostering development of member countries.
  - Supporting economic growth.
  - Promoting competitiveness and facilitating job creation.
  - Building a knowledge sharing platform among developing countries.
- NDB supports **public or private projects** through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.
- NDB has so far **approved 18 projects in India**, including emergency loans of $2 billion to support health spending and economic recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

OPEC+

ORGANIZATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

India, the world's third-biggest oil importer, said the decision by major producers to continue with output cuts as prices move higher could threaten the consumption led-recovery in some countries.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, a group known as OPEC+, agreed not to increase supply in April as they await a more substantial recovery in demand amid the COVID-19.

GLOBAL OIL SUPPLY

- Globally major suppliers of oil include OPEC (The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) which are responsible for about 40 percent of the world's oil supply and 60 percent of the oil traded globally.
- OPEC includes 14 countries with major ones including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, UAE, and Venezuela to name a few. (Qatar withdrew from the group in 2018)
- Saudi Arabia is the world's largest supplier with nearly 10% of the global share

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- Major Non-OPEC producer and suppliers of oil include USA (since 2014) and Russia.

IN FOCUS: OPEC+ DEAL

- Under the Vienna Agreement of 2016, OPEC-plus deal was signed between major oil producers to coordinate the production levels to check the price fluctuation
- It is basically an agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers, to cut oil production in order to prevent falling oil prices.
- Besides the deal is seen as a counter to keep the oil prices from falling due to shale oil production from US since 2014.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

1. Which of the following statements is/are correct about New Development Bank?

1. It was founded at the Fortaleza declaration.
2. All the BRICS Member countries hold an equal stake in the bank

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. Which of the following is not a member of the OPEC?

a) Iran b) Venezuela
c) UAE d) USA

3. Which of the following countries share borders with the Baltic Sea?

1. Poland 2. Germany
3. Norway

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

4. Which of the following share their border with Red sea?

1. Ethiopia 2. Israel
3. Egypt

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only
c) 1 and 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

5. South Andaman and Little Andaman are separated by which of the following ?

a) Preparis Channel b) Duncan Passage
c) Ten degree channel d) Great Channel

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

Q1. India Bangladesh relations are a mixed bag of collaboration and unresolved issues. Comment.

Q2. Analyze India – Taiwan relations in the context of India's One China Policy. Should India move away from its One China Policy?

Answers to above MCQs: *1 (c), 2 (d), 3 (b), 4(c), 5(b)*

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CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER II (MAIN)

CIC'S - ANNUAL REPORT (2019-20)

#RTI #ANNUAL REPORT #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE CENTRAL INFORMATION COMMISSION

IN NEWS

Central Information Commission has come up with Annual Report for 2019-20 which states that the centre has rejected only 4.3% of all Right to Information (RTI) requests in 2019-20. However, of the rejected requests, almost 40% of the rejections by the government did not cite valid reason. Section 25 of RTI Act mandates filing of Annual Report by Central and respective State Information Commissions. The Annual Report of the Commission is based on the inputs received from the Public Authorities (PA) on the implementation of the RTI Act.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT OF RTI ACT

- The RTI Act provides for setting up of the practical regime of Right to Information for citizens to secure the right to access to information held by or under the control of public authorities.
- The legislative intent behind the enactment of the RTI Act is to -
  - foster transparency & accountability in the working of every Public Authority,
  - bridge the gap between the information provider and the information seeker,
  - enhance efficiency in administration of public authorities,
  - mitigate corruption, and
  - promote good governance.

SECTION 25 OF RTI – FILING ANNUAL REPORT BY CIC & SIC

- The Central Information Commission or State Information Commission shall after the end of each year, prepare a report on the implementation of the provisions of this Act during that year and forward a copy thereof to the appropriate Government.
- Each Ministry or Department shall, in relation to the public authorities within their jurisdiction, collect and provide such information to the Central Information Commission or State Information Commission.
- Such report of Central Information Commission shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament & Report of State Information Commission shall be laid before House of Legislature.
- If there is a Legislative Council, such report shall be laid before both houses of Legislative Assembly.

THE ANNUAL REPOT MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION - SECTION 25(3)

- Number of requests made to each Public Authority.
- Number of decisions where applicants were not entitled to access to the documents pursuant to the requests, the provisions of this Act under which these decisions were made and the number of times such provisions were invoked.
- Number of appeals referred to the Central Information Commission or State Information Commission, as the case may be, for review, the nature of the appeals and the outcome of the appeals.

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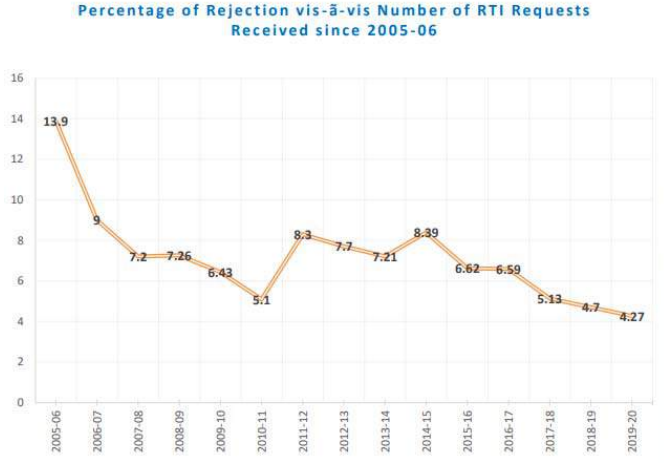
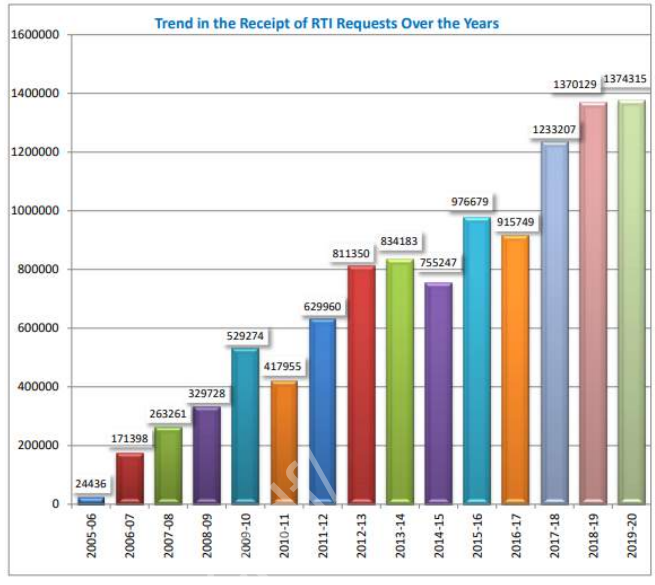
- Particulars of any disciplinary action taken against any officer.
- Amount of charges collected by each Public Authority under this Act.
- Any facts which indicate an effort by the Public Authorities to administer and implement the spirit and intention of this Act.
- Recommendations for reform, including recommendations in respect of the particular Public Authorities, for the development, improvement, modernization, reform or amendment to this Act or other legislation or common law or any other matter relevant for operationalising the right to access information.
- Further, as per section 25(5), if it appears to Commission that the practice of a Public Authority in relation to the exercise of its functions under this Act does not conform with the provisions or spirit of this Act, it may give to the authority a recommendation specifying the steps which ought in its opinion to be taken for promoting such conformity.

INCREASE IN REJECTION RATES

- The CIC's annual report covers more than 2,000 public authorities across the Central government as well as the union territories.
- An analysis of CIC macro-data from Central ministries shows that the Home Ministry had the highest rate of rejections, as it rejected 20% of all RTIs received.
- The Agriculture Ministry's rejection rate doubled from 2% in 2018-19 to 4% in 2019-20. The Delhi Police and the Army also saw increases in rejection rates.





Data Related to Rejection of RTI Requests by Various Categories of PAs during Reporting Year

Sl. No.	Category of PA	Number of RTI Requests Received	Number of RTI Requests	Percentage of RTI Requests Rejected
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e) = (d) × 100/(c)
I	Independent Ministry/ Department	293933	4908	1.67
2	Department Under Ministry	242782	4429	1.82
3	Attached Office	125926	1156	0.92
4	Subordinate Office	361362	29653	8.21
5	Corporation	32363	1072	3.31
6	Govt. Autonomous Body	215030	13387	6.23
7	Govt. Company Under Companies Act	20311	1504	7.40
8	Others	82608	2525	3.06

Sl. No.	Ministry/ Department/ Independent Public Authority	Number of RTI Requests Received	Number of RTI Requests Rejected	Percent-age (%)
1.	Ministry of Finance	192204	23995	12.48

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2.	Ministry of Railways	141499	1663	1.18
3.	Ministry of Communications	122949	2078	1.69
4.	UT of Delhi	108009	1513	1.40
5.	Ministry of Human Resource Development	94306	950	1.01
6.	Ministry of Corporate A flairs	83602	454	0.54
7.	Ministry of Labour and Employment	80978	2284	2.82
8.	Ministry of Defence	70934	3901	5.50
9.	Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions	65234	1892	2.90
10.	Ministry of Home Affairs	44453	9095	20.46
11.	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways	36839	137	0.37
12.	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	33738	409	1.21
13.	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas	20903	1092	5.22
14.	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs	20716	264	1.27
15.	UT of Chandigarh	17289	283	1.64
16.	Ministry of Coal	12650	639	5.05
17.	Prime Minister's Office	12238	735	6.01
18.	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution	11075	92	0.83
19.	Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare	10288	361	3.51
20.	Ministry of Civil Aviation	10215	175	1.71

SECTIONS OF RTI ACT INVOKED IN PROHIBITING INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

- No right is unfettered and therefore while promoting institutional integrity and transparency, **Sections 8, 9, 10, 11** and **24** of the RTI Act enlist exemptions/ limitations on disclosure of certain information.
- So, there are number of RTI Applications which have been rejected under the above mentioned provisions.

Sections	Number of Times Various Sections were Invoked while Rejecting Information Sought in the RTI Requests #	Total	Percentage Contribution Over the Total (%)
8(1)	28585		46.01
9	258	62123	0.42
11	717		1.15
24	8504		13.69
Others	24059		38.73

Section 8	Exemption from disclosure of information affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the State, relation with foreign State or lead to incitement of an offence.
Section 9	Information can be denied if it involves an infringement of copyright subsisting in a person other than the State.
Section 11	Third Party Information
Section 24	RTI Act not to apply on intelligence and security organisations specified in the Second Schedule of the RTI Act.

DISPOSAL OF APPEALS/COMPLAINTS FILED WITH THE CIC

- The Central Information Commission shall consist of – (a) the Chief Information Commissioner; and (b) such number of Central Information Commissioners, not exceeding ten, as may be deemed necessary.
- The database regarding registration/disposal of the cases during the reporting year in the CIC is as follows:

Number of Second Appeals/ Complaints Registered during reporting year	22243
Number of Second Appeals/ Complaints disposed during reporting year	16720
Number of Second Appeals/ Complaints pending for disposal as on 1st April of reporting year	35178

- During the reporting year, 387 appeals were filed before the First Appellate Authority of CIC u/s 19(1) of the Act which comprised around 18.08% of the total

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RTI applications received. The First Appellate Authority of CIC disposed of all the 387 first appeals during the reporting year.

- Important initiatives taken by CIC includes e-Court and Video Conferencing, Transparency Audit, Seminars and Conferences and Publicity of the RTI Act.

THREE TIER SYSTEM UNDER RTI ACT

➔ **FIRST TIER**

- The First tier is **Central Assistant Public Information Officer/Central Public Information Officer (CAPIO/CPIO)** in a Public Authority designated as such under section 5 of the RTI Act.
- The CAPIO/CPIO is required to provide information to an RTI applicant within 30 days of the receipt of a request as per section 7, unless it is exempt from disclosure or relates to a third party or held by another Public Authority.
- If information is held by another Public Authority, then such case should be transferred to that Public Authority within 5 days of the receipt of the application as per section 6 (3).

➔ **SECOND TIER**

- The Second tier is designated as the **First Appellate Authority (FAA).** As per the mandate of the RTI Act, an RTI applicant who does not get the required information within the specified time or is aggrieved by the decision of CPIO may, within 30 days - address/prefer his first appeal to an officer senior in rank to CPIO in each Public Authority.
- Together, the CPIO and the FAA constitute the cutting edge of this 'practical regime of information' as envisaged in the preamble of the Right to Information Act.

➔ **THIRD TIER**

- At the third tier, **the Central Information Commission** has been established as the apex appellate authority under the RTI Act 2005. An information seeker can file a second appeal before the Central Information Commission against the order of FAA, if he is not satisfied or does not receive an order from FAA within the specified time as per section 19 (3) of the RTI Act.

1ST TIER	Central Assistant Public Information Officer/Central Public Information Officer (CAPIO/CPIO)
2ND TIER	First Appellate Authority (FAA)
3RD TIER	Central Information Commission

STATE INFORMATION COMMISSION

The State Information Commission shall consist of (a) the State Chief Information Commissioner, and (b) such number of State Information Commissioners, not exceeding ten, as may be deemed necessary.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF UT OF DELHI

#DELHI #UNION TERRITORY #AMENDMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

After India received independence, there were four categories of states namely PART A, PART B, PART C & PART D States. Delhi was categorised a Part C state and was accordingly a Chief Commissioners Province. However, the State Reorganisation Act, 1956 removed these criterias and only states and Union Territories remained. Delhi was then categorised as a Union Territory.

PRIOR TO STATE REORGANISATION ACT, 1956

- When the Constitution came into force, there were four kinds of States, called Parts A, B, C and D States, with the last two being administered by centrally appointed Chief Commissioners and Lieutenant Governors, with no locally elected Assemblies to aid and advise them.

PART A STATES	Nine former **Governors' Provinces** of British India were made Part A states.
PART B STATES	Eight former **Princely States** or groups of smaller princely states were made Part B states.
PART C STATES	Ten former chief **Commissioners Provinces** and some princely states were made Part C states, these were governed by chief commissioners appointed by the

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	President of India.
PART D STATES	**Andaman and Nicobar Islands** was the only Part D state and was administered by a central government appointed lieutenant governor.

THE STATES REORGANISATION ACT, 1956

- The States of India were originally formed as a result of historical accidents and circumstances.
- After independence there was a growing demand for reorganisation of the States on more rational basis in the context of not only from financial, economic and administrative management of independent India but also due to the growing importance of regional languages.
- For the first time, **the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was constituted in 1953** to go into this problem and to recommend the principles and broad guidelines on which the States can be reorganised. The Commission submitted its report in September, 1955.
- The Commission was appointed by Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru. **SRC was headed by S. Fazal Ali** and had two members namely **K. M. Panikkar & H. N. Kunzru.**
- To give effect to the scheme of reorganisation which emerged from the consideration of the proposals contained in the Report, **the States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, was enacted by the Parliament **under Article 3 of the Constitution of India.**
- **THE CONSTITUTION (SEVENTH AMENDMENT) ACT, 1956** - implemented the scheme of States reorganisation. It has added Article 350A which is designed to implement one of the States Reorganisation Commission's important recommendations regarding safeguards for linguistic minorities in the States after reorganisation.
- The new States formed as a result of the reorganisation of States in 1956 are Andhra Pradesh, Bombay, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Mysore, Punjab and Rajasthan.
- **SRA, 1956 also provided for the following:**

➔ Amendment to First & Fourth Schedule

➔ Provision of High Courts for the new States

➔ Zonal Council

➔ Delimitation of Constituencies

➔ All India Services

➔ Services under State Public Service Commission

THE STORY OF DELHI'S LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

- The Delhi State Legislative Assembly came into being on 7th March, 1952 under the Government of Part-C States Act, 1951. Chaudhary Brahm Prakash became the first Chief Minister in 1952.
- However, a prolonged stand-off with the Chief Commissioner, and later the Union Home Minister, Govind Ballabh Pant, over issues of jurisdictions and functional autonomy, eventually led to his resignation, in 1955.
- In 1956, when the Constitution of India was amended to implement the provisions of the States Reorganisation Act, only two categories, namely, States and Union Territories remained in the Indian Union.
- Delhi then became a Union Territory to be administered by an Administrator appointed by the President. The Legislative Assembly of Delhi and the Council was abolished, despite loud protests in Parliament.
- Ten years later, the Delhi Administration Act, 1966 was passed which provided for a **limited representative Government in Delhi** through a **Metropolitan Council** comprising 56 elected Members and five nominated Members.
- This structure continued for many years, with repeated political demands for full statehood to be granted to Delhi.

BALAKRISHNAN COMMITTEE

- The question of re-organisation of administrative set-up in the Union territory of Delhi was under consideration for some period of time.
- The Government of India appointed on in December 1987 Balakrishnan Committee to look into various issues connected with the administration of Delhi and to recommend measures to streamline Delhi's administrative setup.
- After detailed inquiry and examination, the Committee recommended that Delhi should continue to be a Union territory and provided with a Legislative

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Assembly and a Council of Ministers responsible to such Assembly with appropriate powers to deal with matters of concern to the common man.

- The Committee also recommended that with a view to ensure stability and permanence, arrangements should be incorporated in the Constitution to give the National Capital a special status among the Union territories.
- Based on this report, the ***Constitution (69th) Amendment Act*** and ***the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCT) Act, 1991*** was enacted.
- Hence as per Constitution (69thAmendment) Act, 1991, ***Article 239AA and Article 239AB*** were added to the Constitution to give constitutional **status** to the **National Capital Territory of Delhi.**

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS OF ARTICLE 239AA

- Union Territory of Delhi shall be called the National Capital Territory of Delhi (hereafter in this Part referred to as the National Capital Territory) and the administrator thereof appointed under article 239 shall be designated as the Lieutenant Governor.
- Provides for Legislative Assembly for NCT and the seats shall be filled by members chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies.
- The total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly, the number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, the division of the National Capital Territory into territorial constituencies (including the basis for such division) and all other matters relating to the functioning of the Legislative Assembly shall be regulated by law made by Parliament. [Accordingly Parliament legislated ***the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCT) Act, 1991].***
- Election Commission under Article 324 shall conduct elections for the Legislative Assembly of Delhi.
- Legislative Assembly shall have powers to make law on matters enumerated in the State List or in the Concurrent List. However, Legislative Assembly of Delhi cannot make laws on the following entries under the **State List** –

Entry 1	Public Order
Entry 2	Police *(including railway and village police)*
Entry 18	Land, that is to say any right in or over land, land tenures including the relation of landlord and tenant, and the collection of rents, transfer and alienation of agricultural land, land improvement and agricultural loans and colonization.

- They also cannot legislate on **Entries 64, 65 and 66** of **State List** so far as they relate to the above entries – 1, 2 and 18.

- It provides for Council of Ministers consisting of not more than 10% of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly, with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Lieutenant Governor (LG), except where LG is required to act in his discretion.
- In the case of difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor and his Ministers on any matter, LG shall refer it to the President for decision and act according to the decision given by the President.
- However, if the matter sent to the President is pending before the President, then the Lieutenant Governor can take immediate action or give such direction if he thinks the matter is of urgency or importance.
- The Chief Minister shall be appointed by the President and other Ministers shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Chief Minister and the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the President.
- The Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly.

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS OF ARTICLE 239AB

- It contains provision for failure of constitutional machinery in NCT of Delhi.
- If the President, on receipt of a report from the Lieutenant Governor or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the administration of the National Capital Territory cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of Article 239AA or of any law made in pursuance of that article - the President may by order suspend the operation of any provision of article 239AA or of all or any of the provisions of any law made in pursuance of that article.

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NCT OF DELHI ACT, 1991

#DELHI #UNION TERRITORY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

The GNCTD Act supplements the constitutional provisions relating to the Legislative Assembly and Council of Ministers for the National Capital Territory of Delhi. Let us go through the salient features of the Act.

GNCTD ACT PROVIDES FOR THE FOLLOWING

- ***Legislative Assembly and its composition*** – 70 Seats.
- ***Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes*** -Number of Seats reserved for SC shall bear the same proportion to the total number of seats in the Assembly as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the Capital bears to the total population of the Capital.
- ***Qualifications for membership of Legislative Assembly*** – citizen of India, and not less than 25 years of age and possess such other qualifications as required.
- ***Duration of Legislative Assembly –*** Unless sooner dissolved, Five years. Expiration of five years shall operate as dissolution of the Assembly.
- ***Duration of Assembly can be extended in case of proclamation of Emergency under Article 352*** for 1 year at a time (on the order of President) and not extending in any case beyond a period of six months after the Proclamation has ceased to operate.
- ***The Lieutenant Governor shall summon the Legislative Assembly*** to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit, but 6 months shall not intervene between its last sitting in one session and the date appointed for its first sitting in the next session.
- ***Legislative Assembly to choose Speaker and Deputy Speaker.***
- ***Special address by the Lieutenant Governor –*** at the commencement of the first session after each general election to the Legislative Assembly and at the commencement of the first session of each year.
- ***A member shall be disqualified on holding Office of Profit –*** the question on disqualification shall be referred to the President and his decision shall be final.
- ***The members shall be disqualified on grounds of defection under Tenth Schedule.***
- ***Privileges -*** Members shall have freedom of speech in the Assembly and shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the Assembly or any Committee.
- ***Restriction on discussion in the Legislative Assembly -*** No discussion shall take place in the Legislative Assembly with respect to the conduct of any Judge of the Supreme Court or of a High Court in the discharge of his duties.
- ***Courts not to inquire into proceedings of Legislative Assembly.***
- ***Election Commission to delimit constituencies.***
- ***Matters in which Lieutenant Governor to act in his discretion -*** which falls outside the purview of the powers of Legislative Assembly; matters in which powers or functions are entrusted or delegated to the LG by the President; where LG under any law is required to act in his discretion; where LG is to exercise any judicial or quasi-judicial functions. Decisions of LG in such instances shall be final.
- ***Advice given by ministers to LG shall not be inquired into in any court.***
- ***Oath of Office & Secrecy -*** Before a Minister enters upon his office, the Lieutenant Governor shall administer to him the oaths of office and of secrecy
- A Minister who, for any period of six consecutive months, is not a member of the Legislative Assembly shall, at the expiration of that period, cease to be a Minister.
- ***Conduct of Business -*** The President shall make rules for the allocation of business and also for convenient transaction of business with the Ministers.
- ***President shall also make rules for procedure to be adopted in the case of a difference of opinion*** between the Lieutenant Governor and the Council of Ministers or a Minister.
- ***All executive action of the Lieutenant Governor*** whether taken on the advice of his Ministers or otherwise shall be expressed to be taken in the name of the Lieutenant Governor.
- ***Duties of the Chief Minister -*** to communicate to the LG all decisions of the Council of Ministers relating to

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the administration of the affairs of the Capital and proposals for legislation, to furnish such information relating to the administration of the affairs of the Capital and proposals for legislation as LG may call for & if the Lieutenant Governor so requires, to submit for the consideration of the Council of Ministers any matter on which a decision has been taken by a Minister but which has not been considered by the Council.

- ***Relation of LG & his Ministers to President -*** the Lieutenant Governor and his Council of Ministers shall be under the general control of, and comply with such particular directions, if any, as may from time to time be given by, the President.
- ***Period of order made under article 239AB and approval thereof by Parliament -*** Every order made by the President under article 239AB shall expire at the end of one year from the date of issue of the order and the provisions of clauses (2) and (3) of article 356 shall apply to such order as they apply to a Proclamation issued under clause (1) of article 356.
- ***The President may extend the duration of the order made under Article 239AB for a further period not exceeding two years*** from the date of expiry of the earlier order.
- **Article 356(2) -** Any such Proclamation may be revoked or varied by a subsequent Proclamation.
- **Article 356(3) -** Every Proclamation under this article shall be laid before each House of Parliament and shall, except where it is a Proclamation revoking a previous Proclamation, cease to operate at the expiration of two months unless before the expiration of that period it has been approved by resolutions of both Houses of Parliament.
- ***GNCTD Act 1991 repealed the Delhi Administration Act, 1966.***

NCT OF DELHI (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2021

#AMENDMENT #UT #DELHI

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind has given assent to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, which enhances the powers of the Lieutenant Governor and limits the elected government's power in Delhi.

SALIENT FEATURES

- ***It amends the powers and responsibilities of the Legislative Assembly and the Lieutenant Governor*** provided under the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCT) Act, 1991.
- The amendment provides that the term "government" referred to in any law made by the Legislative Assembly will imply **Lieutenant Governor (LG).**
- 1991 Act allows the Legislative Assembly to make Rules to regulate the procedure and conduct of business in the Assembly. The Amendment provides that such Rules must be consistent with the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha.
- The Amendment prohibits the Legislative Assembly from making any rule to enable itself or its Committees to: (i) consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the NCT of Delhi and (ii) conduct any inquiry in relation to administrative decisions. The Amendment also ensures that all such rules made before its enactment will be void.
- The Amendment requires the LG to reserve those Bills for the President which incidentally cover any of the matters outside the purview of the powers of the Legislative Assembly.
- The 1991 Act specifies that all executive action by the government, whether taken on the advice of the Ministers or otherwise, must be taken in the name of the LG. The Amendment adds that on certain matters, as specified by the LG, his opinion must be obtained

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before taking any executive action on the decisions of the Minister/ Council of Ministers.

PLACES OF WORSHIP ACT 1991

#LEGISLATION #JUDGMENTS #DOCTRINE #BASIC STRUCTURE #CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

The Supreme Court has asked the central government to respond to a petition challenging a special law enacted in1991, which freezes the status of places of worship as it was on August 15, 1947. The petitioners have argued that the legislation is against the basic structure doctrine as it takes away the power of judicial review under Article 32 and 226 and accordingly have accused it to be an act of colourable legislation and also challenged its pith and substance.

ABOUT THE PLACES OF WORSHIP (SPECIAL PROVISIONS) ACT, 1991

- The law seeks to *maintain the "religious character"* of places of worship as it was in 1947 — *except in the case of Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute*, which was then pending in Court.
- The law was brought in at the peak of the Ram Mandir movement, exactly a year before the demolition of the Babri Masjid to curb communal tension in those times.

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

- **Prohibits Conversion** - The Act prohibits conversion of any place of worship and provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947.
- **Froze religious character of place of worship as on 15th August, 1947** and prohibited conversion of religious denomination or places of worship.
- **Pending Cases ceases to exist (abate) -** All suits, appeals or other proceedings regarding conversion of places of worship that were pending on 15th August, 1947 shall stand abated and no fresh proceedings could be filed.
- ***Abatement of suit means that the suit ceases to exist and no proceeding can be conducted.***
- **Cases after 15th August 1947 -** However, legal proceedings can be initiated with respect to the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship after the commencement of the Act if the change of status took place after the cut-off date of August 15, 1947.

THE 1991 LEGISLATION DOES NOT APPLY TO (EXCEPTIONS)

- **Ancient or Historical Monument -** Any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument or an archaeological site or remains covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- **Court's Decisions -** Any Court proceedings finally decided, settled or disposed of by a Court, Tribunal or other authority before the commencement of this Act. (1991)
- **Amicable Settlement of Dispute -** Any dispute with respect to any such matter settled by the parties amongst themselves before such commencement.
- **Acceptance without Protest -** Conversion of any such place effected before such commencement by acquiescence (acceptance without protest).
- **Any conversion petition barred by limitation** - sufficient time has passed and no action was taken.
- **Arguments made by the Petitioners related** to **the Places of Worship Act, 1991**
- **The Pith and Substance of the Act of 1991 is ultra vires** as it bars judicial review of Supreme Court.
- **Bars Constitutional Remedy –** The legislation effectively negates one fundamental right to constitutional remedy under Article 32 of the Indian Constitution i.e. right to constitutional remedy.
- **Bars Judicial Review which is part of Basic Structure -** Under Article 32 of the Constitution of India, the Supreme Court has the power to issue writs appropriate for enforcement of all the Fundamental rights conferred by Part III of the Constitution. The power of judicial review conferred on Supreme Court and High Court is part of Basic Structure of the

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Constitution. Hence, no Act of Parliament can exclude or curtail the powers of the Constitutional Courts with regard to the enforcement of fundamental rights".

- **Legislation an Act of Colourable Legislation -** The petitioners have also claimed that the legislation can be appropriately called an Act of Colourable Legislation. It is based on the maxim that "what cannot be done directly, cannot also be done indirectly".
- ***Accordingly, the petitioners have challenged Section 3 and 4 of Places of Worship Act, 1991 being unconstitutional, void ab initio and against the Basic Structure of the Constitution of India.***

DOCTRINE OF PITH AND SUBSTANCE

- **Pith and Substance denotes the true nature or essence of any legislation -** The doctrine places emphasis on the fact that it is the real subject matter which is to be challenged and not its incidental effects on another field. Pith denotes the 'essence of something' or the 'true nature', while substance states 'the most significant or essential part of something'. Hence, it can be stated that the very doctrine of pith and substance relates to finding out the true nature of a statute.
- It was in the case of **State of Bombay v. F. N Balsara** that the doctrine was first applied in the case and the same was upheld.
- **Seventh Schedule -** Constitution of India under Article 246 distributes law making power through Seventh Schedule under UNION LIST, STATE LIST & CONCURRENT LIST. Now, at times the power under various entries of SEVENTH SCHEDULE overlaps and the Judiciary applies the principle of PITH AND SUBSTANCE to demarcate and find out the competence or incompetence of state legislatures to frame law on any subject matter.

DOCTRINE OF COLOURABLE LEGISLATION

- The doctrine is used in the cases to determine questions of competency to enact a law when a legislature oversteps its conferred power and legislate upon something indirectly which it can't do in a direct manner.
- On the face of the legislation, the subject matter of the law seems to fall within the power of the legislature but the related effect or purpose of the matter actually falls beyond the domain and authority of the legislature.
- So in a manner, the doctrine limits the overstretching or misuse of the granted constitutional power in a covert manner.
- In **K.C. Gajapati Narayan Deo v State of Orissa**, Supreme Court held that transgressions may be patent, manifest or direct, but it may also be disguised, covert or indirect, or and it is to this latter class of cases that the expression colourable legislation has been applied in judicial pronouncements.

BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

- **Basic Structure doctrine** was expounded in the landmark judgment of ***Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala.***
- As per the judgment, ***Basic Structure of the Constitution cannot be altered or amended by the Parliament or the Executive.***
- Judiciary has the power of judicial review to ascertain if any law made by the executive violates the Basic Structure of the Constitution.
- **Basic Structure is not an exclusive list, and things can be added by the Judiciary in future in the list of Basic Structure.**
- ***Some of the features which has been said to be the Basic Structure over a certain period are:***
  - Supremacy of the Constitution
  - Republican and democratic form of government
  - Secular character of the Constitution
  - Separation of powers between the legislature, executive and the judiciary
  - Federal character of the Constitution
  - The mandate to build a welfare state contained in the Directive Principles of State Policy
  - Sovereignty and unity and integrity of the nation
  - Essential features of the individual freedoms secured to the citizens
  - Judicial Review – (Added by Minerva Mills Judgment)
  - Secularism as part of basic structure was again emphasised in S.R. Bommai v Union of India.

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EVOLUTION OF BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

- **Constitution First Amendment** – Added Article 31A, 31B and Ninth Schedule to the Constitution (under Article 31B) and any legislation provided under Ninth Schedule was beyond Judicial Review to promote agrarian reforms and ensure constitutional validity of Zamindari abolition laws.
- **Shankari Prasad case - 1951** –
  - SC upheld the validity of Constitution First Amendment.
  - Court separated the concept of ordinary law making powers under Article 13 from constituent powers of Parliament to amend the Constitution under Article 368.
  - This made amendments under Article 368 beyond Judicial Review.
  - Article 368 empowered Parliament to amend constitution without any exception including Fundamental Rights (PART III).
- **Sajjan Singh Case (1965)**
  - Constitution 17th Amendment was challenged as it placed certain statutes under 9th Schedule.
  - This impacted judicial review of High Courts as most state laws were placed under 9th Schedule.
  - SC held that Pith & Substance of 17th Amendment was to encourage agrarian reforms and any impact on Article 226 was indirect, insignificant and only incidental.
  - On amending powers of Parliament, SC reiterated relation between Article 13 and 368.
- **Golaknath case 1967 –**
  - Overruled Shankari Prasad and Sajjan Singh judgments.
  - Constitutional Amendment is law under Article 13 and hence subject to judicial review.
  - The term "law" also includes Constitutional Law as Article 13 gives an exclusive definition of law.
  - Fundamental Rights are given a 'transcendental and immutable' position and hence, the Parliament cannot amend Fundamental Rights.
  - Article 368 did not confer amending power to Parliament but had merely laid down the PROCEDURE for Amendment. Substantive power to amend the constitution is not found under Article 368.
  - The term "Amend" envisaged only minor modifications in the existing provisions but not any major altercations.
- **Constitution 24th Amendment, 1971 -** It declared that the Parliament has the power to amend provisions of the Constitution including Fundamental Rights under Article 368. It also amended Article 13 of the Constitution to make it inapplicable to any amendment of the Constitution under article 368.
- **Constitution 25th Amendment, 1971 –**
  - It omitted the word "compensation" under Article 31 and replaced it with the term "amount".
  - This was done to remove any contention that the government was bound to give compensation for any property acquired by it.
  - It delinked Article 19(1)(f) from Article 31(2).
  - It added Article 31C which provided that

(i) if any law is passed to give effect to the Directive Principles contained in Art icle 39(b) and 39(c) and contains a declaration to that effect, such law shall not be invalid merely because it takes away or abridges Fundamental Rights under Article 14, 19 or 31

(ii) Such law shall not be questioned in Court of Law.

(iii) State laws could also claim immunity from judicial review after receiving assent from the President.

- This amendment changed the relation between PART III & PART IV of the Constitution.
- So, after introduction of Article 31C, DPSP under Article 39(b) and Article 39(c) were given precedence over Fundamental Rights under Article 14, 19 and 31.

KESAVANANDA BHARATI V STATE OF KERALA

- Constitution 24th and 25th Amendment were challenged under Article 32. 13 Judge Bench sat to decide the case because Golaknath Case was decided by 11 Judges Bench.
- The judgment was delivered on 24th April, 1973.

KESAVANANDA ON AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

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- The Court in Kesavananda held that power to amend the Constitution is to be found in Article 368 itself.
- The Court also held that laws made by the Parliament can be categorised under two heads –

1. The Constituent power of Parliament to amend the constitution under Article 368.
2. Ordinary law making power under Article 13.

- The Court recognised that there is a distinction between Ordinary law making power of Parliament under Article 13 and Constituent Power of the Parliament under Article 368.
- Constitution makers did not use the expression "Law" under Article 13 (2) as including Constitutional Law. This would mean that ***Fundamental Rights under Part III or any other part of the Constitution can be amended through Article 368.***
- **However, the Parliament does not enjoy unlimited powers to amend the constitution.**
- So, for the first time, Supreme Court in Kesavananda Bharati case held that ***amending power of Parliament cannot be exercised by the Parliament in such a manner so as to destroy the Basic or Fundamental Features of the Constitution.***
- By saying that Parliament cannot override basic structure, it effectively means that SC has the power of Judicial Review to find out -

➔ whether any legislation or executive order has violated the basic structure of the Constitution.

➔ Whether or not any constitutional amendment destroys the basic features of the Constitution.

- If an amendment goes beyond the provisions of the Constitutions, the Court has the power of judicial review to declare such provisions as constitutionality invalid.

KESAVANANDA BHARATI ON CONSTITUTION 25TH AMENDMENT

- **First part of Article 31C** protected a law giving effect to the policy of the state towards securing principles of Article 39(b) and Article 39(c) from being challenged on grounds of violation of Article 14, 19 and 31.
- **Second part of Article 31C** did not allow judicial review by Courts even if the law was not concerning to Article 39(b) and Article 39(c).
- **SC held the first part of Article 31C as valid** as it identified a limited class of legislation and exempted it from operations of Article 14, 19 and 31.
- **Whereas second part of Article 31C was declared Invalid** as it barred judicial review by Courts. The Court held that they have the power to inquire whether the law have achieved the objectives mandated under Article 39(b) and Article 39(c).
- The Court also held that the "amount" paid cannot be illusory or arbitrary and must have reasonable relationship with the value of property in question.

CONSTITUTION 42ND AMENDMENT, 1976

- ***It added Article 368(4) and 368(5).***
- **Article 368(4) -** No amendment of this Constitution including the provisions of Part III made under this article whether before or after the commencement of Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976 shall be called in question in any court on any ground.
- **Article 368(5) -** There shall be no limitation whatever on the constituent power of Parliament to amend by way of addition, variation or repeal the provisions of this Constitution under this article.

MINERVA MILL JUDGMENT, 1980

- **Reiterated the Basic Structure Doctrine** and also added **Judicial Review** as part of basic structure of the constitution.
- ***Supreme Court declared Article 368 (4) and Article 368 (5) as invalid. It also declared extension made to Article 31C by Constitution 42nd Amendment as being unconstitutional on the ground of violation of the basic structure.***
- Court recognised that Parliament has the right to make alterations in the Constitution so long as they are within its basic framework of the Constitution.
- Parliament cannot, under Article 368, expand its amending power so as to acquire for itself the right to repeal or abrogate the Constitution or to destroy its basic and essential features. The donee of a limited power cannot by the exercise of that power convert the limited power into an unlimited one.
- Court held that limited amending power is one of the basic features of the Constitution and, therefore, the limitations on that power cannot be destroyed. In other words, Parliament cannot, under article 368,

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expand its amending power so as to acquire for itself the right to repeal or abrogate the Constitution or to destroy its basic features.

I.R. COELHO JUDGMENT, 2007

- Ninth Schedule was added to the Indian Constitution by the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951.
- ***The First Amendment Act curtailed Fundamental Right to property guaranteed under Article 31 (repealed by Constitution 44th Amendment)*** so that important measures with respect to agrarian reforms could be passed by the State Legislatures by immunizing them against review in Courts.
- The First amendment added two new Articles namely **Article 31A and Article 31B** and the **Ninth Schedule** so as to make laws acquiring Zamindari unchallenged in court of law.
- Thus, any law added to the 9th SCHEDULE could not be challengeable in a Court of law even though they violated Fundamental Rights.
- However, in a landmark judgment by 9 Judge Constitution Bench in 2007 held that - ***all amendments made to the Constitution on or after 24th April, 1973 by which 9th SCHEDULE was amended by various laws can be judicially reviewed if they have violated the basic structure of the constitution as mentioned in Article 14, 19, 20 and 21*** of the Indian Constitution.
- So, as of now the position is that no matter whatever law is placed under 9th Schedule, they can be judicially reviewed if they violate basic structure of the Indian Constitution pertaining to Article 14, 19, 20 or 21.

PUBLIC ENTERPRISES SELECTION BOARD (PESB)

#ORGANISATION #GOVERNANCE

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IN NEWS

Mallika Srinivasan, CMD, TAFE Ltd., has been appointed as the chairperson of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB). This is the first time a person from the private sector has been made head of the PESB which is responsible for the appointment of personnel in the posts of chairman, CMD and functional directors in public sector enterprises.

ABOUT PESB

- The Public Enterprises Selection Board [P.E.S.B] is a high powered body constituted by Government of India Resolution.
- The P.E.S.B has been set up with the objective of evolving a sound managerial policy for the Central Public Sector Enterprises and, in particular, to advise Government on appointments to their top management posts.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

- To be responsible for the selection and placement of personnel in the posts of Chairman, Managing Director or Chairman-cum-Managing Director (Level-I), and Functional Director (Level-II) in PSEs as well as in posts at any other level as may be specified by the Government;
- To advise the Government on matters relating to appointments, confirmation or extension of tenure and termination of services of the personnel of the above mentioned levels;
- To advise the Government on the desired structure at the Board level, and, for senior management personnel, for each PSE or group of PSEs;
- To advise the Government on a suitable performance appraisal system for both the PSEs and the managerial personnel in such enterprises;
- To build a data bank containing data relating to the performance of PSEs and its officers;
- To advise the Government on formulation and enforcement of a code of conduct and ethics for managerial personnel in PSEs;
- To advise the Government on evolving suitable training and development programs for management personnel in PSEs.

CONSTITUTION OF THE BOARD

- The P.E.S.B shall consist of a part-time or full-time Chairperson and three full-time Members. The Chairperson and Members shall be persons who have had a long and distinguished career in management

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of public or private corporations or public administration and have a proven record of achievements, preferably, in the field of personnel, finance, production or marketing. The three full-time Members of P.E.S.B shall be:

- A distinguished serving or former Chief Executive of a Public Sector or Private Sector or Joint Sector Enterprise.
- A distinguished person with experience in selection of Top Management personnel.
- A distinguished serving or former Civil servant with experience in management of PSEs or in areas of finance, industry or economic affairs.

CVC MODIFIES GUIDELINES FOR TRANSFERS

#CVC #ORGANISATION #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has modified the guidelines for transfer and posting of officials in the vigilance units of government organisations, restricting their tenure to three years at one place. The tenure may be extended to three more years, but at a different place of posting. It would mean that the personnel can have two continuous postings in vigilance units, at two different places of posting, each running into a maximum of three years.

REASONS FOR THE ORDER

- The CVC, in its order, said undue long stay of an official in a vigilance department had the potential of developing vested interests, apart from giving rise to unnecessary complaints or allegations.
- The Commission has modified its earlier guidelines to ensure transparency, objectivity and uniformity in its approach.
- Personnel who have worked for over three years at one place should be transferred in phases, with priority given to those who have served for the maximum period.
- CVC has ordered to transfer such officials who have completed more than 5 years of service in vigilance units in one place on a priority basis.
- So, in the first phase, at least 10% of such personnel should be shifted in a sequential order without any exception.
- In case someone has served at one place for over three years, his/her tenure at the next place would be curtailed to ensure that the combined tenure was limited to six years.

ABOUT CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION

- The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) was set up by the Government in February, 1964 on the recommendations of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, headed by Shri K. Santhanam, to advise and guide Central Government agencies in the field of vigilance.
- Consequently, through **The Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003**, *CVC became statutory body.*

FUNCTIONS & POWERS OF CVC

- Conduct inquiries into offences alleged to have made under Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 by certain categories of public servants of Central Government, corporations established by or under any Central Act, Government companies, societies and local authorities owned or controlled by the Central Government.
- Advise various authorities in Central Government organizations in planning, executing, reviewing and reforming their vigilance work.
- Receive written complaints for disclosure on any allegation of corruption or misuse of office and recommend appropriate action.
- Also exercise superintendence over functioning of Delhi Police Establishment regarding investigation of offences under **The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.**
- Review the progress of investigations conducted by the Delhi Special Police Establishment into offences alleged to have been committed under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

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- Review the progress of applications pending with the competent authorities for sanction of prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
- ***(Section 20 of Lokpal & Lokayukta Act)*** **-** Conduct inquiries into complaints referred by Lokpal as per the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013. Central Vigilance Commission in respect of complaints referred to it after making preliminary enquiry:
  - In respect of public servants belonging to **Group A and Group B** - shall submit its report to the **Lokpal.**
  - In case of public servants belonging to **Group C and Group D** - the Commission shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of the **Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.**

Composition: The Commission shall consist of-

- Central Vigilance Commissioner who shall be the Chairperson
- Not more than 2 Vigilance Commissioners as Members

Appointment: Central Vigilance Commissioner and other Vigilance Commissioners shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal. The appointment shall be made after obtaining the recommendation of a Committee consisting of-

- Prime Minister – Chairperson
- Minister of Home Affairs – Member
- Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha – Member

- Central Vigilance Commissioner shall be ineligible for appointment in the Commission when he/she ceases to hold office.
- Vigilance Commissioner shall be eligible for appointment as Central Vigilance Commissioner.
- On ceasing to hold office, Central Vigilance Commissioner and every other Vigilance Commissioner shall be ineligible for further employment to any office of profit under Government of India or government of any State.

Tenure: Central Vigilance Commissioner and every Vigilance Commissioner shall hold office for

- a term of **4 years** from the date of his/her appointment or
- till he/she attains the age of **65 years** (whichever is earlier)

Resignation: Central Vigilance Commissioner or a Vigilance Commissioner may by writing under his hand addressed to the President, resign their office.

Removal: The Central Vigilance Commissioner or any Vigilance Commissioner shall be removed from his office.

- **only by order of the President** on the ground of **proved misbehaviour or incapacity.**
- after the Supreme Court, on a reference made to it by the President, has, on inquiry, reported that the Central Vigilance Commissioner or any Vigilance Commissioner should be removed on such grounds.

The salary and allowances payable to and the other conditions of service of

(a) Central Vigilance Commissioner shall be the same as those of the **Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission.**

(b) Vigilance Commissioner shall be the same as those of a **Member of the Union Public Service Commission**.

Expenses of Commission to be charged on CFI: The expenses of the Commission, including any salaries, allowances and pensions payable to or in respect of the Central Vigilance Commissioner, the Vigilance Commissioners, Secretary and the staff of the Commission, shall be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India.

ANNUAL REPORT

- It shall be the duty of the Commission to present annually to the President a report as to the work done by the Commission within six months of the close of the year under report.
- The Report presented to the President by CVC shall contain a separate part on the functioning of the Delhi Special Police Establishment.
- On receipt of such report, the President shall cause the same to be laid before each House of Parliament.

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OVERSEAS CITIZENS OF INDIA

#OCI #NRI #CITIZENSHIP

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IN NEWS

Ministry of Home Affairs has issued series of guidelines for Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholders in the backdrop of Judgment of Karnataka High Court. Section 7A, 7B, 7C & 7D of the Citizenship Act, 1955 provides for the Overseas Citizens of India.

NOTIFICATION OF MHA FOR OCI CARD HOLDERS

- ***Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholders can lay claim to "only NRI (Non Resident Indian) quota seats" in educational institutions based on All-India entrance tests*** such as National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), Joint Entrance Examination (Mains), Joint Entrance Examination (Advanced) or other such all-India professional tests.
- **Special Permission or Special Permit Needed from Competent Authority such as Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or the Indian Mission** - to undertake research, Missionary or Tabligh or Mountaineering or Journalistic activities, undertake internship in any foreign diplomatic missions or foreign Government organisations in India or employment in any foreign diplomatic missions in India and visit any place which falls within the Protected or Restricted or prohibited areas as notified by the Central Government or competent authority .

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

- Citizenship Act, 1955 provides for registration of people as OCI.
- If the applicant had ever been a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh, **he/she will not be eligible to be registered as OCI.** Rest of the citizens can apply for OCI if they fulfill the eligibility criteria as provided by the government.
- OCIs have been granted all rights in the economic, financial and education fields in parity with NRIs - except, the right to acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.
- OCI does not enjoy all the rights provided under Article 15 and 16 of the Constitution of India.
- OCIs are not entitled to hold the office of President and Vice-President in India.
- OCI is not to be misconstrued as 'dual citizenship' as OCI does not confer political rights.

ABOUT OVERSEAS CITIZENS OF INDIA (OCI)

- In response to persistent demands for "dual citizenship" particularly from the Diaspora in North America and other developed countries and keeping in view the Government's deep commitment towards fulfilling the aspirations and expectations of Overseas Indians, the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme was introduced by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955 in August 2005.
- The Scheme was launched during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention 2006 at Hyderabad.
- The Scheme provides for registration as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) of all Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who were citizens of India on 26th January, 1950 or thereafter or were eligible to become citizens of India on 26th January, 1950 except who is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify.
- OCI is not to be misconstrued as 'dual citizenship'. OCI does not confer political rights. The registered Overseas Citizens of India shall not be entitled to the rights conferred on a citizen of India under article 16 of the Constitution with regard to equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

WHICH RIGHTS ARE NOT ENJOYED BY OCI?

- OCIs do not enjoy employment rights in Government of India services nor can they hold any constitutional office in the Government of India.
- They need prior permission for undertaking mountaineering, missionary activities, research work and to visit restricted areas in India.
- They cannot run for office of President or Vice-President of India as per Section 7B of CITIZENSHIP ACT, 1955.
- They cannot be appointed as Judge of High Court or Supreme Court.
- Cannot be registered as voter under Representation of People Act, 1951

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- Cannot become member of Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council.

NEW RULE FOR POLLING AGENTS BY EC

#POLLING AGENT #ELECTION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

As per the new regulations, a political party can now nominate a polling agent for any booth within the assembly segment he/she is a voter from. Earlier, the polling agent had to be a voter of the booth or an adjoining booth that he/she is working at.

POLLING AGENT

- A polling agent is a person appointed as a representative of a political party as it is not possible for a candidate to be physically present at every polling booth on the day of the elections.
- Therefore, the Election Commission allows a candidate to appoint a polling agent who keeps an eye on the voting process.
- **Section 46** of Representation of People Act provides for appointment of polling agents by the political party.
- **Section 13** of Conduct of Election Rules also provides for appointment of Polling Agent and two Relief Agents.

  Section 46 – RPA, 1951: *A contesting candidate or his election agent may appoint such number of agents and relief agents as may be prescribed to act as polling agents of such candidate at each polling station provided under section 25 or at the place fixed under sub-section (1) of section 29 for the poll.*

ROLE OF POLLING AGENT

- As per the Election Commission's rules, a polling agent should be familiar with the rules and procedures to conduct elections using EVMs and VVPATs, and with the working of these machines.
- Towards this end, a polling agent attends the demonstrations arranged by the Returning Officer, where the functioning and operation of these machines are explained.

CHANGES MADE BY THE NEW RULE

- As per the earlier practice, polling agents had to be voters of the same polling stations or at least the neighbouring polling stations of the booth where she has been posted at.
- The Election Commission of India, revising the rule, has allowed a party to nominate a polling agent for any booth within the assembly segment where the person is an electorate of.
- So, any voter from within an Assembly constituency can be a polling agent of any booth within that constituency.

MAIN DUTIES OF POLLING AGENTS

- To take part in the mock poll and satisfy themselves that EVM & VVPAT are in proper working order.
- To help the presiding officer to detect and prevent impersonation of voters.
- Help the officials in securing and sealing EVMs and VVPATs before and after conduct of polls.
- To see that all election records relating to the poll are secured and sealed properly after the close of polls as required by law.
- To see that serial numbers of Control Units, Ballot Units and VVPATs being used in the polling stations are in conformity with the details provided by the Returning Officer.

ROLE OF IMPORTANT OFFICERS IN CONDUCTING ELECTIONS

#OFFICERS #ELECTION #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS SECONDARY SOURCE Election Commission of India

SECONDARY SOURCE RPA 1951

IN NEWS

Conduct of election is done successfully by the Election Commission with the help of officers whose role and

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responsibilities are prescribed under election laws of India. Let us go through important role and functions performed by Chief Electoral Officer, District Election Officer, Returning Officers, Presiding Officers and Observers in India under the overall guidance of Election Commissioners and Chief Election Commissioner to ensure superintendence, direction and control of elections as per Article 324 of the Indian Constitution.

PRESIDING OFFICER	**RPA 1951 (Section 26)**	DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER APPOINTS PRESIDING OFFICER FOR 1 OR MORE POLLING STATIONS
DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER (DEO)	**RPA 1950 (Section 13AA)**	APPOINTED BY ELECTION COMMISSION (EC) IN CONSULATTION WITH STATE GOVT.
	RPA (Section 20A)	PROVIDES FOR GENERAL DUTIES OF DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER – TO BE DONE AS MANDATED BY EC OR CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER (CEO)
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER (CEO)	**RPA 1950 (Section 13A)**	EC APPOINTS 1 CEO FOR EACH STATE
	RPA 1951 (Section 20)	PROVIDES FOR GENERAL DUTIES OF CEO
RETURNING OFFICERS	**RPA 1951 (Section 21)**	APPOINTED FOR EVERY CONSTITUENCY BY EC IN CONSULTATION WITH STATE GOVT.
OBSERVERS	**RPA 1951 (Section 20B)**	ELECTION COMMISSION STARTED DEPUTING SOME SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM THE SAME STATE TO OBSERVE ELECTION PROCESS IN A CONSTITUENCY OR A GROUP OF CONSTITUENCIES.

CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER AND ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

They are appointed by the President under Article 324 to oversee the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections in India. They collectively supervise nomination of candidates, register political parties (section 29A – RPA, 1951), announce elections to be conducted, monitors election campaigns, monitors organisation of polling booth including transfer of EVMs and VVPATs, oversee violation of Model Code of Conduct, checks counting of votes and declare election results.

SECTION 26 (RPA, 1951) -APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICERS FOR POLLING STATIONS

- The District Election Officer (DEO) shall appoint a presiding officer for each polling station and such polling officer or officers as he thinks necessary, but he shall not appoint any person who has been employed by or on behalf of, or has been otherwise working for, a candidate during the election.
- The District Election Officer can appoint the same person to be the Presiding Officer for more than one polling station in the same premises.

SECTION 13AA (RPA, 1950) - DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICERS - DEO

- For each district in a State, the Election Commission shall, in consultation with the Government of the State, designate or nominate a district election officer who shall be an officer of Government.
- Election Commission may designate or nominate more than one such officer for a district if the Election Commission is satisfied that the functions of the office cannot be performed satisfactorily by one officer.

SECTION 20A (RPA, 1951) GENERAL DUTIES OF DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER

- Subject to the superintendence, direction and control of the Chief Electoral Officer, DEO shall coordinate and supervise all work in the district or in the area within his jurisdiction in connection with the conduct of all elections to Parliament and the Legislature of the State.
- The DEO shall coordinate and supervise all work in the district or in the area within his jurisdiction in connection with the preparation and revision of the electoral rolls for all parliamentary, assembly and council constituencies within the district.
- Every contesting candidate at an election shall lodge with the district election officer an account of his election expenses which shall be a true copy of the account kept by him or by his election agent.

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- The district election officer shall also perform such other functions as may be entrusted to him/her by the Election Commission and the chief electoral officer.

SECTION 13A (RPA, 1950) CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICERS - CEO

- There shall be for each State a Chief Electoral Officer who shall be such officer of Government as the Election Commission may, in consultation with that Government, designate or nominate in this behalf.
- Subject to the superintendence, direction and control of the Election Commission, the CEO shall supervise the preparation, revision and correction of all electoral rolls in the State under this Act.
- Each state needs a Chief Electoral Officer so as to maintain maximum transparency in elections.

SECTION 20 (RPA, 1951) - GENERAL DUTIES OF CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICERS

- **Ensure Free & Fair Elections in the state** thereby increasing voting percentage.
- **Enhance Communication** between the voters of a state and the different departments of elections within the state.
- **Ensuring elections are devoid of any political control in the state** – Accordingly, CEO supervises the procedure and machinery for election in a state.
- **The CEO reviews the law and order situation** in the state and makes a detailed assessment to ensure that timely measures are taken.
- **CEO maintains inter-state coordination** and orders for sealing of borders if needed.
- **Identify Critical Polling Stations** and ramp up security.
- **CEO consults police officials and field officers** for vulnerability mapping prior to the elections.
- **CEO assesses the availability and requirement of state police force and security forces** and sends the requirement to the Election Commission.
- **Ensuring security deployment plan to be in compliance with the ECI's directives.**
- **CEO also ensures that Helpline and the Complaint Cell are functioning** at different levels in the state.
- **Section 21 & 24 (RPA, 1951) - Returning officers**
- The Returning Officer has a pivotal role in election management. He/she is so called because he/she conducts the election in a constituency and returns elected candidate. A Returning Officer is responsible for overseeing the election in one constituency or sometimes in two, as directed by the Election Commission of India.
- Provision for Returning Officer has been provided under section 21 and 24 of the Representation of People (RP) Act, 1951.
- Under Section 22 of the RP Act, 1951, the Election Commission of India appoints the Assistant Returning Officer for a constituency, in consultation with the State Governments and the Union Territories.
- The Election Commission of India nominates or designates an Officer of the Government or a local authority as the Returning Officer for each of the assembly and parliamentary constituencies in consultation with the State Government/Union Territory Administration.
- Election Commission can designate same person to be the returning officer for more than one constituency.
- In addition, the Election Commission of India also appoints one or more Assistant Returning Officers for each of the assembly and parliamentary constituencies to assist the Returning Officer in the performance of his functions in connection with the conduct of elections.
- The Returning Officer of a parliamentary or assembly constituency is responsible for the conduct of elections in the parliamentary or assembly constituency concerned as per section 21 of the Representation of the People Act 1951.
- Under section 26 of the Representation of the People Act 1951, the District Election Officer appoints the Presiding Officers and the Polling Officers. In the case of Union Territories, such appointments are made by the Returning Officers.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF RETURNING OFFICER

- Overseeing the election in his/her constituency.
- Accepting and scrutinizing nomination forms.
- Rejecting nomination form of candidate after raising important concern or lacunae in filling up of such forms.

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- Publishing the affidavits of the candidate.
- Allotting approved election symbols to contesting candidates sponsored by National or State Party.
- As per Paragraph 12 of The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, Returning Officer shall allot a free symbol chosen by an "Independent Candidate" for election purpose. As per the above Order, the Returning Officer shall also allot free symbol to the candidate set up by the unrecognized political party.
- Monitoring election expenses and accounts of the candidates.
- Preparing list of contesting candidates.
- Preparing EVMs and VVPATS, training poll personnel, designating counting centres.
- Counting of the votes.
- Declaration and Publication of results in Election.

LOTTERY IN ELECTIONS – PROCEDURE IN CASE OF EQUALITY OF VOTES

Lottery in Elections takes place when two candidates in a constituency get the same number of votes. ***Section 102 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951*** mentions about the procedure to be followed when during the trial of an election petition, it appears that there is an equality of votes between any candidates at the election petition. Section 102 of RPA, 1951 provides for two scenarios in such a case:

- In such a case of equality of votes, the Returning Officer shall decide the manner which will ascertain who will get majority of votes. In past incidents, it has been decided through toss of a coin. During the panchayat election in Assam, candidates in six places were declared winners after tossing a coin. In all these six seats the results were a tie.
- Section 102 says that if the issue is not decided by the decision taken by Returning Officer, then the High Court shall decide the issue by lot. The candidate who wins the lottery wins the election.

OBSERVERS – SECTION 20B – REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE ACT, 1951

- Election Commission started deputing some senior officials from the same State to observe election process in a constituency or a group of constituencies.
- But the concept of deputing senior officers as the Election Commission's Observers took a firm root only from the beginning of the year 1990s.
- Over a period of nearly last two decades, the deputation of Election Observers from one State to another State has become an integral part of the election management in the country.
- Currently, mostly the officers who belong to All India Services and Central Services like IRS, CBDT and CBEC, IDES are being deputed as the election observers.

STATUTORY POWERS FOR OBSERVERS

- Observers of the Election Commission of India are appointed under the powers conferred on it by Section 20B of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and the plenary powers available to the Commission under the Constitution of India.
- They are the appointees of the Commission working under the superintendence, control and discipline of the Commission for the period from their appointment until the process of election is completed.
- The Representation of the People Act, 1951 was amended in August, 1996 to add a new Section 20B. This provides ***statutory powers to the Observers to watch the conduct of elections and especially in respect of counting of votes.***

OVERVIEW OF ROLE OF OBSERVERS IN INDIAN ELECTIONS

- **Assist Election Commission -** By dint of their seniority and long experience in the administrative services, they assist the Commission in the conduct of free and fair polls. Being in the field also helps the Observers to oversee the efficient and effective management of the electoral process.
- **Provides Direct Inputs to EC from the Field on compliance of electoral laws -** Observers acts as eyes and ears of the Commission during the period of the and provide direct inputs to the Commission from the field as an interface with the election machinery the candidates, political parties, and electors to ensure that the Acts, rules, procedures, instructions and guidelines related to elections are strictly and impartially complied with by all concerned.
- **Inputs/Observations of Observers are Confidential** - and solely for the use of the Commission and not for

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any other agency including media. They must not, therefore, interact with or respond to the queries of the Press even after the elections are over.

- **Observers discusses with CEO/RO/DEO about their observation on various aspects of election management** during the conduct of elections in order to facilitate midcourse corrections if necessary.
- **Submission of Formal Report to EC -** Observers while submitting their formal report to the Election Commission, shall not share the same with Returning Officer, District Election Officer, Chief Electoral Officer or with any other election functionary of the state.
- Thus, the objective of the deputation of the Observer is not to find fault but to facilitate field administration in ensuring a free and fair poll.

POWERS OF OBSERVERS UNDER SECTION 20B OF RPA, 1951

Section 20B of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951 has vested the Observers with some statutory powers. They are empowered to direct RO to stop counting or not to declare for the reasons specified in Section 20B. Besides the above-mentioned statutory powers, they have got certain very important roles to play which include:

(a) **Observing the processes of scrutiny of nominations and withdrawal of candidature by the RO**, and Report back to the Commission promptly in case of any irregularity.

(b) **Examination of the video clipping of the nomination process along with making proper investigation on the complaints received in connection with the process of nomination.**

(c) **Examine the unresolved grievances by the candidate/ political parties about the allotment of symbols.**

(d) **Effective monitoring of implementation of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and detecting cases of violation of MCC**.

(e) Though checking the account of expenditure of the candidates is entrusted to **Expenditure Observers**, however, General Observer are also required to do so, in case of exigencies, if directed by the Commission.

(f) **Tracking dispatch of postal ballot papers to the service voters**, **ensuring the setting up of the facilitation counters for polling officials, police and security personnel etc.**, in accordance with the recent guidelines of the Commission and sending specific report in this regard to the Commission.

(g) **Checking randomization software, reviewing the process of randomization of the polling personnel,** obtaining report from the DEO regarding first level randomization; and

(h) **Observing and regulating the counting process -** Observer has to sign the round wise counting sheets as proof of his/her satisfaction. She/he can direct the Returning Officer to stop counting of votes or declaration of result, if she/he notices any irregularities and bring the matter to the notice of the Commission for further directions.

Observers also have Power to Stop Counting of Votes

The Observer nominated by the Commission shall have the power to direct the returning officer

- ➔ to stop the counting of votes at any time before the declaration of the result or
- ➔ not to declare the result if in the opinion of the Observer booth capturing has taken place at a large number of polling stations
- ➔ to stop counting if the votes have been tampered with.

Observers are also expected to observe and report on all the steps involved in election management which includes report to be filed on

- Nominations, Scrutiny ,Withdrawal and Symbol allotment
- Issues related to Electoral Rolls
- Implementation of MCC during Campaign Period
- Pre-poll Election Management
- Report on Poll Day Management
- Post Poll Management
- Report on conduct of Counting

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ELECTION MANIFESTOS

#ELECTION MANIFESTO #ELECTION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

Election Manifestos plays an important role as they help in shaping welfare policies in India. The ongoing assembly elections in the states have allowed political parties to include not only important welfare policies pertaining to health, education, nutrition, employment but even issues such as farmers' rights and impact of climate change and ecological disasters have found mention in the election manifestos. So, in this context, let us understand about election manifestos and the latest additions made in the political manifestos which mark a political shift for the future. It is important to note that Election Manifestos are mere promises and political parties cannot be held accountable if they fail to implement the promises made prior to elections.

WHAT IS AN ELECTION MANIFESTO?

- An election manifesto is essentially a list of policies that a political party says it will enact if it is voted into office at a general election.
- The word "manifesto" itself originates from the Latin ***manifestum***, which refers to a list of facts.
- Before an election, each party will produce an official manifesto which will form the basis of its campaign.
- Manifestos serve a very important function, because they are the main way of telling voters why they should give their vote to a particular political party.
- This means they are usually written in a persuasive style which attempts to make voters believe that the policies they contain will be in their best interests.
- Thus, Political Parties prior to elections release their respective manifestos which is generally a roadmap of work to be done if such political parties come to power.
- Enlistments in the manifestos are announced and advertised as part of political campaign prior to voting and mostly contains lists of welfare programmes or policies which the party aims to implement if voted to power.

AN ELECTION MANIFESTO HAS THE FOLLOWING USES

- The election manifestoes issued by various political parties at the time of elections enable the voters to know about the policies and programmes of the parties who are fighting the elections. After studying those manifestoes, the voters can vote for the party (candidate) of their choice.
- The manifesto of the ruling party tells the people about its achievements during the last tenure. Similarly, the manifestos of the Opposition parties point out the failures of the government and mobilise public opinion against them.
- After the elections, the party which is able to get the majority in the Parliament forms the government. The people can exert their pressure on the party in power to fulfil the various promises made to the people in its election manifesto. They are pressed to implement the policy and programmes issued in their election manifestoes.
- **However, election manifestos do not have legal binding effect** and are mere promises by political parties. Hence, political parties cannot be sued in case they do not implement policies as promised in poll manifestos.
- **Poll Manifestos are also included under Model Code of Conduct** and must be released by political parties before starting of the prohibitory period as mandated under Section 126 of Representation of People Act, 1951 (48 hours).

RECENT ADDITIONS MADE IN THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

- **Distribution of freebies** - have become the norm for political manifestos in different states and includes promises of free data, free tabs, free washing machines etc.
- **Some aspects of Social Engineering** is also addressed in the poll manifestos – such as provisions for reservations to SC/ST or OBC for certain communities.
- **Nutrition** -It also provides for addressing the nutritional and health needs of its citizens through various offers of social canteens, providing milk in schools etc.

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- **Aspects of Social Justice** is also taken care of in poll manifestos such as increments in maternity entitlements, extending paid maternity leave, setting up nourishing stations with privacy for women
- **Employment -**It provides for aspects related to jobs and work entitlements through MGNREGA and similar schemes.
- **Environmental Politics -** the appearance of environment as a political concern signals a welcome cultural shift in Tamil politics. This is also possible because of sustained protest made in the past on number of environmental issues.
- **Farmers and Fishermen's Rights** over over big-ticket infrastructure and industrial projects.
- **Importance of including Environment and Farmers' Rights in Election Manifestos**
- **Mention of Environment and Farmers' rights are welcome change** and signals a political shift which is responsive to people's aspirations articulated primarily through the medium of protests.
- **Non-violent protests against setting up of Kudankulam nuclear plants** in the coastal town of Idinthakarai forced a nationwide debate on nuclear energy and the right of people to participate in environmental decision-making in the face of obstinate, powerful and irate adversaries.
- **Poll Manifesto on Environment & Farmers' Rights reflection of Past Interventions** – In the past, number of protest were made especially in Tamil Nadu such as:
  - protest against nuclear projects
  - protest against coal-bed methane extraction in the delta,
  - protest against Unilever's mercury pollution in Kodaikanal,
  - protest by fishers to save Ennore Creek from industrial encroachments,
  - protest against hydrocarbon extraction in Neduvasal, Pudukottai, which subsequently spread like wildfire through other delta districts;
  - against Sterlite, crony capitalism and industrial pollution;
  - protest by farmers against the Salem-Chennai expressway;
  - protest by fishers and farmers against the International Container Transshipment Terminal in Kaniyakumari and
  - against Adani's Kattupalli port expansion.
- **Unfolding of Climate Disasters -**extreme weather events have been posting annual reminders of the looming climate crisis such as the Chennai floods (2015), Cyclone Vardah (2016), Cyclone Ockhi (2017), Cyclone Gaja (2018), Chennai's Day Zero and water scarcity (2019).
- ***Mention of climate disaster in state poll manifestos will help the political class appreciate the gravity of the unfolding ecological disaster.***

MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT - PART VIII - GUIDELINES ON ELECTION MANIFESTOS

Having due regard to the directions of the Supreme Court and after consultation with the Political Parties, the Commission, in the interest of free and fair elections , hereby directs that Political Parties and Candidates while releasing election manifestos for any election to the Parliament or State Legislatures, shall adhere to the following guidelines –

(i) **The election manifesto shall not contain anything repugnant to the ideals and principles enshrined in the Constitution** and further that it shall be consistent with the letter and spirit of other provisions of Model Code of Conduct.

(ii) **The Directive Principles of State Policy** enshrined in the Constitution enjoin upon the State to frame various welfare measures for the citizens and therefore there can be no objection to the promise of such welfare measures in election manifestos. However, political parties should avoid making those promises which are likely to vitiate the purity of the election process or exert undue influence on the voters in exercising their franchise.

(iii) In the interest of transparency, level playing field and credibility of promises, it is expected that manifestos also reflect the rationale for the promises and broadly indicate the ways and means to meet the financial requirements for it. Trust of voters should

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be sought only on those promises which are possible to be fulfilled.

REGISTRATION OF OTT PLATFORM

#OTT PLATFORM #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

Allaying fears of overregulation by the government, Union Minister of I&B said that over-the-top or OTT platforms would not have to register with the ministry and that a self-regulating body under the new digital rules would have no members appointed by the government.

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS GIVEN BY UNION MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

- **No Registration with Government for OTT Platforms -** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has clarified that over-the-top (OTT) platforms will not have to register with the government, and no government nominee will be present in the self-regulatory body.
- **Purpose is to Disclose Information about the Content -** Informing the industry representatives about the provisions of the rules, the Minister said it merely requires them to disclose information and that there is no requirement of registration of any kind with the Ministry. The Minister added that a form for this will be ready soon.
- **Idea to Develop Level Playing Field -** Union Minister stated that he had received representations from cinema and TV industries that while there were regulations for them, none existed for OTT industry. Thus, it was decided that Government would come out with **progressive institutional mechanism** for OTT players and develop a level playing field with the idea of self-regulation.
- **Self-Classification of Content -** Furthermore, the rules focus on self-classification of content instead of any form of censorship.
- **Developing Effective Grievance Redressal Mechanism -** OTT platforms are expected to develop an effective grievance redressal mechanism.
- **No members from government in Self-Regulating Body -** Dispelling rumours, the Minister clarified that in the self-regulating body, no member will be appointed by the Government.
- **Government to create Inter Departmental Committee** - Speaking on the power of the Government, under the rules, Union Minister informed that the Government will create Inter Departmental Committee to look at complaints which remain unresolved at the self-regulatory level.

SC TO REVISIT INDRA SAWHNEY JUDGMENT

#RESERVATION #QUOTA #JUDGMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

Supreme Court while hearing the petition challenging Maharashtra law granting reservation in education and government jobs exceeding 50% quota limit, has decided to re-look the decisions given by the Supreme Court in the famous Indra Sawhney judgment. Nine Judge Constitution Bench of SC in Indra Sawhney had capped reservation limits in education and public services to 50% subject to exceptional circumstances.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WHICH THE SUPREME COURT WILL LOOK INTO?

- ***Need to re-look Indra Sawhney judgment by a larger Supreme Court Bench in the light of subsequent constitutional amendments*** (102nd CA – constituting National Commission for Backward Classes under Article 338B), judgments and changed social dynamics of the society.
- ***Whether the Quota fixed by Maharashtra government is covered by exceptional circumstances*** under which the reservations provided by state can exceed 50% limit.
- ***Whether Constitution 102nd Amendment deprives state legislature of its powers*** to enact legislation to

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identify socially and economically backward classes within the state to confer quota benefits to them.

- ***Whether Article 342A abrogates State's powers to legislate for or classify any backward class of citizens*** and thereby affecting the federal structure of the Constitution.
- **Article 342A was added by Constitution 102nd Amendment Act. Under Article 342A,** President through public notification after consulting with states concerned, specify the socially and educationally backward classes for any State or Union Territory. Accordingly, Parliament by law shall include in or exclude name of socially and educationally backward classes from the Central List notified by the President.

INDRA SAWHNEY JUDGMENT

- ***The case decided by Nine Judge Constitution Bench.*** The bone of contention in this landmark judgment was the **Mandal Commission Report of 1980**, which was laid before Parliament on two occasions – once in 1982, and again in 1983.
- However, no action was taken on the basis of this Report until 13.08.1990, when an Office Memorandum stated that after considering the said Report, **27% of the vacancies in civil posts and services under the Government of India shall be reserved for the Socially and Economically Backward Classes**.
- This was followed by an Office Memorandum of 25.09.1991, by which, **within the 27% of vacancies**,

➔ **preference** was to be given to candidates belonging to the **poorer sections of the Socially and Economically Backward Classes**; and

➔ **10% vacancies** were to be reserved for **Other Economically Backward Sections** who were not covered by any of the existing schemes of reservation.

The majority judgments upheld the reservation of 27% in favour of backward classes, and the further subdivision of more backward within the backward classes who were to be given preference, but struck down the reservation of 10% in favour of Other Economically Backward categories.

- The Court contrasted Article 16(4) with Article 15(4), and stated that ***Article 16(4) refers to any backward class of citizens*** where it refers primarily to social backwardness.

Article 16 (4) - any backward class of citizens

Article 15 (4) - any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes

- The Court held that the **test** or requirement of **social and** educational **backwardness cannot be applied to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**, who indubitably fall within the expression ***"backward class of citizens". Thus, they do not have to prove their backwardness.***
- **The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes are the most backward** among backward classes and it is, therefore, presumed that once they are contained in the **Presidential List** under **Articles 341** and **Article 342** of the Constitution of India, there is no question of showing backwardness of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes all over again.
- The advanced sections among the OBCs (the creamy layer) should be **excluded** from the list of beneficiaries of reservation.
- It further held that **creamy layer principle** is **only confined to Other Backward Classes** and has no relevance in the case of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.
- **There shall be no reservation in promotions and the reservation should be confined to initial appointments only.**
- The reasoning was that reservations exist to create a level-playing field, to remedy unequal starting positions, thereby removing the justification for reservation in promotion.

SUB-CATEGORISATION OF OBCs

- Five-year data on OBC quota implementation in central jobs and higher educational institutions showed that a very small section among members of OBC have taken majority of benefits of reservation.
- The government in order to quantify the flow of benefits among different communities among OBC and to achieve greater social justice and inclusion for all, President in exercise of the powers conferred

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under Article 340 had appointed a Commission headed by Justice (Retd.) G Rohini.

- The commission was to examine the sub-categorisation of Central List of the Other Backward Classes (OBC).

ROHINI COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL

- The Commission has drawn up a proposal for FOUR CATEGORY FORMULA.
- According to the formula, the Commission intends to divide the total OBC castes in the Central List into four subcategories.
- The categories numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 are proposed to split 27% of the OBC quota reservation into 2, 6, 9 and 10 per cent, respectively.
- This proposal is yet not final.

FIRST & SECOND BACKWARD CLASS COMMISSION

#RESERVATION #OBC

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

In the backdrop of Supreme Court's Judgment to revisit Indra Sawhney Judgment which caps reservation at 50%, let us also revisit First and Second Backward Class Commission constituted by the government.

KELKAR COMMISSION – FIRST BACKWARD CLASS COMMISSION

- **The Commission was set up as a Presidential Order under Article 340** to investigate the conditions of backward classes.
- **It prepared a comprehensive list of backward caste or communities** and out of 2399 such castes, 837 were classified as 'Most Backward'.
- **The commission submitted its report in 1955 but was not implemented**.

Mandal Commission – Second Backward Class Commission

- ***It was set up to investigate the extent of social and educational backwardness among various sections of Indian society*** and recommend ways of identifying these 'backward classes'.
- ***It advised backward castes had a very low presence in both educational institutions and in employment in public services.*** It therefore recommended reserving 27% of seats in educational institutions and government jobs for these groups.
- The government accepted the recommendations and along with it, issued another order by which, within the 27% of vacancies,
  - Preference was to be given to candidates belonging to the poorer sections of the Socially and Economically Backward Classes; and
  - 10% vacancies were to be reserved for Other Economically Backward Sections who were not covered by any of the existing schemes of reservation. (This part was declared invalid in Indra Sawhney Judgment)

Second Backward Class Commission (Mandal Commission)	
Who announced its formation?	PM Morarji Desai in December 1978
When was the Report Submitted?	On 31st December 1980 to President N.S. Reddy. PM – Indira Gandhi
When and by Whom was the Report implemented?	August 1990 - Prime Minister V.P. Singh

2015 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF NCBC - CHAIRMAN - JUSTICE V. ESWARAIAH

It discussed sub-categorisation of OBCs at length and proposed that the Other Backward Classes/castes/ communities/ synonyms be divided into the following three categories:

1. **Extremely Backward Classes (Group 'A'):** This would include Aboriginal Tribes, Vimukta Jatis, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, wandering classes etc., whose traditional occupation is/was begging and pig-rearing, snake-charming, bird catching, game-snearers, religious mendicants, drum beaters,

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bamboo workers, hunters and labourers, making mats from date leaves, basket making, agricultural labourers, earth workers, boatmen etc.

2. **More Backward Classes (Group 'B'):** This would include vocational groups whose traditional occupation is/was making of brushes for weaving looms and dyers, painting and doll making, weavers, toddy tappers, cotton ginning, oil pressing, silk weavers, potters, sheep-rearing and combingweaving, earth workers, jute weaving and gunny bag making, butchers, tailoring, fishing, gardening, dancers and singers, barbers, petty traders in kumkum and bangles, dyeing, petty dealers in beads, needles etc., scheduled castes converted into Christianity and their progeny, washermen etc.
3. **Backward Classes (Group 'C'):** This would include land owning, cultivating castes, agriculturists, business and trading castes and comparatively advanced castes/communities.

DRINKING WATER QUALITY

#GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

The Union Minister of Jal Shakti released the 'drinking water quality testing, monitoring & surveillance' framework and also launched the Water Quality Management Information System (WQMIS) of Jal Jeevan Mission.

WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM - WQMIS

- National Jal Jeevan Mission in partnership with ICMR, has developed an online portal on Water Quality Information Management System(WQMIS).
- **The WQMIS online portal & mobile app** has a full automated data management related to water quality. Citizens can now get the water quality in their taps tested at reasonable rates.
- **The "Drinking Water Quality Testing, Monitoring and Surveillance Framework and Guidelines"** mandate a network of National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accredited labs to be set up in every State, district and block over the next year.

THE MAJOR FEATURES OF WQMIS PORTAL ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- All the laboratories in the State/ UTs will be registered and mapped in the portal.
- Every State/ UT shall have a 'Super Admin' who will do the registration of all the laboratories (State/ District/ Block/ Sub-divisional/ Mobile level laboratories) and also nominate a laboratory in-charge.
- One among the five women trained to perform the FTK test in every village would be registered in the online portal by the block / sub-divisional laboratory in-charge to upload the FTK test results.
- Uploading the details of the water sample and the test results.
- Uploading the inventory, human resources and fees collected by the respective laboratory.
- If the water sample tested is found to be contaminated, an automated alert will be sent to concerned State PHED official to initiate remedial action.
- In case of repeated/ severe contamination of test samples, an automated alert will send to concerned district health officer to initiate public health risk assessment.

IMPORTANCE OF SAFE DRINKING WATER

- Availability of safe drinking water in adequate quantity of prescribed quality on a regular basis in every household and institutions is directly linked with the public health and economic well-being of the people.
- When it is supplied on a long-term basis, it improves the ease of living of people, and can also result in greater personal safety, reduced drudgery to collect water, especially in isolated, forested and hilly areas.
- For children, safe and assured water supply results in better school attendance, with positive long-term health benefits in their lives.

IMPORTANCE OF JAL JEEVAN MISSION IN PROVIDING SAFE DRINKING WATER

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- The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) announced on 15th August 2019 and currently under implementation in partnership with States, targets to provide safe and regular water supply through a **Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC)** to every rural household by 2024.
- Under the Mission, the functionality of the tap is defined in terms of quantity & quality of water and regularity of supply.
- **JJM emphasises a particular focus on water quality monitoring and surveillance** - Water quality testing is important for constant monitoring to ensure the portability of drinking water supplied, monitoring the operation of water supply systems, investigation of disease outbreaks and undertaking preventive measures.
- **Surveillance activities for the purpose of water quality management** are undertaken to identify and evaluate factors associated with drinking water which could pose a health risk.
- Thus, it is about both detecting & preventive risks, so that, remedial action can be taken before public health problems occur and identifying the contaminated water sources to take prompt corrective action.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE (WQM&S)

- **Water quality** refers to chemical, physical, biological and radiological characteristics of water. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has specified drinking water quality standards (IS 10500:2012) to provide safe drinking water. These standards have two limits, i.e. acceptable limits and permissible limits in the absence of an alternate source. If any parameter exceeds the permissible limit, the water is considered unfit for human consumption.
- **Water quality monitoring is a fundamental tool in the management of safe drinking water supply.**
- **Water quality monitoring** is defined by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) as: "the programmed process of sampling, measurement and subsequent recording or signalling, or both, of various water characteristics, often with the aim of accessing conformity to specified objectives". Surveillance is continuous, specific measurement and observation for the purpose of water quality management and operational activities.
- **Surveillance involves the active participation of Gram Panchayat and/ or its subcommittee (VWSC/ Paani Samiti/ User Group) and the local community to regularly test water quality using Field Test Kits (FTKs) meant for the purpose**.
- **As a part of surveillance activity** an on-site inspection need to be of a water supply facility to identify actual and potential sources of chemical and biological contamination.

UP TO 2% OF THE OVERALL FUND ALLOCATED TO THE STATES/ UTS (BOTH CENTRAL AND STATE SHARE UNDER THE MISSION) IS PROVIDED CARRY OUT THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- Presumptive testing of water quality in Gram Panchayats/ Anganwadi centres/ Schools, etc. using Field Test Kits (FTKs).
- Engage communities in regular sanitary inspection.
- Building capacity of various stakeholders with regards to the importance of consuming safe drinking water.
- Awareness generation amongst communities.
- Strengthening of water quality testing laboratories by setting-up or up-gradation of State/ district/ sub-division/ block/ mobile laboratories and monitoring by undertaking laboratory testing of samples collected.
- Accreditation/ recognition of water quality testing laboratories as per IS/ISO/IEC:17025 for parameters.
- Cross-verification of water quality data and integration with other laboratories of State/ Central government agencies, etc.
- Setting up a system to procure/ refill FTKs/ bacteriological vials and monitoring their utilisation.
- Expenses incurred for NABL accreditation process (consultant fee, audit cost, application fee and annual fee.

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STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

#SEC #ELECTION #JUDGMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE hindustantimes

IN NEWS

The Supreme Court has held that a person associated or employed with the Centre or the state government such as bureaucrats cannot work as a state election commissioner as he/she needs to be an independent person. The Court held that independence of the election commission cannot be compromised in a democracy. Entrusting additional charge of state election commissioner to a government official is a mockery of the Constitution.

REASONS GIVEN BY SUPREME COURT

- The Court held that election commissioners have to be "independent persons" and that nobody, who has been employed or holds an office of profit under the central or any state government, could be appointed as election commissioners.
- Supreme Court held that the officers must resign before taking up the job as it will ensure that the office of the State Election Commissioner is not compromised under any circumstances.
- The Court therefore ordered all state governments to appoint whole-time election commissioners who will act independently and fairly. A serving bureaucrat will not be fair or independent according to Supreme Court.
- Supreme Court censured the Goa government move for appointing its Law Secretary as the state election commissioner for conducting municipal council elections in the state. The law secretary was given the additional charge as the State Election Commissioner.
- The Supreme Court issued the direction exercising its powers under **Articles 142 and Article 144** of the Constitution.
- **Under Article 142**, the apex court is empowered to issue directives to do "complete justice" whereas **Article 144** states that all authorities including civil and judicial, in the territory of India shall act in aid of the Supreme Court.

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION (SEC)

- **SEC has been constituted under Article 243K and Article 243ZA** of the Constitution of India and has been entrusted with the function of conducting free, fair and impartial elections to the local bodies in the state.
- **Article 243K & 243ZA** provide that the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the Conduct of all elections to the Panchayats and Municipalities shall vest in the State Election Commission consisting of the State Election Commissioner.
- **The State Election Commissioner has the status, salary and allowance of a Judge of a High Court** and cannot be removed from office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of a High Court.
- **State Election Commissioner also participates in the delimitation exercise conducted for their respective area.**

ARTICLE 243K ENSURES INDEPENDENCE OF STATE ELECTION COMMISSIONER

- **Removal Procedure:** Though the SEC is appointed by the governor of the respective state, he/she can be removed by the President only in the manner a Judge of a High court is removed which is constitutionally prescribed under Article 217(1)(b).
- **Conditions of service cannot be varied:** Though the conditions of service are determined by the governor with aid and advice of political executive, it cannot be varied or changed arbitrarily by the state to the disadvantage of state election commissioner after his appointment.

CENSUS INTERIM DATA

#CENSUS #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

The provisional data for the latest Census and National Population Register (NPR) will be available before the Lok Sabha election in 2024, according to information provided

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by the Union Home Ministry to a parliamentary committee. The Ministry informed the committee that Census and update of the NPR would be among the major thrust areas for the financial year 2021-22. The previous Census was conducted in 2011 and the NPR, which has a database of 119 crore residents, was last updated in 2015.

MARCH 2021 NOTIFICATION OF GOVERNMENT

- **Census 2021 is being conducted in two phases**
  - House-listing & Housing Census during April-September, 2020 and
  - Population Enumeration during 9th to 28th February, 2021.
- It was also decided to update the National Population Register (NPR) under the Citizenship Act, 1955 along with the first phase of Census.
- Due to outbreak of Covid-19, the first phase of Census, updation of NPR and other related field activities have been postponed.
- **Mobile Applications** for collection of data and a Portal for management and monitoring of various Census related activities have been developed.

CENSUS – IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Nature of Exercise -** The census provides information on size, distribution and socio-economic, demographic and other characteristics of the country's population.
- **Use of Data -** The data collected through the census are used for administration, planning and policy making as well as management and evaluation of various programmes by the government, NGOs, researchers, commercial and private enterprises, etc.
- **Confidentiality -** All information collected under the Census is confidential and will not be shared with any agency - Government or private.
- **Data on NPR -** Certain information collected under the NPR will be published in the local areas for public scrutiny and invitation of objections. This is in the nature of the electoral roll or the telephone directory. After the NPR has been finalised, the database will be used only within the Government.

CONDUCT OF CENSUS

- The responsibility of conducting the decennial Census rests with the **Office of the Registrar General** and **Census Commissioner** under **Ministry of Home Affairs.**
- Conduct of census in India is guided by **the Census Act, 1948.**

CENSUS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING SYSTEM - CMMS

- With the introduction of Mobile based data collection exercise in Census 2021, a system for real time Monitoring and Management mechanism was envisaged.
- This led to the advent of **Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS)** in the Office of the Registrar General, India. Later, with the decision to update the National Population Register (NPR), an NPR module was also incorporated in CMMS.

CENSUS – HISTORY

1872 CENSUS

- A systematic and modern population census, in its present form was conducted non-synchronously between 1865 and 1872 in different parts of the country.
- This effort culminating in 1872 has been popularly labeled as the first population census of India. 1872 Census did not cover all territories possessed or controlled by the British.

1881 CENSUS

- However, the first synchronous census in India was held in 1881. **W.C. Plowden** was the Census Commissioner of India for 1881 Census.
- Since then, censuses have been undertaken uninterruptedly once every ten years.

POST INDEPENDENCE

- The first census of Independent India was conducted in 1951, which was the seventh census in its continuous series.
- **Mr. M W M Yeatts** was appointed as the Census Commissioner for 1951 Census. But he was replaced by Mr. R. A. Gopalaswami due to death of Mr. Yeatts.

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FALSE NEGATIVES IN AADHAAR

#AADHAAR #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Aadhaar as an identification number for residents has been in existence for more than a decade but concerns remains on the use of Aadhar as it has been linked with various government schemes.

INEFFICIENCIES HIGHLIGHTED

- Inefficiencies in biometric authentication and updating.
- Linking of Aadhaar with bank accounts
- Use of the Aadhaar Payment Bridge
- Problem of False Negatives or False Positives
- Benefits under Public Distribution System (PDS), MGNREGA, LPG etc. have been linked to Aadhaar.
- Confusion between seeding and Mapping of Aadhaar with Bank Accounts.

INEFFICIENCIES CAUSING PROBLEMS FOR CITIZENS

- Inefficiencies and failures have led to inconvenience and suffering for the poor as due to non-linkage of Aadhaar with bank accounts, they have been denied benefits under various government schemes.
- There are reports that show failures in authentication having led to delays in the disbursal of benefits and, in many cases, in their denial due to cancellation of legitimate beneficiary names.

UNDERSTANDING FALSE NEGATIVE

- **Problem of FALSE POSITIVE -** Inaccurate result can lead to falsely implicating someone else.
- **Problem of FALSE NEGATIVE** – system does not recognise the person at all.
- **False Negative can lead to exclusion of people from government schemes or policies.**
- Biometric authentication failures are expected of a large scale and technology-intensive project such as the UID.
- Despite being designed to store finger and iris scans of most users, doubts about the success rates of authentication and the generation of **"false negatives"** have always persisted, more so for labourers and tribal people.
- Another issue is that manual labourers finger print may change over time and such people may be subject to negation by the system due to the problem of FALSE NEGATIVES.
- Thus, FALSE NEGATIVES has the potential not only to deny wages or benefits under govt. programmes but also to deny the existence of a person on record.

WAY FORWARD

- Hence, government must come up with an alternative IDENTIFICATION MECHANISM so that genuine beneficiaries are not denied due subsidies.
- The question of fraud can still be addressed by the use of other verification cards and by decentralised disbursal of services at the panchayat level.

UNIQUE ID FOR PLOTS OF LAND

#UNIQUE ID #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

The Centre plans to issue a 14-digit identification number to every plot of land in the country within a year. It will subsequently integrate its land records database with revenue court records and bank records, as well as Aadhaar numbers on a voluntary basis. This plan has been laid out in a parliamentary standing committee report submitted to the Lok Sabha as part of the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) which began in 2008 and has been expanded several times.

DIGITAL INDIA LAND RECORDS MODERNIZATION PROGRAMME – DILRMP

- The Government has launched the "Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)" in 2008.

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- **The Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP),** a Central Sector scheme attempts to build upon the commonalities that exist in the arena of land records in various States to develop an appropriate Integrated **Land Information Management System (ILIMS)** across the country, on which different States can also add State-specific needs as they may deem relevant and appropriate.
- **Substantial Work Done under the project with respect to** –
  - Prime components of computerization of Record of Rights
  - Digitization of cadastral maps
  - Computerization of Registration
  - Connectivity between Sub-Registrar Offices and Tehsils
  - Integration of Registration and Land Records
- **Objective:** Updated land records, integration between textual and spatial records, inter-connectivity between revenue and registration, reduce litigations in land ownership.
- **Components:** Computerisation of Land Records, Survey of Land, Computerisation of Registration.
- **Implementation:** State Governments with financial and technical support from Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development.

ABOUT UNIQUE LAND PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (ULPIN)

- The Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) System will have 14 digits - Alpha-numeric unique ID for each land parcel.
- The Unique IDs based on Geo reference coordinate of vertices of the parcel would be of international standard and compliance of the Electronic Commerce Code Management Association (ECCMA) standard and Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) standards and it will provide compatibility so that all states can adopt it easily.
- Proper land statistics and land accounting through ULPIN will help develop land bank and lead towards Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS).
- The pilot test has been successfully carried out in 11 States namely Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh and Goa.
- **Details:** Component under DILRMP; Launched in 10 states and will be rolled out across the country by end of March 2022.
- **Objective:** Provide Unique 14-digit Alphanumeric ID for all the land parcels in India. ("Aadhaar for the Land").
- **How will it be done -** Combine longitude and latitude to update the land records and provide unique ID; Integrate ULPIN with Aadhaar and Revenue Records
- **Implementation:** Department of Land Resources-Nodal Agency.

BENEFITS OF ULPIN

- Prevent land frauds
- Modernization of Land records
- Sharing of land records across multiple departments
- Reduce Litigations in Land ownership
- Easier process for Land Acquisition
- Ensure uniqueness in all transactions and keep the land records always up-to-date;
- Link of all property transactions get established;
- Delivery of citizen services of land records through the single window.
- Sharing of land records data across departments, financial institutions and all stakeholders.
- Standardization at data and application-level would bring in effective integration and interoperability across departments.

NATIONAL GENERIC DOCUMENT REGISTRATION SYSTEM (NGDRS)

- It provides one Nation one software for registration of documents & properties to 'empower citizens'.
- Department of Land Resources developed and field-tested a National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) through NIC/NICSI under the broad aegis of Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP).

BENEFITS OF NGDRS

- Reduction of land disputes

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- Check on fraudulent transactions.
- Reduced process, time of document registration at Sub Registrar level.
- Processes and time taken in document registration has reduced from 9 to 6 processes and from 3-4 hours to 15-20 minutes respectively.
- Presentation for document registration anywhere within concurrent jurisdiction is possible.
- SMS and email enabled alerts related to transactions on a property.
- A dashboard for senior authorities for monitoring the outcomes and analyzing the performance or challenges faced by SROs.
- Data shared and used by important government authorities/stakeholders like the Revenue Department (Income Tax) with a data policy and standards in place. and
- External system integrations can be provided as required (i.e. eSign, eKYC, Payment Gateways, PAN Verification, ROR to fetch party names for data standardization).
- NGDRS software is expected to improve the ranking of the country in ease of doing business in a world level forum and provide ease of living to the people.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Consider the following statements about Central Information Commission:

1. It is mandatory for the Commission to submit Annual Report on implementation of RTI Act.
2. The appeal mechanism of Central Information Commission comprises three tiers.
3. The Third tier of Central Information Commission is the First Appellate Authority.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 3 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Prior to State Reorganisation Act, 1956, Delhi was categorised as PART D state.
2. The Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956 added Article 350A which provides for facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following statements in the context of Basic Structure Doctrine:

1. It was given in the Kesavananda Bharati Judgment.
2. It provides a set of important provisions in the constitution which cannot be amended.
3. It provides an all-inclusive list and cannot be extended further.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) None of the above

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Ninth Schedule which was added by constitution 1st amendment is beyond judicial review.
2. Constitution 1st Amendment added Article 31A and Article 31B.
3. Article 31C was added by Constitution 25th Amendment.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

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Q5. Which of the following can be said to be the duties of Polling Agent?

1. Participate in the mock poll and satisfy about the proper functioning of EVM & VVPAT.
2. Help the presiding officer to detect and prevent impersonation of voters.
3. Help the officials in securing and sealing EVMs and VVPATs before and after conduct of polls.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

Q1. Parliament of India enjoys limited power to amend the Constitution of India. Examine. (250 Words) (15 Marks)

Q2. Highlight the important role played by Observers and Returning Officers in conducting smooth, transparent and fair elections in India. (150 Words) (10 Marks)

Answers: *1-b, 2-a, 3-a, 4-c, 5-d*

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER III (MAIN)

LEAD ARTICLE

MMDR AMENDMENT ACT, 2021

#GOVERNMENT POLICIES

PRIMARY SOURCE FINANCIAL EXPRESS | SECONDARY SOURCE BusinessLine | SECONDARY SOURCE THE HINDU | SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS | SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

The Mining potential in India is almost similar to that of Australia and South Africa. However, the share of mining sector in India is hardly around 1.75% of GDP in comparison to 7% of the GDP in Australia and South Africa. The annual production of minerals is around Rs 1.25 lakh crores, but India ends up importing minerals worth Rs 2.5 lakh crores. For example, even though, India has 4th largest Coal Reserves in world, it imports 20-25% of its coal requirements amounting to Rs 1.2 lakh crores. Similarly, in spite of having Gold Reserves of almost around 510 MT, India imports around 980 tonnes of Gold on an annual basis.

These facts and figures clearly highlight that, unlike Australia and South Africa, India has failed to capitalise on "Geology" as a mode of escape from underdevelopment and poverty. This is mainly on account of factors such as Dominance of PSUs in Mining sector, lack of competition, outdated technology, unnecessary restrictions on the private sector companies and so on.

Hence, in order to provide fillip to the mining sector, the Parliament has recently passed the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2021. In this regard, let us focus on the following aspects:

- ***Constitutional and Legal Background to MMDR Act, 1957***
- ***Responsibility of Centre and States in Mining Sector***
- ***National Mining Policy 2019***
- ***Salient Features of the 2021 Amendment***

Q. Consider the following minerals: (Prelims 2020)

1. Bentonite
2. Chromite
3. Kyanite
4. Sillimanite

In India, which of the above is/are officially designated as major minerals?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 4 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 2, 3 and 4 only

Q. Consider the following statements (Prelims 2018)

1. In India, State Governments do not have the power to auction non-coal mines.
2. Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand do not have gold mines.
3. Rajasthan has iron ore mines.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 3 only

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL BACKGROUND RELATED TO MMDR ACT, 1957

- ***Entry 54 of Union List:*** Regulation of Mines and Mineral Development as declared by Parliament through a Union law.
- ***Entry 23 of State list:*** Regulation of Mines and Mineral development subject to the provisions of Union Law.

2 Key takeaways (a) Regulation of Mines and Mineral Development can be undertaken by both Centre as well as

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States (b) The Powers of the States to regulate Mines and Mineral development should be laid down by the Centre through a law passed by the Indian Parliament.

Hence, we have the MMDR Act, 1957 which lays down the roles and responsibilities of the Centre and States with respect to the regulation of mines and minerals in India.

RESPONSIBILITY OF CENTRE AND STATES UNDER MMDR ACT, 1957

- **Centre**: Rules and policies related to ***Major Minerals***. The list of Major Minerals has been provided in the **First Schedule** of the Act and include Coal, Lignite, Atomic Minerals, Metallic and Non-metallic minerals such as Iron-ore, bauxite, gold, Precious stones, Copper, Lead, Zinc etc.
- **State:** Rules and policies related to **Minor Minerals.** The act provides for the list of minor minerals and includes Building stones, gravel, ordinary clay, ordinary sand and any other mineral which the Central Government can notify.

Note: The States can make rules and regulations relating to only minor minerals. But, they can make rules related to ***prevention of illegal mining of all minerals.(Both Minor and Major Minerals)***

Auctioning of Mines: The MMDR Amendment Act, 2015 has empowered the State Governments to auction mines subject to rules and regulations made by the Central Government. However, the auctioning of coal, lignite and atomic minerals would continue to be under the control of Central Government.

PAYMENT OF ROYALTY

- **State:** Owners of minerals located within their respective boundaries.
- **Centre**: Owner of the minerals underlying the ocean within the territorial waters up to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India.
- **Major Minerals-->** Royalty fixed by the Centre--> Collected by the State Governments;
- **Minor Minerals-->**Royalty fixed and collected by the State Governments.

NATIONAL MINING POLICY 2019

- **Background:** Replaces the existing National Mineral Policy 2008.
- **Prospecting and Exploration of Minerals:** Special attention towards exploration of energy critical minerals, fertilizer minerals, precious metals and stones etc. Encourages private sector participation through various tools such as Right of First Refusal at the time of auction, Seamless transition from Reconnaissance permit (RP) to Prospecting Licence (PL) to Mining Leases (ML), Auctioning of composite Reconnaissance permit (RP) cum Prospecting License (PL) cum Mining Lease (ML) in virgin areas.
    - ***Reconnaissance permit (RP)*** is granted for preliminary prospecting of a mineral through regional, aerial, geophysical or geochemical surveys and geological mapping.
    - ***Prospecting Licence (PL)*** is granted for undertaking operations for purpose of exploring, locating or proving mineral deposit.
    - ***Mining Lease (ML)*** is granted for undertaking operations for mining mineral.
- **Right of First Refusal**: Usually, the mines are leased for a specified period of time and upon the expiry of the lease period, the mine is auctioned once again. Under the Right to First Refusal Option, when the mine is to be auctioned through bidding, the company presently involved in the exploration of the mine would be given the option of keeping the mining lease by paying the bidding amount. However, if it refuses to pay the bidding amount, only then the mining lease gets transferred to a third party
- **Financial Support for Mining**: Grant status of industry to mining activity.
- **Protection of Environment**: The Government shall identify such areas that are critically fragile in terms of ecology and declare as 'in-violate areas' or 'no-go areas' out of bounds for mining; Also seeks to create Exclusive Mining Zone (EMZ) with prior in-principle statutory clearances.
- **Inter-Ministerial Mechanism**: Unified authority in the form of an inter-ministerial body under Ministry of Mines with members like Ministry of Coal, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Ministry of Tribal Affairs etc.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE 2021 AMENDMENT

1. **Doing Away with distinction between Captive and Merchant Mines:**

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- **Present Scenario:** Captive mines are those mines which have been allocated to the private sector entities to be used for their own purposes. For example, allocation of an iron-ore mine to a private sector entity involved in steel production. The private sector entity must use the iron-ore only as a raw material in its steel Industry and cannot sell the excess iron-ore in the open market. On the other hand, merchant mines are those mines wherein there are no restrictions on the private sector on selling the minerals in the open market.
- **Problems with Captive Mines:** Inefficient mining of minerals from captive mines leading to imports from other countries + Lack of self-Sufficiency in Mineral Sector + Unnecessary restrictions on the private sector on selling the surplus minerals in the open market + Lower sale of minerals in the open market also affects the royalty which otherwise is earned by the States.
- **New Amendment:** The distinction between Captive and merchant mines has been done away with. Henceforth, the Government would not allocate Captive mines to the private sector. All the mines to be allocated in future, would be merchant mines.
- As far as the existing Captive mines are concerned, they would continue to remain so, until the end of their mining lease. But, until then, they have been allowed to sell a maximum of 50% of total mineral mined in a year after meeting its own requirements. The Private sector entity would be required to pay additional amount to the states on the sale of the mineral in the open market. *The new amendment would be applicable for all the minerals including Coal and Lignite.*

2. Issuance of Composite Licence

- **Present Scenario:** Earlier, the private sector was required to separately apply for Prospecting Licence, Reconnaissance permit (RP) and Mining Lease (ML).
- **New Amendment:** As provided in the National Mining Policy, private sector entities can be issued with Composite License. Such a regime will enable them to carry out both prospecting and mining through a single license.

3. Transfer of statutory clearances

Present Status: Upon expiry of a mining lease, mines are leased to highest bidder through auction. Presently, the statutory clearances (including Environmental clearances) do not get transferred to new lessee. The new lessee is required to obtain fresh clearances once again, which is against the basic tenets of Ease of Doing Business.

New Amendment: Provides for the transfer of statutory clearances from existing lessee to new lessee upon the expiry of lease period.

4. Auction by the central government in certain cases

Present Status: States have been empowered to conduct the auction of mineral concessions (other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals). However, since 2015, out of 193 mines, the states have conducted auctions of only around 7 mines in the last 5 years. This has led to large number of mines remaining unutilized.

New Amendment: If the state government is unable to complete the auction process within a stipulated time period, the auctions may be conducted by the central government.

AGRICULTURE

DRIP IRRIGATION IN INDIA

#AGRICULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

IN NEWS

According to the NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index (CMWI) report, India is presently staring at the worst water crisis in its history. The solution lies in the adoption of micro-irrigation techniques in the Indian agriculture, which consumes around 85% of the water.

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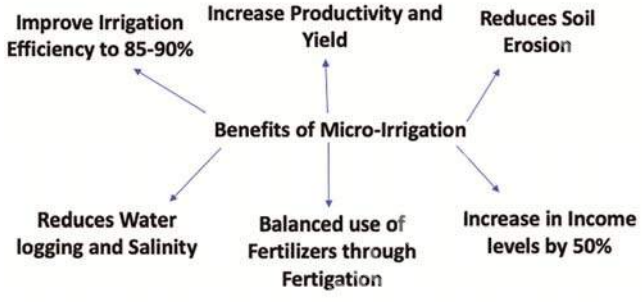
However, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, only 19% (12 Mha) of the net irrigated area (68 Mha) is under micro-irrigation. In this regard, let us discuss about the Prospects and challenges associated with the adoption of Micro-Irrigation in India.

Q. Suggest measures to improve water storage and irrigation system to make its judicious use under depleting scenario (UPSC Mains 2020)

Micro irrigation (MI) systems (sprinkler, drip) promote precision farming by making water available to root zone of crops. MI holds immense potential in addressing dual challenges - Sustainability and Declining Income Levels.

NEED FOR PROMOTING MICRO-IRRIGATION

- Over-consumption: Share of Water used in Indian Agriculture (85%)
- Area under Irrigation: Net Sown Area- 141 M ha; Irrigated Area- 68 M ha; 52% Agricultural land- Rainfed (3 times lower yield as compared to irrigated area)
- Committee on doubling farmers' Income: Micro-irrigation Benefits- 40% Water Savings, 45% increase in crop productivity and 50% increase in income.



BENEFITS OF MICRO-IRRIGATION

- Saving of irrigation water from 20 to 48 per cent;
- Energy saving from 10 to 17 per cent;
- Saving of labour cost from 30 to 40 per cent;
- Saving of fertilizers from 11 to 19 per cent;
- Increase in crop production from 20 to 38 per cent;
- Increase in net annual income of the farmer beneficiaries

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):

- Har Khet Ko Paani: Providing end-to-end solutions in Irrigation supply chain.
- Per Drop More Crop: Promotion of Drip Irrigation and Sprinkler Irrigation.

Micro-Irrigation Fund (MIF):

- Managed by NABARD with corpus of Rs 5000 crore.
- States can avail the fund to in order to subsidize the farmers for adoption of micro-irrigation techniques.

Present Status of Micro-Irrigation in India: Area under MI has remained at 12 Mha against the potential of 70 Mha. Only 4 States- Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra have more than half of the net cultivated area under micro-irrigation. 27 States (including UTs) in India have less than 30 % area under micro-irrigation, out of which 23 states have less than 15 per cent micro-irrigation.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

- Highly subsidized canal water and electricity.
- Lower subsidy (55%) for marginal farmers under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana.
- No Major role of Banks in providing credit for buying micro-irrigation equipment.
- No after-sale services such as removal of clogging in pipes.
- Frequent power outages.
- Dismantling of MI structure after every crop damages the equipment.
- Mainly concentrated in Western and Southern India.
- Used only for few selected crops.

Going forward, we need to implement recommendations of Dalwai panel such as increase in annual coverage by 2.5 Mha, making Micro-irrigation compulsory agenda in all forms of irrigation – flow, lift, Ponds etc.

FEMINISATION OF AGRICULTURE

#AGRICULTURE # SOCIAL JUSTICE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Recently, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying celebrated International Women's Day on March 8. This

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year, the department has laid special emphasis on showcasing the role of Women in the Dairy sector. It has highlighted that the women have contributed immensely to the success of the "White Revolution" in India.

Hence, keeping in mind, the importance of women in Indian agriculture, let us have a look at various facets of "Feminisation of Indian Agriculture- Present Status, Challenges and Strategies".

Growing feminization of Indian Agriculture: With growing rural to urban migration by men, there is 'feminization' of agriculture sector, with increasing number of women in multiple roles as cultivators, entrepreneurs, and labourers. According to Oxfam India, women are responsible for about 60-80% of food and 90% of dairy production, respectively. Further, the Agriculture Census (2010-11) shows that out of an estimated 118.7 million cultivators, 30.3% were females. Similarly, out of an estimated 144.3 million agricultural labourers, 42.6% were females.

STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Earmarking at least 30 per cent of the budget allocation for women beneficiaries in all ongoing schemes/programmes and development activities.
- Initiating women centric activities to ensure benefits of various beneficiary-oriented programs/schemes reach them.
- Focusing on women self-help group (SHG) to connect them to micro-credit through capacity building activities and to provide information and ensuring their representation in different decision-making bodies.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has declared **15th October** of every year as Women Farmer's Day.

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

- **Lack of Ownership:** Almost 86% of women farmers are devoid of property right in land mainly on account of the patriarchal set up in our society. This lack of ownership of land does not allow women farmers to approach banks for institutional loans as banks usually consider land as collateral.

  What has to be done? Provision of credit without collateral; Better access to credit, technology, and provision of entrepreneurship abilities; Encourage greater participation of women in the FPOs.

- **Declining Size of Landholdings:** The land holdings have doubled over the years in India due to which the average size of farms has shrunk. Therefore, a majority of women farmers fall under the small and marginal category, having less than 2 ha of land. A declining size of land holdings may act as a deterrent due to lower net returns and technology adoption.

  What has to be done? Collective farming has to be encouraged to make women self-reliant. Training and skills should be imparted to women as has been done by some self-help groups and cooperative-based dairy activities (Saras in Rajasthan and Amul in Gujarat). Moreover, government flagship schemes such as the National Food Security Mission, Sub-mission on Seed and Planting Material and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana must include women-centric strategies and dedicated expenditure.

- **Need for Gender Friendly Agricultural Tools:** The female cultivators and labourers generally perform labor-intensive tasks (hoeing, grass cutting, weeding, picking, cotton stick collection, looking after livestock). In addition to working on the farm, they have household and familial responsibilities. Hence, it is important to have gender-friendly tools and machinery for various farm operations. Most farm machinery is difficult for women to operate.

  What has to be done? Manufacturers should be incentivized to come up with better solutions. **Farm machinery banks** and **custom hiring centers** promoted by many State governments can be roped in to provide subsidized rental services to women farmers.

- **Lack of Access to Resources:** Women generally have less access to resources and modern inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides). The Food and Agriculture Organization says that equalizing access to productive resources for female and male farmers could increase agricultural output in developing countries by as much as 2.5% to 4%.

  What has to be done? Krishi Vigyan Kendras in every district can be assigned an additional task to educate and train women farmers about innovative technology along with extension services.

Hence, an 'inclusive transformative agricultural policy' should aim at gender-specific interventions to raise

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productivity of small farm holdings, integrate women as active agents in rural transformation.

BANKING AND FINANCE

SPACS

#FINANCE

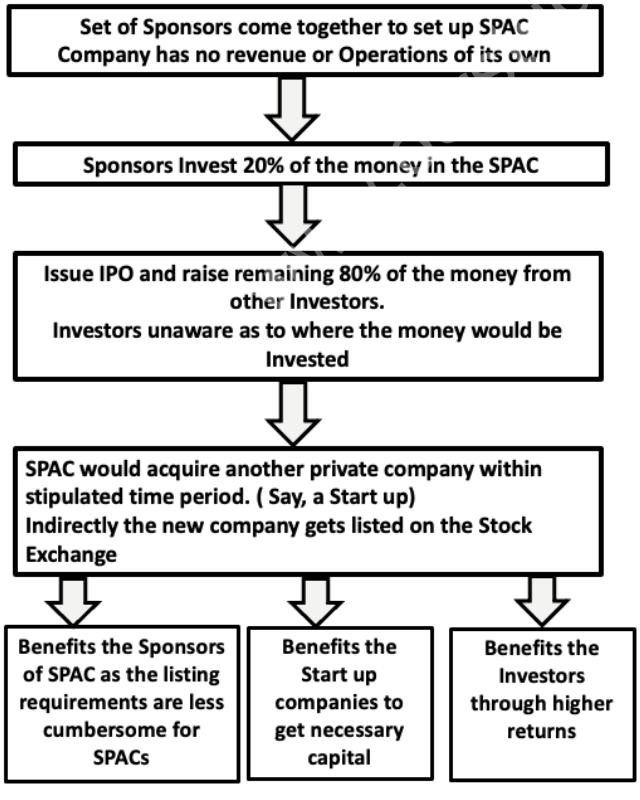
PRIMARY SOURCE Business Standard

IN NEWS

The year 2020 has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the number of Initial public offers (IPOs) by the Special purpose acquisition company (SPAC) in USA. The SPACs have raised almost around $83 billion, representing almost 50% capital raised from the capital market in the year 2020.

Hence, in order to take advantages associated with SPACs in India, the SEBI has set up an expert committee to explore the viability of formulating rules and regulations for SPACs. In this regard, let us look at various facets related to SPACs.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACQUISITION COMPANIES?



- Usually, if a company wants to raise capital through the issuance of Initial Public offer (IPO), it needs to have its own revenue as well as operations. However, in case of SPACs, it raises capital through the issuance of IPO without having its own revenue or operations.
- It raises 80% of the money through the IPO from the investors and remaining 20% is raised internally from the sponsors of the SPACs.
- When the investors buy the shares issued by the SPAC, they are usually unaware as to where their money would be invested and hence, the SPACs are also referred to as **"Blank Cheque Companies".**
- Once the money is raised, SPAC would then use that money to acquire a profit-making unlisted company. If it fails to acquire a company within stipulated time period (say, 2 years), then the money would have to be returned back to the investors along with the interest and the SPAC would be delisted.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR SPACS IN INDIA

- The current regulatory framework of India is not supportive of the SPAC structure. For instance, the Companies Act 2013 authorizes the Registrar of Companies to strike-off the name of companies that do not commence operation within one year of incorporation. SPACs typically take 2 years to identify a target and perform due diligence. If SPACs are to be made functional in India, enabling provisions will have to be inserted in the Companies Act.
- Further, SPACs do not find acceptance even under the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act. The eligibility criteria for public listing, requires a company to have net tangible assets of at least Rs 3 crore in the preceding three years, minimum average operating profits of Rs 5 crore during any three of last five years and net worth of at least Rs 1 crore in each of the last three years.

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- The absence of operational profits, net tangible assets would prevent SPACs from making an IPO in India.
- Accordingly, the SEBI has set up an expert committee to explore the viability of formulating rules and regulations for SPACs

ONE NATION ONE OMBUDSMAN

#BANKING

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

IN NEWS

The protection of consumers in the Financial sector such as Banks, NBFCs has gained policy priority in the recent years. Accordingly, the RBI has decided to merge three Ombudsman schemes (i) Banking Ombudsman Scheme (ii) Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies and (iii) Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions into a single scheme. The merger of these schemes is intended to make the process of redressal of grievances easier for the consumers across different verticals. The Integrated Ombudsman Scheme will be rolled out in June 2021.

Q. With reference to the institution of Banking Ombudsman in India, which one of the statements is not correct? (Prelims 2010)

(a) The Banking Ombudsman is appointed by the Reserve Bank of India.

(b) The Banking Ombudsman can consider complaints from Non-Resident Indians having accounts in India.

(c) The orders passed by the Banking Ombudsman are final and binding on the parties concerned.

(d) The service provided by the Banking Ombudsman is free of any fee.

	Banking Ombudsman Scheme	Ombudsman Scheme for NBFCs	Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions
Introduced under?	Banking Regulation Act	RBI Act, 1934	Payment and Settlement Systems Act
Year	1995	2018	2019
Coverage	Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Scheduled Primary Cooperative Banks	All deposit taking NBFCs with asset size of more than Rs 100 crores.	Digital system participants such as Paytm, Phone pay, Amazon etc.
When can complaint be registered before Ombudsman?	If the Bank does not respond to complaint ***within 1 year*** or Bank rejects the complaint or if the customer is not satisfied with the reply given by the Bank.	If the Bank does not respond to complaint within ***1 month*** or NBFC rejects the complaint or if the customer is not satisfied with the reply given by the NBFC	If the entity does not respond to complaint within ***1 month*** or entity rejects the complaint or if the customer is not satisfied with the reply given by the entity
Fees for filing Complaints	No Fees	No Fees	No Fees
Limits on Compensation payable to Customer	Up to Rs 20 Lakh. Maximum Compensation of Rsl lakh can also be awarded for loss of time and mental harassment faced by customer	Up to Rs 10 Lakh. Maximum Compensation of Rsl lakh can also be awarded for loss of time and mental harassment faced by customer	Up to Rs 20 Lakh. Maximum Compensation of Rsl lakh can also be awarded for loss of time and mental harassment faced by customer

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ON TAP LICENSING OF BANKS

#BANKING

PRIMARY SOURCE | FINANCIAL EXPRESS

IN NEWS

The Economic Survey 2019-20 has highlighted that Banking Sector in India has remained dwarf when compared to size of our GDP, development Needs and our population.

Hence, in order to address this problem, the RBI has recently constituted a committee headed by former deputy governor Shyamala Gopinath to evaluate applications for universal banks as well as small finance banks (SFB). Based upon the recommendations of this committee, the RBI would provide 'On-tap' licensing to these Banks.

Q. The establishment of "Payment Banks" is being allowed in India to promote financial inclusion. Which of the following statements is/are correct in this context? (UPSC Prelims 2016)

1. Mobile telephone companies and supermarket chains that are owned and controlled by residents are eligible to be promoters of Payment Banks.
2. Payment Banks can issue both credit cards and debit cards.
3. Payment Banks cannot undertake lending activities.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q. What is the purpose of setting up of Small Finance Banks (SFBs) in India? (UPSC Prelims 2017)

1. To supply credit to small business units.
2. To supply credit to small and marginal farmers.
3. To encourage young entrepreneurs to set up business particularly in rural areas.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

- **On-Tap Licensing:** RBI would accept applications and grant license to the Banks throughout the year. Rather than waiting for the RBI to invite applications, any eligible entity can file application on its own throughout the year.
- **Universal banks**: Banks which can offer all the Banking related services under single roof. Usually, no restrictions on such Banks with respect to Banking services and Area of operations. Can provide all the Banking related services such as acceptance of deposits, loans, issuance of Debit/Credit Card etc. Examples: Scheduled Commercial banks.

DEFINITION OF SCHEDULED BANKS

According to the RBI Act, 1934, a scheduled Bank is one which is

- Included in the second schedule of the RBI Act
- Has a paid-up capital of not less than 5 lakhs.
- Satisfies that its affairs are not being conducted in a manner which is detrimental to the interests of the depositors.

Note: The RBI has stipulated the minimum capital requirement of Rs 500 crores for the issuance of new banking licenses. Further, to be eligible to get a Banking license, an entity should have successful track record of running its business for at least 10 years. These requirements are in addition to the requirements mentioned in the RBI Act, 1934.

Differentiated Banks: Banking institutions licensed by the RBI to provide specific banking services and products. A differentiated license will allow a bank to offer products only in select areas. Main aim is to promote financial inclusion and payments. Differentiated banks licensing was launched in 2015. The differentiated banks are of two types namely payment banks and small finance banks.

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CRITERIA	PAYMENT BANKS	SMALL FINANCE BANKS
Registration and Licensing	Registered under Companies Act, 2013 Licensed under Banking Regulation Act, 1949	Registered under Companies Act, 2013 Licensed under Banking Regulation Act, 1949
Eligibility	Pre-paid Payment Instrument (PPI) Providers, Resident individuals; NBFCs; Telecom Companies, super-market chains, public sector entities etc.	Resident Indians, Private Companies, Societies, NBFCs, MFIs, Local Area Banks
Min. Capital Requirements	Rs 100 crores	Rs 100 crores. (To be increased to Rs 200 crores within 5 years)
FDI allowed?	Yes. Up to 74%	Yes. Up to 74%
Accept Deposits	Only Demand Deposits. No Fixed Deposits and NRI Deposits	Yes.
Restrictions on Deposits	Up to Rs 1 Lakhs	No Restrictions
Deposit Insurance Available?	Yes	Yes
Can Lend Loans	No	Yes. At least 50 per cent of its loan portfolio should constitute loans and advances of up to Rs 25 lakh
Issue Debit/Credit Card	Only Debit Card. No Credit Card	Both can be issued
Set up based upon recommendations of	Nachiket Mor Committee	Nachiket Mor Committee
Committee to evaluate applications for License	Nachiket Mor Committee	Usha Thorat Committee
SIR and CRR applicable	CRR Applicable; SLR: 75% of Deposits.	CRR and SLR Applicable
BASEL Norms applicable	Yes. 15% of RWAs	Yes. 15% of RWAs
PSL Norms applicable	No. Can't lend Loans	Yes. Target: 75%.
Examples	Airtel, India Posts Payment Bank, Paytm, FINO etc.	Ujjivan, Utkarsh, Jana, Au etc.

WHY THE NEED TO ISSUE ON-TAP LICENSES TO NEW BANKS IN INDIA?

- The Economic Survey 2019-20 has highlighted that Banking Sector in India has remained dwarf when compared to Size of our GDP, Development Needs and our population. For instance, our highest ranked bank, State Bank of India is ranked a lowly 55th in the world and is the only bank to be ranked in the Global top 100. On the other hand, China has been supported by its 4 large Banks, which incidentally only happen to be 4 largest Banks at the global level.
- Hence, in order to become a $ 5 trillion economy, India requires at least eight Indian banks to be large enough to belong in the top 100 globally.

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AEPS

#BANKING

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

IN NEWS

According to the recent data published by National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI), the value of transactions through Aadhaar Enabled Payment services (AePS) has doubled in the last one year. More importantly, it has gained significant popularity in the rural areas during the COVID-19 pandemic and thus capable in bringing about shift towards Cashless economy in India.

Q. With reference to digital payments, consider the following statements: (Prelims 2018)

1. BHIM app allows the user to transfer money to anyone with a UPI-enabled bank account.
2. While a chip-pin debit card has four factors of authentication, BHIM app has only two factors of authentication.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

DETAILS

- It is a payment system that has been developed by National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI).
- It empowers a bank customer to use Aadhaar as his identity to access his respective Aadhaar enabled bank account and perform basic banking transactions like balance enquiry, cash deposit, cash withdrawal, remittances through a Business Correspondent.
- Such transactions are usually carried out through handheld Micro ATM machine carried by the Business Correspondent. The only inputs required for a customer to do a transaction under this scenario are:-
  - Bank name
  - Aadhaar Number
  - Fingerprint captured during their enrollment

How does it work? The AEPS machine works like a Point of Sale (POS) machine. Instead of a debit/credit card pin, the customer will have to enter his Aadhaar number and authenticate the transaction using his fingerprint.

Services Offered: Cash Withdrawal, Cash Deposit, Balance Enquiry, Aadhaar to Aadhaar Fund Transfer, Mini Statement etc.

Benefits:

- No need for the people to carry their debit cards or remember the Bank Account details.
- Biometric authentication using fingerprint provides greater security.
- Interoperable across Banks.
- Facilitate disbursements of Government entitlements like NREGA, Social Security pension,
- Reaching the unreached - The model enables banks to extend financial services in the unbanked and underbanked areas.

Payment systems under National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI): Umbrella organization for operating retail payments and settlement systems. It is an initiative of RBI and Indian Banks' Association (IBA).

- RuPay Contactless
- **Unified Payments Interface:** Real-time interbank payment system for sending or receiving money.
- **BHIM App:** BHIM is a mobile app for Unified Payments Interface. The BHIM apps has 3 levels of authentication.
- **Bharat BillPay:** One-stop ecosystem for payment of all bills
- **Immediate Payment Service:** Real time interbank payment system
- **National Financial Switch:** Network of ATMs in India.
- **BharatQR:** A common QR code built for ease of payments.

PROMPT CORRECTIVE ACTION FRAMEWORK

#BANKING

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

The RBI has recently decided to remove IDBI Bank from Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework due to its improved financial performance. The IDBI Bank was initially placed under the PCA framework in the year 2017.

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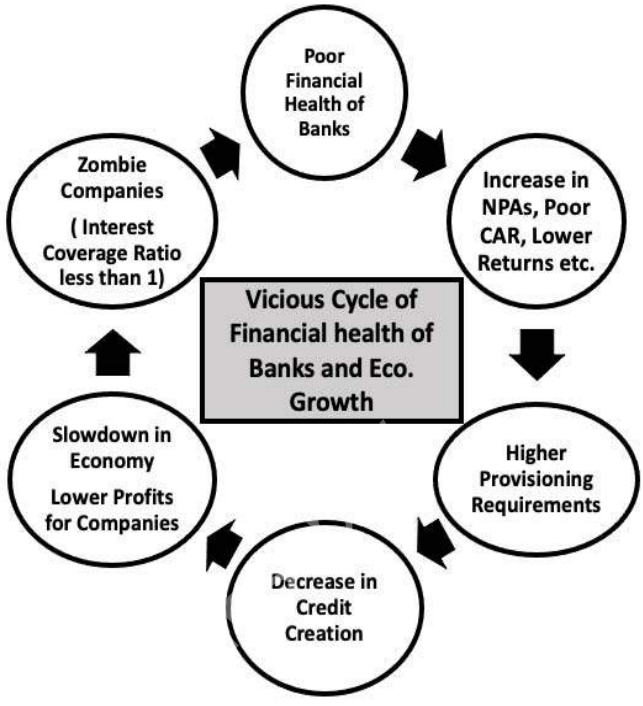

DETAILS ABOUT PCA FRAMEWORK

What?: Tool used by the RBI to monitor the financial health of the Banks and take corrective action.

Indicators used:

- Capital to Risk weighted Asset Ratio (CRAR)
- Net Non-Performing Assets (NPA)
- Return on Assets (RoA)
- Leverage ratio

When does it get triggered: When the above 4 Indicators breach the threshold target. (Example: If Net NPA Is greater than or equal to 6%)

What happens if a Bank is placed under PCA framework? RBI can place certain restrictions which can include:

- Halting branch expansion.
- Stopping dividend payment.
- Cap a bank's lending limit to one entity or sector.
- Undertake special audit, restructuring operations and activation of recovery plan.
- Banks' promoters can be asked to bring in new management.
- The RBI can also supersede the bank's board.

- **Applicability:** Applicable only to commercial banks and not extended to co-operative banks and NBFCs. (Note: ***The RBI's Supervisory Action Framework is similar to PCA framework and is applicable to Urban Cooperative Banks***)
- **Banks under PCA (as on Mar 2021)**: Indian Overseas Bank, UCO Bank and Central Bank.

SEIGNIORAGE AND PRINTING OF CURRENCY NOTES

#BANKING

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

IN NEWS

According to recent information provided by Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Ltd. (SPMCIL), the cost of printing currency notes in the denomination of Rs 50 and Rs 500 has come down, while it has gone up for Rs10, Rs 20 and Rs 100 notes.

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Standard cost of printing currency note (Per unit/In ₹)

Denomination	2018-19	2019-20
10	0.86	0.94
20	0.87	0.90
50	1.24	1.22
100	1.89	1.99
200	2.48	-
500	2.71	2.65

Source: SPMCIL

PRINTING OF CURRENCY NOTES AND MINTING OF COINS

- **RBI:** Sole authority to print Currency Notes under **RBI Act, 1934**. Can print notes of different denominations from Rs 2 to up to Rs 10,000. All the Bank notes are legal tenders. All banknotes issued by RBI are backed by assets such as gold, Government Securities and Foreign Currency Assets, as defined in Section 33 of RBI Act, 1934.
- Bank notes are printed at four currency presses, two of which are owned by the Government of India through Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Ltd. (SPMCIL) and two are owned by the RBI's subsidiary Bhartiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Private Ltd. (BRBNMPL). The currency presses of SPMCIL are at Nasik and Dewas. The two presses of BRBNMPL are at Mysuru and Salboni.
- **Government**: Issue One-Rupee Notes and Coins. Coins can be issued up to the denomination of Rs 1000 under **The Coinage Act, 2011**. Government decides on the quantity of coins to be minted on the basis of indent received from the Reserve Bank on yearly basis.

Seigniorage: Profit which accrues to the Central bank due to the printing of the Currency notes. This is mainly on account of the fact that the intrinsic value of the paper currency is much lower than its face value. For example, the cost of printing a Rs 500-note may be Rs 3. Hence, printing one such note and putting it into circulation fetches a profit of Rs 497.Usually central banks 'earn' this profit and transfer it to the Government.

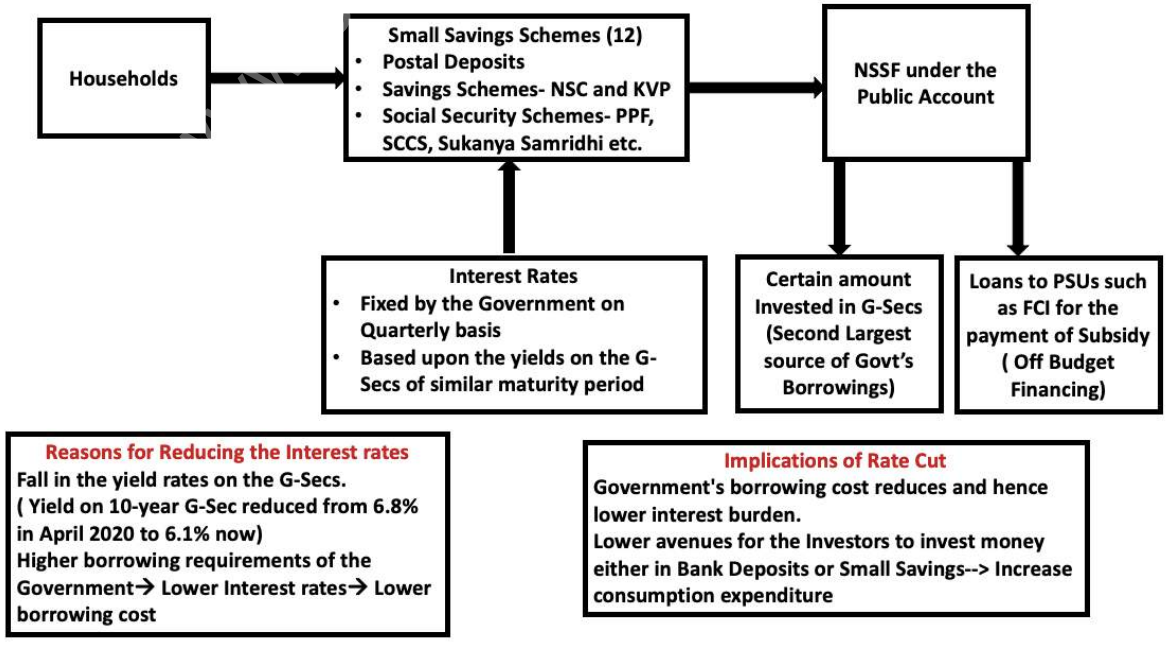
SMALL SAVINGS SCHEMES

#BANKING

PRIMARY SOURCE Business Standard

IN NEWS

Recently, the Government decided to cut interest rates on various small savings schemes sharply by 40-110 basis points. The small savings schemes are the major source of Household Savings and hence reduction in the interest rates would have adversely affected the households. Thus, due to political backlash, immediately, the Government decided to cancel the notification on cutting the interest rates and adopt status quo.



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The small savings instruments are the major source of household savings in India. Broadly, the small savings schemes basket comprises 12 instruments and can be classified under three heads. These are:

- Postal deposits
- Savings certificates [(National Small Savings Certificate VIII (NSC) and Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)]; and
- Social security schemes [(public provident fund (PPF) and Senior Citizens 'Savings Scheme (SCSS)].
- All small savings collections are credited to the **National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) in the Public Account of India**. The interest rates are reset every quarter based on the G-Sec yields of the previous three months.
- A certain amount of NSSF is invested in the Central and State Government securities. The fund is administered by Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Affairs.

Why the Government decide to reduce the Interest rates initially? Higher borrowings of the Government through the Small Savings schemes (2020-21: Rs 4.8 lakh crores; 2021-22: Rs 3.9 Lakh crores). Higher interest rates would make Government's borrowings costly and hence the plan to reduce the interest rates.

Fall in the yield rates on the G-Secs. (Yield on 10-year G-Sec reduced from 6.8% in April 2020 to 6.1% now)

IMPLICATIONS OF REDUCED INTEREST RATES

- Government's borrowing cost reduces and hence lower interest burden.
- Enable the Banks to reduce rate of interest on the Deposits
- Lower avenues for the Investors to invest money either in Bank Deposits or Small Savings--> Increase consumption expenditure.

PUBLIC FINANCE AND TAXATION

FISCAL FEDERALISM

PUBLIC FINANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

IN NEWS

One fundamental aspect of our Governance is the fiscal federalism which provides the autonomy of the states to raise revenue and undertake expenditure according to their priorities and needs. Such form of fiscal federalism has been formulated keeping in mind the diverse needs and aspirations of the states across India and hence considered critical for balanced and holistic development of the entire country.

However, in recent years, the fiscal federalism has become skewed towards the Centre in certain aspects and the same has been opposed by number of states. In this regard, let us understand some important issues which have arisen in the Centre State Fiscal Relations.

- **Higher Share of Cess and surcharge**: Cess and surcharge imposed and collected by the Centre do not form part of Central Divisible pool of taxes. They are not distributable among the States and hence continue to remain with the centre. Over a period of time, the Centre has been imposing large number of surcharge and Cess to mobilise revenue. A Case in point is the recent introduction of the Agri Infrastructure Cess in the Union Budget 2021-22.

  The share of Cess and Surcharge as a percentage of Gross Tax Revenue (GTR) of the centre has increased sharply from 2.3% in 1980-81 to 15% in 2019-20. The States see this as an illegitimate way of depriving resources that are rightfully due to them.
- **GST compensation**: States agreed to give up the power to impose indirect taxes and adopt GST on the basis of a guaranteed 14 per cent growth in GST revenues per annum. The Centre committed to pay the states for the shortfall in their GST revenue through the imposition of GST Compensation Cess for a period of 5 years.

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However, on account of CoVID-19 pandemic, there was GST shortfall of almost around Rs 3 lakh crores. However, money collected under GST compensation Fund was hardly around Rs 65,000 crores. Hence, there was an obligation on the Centre to pay compensation amount of almost Rs 2.35 lakh crores. Initially, the Centre asked the States to borrow this amount from the market. Later on, due to strong opposition, the Centre decided to borrow on behalf of the states and compensate them. This recent issue over GST compensation has led to erosion of trust in the fiscal federalism.

- **Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS):** The Centrally Sponsored schemes are the schemes which are financed by both Centre and States in a defined proportion (70:30 or 60:40 or 50:50 etc) but implemented by the respective State Governments. Some of these schemes include MGNREGA, Ayushman Bharat, National Education Mission etc.

  The Centre lays down elaborate rules and guidelines with respect to implementation of these schemes. It also lays down purposes for which the funds can be utilised for. The State governments claim that such rules and guidelines do not provide them with enough financial and operational autonomy in executing the schemes.

  These Centrally sponsored schemes have also faced political controversy. For instance, some of the States such as West Bengal, Telangana etc. have decided not to implement Ayushman Bharat Scheme. These states claim that their own health insurance schemes are better than centre's Ayushman Bharat Scheme.

- **Borrowing powers of the States:** Under **Article 293**, the States are allowed to raise loans from the Centre or market. However, a State cannot raise a public loan without the consent of the Centre if there is still outstanding any part of a loan. Since all the State Governments have been and continue to be indebted to the Centre, the Centre effectively controls the amount of public debt raised by State Governments. Presently, the fiscal deficit of a State cannot exceed 3% of GSDP.

  Hence, in recent times, particularly in the aftermath of CoVID-19 pandemic, frictions have risen over the Centre's attempt to perpetually control borrowings by the States. The recent 50-year interest free loan announced by the Centre for the states is a case in point. Any State which avails this facility will need to take Centre's permission for all future borrowing at least for the next 50 years.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

ONE DISTRICT ONE PRODUCT

#EXPORTS

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

IN NEWS

India's vision of becoming a $ 5 trillion economy by 2024 is intricately linked with an export-oriented approach. In this regard, "Districts as Export Hubs" is the first such initiative of Government of India which targets export promotion at the grass root levels. Export promotion was never a focus area in the rural areas. Hence, through this initiative, Government of India intends to contribute to the Atma Nirbhar Bharat while focusing on generating economic activity in the rural hinterland and small towns in the country.

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In this regard, let us look at Prospects and Challenges of "One District One Product" scheme launched by the Government.

Each district of our country has a potential equal to that of one country, each of our districts has the capacity equal to a small country in the world... why should each district not think of becoming an export hub? (Prime Minister, 2019 Independence Day Speech)

Important Facts and Figures about India's Merchandise Trade

FIGURE: India's share in World Exports, Share of Manufactured & Non-Manufactured Items in India's Total Merchandise Exports

Source: *Trademap.org.*

Note: *The years mentioned are calendar years.*

Total Merchandise Exports: In the year 2018-19, the total merchandise exports from India was around $ 337 billion accounting for around 12% of India's GDP.

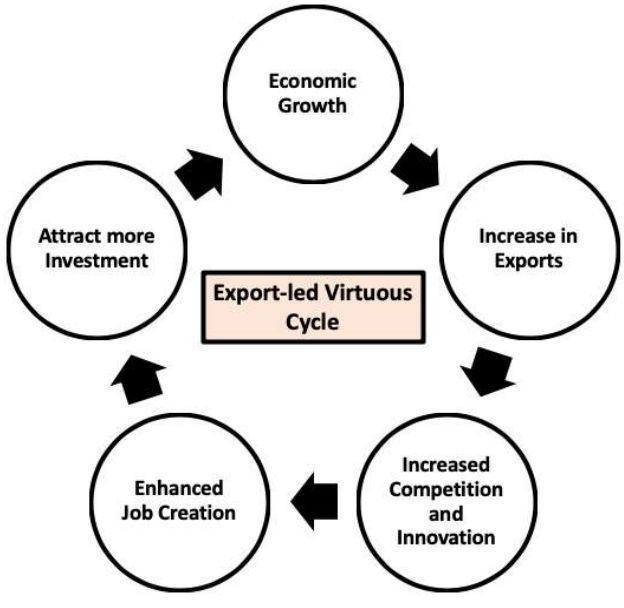
Trends in India's share of World's exports: As shown in the figure, India's share in the world's exports has remained stagnant at 1.6% in the last decade.

Increase in share of manufactured exports: The merchandise exports from India could be categorized into Manufactured and Non-Manufactured Exports. Increase in the share of manufactured exports would denote the success of Make in India. As shown in the figure, there has been consistent increase in the share of Manufactured exports from India. This is on account of 2 main reasons:

- Due to Make in India
- Integration of Indian Economy into Global Value Chains (GVCs)

Need for Export-Led Model

- **Empirical Evidence:** Countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore etc. have been able to sustain higher economic growth by following export-led strategy. In the recent times, such an export-led strategy has benefitted both bigger economies such as China as well as smaller economies such as Vietnam.



- **Shift from Consumption-led to Investment and Export driven Model:** India's growth driver highlights that its economic growth has been primarily propelled

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by domestic demand which accounts for 60% of India's GDP. However, exports account for only 12% GDP. It should also be recognised we cannot continue to expand our GDP size by relying only on demand. As highlighted by Economic Survey 2018-19, we need to shift gears towards Investment and export driven economy.

- **Conducive environment** in terms of decline in exports from china on account of US-China Trade war, rising Labour costs, growing anti-china sentiment etc.
- **Boost Make in India and Assemble in India:** By integrating "Assemble in India for the world" into Make in India, India can raise its export market share to about 3.5 percent by 2025 and 6 per cent by 2030. India would create about 4 crore well-paid jobs by 2025 and about 8 crores by 2030.
- **Innovation and Efficiency:** Exporters would be required to innovate and adopt new technologies to boost exports.

BUT WHY FOCUS ON DISTRICTS?

- **Decentralised approach to Export promotion:** Earlier, the export promotion, as a subject was dealt by only the Central Government without any active, credible mechanism involving the State or District level stakeholders. The export promotion activity had to be decentralized to boost local production and make Districts active stakeholders. This will also help in filling the existing gaps and bottlenecks in exporting identified products/services from the Districts.
- **Enable Inclusive Growth and Development:** Focussing on Districts as units of Export hubs would benefit farmers, MSMEs, Small Scale Industries etc.
- **Potential at District Level:** Every District has products and services which can be exported leading to the goal of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat, Vocal for local and Make in India.

Approach of the Government: In the initial phase, product/services (GI products, agricultural clusters, toy clusters etc.) with export potential in each District have been identified and institutional mechanism in the form of State Export Promotion Committees (SEPC) at the state level and District Export Promotion Committees (DEPCs) at the district level are being created to provide support for export promotion and to address the bottlenecks for export growth in the Districts.

CHALLENGES IN BOOSTING EXPORTS AND STRATEGIES NEEDED

- **Export Promotion Policy:** Most states are mainly identifying their thrust areas/sectors for exports. This is not enough. Export promotion policy needs to focus on incentives like providing market support, financial and non-financial incentives to MSMEs, and an increased emphasis on product and process standards and quality certifications.
- **Institutional Framework:** There is a need to increase the number of grievance redressal cells, Centre-State coordination cells, and outreach forum for exporters within states.
- **Business Environment**: Focus on reduction in the cost of establishing and running a business, Enabling Trade across borders etc.
- **Poor Logistics:** Need to address poor logistics such as Roads, Ports, railways etc; Focus on multi-modal transport.
- **Access to Finance**: Need to provide export focussed credit, especially for MSMEs, across most states in India.

ULPIN SCHEME

#GOVT POLICIES

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

The Government has recently stated that the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme has been launched in the 10 states this year and will be rolled out across the country by the end of March 2022.

- **Background**: The Government has launched the "Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)" in 2008.
- **Objective:** Updated land records, integration between textual and spatial records, inter-connectivity between revenue and registration, Reduce litigations in land ownership.

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- **Components:** Computerisation of Land Records, Survey of Land, Computerisation of Registration.
- **Implementation:** State Governments with financial and technical support from Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development.

About Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)

Details: Component under DILRMP; Launched in 10 states and will be rolled out across the country by end of March 2022.

Objective: Provide Unique 14-digit Alphanumeric ID for all the land parcels in India. ("Aadhaar for the Land").

How? Combine longitude and latitude to update the land records and provide unique ID; Integrate ULPIN with Aadhaar and Revenue Records

Implementation: Department of Land Resources under Ministry of Rural Development- Nodal Agency.

Benefits:

- Prevent land frauds
- Modernization of Land records
- Sharing of land records across multiple departments
- Reduce Litigations in Land ownership
- Easier process for Land Acquisition

GRAM UJALA PROGRAMME

#ENERGY

PRIMARY SOURCE | FINANCIAL EXPRESS

IN NEWS

India is the 3rd largest energy consumer in the world after USA and China. It is being said that "Energy Saved is Energy Generated". Accordingly, the Indian Government has taken number of energy efficiency measures to reduce and utilize energy efficiently.

Taking these measures forward, recently, the Ministry of Power has launched the Gram Ujala Programme in order to make LEDs available at affordable cost in the rural areas.

DETAILS OF THE GRAM UJALA PROGRAMME

- **Benefits for the households**: Each household will get up to 5 LEDs. LEDs will be available for only Rs 10 each for each household, in exchange for working condition old incandescent lamps.
- **Area to be covered:** In the first phase, it will be implemented only in villages of 5 districts in 5 different states - AP, UP, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat
- **Implementation Agency:** Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a PSU under Ministry of Power.
- **Impact of the Programme:**
  - **Environment:** Energy savings of 2025 million KWh/year and CO_2 reductions of 1.65 million T/year.
  - **People:** Better standard of life, financial savings, higher economic activity.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY INITIATIVES IN INDIA

Legal and Institutional Framework: The Energy Conservation Act (EC Act) was enacted in 2001 with the goal of reducing energy intensity of Indian economy. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) was set up as the **statutory body in 2002** at the central level to facilitate the implementation of the EC Act. Further, the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) is a joint venture of 4 Public sector enterprises. It implements a number of energy efficiency schemes in India.

INITIATIVES OF THE BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY (BEE)

- **Standards and Labelling:** Provide the consumer an informed choice about the energy saving and thereby the cost saving potential products such as Room Air Conditioners, Fluorescent Tube Lights, Frost Free Refrigerators etc.
- **Energy Conservation Building Codes (ECBC):** ECBC sets minimum energy standards for new commercial buildings having a connected load of 100kW or contract demand of 120 KVA and above.
- **Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA)**: rating tool that helps people assesses the performance of their building against certain

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nationally acceptable benchmarks of accepted energy and environmental principles.

- **National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE)**: Aims to strengthen the market for energy efficiency by creating conducive regulatory and policy regime. It is being jointly implemented by Bureau of Energy Efficiency and Energy Efficiency Services Limited EESL.

COMPONENTS OF NMEEE

- **Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT):** Industries in various sectors have been mandated to reduce their specific energy consumption (SEC) (energy used per unit of production) to a specific target based on their current levels of energy efficiency. The units which are able to achieve SEC level that are lower than their targets can receive energy savings certificates (ESCerts) for their excess savings. The ESCerts could be traded on the Power Exchanges and bought by other units under PAT who can use them to meet their compliance requirements.
- **MARKET TRANSFORMATION FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY (MTEE):** Under MTEE, two programmes have been developed i.e., **Bachat Lamp Yojana (BLY)** and **Super-Efficient Equipment Programme (SEEP)**.
- Under Bachat Lamp Yojana (BLY), incandescent bulbs are to be replaced by CFLs. In the next phase of BLY, BEE will promote use of LED lights. **Super-Efficient Equipment Programme (SEEP)** is a program designed to bring accelerated development of super-efficient appliances by providing financial stimulus.

INITIATIVES OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY SERVICES LIMITED (EESL)

- **UJALA SCHEME: UNNAT JYOTI BY AFFORDABLE LEDs FOR ALL**: It involves distribution of the energy efficient LED bulbs to the consumers.
- **Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP):** Under the programme, EESL replaces the conventional streetlights with LEDs at its own costs.
- **Atal Jyoti Yojana (AJAY)**: To illuminate dark regions through establishment of solar streetlights.

FLOATING SOLAR PLANT

#ENERGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

India's largest floating solar power plant of 100 MW capacity, belonging to the National Thermal Power Corporation, is expected to be commissioned at Ramagundam in May this year. The floating solar photo-voltaic project would be spread over 450 acres on the water surface of Sri Ram Sagar Project reservoir located on Godavari River. This will be the largest floating solar plant in the country in a single location as of now.

DETAILS: Floating solar plant refers to an array of solar panels on a structure that floats on a body of water, typically an artificial basin or a lake.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA

- India has set up an ambitious renewable energy target of 175 GW by 2022 of which solar comprises 100 GW. The country has been making rapid strides in this area. In this regard, floating solar would be considered to be huge opportunity for India.
- India's first floating PV plant of 10 KW was installed in a lake in Kolkata in 2014. Recently, India's largest floating solar plant was installed in Banasura sagar reservoir in Kerala.

ADVANTAGES

- **No land occupancy:** The main advantage of floating PV plants is that they do not take up any land.
- **Water Conservation:** The installation of solar panels on lake or reservoir leads of partial coverage of the water body leading to reduced evaporation.
- **Higher Efficiency of Panels:** The cooling effect of water on the installed PV modules, helps reduce thermal losses which increases the efficiency of panels. Plant operators claim higher efficiencies in the range of 5-16% from floating solar power plants compared to land based PV plants.

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- **Longer Module Life:** The cooling effect on modules slows down long term heat induced degradation of solar modules thereby leading to higher module and plant life.
- **Easy Cleaning & Less Water Consumption:** Regular cleaning of solar modules is easier as water is readily available. Also, water loss is lesser as the water used in cleaning the panels goes back into the reservoir.

CHALLENGES

- **Higher Investment:** Installing a floating solar power plant with current technologies requires at least thrice the investments cost compared to land-based solar power plants.
- Other challenges include ***rusting of components from constant contact with water; anchoring the floats to the water body so that they can withstand high velocity winds and floods, possible long term adverse impact on water ecology***.
- **Local manufacturing of floats** in India is another area that will require significant boost to meet such high requirements.

PMSSN

#HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

The Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) as a non-lapsable fund for share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PMSSN

1. A non-lapsable reserve fund for Health in the Public Account.
2. Proceeds of share of health in the Health and Education Cess will be credited into PMSSN.
3. Accruals into the PMSSN will be utilized for the flagship schemes of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare namely,
   - Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)
   - Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)
   - National Health Mission
   - Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)
   - Emergency & disaster preparedness and responses during health emergencies
4. Administration and maintenance of the PMSSN is entrusted to Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

INTERNATIONAL REPORTS

EBA REPORT 2019

#AGRICULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

*Recently, the World Bank has published the **"Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA) 2019" report**. This report is similar to the Doing Business Report of the World Bank, which ranks the ease of doing business in countries. The EBA 2019 report examines whether government-designed regulations and processes either facilitate or hinder agricultural activities of domestic farmers.*

In this regard, let us understand the various facets of this report and also have a look at India's performance.

Details about Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA) Report: It Identifies and monitors regulations and policies that affect the livelihood of farmers. Supported by a number of donor organizations and partners such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Department

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for International Development (DFID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Indicators used: 8 Indicators used: Supplying seed, registering fertilizer, securing water, registering machinery, sustaining livestock, protecting plant health, trading food, and accessing finance

INDICATOR	WHAT IS MEASURED
Supplying seed	Time and cost to register a new cereal variety and the quality of the seed regulation
Registering fertilizer	Time and cost to register a new chemical fertilizer product and the quality of the fertilizer regulation
Securing water	Requirements for access to water information and opportunities to participate in water resources management decisions
Registering machinery	Time and cost to register a two-axle, four-wheel-drive agricultural tractor
Sustaining livestock	Quality of the regulations for manufactured feed and veterinary medicinal products
Protecting plant health	Quality of phytosanitary regulation
Trading food	Time and cost to obtain documents to trade agricultural goods and the quality of food regulation system
Accessing finance	Accessing finance laws and regulations

What is not measured? Natural factors affecting the productivity of farmers such as the type of soil, average temperatures and precipitation levels, the length of the growing season, or the risk of droughts and floods.

Coverage: 101 countries across all regions.

Significance: Provide a snapshot of key aspects to be considered by policy makers for boosting farmers' productivity.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

- **Top Performers:** France, Croatia, and the Czech Republic are the three top-ranking countries. Turkey is the top-performing country among EG 20 countries, followed by Argentina, Brazil, the Russian Federation, Mexico and China.
- **India's Performance:** Among 101 countries covered, India ranked 49 on the EBA aggregate score. Among **emerging groups of 20 (EG 20) countries**, India has the second least favourable regulatory environment for farming activities after South Africa.
- **Weak performance**: 5 out of 8 indicators- registering fertilizer and machinery, securing water, sustaining livestock, and protecting plant health indicator.
- **High Performance:** 3 Indicators- Supplying seed, trading food, and Accessing finance indicators.

IMPORTANCE OF ENABLING BUSINESS OF AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

- The small and marginal farmers in India account for 83% of the farmers and hold almost around 48% of the agricultural land.
- These farmers face number of constraints with respect to access to inputs such as Seeds, Fertilizers, Water, machines, finances etc. The overall productivity of smaller landholdings is also lower. Further, due to lower marketable surplus, the small and marginal farmers are quite often exploited by the middlemen and traders leading to lower price realization.
- Hence, as pointed out by Committee on Doubling farmers' income, the Government must adopt 3-pronged strategy- Reducing Input costs, Enhance

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Productivity and higher price realization for the farmers.

- In this regard, the Government must adopt the right strategies to enable the business of agriculture and improve the overall productivity.
- This report should act as a reference point for the Government to understand the lacunae in facilitating agriculture and accordingly address these constraints and challenges.

EXTERNAL SECTOR

FOREX RESERVES

#EXTERNAL SECTOR

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

IN NEWS

Recently, the Forex Reserves in India surpassed Russia's to become the 4th largest Forex Reserves in the world. Presently, the top 3 countries with the largest Forex Reserves are China, Japan and Switzerland.

Components of Forex Reserves: The Forex reserves in India comprise of **Foreign Currency assets (FCAs), Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), Reserve Position in the IMF and Gold.**

- **Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs):** Consists of major global currencies + Investments in US Treasury bonds, bonds of other selected governments, deposits with foreign central and commercial banks.
- Even though, Foreign Currency Assets (FCA) is maintained in major currencies, the foreign exchange reserves are denominated and expressed in US dollar terms.

SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS (SDRs)

- The SDRs was created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as an international reserve asset in the year 1969 to supplement its member countries' official reserves. The SDR is a basket of 5 currencies- Dollar, Euro, Pound, Yen and Yuan. The SDRs are allocated to member countries in proportion to their IMF quotas.
- The value of SDR is set daily by the IMF on the basis of exchange rates between the currencies included in SDR. The value of SDR is denominated in terms of dollars.
- Uses of SDRs
  - SDRs can be held as part of Forex Reserves.
  - SDRs can be exchanged into other freely usable currencies among themselves. (This signifies that SDR is neither claim nor currency of IMF, rather, it is potential claim on freely usable currencies of IMF members)
  - IMF members can also use SDRs in their transactions with IMF such as repayment of loans, payment of interest, payment for increasing their IMF quota and so on.
  - Members can sell a part or all their SDR allocations.
- **Reserve Position in the IMF:** The subscription of the quota consists of two components: (i) foreign exchange component and (ii) domestic currency component. Under the foreign exchange component, a member is required to pay 25 per cent of its quota in SDRs or in foreign currencies. This is termed as "reserve position in the IMF or reserve tranche" and is part of the member country's reserve assets.

Reasons for increase in the Forex Reserves: : Increase in Foreign Investments into India + Current Account Surplus for the first time in the last 17 years + RBI's intervention in the forex market to buy dollars

HOW THE INCREASE IN THE FOREX RESERVES WOULD BENEFIT INDIA?

An important indicator of the stability of a currency is import cover. It measures the number of months of imports that can be covered with foreign exchange reserves available with the central Bank. The rising forex reserves have led to an improvement in India's import cover to around 18 months. Further, an increase in the

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forex reserves will give the RBI the firepower to act against any sharp depreciation in the value of Rupee.

PRELIMS SNIPPETS

SERVICES TRADE BAROMETER INDEX

WTO's Services Trade Barometer has risen sharply to a value of around 104 during Oct-Dec 2020. This is well above the value of 90 seen earlier due to the economic fallout of the CoVID-19 pandemic.

DETAILS ABOUT TRADE BAROMETER INDEX

- Published by WTO.
- 2 Types: (a) Goods Trade Barometer and (a) Services Trade Barometer.
- Provide "real-time" information on trends in Trade in Goods. Readings greater than 100 suggest above-trend growth while readings below 100 indicate below-trend growth.

'ATMANIRBHAR NIVESHAK MITRA' PORTAL

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry is in the process of finalising a dedicated digital portal "Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra" Portal.

DETAILS

- Portal would provide necessary handholding, information dissemination and facilitation for the benefit of domestic investors.
- Digitally support investors throughout their doing business journey in India and help them getting all the information starting from finding an investment opportunity to exploring incentives & taxes applicable to their businesses.
- This Project is under the "Invest India" agency which was set up in 2009 as a non-profit venture under the DPIIT.

PUBLIC ENTERPRISES SELECTION BOARD (PESB)

Recently, the Government has appointed Mallika Srinivasan, chairman and MD of Tractors and Farm Equipment (TAFE) as the head of PESB. This is the first time that a private sector executive has been appointed as the head of the PESB.

ABOUT PUBLIC ENTERPRISES SELECTION BOARD (PESB)

- **Establishment:** Non-statutory body constituted by the Government through a resolution in 1987.
- **Functions:** Advise the Government on the appointments to the highest posts in the Central Public Sector Enterprises. The final approval for the appointments is given by Cabinet Committee on Appointments.
- **Composition of PESB:** Chairman + 3 members
- **Tenure and Age Limit**: Hold office for a term of three years or until the age of 65 years whichever is earlier.

Note: The Banks Board Bureau (BBB) recommends the names for the Chiefs of the Public Sector Banks.

FUGITIVE ECONOMIC OFFENDER

Recently, the Union Finance Minister gave a statement that fugitive economic offenders like Vijay Mallya and

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Nirav Modi will be brought to India and face the law of the country.

Definition of Fugitive Economic Offender: A person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued for committing an offence listed in the Act and the value of the offence is at least Rs. 100 crores. Such a person may have either left India to avoid criminal prosecution; or being abroad, refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution. Some of the Offences listed in the act are Counterfeiting government stamps or currency, Cheque dishonour, Money laundering, Transactions defrauding creditors, Evasion of taxes, Corruption by Civil Servants etc.

Procedure to Declare Fugitive Economic Offender:

Director or Deputy Director appointed under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Act, 2002→Files Application before the Special Court constituted under PMLA Act → if the person fails to appear before the special court within six weeks of issuance of notice → Declared as Fugitive Economic Offender. (If the person appears before the court within 6 weeks, the proceedings to declare him as FEO get terminated).

Power to confiscate properties: Confiscate properties which: (i) are proceeds of crime, (ii) are benami properties in India or abroad, and (iii) any other property in India or abroad. Upon confiscation, all rights and titles of the property will vest in the central government.

ACCREDITED INVESTORS IN INDIA

The SEBI has recently introduced a consultation paper to seek comments from the public as to whether there is a need to introduce the Concept of Accredited Investors in India.

DETAILS

- Accredited investors are those who can take informed decisions after understanding various financial products and the risks and returns associated with them. Usually, such Investors are high net worth Individuals and hence have financial capacity to hire expert managers/advisors to enable them to take financial decisions.
- Such Accredited investors are formally recognised in other countries such as USA, Singapore etc. In order to make it easier for such accredited Investors to invest money, certain rules and regulations laid down by the Government are relaxed in their favour. Even the financial service providers which offer exclusive financial services to such accredited investors are also given certain relaxations in regulatory requirements.
- **New Development:** SEBI has come up with the idea to introduce the concept of Accredited Investor in India. As and when the proposal is finalised, we will discuss the concept in much greater detail.

INDIA OUT OF "TECHNICAL RECESSION"

According to recent estimates published by National Statistical Office (NSO), the Indian Economy registered positive GDP growth rate of 0.4% in the third quarter of the financial year 2020-21 (Oct - December 2020). In the previous two quarters, the Indian economy had registered negative GDP growth rate and hence, technically it had entered into Economic Recession.

Economic Recession in India: Recession is defined as a fall in the overall economic activity for two consecutive quarters (six months) accompanied by a decline in income, sales and employment. In independent India's history, 5 such years of negative GDP growth were registered. They saw contraction of -1.2% (FY58), -3.66% (FY66), -0.32% (FY73), -5.2% (FY80) and financial year (2020-21).

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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Which among the following indicators is/are monitored by the RBI to place the Banks under Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework?

1. Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR)
2. Gross NPA
3. Provisioning Coverage Ratio (PCR)

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) can be used for which among the following purposes?

1. Exchange into other freely usable currencies.
2. Repayment of IMF loans.
3. Payment for increasing Quota in IMF.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q3. Which among the following is/are the salient features of National Mineral Policy, 2019?

1. Right of first refusal at the time of auction
2. Granting status of Industry to Mining Sector.
3. Setting up of Exclusive Mining Zone

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q4. Consider the statements:

1. The Centre is the owner of the minerals located within the territory of India as well as the minerals underlying the ocean up to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India.
2. The Royalty on the major minerals is fixed and collected by Centre while the royalty on minor minerals is fixed and collected by the States.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q5. Which among the following International agencies publishes the "Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA)" Report?

(a) World Bank (b) IMF
(c) UNCTAD (d) World Economic Forum

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

Q1. Inspite of having huge potential, India has failed to capitalise on “Geology” as a mode of escape. In this regard, discuss as to how the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2021 would provide fillip to Mining Sector in India. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

Q2. Despite huge promise, potential of micro-irrigation remains untapped in India. Comment. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

Answers: *1-a, 2-d, 3-d, 4-d, 5-a*

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SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

GS PAPER I & GS PAPER II (MAIN)

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION (NHM)

#HEALTH RELATED ISSUES

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

The Union Cabinet was apprised on the progress under National Health Mission (NHM)during FY 2019-20 including accelerated decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) and Total Fertility Rate (TFR). It also noted the progress in respect of various diseases programmes like TB, Malaria, Kala-Azar, Dengue, Tuberculosis, Leprosy, Viral Hepatitis etc.

NHM HAS ENVISAGED NEW INITIATIVES IN 2019-20 AS

- **Social Awareness and Actions to Neutralize Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS)** initiative was launched to accelerate action to reduce deaths due to childhood pneumonia.
- **Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)** initiative was launched to provide assured, dignified, respectful and quality healthcare at no cost and zero tolerance for denial of services and all existing schemes for maternal and neonatal health have been brought under one umbrella.
- **Midwifery Services Initiative** aims to create a cadre of Nurse Practitioners in Midwifery who are skilled in accordance to competencies prescribed by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and are knowledgeable and capable of providing compassionate women-centered, reproductive, maternal and newborn health care services.
- **School Health and Wellness Ambassadors Initiative** has been launched under the AB-HWCs Programme in partnership with Ministry of Education to promote health and well-being through an active lifestyle amongst school children.

PROGRESS REPORT OF NHM

Parameters	Targets	Progress
Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	Reduce to 1/1000 live births	MMR has declined from 167 in 2011-13 to 113 in 2016-18.
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	Reduce to 25/1000 live births	IMR declined from 80 in 1990 to 32 in the year 2018.
Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	Reduce to 2.1	TFR in India declined from 2.3 in 2013 to 2.2 in the year 2018.
Leprosy	Reduce prevalence to < 1 /10000 population and incidence to zero in all districts	
Malaria	Reduce annual Incidence to be <1/1000	In the year 2019, malaria cases and deaths declined by 21.27% and 20% respectively as compared to 2018.
TB	Ending the TB epidemic by 2025 from the country.	The incidence of TB per 1,00,000 population has been reduced from 234 in 2012 to 193

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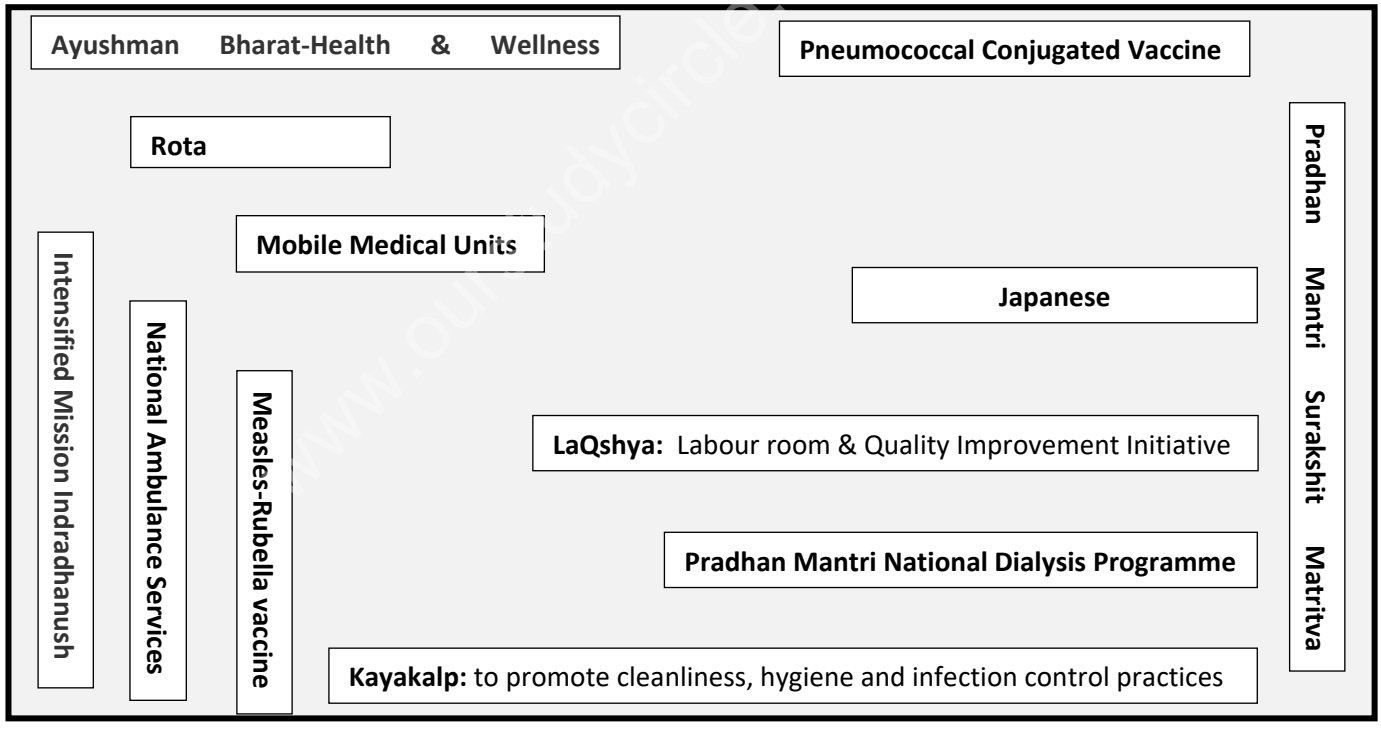
		in 2019. The mortality due to TB per 1,00,000 populations for India reduced from 42 in 2012 to 33 in 2019.

- **Other targets**
  - Prevent and reduce mortality & morbidity from communicable, non-communicable; injuries and emerging diseases
  - Reduce household out-of-pocket expenditure on total health care expenditure.
- **Other achievements**
  - The percentage of Kala-Azar endemic blocks, achieving the elimination target of < 1 KA case per 10000 population, increased from 74.2% in 2014 to 94% in 2019-20.
  - The National target of sustaining case fatality rate (CFR) to less than 1 percent was achieved. The case fatality rate on account of Dengue in 2019 was 0.1%.
  - **Lymphatic Filariasis (LF):** In 2019, among 257 LF endemic districts, 98 districts have achieved microfilaria rate <1% and verified by Transmission Assessment Survey (TAS-1) and stopped Mass Drug Administration (MDA).
  - In relation to **Dengue,** the National target was to sustain case fatality rate (CFR) < 1 percent. The target was achieved as case fatality rate in 2014 was 0.3% and during 2015 to 2018, CFR has been sustained at 0.2%. Further in 2019, it has been reduced to 0.1%



WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2021

#REPORT #SOCIAL ISSUES

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE World Happiness Report

IN NEWS

*The **Sustainable Development Solutions Network** for the United Nations released the World Happiness Report 2021.*

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This year Report focuses on the effects of COVID-19 on happiness and how countries have differed in their success in reducing the deaths and maintaining connected and healthy societies.

Gross National Happiness: The phrase 'Gross National Happiness' was first coined by the 4th King of Bhutan, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, in 1972.

The concept implies that sustainable development should take a holistic approach towards notions of progress and give equal importance to non-economic aspects of wellbeing.

The rankings are based on polling (Gallup World Poll) which looks at six variables:

- Gross Domestic Product Per Capita (Purchasing Power Parity).
- Social Support.
- Healthy life expectancy at birth.
- Freedom to make life choices.
- Generosity.
- Perceptions of corruption.

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2021 PERFORMANCE

- The World Happiness Report ranks 149 countries.
- **Finland** has been ranked as the happiest country in the world (for the fourth consecutive year), followed by Iceland, Denmark, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Norway.
- **Afghanistan** (149) is the most unhappy country, followed by Zimbabwe (148), Rwanda (147), Botswana (146) and Lesotho (145).
- **India's Neighbours:** Pakistan-105; Bangladesh-101; China-84.
- India has been ranked 139, out of 149 countries evaluated. In 2020, India was ranked 144 out of 156 countries surveyed.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- For the living, there has been greater economic insecurity, anxiety, disruption of every aspect of life, and, for many people, stress and challenges to mental and physical health.
- **Trust and the ability to count on others are major supports to life evaluations, especially in the face of crisis.** To feel that your lost wallet would be returned if found by a police officer, by a neighbour, or a stranger, is estimated to be more important for happiness than income, unemployment, and major health risks.
- **Trust is even more important in explaining the very large international differences in COVID-19 death rates**, which were substantially higher in the Americas and Europe than in East Asia, Australasia, and Africa. These differences were almost half due to differences in the age structure of populations, whether the country is an island, and how exposed each country was, early in the pandemic, to large numbers of infections in nearby countries. Whatever the initial circumstances, the most effective strategy for controlling COVID-19 was to drive community transmission to zero and to keep it there. Countries adopting this strategy had death rates close to zero, and were able to avoid deadly second waves, and ended the year with less loss of income and lower death rates.
- Factors supporting successful COVID-19 strategies include:
  - **Confidence in public institutions.** Trusted public institutions were more likely to choose the right strategy and have their populations support the required actions. For example, Brazil's death rate was 93 per 100,000, higher than in Singapore, and of this difference, over a third could be explained by the difference in public trust.
  - **income inequality**, acting partly as a proxy for social trust, explains 20% of the difference in death rates between Denmark and Mexico. A second measure of social trust, whether there was a high expected return of lost wallets found by neighbours or strangers, was associated with far fewer deaths.
  - whether the country had, or learned from, the lessons from SARS and other earlier pandemics.
  - **whether the head of the government was a woman.**

REASONS FOR ASIA-PACIFIC SUCCESS IN SUPPRESSING COVID-19

- The Asia-Pacific region has achieved notable success compared to the North Atlantic region in controlling

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the pandemic, with far lower mortality rates and greater successful implementation of Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) to stop the spread of the disease, such as border controls; face-mask use; physical distancing; and widespread testing, contact tracing, and quarantining (or home isolation) of infected individuals.

- The successes of Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) implementation in the Asia-Pacific region resulted from measures that were both top-down, with governments setting strong control policies, and bottom-up, with the general public supporting governments and complying with government-directed public health measures.
- The more **individualistic culture of the North Atlantic countries** compared to countries in the Asia-Pacific region and the relative looseness of social norms may also have contributed to lower public support for NPIs. **Assertions of "personal liberty" and demands for privacy** in the North Atlantic contributed to the reluctance of individuals in the North Atlantic countries to comply with public health measures such as contact tracing.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND WELL-BEING DURING COVID-19

- One major element in COVID-19 policy has been physical distancing or self-isolation, posing a significant challenge for people's social connections, vital for their happiness.
- People whose feeling of connectedness fell had decreased happiness, as did people whose sense of loneliness increased and whose social support was reduced.
- Many positive features of a person's life helped to protect their sense of connectedness. These included gratitude, grit, prior connections, volunteering, taking exercise, and having a pet. It also helped to have activities that provided 'flow.'
- Likewise, there were negative features that weakened a person's protection. These included prior mental illness, a sense of uncertainty, and a lack of proper digital connections. Clearly, digital connection is vital, and many people have been helped by digital programmes promoting mental health.

WORK AND WELL-BEING DURING COVID-19: IMPACT, INEQUALITIES, RESILIENCE, AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

- Global GDP is estimated to have shrunk by roughly 5% in 2020, representing the largest economic crisis in a generation. In many countries, job vacancies remained approximately 20% below normal levels by the end of 2020. Young people, low-income, and low-skill workers have also been more likely to lose working hours or lose their jobs entirely.
- Not being able to work has had a negative impact on well-being. Countries that have introduced more substantial labour market protections for workers have generally seen less severe declines in well-being.
- **Social support can protect against the negative impact of not being able to work.** In the United Kingdom, the negative effect of not working on life satisfaction was 40% more severe for lonely workers to begin with. Furloughing helps but may not fully compensate for the negative impact of not working. Furloughed workers, even those without any income loss, still experienced a significant decline in life satisfaction relative to those who continued working.
- The impacts of the pandemic on the world of work are likely to endure. Evidence from past recessions and early research from the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that young people who come of age in worse macroeconomic conditions are more likely to be driven by financial security in adulthood. The shift to remote working is likely to last long after the crisis has subsided. Providing future workers with more flexibility and control over their working lives, but at the risk of undermining social capital at work.

LIVING LONG AND LIVING WELL: THE WELLBY APPROACH

To evaluate social progress and to make effective policy, we have to take into account both:

- the quality of life, and
- the length of life.

Health economists use the concept of **Quality-Adjusted Life Years** to do this, but they only count the individual patient's health-related quality of life. In the well-being approach, we consider total well-being, whoever

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experiences it, and for whatever reason: All policy-makers should aim to maximise the **Well-Being-Adjusted Life-Years (or WELLBYs)** of all who are born. And include the life-experiences of future generations (subject to a small discount rate).

- The well-being approach puts a lower value than is customary upon money relative to life. **According to many studies in rich countries, an extra $1 raises WELLBYs by around 1/100,000 points. But an extra year of life increases WELLBYs by around 7.5 WELLBYs. So, the community should value a year of life equally to $750,000 of GDP.**
- The WELLBY approach also provides a more complete way of measuring human progress and comparing the performance of different countries. It does this by multiplying average well-being by life expectancy. On this basis, the number of WELLBYs per person rose by 1.3% between 2006-08 and 2017-19, due to higher life-expectancy, especially in the less healthy countries. This was a significant reduction in fundamental inequality across the world, and inequality remains lower in 2020 despite COVID-19.

RISING POVERTY

#SOCIAL JUSTICE #ECONOMIC JUSTICE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE ECONOMIC SURVEY

CONTEXT

India introduced one of the earliest and most stringent lockdowns in the face of the pandemic and its enforcement brought the economy to a standstill, triggering unemployment, hunger, distress migration, and untold hardship.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S STUDY ON LIVING STANDARDS

- India's middle class (people with incomes of approximately ₹700-1,500 or $10-20 per day) may have shrunk by a third due to 2020's pandemic-driven recession.
- The number of people who are poor in India (with incomes of $2 or less a day) is estimated to have increased by 7.5 crore because of the COVID-19 recession. This accounts for nearly 60% of the global increase in poverty.
- About 3.5 crore dropping below the poverty line.
- In contrast, China's middle class is likely to see a miniscule dip of just one crore, while the number of poor people may have gone up by 10 lakh, according to the report.
- It also noted the record **spike in MGNREGA participants** as proof that the poor were struggling to find work.

RISING INEQUALITY

- Inequality was alarmingly high even before the pandemic struck. According to Oxfam report 2019, In India the top 1% hold 51.53% of the national wealth, while the remaining 99% make do with almost 48%.
- However, the **Inequality Virus Report**, released by Oxfam International, has found that the COVID-19 pandemic deeply increased the existing inequalities in India and around the world.
- The rich were able to escape the pandemic's worst impact; and while the white-collar workers isolated themselves and worked from home, a majority of the not-so-fortunate Indians lost their livelihood. The wealth of Indian billionaires increased by 35% during the lockdown.

DISTRESS DUE TO COVID-19

- There are people who can't be home-stayers when it comes to livelihoods viz. migrant workers, gig economy workers, fruit & vegetable street vendors, daily wage earners and others. The CMIE approximates job losses of about 140 million people then.
- Urban jobs in informal sector being lost where there is no job security. Informal workers had relatively fewer opportunities to work from home and suffered more job loss compared to the formal sector. India's large informal workforce make up 75% of the 122 million jobs lost.
- The 40-50 million seasonal migrant workers, typically engaged working in construction sites, factories etc. were particularly distressed. Rural households which

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were dependent on remittances from migrant workers are now facing distress due to migrant returns.

- Rise of unemployment to decadal highs to more than 6%.
- The unemployment rate among women rose from an already high 15% before COVID to 18%. This increase in unemployment of women can result in a loss to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about 8% or USD 218 billion. Of the women who retained their jobs, as many 83% were subjected to a cut in income according to a survey by the Institute of Social Studies Trust.
- Beyond income and job losses, poorer women also suffered healthwise because of the disruption in regular health services and Anganwadi centers.
- Halting of midday meal scheme due to school closures is depriving nutrition to children. Further, child labour is rising, to meet income and food needs of households.
- Digital divide worsening inequalities: Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) revealed that only a little under a third of India's schoolchildren are accessing online education. The resulting widespread loss of human capital accumulation will cause more damage than the economic scars being caused by permanent loss of output

A new study from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has found that an additional 207 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030 due to the severe long-term impact of the coronavirus pandemic, bringing the total number of the world's extremely poor to more than a billion.

With the number of COVID-19 cases once again rising disconcertingly across the country, there is a clear and present danger that not only could any nascent economic recovery be stymied even before it gains traction but that the number of those sliding into poverty could jump dramatically. The policy responses to the rising wave of infections could well test the government's 'lives versus livelihoods' playbook to the hilt.

The Economic Survey's opinion

- *Both **economic growth** – as reflected in the income per capita at the state level – and **inequality** have similar relationships with socio-economic indicators.*
- *Economic growth has a far greater impact on poverty alleviation than inequality.*
- *Given India's stage of development, by expanding the India must continue to focus on economic growth to lift the poor out of poverty overall pie.*

India needs to grow first before it can distribute. Otherwise, it can get stuck in a low-income equilibrium.

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

#POVERTY & HUNGER #SOCIAL ISSUES

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

The Union Minister of State for Agriculture questioned the methodology and data accuracy of the Global Hunger Index (GHI) report, which has placed India at 94th among 107 countries in 2020.

The Minister said the government had written to the NGO, Welthungerhilfe, which compiles the report, expressing concerns about their methodology, data accuracy and sample size and was yet to hear from them.

GOVERNMENT'S ARGUMENT

- According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4, the percentage of wasted, stunted and malnourished children in 2015-16 stood at 21, 38.4 and 35.7, respectively.
- Compared to NFHS-4 data, the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) of 2017-18 showed an improvement of 4%, 3.7% and 2.3% in wasted, stunted and malnourished children respectively.
- CNNS was commissioned by the government in 2016 and was conducted from 2016-18, led by the Union Health Ministry, in collaboration with the UNICEF. CNNS includes only nutrition data, whereas NFHS encompasses overall health indicators.

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GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX 2020

- GHI is a peer-reviewed annual report, jointly published by Concern Worldwide, an Ireland-based humanitarian group, and Welthungerhilfe, a Germany-based NGO.
- The data for the indicators come from the United Nations and other multilateral agencies, including the World Health Organization and the World Bank.
- It is designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels.
- It says the aim of publishing the report is to trigger action to reduce hunger around the world.
- The GHI scores are calculated each year to assess progress and setbacks in combating hunger. It is calculated on the basis of four indicators:
  - **Undernourishment:** Share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.
  - **Child Wasting:** Share of children under age five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition.
  - **Child Stunting:** Share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.
  - **Child Mortality:** The mortality rate of children under the age of five.

INDIA'S PERFORMANCE IN INDEX

- With a score of 27.2, India has a level of hunger that is "serious".
- It ranks 94 out of 107 countries in the Index. In 2019, India's rank was 102 out of 117 countries.
- India is behind Nepal (73), Pakistan (88), Bangladesh (75), Indonesia (70) among others.
- Out of the total 107 countries, **only 13 countries fare worse than India** including countries like Rwanda (97), Nigeria (98), Afghanistan (99), Liberia (102), Mozambique (103), Chad (107) among others.
- **Performance on various Indicators:**
  - **Undernourishment: 14%** of India's population is undernourished (2017-19). It was 16.3% during 2011-13.
  - **Child Wasting:** 17.3% (2015-19), it was 15.1% in 2010-14.
  - **Child Stunting:** 34.7%, it has improved significantly, from 54% in 2000 to less than 35% now.
  - **Child Mortality:** 3.7%, it was 5.2% in 2012.

MILLET-BASED PRODUCTS

#HEALTH # AGRICULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE ICAR

- Millet is a common term to categorize small-seeded grasses that are often termed nutri-cereals or dryland-cereals. It includes jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet) and ragi (finger millet), small millet, foxtail millet, proso millet, barnyard millet, kodo millet and other millets.
- Kodo millet originated in India. It is assumed that domestication of this millet took place about 3000 years ago. Kodo millet is well suited for tropical and sub-tropical regions. Kodo millet is said to possess the highest drought resistance among all minor millets and believed to give good yield with a growing period lasting 80–135 days.
- India, Nigeria and China are the largest producers of millets in the world, accounting for more than 55% of the global production.
- For many years, India was a major producer of millets. However, in recent years, millet production has increased dramatically in Africa. In India, pearl millet is the fourth-most widely cultivated food crop after rice, wheat and maize.
- The three major millet crops currently growing in India are jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet) and ragi (finger millet).
- Major producers include Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Haryana.

NEED FOR PROMOTION OF MILLETS

- Sustainable agriculture

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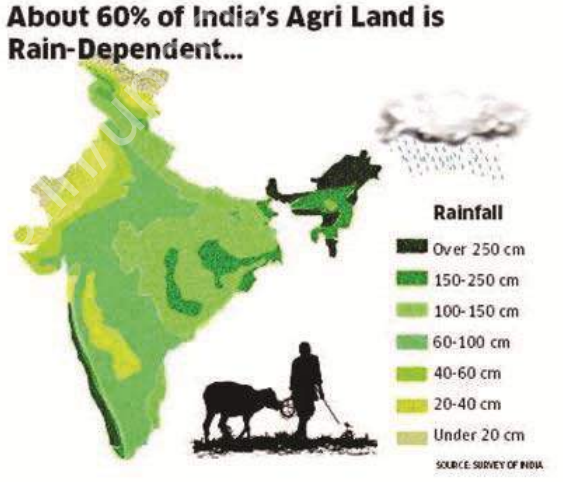
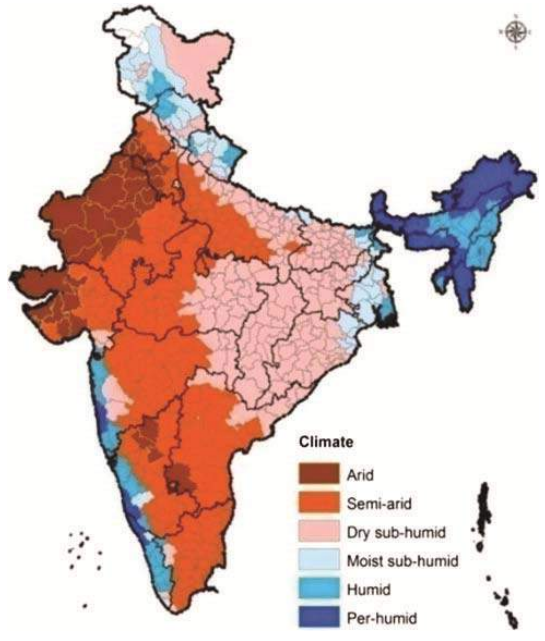
- Millets are **Photo-insensitive** (do not require a specific photoperiod for flowering).
- Millets are generally **thermophilic** (thriving at relatively higher temperatures) and **xerophilic** (can reproduce with limited water input).

- Pearl millet can grow on poor sandy soils and is well suited for dry climates due to its ability to use moisture efficiently.
- Small millets such as finger millet and Kodo millet can be grown in adverse climatic and soil conditions.
  - Millets are **carbon sequestrating crops** contributing to the reduction of CO_2 in the atmosphere, besides being water efficient.
- In contrast, paddy is a major contributor to climate change through methane emission (the green-house gas emanating from water-drenched rice fields). Wheat and maize also has high global warming potential.
- Wheat being a thermally sensitive crop, with increasing temperatures, its production is liable to be adversely affected.
  - Millets are resistant to climatic stress, pests and diseases
- Millets can be stored for a considerable amount of time under appropriate storage conditions, therefore making them "famine reserves" and this feature is of great relevance for India, as our agriculture suffers from the vagaries of monsoon.
  - Millets are not water or input-intensive. It requires little irrigation and no fertilizers at all.
  - Millets have low carbon and water footprint (rice plant needs at least 3 times more water to grow in comparison to millets).
- Since India, which supports more than 15% of the world's population, but only has 4% of its water resources, promotion of millets could be helpful.
- **Economic Security**
  - Millets can be grown on dry, low-fertile, mountainous, tribal and rain-fed areas.
  - Millets are good for the soil, have shorter cultivation cycles and require less cost-intensive cultivation.
  - Millets and thus can prove to be a sustainable income source for farmers.
  - They provides employment to many people due to the traditional methods of farming involved in their cultivation.
  - The export of millets add to the overall economic growth of the country and also helps boost the GDP of the nation.
  - Millet has a Short growing season of about 65 days which allows it to be a part of **multiple cropping systems** in both rain-fed and irrigated areas. Millets sequestrate carbon, thereby beneficial for intercropping with other vital crops





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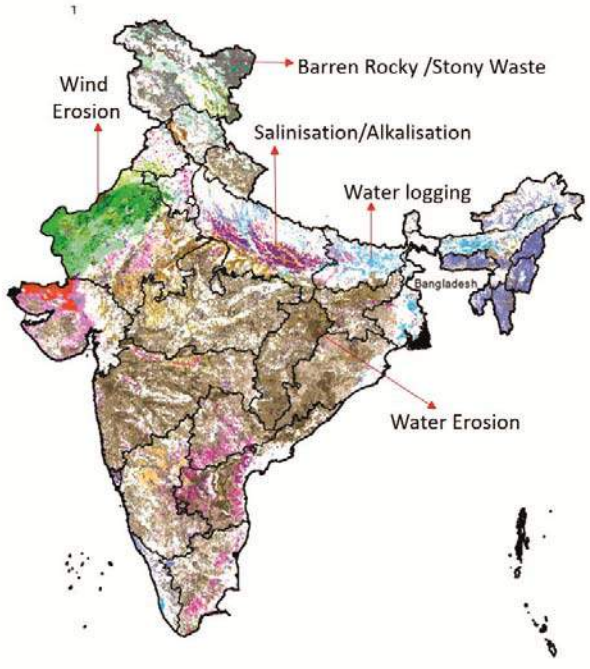

- **Nutritional Security**
  - Higher levels of protein with more balanced amino acid profile.
  - Millets are high in **dietary fibre**.
  - B-complex vitamins including **niacin, thiamine and riboflavin**, the essential sulphur-containing amino acid methionine, lecithin, and some vitamin E
  - A powerhouse of nutrients including **iron, folate, calcium, zinc, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, vitamins and antioxidants**.
- Ragi is known to have the **highest calcium content** among all the food grains.
- Its high iron content can **fight high prevalence of anaemia** in India women of reproductive age and infants.
  - The seeds also contain phyto-nutrients, including phytic acid, which is believed to lower cholesterol, and phytate, which is associated with reducing risk of cancer.
- **Poverty and social welfare**

Different sources estimate poverty rates between 37% and 77% of the population, with rural areas having more poverty than cities.

- **Tendulkar Committee**: 37% (more than 400 million people); rural 42% and urban 26%
- **Saxena Committee**: 50% of Indian population BPL
- **Arjun Sengupta**: 77% of Indian population BPL
- **World Bank**: 42% of Indian population below international poverty line of $1.25/day in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). 80% of Indian population lives below the $2/day line.
- **UNDP**: 54% of the Indian population are poor following multidimensional poverty Index.

Nutritional status is also poor in the country. According to NFHS-5:

- More than half of the children and women are anaemic in 13 of the 22 States/UTs.
- Increase in childhood stunting in 13 of the 22 States/UTs compared to the data of NFHS-4.
- Prevalence of elevated blood pressure (hypertension) has increased.
- Most States/UTs also see an increase in overweight/obesity prevalence among children and adults.

Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has reconfirmed the power of agricultural productivity in reducing rural poverty: **a 1% productivity increase reduces poverty by 0.65%.**

There exist a valid linkages between millets, poverty reduction, malnutrition alleviation and rural development:

- Millets are drought resistant and require few external inputs.
- Highly nutritious
- Food and livelihood security to small and marginal farmers and inhabitants of rainfed areas, especially in remote tribal areas
- Dual-purpose crops providing both food & fodder
- **Health & Disease**
  - Reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes in adults.
  - They are gluten-free and have a low glycemic index (a relative ranking of carbohydrate in foods according to how they affect blood glucose levels).

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This makes them easily digestible and non-allergenic foods. So they are beneficial for Diabetic patients, people having Cancer, Oxidative stress, obesity, Celiac diseases, Gastro-intestinal disorders, and also for patients with heart ailments.

- The anaemia (iron deficiency), B-complex vitamin deficiency, pellagra (niacin deficiency) can be effectively tackled with intake of less expensive but nutritionally rich food grains like millets.

- **Culture:** Millets have significant cultural value due to their long history on the Indian subcontinent. References to millets can be found in mythology, poetry, religious practices, ayurvedic recipes, and in numerous dishes. Millets are not only food grains; they are still intricately interwoven in the socio-cultural fabric of numerous regions.

International Relation: India exported about 15.4% of the world's Bajra to roughly 60 countries from 2013 to 2018. More than 40% of global millet consumption is held by African countries mainly Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Burkina, and Sudan, where food and nutritional security are the major challenges. India can become an effective exporter to develop better relation with these countries.

WHY IS INDIA SLOW IN ADOPTING MILLET-BASED PRODUCTS?

The average annual growth of millet consumption in India from 1999 to 2016 was only 4.56 %. The highest rise in domestic millet consumption in India was noticed in the years 2002-2003, in which the growth rate reported was about 115.15%. Year by year, the growth rate of millet consumption is declining by the country to an extremely low growth rate of 8.33% in the years 2019-2020.

For all millets there is a dramatic decrease in cultivated area. Dramatic also is the decrease in total production of small millets - 76%.

- General perception is that the millets are increasingly seen as "poor person's food". Therefore, it is necessary to re-brand coarse cereals/millets as nutri-cereals and promote their production and consumption.
- Historical policy neglect of these crops.
- Lower or near absence of production support when compared to the support enjoyed by other crops.
- Near lack of reach of improved methods of production and technologies.
- Lack of appropriate post-harvest processing technologies for small millets except finger millet.
- Competition from other market friendly remunerative crops.
- Changes in preference patterns in consumption moving away from them (Sanskritization), mainly due to inclusion of only rice and wheat into the Public Distribution System (PDS)
- Absence of public or private funded promotion of millets as a nutritious food category.

EFFORTS BY GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE MILLETS

- The year **2018 was declared as the National Year of Millets** by India. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council in 2018, approved India's proposal to observe an **International Year of Millets in 2023**.
- **Intensive Millets Promotion(INSIMP):** Launched in 2012 as a part of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, wherein Rs.300 crores has been allocated to advancing equipment and technology related to millet harvest and increasing productivity of inefficient areas.
- **Rainfed Area Development Programme:** Developing and identifying new areas receiving adequate rainfall for millet farming as a part of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana(RKVY).
- In order to promote 'millets', India had on its part notified these climate resilient crops as "Nutri-Cereals" and allowed its inclusion in the **Public Distribution System (PDS)** for improving nutritional support.
- **Recognising millets' anti-diabetic properties**, the government's notification called it a "powerhouse of nutrients" and identified several varieties of millets for promotion. The millets in the category of "Nutri-Cereals" include Sorghum (Jowar), Pearl Millet (Bajra), Finger Millet (Ragi), Foxtail Millet (Kangani/Kakun) and Buckwheat (Kuttu) among others.

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- Besides, the government had in July substantially hiked the **minimum support price (MSP)** of millets so that more and more farmers may opt for cultivation of these less water consuming crops.
- Millets are being purchased at the support price and are also being included in the **mid-day meal scheme** and public distribution system, for encouraging its consumption.
- The government also initiated the **'Integrated Cereals Development Programmes in Coarse Cereals'** under Macro Management of Agriculture.
- Millets are being **promoted under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM)** to help provide good nutrition to those who are unable to afford it.

WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES REPORT

#REPORT #SOCIAL JUSTICE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

State of the world's indigenous peoples report has been released by United Nations department of economic and social affairs.

KEY ISSUED IDENTIFIED	SUGGESTION
Indigenous peoples' relationship to their lands, territories and resources are at the heart of their identity, well-being and culture.	Accessible and affordable mechanisms for effectively identifying and demarcating indigenous traditional lands. Particular attention should be given to typically vulnerable groups within indigenous populations, including women, children and youth.
Indigenous peoples face challenges when asserting their rights in the context of extractive industry operations, agribusiness plantations, infrastructure development and conservation initiatives. E.g. draft amendment to Indian Forest Act of 1927 would threaten the indigenous forest rights recognized in Forest Rights Act.	Policies and programmes relating to conservation or pursuit of commercial activities shall be fully consistent with respect for indigenous peoples' rights. Ensure indigenous peoples' participation in strategic land planning.
There remains a wide gap between formal recognition and actual implementation of such rights. E.g. In India, over 46% of community land claims under Forest Rights Act have been rejected on invalid grounds.	National human rights institutions should continue to support the rights of indigenous peoples. Training and assistance to indigenous peoples to carry out mapping and demarcation of their ancestral lands and territories.
Indigenous women play a pivotal role in traditional relationship indigenous peoples have with the land. Yet, their legal status related to land rights are hampered by gender discrimination and poverty-related barriers.	Fair and effective grievance mechanisms to indigenous women. Fully implement Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
SDG's outcomes are significantly dependent on the way lands and resources are managed such as food security, environmental protection and climate change.	Include recognition of customary rights or tenure of indigenous peoples to their lands and resources in their data on secure land tenure rights in SDG reporting.

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BENGALURU, SHIMLA 'MOST LIVEABLE' CITIES

INDEX

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has recently announced the rankings under **Ease of Living Index 2020.**

DETAILS

- The **Ease of Living Index (EoLI)** is an assessment tool that evaluates the quality of life and the impact of various initiatives for urban development. It provides a comprehensive understanding of participating cities across India based on quality of life, economic-ability of a city, and its sustainability and resilience. The assessment also incorporates the residents' view on the services provided by city administration through a Citizen Perception Survey.
- The **Municipal Performance Index (MPI)** was launched as an accompaniment to the Ease of Living Index. It seeks to examine local government practice in municipalities across areas of services, finance, policy, technology and governance. It seeks to simplify and evaluate the complexities in local governance practice and promote the ethos of transparency and accountability.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

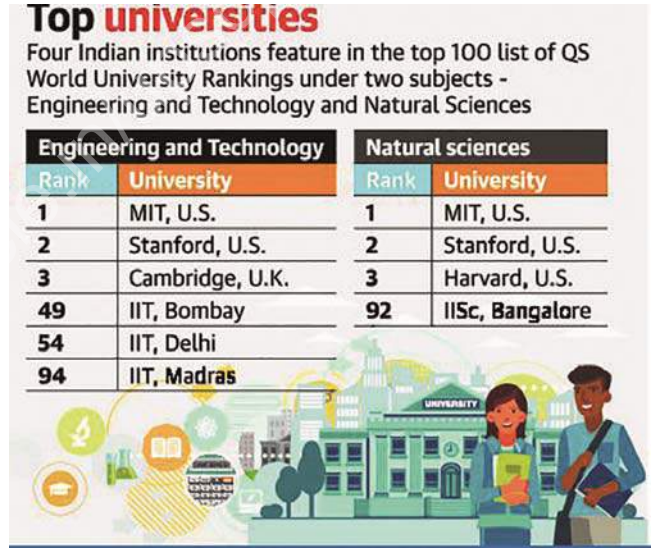
- Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in the **Million+ category**, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore, and Greater Mumbai. In the **Less than Million category**, Shimla was ranked the highest in ease of living, followed by Bhubaneshwar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Davangere, and Tiruchirappalli.
- Similar to the EoLI index, the **assessment framework under MPI 2020** has classified municipalities based on their population- Million+ (municipalities having over a million population) and Less than Million Population. In the **Million+ category**, Indore has emerged as the highest ranked municipality, followed by Surat and Bhopal. In the **Less than Million category**, New Delhi Municipal Council has emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and Gandhinagar.

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING 2021

RANKING #HIGHER EDUCATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

Released by: Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2021.



Metrics: It ranks the world's top universities in individual subject areas, covering **51 subjects.**

It uses **four key metrics** to compile the rankings including:-

a) Academic reputation (Having provided their name, contact details, job title and the institution where they are based, respondents identify the countries, regions and faculty areas they are most familiar with, and up to two narrower subject disciplines in which they have expertise.)

b) Employer reputation (The QS World University Rankings are unique in incorporating employability as a key factor in the evaluation of international universities.)

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c) **Research citations per paper** (It measure citations per paper, rather than citations per faculty member. A minimum publication threshold is set for each subject to avoid potential anomalies stemming from small numbers of highly cited papers.)

d) **H-index** (Since 2013, a score based on 'h-index' has also been incorporated in the QS World University Rankings by Subject. The h-index is a way of measuring both the productivity and impact of the published work of a scientist or scholar. The index is based on the set of the academic's most cited papers and the number of citations that they have received in other publications.

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

1. The Indian Institute of Science broke into the top 100 in the natural sciences category.
2. With regard to subject rankings, there are two new entrants in the top 100 list: JNU's anthropology programme and O.P. Jindal Global University's law programme, which is also the only private institution in the list.
3. In the broad engineering and technology category, only three institutions made it to the top 100 — the Bombay, Delhi and Madras IITs — in comparison to five institutions last year. (Kharagpur and Kanpur IITs dropped out of the top 100 though the former is one of the government's Institutes of Eminence (IoEs).
4. In social sciences and management, the University of Delhi was the highest ranked Indian institution, but fell 48 places to drop out of the top 200.
5. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences remained the only institution in the top 300 in life sciences and medicine, but also dropped more than 10 places.
6. India had a good performance in COVID-19 research, ranking fifth in the world in terms of the number of published research papers on the pandemic.

Meanwhile, globally, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) emerged as the world's best-performing institution, followed by Stanford University.

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

#LEARNING OUTCOMES #HIGHER EDUCATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IDEAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

There are three ideal learning outcomes of higher education:

- **Knowledge :** To provide knowledge in the relevant discipline to the students.
- **Skills :** Since higher education students are on the verge of joining the workforce, it is expected that their education will also impart them with the skills needed for their jobs/enterprises.
- **Character Development:** Students are expected to play a constructive role in shaping the society and the world at large using the values and ideals of a modern, progressive society; the teaching-learning process is expected to mould their character accordingly.

So and obvious questions that arises is that on how many of India's higher learning institutions, and the students within them, are able to fulfil any or all of these ideal learning outcomes?

ISSUES WITH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Shortage of resources:

- Bulk of the enrolment in higher education is handled by state universities and their affiliated colleges.
- However, these state universities receive very small amounts of grants in comparison.
- **Nearly 65% of the University Grants Commission (UGC) budget is utilised by the central universities and their col**leges while state universities and their affiliated colleges get only the remaining 35%.

Low Enrolment:

- According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report 2018-19, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India is only 26.3%, which is quite low as compared to the developed as well as, other developing countries.

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- With the increase of enrolments at the school level, the supply of higher education institutes is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country.

Issues of faculties

- According to UGC, the total number of sanctioned teaching posts in various Central Universities are 16,699 for professors, 4,731 for associate professors, and 9,585 for assistant professors.
- **The Committee reasoned that this could be due to two reasons:**
  - young students don't find the teaching profession attractive;
  - the recruitment process is long and involves too many procedural formalities.

Lack of accountability for teachers

- At present, there is no mechanism for ensuring the accountability and performance of professors in universities and colleges. This is unlike foreign universities where the performance of college faculty is evaluated by their peers and students.

Low Quality of Education:

- Ensuring quality in higher education is amongst the foremost challenges being faced in India today.
- A large number of colleges and universities in India are unable to meet the minimum requirements laid down by the UGC and our universities are not in position to mark their place among the top universities of the world.

Most courses do not address industry demands

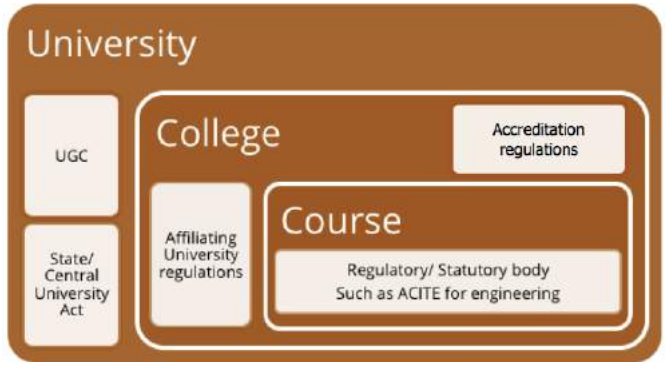
- That there is a huge gulf between the curriculum taught in the colleges and actual job requirements is universally known.
- It is common to hear even the brightest of students mention that they learnt more on the job than through their curriculum in college. If this is indeed the universal reality, why should we bestow so much importance on a syllabus?

Low levels of Vocational component

- From 61st round of NSSO survey (2004–2005) to 66th round of NSSO survey (2009–2010), the population in the age group of 15–29 years who had received formal vocational education reduced from 2.37 to 1.96% and those who had received non-formal vocational education declined from 7.74 to 4.80%

Lack of autonomy

- **Need for Autonomy**
  - Academic Freedom
  - Innovation
  - Promote Research Ecosystem
  - Avoid Red-tapism
  - To weed out corruption
  - Need of Digital Economy
  - Impact on GER
  - While most central and state universities are guided by the aforesaid regulations there are a number of institutions established outside the aforesaid regulatory purview for the want of autonomy in their functioning. IITs and IIMs which are established outside the Indian university system are an example of this category.
- **3 tier regulation architecture**
  - While the universities in India are established by a law, either central or state law, UGC acts as an over-arching regulatory body at the university level.
  - The colleges on the other hand are regulated by way of affiliation to universities. This way the course fee, assessment criteria, admission criteria etc are regulated by the affiliated universities.
  - At the course level there are various technical professional councils that regulate the design and content of the course.



Poor Infrastructure and Facilities: Poor infrastructure is another challenge to the higher education system of India, particularly the institutes

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run by the public sector suffer from poor physical facilities and infrastructure.

Outdated curriculum

- Outdated, irrelevant curriculum that is dominantly theoretical in nature and has a low scope for creativity.
- There is a wide gap between industry requirements and universities' curriculum that is the main reason for the low employability of graduates in India.

Inadequate Research:

- There is inadequate focus on research in higher education institutes.
- There are insufficient resources and facilities, as well as limited numbers of quality faculty to advise students.
- Most of the research scholars are without fellowships or not getting their fellowships on time which directly or indirectly affects their research. Moreover, Indian Higher education institutions are poorly connected to research centres and to industries.

HENCE FOLLOWING MEASURES CAN BE TAKEN TO RESOLVE THE ABOVE ISSUES

- **For low resources :** The mobilisation of funds in state universities should be explored through other means such as endowments, contributions from industry, alumni, etc.
- **For Teacher vacancies:** The recruitment process should start well before a post is vacated. In addition, to make the profession of teaching more lucrative, faculty should be encouraged to undertake consultancy projects and be provided financial support for start-ups.
- **Accountability and performance of teachers:** In this context, a system of performance audit of professors based on the feedback given by their students and colleagues should be set up. Other inputs like research papers, publications by teachers should be added in the performance audit in due course of time.
- **Lack of employable skills:** Lack of employable skills in students of technical education has been observed. Identification of skill gaps in different sectors and offering courses for enhancing employability in them has been recommended. **Some strategies in this regard can include:**
  - Industry Institute Student Training Support,
  - Industrial Challenge Open Forum,
  - Long Term Student Industry Placement Scheme, and
  - Industrial Finishing Schools.

Accreditation of institutions:

- The Committee notes that accreditation of higher educational institutions needs to be at core of the regulatory arrangement in higher education.
- Further, quality assurance agencies should guarantee basic minimum standards of technical education to meet the industry demand for quality manpower. The National Board of Accreditation should act as a catalyst towards quality enhancement and quality assurance of higher technical education.

Credit rating agencies, reputed industry associations, media houses and professional bodies should be encouraged to carry forward the process of rating of Indian universities and institutions. A robust rating system will give rise to healthy competition amongst universities and help improve their performance.

ACADEMIC COLLABORATION REGULATIONS, 2021

#HIGHER EDUCATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

Draft UGC (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Education Institutions to offer Joint Degree, Dual Degree and Twinning Programmes) Regulations, 2021. The Government of India is taking a number of initiatives for the implementation of the National Education Policy-2020.

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- The NEP-2020 calls for permitting credits acquired in foreign countries to be counted for the award of a degree.
- Furthermore, the budget announcement of 2021 proposed regulatory mechanism to permit dual degrees, joint degrees and twinning arrangements. Accordingly, UGC has framed the draft UGC (Academic collaboration between Indian and foreign Higher Education Institutions to offer Joint Degree, Dual Degree and Twinning Programme) Regulations, 2O21.

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE REGULATIONS

- These Regulations shall apply to Indian Higher Education Institutions intending to collaborate with Foreign Higher Education Institutions leading to award of diploma(s) and degree(s) including Post Graduate and Doctoral programmes, and Foreign Higher Education Institution intending to collaborate with Indian Higher Education Institutions.
- Academic Collaboration between Indian and foreign higher education institutions under these Regulations shall facilitate Credit Recognition and Transfer, Twinning Arrangement, Joint Degree Programme and Dual Degree Programme.
- Under "**Twinning Arrangement**", students enrolled with an Indian higher education institution shall be able to undertake their programme of study partly in India, complying with relevant UGC regulations, and partly in the foreign higher education institution.
- Moreover, credits earned by the students at a foreign education institution shall be counted towards the degree/diploma awarded by the Indian higher education institution.
- In case of "Joint Degree programme", the curriculum shall be designed jointly by the collaborating Indian and foreign higher educational institutions and the degree shall be awarded by both the collaborating institutions with a single Certificate bearing the crests and logo of both collaborating institutions, upon completion of the programme.
- "Dual Degree Programme" under these Regulations shall be conferred by the Indian and foreign higher education institutions, separately and simultaneously, upon completion of degree requirements of both the institutions.
- Promotion of foreign academic collaboration shall be strengthened through the introduction of the provisions of joint degree, dual degree and twinning arrangement. This initiative will provide global exposure to the students, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary education with internationally relevant curriculum, improve employability, attract foreign students to study in India and improve the standing of the Indian universities in international rankings as internationalization is an important parameter.

TUBERCULOSIS

#HEALTH & DISEASE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

In 2020, there were 18.05 TB notifications, which was a fall of 24% from 2019 due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic, according to the India TB report.

IN BRIEF: TUBERCULOSIS

- Tuberculosis is an airborne communicable disease caused by the bacteria bacillus Mycobacterium tuberculosis.
- Typically they grow in the body where oxygen and blood are in high amount. As a result 80% of the TB cases are pulmonary or that which infects lungs and 20% cases which involves brain, uterus, stomach, mouth, kidneys and bones, called extra-pulmonary.

Mode of transmission: Airborne and therefore through coughing, sneezing or spiting.

High-risk groups : Those with weak immunity and can be identified as:

- Those infected with HIV
- Under-nutrition
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Alcohol consumption.

Prevention: BCG vaccine for children. Currently no effective vaccine for adults

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Diagnosis: Early diagnosis is extremely important in fighting TB. Widely followed diagnosis methods include**:** *Sputum smear microscopy which studies phenotype of the pathogen from the sputum sample of the infected patient.* **Challenge:** Low sensitivity, cannot detect drug-resistant pathogen.

Molecular studies: have enabled study of genotype and therefore more sensitive and widely being used today.

TREATMENT

Strategy: DOTS strategy (Directly observed Treatment Short Course) is WHO-recommended cost effective strategy to reduce the disease burden of TB. It includes sustained political and financial commitment, early diagnosis, standardized short-course anti-TB treatment, regular and uninterrupted supply of high quality anti-TB drugs.

Antibiotics: Administering commonly used antibiotics like **Rifampin**. **Challenge:** Mycobacterium tuberculosis has developed drug-resistance.

New-gen drugs like **Bedaquiline** and **Delaminid** are recommended for MDR-TB.

TB INCIDENCE IN INDIA

- India tops the list of 20 TB high burden countries in the world.
- According to WHO's Global TB Report 2019, out of the 10 Million global TB incidences, 2.69 Million (about 27%) occurred in India.
- The number of deaths per lakh population due to TB is 199 in India.

ERADICATING TB IN INDIA

- **National TB control programme** is ongoing since 1962 which has not performed upto the mark.
- **Revised National TB control Programme** (RNTCP) was adopted in 1997 after WHO declared TB as the global epidemic in 1993.
- Focus of RNTCP has been Early Diagnosis and Treatment in accordance with DOTS strategy.
- Under RNTCP about 4 lakh **DOTS centres** have been established so far.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TB ELIMINATION 2017-2025

- In 2018, India adopted the National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination in line with TB Elimination Strategy of WHO and SDG of UN.
- 4 strategic pillars of "Detect – Treat – Prevent – Build".
- **It aims to eliminate TB in India by 2025.**
- Specific targets compared to 2015 include
  - 80% reduction in TB incidence
  - 90% reduction in TB mortality
  - 0% patient having catastrophic expenditure due to TB

OTHER MEASURES

- Stepping up RNTCP.
- Supply of quality Anti TB Drugs through **NIKSHAY Portal**, an Online notification portal.
- Active **engagement of private sector** in early diagnosis and treatment.
- **'Medicine till end' and 'nutrition till end'** strategy. Recently the government has launched **Nikshay Poshan Yojana.**
- Strong surveillance and quality improvement systems backed by IT to improve the effectiveness of interventions.
- Recently, India launched '*TB Harega, Desh Jeetega*' campaign.

CHALLENGES TO ELIMINATE TB IN INDIA

High incidence: India is contributed about 27% of the global TB incidences.

Marginal decrease: In 'End TB Summit', 2018, India set to eliminate TB incidence by 2025. However the reduction in the number of TB cases is marginal, 2.74 million in 2017 to 2.69 million in 2018. In order to eliminate TB, India needs to reduce incidence by 57% of 2015 level which is achievable only by 2035.

Diagnostic delays: According to an estimate, the average time between infection and reporting for care is 4.1 months.

Early diagnosis is the key for TB elimination. (Therefore SeeTB will go a long way in improving this)

Low level of notification: Out of 2.69 million cases, only 2.15 million were reported leaving a gap of 5.4 lakh unreported cases. This is because of low level of case notifications by the private sector.

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Economic burden: The monetary value of financial loss linked to TB mortality is estimated to be $32 billion per year in India. Besides the new generation drugs including Bedaquine and Delaminid are prohibitively expensive.

ISTANBUL CONVENTION

#ISTANBUL CONVENTION #COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN #SOCIAL JUSTICE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Recently, Turkey pulled out of this convention. Incidentally Turkey was the first country to ratify the convention

ISTANBUL CONVENTION

- It is a human rights treaty to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence.
- It is under auspices of Council of Europe, Europe's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, including all members of the European Union.
- **The treaty is the world's first binding instrument to prevent and tackle violence against women.**
- It is the most comprehensive legal framework that exists to tackle violence against women and girls, covering domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, female genital mutilation (FGM), so-called honour-based violence, and forced marriage.
- The Convention sets minimum standards for governments to meet when tackling violence against women.
- The Convention outline which acts must be criminalised by the participating countries. Such offences include psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, sexual violence (including rape), all non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a person, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion, and forced sterilisation, honour crimes as well as sexual harassment.

OTHER GLOBAL CONVENTIONS

- The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979 was adopted by the UN General Assembly to prevent violence against women and girls worldwide.
- The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993.
- It defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm including threats of such acts, deprivation of liberty, etc. occurring in public or in private life."
- SDG-5 targets for gender equality in the world by 2030.

POSHAN ABHIYAN FOR THE ELDERLY

#NUTRITION SUPPORT FOR ELDERS #SOCIAL JUSTICE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aims to launch Poshan Abhiyan for the elderly.

- The aim is to provide nutrition support to the indigent elders, who are not staying in Old Age Homes and are victims of severe malnutrition.
- Scheme will focus on procuring locally available healthy food material and serving hot-cooked mid-day meals.
- **Implementing agencies**: Gram Panchayats and Urban Municipalities.
- **Funding**: From Senior Citizens Welfare Fund (SCWF) which was setup by Finance Act, 2015.

According to census 2011, there are nearly 104 million elderly persons (aged 60 years or above) in India; 53 million females and 51 million males and is expected to grow to 173million by 2026.

Challenges faced: Ageist stereotypes that marginalize older people, changing family structure, lack of social support, lack of access to quality healthcare, etc.

INITIATIVES TAKEN FOR ELDERLY POPULATION

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- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched **Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030)**
- Integrated Programme for Older Persons.
- National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly.
- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme.
- Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana.
- Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana.
- National Action Plan for Senior Citizens.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. The COVID-19 performance index has been released by which of the following organisations?

a) World Economic Forum
b) World Health Organisation
c) World Bank
d) None of the above

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Global Hunger Index:

1. It is prepared by Concern Worldwide and the Welthungerhilfe.
2. The index is based on four GHI indicators namely, undernourishment, child stunting, child wasting, and child mortality.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. World Happiness Report is released by United Nations Development Programme.
2. Democracy Index is released by OECD.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Pearl millet is predominantly rainfed crop.
2. Millet consumption can mitigate the risk of anaemia, high cholesterol and cancer.
3. Most of the varieties of millet have their origin in Indian subcontinent.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only
c) 1 and 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

Q5. Istanbul Convention is related to which of the following?

a) Sustainable agriculture and food security
b) Combatting violence against women
c) Peace and security in the Mediterranean region
d) Human right protection in the conflict region

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

Q1. What are the health and social benefits of millets? How government has integrated millets in India's food programmes?

Q2. What are various initiatives under National Health Mission? How do you evaluate the implementation and success of the mission?

***Answers**: 1-d, 2-c, 3-d, 4-b, 5-a*

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER III (MAIN)

HELIUM

#SCIENCE

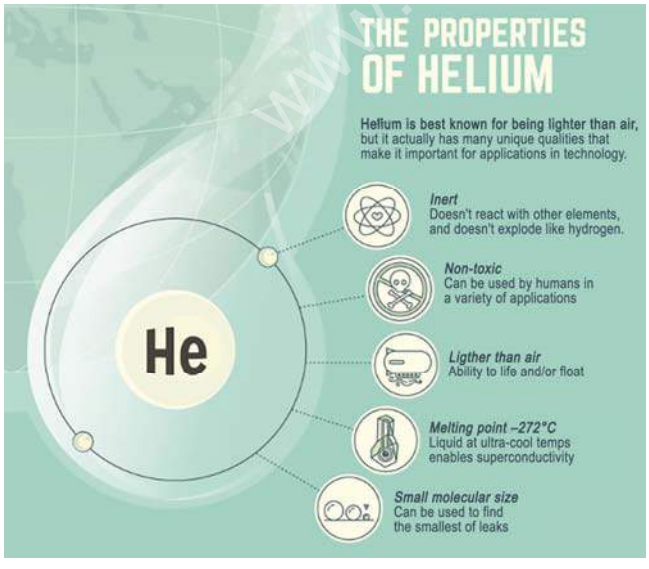
PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

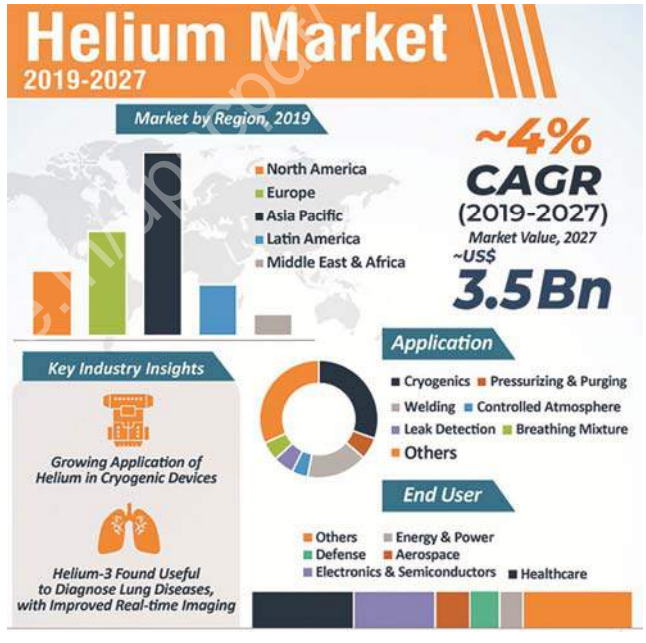
The United States is the most important exporter of helium across the world. But it is now planning to switch off export of helium from 2021. While Qatar is another possible exporter, acute political and diplomatic wrangles have made the country unreliable. This has created a crisis of obtaining helium in India.

PROPERTIES OF HELIUM

- Helium (He) is an inert gas of Group 18 (noble gases) of the periodic table.
- The **second lightest element** (only hydrogen is lighter), helium is a **colourless, odourless, and tasteless gas** that becomes liquid at −268.9 °C (−452 °F).
- The boiling and freezing points of helium are lower than those of any other known substance.



- Helium is the only element that cannot be solidified by sufficient cooling at normal atmospheric pressure; it is necessary to apply pressure of 25 atmospheres at a temperature of 1 K (−272 °C, or −458 °F) to convert it to its solid form.



ABUNDANCE

- Helium constitutes about **23 percent of the mass of the universe** and is thus second in abundance to hydrogen in the cosmos. Helium is concentrated in stars, where it is synthesized from hydrogen by nuclear fusion.
- Although helium occurs in Earth's atmosphere only to the extent of 1 part in 200,000 (0.0005 percent) and small amounts occur in radioactive minerals, meteoric iron, and mineral springs, great volumes of helium are found as a component (up to 7.6 percent) in natural gases in the United States (especially in Texas, New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arizona, and Utah).
- Smaller supplies have been discovered in Algeria, Australia, Poland, Qatar, and Russia. Ordinary air

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contains about 5 parts per million of helium, and Earth's crust is only about 8 parts per billion.

USES OF HELIUM

- Helium is used as a **cooling medium for the Large Hadron Collider (LHC),** and the superconducting magnets in MRI scanners and NMR spectrometers.
- It is also used to **keep satellite instruments cool** and was used to cool the liquid oxygen and hydrogen that powered the Apollo space vehicles.
- Because of its low-density helium is often used to fill decorative balloons, weather balloons and airships.
- Because it is very unreactive, helium is used to provide an inert protective atmosphere for making fibre optics and semiconductors, and for arc welding.
- Helium is also used to **detect leaks**, such as in car air-conditioning systems, and because it diffuses quickly it is used to inflate car airbags after impact.
- A mixture of 80% helium and 20% oxygen is used as an artificial atmosphere for deep-sea divers and others working under pressurized conditions.
- Helium-neon gas lasers are used to scan barcodes in supermarket checkouts.
- A new use for helium is a helium-ion microscope that gives better image resolution than a scanning electron microscope.

ALLOGENIC STEM CELL

#HEALTH #SCIENCE #TECHNOLOGY

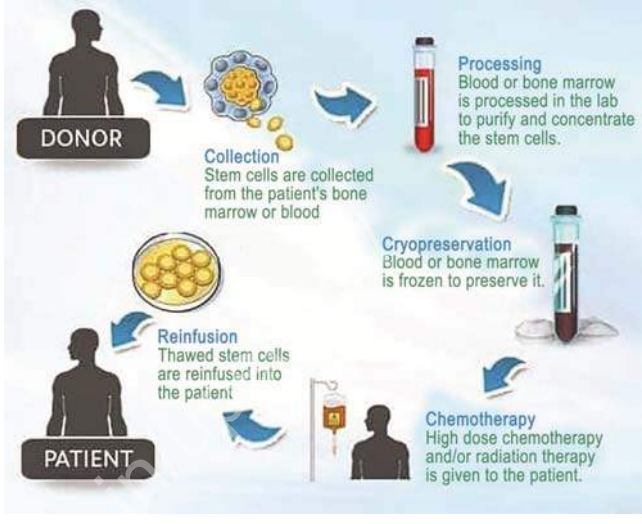
PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

*A cancer patient got a new lease of life after the doctors in Cuttack, performed the first-ever allogenic bone marrow transplant. In **autologous BMT,** stem cells of the patient are used for one's cancer treatment while in **allogeneic procedure, a donor donates stem cells**. The surgery will create opportunity for cure of many blood and other diseases like thalassemia, sickle cell disease, aplastic anaemia, various blood cancers and other cancer diseases.*

ABOUT ALLOGENEIC STEM CELL TRANSPLANT

- Allogeneic stem cell transplantation involves transferring the stem cells from a healthy person (the donor) to the patient's body after high-intensity chemotherapy or radiation. The donated stem cells can come from either a related or an unrelated donor.



- Before an allogeneic stem cell transplantation, the patient receives a conditioning regimen of chemotherapy and, sometimes, radiation therapy. This conditioning treatment is given to destroy any remaining cancer cells in the body. This helps weaken the patient's immune system to help keep the body from rejecting the donated cells after the transplant.
- It also allows the donor cells to move through the bloodstream to the bone marrow, where the donor cells will begin to grow and produce new blood cells, including red blood cells, platelets and white blood cells. This process is called **"engraftment."**
- When a transplant is successful, the donor stem cells can replace stem cells in the bone marrow. It may also provide the only long-term cure of the patient's disease.
- One of the benefits of allogeneic stem cell transplantation is that after the donated cells engraft in the patient, they create a new immune system. The donated cells produce white blood cells that attack any remaining cancer cells in the patient's body.
- This is called the **"graft-versus-tumour effect"** and it may be even more important than the very intensive conditioning regimen that is administered to destroy

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the cancer cells. This benefit can only occur in allogeneic stem cell transplantation.

GLIAL CELLS

#HEALTH #SCIENCE

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Researchers studying fresh brain tissue found, in the hours after death, some cells are still active and even increase their activity. They studied gene expression in brain tissue removed during surgery and found that gene expression in glial cells increased. After death, these cells grow and sprout extensions.

NEUROGLIAL CELLS

- It usually referred to simply as glial cells or glia—are quite different from nerve cells. The major distinction is that glia does not participate directly in synaptic interactions and electrical signalling, although their supportive functions help define synaptic contacts and maintain the **signalling abilities of neurons**.
- Glia is more **numerous than nerve cells in the brain**, outnumbering them by a ratio of perhaps 3 to 1. Although glial cells also have complex processes extending from their cell bodies, they are generally smaller than neurons, and they lack axons and dendrites.
- The term glia (from the Greek word meaning "glue") reflects the nineteenth-century presumption that these cells held the nervous system together in some way. The word has survived, despite the lack of any evidence that binding nerve cells together is among the many functions of glial cells.
- Glial roles that are well-established include maintaining the ionic milieu of nerve cells, modulating the rate of nerve signal propagation, modulating synaptic action by controlling the uptake of neurotransmitters, providing a scaffold for some aspects of neural development, and aiding in (or preventing, in some instances) recovery from neural injury.

TYPES OF GLIAL CELLS

- **Microglia** are the brain's immune cells, serving to protect it against injury and disease. Microglia identify when something has gone wrong and initiate a response that removes the toxic agent and/or clears away the dead cells. Thus, microglia are the brain's protectors.
- **Astrocytes** are star-shaped cells that maintain a neuron's working environment. They do this by controlling the levels of neurotransmitter around synapses, controlling the concentrations of important ions like potassium, and providing metabolic support. Astrocytes modulate how neurons communicate.
- **Oligodendrocytes** provide support to axons of neurons in the central nervous system, particularly those that travel long distances within the brain. They produce a fatty substance called **myelin**, which is wrapped around axons as a layer of insulation. Similar in function to insulation layers around power cables, the myelin sheath allows electrical messages to travel faster, and gives white matter its name—the white is the myelin wrapped around axons. Multiple sclerosis is caused by a loss of the myelin sheath around neurons.

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

- **Ependymal cells**: Ependymal cells line the spinal cord and ventricles of the brain. They are involved in creating cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).
- **Radial glia**: Radial glial cells are progenitor cells that can generate neurons, astrocytes and oligodendrocytes.

PERIPHERAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

- **Schwann cells**: Similar to oligodendrocytes in the central nervous system, Schwann cells myelinate neurons in the peripheral nervous system.
- **Satellite cells**: Satellite cells surround neurons in the sensory, sympathetic and parasympathetic ganglia and help regulate the chemical environment. They may contribute to chronic pain.
- **Enteric glial cells**: Enteric glial cells are found in the nerves in the digestive system.

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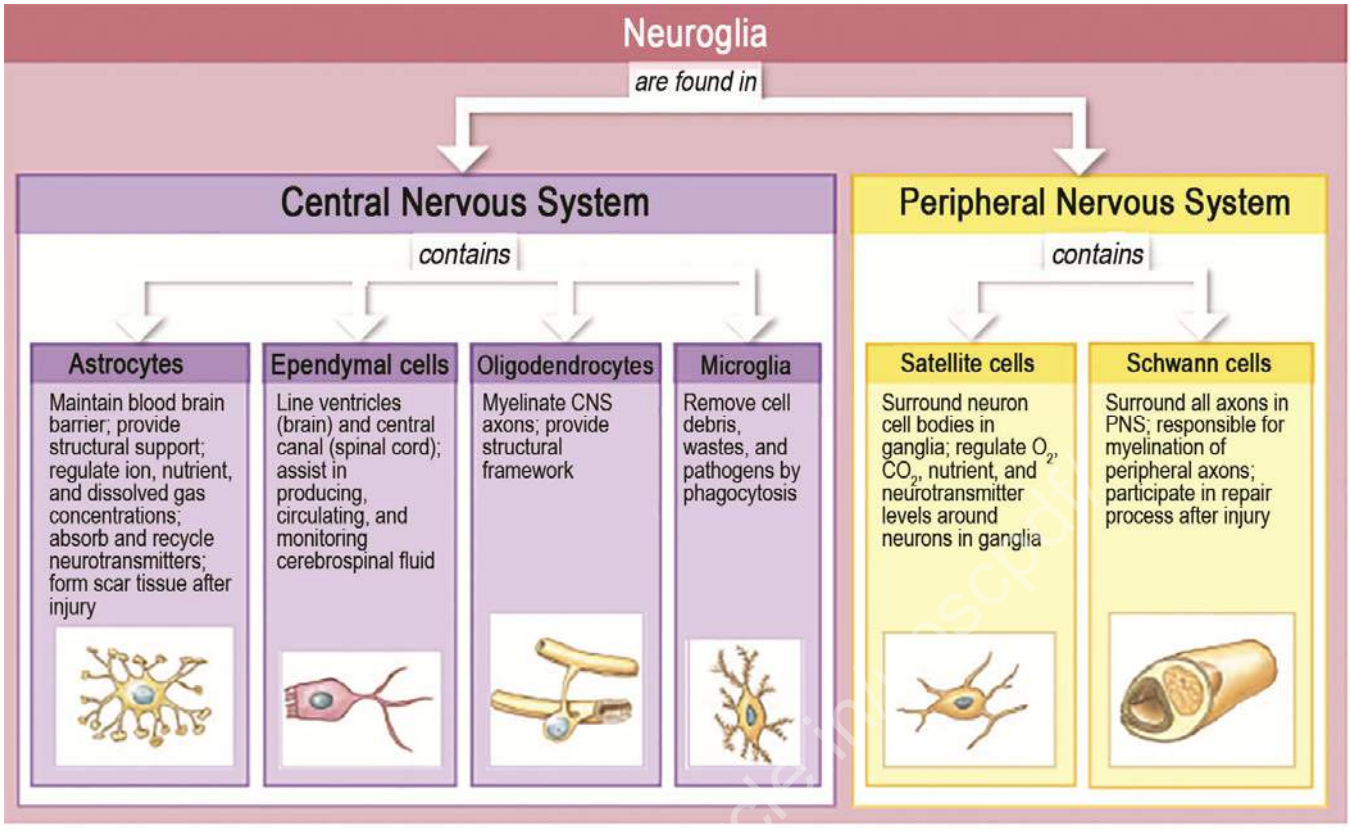

AEG12 Protein

#HEALTH #SCIENCE

PRIMARY SOURCE | The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

Mosquito protein inhibits number of viruses, raises hope against Covid too.

- A mosquito protein, called AEG12, strongly inhibits the family of viruses that cause yellow fever, dengue, West Nile, and Zika, and also weakly inhibits coronaviruses.
- It is found that AEG12 works by destabilising the viral envelope, breaking its protective covering. The protein does not affect viruses that do not have an envelope. The findings, however, could lead to therapeutics against viruses that affect millions of people around the world.
- Scientists at the US National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), part of NIH, used X-ray crystallography to solve the structure of AEG12.
- At the molecular level, AEG12 rips out the lipids (the fat-like portions of the membrane that hold the virus together). It is as if AEG12 is hungry for the lipids that are in the virus membrane, so it gets rid of some of the lipids it has and exchanges them for the ones it really prefers.
- While the researchers demonstrated that AEG12 was most effective against flaviviruses — the family of viruses to which Zika, West Nile, and others belong — they felt it is possible AEG12 could be effective against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes Covid-19.
- But it will take years of bioengineering to make AEG12 a viable therapy for Covid-19. Part of the problem is AEG12 also breaks opens red blood cells, so researchers will have to identify compounds that will make it target viruses only.

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PSLV-C51/AMAZONIA-1

#SPACE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

PSLV-C51, the first dedicated launch for NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), successfully launched Amazonia-1 and 18 Co-passenger satellites from Sriharikota.

AMAZONIA-1

- Amazonia-1, the main payload, an **optical earth observation** satellite from Brazil.
- Optical Earth observation is monitoring our planet from satellites, using photography, imaging in various wavelengths, lidar and other optical sensing technologies.
- This satellite will provide remote sensing data to users for monitoring deforestation in the Amazon region and analysis of diversified agriculture across the Brazilian territory.
- The success of Brazil's Amazonia-1 satellite by ISRO marks a new high point in space cooperation between the two countries. It would open the door for multiple business and governmental opportunities and help fulfil the environmental commitments of the Brazilian government towards the Amazon rainforest.

18 CO-PASSENGER SATELLITES – 5 FROM INDIA AND 13 FROM U.S.

- The satellites from India are –
  - Satish Dhawan SAT (SDSAT) built by Space Kidz India, a nano-satellite intended to study the radiation levels, space weather and demonstrate long-range communication technologies;
  - A group of three satellites called UNITYsat for providing radio relay services; and another satellite belonging to the DRDO.

RELATED INFORMATION: EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE

- Earth observation is the gathering of information about Earth's physical, chemical and biological systems. Earth observation satellites are the satellites equipped with remote sensing technology.
- Most earth observation satellites are in **sun-synchronous orbit**.
- A polar orbit is one in which a satellite passes above or nearly above both poles on each revolution. It therefore has an inclination of (or very close to) **90 degrees to the body's equator**.
- A satellite in a polar orbit will pass over the equator at a different longitude on each of its orbits.
- A Sun-synchronous orbit is a nearly polar orbit around a planet, which combines altitude and inclination in such a way that an object on that orbit ascends or descends over any given Earth latitude at the same local mean solar time. This consistent lighting is a useful characteristic for satellites that image the Earth's surface in visible or infrared wavelengths.
- Typical Sun-synchronous orbits around Earth are about **600–800 km in altitude**, with **periods in the 96–100-minute range, and inclinations of around 98°.**
- To get (nearly) global coverage with a low orbit it must be a polar orbit or nearly so.
- A low orbit will have an orbital period of roughly 100 minutes and the Earth will rotate around its polar axis with about 25° between successive orbits, with the result that the ground track is shifted towards west with these 25° in longitude.
- Spacecraft carrying instruments for which an altitude of 36000 km is suitable sometimes use a geostationary orbit. Such an orbit allows uninterrupted coverage of more than 1/3 of the Earth. Three geostationary spacecraft at longitudes separated with 120° can cover the whole Earth except the extreme polar regions. This type of orbit is mainly used for meteorological satellites.
- Starting with IRS-1A in 1988, ISRO has launched many operational remote sensing satellites. Today, India has one of the largest constellations of remote sensing satellites in operation.
- Currently, 13 operational satellites are in Sun-synchronous orbit – RESOURCESAT-1, 2, 2A CARTOSAT-1, 2, 2A, 2B, RISAT-1 and 2, OCEANSAT-2, Megha-Tropiques, SARAL and SCATSAT-1,

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- 4 in Geostationary orbit - INSAT-3D, Kalpana & INSAT 3A, INSAT -3DR.
- Land and forest mapping and monitoring, mapping of resources like water or minerals or fishes, weather and climate observations, soil assessment, geospatial contour mapping are all done through earth-observation satellites.

RELATED INFORMATION: RISAT

- RISAT (Radar Imaging Satellite) is a series of Indian radar imaging reconnaissance satellites built by ISRO.
- They provide all-weather surveillance using synthetic aperture radars (SAR).
- Synthetic-aperture radar is a form of radar that is used to create two-dimensional images or three-dimensional reconstructions of objects, such as landscapes.
- RADAR (Radio Detection and Ranging System) is a detection system that uses radio waves to determine the range, angle, or velocity of objects. Sunlight, clouds, and rain do not affect radio waves observations.
- The RISAT series are the first all-weather Earth observation satellites from ISRO.
- Previous Indian observation satellites relied primarily on optical and spectral sensors which were hampered by cloud cover.

RECYCLING E-WASTE

#E-WASTE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

To deal with one of the fastest growing waste streams, researchers at IIT, Delhi have developed a zero-emission technology to manage and recycle e-waste to wealth. They adopted a methodology that uses e-waste as an "Urban Mine" for metal recovery and energy production.

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Recycling -** Researchers said using their method, e-waste is shredded and pyrolyzed to **yield liquid and gaseous fuels**, leaving behind a metal-rich solid fraction.
- **Residue** - On further separation using a novel technique, the leftover solid residue yields a 90-95% pure metal mixture and some carbonaceous materials.
- **Use of Carbonaceous Material** - It is further converted to aerogel for oil spillage cleaning, dye removal, carbon dioxide capture, and use in supercapacitors.
- **Funded by Government** - The technology is an outcome of a Department of Science and Technology, funded project and developed technology will cater to the need of "Smart Cities," "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan," and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiatives of the government.

ABOUT ELECTRONIC WASTE

- Waste electric and electronic equipment (WEEE) is now considered as one of the fastest growing waste streams.
- The most distinctive feature of electronic waste is complexity of components and their integration.
- This type of waste consists of polymeric materials and has high content of valuable metals that could be recovered.
- The purpose of thermal treatment of electronic waste is elimination of plastic components (especially epoxy resins – primary skin irritants) while leaving non-volatile mineral and metallic phases in more or less original forms.
- Additionally, the gaseous product of the process after cleaning may be used for energy recovery or as **syngas** also called a synthesis gas.

Electronic waste	wt.%					Ppm (wt.)		
	Fe	Cu	Al	Pb	Ni	As	Au	Pd
TV board	28	10	10	1.0	0.3	280	20	10

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PC board	7	20	5	1.5	1	1000	250	110
Mobile phone	5	13	1	0.3	0.1	1380	350	210
Portable audio	23	21	1	0.14	0.03	150	10	4
DVD player	62	5	2	0.3	0.05	115	15	4
Calculator	4	3	5	0.1	0.5	260	50	5
Primed circuit boards	12	10	7	1.2	0.85	280	110	–

ABOUT SYNGAS

- Syngas is a mix of molecules containing hydrogen, methane, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, water vapours, as well as other hydrocarbons and condensable compounds.
- Syngas is a main product of gasification and majority product of high temperature pyrolysis carried on any biomass, residues and waste.

WASTE PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARDS

- Waste printed circuit boards (WPCBs) contain lots of valuable resources together with hazardous materials.
- This type of waste contains heavy metals (i.e., lead, cadmium) and hazardous substances that may pollute environment if they are not properly treated.
- However, a significant number of valuable materials contained in WPCBs make them worth being recycled.

Component	Wt.%	Value (£/kg)	Intrinsic value of PCB	
			(£/kg of PCB)	(%)
Gold	0.025	14200.00	3.55	65.4
Palladium	0.010	6200.00	0.62	11.4
Silver	0.100	250.00	0.25	4.6
Copper	16.0	3.30	0.53	9.7
Aluminium	5.0	1.20	0.06	1.1
Iron	5.0	0.10	0.01	0.1
Tin	3.0	8.10	0.24	4.5
Lead	2.0	1.30	0.03	0.5
Nickel	1.0	13.20	0.13	2.4
Zinc	1.0	1.20	0.01	0.2

NATIONAL SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY

#POLICY

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

IN NEWS

The draft of the 5th National Science Technology and Innovation Policy has been finalized and is now available for public consultation. The aim of the scientific policy is to "encourage individual initiative for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, and for the discovery of new knowledge, in an atmosphere of academic freedom."

PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT'S DRAFT SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (STI) POLICY

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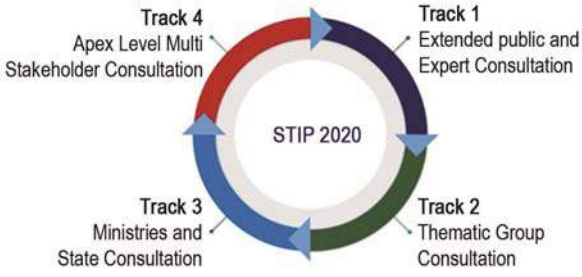
- Unlike previous STI policies which were largely top-driven in formulation, the 5th national STI policy (STIP) follows core principles of **being decentralised, evidence-informed, bottom-up, experts-driven, and inclusive.**
- It aims to be dynamic, with **a robust policy governance mechanism** that includes periodic review, evaluation, feedback, adaptation and, most importantly, a timely exit strategy for policy instruments.

Policy Process



VISION OF STI POLICY

- The STIP will be guided by the vision of positioning India among the top three scientific superpowers in the decade to come with **technological self-reliance**;
- To attract, nurture, strengthen, and retain critical human capital through a **people-centric STI ecosystem**;
- To double the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers, gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) and private-sector contribution to GERD **every five years**; and
- To build individual and institutional excellence in STI with the aim of reaching the **highest levels of global recognition and awards** in the coming decade.

The policy outlines strategies for strengthening India's STI ecosystem to achieve the larger goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF STIP

- Open Science Framework to provide access to scientific data, information, knowledge, and resources to everyone in the country.
- **Bulk subscriptions and free access for all**: Keeping in mind 'One Nation, One Subscription', the STIP envisions free access to all journals, Indian and foreign, for every Indian against a centrally-negotiated payment mechanism.
- **Participation of women and the LGBTQ community in science and education**: To address the issue of inclusion and equity in a holistic way, an Indian version of the Athena SWAN Charter (a global framework to support gender equality in higher education and research, especially in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine) is needed. The STIP has made recommendations such as
  - Mandatory positions for excluded groups in academics;
  - 30% representation of women in selection/evaluation committees and decision-making groups;
  - Addressing issues related to career breaks for women by considering academic age rather than biological/physical age;
  - A dual recruitment policy for couples; and o institutionalisation of equity and inclusion by establishing an Office of Equity and Inclusion, etc.

FUNDING IN R&D

STIP has made some major recommendations in this regard, such as

- Expansion of the **STI funding landscape** at the central and state levels;
- Enhanced **incentivisation mechanisms for leveraging the private sector's R&D participation** through boosting financial support and fiscal incentives for industry and flexible mechanisms for public procurement; and
- Creative avenues for collaborative STI funding through a portfolio-based funding mechanism called the **Advanced Missions in Innovative Research Ecosystem (ADMIRE) programme** to support distributed and localised collaborative mission-oriented projects through a long-term investment strategy.

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- A national STI Financing Authority, along with an **STI Development Bank**, needs to be set up to direct long-term investments in select strategic areas.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- There is a growing realisation that science can address some of the pressing problems of society, in sectors such as health, energy, and water. Science brought quick and effective solutions against the challenge of Covid-19, by producing protective and diagnostic kits, and developing vaccines.
- The STIP draft focuses on the need to adopt such learnings for greater efficiency and synergy in future.

ISSUES WITH STIP

- The 2013 STIP policy had similar aims but the 2020 draft policy fails to discuss what we have achieved on these fronts since then. For example, the 2013 policy aimed R&D investment in science to be 2% of GDP but it still hovers between 0.5% and 0.6% of the GDP.
- The 2020 draft policy blames this on "**inadequate private sector investment**" and adds that "**a robust cohesive financial landscape remains at the core of creating an STI-driven Atmanirbhar Bharat.**" This way, Govt is trying **to shift the responsibility of financing R&D to different agencies such as the States, private enterprises, and foreign multinational companies**.
- The draft policy visualises a **'decentralized institutional mechanism'** balancing top-down and bottom-up approaches but this intention is defeated in the document itself, where several new authorities, observatories and centres have been proposed in science administration. Decentralisation of administrative architecture is essential, but we need to explore the practical option of providing more autonomy to research and academic centres for financial management.
- As a part of inculcating an inclusive culture in academia, the document promises to tackle discriminations "based on gender, caste, religion, geography, language, disability and other exclusions and inequalities". It mentions more representation of women and the LGBTQ community, but **is silent on how we are to achieve their proportionate representation.**
- The document harks back to our constitutional obligation to "develop a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform." But it is silent on how this can be achieved when **pseudoscience is deliberately propagated in the name of traditional science with the help of some arms of the government**. A recent instance is the proposal by the Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog to conduct a national examination under the garb of 'cow science'.

WAY FORWARD

Along with the problems that we are encountering today, we should focus on the kind of problems that we may encounter in future and be ready for that.

- Science needs to be promoted at the grass root level; science communication in regional languages should be promoted.
- Catering the export market and making India a hub for new technologies like Artificial Intelligence, 5G etc.

In order to change the life of millions of people, the government needs to collaborate with various stakeholders so as to focus on inculcating scientific temperament in each individual. The ultimate goal of the policy is to make India self-reliant (Aatmanirbhar) in all respects.

LUNAR EXPLORATIONS

#SPACE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Indian and Japanese space agencies reviewed cooperation in earth observation, lunar cooperation and satellite navigation, and also agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in "space situational awareness and professional exchange programme". This was agreed during a bilateral meeting between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) held virtually.

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Both agencies signed an Implementing Arrangement for collaborative activities on rice crop area and air quality monitoring using satellite data.

LUPEX

- India and Japan are already working on a joint **lunar polar exploration (LUPEX) mission**.
- The Lunar Polar Exploration mission (LUPEX) is a robotic lunar mission concept by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) that would send a lunar rover and lander to explore the south pole region of the Moon in 2024.
- JAXA is likely to provide the under-development H3 launch vehicle and the rover, while ISRO would be responsible for the lander.

EXPLORATION MISSIONS

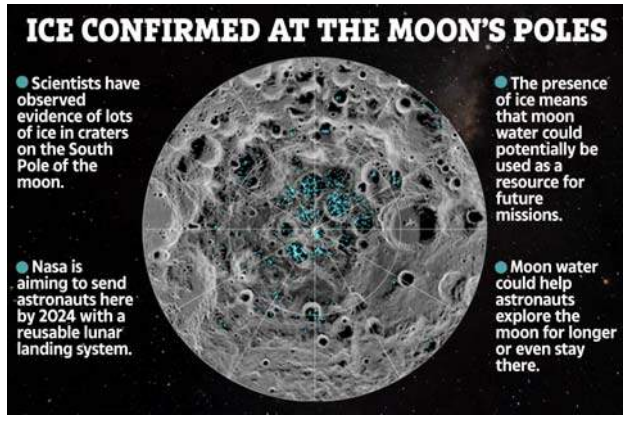
- India's second mission to the Moon, Chandrayaan-2 was launched on 22nd July 2019 from Satish Dhawan Space Center, Sriharikota. The Orbiter which was injected into a lunar orbit on 2nd Sept 2019, carries 8 experiments to address many open questions on lunar science. On September 7 2019, India attempted to make a soft landing on to the lunar surface. However, lander Vikram missed the primary landing site
- In 2019, the Chang'e 4, a Chinese spacecraft, was the first to soft land (45.5 ° S, 177.6 ° E) in the Von Kármán crater, which is within the immense South Pole - Aitken Basin on the southern far side of the Moon.

NASA'S "ARTEMIS PROGRAM"

- It will send first woman to the lunar surface by the year 2024.
- It will land astronauts on the Moon's South Pole.
- Artemis I is most likely to be launched IN 2021 and involves an uncrewed flight to test the Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion spacecraft.
- Artemis II will be the first crewed flight test and is targeted for 2023.
- Artemis III will land astronauts on the Moon's South Pole in 2024.

WHY VARIOUS MISSION IS FOCUSSING ON SOUTH POLE OF THE MOON?

- Moon is tidally locked with earth, meaning always the same side of the moon face the earth.
- Moon provides the best linkage to Earth's early history. It offers an undisturbed historical record of the inner Solar system environment. Extensive mapping of lunar surface to study variations in lunar surface composition is essential to trace back the origin and evolution of the Moon.
- There is very good reason why all the landings on the moon so far have happened in the equatorial region.
- Even China's Chang'e 4, which became the first spacecraft to land on the far side of the moon (the side that does not face the earth), landed near the 45-degree latitude.
- It is easier and safer to land near the equator. The terrain and temperature are more hospitable, and conducive for longer and sustained operation of instruments. The surface here is even and smooth, very steep slopes are almost absent, and there are fewer hills or craters.
- Sunlight is present in abundance, at least on the side facing the earth, thus offering regular supply of energy to solar-powered instruments.
- The polar regions of the moon, however, are a very different, and difficult, terrain. Many parts lie in a completely dark region where sunlight never reaches, and temperatures can go below 230 degree Celsius.
- Lack of sunlight and extreme low temperatures create difficulty in operation of instruments. In addition, there are large craters all over the place, ranging from a few cm in size to those extending to several thousands of kilometres.



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IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH POLE OF THE MOON

- The polar regions of the moon have remained unexplored. But several Orbiter missions (NASA's Resource Prospector mission, Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter) have provided evidence that these regions could be very interesting to explore. There are indications of presence of ice molecules in substantial amounts in the deep craters in this region.
- NASA's LCROSS (Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite) showed that there are hydrogen, methane, ammonia, and metal like Sodium, mercury, silver. Moon's South pole has vast resources for future explores to use.
- In addition, the extremely cold temperatures here mean that anything trapped here would remain frozen in time, without undergoing much change. The rocks and soil in this region could therefore provide clues to early solar system.

RELATED INFORMATION: JAPAN AEROSPACE EXPLORATION AGENCY (JAXA)

- It is the Japanese national aerospace and space agency.
- Through the merger of three previously independent organizations, JAXA was formed on 1 October 2003.
- JAXA is responsible for research, technology development and launch of satellites into orbit, and is involved in many more advanced missions such as asteroid exploration and possible human exploration of the Moon.
- Its motto is One JAXA and its corporate slogan is Explore to Realize (formerly Reaching for the skies, exploring space).

RELATED INFORMATION: INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION (ISRO)

- India decided to go to space when **Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR)** was set up by the Government of India in 1962.
- With the visionary Dr Vikram Sarabhai at its helm, INCOSPAR set up the **Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS)** in Thiruvananthapuram for upper atmospheric research.
- Indian Space Research Organisation, formed in 1969, superseded the erstwhile INCOSPAR.
- Vikram Sarabhai, having identified the role and importance of space technology in a Nation's development, provided ISRO the necessary direction to function as an agent of development.
- ISRO then embarked on its mission to provide the Nation space-based services and to develop the technologies to achieve the same independently.
- In the process, it has become one of the six largest space agencies in the world. ISRO maintains one of the largest fleets of communication satellites (INSAT) and remote sensing (IRS) satellites, that cater to the ever-growing demand for fast and reliable communication and earth observation respectively.
- ISRO develops and delivers application specific satellite products and tools to the Nation: broadcasts, communications, weather forecasts, disaster management tools, Geographic Information Systems, cartography, navigation, telemedicine, dedicated distance education satellites being some of them.
- To achieve complete self-reliance in terms of these applications, it was essential to develop cost efficient and reliable launch systems, which took shape in the form of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
- The famed PSLV went on to become a favoured carrier for satellites of various countries due to its reliability and cost efficiency, promoting unprecedented international collaboration.
- The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) was developed keeping in mind the heavier and more demanding Geosynchronous communication satellites.
- Apart from technological capability, ISRO has also contributed to science and science education in the country. Various dedicated research centres and autonomous institutions for remote sensing, astronomy and astrophysics, atmospheric sciences

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and space sciences in general function under the aegis of Department of Space.

- ISRO's own Lunar and interplanetary missions along with other scientific projects encourage and promote science education, apart from providing valuable data to the scientific community which in turn enriches science.
- ISRO is moving forward with the development of heavy lift launchers, human spaceflight projects, reusable launch vehicles, semi-cryogenic engines, single and two stage to orbit (SSTO and TSTO) vehicles, development and use of composite materials for space applications etc.

MARTIAN 'BLUEBERRIES'

#MARTIAN SOIL #SPACE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

In 2004, NASA's Mars exploration rover 'Opportunity' found several small spheres on the planet, informally named Martian blueberries. Opportunity's spectrometers studied the mineralogy and noted they were made of iron oxide compounds called haematites.

This caused excitement, as the presence of haematites suggests that there was water present on Mars. Haematite is known to form in oxidising environments, and based on the experience on Earth, scientists have inferred that water must have also played a crucial role in the formation of grey haematite on Mars.

PRESENCE OF HAEMATITE ON MARS

- Hematite is made up of iron and oxygen-a type of iron oxide. It takes its name from the Greek word for "blood," and is a rusty colour in powdered form. Fine-grained hematite helps gives Mars its characteristic red hue.
- Scientists think Mars has a bad case of rust. Martian soil is full of iron-bearing compounds that, over the eons, have reacted with trace amounts of oxygen and water vapor in Mars' atmosphere to form - the same chemical that covers innumerable rusty nails in garages and workshops on Earth.
- Rusting is an **oxidation reaction**. The iron reacts with water and oxygen to form hydrated iron (III) oxide, which we see as rust. Iron and steel rust when they come into contact with water and oxygen – both are needed for rusting to occur.
- Here on Earth a grey-hued variety of iron oxide, a mineral called hematite, can precipitate in hot springs or in standing pools of water.
- Gray hematite is not the sort of rust you might expect to find on a desert-dry planet like Mars. But perhaps Mars wasn't always as dry as it is today. There are many signs of ancient or hidden water on the Red Planet including flash-flood gullies, sedimentary layers and hematite.
- The haematites on Mars not just show the presence of water, they also indicate that the planet had an atmosphere with oxygen as haematites need oxygen to stabilise. However, the concentration of oxygen is yet to be known.

TRANSFORMATION OF ENVIRONMENT ON MARS SIMILAR TO KUTCH

- Dwijesh Ray from the Planetary Sciences Division of Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad has been studying haematite concretions in Kutch. His recent paper notes that the 'blueberries' in India and Mars share similar characteristics.

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- The team has been studying the **Jhuran formation** in Gujarat which is between 145 and 201 million years old.
- The Jhuran Formation is characterized by conspicuous black shales alternating with thin to thick bedded siltstones and sandstones.
- Detailed geochemistry and spectroscopic investigations of the haematite concretions in the KUTCH Area revealed that they resemble the ones on Mars. They have similar morphology – spherical, often doublet and triplet – and similar mineralogy – a mixture of haematite and goethite.
- Several researchers have shown that the Kutch area is a potential Martian analogue locality.
- A 2016 paper argued that the occurrences of hydrous sulphate in the Matanumadh area of Kutch, resemble Martian surficial processes.
- It has been also argued that the transformation from the wet and humid to dry and arid environment on Mars is mimicked by the history of Kutch.

RAMAN THERMOMETRY

#SCIENCE #TECHNOLOGY #SPECTROSCOPY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Researchers at IIT Madras have demonstrated that by using Raman thermometry on fibre optic cables, they can achieve monitoring of power transmission cables.

- They achieved this by using the optical fibres that are already embedded in the power cables for establishing optical communication.
- Glass fibre are included for communication purposes along with the power cables. One or two of the unused fibres could be used to keep tabs on the health of the power cables. This is based on the principle that any current flowing through a conductor would cause a temperature rise due to the **Joule heating effect.**
- In the Raman effect, when light is scattered off an object, say a molecule, two bands are observed, with higher and lower frequency than the original light. By studying the relative intensity of the two bands, it is possible to estimate the temperature of the object.

RELATED INFORMATION: RAMAN THERMOMETRY

- Raman spectroscopy is well known as an analytical method for identifying chemical compounds and characterizing the chemical bonding and solid-state structure of materials.
- Perhaps less well known is the fact that one can use Raman spectroscopy to determine the **temperature of the material** being analyzed.
- In the Raman Effect, when light is scattered off an object, say a molecule, two bands are observed, with a higher and lower frequency than the original light, called the **Stokes and anti-Stokes bands**, respectively.
- By studying the relative intensity of the two bands, it is possible to estimate the temperature of the object that scattered the light.
- The anti-Stokes component of Raman scattering is strongly dependent on the temperature that the material is subjected to.
- Thus, by measuring the intensity of the anti-Stokes scattered light we can estimate the temperature. This is Raman thermometry.

GLOBAL BIO INDIA 2021

#BIOTECHNOLOGY #SCIENCE

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare inaugurated the second edition of Global Bio-India-2021. The theme for this year is "Transforming lives" with the tag line "Biosciences to Bio-economy".

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- Biotechnology sector is recognized as the key driver for contributing to India's USD 5 Trillion economy target by 2024.
- As India progresses on this transformational journey, Global Bio-India 2021, the largest Bio event, would showcase opportunities in Indian Biotechnology sector to the world.
- It is a mega international congregation of biotechnology stakeholders, including international bodies, regulatory bodies, Central and State Ministries, SMEs, large industries, bio clusters, research institutes, investors, and the start-up ecosystem.
- It is co-organised by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology along with its Public Sector Undertaking Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) in partnership with industry association Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) and Invest India.
- ABLE is a not-for-profit pan-India forum that represents the Indian Biotechnology Sector.

OBJECTIVES OF GLOBAL BIO INDIA 2021

- Bio - Partnering, Policy Discussions, CEO's plans for India & asks from India.
- Showcase and identify key biotechnological innovations, products, services, technologies from national and international companies, start-ups and research institutes.
- Identify funding and collaboration opportunities for research and development.
- Explore licensing options for existing products.
- Attracting major contract projects from international companies as well as major global venture funding into India.
- Create platforms for new idea evaluation and investments.
- Opportunity for Indian State Governments to attract foreign investment into their respective States.
- Discuss key trends and policy interventions across all sub-sectors including bio-pharma, bio-agriculture, bio-industrial, bio-energy, bio-manufacturing, bio-services etc. and establish takeaways.
- Connect Indian Biotech ecosystem with international ecosystem.
- Learning platform experience of other successful geographies and companies.
- Facilitate interactions of research institutions with the industry.

2001 FO32

#SPACE

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

The largest asteroid passed by Earth in March 2021, around 2 million km from Earth.

- It presented a valuable scientific opportunity for astronomers who good look at a rocky relic that formed at the dawn of our Solar System. It is called 2001 FO32. There is no threat of a collision with our planet now or for centuries to come.
- Scientists know its orbital path around the Sun very accurately, since it was discovered 20 years ago and has been tracked ever since.
- For comparison, when it is at its closest, the distance of 2 million km is equal to 5¼ times the distance from Earth to the Moon. Still, that distance is close in astronomical terms, which is why 2001 FO32 has been designated a “potentially hazardous asteroid”.

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- During the approach, 2001 FO32 passed by at about 124,000 kph – faster than the speed at which most asteroids encounter Earth. The reason for the asteroid's unusually speedy close approach is its highly eccentric orbit around the Sun, an orbit that is tilted 39° to Earth's orbital plane. This orbit takes the asteroid closer to the Sun than Mercury, and twice as far from the Sun as Mars.
- As 2001 FO32 makes its inner solar system journey, the asteroid picks up speed. In a statement announcing the approach, NASA likened the asteroid's picking up of speed to a skateboarder rolling down a halfpipe. Later, the asteroid slows after being flung back out into deep space and swinging back toward the Sun. It completes one orbit every 810 days (about 2¼ years).
- After its brief visit, 2001 FO32 will continue its lonely voyage, not coming this close to Earth again until 2052, when it will pass by at about seven lunar distances, or 2.8 million km. Even if it is at the smaller end of the scale, 2001 FO32 will still be the largest asteroid to pass this close to our planet in 2021.
- The last notably large asteroid close approach was that of 1998 OR2 on April 29, 2020. While 2001 FO32 is somewhat smaller than 1998 OR2, it will be three times nearer to Earth.
- When sunlight hits an asteroid's surface, minerals in the rock absorb some wavelengths while reflecting others. By studying the spectrum of light reflecting off the surface, astronomers can measure the chemical "fingerprints" of the minerals on the surface of the asteroid.
- Over 95% of near-Earth asteroids the size of 2001 FO32 or larger have been discovered, tracked, and catalogued. None of the large asteroids in the catalogue has any chance of impacting Earth over the next century, and it is extremely unlikely that any of the remaining undiscovered asteroids of this size could impact Earth, either. Still, efforts continue to discover all asteroids that could pose an impact hazard

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q.1) Consider the following statements:

1. Earth observation satellites are the satellites equipped with remote sensing technology.
2. RISAT (Radar Imaging Satellite) series are the first all-weather Earth observation satellites from ISRO.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.2) Which of the following compounds is/are present in SYNGAS?

1. Hydrogen 2. Methan
3. Carbon monoxide 4. Water Vapours

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only
(c) 1, 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

1. Stokes and anti-Stokes bands are associated with the Raman Effect.
2. Raman spectroscopy can be used to determine the temperature of the material.

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Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.4) Which of the following country is/are working on Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX) mission?

1. India
2. Japan
3. USA
4. Russia

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only

Q.5) A mosquito protein strongly inhibits the family of viruses that cause yellow fever, dengue, West Nile, and Zika, and also weakly inhibits coronaviruses. It is known as:

(a) FO32
(b) AEG12
(c) SARS
(d) H1N1

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTION

Q1. As India and the world reorient in the present context of the COVID-19 crisis, a new Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP) was initiated at this crucial juncture during mid-2020. In light of this statement, highlight the important key points of the National Science Technology and Innovation Policy.

Answers: *1-c, 2-a, 3-c, 4-a, 5-b*

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GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) AND GS PAPER I & III (MAIN)

LEAD ARTICLE

RED SANDERS

#CONSERVATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE ResearchGate

IN NEWS

The Andhra Pradesh forest Department has prepared a schedule for the global e-auction of the seized red sanders logs.

RED SANDERS

- Red sander is endemic to **several districts in Andhra Pradesh and some parts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**. It occurs in the **Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests.**
- It is known for its rich hue and therapeutic properties.
- It is high in demand across Asia, particularly in China and Japan, for use in cosmetics and medicinal products as well as for making furniture, woodcraft and musical instruments.
- The species was listed in **Appendix II of CITES in 1995**, which says "trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival".
- Its export was prohibited in 2004.
- In 2010, the government submitted a **Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) report** saying it must be allowed to export from cultivated sources.
- In 2012, India got an export quota on red sanders from CITES.
- In 2019, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), an agency of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has revised its export policy to permit the export of all red sanders if it is obtained from cultivated land.

INTER-LINKING OF RIVERS

#INTERLINKING

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS SECONDARY SOURCE MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

CONTEXT

India is a land of extreme climates including its rainfall patterns which are highly skewed. Most of the rainfall in India happens within a span of about 100 days during the

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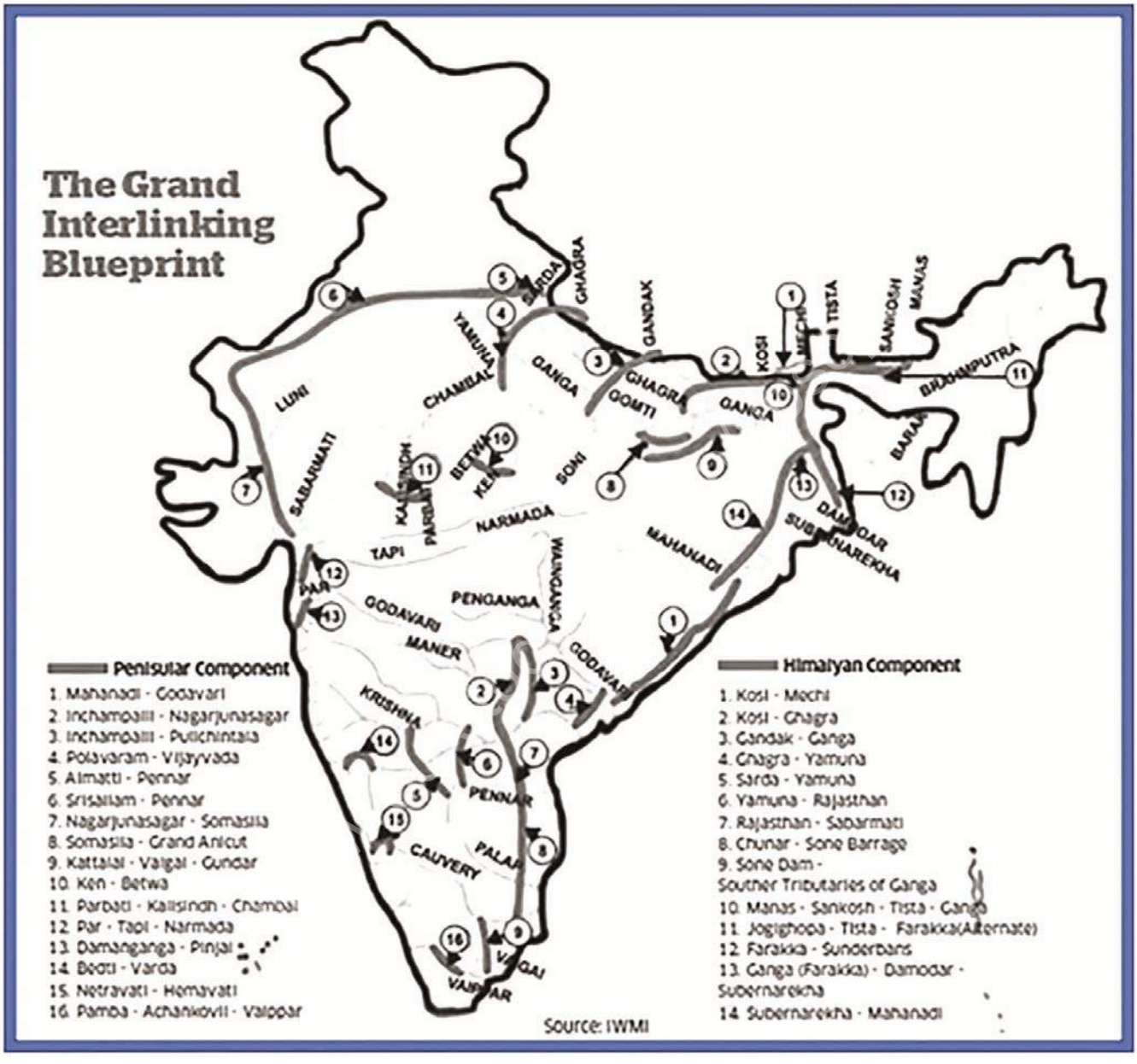
Monsoons. Adding to the climate diversity are the geographical variations which make India home to some of driest and wettest places in the world.

The interlinking of rivers is necessary to overcome anomaly of uneven temporal and spatial distribution of rainfall in the country. It is also necessary to remove the regional imbalances in the country.



Currently, Himalayan rivers has perennial flow with often serious flooding during monsoon months. While the Peninsular rivers have flows during the monsoon months, and have very low or run dry during other times of the year. This anomaly has been visualised to be solved by Interlinking of Rivers.

CURRENT PROGRAM

The program for interlinking of major rivers comprises 30 links to share available waters equitably between different basins and states. The current program has two components: **The National Perspective Plan for Inter-Linking of rivers-**

- Himalayan Component: 14 Links
- Peninsular Component: 16 links

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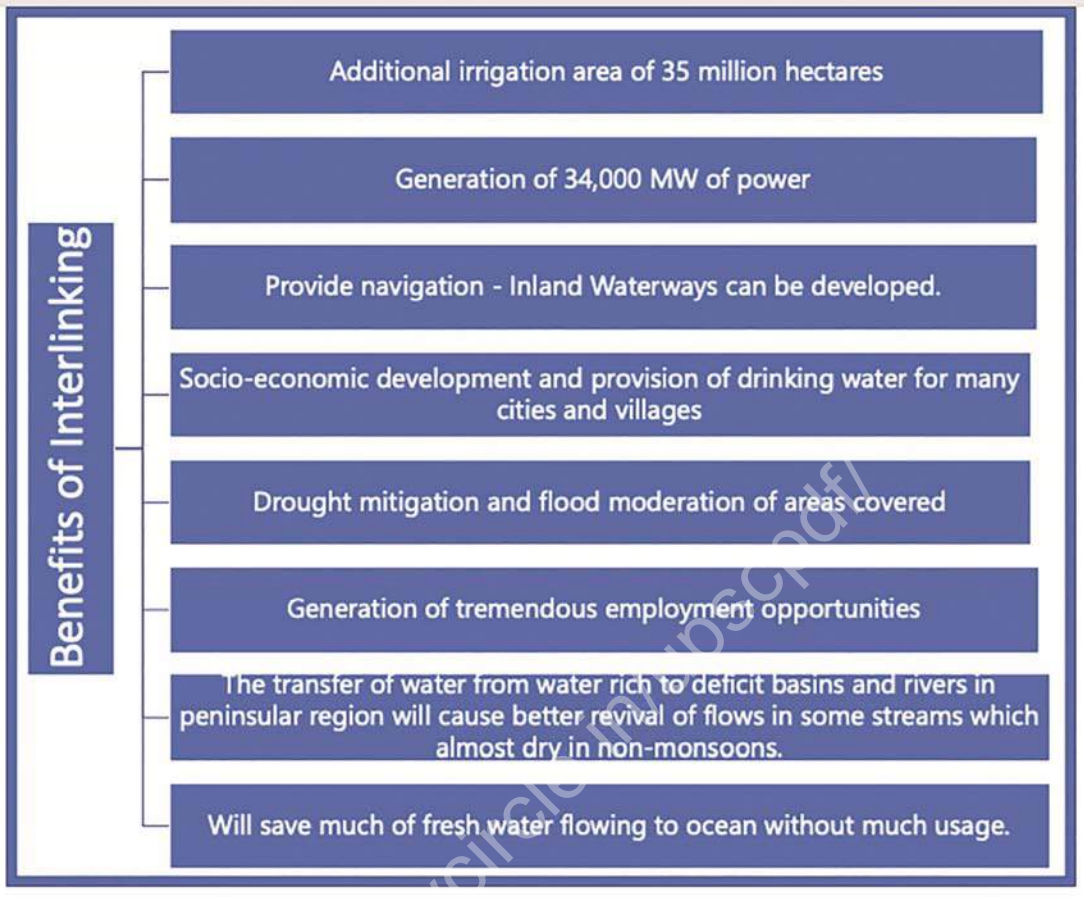

CHALLENGES TO THE PROJECT ARE

- Lack of consensus on implementation of project among the co-basin states.
- International Issues involved such as concerns of neighbouring countries such Resettlement and rehabilitation of the project affected people
- Timely clearance of concerned agencies
- High project funding cost.
- It is estimated that the project will involve construction of big dams
- Arresting the flow of fresh water can gravely impact mangroves.
- Low flow of fresh water to Bay of Bengal can reduce the fresh water layer over the Bay of Bengal. This can have regressive impact over the monsoons.
- Increased saline ground water intrusion, and putting at the risk the delicate wetland and estuarine ecology which is not only aquatic habitats and fisheries.
- The water surplus in most river basins of India is during the same period of monsoons. After the monsoon season even the so called water surplus states such as Punjab, UP, Uttarakhand face water deficits. Hence, during this period there will be no surplus left to transfer to peninsular states.
- The river interlinking will involve pumping the water from Himalayan rivers to the peninsular India which will involve increase of height of water by 1000 m. This will involve huge cost for pumping.

WAY FORWARD

1. In interlinking proposals, a provision of the minimum lean season flow should be safeguarded to maintain the ecology and the river regime.
2. Cumulative impact assessment for the entire project should be done and not on component by component basis.
3. Rehabilitation and Resettlement should be done prior to undertaking the projects.

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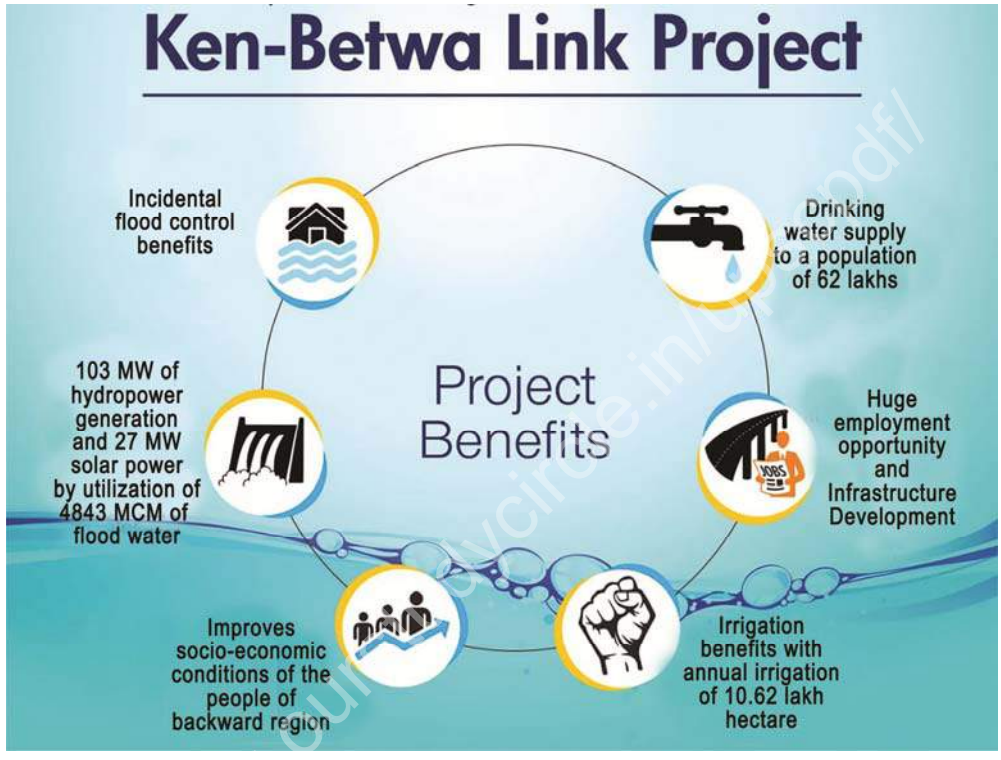
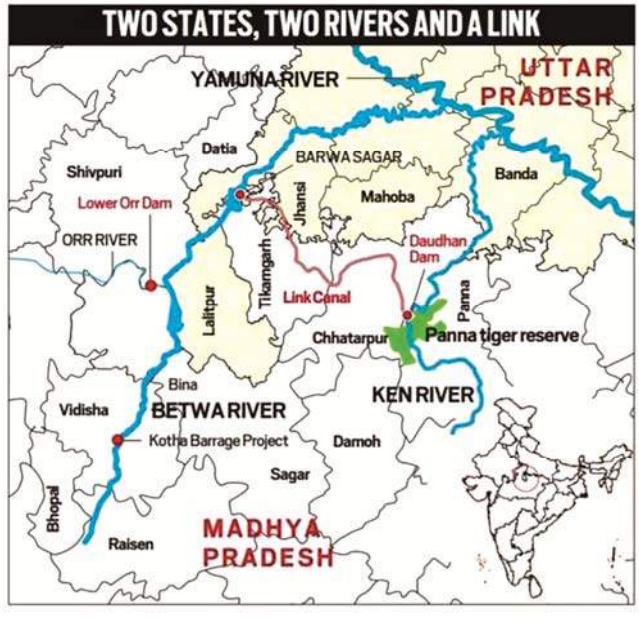
4. First projects should be identified which has least opposition. **Ken Betwa Linkage is the first Inter-linkage proposal** to be taken up, it should be completed as lighthouse of the project.
5. Despite the project, it will not be able to solve all water issues in the country. Hence, the focus should be on reforming the water governance (as per Mihir Shah Committee Report), focus on water use efficiency, participatory water governance and reforms in water usage in agricultural sector
6. Water availability will be the main developmental concern. All possible steps should be taken to solve this after consensus building.

RELATED INFORMATION: KEN-BETWA LINK PROJECT



Need: Spread between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the region of **Bundelkhand** is one of the most drought prone regions in the country. The frequency and intensity of drought in Bundelkhand has now increased in last few decades. Agriculture in the region is heavily dependent on rain and it is a diverse, complex, under-invested, risky and vulnerable preposition. In addition, the area also witnesses short-term heavy rain and flooding in the fields which add to the uncertainties. These extremes gets further complicated by the scarcity of water in the semi-arid region of Bundelkhand with poor soil and low farm productivity.



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WATER SOURCES

- Bundelkhand region is surrounded by a number of rivers of **the Ganga-Yamuna river basin**.
- The **Yamuna river** is to the North of Bundelkhand, **Ken river** is in the east and **Betwa** and **Pahuj rivers** are in the west.
- Yamuna river flows from west to east and is fed by its tributaries from Bundelkhand region– the Betwa, Ken, Pahuj, Baghain, and Paisuni.
- Almost half of the water available in Bundelkhand's upland and plain sub-regions is contributed by the Betwa river which originates in Madhya Pradesh's Raisen district, south of Bhopal.
- The second major contribution of water in the Bundelkhand region comes the Ken river which is around 25%. Both the rivers flow south to north in the states of UP and Madhya Pradesh.
- Ken and Betwa are very important for irrigation in the region.
- A plan to interlink these rivers was envisaged in the late 80s to transfer water from water surplus river basins to water-deficit ones. The project was revised in the late 90s but never saw the light of the day.

GREAT NICOBAR

#CONSERVATION #TRIBAL RIGHTS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE NITI Aayog

IN NEWS

*More than 150 sq. km. of land is being made available for Phase I of a **NITI Aayog-piloted 'Holistic' and 'Sustainable' vision for Great Nicobar Island** the southernmost in the Andaman and Nicobar group. This amounts to nearly 18% of the 910 sq. km. island, and will cover nearly a quarter of its coastline. The overall plan envisages the use of about 244 sq. km. — a major portion being pristine forest and coastal systems.*

- Projects to be executed in Phase I include a 22 sq. km. airport complex, a **trans-shipment port (TSP) at South Bay** at an estimated cost of ₹12,000 crore, a parallel-to-the-coast mass rapid transport system and a free trade zone and warehousing complex on the south western coast.
- Previously NITI Aayog has given a plan for the sustainable and holistic development of the 680 sq km, fragile Little Andaman Island in the Andaman and Nicobar group.
- The Standing Committee of the **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** denotified the entire Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary to allow for the port there. Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO) as the nodal agency (**Chief Secretary**, **A&N Administration is the chairman**)

NOTE

The proposal for denotification of any **Sanctuary/National Park** requires recommendation of the National Board for Wildlife as per the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and thereafter, approval from Hon'ble Supreme Court also.

Supreme Court vide their order dated 13. 11.2000 had directed that there shall be no dereservation/ denotification of National Parks and Sanctuaries without approval of the Supreme Court.

Declaration and de-notification of tiger reserves —

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1. No alteration in the boundaries of a tiger reserve shall be made except on a recommendation of the Tiger Conservation Authority and the approval of the National Board for Wild Life.
2. No State Government shall de-notify a tiger reserve, except in public interest with the approval of the Tiger Conservation Authority and the National Board for Wild Life.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

- **National Marine Turtle Action Plan** has listed Galathea Bay as one of the '**Important Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Areas'** and '**Important Marine Turtle Habitats'** in the country.
- Considering the need to have a conservation paradigm for marine mega fauna and marine turtles, the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has released '**Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines'** and '**National Marine Turtle Action Plan**' in January 2021.
- **Giant leatherback turtle** and the **Nicobar megapode**, two charismatic species for whom Great Nicobar is very important. The beaches here, like at the mouth of the river Galathea in South Bay, are among the most prominent nesting sites globally of the Giant leatherback. It for this reason that the bay was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1997, but has now been denotified to allow for the transhipment port.

NOTE

There are five species of turtle in Indian waters i.e. **Olive Ridley, Green turtle, Loggerhead, Hawksbill, Leatherback.**

- The Olive Ridley, Leatherback and Loggerhead are listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- The **Hawksbill turtle is listed as 'Critically Endangered'** and **Green Turtle is listed as 'Endangered'** on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Leatherbacks are the largest of all species of sea turtles on the planet and also the most long-ranging. They are found in all oceans except the Arctic and the Antarctic. Within the Indian Ocean, they nest only in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the A&N Islands.

NICOBAR MEGAPODE

- Bird unique to the Nicobars. Found in some of the Nicobar Islands.
- **IUCN Status: Vulnerable**
- 90% of this ground nesting bird's nests to be within a distance of 30 m from the shore.
- Like other megapode relatives, it builds a large mound nest with soil and vegetation, with the eggs hatched by the heat produced by decomposition.

➢ In January, another Environment Ministry expert committee approved a **"zero extent" Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ) for the Galathea NP** to allow use of land in the south-eastern and south-western part of the island for the NITI Aayog plan.

Eco-Sensitive Zones

- Eco-Sensitive Zones or Ecologically Fragile Areas are areas within **10 kms around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.**
- ESZs are notified by **MoEFCC**, Government of India under Environment Protection Act 1986.
- In case of places with sensitive corridors, connectivity and ecologically important patches, crucial for landscape linkage, even area beyond 10 km width can also be included in the eco-sensitive zone.
- The basic aim is to regulate certain activities around National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries so as to minimise the negative impacts of such activities on the fragile ecosystem encompassing the protected areas.

The October 2020 draft notification for this zero extent ESZ had ironically listed out in great detail the park's ecological uniqueness — that it is part of a **UNESCO**

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World Heritage Site, houses a range of forest types, has one of the **best preserved tropical rainforests in the world**, is home to 648 species of flora and hosts 330 species of fauna including rare and endemic ones such as the:

- **Nicobar wild pig**
- **Nicobar tree shrew** [Endangered]
- the **Great Nicobar crested serpent eagle** [NT]
- **Nicobar paradise flycatcher** and the [LC]
- **Nicobar megapode** [VU]

➢ It also notes that the park is home to the indigenous **Shompen community**. It is included in **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)-I**, the zone with maximum protection.

Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)

- **CRZ Rules govern human and industrial activity close to the coastline**, in order to protect the fragile ecosystems near the sea.
- They restrict certain kinds of activities — like large constructions, setting up of new industries, storage or disposal of hazardous material, mining, reclamation and bunding — within a certain distance from the coastline.
- Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification are issued by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) under **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** with the mandate to take measures to protect and conserve our coastal environment.

Similar concerns exist about the impact on the **Shompen community**. The proposed project areas are important foraging grounds for this hunter-gatherer nomadic community and the official **Shompen Policy of 2015** specifically noted that the welfare and integrity of these people should be given priority "with regard to large-scale development proposals in the future for Great Nicobar Island (such as trans-shipment port/container terminal etc.)". Now, large forest areas here could become inaccessible and useless for the Shompen.

Tribes		**Islands**
Andamanese		Strait Island
Sentinelese	PVTG	Sentinel Islands
Jarawa		Middle and South Andaman
Onges		Little Andaman
Shompen		Great Nicobar
Nicobarse		Great Nicobar

➢ **Geological volatility:** Geological volatility of these islands are also not being factored in. The December 26, 2019, tender document by WAPCOS Limited for a 'Traffic Study for Creating Transshipment port at South Bay, Great Nicobar Island' justifies the port here by noting that "the topography of the island is best suited, which has not been damaged much even by the tsunami on 26.11.2004".

- Andaman and Nicobar Islands are southward extension of ArakanYoma range (Myanmar). Arakaoma in itself is an extension of Purvanchal Hills.

- The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are vulnerable to tsunamis generated from earthquakes originating from different sources that exist along the Sumatra Subduction Zone (SUSZ), Andaman Subduction Zone (ANSZ) and Arakan Subduction Zone (ARSZ)
- Loss of life and property then was limited because the Great Nicobar coast is largely uninhabited. This raises questions over safety of life, property and the investments in this zone and that too without accounting for the complex ecological, social and geological vulnerabilities here.

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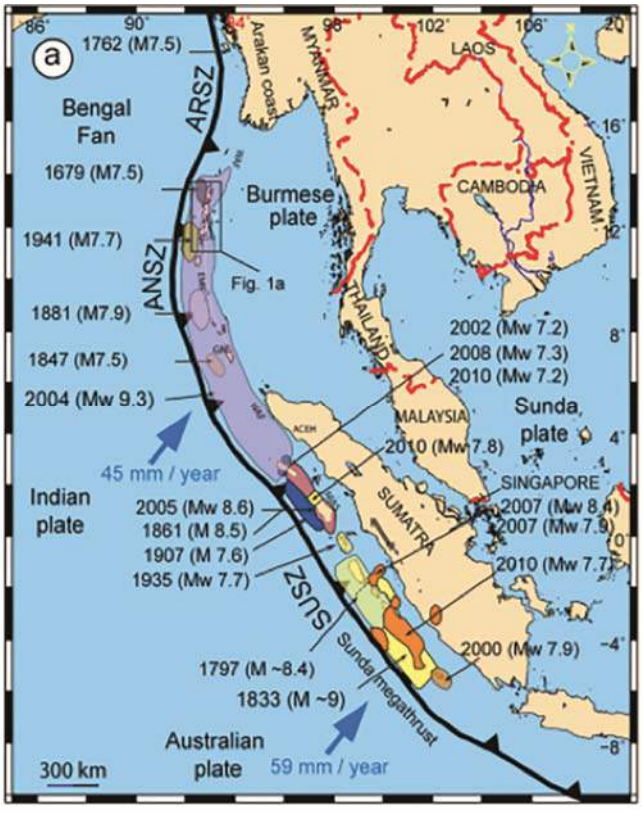

- Yet, a 2005 Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) Special Earthquake Report by a team from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, recorded witness accounts of 8-metre-high tsunami waves hitting the Great Nicobar coast on December 26, 2004. "The lighthouse at Indira Point, the southernmost tip of the Great Nicobar Island, which was on high ground before the earthquake," the report notes, "is now under water, indicating a land subsidence of about 3-4 m."

BAMBOO FLOWERING

PHENOMENON

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

CONTEXT

There are over 1500 different bamboo species known to date which all have different flowering habits and flowering intervals. There does not exist much scientific evidence and study about why and when bamboo flowers, mainly because the flowering intervals of bamboo can be several decades apart.

While the vast majority of herbaceous bamboos flower annually, most of the woody bamboos flower very infrequently. In fact, many bamboos only flower once every 20 to 120 years and may die in part or completely due to some possible causes.

There exist 3 types of flowering in bamboo which largely depend on species and circumstances:

1. **Continuous Flowering**
2. **Sporadic Flowering**
3. **Gregarious Flowering**

- **Continuous or annual flowering** happens with most herbaceous bamboos and in some cases also with woody bamboos. Some species keep flowering year after year without any effect on the plant itself, although the produced seeds are rarely viable.
- **Sporadic flowering bamboo only occurs on individual stems (culms)** of the same clump in a forest. As the name suggests, there is very little pattern to this type of flowering and it seems that it may be **induced by environmental factors** such as drought or cold instead of genetics.
  - It has been noted that severe attacks of pests or disease, injury, malnutrition, or long periods of prolonged droughts and floods coincide with the presence of flowering in grooves that were under these circumstances.
  - These adverse causes inevitably produce reactions and mechanisms in the plants which leads them to flower with the objective to preserve the species. The seeds are then utilized as a unique system of self-perpetuation. Sporadic flowering can also occur when bamboo forests or plantations are heavily exploited.
- Most **woody bamboo species** are subject to **gregarious flowering** which means that **all plants of**

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a particular species flower at the same time, **regardless of differences in geographic locations or climate conditions**, and **then die a few years later**. Intervals in the gregarious flowering cycle varies depending on the species, but in general bamboo flowering intervals can be as long as 20-120 years.

In other words, when a certain bamboo species starts to flower gregariously, they do this all over the world for a several year period until the entire forest has died.

What causes gregarious flowering? Unlike sporadic flowering, gregarious flowering isn't triggered by environmental aspects, which leads us to believe that there must exist some sort of genetic alarm clock in each bamboo cell that signals the diversion of all energy to flower production and the cessation of vegetative growth. This mechanism, as well as the evolutionary cause behind it, is still largely a mystery.

Why bamboo dies after flowering? The 2 most probable explanations for why bamboo dies after flowering (there exist many theories) are:

1. seed production requires an enormous amount of energy which stresses the bamboo plant to such an extent that it will actually die.
2. A second explanation could be that the mother plant is creating an optimal environment for its seedlings to survive. In other words when the mother plant dies, the bamboo seedlings will have full access to water, nutrients and sunlight that would otherwise be used by the mother plant.

- Profuse natural regeneration occurs from seeds after gregarious flowering. Seeds have no dormancy, and it helps germination under favourable conditions soon after seed fall.
- But protection from fire and grazing is essential for proper establishment of seedlings.

CONSEQUENCES OF GREGARIOUS FLOWERING

- The mass flowering of bamboos and consequential seed setting also have economic and ecological consequences. The huge amount of seeds in forests attract large populations of rats and other rodents which may consume all available food crops and may cause severe spread of diseases in surrounding villages.
- Furthermore, when bamboo stems die, local people lose access to a vital building material for their homes and agricultural activities.
- The "gregarious flowering of bamboo" inside the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS) and the nearby Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Gudalur forest division in Tamil Nadu this year may pose a threat to wildlife in the Nilgiri biosphere, a major tiger and elephant habitat.
- The bamboo groves in the Wayanad forest are the mainstay of herbivores in the Nilgiri biosphere during summer. With the advent of the season, migration of wild animals starts from the adjacent sanctuaries in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to Wayanad due to shortage of fodder and water.
- The gregarious flowering may adversely affect migration, especially by elephants, wild gaur, and other lower herbivores owing to the mass destruction of bamboo groves after the flowering. Bamboo groves, which grow in more than 500 hectares of the 344.44 sq km of the sanctuary, have fully bloomed, a phenomenon said to occur once in the life cycle of bamboo plants.
- 25% of bamboo groves in the WWS and nearby sanctuaries have bloomed since 2010, and the phenomenon is continuing.

SLOWING OF GULF STREAM

#OCEAN CURRENTS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE NOAA

CONTEXT

Never before in over 1000 years the Gulf Stream System, has been as weak as in the last decades.

Already the 2019 special report on the oceans of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that the ***Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)*** *has weakened relative to 1850–1900.*

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*And in a second, separate but related study, researchers have found that the **Beaufort Sea, in the Arctic, has gained two-fifths more fresh water** in the last 20 years: water that could flow into the Atlantic to affect the Conveyor.*

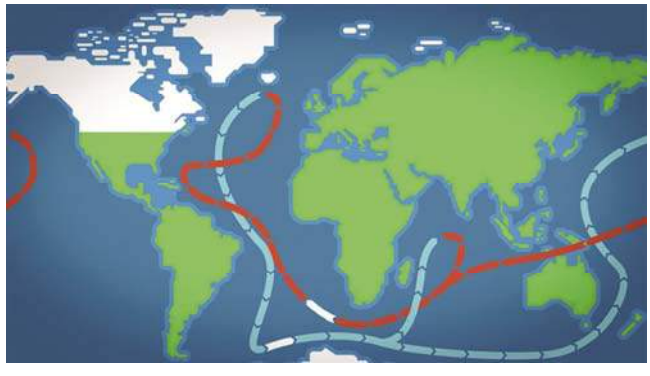
***In Short:** The Gulf Stream is growing feebler, the Arctic seas are gaining fresh water. Together they could affect the world's weather.*

OCEAN CURRENTS

- In the ocean there are numerous currents. The ocean conveyor belt is very important for our climate.
- Through these currents four of the five global ocean exchanges water with each other.
- The conveyor belt also is called **thermohaline circulation**. *Thermo* refers to temperature and *halin* to the salt content of water – **both determining the density of the water.**
- While wind helps in the movement of water in the ocean, **primarily density** is the determinant of the movement.
- Gulf stream has length of 10000 km, it is largest and fastest of all ocean current.
- Constantly blowing S-E trade wind drives the water to the North-West into the gulf of Mexico where it heats up to 30oC.
- The turning of the earth and the west winds then directs the gulf stream towards west and splits it up.
- One part flows south, another east to the Canary current. And the third part moves north where it releases lots of heat into the atmosphere, as the north Atlantic current.
- The water becomes colder there, its salt content and density rise on account of evaporation and it drops down between Greenland, Norway and Iceland.
- There we find largest water fall on earth – 15 times more water that is carried by all the waters in the world. This creates a strong mass flow which constantly pulls in new water. And this is the reason the current move towards Europe. It moves nearly 20 million cubic meters of water per second, almost a hundred times the Amazon flow. It carries heat equivalent to million nuclear power plants.
- With global warming we are making the water more warm and at the same time increasing the rainfall and glacier melt, making it less salty. Hence the overturning circulation becomes weaker and weaker.

WHY IS THE AMOC SLOWING DOWN?

- An AMOC slowdown has long been predicted by climate models as a response to global warming caused by greenhouse gases.
- The Atlantic overturning is driven by what the scientists call deep convection, triggered by the differences in the density of the ocean water: Warm and salty water moves from the south to the north where it cools down and thus gets denser.
- When it is heavy enough the water sinks to deeper ocean layers and flows back to the south.
- Global warming has caused the Arctic to warm, Greenland to melt, rainfall to increase, and the flow of fresh water into the northern seas to intensify.
- US researchers tracked the flow of fresh water from the Beaufort Sea − melt water from glaciers, rivers and disappearing Arctic sea ice − through the Canadian Archipelago and into the Labrador Sea.
- This reduces the salinity and thus the density of the water, inhibiting the sinking and thus weakening the flow of the AMOC.



Impact of slowing down of AMOC: The consequences of the AMOC slowdown could be manifold for people living on both sides of the Atlantic:

a) Gulf Stream conveys tropic warmth to the coasts of Britain and Western Europe and keep their temperature at several degrees higher than latitude alone might dictate. A further slowdown of the AMOC could imply more **extreme weather events** like a change of the winter storm track coming off the Atlantic, possibly intensifying them.

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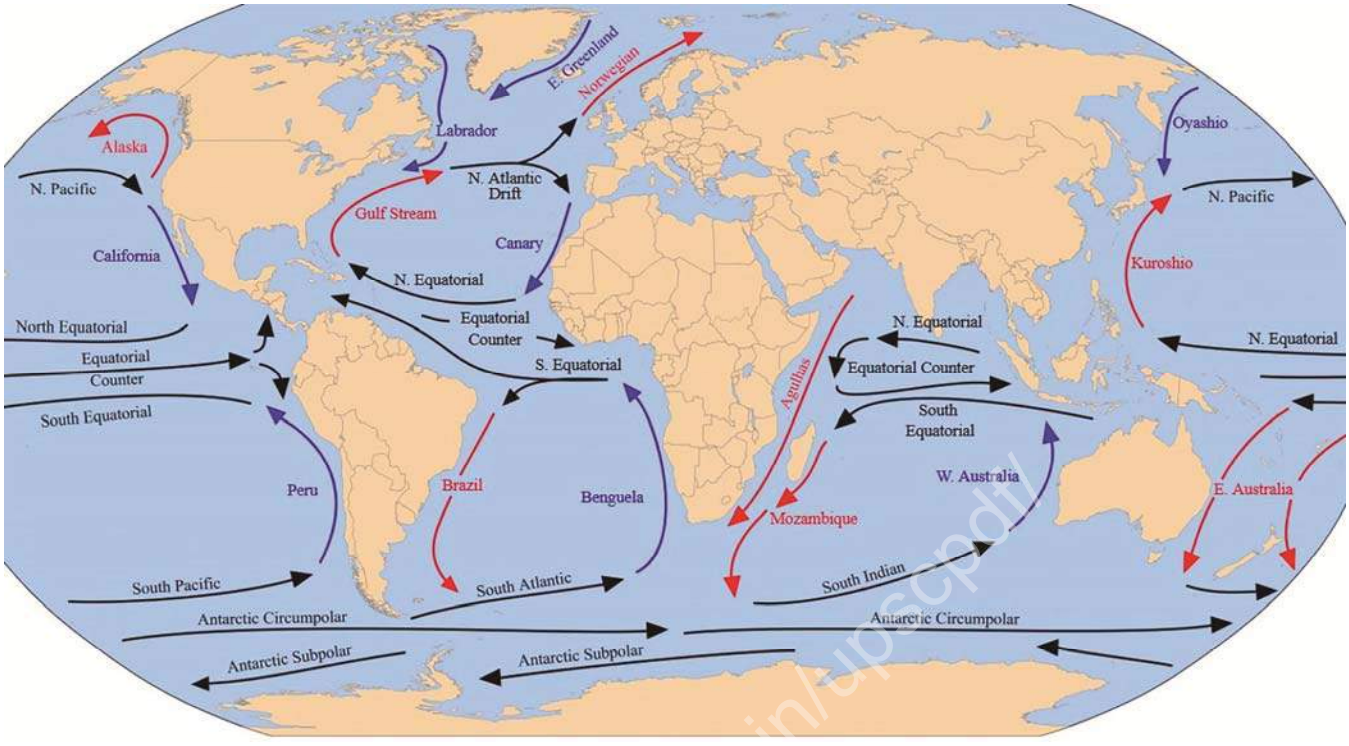
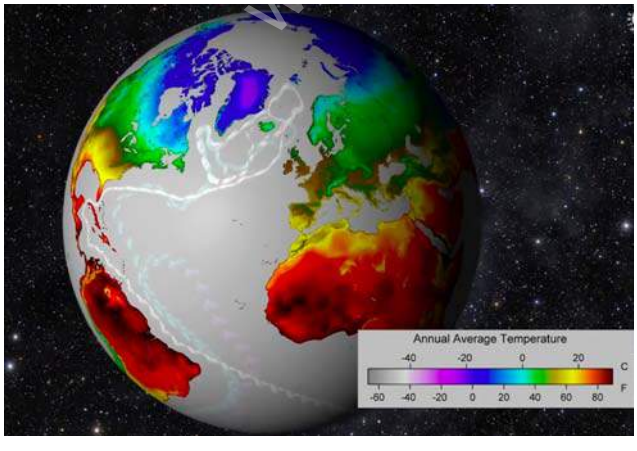


b) The northward surface flow of the AMOC leads to a deflection of water masses to the right, away from the US east coast. This is due to Earth's rotation that diverts moving objects such as currents to the right in the northern hemisphere and to the left in the southern hemisphere. As the current slows down, this effect weakens and more water can pile up at the US east coast, leading to an **enhanced sea level rise**.

c) The giant ocean circulation is relevant for weather patterns in Europe and regional sea-levels in the US; its slowdown is also associated with an observed **'cold blob' in the northern Atlantic**.



d) It could also deliver more **intense coastal flooding** to the US eastern seaboard.

e) **Greater heat potential in the western side of Africa**. Sahara region will become more draught prone.

f) Other studies found possible consequences being **extreme heat waves or a decrease in summer rainfall.**

If world continue to drive global warming, the Gulf Stream System will weaken further – by 34 to 45 percent by 2100 according to the latest generation of climate models. This could bring us dangerously close to the tipping point at which the flow becomes unstable.

26th COP

#CLIMATE CHANGE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

CONTEXT

*Countries across the world are gearing up for the **26th Conference of Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** to be convened in November this year at Glasgow.*

*The COP was originally scheduled to be held last year but, like several other international conferences, it was **delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic**.*

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*The forthcoming COP will be important because this will be the **first occasion after the Paris Climate agreement** concluded in 2015 that countries will be expected to **"ratchet up" the nationally determined commitments** they made as part of that agreement.*

NEW COMMITMENTS BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES:

- Those original commitments to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, chiefly carbon emissions, would, in the aggregate, put the planet on **track towards a 3 degrees centigrade temperature rise** by the end of the current millennium, **far beyond the 1.5 degree limit** that science considers to be a relatively safe threshold.
- The European Union (EU), the UK, Japan and South Korea have announced **more ambitious targets**. The EU and the UK have pledged to reduce their carbon emissions by **55 per cent in 2030 with 2000 as the base year.**
- They have also pledged to achieve **"carbon neutrality" or zero carbon emissions by 2050**. The US, under the incoming Biden administration, has rejoined the Paris Agreement.
- It is expected to **announce a carbon neutrality commitment for 2050**. China has announced that it will achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 and this has been welcomed by other major economies.

US-CHINA TEMPLATE

- It is anticipated that the Biden administration may engage with China to come up with a **template for COP-26** just as their leaders, Barack Obama and Xi Jinping, were able to do in advance of the Paris Climate summit.
- That template did not take into account **India's interests despite China being part of the BASIC group** of Brazil, South Africa, China and India which, as major emerging economies, had been taking coordinated positions at multilateral climate negotiations.

SUGGESTION FOR INDIA

Going forward, India must **delink itself from China**, let **BASIC become a consultative forum only** and **reconstruct a larger coalition** of developing countries whose climate change goals are more aligned with its own. After Paris, BASIC has lost whatever rationale it originally possessed.

OTHER RELATED CONFERENCES

- There will be some important **international conferences before COP-26**, where major efforts are expected to set down an agenda for that meeting.
- Biden has called for a **summit of major emitting nations on April 22** in order to persuade them to commit to ambitious mitigation targets. It is reported that the US may announce its own NDC at the meeting which could include a commitment to reduce its emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 though it is not clear whether this will be with 2000 as the base year or 2005 as was the case with the earlier pledge.
- In June there will be a **G-7 summit** to which India has been invited by host Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the UK. Since COP-26 will be held in Glasgow, the UK has let it be known that climate change would be at the top of the summit agenda.

FOCUS ON ADAPTATION

- Both for India and other developing countries, it is important that **mitigation does not overshadow other key elements** of the Paris Climate agreement.
- There has been **step-motherly treatment of adaptation**, which is a bigger challenge for most developing countries than mitigation is.
- The consequences of climate change are already upon us and even with the most ambitious mitigation action, will **continue to impact the world since greenhouse gases accumulated in the earth's atmosphere diminish only gradually**.
- Adaptation should have **equal billing with mitigation** whenever and wherever climate change action is being deliberated upon.
- The **developed countries** had committed themselves to **providing $100 billion a year** in climate finance to developing countries up to 2020 to enable them to expand their climate change action.
- There was a **pledge to increase the size of this funding** significantly in the period 2021-2025.
- Even by the very accommodative accounting methods used by the OECD, the **actual flows have fallen far short**, being only $79 billion in 2018.
- It is therefore important for India to **highlight the finance component** as this will also enable the mobilisation of other developing countries, in

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particular small and medium countries and small island developing states.

CLIMATE AT UNSC

- There is a relentless **effort by the US and Western European countries** to include climate change on the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**
- At a recent UNSC meeting, this was **strongly opposed by Russia and by India** but the Chinese climate envoy, Xie Zhenhua, appears to have adopted a supportive stance.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that India needs to fashion a fresh strategy on climate change negotiations to safeguard its interests, contribute to a global climate regime that enhances and does not diminish India's development prospects and helps the country both to adapt to climate change that is already taking place and to accelerate its transition to a low carbon growth trajectory.

CHILIKA LAKE

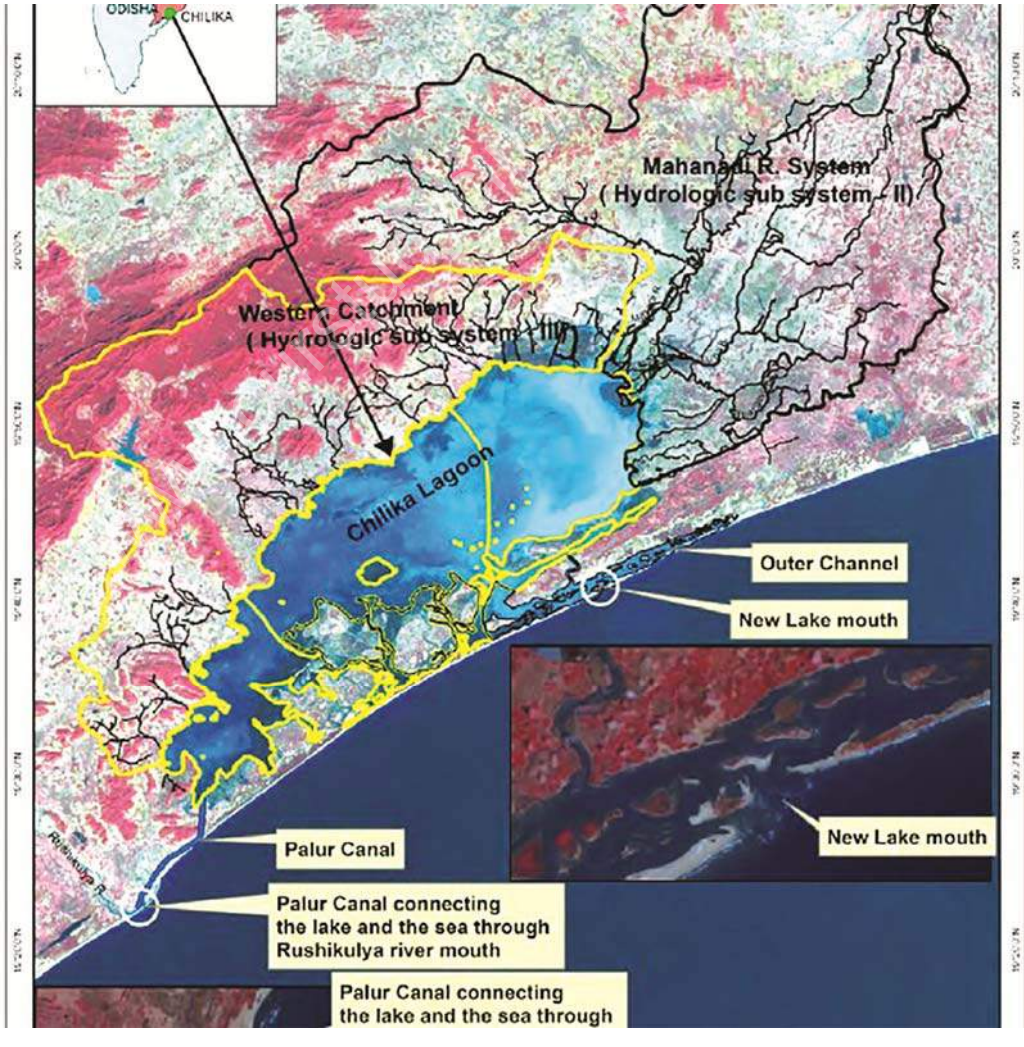
#WETLAND

PRIMARY SOURCE DownToEarth SECONDARY SOURCE www.ramsar.org

IN NEWS

The Odisha government started evicting illegal prawn gherries (enclosures) from Chilika lake. Around 349 hectares were cleaned on the first day of the drive, carried out by the Chilika Development Authority (CDA), the regulatory body for Asia's largest brackish water lagoon.

ABOUT CHILIKA LAKE



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- Chilika Lake is a brackish water lake and a shallow lagoon with estuarine character spread across the districts of Puri, Khurda and Ganjam in the state of Odisha in eastern India.
- Fed by 52 rivers and rivulets, the waterspread area of Chilika varies between 900 to 1165 sq. km. during summers and monsoon respectively.
- The pear shaped lagoon is about 64.5 km. long and its width varies from 5 to 18 km.
- It is connected to the Bay of Bengal by a 32 km long and 1.5 km wide channel that mostly runs parallel to the Bay separated by a narrow spit whose width varies between 100 m to several kilometres.
- The lagoon can be broadly divided into four ecological sectors based on salinity and depth, namely the southern zone, the central zone, the northern zone and the outer channel. A number of islands are present in the lagoon, prominent among which are Krushnaprasad, Nalaban, Kalijai, Somolo and Birds Islands.
- Brackish lake separated from the Bay of Bengal by a long sandy ridge and subject to sea water exchange, resulting in extreme seasonal fluctuations in salinity in different sections of the lake. Saline areas support aquatic algae.
- The site is an important area for breeding, wintering and staging for 33 species of waterbirds. It also supports 118 species of fish, including commercially important species. Significant numbers of people are dependent upon the lake's resources.
- Placed on the **Montreux Record in 1993** due to problems caused by siltation and sedimentation which was choking the mouth of the lake; removed from the Record in 2002 following rehabilitation efforts for which the Chilika Development Authority received the **Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for 2002.**

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

#BIODIVERSITY #SPECIES

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

IN NEWS

The Supreme Court decided to intervene on behalf of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustards over the birds falling dead after colliding with power lines running through their dwindling natural habitats in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

- The great Indian bustard or Indian bustard is a bustard found on the Indian subcontinent.
- **Morphology -** A large bird with a horizontal body and long bare legs, giving it an ostrich like appearance, this bird is among the heaviest of the flying birds.
- **Range -** Once common on the dry plains of the Indian subcontinent, as few as 150 individuals were estimated to survive in 2018 (reduced from an estimated 250 individuals in 2011). One of the ideal location for GIB is **Desert National Park**
- **Conservation status**
  - This species is **critically endangered**
  - It is protected under **Wildlife Protection Act 1972** of India.
- **Threats**
  - Main threats include hunting and loss of its habitat, which consists of large expanses of dry grassland and scrub.
  - Alleged hunting of GIB in Pakistan is believed to be one of the reasons for the plummeting numbers of the bird species.

What currently is the threat to GIB? A report by the Ministry, submitted to the National Green Tribunal in 2019, pointed out that **power lines, especially high-voltage transmission lines** with **multiple overhead wires**, are the most important current threat for GIBs in

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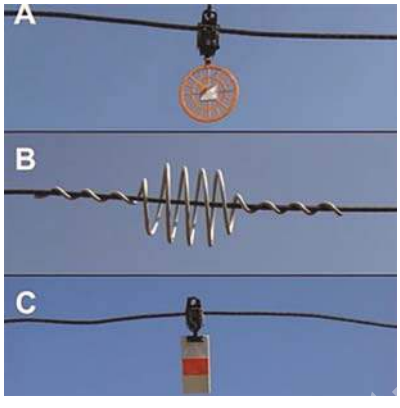
the Thar region, and are causing unsustainably high mortality in about 15% of their population.

USE OF DIVERTERS TO PREVENT COLLISION WITH POWER LINES

- Firefly bird diverters are flaps installed on power lines. They work as reflectors for bird species like the GIB. Birds can spot them from a distance of about 50 meters and change their path of flight to avoid collision with power lines. Smaller birds can change their direction [swiftly] but for larger bird species, it is difficult because their body weight and other factors.
- The diverters are called **fireflies** because they look like fireflies from a distance, shining on power lines in the night.



→RELATED INFORMATION: DESERT NATIONAL PARK

- Desert National Park, Rajasthan, India, is situated in the state of Rajasthan near the towns of Jaisalmer and Barmer. This is one of the largest national parks, covering an area of 3162 km².
- The Desert National Park is an excellent example of the **ecosystem of the Thar Desert**. Sand dunes form around 20% of the Park. The major landform consists of craggy rocks and compact Salt Lake bottoms, intermedial areas and fixed dunes.
- Despite a fragile ecosystem, there is an abundance of birdlife.
- The region is a haven for migratory and resident birds of the desert. Many eagles, harriers, falcons, buzzards, kestrel and vultures are spotted here. Short-toed eagles, tawny eagles, spotted eagles, laggar falcons and kestrels are the most common among these. Sand grouse are spotted near small ponds or lakes.
- The endangered great Indian bustard is a magnificent bird found in relatively fair numbers. It migrates locally in different seasons. The most suitable time to visit the area is between November and January.
- The Desert National Park has a collection of fossils of animals and plants which is 180 million years old. Some fossils of dinosaurs which are 60 million years old have been found in the area

SIMLIPAL BIOSPHERE RESERVE

#FOREST FIRE # CONSERVATION

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

IN NEWS

A forest fire raged severely in the biosphere reserve.

HOW FIRE PRONE IS SIMLIPAL FOREST?

- Generally, with the onset of summers and towards the end of autumn, the forest area remains vulnerable to forest fires. They are a recurrent annual phenomenon, but are also brought under control due to short span of precipitation. The months of January and February witness rainfall of 10.8 and 21 mm, respectively.

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- This duration coincides with the shedding of deciduous forests in the forest areas. The fallen leaves are more vulnerable to catching fire and facilitate the spreading of these forest fires quickly over the entire forest area.

WHAT CAUSES THE FIRE IN SIMLIPAL?

- Natural causes such as lighting or even soaring temperatures can sometimes result in these fires, but forest officials and activists say most of the fires can be attributed to man-made factors. With dried leaves and tree trunks, even a spark can lead to a raging fire.
- Instances of poaching and hunting wherein the poachers set a small patch of forest on fire to divert the wild animals can lead to such fires. They do not douse the fire after hunting. This particular time is very vulnerable for fires to spread quickly.
- Secondly, jungle areas are also set on fire by villagers to clear the dry leaves on the ground for easy collection of mahua flowers. These flowers are used to prepare a drink which is addictive in nature. Villagers also believe burning patches of Sal trees will lead to better growth when planted again.
- This year, along with man-made factors, an advanced heat wave with the early onset of summer further deteriorated the condition.

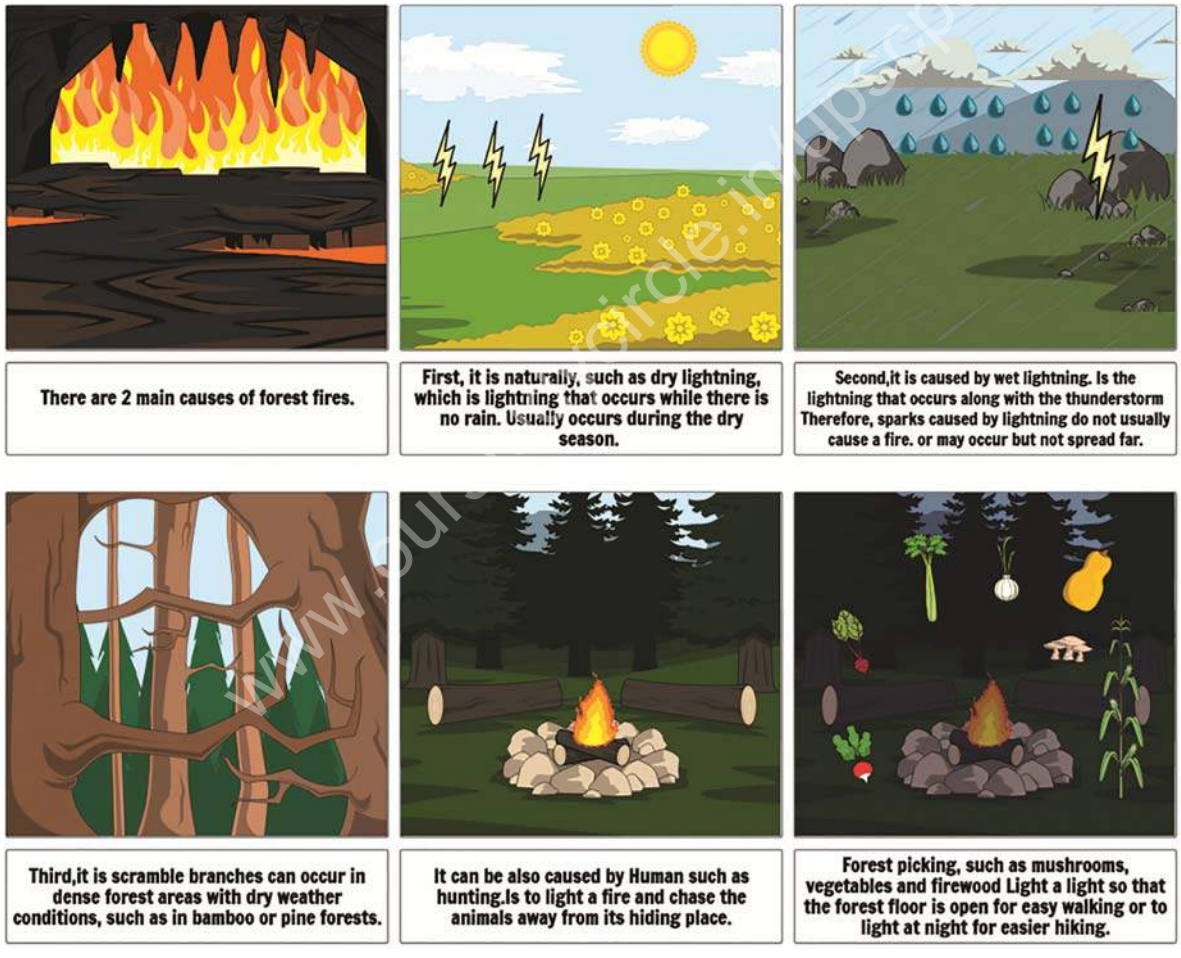

Fig: Causes of forest Fires

HOW ARE THESE FOREST FIRES CONTROLLED AND PREVENTED?

- Such fires are generally brought under control by natural rains.
- Forecasting fire-prone days and including community members to mitigate incidents of fire, creating fire lines, clearing sites of dried biomass, and crackdown on poachers are some of the methods to prevent fires.

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- The forest fire lines which are strips kept clear of vegetation, help break the forest into compartments to prevent fires from spreading.
- This year, the forest department intensified its mitigation measures and formed a squad each for 21 ranges across the five divisions to closely monitor the situation. 1,000 personnel, 250 forest guards were pressed into action. 40 fire tenders and 240 blower machines were used to contain the blaze.
- Awareness programmes are also being initiated at a community level to prevent such incidents.

RANTHAMBORE TIGER RESERVE

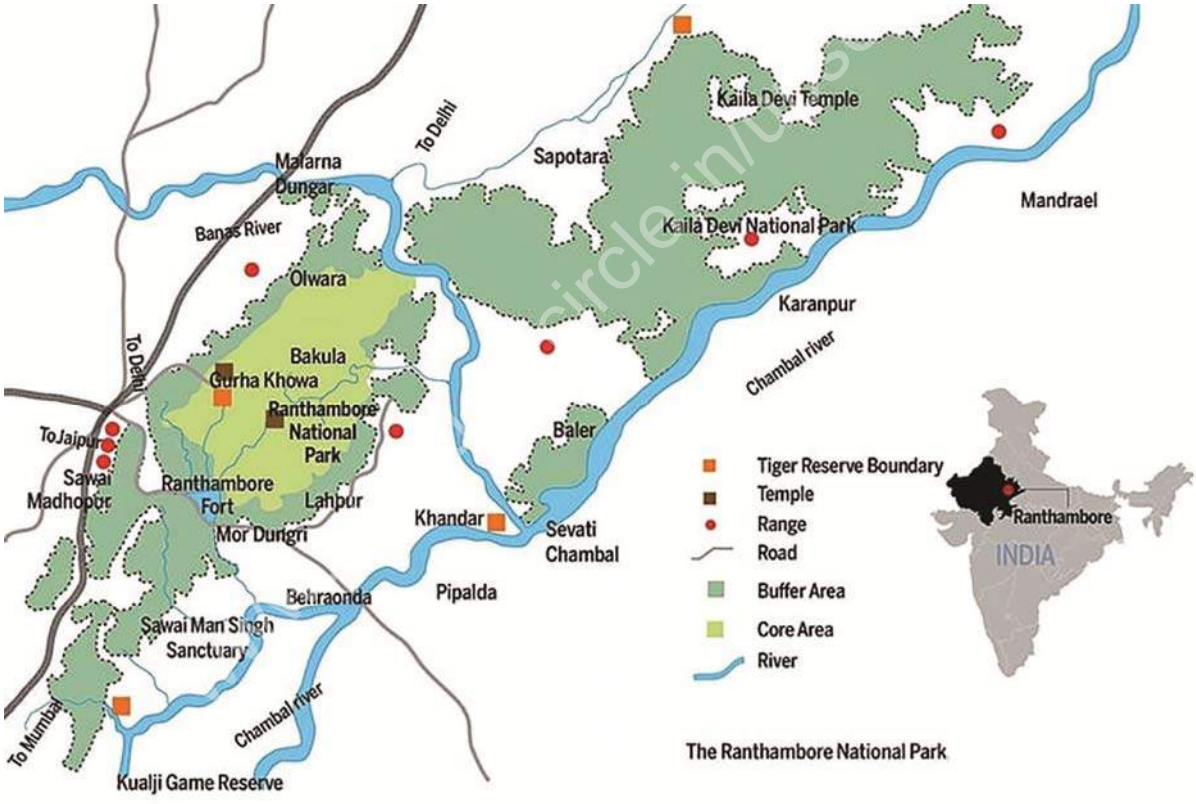
CONSERVATION

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

CONTEXT

Six tigers — four adults and two sub-adults — have been unaccounted for since March 2020 in the Ranthambore tiger sanctuary, Rajasthan. However, State forest officials are not willing to label them "missing" and denied reports that they may have been poached.

ABOUT RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK



The Ranthambore National Park

- Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan has an area of 1,334 km2 (515 sq mi). It is bounded to the north by the **Banas River** and to the south by the **Chambal River**. It is named after the historic Ranthambore Fort, which lies within the park.
- Ranthambore National Park harbours **dry deciduous forests** and **open grassy meadow**. The flora of the park includes 539 species of flowering plants.
- Ranthambore Fort was built in the 10th century at 210 m (700 ft) above the surrounding plain. Inside the fort are three red Karauli stone temples devoted to Ganesh, Shiva and Ramlalaji. There is a Digamber Jain temple of Lord Sumatinath and Lord Sambhavanath. The temples were constructed in the 12th and 13th centuries.
- **Padam Talao** is the largest of the many lakes in the park. A red sandstone Jogi Mahal is at the edge of the lake. A gigantic Banyan tree, considered to be India's second largest, is also near the lake.

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- Ranthambore is known for its **large tiger population**. During the past few years, there has been a decline in the tiger population in Ranthambhore due to poaching and other reasons.
- Ranthambore National Park hosts deciduous forests and wildlife such as Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, nilgai, wild boar, sambar, striped hyena, sloth bear, southern plains gray langur, rhesus macaque, mugger crocodile and chital. The sanctuary is home to a wide variety of trees, plants, birds and reptiles, as well as one of the **largest banyan trees** in India.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Chilika Lake?

1. It is a brackish water lake.
2. It observes extreme seasonal fluctuations in salinity in different sections of the lake.
3. It has been removed from Montreux Record.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Sporadic flowering bamboo occurs due to genetic factors.
2. Gregarious flowering which means that all plants of a particular species flower at the same time

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Red sander is endemic to several districts in West Bengal and Odisha.
2. Red Sanders are known for their rich hue and therapeutic properties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. 26th Conference of Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be convened later this year in Moscow.
2. The efforts made by countries have put the planet on track to contain the rise in temperature within 1.5 Degree C.
3. There is a relentless effort by the US and Western European countries to include climate change on the UN Security Council (UNSC)

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q5. With reference to threats to Great Indian Bustards, consider the following statements:

1. Hunting in Pakistan
2. Electric wires
3. Loss of Habitat

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answers: *1-c, 2-b, 3-b, 4-c, 5-d*

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HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER I (MAIN)

ANANGPAL II

#MEDIEVAL HISTORY

IN NEWS

The government has recently formed a committee to popularise the legacy of 11th-century Tomar king, Anangpal II.

- He belonged to the **Tomar dynasty** (Anangpal I founded the Tomar dynasty in the 8th century) that ruled parts of present-day Delhi and Haryana between the 8th and 12th centuries.
- Anangpal II, popularly known as Anangpal Tomar.
- Anangpal II was instrumental in populating **Indraprastha** and giving it its present name, Delhi.
- He built **Lal Kot fort** and **Anangtal Baoli**.
- Their capital was initially at Anangpur (near Faridabad) during the reign of Anangpal I, later it was shifted to **Dhillikapuri** (Delhi) during the reign of Anangpal II.
- Anangpal Tomar II was succeeded by his grandson **Prithviraj Chauhan**, who was defeated by the Ghurid forces in the Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana) after which the Delhi Sultanate was established in 1192.

BATTLE OF TARAIN (1191 & 1192)

- As a result of successive conquests, the boundaries of Ghori's kingdom extended to the border of Prithviraj's kingdom. In **1191**, Muhammad Ghori attacked Sirhind or Bathinda on north-western frontier of Chauhan kingdom. Prithviraj's along with his army, led by vassal **Govinda-Raj**, rushed to the defense of the frontier, and the two armies fought a battle at Tarain. This is how the First war of Tairan began.
- Two wings of Turkic army were defeated and fled away while Muhammad Ghori could not recover from the blow and fainted from the shock. The army surrendered and Muhammad was made prisoner. Muhammad of Ghor begged for mercy and Prithviraj pardoned him.
- In **1192,** Ghori after returning to his capital Ghazni challenged Prithviraj at the Second Battle of Tarain.
- The Second Battle of Tarain was fought in 1192. The Ghurid king defeated the Prithiviraj Chauhan thus avenging his earlier defeat at the First Battle of Tarain.
- The second battle of Tarain is significant among the Turkish and Arab invasions of India in the sense that though the Ghurid Kingdom would not last, the Islamic presence that it had brought in its wake endured that it would have a permanent base, influencing the cultural dynamics and history of the Indian subcontinent from that point on.

POCHAMPALLY SARI

#CULTURE

POCHAMPALLI IKAT

- Pochampally sari or Pochampalli ikat is a saree made in Bhoodan Pochampally, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Telangana State, India.
- They have traditional **geometric patterns in Ikat style of dyeing**. The intricate geometric designs find their way into sarees and dress materials.

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- The Indian government's official airplane company, Air India, has its cabin crew wear specially designed Pochampally silk sarees.
- Ikat (in Indonesian languages means "bind") is a dyeing technique originated from Indonesia used to pattern textiles that employs resist dyeing on the yarns prior to dyeing and weaving the fabric.
- The Ikat style, whose creations include the attractive `Tie and Dye' and silk woven sarees from Pochampally village, has now been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) status, giving it both protection and branding.
- Pochampally Ikat, will henceforth be the registered property of Pochampally Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society Ltd and the Pochampally Handloom Tie and Dye Silk Sarees Manufacturers Association.
- It has been registered with the GI Registry, Chennai, under the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

RELATED INFORMATION: LIST OF GI PROTECTED FABRICS

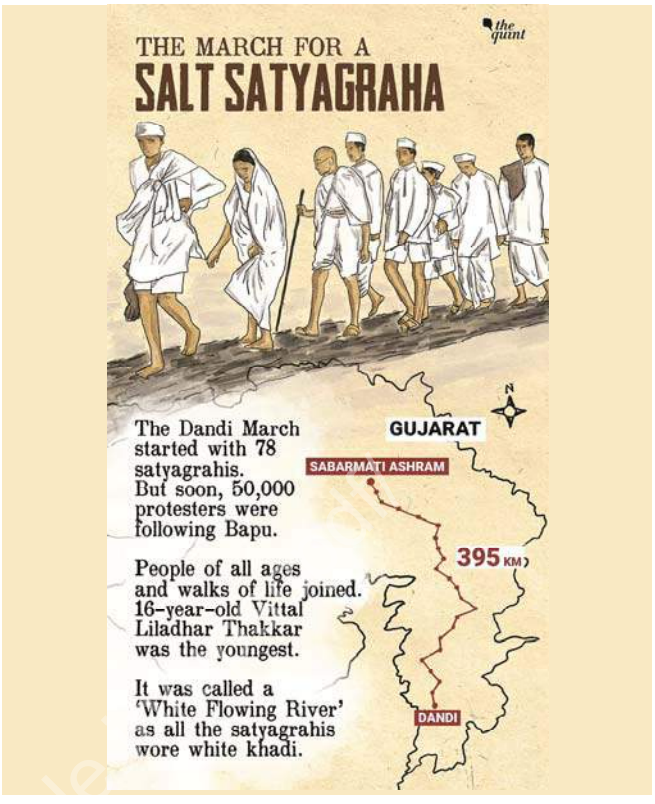
Geographical indication	State/UT
Aranmula Kannadi	Kerala
Pochampalli Ikat	Telangana
Salem Fabric	Tamil Nadu
Chanderi Sarees	Madhya Pradesh
Kota Doria	Rajasthan
Phulkari	Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan
Srikalahasthi Kalamkari	Andhra Pradesh
Nakshi Kantha	West Bengal
Kasuti Embroidery	Karnataka
Maheshwar Sarees & Fabric	Madhya Pradesh
Patola Sari	Gujarat

DANDI MARCH

#MODERN INDIA

IN NEWS

Prime Minister flagged off the Dandi March or Salt March on March 12 in Ahmedabad to celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence- 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.



- The Salt March, which took place from March to April 1930, was an act of civil disobedience led by Mahatma Gandhi to protest against the British rule in the country.
- On 12th March 1930, Gandhi began March to Dandi with his chosen 78 followers and broke the salt law at Dandi on 5 April 1930.
- Following the conclusion of the Salt March to Dandi, Mahatma Gandhi chose a non-violent raid of the Dharasana Salt Works in Gujarat as the next protest against British rule.
- Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on 5th of May, 1930, just days before his projected raid on the Dharasana Salt Works.
- On 21st May, the poet Sarojini Naidu led 2,000 marchers on the Dharasana Salt Works, some 150 miles north of Bombay. The incident, recorded by American journalist Webb Miller, prompted an international outcry against British policy in India.
- Civil Disobedience included Indian raids on salt depots, refusal to pay taxes in chosen areas, spirits and avoidance of business with all British firms,

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disobedience of forest laws and boycott of foreign cloth.

- The Salt Satyagraha movement was taken up by C. Rajagopalachari in Tamil Nadu and the Vaikon Satyagraha by K. Kalappan in Malabar.
- In the North West, the Pathans under Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, popularly known as Frontier Gandhi, organized the society of 'Khudai Khidmadgars' which was also known as Red Shirts.
- In Bihar there was a protest against Chowkidari tax in Saran, Bhagalpur and Monghyr.
- On 18th of April, around one hundred revolutionaries attacked police and railway armories at Chittagong. Mahatma Gandhi condemned the raid.
- This movement even sparked off patriotism among the Indian soldiers in the British army. The Garhwali soldiers refused to fire on the people at Peshawar.
- It continued for almost a year, ending with the release of Mahatma Gandhi from jail and after the discussions at the Second Round Table Conference with Viceroy Lord Irwin.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Anangpal I founded the Tomar dynasty.
2. Anangpal II has built Lal Kot fort and Anangtal Baoli.
3. Initially, Anangpur was the capital of Tomar Dynasty.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Prithviraj Chauhan defeated Muhammad Ghori in the 1st Battle of Tarain.
2. Second Battle of Tarain was fought in 1192.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Ikat is a dyeing technique used to pattern textiles.
2. Pochampally ikat is a saree made in Tamilnadu.
3. Pochampally ikat has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) status.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q4. Consider the following pairs:

	GI FABRIC	STATE
1.	Aranmula Kannadi	Kerala
2.	Chanderi Sarees	Madhya Pradesh
3.	Phulkari	Punjab

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. Salt March was an act of civil disobedience led by Mahatma Gandhi.
2. The Salt Satyagraha movement was taken up by C. Rajagopalachari in Tamil Nadu.
3. Jawaharlal Nehru led the Dharasana Satyagraha.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answers: *1-d, 2-c, 3-b, 4-d, 5-a*

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SECURITY

GS PAPER III (MAIN)

UAPA

#LEGISLATION #INTERNAL SECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

There has been over 72% increase in the number of persons arrested under the UAPA (Unlawful Activities [Prevention] Act) in 2019 compared to year 2015, data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in the Lok Sabha.

BRIEF HIGHLIGHT

- As many as 1,948 persons were arrested under the UAPA in 1,226 cases registered across the country in 2019.

YEAR	CASES REGISTERED	NO. OF ARREST
2015	897	1128
2016	922	999
2017	901	1554
2018	1182	1421

FOR THE YEAR 2019	
STATE	**NO. OF CASE REGISTERED**
MANIPUR	306
TAMIL NADU	270
JAMMU & KASHMIR	255
JHARKHAND	105
ASSAM	87

FOR THE YEAR 2019	
STATE	**NO. OF ARRESTs MADE**
UTTAR PRADESH	498
MANIPUR	386
TAMIL NADU	308
JAMMU KASHMIR	227
JHARKHAND	202

- According to Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, cases under the UAPA are investigated by the State police and the National Investigation Agency (NIA). As far as the NIA is concerned, so far 48 special courts have been constituted across the country for the speedy trial of terror-related cases.

WHAT LED TO THE ENACTMENT OF UAPA?

- **Through steady restriction of Article 19 -** The UAPA evolved over the years by a gradual but steady constriction of Article 19, which guarantees the fundamental freedoms of expression and assembly.
- **Constitution First Amendment -** Added the term reasonable before restriction and added public order as part of reasonable restrictions.
- **Constitution 16th Amendment -** The next major step in the abridgement of freedom of expression, assembly and association occurred in shape of the 16th amendment in 1963 as reasonable restrictions in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India' was added to Article 19 (2).
- Further 'reasonable restrictions in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India' were amended to Article 19 (2).
- **This amendment occurred in the immediate wake of the Indian army's defeat in the Sino-Indian War**, as well as the threat posed by the DMK contesting elections in Tamil Nadu with secession from India being part of their manifesto.
- It was in this background that the UAPA was enacted on December 30, 1967 – to satisfy the need of the Indian state to declare associations that sought secession from India as 'unlawful'.

The Constitution (First	It added the term

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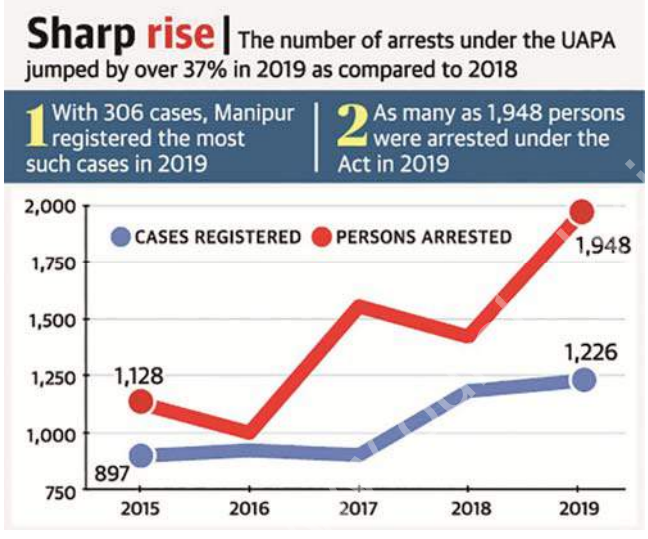
Amendment) Act, 1951	"reasonable" before restrictions and also added "public order" as ground to restrict fundamental right.
The Constitution (Sixteenth Amendment) Act, 1963	Reasonable Restrictions in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India' was added to Article 19 (2).
The Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Act, 1978	Removed Article 19(1)(f) – Right to hold, acquire and dispose property.
The Constitution (Ninety-seventh Amendment) Act, 2011	Added the term "co-operative societies" in Article 19(1)(c).



Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (also referred as **UAPA**) has mentioned about unlawful associations, punishment for terrorist activities including defining terrorist act (section 15), offences by companies, forfeiture of proceeds of terrorism or any property intended to be used for terrorism, listing of terrorist organisation under Schedule I of the Act and constituting Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal under section 5 and Three Schedule.

Schedule I	List of Terrorist Organisation
Schedule II	International Conventions and Protocols to curb and suppress terrorism
Schedule III	It provides security features to define high quality counterfeit Indian currency notes which includes watermark, latent image and see through registration in currency notes
Schedule IV	Name of Individuals – Added by 2019 Amendment

DEFINITIONS PROVIDED UNDER UAPA

- **"Association"** means any combination or body of individuals.
- **"Cession of a part of the territory of India"** includes admission of the claim of any foreign country to any such part.
- **"Secession of a part of the territory of India from the Union"** includes the assertion of any claim to determine whether such part will remain a part of the territory of India.
- **"Terrorist Act"** has the meaning assigned to it in section 15, and the expressions **"terrorism"** and "terrorist" shall be construed accordingly.
- **"Terrorist Gang"** means any association, other than terrorist organisation, whether systematic or otherwise, which is concerned with, or involved in, terrorist act;
- **"Terrorist Organisation"** means an organisation listed in the Schedule or an organisation operating under the same name as an organisation so listed.
- **"Unlawful Activity",** in relation to an individual or association, means any action taken by such individual or association (whether by committing an act or by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representation or otherwise)

(i) which is intended, or supports any claim, to bring about, on any ground whatsoever, the cession of a part of the territory of India or the secession of a part of the territory of India from the Union, or which incites any individual or group of individuals to bring about such cession or secession; or

(ii) which disclaims, questions, disrupts or is intended to disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India; or

(iii) which causes or is intended to cause disaffection against India.

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- **Tribunal** — (1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute, as and when necessary, a tribunal to be known as the "Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal" consisting of one person, to be appointed by the Central Government: Provided that no person shall be so appointed unless he is a Judge of a High Court.
- **Terrorist act -** Whoever does any act with intent to threaten or likely to threaten the unity, integrity, security, economic security, or sovereignty of India or with intent to strike terror or likely to strike terror in the people or any section of the people in India or in any foreign country.
- **The terrorist act** includes an act which constitutes an offence within the scope of, and as defined in any of the treaties specified in the **Second Schedule.**
- **Punishment for terrorist act —** Whoever commits a terrorist act shall —

(a) if such act has resulted in the death of any person, be punishable with death or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine;

(b) in any other case, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

CHANGES MADE THROUGH 2019 AMENDMENT

- Chapter VI of UAPA 1967 is about "Terrorist Organisation". 2019 Amendment has changed the chapter to **"Terrorists Organisations and Individuals".**
- Section 36 of the original Act provides for "Denotification of terrorist organisation". The 2019 Amendment adds the word "Individual" along with terrorist organisation.
- 2019 Amendment adds a new schedule namely Fourth Schedule providing names of individual terrorists.
- Section 25 of UAPA 1967 provided for "Powers of investigating officer and designated authority and appeal against order of designated authority". The 2019 Amendment adds - ***"Investigation to be conducted by an officer of the National Investigation Agency, with the prior approval of the Director General of National Investigation Agency".***
- Section 43 of UAPA 1967 provided for Officers competent to investigate offences. ***The 2019 Amendment provides investigative powers to National Investigation Agency below the rank of Inspector.***
- In the Second Schedule***, International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005)*** has been added.

SECOND SCHEDULE – UAPA

- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970);
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971);
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents (1973);
- International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (1979);
- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (1980) as amended from time to time;
- Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1988);
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the safety of Maritime Navigation (1988);
- Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf (1988);
- International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997).
- International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005).

CYBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

#CYBER SECURITY #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE pib

IN NEWS

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed the Lok Sabha that a "cyber volunteer" programme has been rolled out for

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"cyber hygiene promotion" and the services of volunteers would be utilised by the State police as per requirement.

IMPORTANT FEATURES

- **Cyber Crime Volunteers -** The MHA, through its cybercrime grievance portal- cybercrime.gov.in, aims to raise a group of "cybercrime volunteers" to flag "unlawful content" on the Internet.
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** has been established under Ministry of Home affairs (MHA) to act as a Nodal Point at National level in the fight against cybercrime. It aims to provide a platform to deal with cybercrimes in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.
- One of the important objectives of I4C is to create ecosystem that brings together academia, industry, public and government in prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes.
- Good Samaritans can register as Cyber Crime Volunteers in the role of Unlawful Content Flaggers for facilitating law enforcement agencies in identifying, reporting and removal of illegal / unlawful online content.
- Any citizen can register herself under one of three categories:
  - 'Cyber Volunteer Unlawful Content Flagger',
  - 'Cyber Awareness Promoter', and
  - 'Cyber Expert'.
- Post-registration, the individual can directly report "unlawful content" being circulated over the Internet, which presumably includes social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, among others.

WHAT IS UNLAWFUL CONTENT?

- In general, content that violates any law in force in India. Such content may fall under following broad categories:
  - Against sovereignty and integrity of India; Against defence of India;
  - Against Security of the State;
  - Against friendly relations with foreign States;
  - Content aimed at disturbing Public Order;
  - Disturbing communal harmony or Child Sex Abuse material.

CONCERNS

- It has the potential to create surveillance state.
- Increase Social Distrust - Citizens might end up spying on another citizens, which may impact the social fabric of the society.
- Can be used to target organisations/associations against government policies.
- No prior verification needed to be registered as Unlawful Content Flagger.
- May lead to formation of troll armies and can be utilised by political parties, corporations, vested interest etc. against each other or against rivals.

SFDR TECHNOLOGY

#DEFENCE #TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully carried out a flight demonstration based on Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology from Integrated Test Range Chandipur off the Odisha coast.

SOLID FUEL DUCTED RAMJET (SFDR)

- It is a missile propulsion technology jointly developed by **India and Russia**.
- It will improve the propulsion systems of future Indian long range air-to-air missiles. (Astra, air-to-air missile of India, has range of 80 km)
- The missiles which use such system are also able to carry larger payload due to absence of an oxidiser.
- Unlike solid-propellant rocket, the Ramjet takes up oxygen from the atmosphere during flight.
- Ducted rocket is Air-augmented rocket having a convergent-divergent nozzle. This ensures that combustion takes place at subsonic speeds, improving the range of vehicle speeds where the system remains useful.

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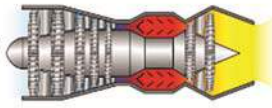
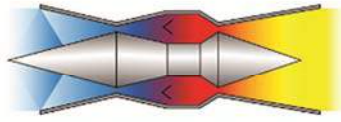
Criteria	Normal Missile	Missile with SFDR Technology
What it carries?	Propellant and Oxidiser	Only Propellant; Oxidiser not needed
Propulsion	Turbo Jet Engine	Ramjet Engines
How the Engine works?	(a)  Turbojet Burning of Propellant and Oxidiser→ Releases Energy→ Thrust	(b)  Ramjet Uses the engine's forward motion to compress incoming air→ Burning of Propellant→ Releases Energy→ Thrust
Amount of payload	Relatively higher	Relatively higher
Range	Relatively lower (Astra Missile: 100km)	Relatively higher (Astra Missile: 160km)
Speed of Missile	Relative lower	Relatively higher

SIGNIFICANCE.

- It will help both India's surface-to-air and air-to-air missiles to perform better and enhance their strike range.
- With it, India can have fastest long-range missiles in two categories, providing full-fledged and multi-layered aerial protection from hostile attacks.
- As per International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), this kind of propulsion system drastically enhances the range with higher average speed.
- Its successful use in missiles will mark India's entry into select club of nations that use next-generation missile technology against manoeuvring targets, compromising effectiveness of conventional missiles.
- The Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet is a missile propulsion system that includes a thrust modulated ducted rocket with a reduced smoke nozzle-less missile booster.
- The system utilises a solid fuelled air-breathing ramjet engine.
- Officially, the technology is being developed to power future Indian air-to-air missiles. However, the technology can also be applied to surface-to-air missiles.

BrahMos MISSILES

#DEFENCE #TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

Aligning a missile deal with destination Manila.

- A combination of the names of Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers, BrahMos missiles are designed, developed and produced by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture company set up by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Mashinostroyenia of Russia.
- Various versions of the BrahMos, including those which can be fired from land, warships, submarines and Sukhoi-30 fighter jets have already been developed and successfully tested in the past.
- The earliest versions of the ship launched BrahMos and land- based system are in service of the Indian Navy and the Indian Army since 2005 and 2007 respectively.
- BrahMos is a two-stage missile with solid propellant booster as first stage and liquid ramjet as the second stage.
- The cruise missiles like BrahMos are a type of systems known as the 'standoff range weapons' which are fired from a range sufficient to allow the attacker to evade defensive fire from the adversary.
- These weapons are in the arsenal of most major militaries in the world.
- The versions of the BrahMos that are being tested have an extended range of around 400 kilometres, as compared to its initial range of 290 kilometres, with more versions of higher ranges currently under development.

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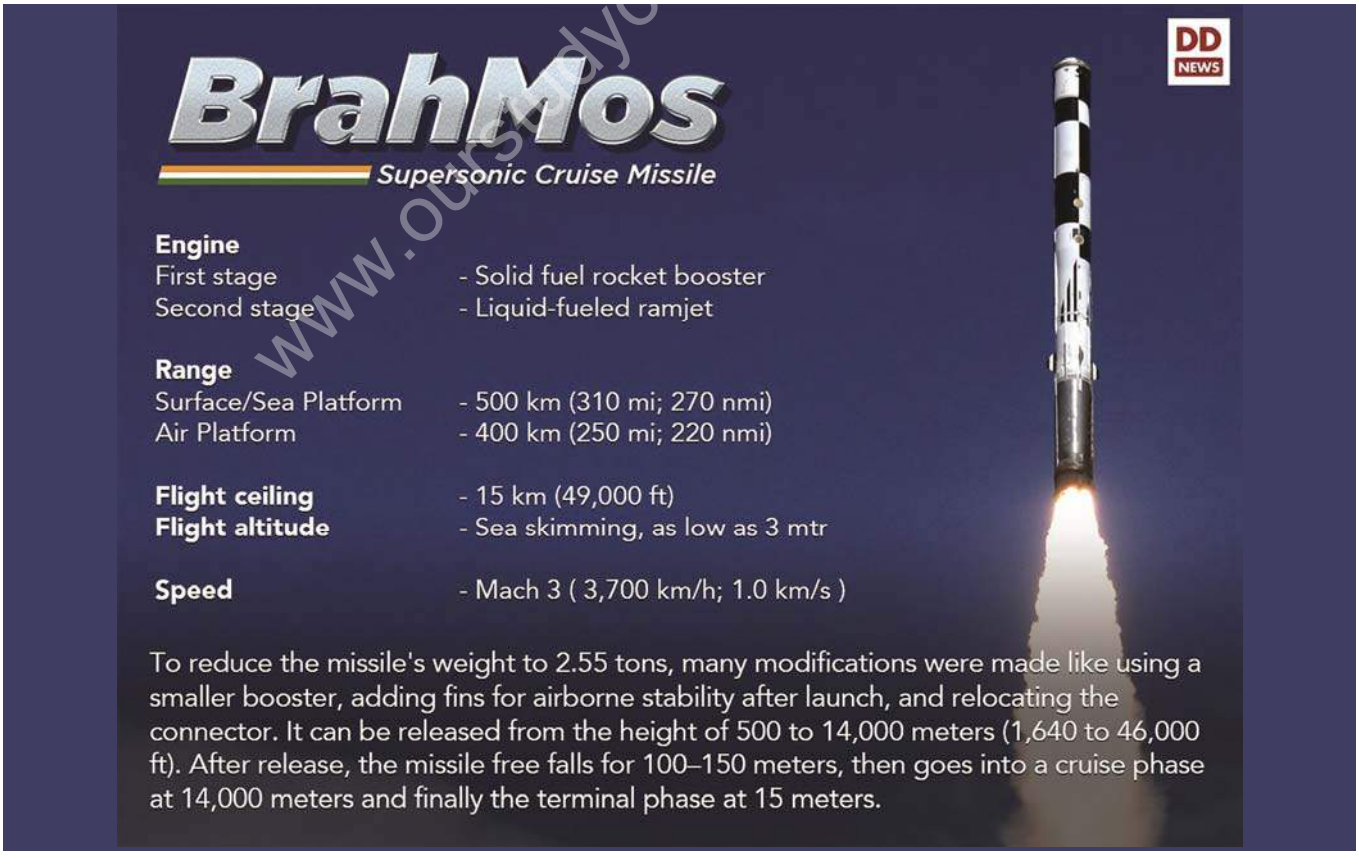

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WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HAVING LAND, SEA AND AIR-LAUNCHED BRAHMOS?

- **The land-based system**: The land-based Brahmos Complex has four to six mobile autonomous launchers, with each having three missiles on board that can be fired almost simultaneously. Batteries of the BrahMos missile land-based systems have been deployed along India's land borders in various theatres.

  The land attack version of BrahMos has the capability of cruising at 2.8 Mach speed and with the upgraded capability, the missile can hit targets at a range of up to 400 kilometres with precision. Advanced versions of range above 1,000 kilometres and speed up to 5 Mach are said to be under development.

- **Ship-based system**: The Indian Navy began inducting BrahMos on its frontline warships from 2005, and has capability to hit sea-based targets beyond radar horizon. The Naval version has been successful time and again in sea-to-sea and sea-to-land modes. The BrahMos from ship can be launched as a single unit or in a salvo upto eight in numbers separated by 2.5 seconds intervals. These salvos can hit and destroy a group of frigates having modern missile defence systems. BrahMos as a 'prime strike weapon' for the ships significantly increases their capability of engaging naval surface targets at long ranges.

- **The Air launched version**: On November 22, 2017, Brahmos was successfully flight-tested for the first time from the IAF frontline fighter aircraft Sukhoi-30MKI against a sea-based target in the Bay of Bengal and has since been successfully tested multiple times.

  BrahMos equipped Sukhoi-30s – which have a range of 1,500 kilometers at a stretch without mid-air refuelling – are considered as key strategic deterrence for the adversaries both along the land borders and in the strategically important Indian Ocean Region. IAF is said to be integrating BrahMos with 40 Sukhoi-30 fighter jets across the various bases.

- **The submarine launched version**: This version has capability of being launched from around 50 meters below the water surface. The canister stored missile is launched vertically from the pressure hull of the submarine and uses different settings for underwater and out of the water flights. This version was successfully tested first in 2013 from a submerged platform off the coast of Visakhapatnam.

WHAT ARE THE ONGOING SERIES OF TESTS AND THE STRATEGIC POSTURING BEHIND IT?

- The Indian Army successfully launched its BrahMos from Car Nicobar Islands in a 'top- attack' configuration hitting a target in Bay Bengal. The launch was first in the series of launches of the various versions of missile in coming days in a display of India's tactical cruise missile triad.

- While the tests of land, ship and air launched BrahMos have been done time and again, it is rare that they are being tested back-to- back that too in the Indian Ocean Region. These tests certainly project India's firm strategic posture in the light of situations along the LAC and China ambitions in the Indian Ocean Region. We also need to understand the importance of these live tests from the preparedness point of view.

- Each test helps these service formations fine-tune their practices, methods and do course correction if needed. Three services doing it back-to-back also have a tri-service integration significance where land, air and sea assets work in tandem and display a joint deterrence.

- Land based BrahMos formations along the borders, BrahMos equipped Sukhoi-30s at bases in Northern theatre and Southern peninsula, and BrahMos capable ships deployed in sea — complete a triad and their successful tests are a strong message to China.

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PART TWO

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

Coverage from varied sources

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UNDERSTANDING ETHICS

#ETHICS #INTEGRITY #APTITUDE

PRIMARY SOURCE BBC

How should we live? Shall we aim at happiness or at knowledge, virtue, or the creation of beautiful objects? If we choose happiness, will it be our own or the happiness of all? And what of the more particular questions that face us: is it right to be dishonest in a good cause? Can we justify living in opulence while elsewhere in the world people are starving? Is going to war justified in cases where it is likely that innocent people will be killed? Is it wrong to clone a human being or to destroy human embryos in medical research? What are our obligations, if any, to the generations of humans who will come after us and to the nonhuman animals with whom we share the planet?

We encounter these ethical challenges on a day to day basis. Ethics deals with such questions at all levels. Its subject consists of the fundamental issues of practical decision making, and its major concerns include the nature of ultimate value and the standards by which human actions can be judged right or wrong.

To know more, let us understand certain basic understanding about ethics.

►WHAT IS ETHICS?

At its simplest, ethics is a system of **moral principles**. They affect how people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as **moral philosophy**. The term is **derived from the Greek word ethos** which can mean custom, habit, character or disposition.

Ethics is a conceptual thing (it is Knowledge), it exists in our minds and is manifested via emotional responses to external stimulus; it requires introspection to gain understanding. Introspection requires asking the right questions to derive honest answers.

Ethics as a field of study:

Although ethics has always been viewed as a branch of philosophy, its all-embracing practical nature links it with many other areas of study, including anthropology, biology, economics, history, politics, sociology, and theology. Yet, ethics remains distinct from such disciplines because it is not a matter of factual knowledge in the way that the sciences and other branches of inquiry are. Rather, it has to do with determining the nature of normative theories and applying these sets of principles to practical moral problems.

Our concepts of ethics have been derived from religions, philosophies and cultures. They infuse debates on topics like human rights and professional conduct.

Approaches to ethics: Philosophers nowadays tend to divide ethical theories into three areas: **meta-ethics**, **normative ethics** and **applied ethics**.

- ✓ Meta-ethics deals with the **nature of moral judgement**. It looks at the origins and meaning of ethical principles.

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- ✓ Normative ethics is concerned with the **content of moral judgements** and the criteria for what is right or wrong.
- ✓ Applied ethics looks at **controversial topics** like war, animal rights and capital punishment.

► WHAT USE IS ETHICS?

If ethical theories are to be useful in practice, they need to affect the way human beings behave. Some philosophers think that ethics does do this. They argue that if a person realises that it would be morally good to do something then it would be irrational for that person not to do it.

But human beings often behave irrationally - they follow their 'gut instinct' even when their head suggests a different course of action. However, ethics does provide good tools for thinking about moral issues.

Ethics can provide a moral map: Most moral issues get us pretty puzzled - think of abortion and euthanasia. Because these are such emotional issues so often people let hearts do the arguing while brains just go with the flow.

But there's another way of tackling these issues, and that's where philosophers can come in - they offer us ethical rules and principles that enable us to take a cooler view of moral problems.

So ethics provides us with a moral map, a framework that we can use to find our way through difficult issues.

Ethics can pinpoint a disagreement: Using the framework of ethics, two people who are arguing a moral issue can often find that what they disagree about is just one particular part of the issue, and that they broadly agree on everything else.

That can take a lot of heat out of the argument, and sometimes even hint at a way for them to resolve their problem.

But sometimes ethics doesn't provide people with the sort of help that they really want.

Ethics can give several answers: Many people want there to be a single right answer to ethical questions. They find moral ambiguity hard to live with because they genuinely want to do the 'right' thing, and even if they can't work out what that right thing is, they like the idea that 'somewhere' there is one right answer.

But often there isn't one right answer - there may be several right answers, or just some least worst answers - and the individual must choose between them.

For others moral ambiguity is difficult because it forces them to take responsibility for their own choices and actions, rather than falling back on convenient rules and customs.

► ETHICS AND PEOPLE

Ethics is about the 'other': At the heart of ethics is a concern about something or someone other than ourselves and our own desires and self-interest. Ethics is concerned with other people's interests, with the interests of society. So when a person 'thinks ethically' they are giving at least some thought to something beyond themselves.

Ethics as source of group strength: One problem with ethics is the way it's often used as a weapon. If a group believes that a particular activity is "wrong" it can then use morality as the justification for attacking those who practice that activity. When people do this, they often see those who they regard as immoral as in some way less human or deserving of respect than themselves; sometimes with tragic consequences.

Good people as well as good actions: Ethics is not only about the morality of particular courses of action, but it's also about the goodness of individuals and what it means to live a good life. Virtue Ethics is particularly concerned with the moral character of human beings.

► FOUR ETHICAL 'isms': When a person says "murder is bad" what are they doing?

That's the sort of question that only a philosopher would ask, but it's actually a very useful way of getting a clear idea of what's going on when people talk about moral issues.

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The different 'isms' regard the person uttering the statement as doing different things. We can show some of the different things I might be doing when I say 'murder is bad' by rewriting that statement to show what I really mean:

1. I might be making a statement about an ethical fact

"It is wrong to murder"

This is moral realism

2. I might be making a statement about my own feelings

"I disapprove of murder"

This is subjectivism

3. I might be expressing my feelings

"Down with murder"

This is emotivism

4. I might be giving an instruction or a prohibition

"Don't murder people"

This is prescriptivism

Moral realism: Moral realism is based on the idea that there are real objective moral facts or truths in the universe. Moral statements provide factual information about those truths.

Subjectivism: Subjectivism teaches that moral judgments are nothing more than statements of a person's feelings or attitudes, and that ethical statements do not contain factual truths about goodness or badness. In more detail: subjectivists say that moral statements are statements about the feelings, attitudes and emotions that that particular person or group has about a particular issue. If a person says something is good or bad they are telling us about the positive or negative feelings that they have about that something. So if someone says 'murder is wrong' they are telling us that they disapprove of murder.

Emotivism: Emotivism is the view that moral claims are no more than expressions of approval or disapproval. This sounds like subjectivism, but in emotivism a moral statement doesn't provide information about the speaker's feelings about the topic but expresses those feelings. When an emotivist says "murder is wrong" it's like saying "down with murder" or just saying "murder" while pulling a horrified face, or making a thumbs-down gesture at the same time as saying "murder is wrong".

So when someone makes a moral judgement they show their feelings about something. Some theorists also suggest that in expressing a feeling the person gives an instruction to others about how to act towards the subject matter.

Prescriptivism: Prescriptivists think that ethical statements are instructions or recommendations. So if I say something is good, I'm recommending you to do it, and if I say something is bad, I'm telling you not to do it.

There is almost always a prescriptive element in any real-world ethical statement: any ethical statement can be reworked (with a bit of effort) into a statement with an 'ought' in it. For example: "lying is wrong" can be rewritten as "people ought not to tell lies".

► WHERE DOES ETHICS COME FROM?

Philosophers have several answers to this question:

God-based ethics – supernaturalism: Supernaturalism makes ethics inseparable from religion. It teaches that the only source of moral rules is God. So, something is good because God says it is, and the way to lead a good life is to do what God wants.

Intuitionism: Intuitionists think that good and bad are real objective properties that can't be broken down into component parts. Something is good because it's good; its goodness doesn't need justifying or proving.

Intuitionists think that goodness or badness can be detected by adults - they say that human beings have an intuitive moral sense that enables them to detect real moral truths.

They think that basic moral truths of what is good and bad are self-evident to a person who directs their mind towards moral issues. So good things are the things that a sensible person realises are good if they spend some time pondering the subject.

Don't get confused. For the intuitionist: moral truths are not discovered by rational argument. It's more a sort of moral 'aha' moment - a realisation of the truth.

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Consequentialism: This is the ethical theory that most non-religious people think they use every day. It bases morality on the consequences of human actions and not on the actions themselves.

Consequentialism teaches that people should do whatever produces the greatest amount of good consequences.

One famous way of putting this is 'the greatest good for the greatest number of people'.

The most common forms of consequentialism are the various versions of utilitarianism, which favour actions that produce the greatest amount of happiness.

Two problems with consequentialism are:

it can lead to the conclusion that some quite dreadful acts are good *for e.g. End justifies the means*.

predicting and evaluating the consequences of actions is often very difficult

Non-consequentialism or deontological ethics: It is concerned with the actions themselves and not with the consequences. It's the theory that people are using when they refer to "the principle of the thing". It teaches that some acts are right or wrong in themselves, whatever the consequences, and people should act accordingly.

Virtue ethics: Virtue ethics looks at virtue or moral character, rather than at ethical duties and rules, or the consequences of actions - indeed some philosophers of this school deny that there can be such things as universal ethical rules.

Virtue ethics is particularly concerned with the way individuals live their lives. It develops the idea of good actions by looking at the way virtuous people express their inner goodness in the things that they do.

To put it very simply, virtue ethics teaches that an action is right if and only if it is an action that a virtuous person would do in the same circumstances, and that a virtuous person is someone who has a particularly good character.

Situation ethics: It rejects prescriptive rules and argues that individual ethical decisions should be made according to the unique situation.

Rather than following rules the decision maker should follow a desire to seek the best for the people involved. There are no moral rules or rights - each case is unique and deserves a unique solution.

Ethics and ideology: Some philosophers teach that ethics is the codification of political ideology, and that the function of ethics is to state, enforce and preserve particular political beliefs.

They usually go on to say that ethics is used by the dominant political elite as a tool to control everyone else.

More cynical writers suggest that power elites enforce an ethical code on other people that helps them control those people, but do not apply this code to their own behaviour.

► ARE THERE UNIVERSAL MORAL RULES?

One of the big questions in moral philosophy is whether or not there are unchanging moral rules that apply in all cultures and at all times.

Moral absolutism: Some people think there are such universal rules that apply to everyone. This sort of thinking is called **moral absolutism.** Moral absolutism argues that there are some moral rules that are always true, that these rules can be discovered and that these rules apply to everyone.

Immoral acts - acts that break these moral rules - are wrong in themselves, regardless of the circumstances or the consequences of those acts.

Absolutism takes a universal view of humanity - there is one set of rules for everyone - which enables the drafting of universal rules - such as the **Declaration of Human Rights**.

Religious views of ethics tend to be absolutist.

Why people disagree with moral absolutism? Many of us feel that the consequences of an act or the circumstances surrounding it are relevant to whether that act is good or bad

Absolutism doesn't fit with respect for diversity and tradition

Moral relativism: Moral relativists say that if you look at different cultures or different periods in history you'll

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find that they have different moral rules. Therefore it makes sense to say that "good" refers to the things that a particular group of people approve of.

Moral relativists think that's just fine, and dispute the idea that there are some objective and discoverable 'super-rules' that all cultures ought to obey. They believe that relativism respects the diversity of human societies and responds to the different circumstances surrounding human acts.

► SOME ETHICAL CONCEPTS

1. **Doctrine of double effect:** This doctrine says that if doing something morally good has a morally bad side-effect, it's ethically OK to do it providing the bad side-effect wasn't intended. This is true even if you foresaw that the bad effect would probably happen. This might seem counter-intuitive, but the principle is used in serious argument about some important issues in ethics, *for e.g.*

   Euthanasia: This principle is commonly referred to in cases of euthanasia. It is used to justify the case where a doctor gives drugs to a patient to relieve distressing symptoms even though he knows doing this may shorten the patient's life. This is because the doctor is not aiming directly at killing the patient - the bad result of the patient's death is a side-effect of the good result of reducing the patient's pain.

   Many doctors use this doctrine to justify the use of high doses of drugs such as morphine for the purpose of relieving suffering in terminally-ill patients even though they know the drugs are likely to cause the patient to die sooner. This is not a blanket justification. The doctor's action must still be appropriate: more on what factors are needed to use the doctrine of double effect as a defence for euthanasia.

   War and civilian deaths: In modern warfare it's difficult to ensure that only soldiers get hurt. Despite the effectiveness of precision weapons, civilians are often hurt and killed. The doctrine of double effect is sometimes put forward as a defence, but it does not always apply. For example, if an army base in the middle of a city is bombed and a few civilians living nearby are killed as well, nothing unethical has been done, because the army base was a legitimate target and the death of civilians was not the intention of the bombing (even though their death could be predicted).

   The doctrine of double effect can't be used to defend the use of weapons of mass destruction, such as non-precision nuclear weapons, area bombing, or chemical or biological weapons used against a population in general, since these are so indiscriminate in effect that civilian casualties can't be regarded as a secondary result.

   Abortions when the mother's life is in danger: In cases when saving the life of a pregnant woman causes the death of her unborn child - for example, performing an abortion when continuing the pregnancy would risk killing the mother - some people argue that this is a case of the doctrine of double effect. By this argument, the death of the foetus is merely the side-effect of medical treatment to save the mother's life. Other people take the more traditional view that this is a case of self-defence against a threat (albeit a threat that is innocent and unaware that it is a threat).

   Criticisms of the doctrine of double effect: We are responsible for all the anticipated consequences of our actions. If we can foresee the two effects of our action we have to take the moral responsibility for both effects - we can't get out of trouble by deciding to intend only the effect that suits us.

   Intention is irrelevant: Some people take the view that it's sloppy morality to decide the rightness or wrongness of an act by looking at the intention of the person who carries it out. They think that some acts are objectively right or wrong, and that the intention of the person who does them is irrelevant.

   But most legal systems regard the intention of a person as a vital element in deciding whether they have committed a crime, and how serious a crime, especially in cases of causing death.

2. **The slippery slope concept:** The slippery slope argument views decisions not on their own, but as the potential beginning of a trend. In general form, this argument says that if we allow something

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relatively harmless today, we may start a trend that results in something currently unthinkable becoming accepted.

The slippery slope argument is used in discussing euthanasia and similar topics. For example, people worry that if voluntary euthanasia were to be made legal, it would not be long before involuntary euthanasia would start to happen.

► IN A NUTSHELL

To derive an ethical truth, there is no limit to the number of questions one can ask. While many questions can and should be asked when weighing an ethical problem, there is one fundamental question of Ethics that should always be asked; it's the Golden Rule and it says that **"How would I like it if someone did that to me?"**

Hence, this question should be applied to all ethical matters for ending ethical dilemma.

EVOLUTION OF ETHICS IN INDIA

In the knowledge tradition of India, ethics has its origin in its **religious and philosophical thinking**. From time immemorial, various religious faiths have flourished here. Every religious and every philosophical system of India has a prominent ethical component. Ethics is the core of all these systems. In every religious tradition, good moral conduct is considered essential for a happy and contented life. Without following the path of righteousness no one can attain supreme goal (mokṣa) of life. For this one has to perform good deeds and avoid wrong-doing.

►The Cosmic Order

India has a very ancient history of thinking about ethics. Its central concepts are represented in Ṛigveda, one of oldest knowledge texts not only of India but of the entire world. In Ṛigveda, we come across the idea of an all-pervading cosmic order (ṛta) which stands for harmony and balance in nature and in human society. Here ṛta is described as a power or force which is the controller of the forces of nature and of moral values in human society. In human society, when this harmony and balance are disturbed, there is disorder and suffering. This is the power or force that lies behind nature and keeps everything in balance.

In Indian tradition, the concept of **ṛta gave rise to the idea of dharma**. The term dharma here does not mean mere religion; **it stands for duty**, **obligation and righteousness**. It is a whole way of life in which ethical values are considered supreme and everyone is expected to perform his or her duty according to his or her social position and station in life. **In Buddhism, the word dhamma is used**, which is the Pāli equivalent of the Sanskrit word dharma. The guidelines and rules regarding what is considered as appropriate behaviour for human beings are prescribed in the Dharma Śāstras. These are sociological texts that tell us about our duties and obligations as individuals as well as members of society.

In the Hindu way of life, every individual is expected to perform his or her duty according to stages of life (āśrama). This division of one's life into the four āśramas and their respective dharmas, was designed, in principle at least, to provide fulfilment to the person in his social, moral and spiritual aspects, and so to lead to harmony and balance in the society. The four āśramas are: (1) brahmacarya, stage of studentship; (2) gṛhastha, stage of the householder; (3) vanaprastha, life in the forest; and saṁnyāsa, renunciation.

Apart from this, the concept of four ends of life (puruṣārthas) is also very important. These four ends of life are the goals which are desirable in them and also needed for fulfilment of human aspirations. These are (1) righteousness (dharma); (2) worldly gain (artha); (3) fulfilment of desire; (kāma) and (4) liberation (mokṣa). The fulfilment of all of these four ends of life is important for man. In this classification, dharma and mokṣa are most important from the ethical point of view. They give right direction and purpose to human life. For instance, acquiring wealth (artha) is a desirable objective, provided however it also serves dharma, that is, the welfare of the society.

In the **Bhagavad-Gītā, selfless action** (niśkāma karma) is advocated. It is an action which is required to be performed without consideration of personal consequences. It is an altruistic action aimed at the well-

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being of others rather than for oneself. In Hinduism this doctrine is known as **karma yoga**.The concept of right and wrong is the core of the Mahābhārata which emphasizes, among others, the values of non-violence, truthfulness, absence of anger, charity, forgiveness and self-realization. It is only by performing one's righteous duties or dharma that one can hope to attain the supreme path to the highest good. It is dharma alone that gives both prosperity (abhyudaya) and the supreme spiritual good (niśryas).

Similarly, the importance of ethics and ethical values is highlighted in epics and philosophical texts like, Upaniṣads, Rāmāyaṇa, darśana-śāstras and dharma-śāstras. The darśana śāstras are philosophical texts, which provide rational explanations of the ethical issues; the universal moral problems faced by man in daily life are placed in a philosophical context. In the dharma-śāstras, emphasis is on the social ethics. In these texts the inter-personal and social relations are placed in an ethical framework for guidance.

►Buddhist Ethics

Buddhism also gives primary importance to ethics. Sometimes it is called an **ethical religion** as it **does not discuss or depend on the existence of God (the Supreme Being with form and attributes) but instead believes in alleviating the suffering of humanity**. The ethical values in this faith are based on the life and teachings of the Buddha.

These moral instructions are included in Buddhist scriptures or handed down through tradition. According to Buddhism, the foundation of ethics is the **pañcaśīla (five rules),** which advocates refraining from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct and intoxicants. In becoming a Buddhist, a lay person is encouraged to take a vow to abstain from these negative actions. In Buddhism, the two most important ethical virtues are **compassion (karuṇa)** and **friendliness (maitrī).** One should have deep sympathy and goodwill for the suffering people and should have the qualities of a good friend. The most important ethical value is non-violence or non-injury to all living beings. **Buddhist ethics is based on Four Noble Truths**. These are: (1) life is suffering, (2) there is a cause for suffering, (3) there is a way to remove it, and (4) it can be removed (through the eight-fold path). It advocates the path of righteousness (dhamma). In a way this is the crux of Buddhist morality.

►Jain Ethics

Jainism is another important religion of this land. It places great emphasis on three most important things in life, called **three gems (triratna)**. These are: **right vision** (samyaka dṛṣṭī), **right knowledge** (samyaka jñāna) and **right conduct** (samyaka cāritra). Apart from these, Jain thinkers emphasize the need for reverence (śraddhā). There are other moral principles governing the life of Jains. Most important of these are ideas of puṇya (merit) and pāpa (demerit). Such deeds are very important from the ethical point of view. Pāpa is the result of evil deeds generated by vice and puṇya is the result of good deeds generated by virtuous conduct. One should take up the path of a virtuous life to lead the way to spiritual growth. Ultimately, one transcends both virtue and vice. Right conduct is necessary for the spiritual progress of man. The most important thing in Jainism is the practice of non-violence (ahimsā), or abstaining from inflicting injury on any being. It is required that the principle of ahimsā should be followed in thought, word and deed. In Jainism, the other cardinal virtues are: forgiveness, humility, simplicity, non-covetousness, austerity, restraint, truthfulness, purity, renunciation and celibacy.

►Sikh Ethics

Sikhism, the most recent faith in Indian tradition, also lays great stress on ethics in human life. In the words of its founder, Guru Nanak, **"Truth is higher than everything else, higher still is truthful conduct."** The cardinal virtues according to Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture, are: compassion (dayā), charity (dāna), contentment (santokha), non-enmity (nirvair) and selfless service (sevā). In addition to these one is also morally obliged to practise the general and eternal virtues.

►The Bhakti and Sufi Movements

During the middle ages, the Bhakti and Sufi movements arose in India. It was an all-India movement of social

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reform and spiritual awakening. It played a very important part in reawakening moral consciousness in India. Most of these saints came from different sections of society. Rejecting the distinctions of caste, colour and creed, they spread the message of human equality. They were saint poets. In their vāṇī (poetic compositions) they propagated the ideals of love, compassion, justice and selfless service. These are the ethical values which we need even today.

On the basis of above, let us now see a couple of articles on the application of ethics.

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

►ARTICLE: PRIVATE, PUBLIC AND POLITICAL MORALITY

Though related, political, public and private morality are not identical. They may come from the same source, but are distinct. This point has been noted in the Western tradition since at least Machiavelli. But its lineage in India is ancient.

Ethics in three domains: Take, for example, Asoka who spoke of Dhamma (ethics) in three distinct domains. **First, interpersonal morality**. Each of us has special obligations to our children, spouse, parents, teachers and relatives. We have a duty towards those under our special care, including the aged, 'servants', animals and, occasionally, strangers. Asoka distinguished this private ethic from what might be called inter-group morality in public life. Crucial here is harmony between different religious-philosophical groups generated by the exercise of sayamam (self-restraint). He particularly emphasised the importance of vacaguti — controlling one's tongue to be critical of other groups only if there is good reason to, only on appropriate occasions and always moderately; also, to praise one's own group, only when there is good reason to, only on appropriate occasions and always moderately. Neither hate speech nor speech glorifying oneself was acceptable as part of public morality — a point very relevant in our times.

Asoka then **distinguished private and public morality from power-related political morality** specifying what rulers and the ruled owe one another. Subjects owe obedience to their king. But the ruler too owed something to his subjects: to ensure janahita, the good of all (including all living species), and janasukham, happiness not only in this life but also in the afterlife. To achieve this, rulers and their officials must display damdasamata and viyohalasamata (impartiality in meting out punishment and in politico-legal acts more generally). This sums up the core of **Asoka's political morality: a commitment to justice, to impartiality.**

What then is the difference between private/public morality and political morality? While in one's personal life, in our dealings with those with whom we have close daily encounters such as our family, friends or 'servants', we can't help but be partial, and while in the larger public domain, where we face people with different religio-philosophical sensibilities, we can't entirely escape some degree of partiality to our own world view, the **political domain requires the impartial or just use of power for the good of all.**

Family, civil society and state: Two thousand years later, the **German philosopher Friedrich Hegel** made similar points, although in a different way and in an entirely different context. He distinguished three spheres of human life: family, civil society and the state. The family, Hegel claimed, was the smallest community in which its members do not even distinguish themselves from one another. Their identities are fused. A family is bound by emotional ties, by mutual love and affection. Members take pride in each other's achievements and feel a strong sense of shame at the other's wrongdoing. Morality here is guided by unarticulated feelings.

The family is different from another sphere of life that Hegel designated civil society but should more appropriately be called 'market society'. Here, each person acts as an individual with a sharply defined sense of her own interests which are distinct from, compete and may even clash with the interests of others. No one is tied to the other by bonds of love or affection. Since there is no community but only an aggregate of individual interests, there is no commonly held ethic either. Competitive life is governed by coercive legal rules to regulate the pursuit of self-interest. At best, each

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individual devises her own personal, subjective moral maxims.

Finally, Hegel spoke about a third domain where people once again see themselves as members of a large political community, as citizens of a state. Citizens in a political community must be bound together neither by feelings nor by self-interest but by a commitment to common values discovered by public reason — values such as political freedom, solidarity, shared traditions and cultural heritage. Morality in this domain requires that we overcome our loyalty to blood relations, not pursue only our private interests, and commit instead to using power grounded in shared principles. Love and hate are largely imposters in this domain where consensus is forged by the use of public reason. Its democratic version requires that, guided by values of openness, equal respect and justice, we deliberate and help each other arrive at impartial laws and public policies, acceptable in principle to everyone in the polity.

Furthermore, those who wield political power must realise that what they do has enduring consequences affecting the lives of an incalculably large number of people. This brings with it enormous public responsibility which derives in no small part from the fact that they have at least temporary legitimacy to use force against ordinary citizens. They have, at their disposal, an apparatus of violence simply unavailable to heads of families or members of civil society. Powerful politicians, therefore, must show great care and sensitivity to the appropriate use of force and violence.

Private and political morality: One important implication of the difference between private and political morality is this: it is sometimes believed that moral scrupulousness in one's private life automatically guarantees high moral stature in political life. This simply does not follow. Those wielding public power may refuse to enrich themselves, their family or friends, and resist from obtaining sexual favours. But such 'cleanliness' need not entail scrupulous political morality. **What use is personal incorruptibility if the politician is partial to or discriminates against one particular community, abandons public reason, smashes dissent to concentrate power in his own hands, makes arbitrary use of force, and lives in the illusion that he is greater than all the institutions that surround him?** What if he begins to believe that he alone possesses the truth or knows the good of the entire community? And precisely because of the moral restrictions he has placed on his personal life, feels released from any restriction on the use of power in the political arena? In short, a person who is profoundly moral in his private life may brazenly violate all norms of political morality — undermine justice and public reason. Conversely, it is entirely possible that a person who has morally slipped in his private life (cheated on one's spouse, enriched himself) respects the integrity of public institutions, is acutely sensitive to the moral costs of violence, shows a deep commitment to justice, and upholds reason-based democratic norms.

Here it is not suggested that politicians are free to abandon private morality. But we often find comfort in the illusion that there is one simple, seamless morality, reflected equally in private and in public. In fact, most humans are complex moral agents. It would be wonderful if our private and political moralities were perfectly aligned and we achieved the highest moral standards in both. But in a non-ideal world we can only hope that when people choose to lead a life in politics, they will at least follow minimum norms of political morality even as they fail to be scrupulously moral in their private lives.

►ARTICLE : PROMOTION OF TOLERANCE IS HIGHLY ETHICAL

(Trampling upon the freedom and dignity of an individual in the name of the collective good is not the way to live)

Moral discussions have been part of our drawing room discussions. These thought-provoking exercises have always been filled with discussions on normative issues from the virtues of truth, honesty, integrity, humility to compassion, non-partisanship and fraternity. Somewhere down the line, the virtue of tolerance has not been given its due share of acknowledgement.

Enjoying freedom and liberty are always talked about. But what is necessary to exercise freedom and liberty has been neglected.

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In the present times when fundamental rights and freedom of speech are under threat, the virtue of tolerance has been relegated to an unprecedented level.

Considering the fundamental social association almost universal in nature, **family is the site where tolerance needs to be exercised to the maximum**. Tolerance towards the preferences of an equal by another equal is the keystone for any successful association, marriage in this context.

Respecting the choices of an individual is a sign of importance you give to him or her. Trampling upon the freedom and dignity of an individual in the name of the collective good is not the way to live. Collective good emerges from the individual good inherent in a sense of self-worth and inner happiness. It is important to recognise that in an association of two, both possess equal moral worth and hence their choices and preferences have equal moral standing.

Exercising tolerance is not a sign of weakness, rather it is a sign of acknowledgement of human dignity. Nobody ought to lock another's dreams up in the name of collective good. Be the master of your journey. Row your own boat. Come to each other's rescue when your journey gets tough.

You may not land up in the desired place, yet you will be a better rower and the journey itself is worth cherishing and has intrinsic value.

Individual contentment and collective good ought to go hand in hand and should not be subjected to bargaining in any social institution.

Sacrifice can only be called a sacrifice if it is a result of the willingness of the individual in question.

Marriage is not living together by weighing constantly and on a daily basis the importance and desirability of each other's actions and laying false precedence of one over the other, in the name of the common good; instead, its essence lies in leading each other's lives, helping realise each other's dreams and standing up for each other's goals, no matter whose preferences have taken a front seat and whose crushed in the history of marriages.

Tolerance is giving every other human every right that you claim for yourself, said Robert Green Ingersoll. When we realise this, we rise together; else we let the other down for securing and safeguarding our rise.

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CASE STUDIES FOR PRACTICE

MAINS GS PAPER IV

Case 1: Rakesh is a responsible district level officer, who enjoys the trust of his higher officials. Knowing his honesty, the government entrusted him with the responsibility of identifying the beneficiaries under a health care scheme meant for senior citizens.

The criteria to be a beneficiary are the following:

(a) 60 years of age or above.

(b) Belonging to a reserved community.

(c) Family income of less than 1 Lakh rupees per annum.

(d) Post-treatment prognosis is likely to be high to make a positive difference to the quality of life of the beneficiary.

One day, an old couple visited Rakesh's office with their application. They have been the residents of a village in his district since their birth. The old man is diagnosed with a rare condition that causes obstruction in the large intestine. As a consequence, he has severe abdominal pain frequently that prevents him from doing any physical labour. The couple has no children to support them. The expert surgeon whom they contacted is willing to do the surgery without charging any fee. However, the couple will have to bear the cost of incidental charges, such as medicines, hospitalization, etc., to the tune of rupees one lakh. The couple fulfils all the criteria except criterion 'b'. However, any financial aid would certainly make a significant difference in their quality of life.

How should Rakesh respond to the situation? (250 words)

The case presents conflict between two foundational values of civil services, objectivity and empathy & compassion. On this account Mr. Rakesh will face ethical dilemma. Following are other values and issues involved in the case –

a) Trust reposed by higher officials on Mr. Rakesh to implement the scheme with responsibility.

b) Maintaining the integrity of criterion of the scheme.

c) Socio-economic justice to old couple in unreserved category.

If Mr. Rakesh accommodates the old couple without fulfilling the criterion then significant difference in the quality of their life will happen. It will also amount to distributive justice of John Rawls. It will fulfil the spirit of equity of our constitution. State will also seem to oblige the social contract by helping citizens in need.

However accommodation under the scheme without fulfilment of criterion will destroy objectivity of Mr. Rakesh. He will also breach the trust reposed on him by superiors. Taking Adhoc decision will destroy work culture and objectivity in decision making. It may also create discontentment in reserved category for whom the scheme has been formulated. This will impact the image of civil service as being impartial and non-partisan. The decision will also go against the idea of Max Weber model of bureaucracy.

Mr. Rakesh must use emotional intelligence to deal with the situation. He must express the foundational values of empathy and compassion within the contour of legal and rational bureaucracy. Hence, he can adopt following course of action –

a) Recommend to the concerned ministry/authority to amend the criterion of the scheme to fully or partially accommodate unreserved category as well.

b) For this he can prepare a detailed report highlighting the need among unreserved category as a tool of persuasion.

c) On immediate basis he can arrange for some financial help to the old couple from self, family and friends, NGO's working in health sector,

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Philanthropist etc. This will save Mr. Rakesh from possible crisis of conscience and inner dissonance.

Mr. Rakesh must show attitude of committed bureaucrat. He must work with dedication to fulfil the constitutional promise of justice and support to senior citizens.

Case 2: As a senior officer in the Ministry, you have access to important policy decisions and upcoming big announcements such as road constructions projects before they are notified in the public domain. The Ministry is about to announce a mega road project for which the drawings are already in place. Sufficient care was taken by the planners to make use of the government land with the minimum land acquisition from private parties. Compensation rate for private parties was also finalized as per government rules. Care was also taken to minimize deforestation. Once the project is announced, it is expected that there will be a huge spurt in real estate prices in and around that area.

Meanwhile, the Minister concerned insists that you realign the road in such a way that it comes closer to his 20 acres farmhouse. He also suggests that he would facilitate the purchase of a big plot of land in your wife name at the prevailing rate which is very nominal, in and around the proposed mega road project. He also tries to convince you by saying that there is no harm in it as he is buying the land legally. He even promises to supplement your savings in case you do not have sufficient funds to buy the land. However, by the act of realignment, a lot of agricultural lands has to be acquired, thereby causing a considerable financial burden on the government, and also the displacement of the farmers. As if this is not enough, it will involve cutting down of a large number of trees denuding the area of its green cover.

Faced with this situation, what will you do? Critically examine various conflicts of interest and explain what your responsibilities are as a public servant. (250 words)

This is a case of political corruption and test of my integrity and uprightness as a senior bureaucrat. The situation challenges my morality and professional ethics.

In this situation, I have to fulfil my duty and responsibility as a senior bureaucrat –

a) I have to work with integrity, honesty & truthfulness and diligence. I will make my intention clear for not being party to any form of corruption.

b) I must give free and fair advice to political executive without any fear to usher good and ethical governance.

c) I must also guide my minister against ills of corruption for him and society.

d) I must act in the interest of farmers, poor, environment and society as a whole.

e) I must protect myself and my wife from any potential loss of reputation and dignity on account of charges of corruption.

f) To fulfill my above duties I must muster courage and determination. I must protect myself from any internal hedonistic tendency and temptation through yoga, meditation and drawing motivation from literatures and life of great leaders and civil servants.

I will use Gandhiji's Talisman to take final decision. I will work in the interest of weak and vulnerable, farmers, environment and efficiently use public money to complete the project.

There are various conflicts of interest in the case –

a) Professional interest of the concerned minister is in efficient execution of the road project. This will create social capital and increase trust and credibility of government. However, his personal interest is alteration of the project and increase in price of his farmhouse.

b) For me as a bureaucrat, it is in my professional interest to have cordial relation with my minister. But professional values, accountability and responsibility to nation is more important.

c) For my wife there is opportunity to buy new asset, however not at the cost of my integrity, dignity and reputation.

Following are my responsibilities as a public servant–

a) Safeguarding mine and my organisational values. I have to protect probity of my office, work culture of organisation and reputation of my ministry.

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b) I am responsible to guide my minister and persuade him against any act of corruption that will be subsequently known after audit or whistle blowing.

c) I am responsible to fulfil fiduciary responsibility of government to complete the project cost effectively.

d) In the spirit of ethical governance, I must ensure minimum land acquisition, farmer's suffering and deforestation and loos to environment.

e) Trust reposed by people in government must be not be breached.

First Cabinet Secretary of independent India **N.R. Pillai said, "the public servant of the day, and still more of tomorrow, should be one rich in human sympathy and with a fully awakened social conscience."** I will try to live up to his expectation.

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PART THREE

ESSAYS

of

THE MONTH

Selected essays from Rau's GSI students

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ESSAY 1: THE TRUE MEASURE OF ANY SOCIETY CAN BE FOUND IN HOW IT TREATS ITS MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Disclaimer: The viewpoints in the topic are strictly personal of the writer. The role of Rau's IAS Study Circle is to present the write-up in its original form, hence the study circle neither endorses nor rejects any viewpoint in the submission. The purpose is only to showcase the manner of writing.

Therefore, it is the sole responsibility of the reader to use his/her intellect to check the veracity of viewpoints.

An economy is seen in terms of growth through the figures of Gross Domestic Product. However, when we see the aspect of any society, we tend to comprehend by the treatment of vulnerable sections of the society. In the ancient times we have studied civilizations, like Indus Valley Civilization, Egyptian Civilization, etc. on the basis of their society and position of women, children, seniors etc.

India, that we see today, is a very diverse country in terms of ethnicity, culture, religion, geography, food, etc. India is among the fastest growing economies, but what actually gives India a distinct place in the mould is the Indian Society.

Indian Society has continuously evolved from the Indus Valley Civilization, the Vedic Period, Social Reform Period, freedom struggle to globalized mould. Vulnerable sections can be broadly identified as women, children, senior citizens, oppressed castes and backward castes, poors persons with disability etc. In India, today women population is about half of the total population. Women are actively participating in formal jobs and are reaching to higher positions because of their performance and commitment. Indian Government has undertaken various steps to ensure safety of women in workplace like framing of Vishakha Guidelines and directing the companies to form an internal committee for women safety. Also, the government constituted Nirbhaya Fund for the safety of women outside the preview of office. There has been proposal of reservation of 1/3rd seats for women in Loksabha and Panchayats.

A huge chunk of vulnerable society are the disadvantaged children who are either orphan or are abandoned. These children are subject to Child abuse, sexual abuse, forced labour, begging, etc. Article 24 of Indian Constitution prohibits employment of children (upto 14 years). Article 21(A) and Article 51A, ensures Right to Education for children regardless of their social or economical background. Government of India has made POCSO, Act 2012 so as to punish people who sexually abuse children. The government also enacted Juvenile Justice Act to protect the juveniles and reform them so that they became socially acceptable afterwards.

According to Census data of 2011, the old population, i.e., people in the age group of 60+years, in India is 8.5%. This section of society has witnessed drastic change after LPG era. The families are now nuclear families and this leads to ignorance of senior citizens. With the coming up of globalization, the senior citizens are subject to various new forms of crimes. According to NCRB data, the crime rates against senior citizens have increased. Various online frauds have been reported by senior citizens. Also, most of the senior citizens in India

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are unattended which makes them vulnerable in times of ailments. Government of India has come up with various Senior Citizen Schemes like Senior Citizen Saving Schemes, Pradhan Mantri Vijay Vandana Yojana, etc. for meeting their daily economic needs. Various civil societies have formed old age home for their second innings in life.

The scheduled caste, Scheduled Tribe and other backward castes are also under vulnerable sections of the society. People of these groups have been exploited by the upper classes. Discrimination on the basis of caste finds its roofs in the Guptan Age when Manusmriti was composed. This section has been deprived of the opportunity of job, education, representation, etc. Government of India has recently amended the SC/ST Atrocities Act so as to safeguard the interest of SC/ST section and to check any misuse of this provision. Indian Constitution under Article 15, Article 16, Article 17 and Article 18 has provided for an equal and egalitarian society. The scheduled areas have been highlighted in 5th and 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution for better governance and autonomy in these areas.

Other backward castes are neither among the upper castes nor among the SCs and STs and therefore had remained subjected to ignorance even after gaining independence. Adoption of Mandal Commission in the last decade of the 20th century advocated for employment and educational opportunities for the OBCs and was successful in getting 27% reservations for them. Recently, National Commission of backward castes have been given a statutory status.

Persons with disability have also been subjected to various ordeals over the decades. However, the term has been re-coined as specially abled to give a new vision to people. In India there are around 2% of specially abled people. These have remained void of education and employment opportunities for newly long time. The Government of India enacted persons with disability Act in 1995 and Rights of persons with Disabilities Act in 1995 and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 to give them right to live as other people are living.

Poor people form the largest part of vulnerable section of the society. However, the poverty is very difficult to comprehend. Various efforts have been made to calculate poverty. It started with Dada Bhai Naroji and since various committees have come up with their version of poverty based on calorie version of poverty based on calorie intake, purchasing power, income, etc. Committees involved in poverty calculations were Yalgar Committee, Tendulkar Committee, Sacchar Committeee, etc. To eradicate poverty, the Government has taken various initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Mandhan Yojana, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Housing for all, etc.

Indian Constitution was framed to safeguard the interest of its citizen and encompasss all the elements related to welfare of the vulnerable sections through various provisions of Part III, Part IV, Part IVA, Schedule 5 and Schedule 6. Also the educated masses of the society have marked towards the betterment of all the vulnerable sections in their own capacity, which has bridged their social gap.

India has been a peaceful society and treats world as one family Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam.

The stature of India has increased on the basis of how we have managed to incorporate the interests of our vulnerable sections.

However, we are not yet an ideal society and there needs to make a lot of effort to be one. Just legislating provisions will not serve the purpose but education will. Even a slightest oppression of any vulnerable section catches attention of the world.

Every country should try to work towards betterment of the society so as to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of learning no one behind and Inclusive Growth.

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ESSAY 2: LESSONS LEARNT FROM HISTORY MAKE OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE SAFE

HISTORY #ETHICS

History is the key to our present and those who can't learn from the history can never progress. As its said that 'History repeats itself', but the outcome can always be moulded by the teachings of the history. Thus a bright present can enlighten the future to make it safe for the mankind. Humans are the social civilized animals with the ability of processing thoughts. What different would be if we couldn't use our gifts?

As old as the humanity goes, there has been evolution in every field that has touched us. History is the package of time that has wrapped in it many aspects of life that guide the evolution of species.
In the society, Indus valley civilization can be taken as the best example:-Where the town planning, trade, division of society into lower and upper town yet all equal in residence, the belief in life after death had evolved from the scattered lifestyle of a hunter-gatherer and led to kingdoms to flourish. Presently the sectoral town planning, like of Chandigarh, can be seen. Futuristic perspective lies in the building of smart cities which will have all the facilities.

Culture has evolved as an integral part of the society. Dance, music, arts were once the means of connecting to one's supernatural powers evolved and now has become the identity of the traditions. Vedas were not rigid in the beginning, but had some relevance for that time, while some had scientific backing. Understanding the value, as of Yoga has led to a better life, with the classical arts that has been demanding utmost concentration and fitness in the growing pollution and changing lifestyle, has become a style statement and the professional way to earn a livelihood.

Historically, the civilization that lived in sync with their environment have flourished for long. The tribes like Sentinalese of the Nicobar Islands are the second last untouched yet an old tribe, who have worshipped the nature such that the small island is their complete world. The idea of worshipping nature Gods like Agni, Vayu, rendering Dharti as Mata are all the symbols how important the environment is. With recent unplanned sprawl of industrialization, it is high time to protect the environment, else it won't take a long time to perish. It is the environment as a whole which has and will continue to provide for the food, clothings, housing, energy and means for livelihood. This is the basis behind the sustainable development Goals, so as to make the future safe.

The World War I led to formation of the League of Nations, the failure of which has been the founding strength behind the United Nation Organisation, the regional cooperation summits and inter-country MoUs so as to maintain peace and harmony for the future. Thus, evolution of relation has come a long but hard way.

The economy is an offshoot of the political system. From the oppressive monarchy to autocracy to imperialism it has led to the freedom struggles throughout the world to establish democracy. E.g. India, where first the barter system led to coin currency, the token currency replaced it to be maintained against a common standard (US. $), this has made a global village of opportunities. The various systems like communism, socialism and capitalism have also led to a welfare approach for some. The best combination can only led to a safe future.

Science and Technology has been saving mankind from perils. From inventing fire, wheels, clothing, sustainable energy, housing machinery for all the work, it has been

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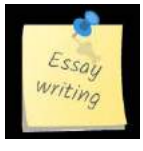
impacting our lives since the beginning. The medicine system has been impacted where the age old traditions of Unani, Ayurveda and Homeopathy, and folk treatments have been treating the incurables for the modern medical science. The Charak Samhita has described such advanced surgical methods. What were fiction for the time are now becoming the reality to improve the lifestyle and living standards.

Thus, it is not wrong to say that history holds the answers to all our questions for countries to come. It has been adapting and evolving, while some aspects have gone missing in the due course of time. It is for the benefit of the generations to filter out the root causes of disharmony like the caste system and the blind religious beliefs, towards an advanced society in making.

ESSAY 3: WHEN FREE SPEECH IS TRULY FREE

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT



Freedom is a theme which is going to come up again and again for creating a vibrant democracy. It is a term, like truth, that has globally become extremely important today. But it is not an easy concept to understand, especially in a public political discourse. First of all, there are many kinds of freedom: freedom to speak, to write, to think, to imagine, to live our lives, to eat what we want, and so on. Since this term is invoked so quickly and so easily — witness little children saying they want their freedom to have ice cream! — it is important that we understand its diverse meanings in our everyday use of this term. Hence, let us understand what one of the most important expressions of freedom, free speech, could mean. Freedom to hold forth?

People often tend to think that among the main elements of democracy are the holding of elections and a free media. Both elections and free media are important because they stand, among other things, for the notions of free speech and free expression. Casting a vote anonymously, of one's own free will, is an example of free expression and is broader than just 'free speech'. Similarly, when the media has the freedom to air all kinds of views, it is seen to be an example of free speech.

But is free speech really the essence of democracy? Is it really so important for an effective democracy?

Paradoxically, there is an inherent tension between free speech and democracy. If free speech is understood merely as the freedom to say what one wants, then that is obviously not conducive to meaningful social behaviour. For example, one can spread falsehood about another in the name of free speech. One can insult, lie, create harm and hatred through free speech. In these cases, free speech should rightfully be called rumour and gossip. Rumour, gossip, fake news and deliberate lying can be hidden under the guise of free speech. It is speech with an ulterior motive. To call these as free speech is a mistake.

The answer to the problem of defining what really constitutes free speech lies in understanding the meaning of 'free' in free speech. What is really free in free speech? The freedom to say what one wants? We can't really say what we want all the time since all speech is constrained. We are constrained by language, words, concepts and grammar, and even by the physical contours of our mouth. We are constrained by the biological and cognitive structures related to thought and its expression through language. Socially, we are not fully free to say what we want. We cannot make certain

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utterances in certain places. A commentator, commenting on a game of cricket, cannot suddenly give a lecture on philosophy saying that he is protected by free speech!

In addition to constraints, all speech also has a cost. When we utter something, good or bad, there is a price to pay. Even in personal relations with family and friends, we cannot say what we want. If we do so — that is, if we are honest and outspoken — there is a price to pay. Relationships get broken, wars are declared between people because somebody spoke 'freely'. Thus, the essence of free speech is not really about the freedom to say what we want. It is more about speech which is free, which comes with no cost. Free speech is actually speech for which you don't pay a price.

The freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) must take shape from the goals set out in the Preamble and must be read in the light of the principles mentioned therein. The Preamble seeks to promote "Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation". In its widest meaning and amplitude, fraternity is understood as a common feeling of brotherhood. While justice, liberty and equality have been made justiciable rights under the Constitution, the idea of fraternity has been used to interpret rights, especially horizontal application of rights.

The Preamble consciously chooses to assure the dignity of the individual, in the context of fraternity, before it establishes the link between fraternity, unity and integrity of India. The rights enshrined in Part III have to be exercised by individuals against the backdrop of the ideal of fraternity, and viewed in this light, Article 19(2) incorporates the vision of fraternity. Hence, the restriction imposed by the statutory provision (section 499 Indian Penal Code) satisfies the content of constitutional fraternity.

The fraternal ideal finds resonance also in Part IVA of the Constitution. Article 51A of the Constitution, which deals with the fundamental duties of a citizen, makes it a duty "to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women". In fact, the Supreme Court has held that Part IVA could be used as an interpretative tool while assessing the constitutional validity of laws, especially in the context of restrictions imposed on rights.

But paying a price is not in the hands of the speaker. When we say or write something, we do not know who will take offence at it. People get upset and take offence very easily these days! Free speech is nothing but the conditions under which the hearer is not allowed to take offence and intimidate the speaker.

The real freedom in 'free speech' lies not in the freedom of the speaker to say what she wants but in the constraint on hearers to allow the speaker to say what she wants. Thus, when we demand the right to free speech, we are essentially demanding the right to stop others from not letting us speak. The most important consequence of the idea of free speech is that it shifts the responsibility of free speech from the speaker to the hearer. But does this mean that anybody can say what they want? Can they slander a person through falsehood in the name of free speech? Is slandering a person the same as criticising the government or the nation? After all, our governments, independent of which party is in power, have effectively used the charge of sedition to stop certain utterances in public.

Criticism as a duty: It is not free speech to purposefully slander a person. But criticising the government or nation is not the same as slandering an individual. Such criticism is not just a right, it is more a duty of democratic societies. In a true democracy, there is nothing that can be considered as slandering the government, even if a criticism may be wrong and unjustified. That is because free speech is a tool to make democracy workable and it is not really about the individual freedom to say what one wants.

Democracy is about governance for others and on behalf of others. It is a social and public system of responsibility of governance. The very foundation of democracy is collective action and the real freedom in a democracy is the freedom of choosing who will govern on our behalf. The ideal of democracy is that we are all potential rulers — any one of us can be the Prime Minister of our country. When we elect somebody, we are only putting a group of people to govern on behalf of us. Free speech is

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the mechanism to make sure that they govern correctly and on our behalf. It is only free speech, defined in this manner, that makes democracy workable.

The true power of free speech lies in its capacity to make those in power accountable to those who do not have power. It is a means to control those in power and is not really about freedom of individuals. The price we demand for making somebody govern on our behalf (the elected leaders) is to allow us to say what we want about them, not as individuals but as political leaders.

Thus, true free speech covers only those acts of speech which speak against power, and keep those in power accountable. It thus safeguards the most cherished democratic principle. Free speech by itself is not the essence of democracy but is the means by which any democracy can be sustained. Anybody who doesn't like to hear criticism of government or government representatives is being undemocratic. We dilute the importance of free speech when we use it to derive personal benefit or cause harm or do so in situations which are not about power. Speech, in the task of keeping check on power, has to be subsidised and made free by those in power.

ESSAY 4: BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN OTHERS

ETHICS

There are a very few people in the world who dared to do what they preached. Gandhi ji was an epitome of change. He wanted to change the world but before that he changed himself. He changed his attitude towards the world and the world's attitude towards him changed automatically. It was his attitude that transformed him from a young promising lawyer, born in enslaved India to the father of a free nation. He started the journey of his transformation from the dark continent of Africa where he confronted the social evil of the apartheid. The plight of the black and coloured people of South Africa filled his heart with a feeling of sympathy for them. His resolution became more solid when he himself had to suffer at the hands of so called whites, for being 'coloured'. He was thrown out of the first class compartment of a train despite having a valid ticket. At that moment he realized how egoistic and hypocrites white people were. He came to know that they considered sharing the compartment with coloured persons as losing their purity.

Gandhi ji was a man of principles. He had the guts to object against the treatment being given to the coloureds. If it had been any ordinary person, he would have easily surrendered to the situation. But he was not ordinary. He demanded from the government to end the policy of discrimination. His aim was not to force something from outside. He wanted that the 'whites' realise that they were wrong. They must change their attitude towards the coloured. His crusade against the system kept him in South Africa until he unshackled the coloured people from the chains of apartheid system which had bound them for centuries. His ways and attitude inspired the coloured. They woke up from a slumber which had made them drowsy for so long to realize that they were also human beings and it was not their fault that they were coloured. The inspiration helped them to get justice finally. Gandhi ji taught us that we must not be hypocrites.

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Similarly, we must present ourselves as we are. There is always a scope of improvement in everyone. We must seek to improve upon ourselves. We must present our real self to the world. If we are conscious that we do not possess qualities that we should have then we must first acquire those qualities. Until and unless we don't have them, we would not be able to assess their true worth. We cannot tell the taste of a mango until we have tasted it ourselves. Telling without doing so will be hypocrisy and a lie.

Gandhi ji did not only preach the principles of truth and non-violence but also presented before us how to make these a part of our lives. He showed the world how we can practice these principles in real sense. If we go through the life history of Mahatma Gandhi we come across many such incidents, which prove that whatever he preached were not only sets of words but he also showed them through actions. Before giving someone some advice he always tested that on his own self. He wanted to see if his advice really worked. Moreover he wanted to make sure that he himself was perfect in that sense. If he wanted some- one to give up eating too much of sweets, he first experimented on himself if he can also quite eating sweets or not. He taught the world that an alcoholic has no moral right of telling anyone to give up drinking. Before changing others one has to change himself. One must rectify his habits before one preaches other. In this sense he meant that teachers must first give up the habit of telling lies before students. The students will never accept his advice of always speaking truth if he himself is a habitual. The same principle works at homes. If we want to teach our children values and morals, we must first live morality.

Gandhi ji was a great believer of truth and non-violence. He did not believe in the violent ways adopted by some youngsters. He termed them 'some misled youths. He returned from South Africa aimed an atmosphere of suppression and tyranny by the Britishers. It is not that his blood remained cool and It did not boil like other youngsters of his time. But he did not compromise with his principles. He did not give up his ways of peace and non-violence. He straight away disapproved of the violent ways adopted by revolutionaries who wanted to drive out the Britishers. Gandhi ji believed that their cause was noble but their means was wrong. He believed that to reach at the destination of freedom, the path of non-violence and truth must be adopted.

These principles became an integral part of his life. Never in his life did he run away from his principles. The instances from his life history prove how he put his principles into reality. He did not compromise even when the movements started by him were at peak. He withdrew his non-co-operation movement when the news broke that at some places had become violent. By doing this he gave an indication how much he believed in his philosophy. It was a step to show his resentment for the violence. It also served as a warning against any such action in future. His principles would have been futile had he not shown his determination and capability of inspiring the masses.

Our history is full of personalities who inspired Gandhi ji to make this statement. Like Gandhi ji, those were the persons who changed themselves. They transferred their entire lifestyle and philosophy to be able to preach what they wanted to. The great Mauryan king Ashoka, who preached peace and non-violence, was himself a violent emperor. He got the throne of Magadha after killing his own siblings. Later he attacked kalinga killing thousand's, but he changed himself. He gave up the policy of violent aggression. He was able to convince others only after he personified non-violence. Today he is not known for his large kingdom or for his conquests, but for his love for peace and non-violence. Another example is of Gautama Buddha. He was the founder of a great religion. He quit the luxuries of his palace to become a wanderer. He transformed his life from a prince to a monk. He preached only after he was himself aware of the ultimate truth. His personal example inspired many thousands become his fol lowers. He had to first adopt the values which inspired others to adopt them. Gandhi ji was also inspired by these historical personalities.

He came to know that changes brought by blood and violence are temporary. People accept these changes under the influence of fear. But changes brought through peaceful ways are permanent. We still remember Ashoka and the Buddha. We still feel the influence of their principles. Their principles are still relevant.

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Gandhi ji preached 'Work is worship'. Today we see the phrase written on the wall of schools and offices. Gandhi ji showed to the world what the phrase actually meant. He is often seen in pictures sitting behind a spinning wheel. It was not just to impress onlookers, but he, in fact, did his petty works him- self. The inhabitants at his ashram were in the habit of doing their works themselves. They did not hesitate from doing works with their own hands because they were being given live demonstration by the very person that they followed. This not only changed their habits but also they understood the worth of work. This also raised the status of Mahatma Gandhi in their eyes. One of the epitomes of human service was mother Teresa. She led a simple and selfless life which has inspired thousands of philanthropists around the world.

Gandhi ji statement becomes all the more relevant in today's world. We all have our own ideal world inscribed in our minds. We see many things which are of our liking but many are those which we do not like and always wish to change. Not only we but many more like minded people having common ideas wish to see changes in society. But this idealism is mostly restricted to merely 'wishes'. We all remain passive and cynical about changes. We do not want to take initiative. We always hope that someone else would take the first step. It is because for a change to be effective the person who initiates the process has to bring changes in himself. We are reluctant of bringing changes in ourselves. This is what differentiates an ordinary person from a great soul. Mahatma Gandhi wished that everyone modifies himself to change other. The statement of Gandhi ji is a source of inspiration for many who want to give a meaning and a right direction to their lives. It encourages us to make our own path. The initiative taken by us distinguishes us from the commoners and helps us make a unique space for ourselves. It can make a leader out of a common man. A leader has the quality of motivating others and an ability to implement the initiatives taken by him appropriately. But nothing comes without a price. Hence changes require determination to change oneself first.

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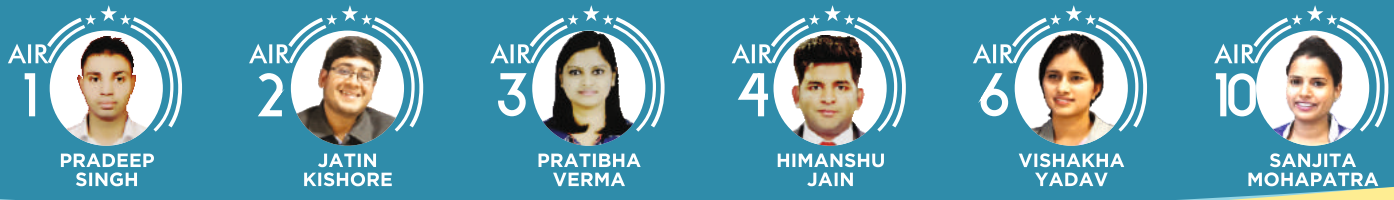

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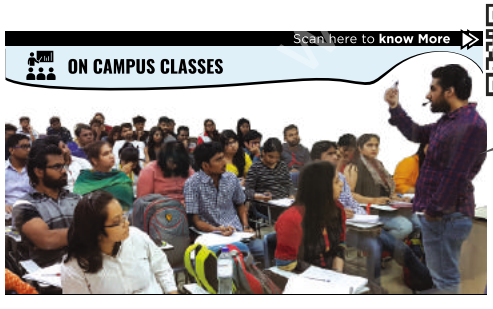

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