

ABOUT CURRENT CONNECT

It gives us immense pleasure to present an innovative approach to master current affairs. Current is a passing wind and diverse issues happen at the same time. It is to an extent chaotic. Newspapers, magazines and various other sources report the chaos per se. With our experience of current affairs **we have tried to give “the current” a medium to travel. It is the syllabus of the UPSC with their components that are the medium through which the “Current is Passed” to the readers.** Ever since the new syllabus of the UPSC came into existence, current has been gaining significance both at prelims as well as mains examination. This book is meant to cover current affairs and related questions arising from those events. We have not only covered the current events for their factual contents but also presented it in such a way that any question asked from that topic gets covered. Moreover, topics are also "peppered" with the relevant facts/key concepts that are related to the theme. We have also given questions for practice both, subjective and objective, so that candidates are oriented to the examination mode. It is a collection covering myriad source yet in a manageable size. To use this book we recommend you to master the components of general studies (GS) syllabus as broken into rows and columns (provided in the beginning after preface). Each cell comprising of the portion of GS becomes the connect for the current and every news subsequently covered guides the reader to the address of the syllabus. It is logical to expect that same issue may be connected to more than one topic of the syllabus. Further, the news also has some additional vistas opened for the readers by adding a box with a **title “PEPPER IT WITH” where we expect the students to build further** around the theme.

We are also trying to reach the remotest part of the country with our spirit **and zeal of “Mains Answer Writing”, which has** been admired by students, CSE rankholders and other scholars. Continuing in line with the effort, we have started with programs like 7 Question (7Q) Challenge, Shell Points, Stock Points, Content Enrichment Booklet etc.

When it comes to evaluation, we are altogether at a different level. We are also reaching every nook and corner with this expertise for the aspirants of CSE. Now you can write a Mains Answer and get it evaluated from our Expert Team and can get Feedback. [Drop a mail at evaluation@ksgindia.com](mailto:evaluation@ksgindia.com) for registering yourself in our race to perfection. **Don't wait, it's your golden chance to crack this exam and fulfill your passionate dream.**

Team KSG

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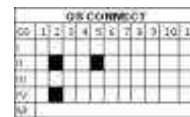
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GS - I	Culture-Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.	Indian history significant events, personalities, issues and the Freedom Struggle	Post independence issues, National boundary and disputes	Indian society, issues, globalization and diversity	Women - issues and developments	Urbanization – problems and remedies	Distribution of industries, resources – India and world	Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc			
GS - II	Indian constitution- Amendments, acts and bills.	Legislative, executive and judicial processes.	Constitutional, non-constitutional, judicial, quasi-judicial, administrative and other types of bodies.	Federal structure and local bodies. Their powers and functions.	Government policies and various governance issues like transparency, accountability and – governance	Committees and schemes.	Non-government issues, self-help groups and role of civil society	Vulnerable sections of our society and social sector issues and initiatives.	International Relation- India and other countries, various Indian and international agreements, effects of other countries on India and international institutions.		
GS - III	Various measures to boost Indian economy- planning, policies, management.	Government budgeting and issues related to budget.	Agriculture, animal husbandry and transport	Food security- measures to boost food security and food processing. Issues related to land- land reforms	Industries and infrastructure growth and investment model	Space and technology, IT, robotics and computer	Disease, biotechnology and human welfare	Innovations, Intellectual property, Awards, POI and other import and aspects of S&T	Environment; government initiatives, various judgment, pollution, degradation and conservation efforts	Disaster & Disaster Management	Challenges to Internal security, Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate. Cybersecurity; moneylaundering and its prevention.
GS - IV	Ethical issues related to family society, education, Corruption etc.	Ethics in public and private administration	Issues	Related laws and rules	Governance/ e-Governance	Ethics in international issues	Personalities and their teaching	Other important topics			
Misc.											

Sedition law

News Excerpt

In recent times, there has been an increase in the instances in which sedition charges were pressed against many persons including intellectuals, human rights activists, filmmakers, university teachers, students, and journalists.



Pre-Connect

- The law was originally drafted in 1837 by Thomas Macaulay, the British historian-politician, but was inexplicably omitted when the IPC was enacted in 1860.
- Section 124A was inserted in 1870 by an amendment introduced by Sir James Stephen when the need was felt for a specific section to deal with the offence. It was one among the many draconian laws enacted to stifle the voices of dissent under the British Raj.
- In its 39th Report (1968), the Law Commission had rejected the idea of repealing the section whereas in its 42nd Report (1971), it recommended to widen the scope of the section and expanded to cover the Constitution, the legislature and the judiciary, in addition to the government established by the law. This was done on the reasoning that there were institutions against which 'disaffection' should not be tolerated.
- In August 2018, the Law Commission of India published a consultation paper recommending that it is time to re-think or repeal the Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code that deals with sedition.
- The constitutionality of sedition was challenged in the Supreme Court in Kedar Nath Vs State of Bihar (1962). The Court upheld the law on the basis that this power was required by the state to protect itself. However, it had added a vital caveat that "a person could be prosecuted for sedition only if his acts caused incitement to violence or intention or tendency to create public disorder or cause disturbance of public peace".

What is sedition?

The Indian Penal Code defines sedition (Section 124A) as an offence committed when "any person by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the government established by law in India". Disaffection includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity. However, comments without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection, will not constitute an offence under this section.

Punishment for the offence of sedition

Sedition is a non-bailable offence. Punishment under the Section 124A ranges from imprisonment up to three years to a life term, to which fine may be added. A person charged under this law is barred from a government job. They have to live without their passport and must produce themselves in the court at all times as and when required.

Analytica

Arguments against the continuation of sedition Law

- In 1979, India ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which sets forth internationally recognized standards for the protection of freedom of expression. However, misuse of sedition and arbitrary slapping of charges are inconsistent with India's international commitments.

What is Hate Speech?

Hate speech has not been defined in any law in India. But, In its 267th Report, the Law Commission of India has defined hate speech as "an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious **belief and the like.**" In other words, it means that hate speech is "any word written or spoken, signs, visible representations within the hearing or sight of a person with the intention to cause fear or alarm, or incitement to violence."

- It is a constraint on the legitimate exercise of constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech and expression. Misuse of such a law would lead to violation of fundamental rights guaranteed by constitution.
- Dissent and criticism of the government are essential ingredients of robust public debate in a vibrant democracy. They should not be constructed as sedition. Right to question, criticize and change rulers is very fundamental to the idea of democracy.
- The British, who introduced sedition to oppress Indians, have themselves abolished the law in their country. There is no reason, why should not India abolish this section.
- The terms used under Section 124A like 'disaffection' are vague and subject to different interpretation to the whims and fancies of the investigating officers.
- Today, the sedition law is being misused as a tool to stifle political dissent. A wide and concentrated executive discretion is inbuilt into it which permits the blatant abuse.

Arguments Favouring the continuation of Sedition Laws

- Section 124A of the IPC has its utility in combating anti-national, secessionist and terrorist elements.
- It protects the elected government from attempts to overthrow the government with violence and illegal means. The continued existence of the government established by law is an essential condition of the stability of the State.
- If contempt of court invites penal action, contempt of government should also attract punishment.
- Many districts in different states face a Maoist insurgency and rebel groups virtually run a parallel administration. These groups openly advocate the overthrow of the state government by revolution.
- Against this backdrop, the abolition of Section 124A would be ill-advised merely because it has been wrongly invoked in some highly publicized cases.

Way forward

There is a need for wider discussion to remove the ambiguity in the law and reduce the discretion of executive in imposing such a stringent law on people to safeguard their right under Art 19 and Art 21. Hence following safeguard needs to be provided:

1. Objectively defined criteria for imposition of the law as the last resort.
2. Executive must be held accountable in case of proven misuse. For example – recently sedition charges were imposed on 49 intellectuals who appealed to prime minister to curb the incidents of mob lynching.
3. Judiciary must take proactive step to curb the misuse of the law.

PEPPER IT WITH
ICCPR, Sec-153, 295 of
IPC, Criminal Defamation

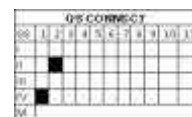
India is the largest democracy of the world and the right to free speech and expression is an essential ingredient of democracy. The Law Commission has rightly said, "an expression of frustration over the state of affairs cannot be treated as sedition". If the country is not open to positive criticism, there would be no difference between the pre- and post-Independence eras.

Regulation of Social media

News Excerpt

The Supreme Court has recently decided to examine the plea to put in place a mechanism to regulate social media and track originators of fake news, rumours and other objectionable material like pornography on platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube etc and directed transfer of all such petitions pending in various high courts to itself.

India is likely to finalise the liability of intermediaries for online content by 15 January 2020.



Pre-Connect

- Intermediaries in India are regulated by the Information Technology Act, enacted in 2000. This was put in place in order to regulate the problems that stemmed out of usage of Information Technology.
- Currently, liabilities of the intermediaries on online content are governed by the Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules operational from April 2011.
- Supreme Court struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 in *Shreya Singhal and Ors. Vs Union of India* that criminalized the practice of sending an offensive message using a computer resource, which led to arrests of many people for posting allegedly objectionable content on the Internet.
- Section 69A of the IT act authorizes the government to block any content from being accessed by the public on various grounds. An intermediary who fails to comply with directions to block content is liable to be imprisoned for up to seven years.
- Section 79 of the IT Act requires an Intermediary to observe certain guidelines in order to avail of exemption from liability. These guidelines were issued in 2011.

Analytica

- The issue of censorship of online content in India is tricky as the Constitution permits censorship in certain limited circumstances. This is a problem as due to the global nature of the Internet, it is very difficult to control or regulate content being uploaded in foreign countries and being viewed in India.
- Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution protects the right to free speech and expression irrespective of the medium of communication whereas Article 19(2) permits reasonable restrictions to be placed on the right in view of public policy concerns. Purportedly in accordance with Article 19(2), the IT Act contains numerous provisions that can be used to censor online content – notably in Sections 66A, 69A and 79. The biggest concern in this regard is the extremely wide and ambiguous scope of view of public policy concerns.
- According to the central government, internet has emerged as a potent tool to cause unimaginable disruption to the democratic polity; it was felt that the extant rules to be revised for effective regulation of intermediaries keeping in view the ever growing threats to individual **rights and nation's integrity, sovereignty, and security.**

Why Do We Need Regulation?

1. Increased reach of social media has made it necessary to bring effective policies to regulate it for its orderly growth.
2. Security concern like spread of fake news, live streaming of terror attacks, lynching incited by fake rumors (child lifting rumors etc)
3. Enhanced usage of social media and cutting edge technologies like Big data analytics has led to massive data collection which can be used for profiling of an individual. This can be misused for targeting different groups which can cause serious concerns for privacy.
4. Regulation of cross border data flow through such platforms which makes it difficult for enforcement agencies to investigate crimes and hate speeches.
5. The young generation is exposed to inappropriate content which is hampering its meaningful development.

Challenges in Regulation of Social Media:

1. Regulation of social media can hamper freedom of speech and expression which is a fundamental right under art 19(1).
2. It can increase the threat of a surveillance state which can hamper the privacy of an individual violating right to privacy (Puttaswamy Judgement) under art 21.
3. Increased regulation will make it difficult for internet companies to do business in India thereby making it unattractive for investments in technological innovations.

PEPPER IT WITH
Puttaswamy Judgement, B.N
Srikrishna committee
recommendation, Cyber Bullying,
Budapest Convention

4. It is difficult to reach at consensus regarding the extent of regulation required and also about what exactly needs to be regulated.
5. It has the potential of being misused to stifle dissent which can hamper the democratic values in Indian society.

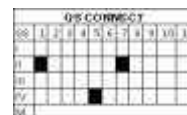
Way forward

- i. Policy – Clear guidelines and effective policy needs to be designed in order to effectively regulate social media.
- ii. Effective grievance redressal mechanism should be put in place in order to safeguard against the misuse.
- iii. Proper data protection regime needs to be developed (B.N Srikrishna committee recommendations) to provide effective safeguard for protecting privacy on individual.
- iv. Progressive regulation instead of one size fit all policy is required to be developed with stakeholder participation so as to take into consideration views of all participants.
- v. Civil society awareness about the issue needs to be enhanced so as to make grassroot impact.

Right to Disconnect Bill

News Excerpt

Recently during the Assembly elections in Maharashtra, the election manifesto of a party **promised to bring a “Right to Disconnect Bill”, which promises to give employees the right to deny response to their employers’ calls, text messages, or emails after office hours.**



Pre-Connect

- The working hours prescribed under the Factories Act, 1948 is taken as a standard period.
- Under Section 51 of the Factories Act, employees are not supposed to work for more than 48 hours in a week.
- Under section 59, employees are not supposed to work for not more than nine hours a day.
- The time worked in excess of these 48 hours per week and nine hours per day will be counted as overtime under the Act and will require the employer to pay workers twice the standard wage.
- Section 14 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 states that after an employee is paid his or her minimum wage for a fixed period, they are required to be paid extra as an overtime rate.
- The Factories Act, 1948 restricts the employment of women between 7:00 pm and 6:00 am, which can be relaxed by the Chief Inspector of factories in certain cases. If such a relaxation of stipulated working hours exceeds the normal period of working hours, employees will be eligible for overtime compensation. Even then, this relaxation is still time sensitive that is, women cannot be required to work between 10:00 pm to 05:00 am.
- A child above fourteen who is eligible to work in a factory cannot be allowed to work for more than four and a half hours in a day and cannot work between 10:00 pm and 6:00am. In addition, a female child is not allowed to work in any factory, except between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm.

Global Trends

- ❖ In 2017, France passed a law formalising the Right to Disconnect.
- ❖ Companies in Germany, even without formal laws, have been implementing this idea.
- ❖ In Italy employees have an obligation to remain available during holidays only in limited circumstances.
- ❖ Several countries, primarily in Europe, have some form of the right to disconnect included in their law.

Rights and commitments under the Bill

- Bill proposed the setting up of an Employee Welfare Authority, which would include the Ministers of IT, Communication and Labour. The Authority would publish a study regarding the impact of digital tools beyond work hours, yearly reports and outline a charter of employee-employer negotiations.

- Companies with more than 10 employees would be required to periodically negotiate specific terms with their workers, publish their own charter, and create an Employee Welfare Committee **consisting of representatives of the company's workforce**.
- Bill proposed to forbid disciplinary action if an employee failed to reply to attempts by employers to contact them outside of the established conditions.
- If the employee worked outside of the agreed-upon conditions, he or she would be entitled to overtime compensation, according to the Bill.

Analytica

The 10-page Right to Disconnect Bill proposed to give employees the right to not respond to communication from employers outside of office hours, and to mandate companies to detail out-of-work demands **“as a way to reduce stress and ease tension between an employee’s personal and professional life”**.

Need for such a legislation

Anxiety Disorder: According to WHO figures, about 264 million people are affected by anxiety disorders. In many surveys it has been found that people having high imbalance in work life and personal life tend to suffer from anxiety related disorders more frequently as comparison to those who have better life balance.

Weakening Social relations: Relations can be built only through communication and spending time with people around you. Today work pressure is so high that people rarely have time to socialize with other.

Lack in Performance: It has been found that people who work only in office hours and spend good time relishing their own time, actually performed better than those who put in extra hours to work and stayed connected even while at home.

Health hazards: Drawbacks of overworking are multifaceted ranging from back pain and Repetitive Strain Injury, two very common problems associated with desk work to heavy strain on your eyes due to continuous computer use.

Other issues: The rising pressure on employees has taken a terrible toll including some work-related suicides. It also leads to early retiring of employees due to exhaustion from work.

However there are some Challenges in bringing out such legislation.

- ✓ It calls for total disconnection of work calls and emails in non-working hours and thus tracking of important works would be difficult as reminders of an important deadline or guideline cannot be conveyed.
- ✓ According to Indian perspective the biggest impediment in implementation at such a large scale, this makes it difficult to have a uniform work policy across all sectors.
- ✓ In the era of globalization, increased interconnectedness and cross border clientele is needed to be maintained and workforce has to be responsive to maintain service delivery.
- ✓ Due to such obligations towards the work force, the employers would tend to advance their machinery and increase automation to reduce the need of recruitment of more human workforce.
- ✓ It will increase the cost of litigation and divert the resources of the company away from actual productive processes.
- ✓ Economic slowdown has reduced the profitability of the companies; it would lead to further slowdown at large and lesser productivity and profits for a particular firm.
- ✓ The employers may try to circumvent the law by reaching the employees through some alternate means for staying connected with their work force or it could be via a waiver clause in the employment contract or by any other express or implied means.

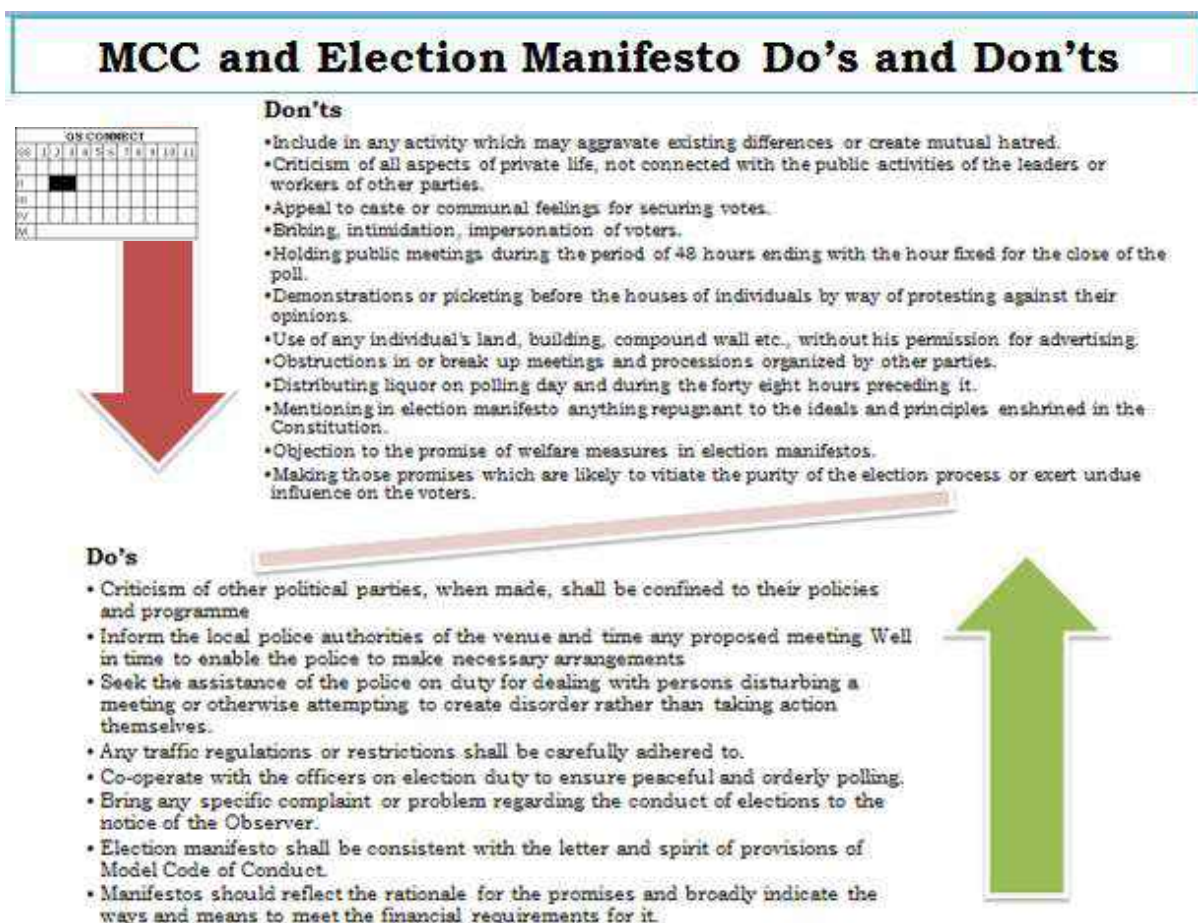
Way Forward

- Improved work culture: There should be clear guidelines and strict scheduling of work by both employer and employees to finish the work on time within the deadlines, so as to reduce work burden at home.

PEPPER IT WITH
Corporate governance, Narayanmoorthi committee, Uday Kotak committee, UNI Global Union

- There should be human resource training to effectively manage work-life balance.
- There should be stakeholder participation to define uniform standards to improve voluntary compliance.
- Speedy dispute resolution mechanism should be set up in case of litigations to stop the resources and time from being wasted.
- The provision of compensatory leave to the employee in case of minor violation would effectively reduce violations by employers without raging disputes.
- The government should provide employee counseling, digital detox centers, and similar resources “to free an employee from digital distractions and enable them to truly connect with the people around him”.

MCC and Election Manifesto



What does MCC lack?

- The MCC, without a stringent legal cover is impractical and toothless.
- After the Election Commission imposes the Model Code of Conduct, no new projects can be announced as it might be done to sway voters; It may result in policy paralysis and development deficit.
- Social media is not effectively regulated

PEPPER IT WITH
 Simultaneous Elections, Electoral Reforms, TN
 Seshan Electoral Reforms, JP Narayan
 Committee, Dinesh Goswami Committee,
 Jeevan Reddy Committee, Tarkunde Committee

under Model code of conduct at present. The advancement in data analytics through social media may be misused to spread fake news and hate speech.

- Due to huge pendency in law courts and cumbersome proceedings the time taken in adjudicating the cases of violation of MCC and no power with ECI to adjudicate such disputes further reduces the significance and relevance of MCC
- There is no political consensus on the model guidelines to be followed during elections. This provides impediments in voluntary compliance by political parties.

Way Forward

- A high level committee must be setup under the oversight of Supreme Court to discuss the possibility of giving statutory or constitutional backing to model code of conduct.
- Critical projects must be allowed to be announced and implemented with prior permission of election commission.
- In the times of globalization there is a need to effectively regulate social media due to extensive reach and potential to sway popular sentiments which can hamper democratic credentials of elections.
- Special fast track courts must be setup for speedy adjudication of cases of violation of model code of conduct.
- Political parties must try to build a consensus over the model code of conduct and ethically comply with the guidelines.
- NOTA (none of the above) option must get equal validation and must not be treated just as an expression of rejection rather should be considered as mandate to improve compliance of model code of conduct.

Section 11 of the Representation of the People act

News Excerpt

Delhi High Court has issued notice to Election Commission, Central Government and Sikkim Government in a petition challenging the reduction in disqualification term of Sikkim's Chief Minister from 6 years to 1 year and 30 days.

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Pre-Connect

- Sikkim's Chief Minister was found guilty of misappropriation of funds in a case involving procurement of cows. He was sentenced to one year of imprisonment, following the completion of which, he was made ineligible for contesting elections for a period of 6 years under section 8 of The Representation of The People Act, 1951.
- The Sikkim High Court, as well as the Supreme Court of India had upheld the decision.

Grounds for Disqualification

The Constitution of India

- i. If he holds any office of profit under the Union or State Government
- ii. If he is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a court;
- iii. If he is an undischarged insolvent;
- iv. If not a citizen of India or has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a foreign state or is under any acknowledgement of allegiance to a foreign state;
- v. Disqualified by any law of Parliament.

Representation of People Act (1951)

- i. A member must not found guilty or corrupt practices in the elections.
- ii. Must not have been convicted for any offence resulting in imprisonment for two or more years.
- iii. Must not have any interest in government, contracts, works or services.
- iv. Must not be punished for socially discriminatory practices; etc.

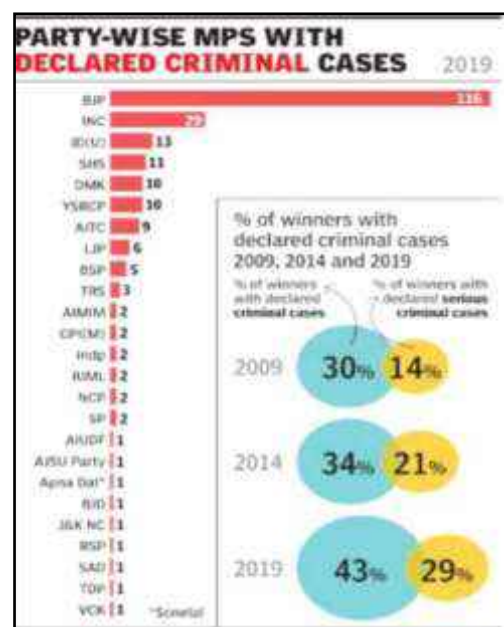
Tenth Schedule

- i. If voluntarily gives up the membership of the party on whose ticket he was elected.
- ii. Abstains from voting or votes against any direction given by his political party;
- iii. Joins a political party after being elected as an independent candidate.
- iv. A nominated member joins any political party after the expiry of six months.

- In September, Election Commission had passed an order, exercising its powers under section 11 of the Representation of the People Act, to reduce the term of disqualification from 6 years to a little over a year.

Analytica

- Section 11 of the RPA empowers the ECI to reduce the disqualification even if person is convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 20 months; hence, it is manifestly arbitrary, irrational & violative of Article 14 of the Constitution.
- Morally, it is wrong for the parties to give ticket to those convicted of crimes or to appoint someone convicted.
- According to a research by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), the chances of winning for a candidate with criminal cases in the Lok Sabha elections are 13% whereas for a candidate with a clean record they are 5%. The progress of democracy would be stalled because the people at the grassroots level would lack the motivation to participate.



Way Forward

- ✓ The Legislators are the policy makers, it is imperative that they are not unveiled as policy breakers. They should act as role models for the public as the society laid its trust in the legislators for ensuring the larger good.
- ✓ NOTA should be strengthened so that even if the voter is faced with a lack of choice, he could express his discontent.
- ✓ Speedy disposal of cases would help voters to make an informed choice by knowing if allegations on their representative are true or not.
- ✓ There should be an Integrated criminal database so that the public and EC can assess the credibility of the candidate.
- ✓ A Code of ethics should be evolved on the lines of 2nd ARC report and made enforceable for the legislators.

PEPPER IT WITH
Model Code of Conduct, NOTA,
ADR

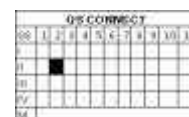
Legal Rights of Deities

News Excerpt

Recently, a five-judge Constitutional bench, headed by Chief Justice of India, concluded 40 days of hearings in the Ram Janmbhoomi - Babri Masjid case.

Pre-Connect

- The treatment of deities as juristic persons started under the British. Temples owned huge land and resources, and British administrators held that the legal owner of the wealth was the deity, with a shebait or manager acting as trustee.
- In 1887, the Bombay High Court held in the Dakor Temple case: “Hindu idol is a juridical subject and the pious idea that it embodies is given the status of a legal person.” This was reinforced in the 1921 order in Vidya Varuthi Thirtha vs Balusami Ayyar.
- The Uttarakhand High Court declared the river Ganga, a “living entity” in a judgment in 2017 and gave the river the same rights as a human being. The order was stayed by the Supreme Court in July that year because it “raised several legal questions and administrative issues”.
- Recently, the Punjab and Haryana High Court held that the “entire animal kingdom” has a “distinct legal persona with corresponding rights, duties, and liabilities of a living person”
- In the Sabarimala case (Indian Young Lawyers Association & Ors. vs The State of Kerala & Ors, 2018), one of the arguments presented against allowing women of menstruating age entry



into the temple was that this would violate the right to privacy of Lord Ayyappa, who is eternally celibate.

Analytica

Treatment of deities as jurist person/entity is problematic on the following accounts:

1. Since the deity is not present in any physical form, no one can know the real will of the person/ entity being represented.
2. This leads to the presentation by a person who represents the deity projecting his/her own belief system as a claim of the deity which is problematic in terms of principles of natural justice.
3. A major challenge is the enforcement of the decision in such cases due to political sensitivity and religious sentiments.
4. Another problem arises in clogging the judiciary with such cases. Since the judiciary already has such a huge backlog such pleas on the behalf of deity slow the progress of other cases in the judiciary.
5. Since religion is close to the heart of people, such disputes involving deities hold the potential to be flared and spark tensions in the society disturbing the secular fabric of the nation.
6. The potential rift between different communities and among different religions can be a major challenge to law and order in the country.

PEPPER IT WITH
Concept of Loco parentis,
Shebait Rights

Way forward

- Definitive enforcement and implementation mechanism should be created for such cases for effective implementation.
- Law commission must discuss the matter in detail to enquire about the possibility of altogether abolishing such a mechanism or to reform it keeping in view of the present **society's** needs.
- Civil society must actively promote awareness about such issues so as to restrict the fallout of adverse judgment in such cases.
- A fine balance must be achieved between the rights of the deity and the fundamental rights of the individual. For example - In Sabarimala judgement, right of deity and fundamental right against discrimination on the bases of gender came in direct conflict.

Chief Justice of India (CJI)

News Excerpt

Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde, will take over the highest office of the Indian judiciary as the 47th Chief Justice of the country, replacing Justice Ranjan Gogoi.

CURRENT CONNECT										
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I										
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Thematic Connect

- As per, Article 124 of the Indian Constitution, every judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President after consultation with such judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts as the President may deem necessary. In case of the appointment of a judge other than the Chief Justice, the CJI shall always be consulted.
- From 1950 to 1973, the practice had been to appoint the senior most judge of the Supreme Court as the chief justice of India. This established convention was violated in 1973 when A N Ray was appointed as the Chief Justice of India by superseding three senior judges. Again in 1977, M U Beg was appointed as the chief justice of India by superseding the then senior-most judge. This discretion of the government was curtailed by the Supreme Court in the Second Judges Case (1993), in which the Supreme Court ruled that the senior most judge of the Supreme Court should alone be appointed to the office of the chief justice of India.

- Acting Chief Justice -The President can appoint a judge of the Supreme Court as an acting Chief Justice of India when: 1. the office of Chief Justice of India is vacant; or 2. the Chief Justice of India is temporarily absent; or 3. the Chief Justice of India is unable to perform the duties of his office.

The validity of the collegium system

- The Collegium system is one where the Chief Justice of India and a forum of four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court recommend appointments and transfers of judges. However, it has no place in the Indian Constitution.
- The system was evolved through Supreme Court judgments in the Three Judges Cases: S.P. Gupta case (December 30, 1981) or the First Judges Case: It declared that the **“primacy” of the CJI’s recommendation on judicial appointments and transfers can be refused for “cogent reasons.”** The ruling gave the Executive primacy over the Judiciary in judicial appointments for the next 12 years.
- Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association versus Union of India or the Second Judges Case (October 6, 1993): The majority verdict **gave back CJI’s power over judicial appointments and transfers.** It says the CJI only need to consult two senior-most judges. **“The role of the CJI is primal in nature because this being a topic within the judicial family, the Executive cannot have an equal say in the matter,”** the verdict reasoned. However, confusion prevails as the CJIs start taking unilateral decisions without consulting two colleagues. The President is reduced to only an approver.
- In Special Reference case of 1998 or the Three Judges Case (October 28, 1998): On a reference from former President K.R. Narayanan, the Supreme Court lays down that the CJIs should consult with a plurality of four senior-most Supreme Court judges to form his opinion on judicial appointments and transfers.

Few landmark cases of which Justice Bobde was a part-

- ❖ Justice Bobde has been credited with the judgement where the apex court ruled that the lack of Aadhaar was not grounds to deprive any Indian citizen of basic services and government subsidies.
- ❖ Bobde is also part of the five-judge constitution bench which just concluded hearing of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute.
- ❖ In 2017 as part of apex court bench, along with Justice L. Nageswara Rao, he rejected the petition of a woman who sought termination of her foetus.
- ❖ In an another judgment in 2016, he suspended the sales of fire crackers in the national capital region on grounds of extreme air pollution.

COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

Original provision

Under Article 124(2) and Article 217(1) of the Constitution, SC/HC judges have to be appointed by the President after “consultation” with the CJI. Govt. was not bound by the CJI’s recommendation.

Judicial takeover

In 1993, SC introduced the collegium system taking over primacy in appointments of SC&HC judges.

CJI’s primacy

In 1998, a nine-judge Constitution bench ruled that “consultation” must be effective and the CJI’s opinion shall have primacy.

Composition

Under the collegium system, a panel of top five SC judges appointed judges in secrecy.

Veto power

Government could return collegium’s recommendation. But if a recommendation was sent again, government was bound by it.

NJAC SYSTEM

Constitutional amendment

NJAC was established by the Constitution (99th Amendment) Act, 2014, giving some say to executive in judges’ appointment.

NJAC Act

Parliament also passed the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014 to regulate procedure to be followed by NJAC that replaced collegium system.

Implementation

The 99th Constitutional Amendment Act and NJAC came into force from April 13, 2015. But it could not take off as the CJI refused to join until petitions against the new system were decided.

Composition

CJI, 2 seniormost SC judges, Union law minister, and two eminent persons.

Veto power

NJAC not to recommend person if any two members did not agree.

Analytica

- ✓ Under the collegium system, the executive was excluded from the judicial appointment process and a few judges appointed other judges in complete secrecy in a bid to ensure judicial independence. **Over the years, the system was criticised for being “opaque”** and

PEPPER IT WITH
Article 50, NJAC

vulnerable to favouritism, prompting the new law (NJAC) that gave the government a greater say in the appointment of Supreme Court and high court judges.

- ✓ Acc. To the govt. the collegium system created an **“imperium in imperio”** (empire within an empire) within supreme court. It is criticised on grounds that it created a **“give-and-take”** culture. While NJAC was criticized by court, stating that executive involvement in appointment of judges impinges upon independence of judiciary. It violates principle of separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary, that is a basic feature of the constitution. Thus NJAC was struck down by Supreme Court.

Conclusion

Appointment of judges to the highest court in different jurisdictions		
Country	Method of Appointment to the highest court	Who is involved in making the appointments
UK	SC judges are appointed by a five-person selection commission.	It consists of the SC President, his deputy, and one member each appointed by the JACs of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. (The JACs comprise lay persons, members of the judiciary and the Bar and make appointments of judges of lower courts.)
Canada	Appointments are made by the Governor in Council.	A selection panel comprising five MPs (from the government and the opposition) reviews list of nominees and submits 3 names to the Prime Minister.
USA	Appointments are made by the President.	Supreme Court Justices are nominated by the President and confirmed by the United States Senate.

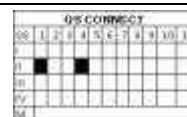
The faith and confidence people have reposed in the Judiciary is testimony to the fact that the Judiciary has since 1950 responded to the need of the hour. But time has come for a nationwide debate, especially because the justice delivery system is failing the expectations of people in the recent past. The issue is not just a delay in deciding cases, but the manner of the decision-making process itself. These decisions are coming under increasing criticism. It has become all the more necessary for the collegium to be vigilant in making appointments.

The process must be transparent and rationale with no nepotism in the selection process. Also, the higher judiciary has exempted itself from the Right to Information Act, and with some reconsiderations RTI Act can be implemented on the judiciary too, so that the public can get informed and the integrity of the institution can be respected. Moreover, Collegium must also open its proceedings to the public. The citizens are the real stakeholders and yet they have no voice in this process. Thus, the Judges must make themselves open to suggestions, criticism, objections and be transparent to the nation.

Legislative Council

News Excerpt

The Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Council, the upper house of the Assembly, was abolished recently as per Section 57 of the J&K Reorganisation Bill, 2019, which reduced the State to the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.



Pre-Connect

- **J&K was a sovereign Princely State at the time of India's Independence and acceded to the Indian Dominion in 1947 on terms recorded in a treaty — the Instrument of Accession.**
- The total reorganisation of a full-fledged State into two UTs is historically unprecedented in India. However, one example that can be cited is that of Delhi. When the Constitution of India was adopted, Delhi was a 'Part C' State administered by the President acting through a Chief Commissioner or Lieutenant Governor.
- In 1956, Delhi and all the other Part C States were divested of their legislative powers and converted into UTs that would now be administered by the President acting through an administrator appointed by her. Within some years, the other UTs were given legislatures, and by 1987, the UTs of Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Goa were even made into States.
- The 36-member Legislative Council of J&K was established in 1957 after an act was passed by the Parliament. The Council functioned as an upper house for the 87-member State Assembly.
- Currently, six states have Legislative Councils (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, and U.P). **Andhra Pradesh's Legislative Council, set up in 1958, was abolished in 1985, and then reconstituted in 2007.** Proposals to create Councils in Rajasthan and Assam are pending in Parliament.

Under Article 169 of the Constitution, a **Legislative Council can be formed** "if the Legislative Assembly of the State passes a resolution to that effect by a majority of the total membership of the Assembly and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Assembly present and voting". **Parliament** can then pass a law to this effect.

Under Article 171 of the Constitution, the Legislative Council of a state shall not have more than one-third of the total number of MLAs of the state, and not less than 40 members. As with Rajya Sabha MPs, the tenure of a Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) is six years, with one-third of the members retiring every two years.

Analytica

- India has a bicameral system of legislature. Just as Parliament has two Houses, the states can, if they choose to have a Legislative Council in addition to the Legislative Assembly. The Constitution provides for this option under Article 171.
- The legislative power of the Councils are limited. Unlike Rajya Sabha which has substantial powers to shape non-financial legislation, Legislative Councils lack a constitutional mandate to do so; Assemblies can override suggestions/amendments made to a legislation by the Council.
- Again, unlike Rajya Sabha MPs, the MLCs cannot vote in elections for the President and Vice President.
- The Vice President is the Rajya Sabha Chairperson; an MLC is the Council Chairperson.

PEPPER IT WITH
Rajya Sabha, J&K Reorganisation
Act-2019, MLC

Conclusion

A second House of legislature is considered important because it act as a check on hasty actions by the popularly elected House and also ensure that individuals who might not be cut out for the rough-and-tumble of direct elections too are able to contribute to the legislative process. On the other hand, legislative Councils can be used to park leaders who have not been able to win an election, also they can be used to delay progressive legislation. Moreover, they would strain state finances. Thus, a second house is prudent provided it allow for more debate and sharing of work between the Houses.

Nagaland Controversy

News Excerpt

The Centre has ruled out a separate flag and Constitution for the Nagas as demanded by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) [NSCN-IM].

Pre-Connect

- Before the ongoing talks, which followed a framework agreement in 2015, there were two other agreements between Naga groups and the Centre.
- In 1975, a peace accord was signed in Shillong in which the NNC leadership agreed to give up arms. Several NNC leaders, including Isak Chishi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and S. S. Khaplang refused to accept the agreement and broke away to form the NSCN. In 1988 came another split, with Khaplang breaking away to form the NSCN(K) while Isak and Muivah headed the NSCN(I-M).
- In 1997, The NSCN (I-M) signed a ceasefire agreement with the government in 1997, preceded by rounds of talks since 1995. The key agreement was that there would be no counter-insurgency offensive against the NSCN(I-M), who in turn would not attack Indian forces. The NSCN(I-M) had then announced to “every citizen of Nagalim wherever they may be”, that a ceasefire agreement was entered into between the Government of India and the outfit “to bring about a lasting political solution to the long drawn out Indo-Naga issue”.
- In 2015, the Centre signed a framework agreement with the NSCN(I-M). Prime Minister described it as a “historic agreement” towards settling the “oldest insurgency” in India. This set the stage for the ongoing peace talks. In 2017, six other Naga armed outfits under the banned of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) joined the talks.

Long quest for peace

With the Naga talks in the final leg, a look at the progress till now

- NSCN-IM seeks a 'Greater Nagalim' merging Naga-inhabited areas of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur & separate flag and constitution for the Nagas

- The outfit signs ceasefire agreement

with Centre in 1997

- Interlocutor R.N. Ravi (in pic) inks framework agreement in 2015

- Signs preamble in 2017 with six Naga National Political Groups to continue discussions



PEPPER IT WITH
Nagaland peace accord
2015, Article 371(A)

What are the Naga Peace Talks?

- The talks seek to settle disputes that date back to colonial rule. The Nagas are not a single tribe, but an ethnic community that comprises several tribes who live in the state of Nagaland and its neighbourhood. One key demand of Naga groups has been a Greater Nagalim that would cover not only the state of Nagaland but parts of neighbouring states, and even of Myanmar.
- The British had annexed Assam in 1826, in which they subsequently created the Naga Hills district and went on to extend its boundaries. The assertion of Naga nationalism, which began during British rule, has continued after Independence, and even after Nagaland became a state. Along the way, the unresolved issues gave rise to decades of insurgency that claimed thousands of lives, including of civilians.

Analytica

- While NSCN-IM has been fighting for 'Greater Nagaland' or Nagalim and to extend Nagaland's borders by including Naga-dominated areas in neighbouring Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh — to unite 1.2 million Nagas, this has caused anxiety among

citizens in neighbouring states. Manipur's Imphal Valley, where the Meiteis are in a large majority, People hit the streets in panic, triggered by worries about the state's possible disintegration and new administrative arrangements in favour of the Nagas as a result of the accord. The Meiteis have already made it clear that they would oppose the granting of any administrative arrangement such as territorial council or regional council to the Nagas.

- The government and the NSCN(I-M) have failed to agree on issues relating to a separate Naga flag and a constitution. The Civil society groups in Nagaland have said the talks should be wrapped up with whatever is offered now and keep other issues open for later negotiations; others believe all issues should be settled and the NSCN(I-M) should be on board, even if it takes longer than the deadline. Thus, there lacks a prudent conciliation.

Conclusion

The government should patiently involve all stakeholders from within and outside the state of Nagaland without marginalising the NSCN (IM), and work towards a solution through a peaceful dialogue process that satisfies all.

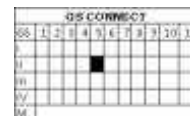
While it is likely that groups within and outside Nagaland are being projected at this time by the government to blunt the edge of the demands made by the NSCN (IM), it is also a fact that societies like Manipur are ethnically plural. These have withstood the test of time for millennia. They are unlikely to acquiesce to any arrangement that requires them to part with their resources and polity. Thus, the government and the NSCN (IM) must be completely transparent in their approach and must take into confidence all genuine political formations, civil society and ethnic groups.

Lasting peace in the Northeast is not possible without resolving the Naga insurgency. If the fragile ethnic balance of the region, which has a history of violence is not handled sensitively, it can potentially lead to an ethnic implosion.

Postal Ballots

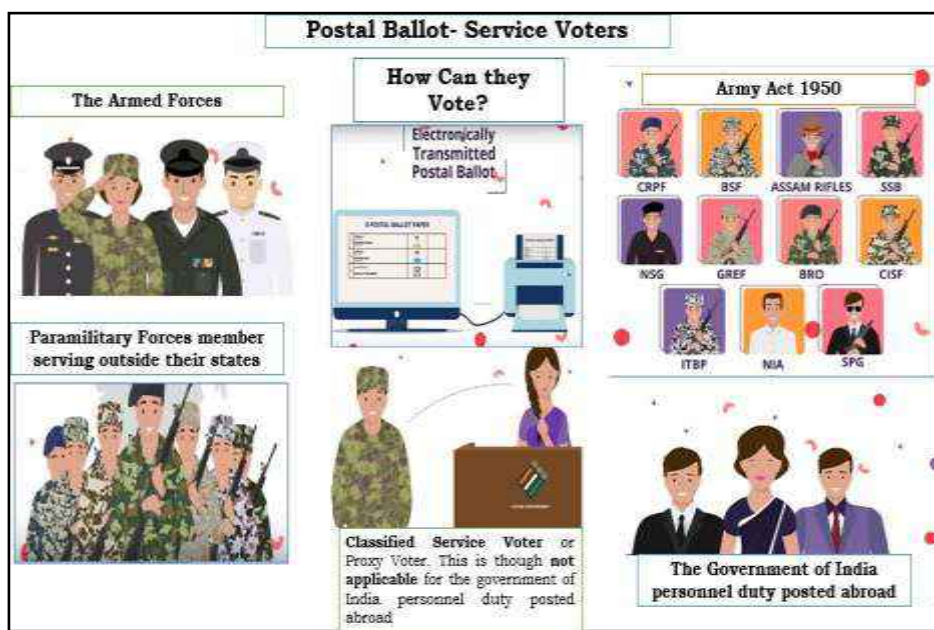
News Excerpt

Election Commission of India has for the first time made voting through postal ballot available for Octogenarian and differently-abled voters.



Pre-Connect

Postal voting is a type of voting in elections whereby Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot Papers (ETPB) are distributed to electors and returned by post, in contrast to electors voting in person at a polling station via an electronic voting system aided by Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). However, postal voting refers only to the means by which the ballots are submitted, not to the method by which the votes are counted. These are counted first but along other votes at the time of counting during the elections.



Who all can vote through postal ballots?

There are six different categories of voters entitled to use the postal ballot: service voters; special voters; wives of service voters and special voters; voters subjected to preventive detention; voters on election duty and Notified voters.

According to the provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 20 of Representation of People Act, 1950.

Key Highlights

- Following a recommendation from the Election Commission, the ministry of law and justice amended the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, recently, allowing senior citizens and those with disabilities on the absentee voter list. Absentee ballot refers to a vote cast by someone unable to go to the polling station.
- These two categories of voters- senior citizen of more than 80 years of age and PwD electors marked in the electoral roll –will have now choice of voting either as absentee voter or as a regular voter on the poll day.
- If any of the electors belonging to these categories intends to vote early, then as per the amended Rule 27 C of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, he/she shall make an application in a new Form 12 D, which shall reach the Returning Officer within 5 days following the date of notification of election. After the receipt of such application, the elector will be issued a postal ballot paper, which shall be deposited in the specified centre after recording of vote.

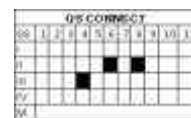
PEPPER IT WITH
ETPBS, SVEEP
initiatives, proxy voter

The initiative will enable people from these two categories to cast their votes with ease and will also thus increase the voter turnout.

Feed our Future (Campaign by World Food Programme)

News Excerpt

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) along with SAWA (Screen advertising and World association) recently launched a cinema advertisement campaign 'Feed Our Future' to raise awareness and take steps against hunger and malnutrition in India.



Pre-Connect

- As per the latest UN records, as many as 821 million people in the world were undernourished in 2017.
- Roughly one in nine of the global population still goes to bed on an empty stomach.
- Hunger and malnutrition are in fact the number one risk to health worldwide -- greater than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined.

UN World Food Programme

- ❖ The United Nations World Food Programme works in more than 80 countries around the world, feeding people caught in conflict and disasters, and laying the foundations for a better future and achieving the targets under SDG. Prior to this campaign it launched two programmes:
- ❖ The first was the World Food Summit (WFS) goal- At the WFS, held in Rome in 1996, representatives of 182 governments pledged to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015.
- ❖ The second was the formulation of the First Millennium Development Goal (MDG 1), which includes among its targets cutting by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.

Why is it significant for India?

- According to 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2019' report of FAO, 194.4 million people are undernourished in India.
- That means 14.5% of the population is undernourished in India. Also, 51.4% of women in the reproductive age group between 15 to 49 years are anaemic.

PEPPER IT WITH
International fund for agriculture
and development, UN SDGs, Global
hunger index, HUNGaMA report

- Further according to the report 37.9% of the children aged under five in India are stunted (too short for their age), while 20.8% suffer from wasting, meaning their weight is too low for their height. Malnourished children have a higher risk of death from common childhood illnesses such as diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria.
- The Global Hunger Index 2018 ranks India at 103 out of 119 countries on the basis of three leading indicators -- prevalence of wasting and stunting in children under 5 years, under 5 child mortality rate, and the proportion of undernourished in the population.

Way Forward

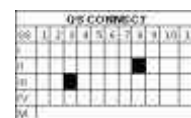
To fight malnutrition and hunger, the government, international organisations, NGOs, private companies should come together and contribute. As such issues are there in almost all the continents, we need to have such innovative ideas so that each and every person in this world gets this basic need fulfilled.

20th Livestock Census

News Excerpt

The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying has recently conducted the 20th Livestock Census.

The census shows a further decline in the indigenous cattle population. It also shows that the cow belt of the country has shifted eastwards with West Bengal emerging as a state with the largest cattle population, leaving behind Uttar Pradesh.



Pre-Connect

- Under the livestock census, various species of animals possessed by households, household enterprises or non-household enterprises and institutions are counted at site — both in rural and urban areas.
- It covers all domesticated animals in a given period of time. India has been conducting livestock censuses periodically since 1919-20.

Importance of cattle

1. Provides milk and other dietary products which have great nutritional value.
2. About 20.5 million people depend upon livestock for their livelihood.
3. Livestock sector contributes to around 4.11% of GDP and 25.6% of total Agriculture GDP.
4. It also provides employment to about 8.8 % of the population in India. India has vast livestock resources.

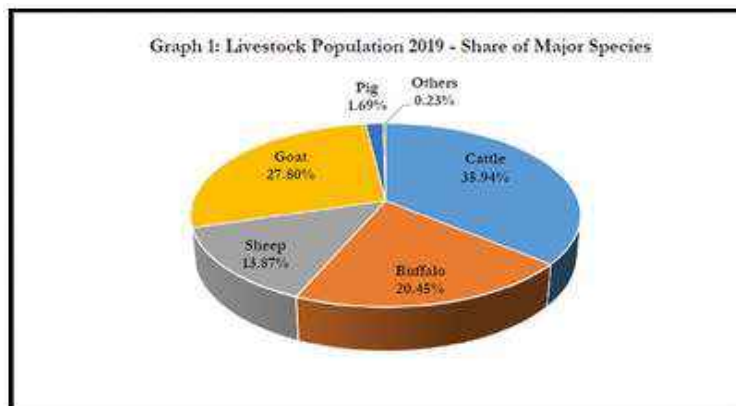
Analytica

- An important feature of 20th Livestock Census is that it has been designed to capture Breed-wise number of animals and poultry birds.
- For the first time in the 20th Livestock Census, livestock data was collected on line. Advance technology has been adopted to collect data through tablet computers. The National Informatics Centre, Ministry of Electronics & IT has developed Android based mobile application for data collection with various features such as data entry module to facilitate recording of the data on tablets, web-based work application, local government directory codes etc.
- The Animal Husbandry Departments of States/UTs have been entrusted with the task to conduct the field operations. The data was collected and scrutinised mostly by para-veterinarians and veterinarians. In the whole operation, more than 80,000 field staff were deployed for smooth conduct of the Census. Training was an important component for the Census as for the first time field staff were required to operate tablet computers for such massive census operations.

Highlights of the 20th livestock census

- ✓ The total Livestock population is 535.78 million in the country showing an increase of 4.6% over Livestock Census 2012.

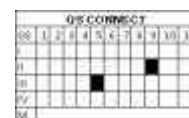
- ✓ Total Bovine population (Cattle, Buffalo, Mithun and Yak) is 302.79 Million in 2019 which shows an increase of 1.0% over the previous census.
- ✓ The total number of cattle in the country is 192.49 million in 2019 showing an increase of 0.8 % over previous Census.
- ✓ The Female Cattle (Cows population) is 145.12 million, which increased by 18.0% over the previous census (2012).
- ✓ The Exotic/Crossbred and Indigenous/Non-descript Cattle population in the country is 50.42 million and 142.11 million respectively.
- ✓ The Indigenous/Non-descript female cattle population has increased by 10% in 2019 as compared to previous census.
- ✓ The population of the total Exotic/Crossbred Cattle has increased by 26.9 % in 2019 as compared to previous census.
- ✓ There is a decline of 6% in the total Indigenous (both descript and non-descript) Cattle population over the previous census. However, the pace of decline of Indigenous Cattle population during 2012-2019 is much lesser as compared to 2007-12 which was about 9%.
- ✓ The total Poultry in the country was 851.81 Million in 2019, which increased by 16.8% over previous Census.
- ✓ As compared to previous census, the percentage share of sheep and goat population has increased whereas the percentage share of cattle, buffalo and pig has marginally declined.



The Global Competitiveness Report, 2019

News Excerpt

India's rank has fallen by ten notches to 68th spot out of 141 countries in the recent Global Competitiveness Report. This report is released by the World Economic Forum.



About

- The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) was launched in 1979. It maps the competitiveness landscape of 141 economies through 103 indicators organised into 12 pillars.
- Each indicator, using a scale from 0 to 100, shows how close an economy is to the ideal state or "frontier" of competitiveness.

Significance of the Report

- World Economic Forum-designed Global Competitiveness Index 2019 is a testament to the validity of the law of locomotion.
- Competitiveness is defined as the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country." Other definitions exist, but all generally include the word "productivity".
- The Global Competitiveness Report is a tool to help governments, the private sector, and civil society work together to boost productivity and generate prosperity.

12 PILLARS ARE institutions, infrastructure, ICT adoption, macroeconomic stability, health, skills, product market, labour market, the financial system, market size, business dynamism and innovation capability.

- Comparative analysis between countries allows leaders to gauge areas that need strengthening and build a coordinated response. It also helps identify best practices around the world.
- **Countries' scores are based primarily on quantitative findings from internationally recognized agencies** such as the International Monetary Fund and World Health Organization, with the addition of qualitative assessments from economic and social specialists and senior corporate executives.

Highlights of the Report on India

- ✓ India has slipped 10 spots to rank 68th out of 141 surveyed countries. It suggests that the slowdown in the Indian economy is having a negative effect on the country's global rankings.
- ✓ India is among the worst-performing BRICS nations along with Brazil, which has ranked 71 this time.
- ✓ The WEF said that India's rank is high in terms of macroeconomic stability and market size but added that the banking system has been affected by a high delinquency rate.
- ✓ India's rank was as high as 15 in terms of corporate governance and ranks second in the world for shareholder governance, according to the WEF study. India also ranked third in terms of market size and renewable energy regulation.
- ✓ While the WEF study did list a few positives, it said that there are major shortcomings in some of the basic enablers of competitiveness in India. It said Information, communication and technology adoption in India has been weak; poor health conditions and low life expectancy are other reasons why India ranked low in terms of competitiveness.
- ✓ In terms of life expectancy, India has been ranked 109 out of a total of 141 countries surveyed for the index.
- ✓ The study also urges India to grow its skill base and free up the market in terms of trade activities. It also highlights how the lack of worker rights' protections, insufficiently developed active labour market politics and critically low participation of women affected India's competitiveness ranking.
- ✓ India's ratio of female workers to male workers of 0.26 has fetched it a rank of 128 while the country was positioned at 118th place in terms of meritocracy and incentivisation.
- ✓ The skills rank for India was also disappointing at 107 despite the Govt's flagship Skill India programme running aggressively for several years.

PEPPER IT WITH
Global wealth report, Competition
commission of India, Prior learning
scheme, NITI Aayog's health index.

Way forward

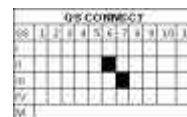
Use of Keynesian theory of increasing Government expenditure and lowering taxes can stimulate demand resulting in the growth of the economy. Programs like Make in India should be advertised more and programs like investment summits in different states of India should be held on a regular basis. This will give a boost to the manufacturing sector which will result in an environment of competitiveness in our economy.

Rationalising labour laws on lines of global economies, emphasising more on women empowerment and providing more emphasis on programs like DDU Kaushal Kendra can help in boosting our economy.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0

News Excerpt

In a bid to achieve the target of full immunization, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has launched Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0 from December 2019 to March 2020.



Pre-Connect

- 'Mission Indradhanush', the Government's immunisation programme for pregnant women and children, had been selected by an independent jury as one of the twelve best global practices for improving healthcare.

- India aims to immunise 90 per cent of all pregnant women and children by 2020.
- According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) figures, in 2015-16 this number stood at 62 per cent. An intensified drive has been started since the past two years, bringing India closer to the goals.

About Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0

- Along with the health ministry, several other ministries are coming up to join hands in taking the mission forward.
- The IMI 2.0 portal has been designed to capture information on the block wise target of children and pregnant women to be vaccinated during the IMI drive.
- **“The data will be entered at the district level. This will help the Programme officers and administrators at the block, district, state and national level to have real time information on the progress of the campaign and also take timely action on slow progress in any particular area.**
- **The health minister also launched Operational guidelines for ‘Strengthening vaccine implementation and immunization systems to reach every child’.**
- This immunisation program will be implemented on the lines of pulse polio programme.



Success of the Mission Indradhanush Program so far

- ✓ Since the inception of the programme Mission Indradhanush, — the Universal Immunization (UIP), the basket of vaccines has expanded to cover 14 Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPDs) from the earlier seven.
- ✓ As of today, Mission Indradhanush and related programmes have successfully reached out to and vaccinated around 3.39 crore children and 87.2 Lakh pregnant women in India.
- ✓ 97 628 vaccination sessions were conducted in IMI areas, delivering over 15 million antigens. During this period, an estimated 5.95 million children were vaccinated, with around 850 000 children were vaccinated for the first time and 1.4 million children aged ≥ 12 months were fully vaccinated.
- ✓ An estimated 1.18 million pregnant women were also vaccinated, with over 660 000 thought to have been fully vaccinated.

Conclusion

The Government's commitment towards immunization of children and pregnant woman is commendable as it has successfully achieved its target within time and has moved a stage further in welcoming the new IMI 2.0.

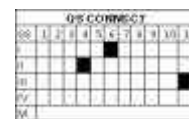
The Government is showing strong commitment to meet the sustainable development goal 3 which emphasizes to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100 000 live births and to end preventable deaths of new borns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1000 live births.

Restrictive Employment Policy in Assam

News Excerpt

Recently, The Government of Assam came up with a policy of restricting government jobs out of bounds for people with more than two children.

The policy will come into effect from January 1, 2021.



Pre-Connect

- Assam which has a land area of 78,438 sq. kms has a population of about 3.09 crores approximately. This shows the population pressure which the state is witnessing.
- Along with high child birth, immigration from the neighbouring countries has added more fuel to the already burning issue.

- The Prime Minister in his 2019 Independence Day speech appealed Indians to have small families.
- Other states like Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh already have similar two-child policies.

Analytica

- **Assam's average family size is 5.5 which is above the national average. It has pushed the state's population to more than 3 crores** which is a huge pressure on the resources of the state.
- It seeks to encourage small family. Apart from specifying that candidates with more than two children would be ineligible for government jobs, the policy warranted that existing government employees should strictly follow the two-child norm.
- Implementing the population policy is necessary given the pressure on land and resources in Assam.

Concerns

- ✓ It goes against India's commitment to a rights-based approach to family planning.
- ✓ This policy might not alarm the large mass of population as majority of the population is engaged in unorganized or private sector.
- ✓ Previous records bear witness to the fact that Restrictive Child Policy has not been a success holistically. For example, **China's erstwhile one-child policy** was extremely controversial, resulting in some children even struggling with trauma.
- ✓ Assam has many groups of indigenous tribal population. It will be difficult for them to accept such laws.

PEPPER IT WITH
National rural health mission,
Autonomous region, New Land Policy,
Welfare Measures for Widows

Conclusion

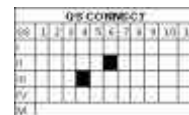
While the need of the population control in Assam cannot be denied, the cons of such policy must also not be overlooked. The incentive based awareness programs on family planning, online advertisement of such issues, women education etc. must also be spread. This can be of great help in stabilizing the population growth of Assam.

Incentive based awareness on family planning can be popularized which has the potentiality to impact the large mass.

Station Cleanliness Survey Report

News Excerpt

Recently the Railway Minister of India has released the **'Stations' Cleanliness Survey Report' (Cleanliness assessment of Non-suburban and Suburban Stations 2019)**. The top three cleanest railways stations are from the western state of Rajasthan.



Pre-Connect

- Cleanliness in railways, especially in stations, trains have always been an issue. Though many programs were implemented for sanitary measures, little benefits have been gained from it.
- Seeing all this, The Indian Railways rolled out programs like Clean Train Station (CTS), Pay and Use toilets at the railway stations etc which resulted in the improvement of the cleanliness of the stations.
- **On the lines of PM's call for Swatchh Bharat Abhiyan, the Indian railways introduced SwatchhtaPakhwada.** Under the campaign, several initiatives and awareness drives were organised. The objective was to achieve sustainable improvements in the cleanliness standards of the railway stations.
- There has been Prompt response of Railway Ministry about any grievance from commuters via social media in recent days.

What does the report say?

- Jaipur secured the first position, Jodhpur is on second followed by Durgapura in the third position.
- The total score is out of 1000 and each component (Process Evaluation, Direct Observation, Citizen Feedback) weighs 33.33% of the total score. Jaipur scored 931.75, Jodhpur scored 927.19 and Durgapura 922.50 respectively.
- North Western Railway followed by South East Central Railway and East Central Railway are the top three railway zones.
- North Western Railways scored the highest with an average score of 848.764 out of 1000 while North Central Railways scored the least with an average score of 631.431.

PEPPER IT WITH
Green report 2019,
Sustainable development
goals, swatch bharat abhiyan.

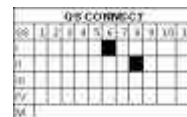
Conclusion

To achieve the dream of Swatch Bharat Abhiyan and sustainable development goals, such programs are the need of the hour. Though presently only few stations have met the cleanliness parameters, the continuation of such positive measures would encourage other stations to achieve the targets.

SARAS Aajeevika Mela

News Excerpt

The SARAS Aajeevika Mela, organised by the Ministry of Rural Development was held recently at India Gate Lawns in New Delhi. The event was inaugurated by Rural Development Minister.



About this Mela

- Its objective was to bring the rural women based Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed with the support of DAY-NRLM, under one platform to show-case their skills, sell their products and help them build linkages with bulk buyers.
- To enable these rural SHG women get vital national level exposure to understand the demand and taste of urban customers.
- The Mela was organised by the marketing arm of the Ministry, Council for Advancement of **People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)**.
- Nearly 500 rural SHG craftswomen from 29 States and UTs show-cased varied range of products like handicrafts, handlooms, natural food products and a food court with regional cuisines.
- Workshops for the rural SHG women were conducted during the Mela, which helped them to enhance their knowledge and sharpen their skills in book keeping and GST, product design, packaging, marketing/e-marketing, communication skills etc.

Conclusion

Such programs have the capability to bring about socio-economic and political changes in the tribal areas of the country. It will result in more people to people contacts, knowledge and exchange of cultures. It will boost up tribal economy as many unemployed low income groups would get a livelihood.

Mo Sarkar Initiative

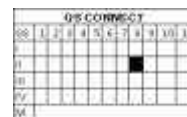
News Excerpt

The Chief Minister of Odisha recently launched his government's new governance initiative 'Mo Sarkar' on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.

About the initiative

- **The objective of the 'Mo Sarkar' programme is** to provide service with dignity to people who are coming to government offices for different purposes.
- Mo Sarkar is an initiative under the 5T model of governance.
- The phone numbers of people who are coming to

5Ts: Team work, technology,
transparency, transformation
and time limit



government offices will be collected randomly with the purpose to improve the governance system by collecting feedback on behaviour and professionalism of government officers.

- The Chief Minister, Departmental Minister, Director General of Police (in case of police stations) and Departmental Minister, Secretary and Director (in case of hospitals) will call on random numbers to collect feedback.
- The employees will be ranked as good or bad on the basis of the feedback and those with good rank will get out-of-turn promotion and action will be taken against employees with bad rank.

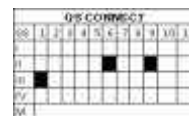
Conclusion

Such positive steps can take the governance to the grassroots level, and it will help in better **delivery of services. This is in consonance with the Central government's commitment of bringing** good governance in the country. Other states can also replicate such measures. This citizen friendly measure will boost the confidence and faith of the general public towards the Government.

Youth Co: Lab

News Excerpt

In a latest initiative to recognize young people as critical drivers of sustainable development, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India has recently launched Youth Co:Lab which aims at accelerating social entrepreneurship and innovation in young India.



About the Program

- To mark the launch, a Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed between AIM, NITI Aayog and UNDP India.
- Through Youth Co:Lab, young entrepreneurs and innovators will get a chance to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help in equipping them with entrepreneurial skills.
- The initiative will also convene a series of youth dialogues across several cities such as New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mumbai to promote entrepreneurship across India.
- AIM and UNDP, as part of UNSDF signed between NITI Aayog and UN India, are collaborating to spread awareness about different issues pertaining to youth, the future of work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through Youth Co:Lab.

About Youth Co:Lab

Co-created in 2017 by UNDP and the Citi Foundation, and operational in 25 countries across the Asia Pacific region, the Youth Co:Lab initiative aims to create an enabling ecosystem to promote youth leadership, innovation, and social entrepreneurship.

Features of this program

- The first phase of Youth Co:Lab will focus on six SDGs: SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).
- Youth Co:Lab will convene social innovation challenges at the national and sub-national level, which will invite young people in the age group of 18-29 years and start-ups to showcase **their proposed ideas and solutions to tackle some of the region's biggest social challenges.**
- Aspiring entrepreneurs or nascent entrepreneurs (with less than 3 years of experience) can submit their ideas at <http://aimapp2.aim.gov.in/youth2019/entry.php>

Atal Innovation Mission: AIM including Self-Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) is Government of **India's endeavour to promote a culture** of innovation and entrepreneurship. Its objective is to serve as a platform for the promotion of world-class innovation hubs, grand challenges, start-up businesses and other self-employment activities, particularly in technology driven areas.

- Selected applicants will be invited for a national innovation challenge, where each winning start-up will get an opportunity to incubate and strengthen their ideas at the Atal Incubation Centres.

Benefits of this program

- ✓ It can create huge employment opportunities in the country.
- ✓ It can empower young people through innovative development ideas.
- ✓ It can solve several developmental challenges of a region.
- ✓ Youths will get the opportunity to pitch their ideas at UNDP's regional centre in 2020.

PEPPER IT WITH
SDG goals, UN Green
corps, NSS, Nehru Yuva
Kendra

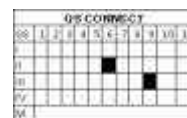
Conclusion

India houses the world's largest youth population and so it becomes necessary to train the youths to take up challenges in social entrepreneurship and innovation. Taking ideas from the youth may solve the issues which are plaguing the growth of our society.

mHariyali App

News Excerpt

Recently the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has launched mHariyali App for Environment Protection in Government Colonies.



Pre-Connect

- As a part of activities to promote ease of living, the Directorate of Estates, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs recently carried out the following activities in 103 selected government colonies through public/stakeholders participation: Cleaning and greening of open space through plantation, Rain Water Harvesting – Awareness and construction, Sensitization on Source Segregation of Household waste and Orientation and Capacity building on Home composting.
- A mass plantation drive “HaryaliMahotsav” was launched in San Martin Park, Chanakyapuri few months ago, where both the Government officials and the common people participated.

About this mobile App

- The app is aimed to encourage Public engagement in planting trees and other such Green drives.
- People can now upload information/photos of any plantation done by them, which is linked to app and will be displayed on the website www.epgc.gov.in.

PEPPER IT WITH
Swatch Bharat Abhiyan,
CAMPA, Green highway
mission, School Nursery
Yojana

Significant features of this App

- ✓ The App provides for automatic geo-tagging of plants.
- ✓ This app will also enable nodal officers to periodically monitor the plantation.
- ✓ The App is user friendly and works on any android mobile phone.

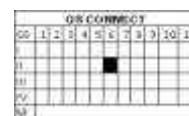
Conclusion

Steps like these from the Government will create more zeal and enthusiasm among the public. It will also help in combating environmental issues like global warming, desertification etc and attaining our NDCs under Paris Accord. Both the Government and the Public must work hand in hand to fulfil Gandhi's dream of a clean environment.

Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme – Dhruv

News Excerpt

Recently the Union Human Resource Ministry, Government of India has launched “The Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme: DHRUV” to



identify and encourage talented children to enrich their skills and knowledge.

About this program

- It has been launched to help students realize their full potential and contribute to the society.
- At centres of excellence across the country, gifted children will be mentored and nurtured by renowned experts in different areas, so that they can reach their full potential.
- 60 outstandingly talented students have been selected in the first batch.

Salient features of this program

- The programme will be called DHRUV (after the Pole Star) **and every student will be called 'DHRUV TARA'.** The students will thus both shine through their achievements and light a path for others to follow.
- It will cover two areas i.e. Science and Performing Arts. There will be 60 students in all, 30 from each area.
- The students will be broadly from class 9 to 12, from all schools including government and private.
- This is only the first phase of the programme which will be expanded gradually to include other fields like creative writing etc.

PEPPER IT WITH
Atal Innovation Mission, Atal
Tinkering Labs, UDAN (J &
K), Ishan Uday

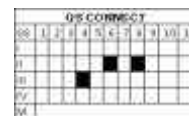
Conclusion

With such programs in our country the students can reach the highest levels in their chosen fields and bring laurels to the society. It will make India a better place for innovation. The new innovations will help the Nation to achieve the target of 5 Trillion economy in a stipulated time.

Development of Poshan Atlas

News Excerpt

In a bid to tackle malnutrition, government is developing an Atlas to map the crops and food grains grown in different regions of the country so that nutritious protein rich food in local areas can be promoted.



Pre-Connect

Last year Poshan Abhiyan Jan Andolan was started to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers by leveraging technology, following a targeted approach.

About this program

- The ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) in association with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Deendayal Research Institute is developing a POSHAN atlas under POSHAN abhiyan, government's multi-ministerial convergence mission with the vision to ensure attainment of malnutrition free India by 2022.
- The POSHAN atlas will map the crops and food grains grown in different regions of the country because the solution to tackling malnutrition lies in promoting regional cropping patterns and embracing local food that are rich in protein.
- POSHAN is an exercise for life for all citizens and should not be limited to women and children.

WCD Ministry observed POSHAN Maah in September 2019. During the month long POSHAN Abhiyaan 22 lakh programmes were held and 3.66 crore activities were organised in different parts of the country. Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND) programmes were also organised at 7.86 lakh places.

Importance of this program

- According to the World Bank Global Nutrition Report – 2018, malnutrition costs India at least \$10 billion annually in terms of lost productivity, illness and death and is seriously retarding improvements in human development and delaying the further reduction in child mortality rate.

- POSHAN abhiyan is focusing on ensuring the nutrition of children, women, and pregnant and lactating mothers in impoverished areas and the government seems to be looking at community management of the problem.

Why Community management can be a Solution?

Community Management of Acute Malnutrition is a proven approach to manage severe acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition in children under five. For example, Maharashtra went on to implement a community-based management strategy, where community workers helped identify and manage cases through the use of different centrally and locally produced therapeutic food.

Conclusion

PoshanMaah is a concerted, intensified effort to make communities as active stakeholders in the fight against malnutrition. POSHAN Abhiyaan, through its continued behaviour change communication strategies aims to keep the momentum going until **nutrition becomes everybody's** agenda. With such focused efforts, we are certainly moving towards a Swasth Bharat.

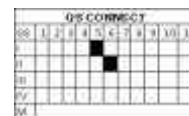
Way Forward

A humane solution has to be developed to tackle the menace of malnutrition in India and for this the economic benefits of investing in nutrition has to be highlighted and propagated.

Suman Scheme

News Excerpt

Aiming at zero preventable maternal and new-born deaths in India, the central government recently launched the SurakshitMatritvaAashwasan (SUMAN) scheme, under which pregnant women, mothers up to 6 months after delivery, and all sick new-borns would be able to avail free healthcare benefits.



Pre-Connect

According to the government, India's maternal mortality rate has declined from 254 per 1,00,000 live births in 2004-06 to 130 in 2014-16. Between 2001 and 2016, the infant mortality rate came down from 66 per 1,000 live births to 34.

Objective

- Under the scheme, the beneficiaries visiting public health facilities are entitled to several free services. These include at least four ante natal check-ups that also include one check-up during the 1st trimester, at least one check-up under Pradhan Mantri SurakshitMatritva Abhiyan, Iron Folic Acid supplementation, Tetanus diphtheria injection and other components of comprehensive ANC package and six home-based newborn care visits.
- Under the scheme there will be zero expense access to identification and management of complications during and after the pregnancy. The government will also provide free transport from home to health institutions.
- There will be assured referral services with scope of reaching health facility within one hour of any critical case emergency and Drop back from institution to home after due discharge (minimum 48 hrs).
- Under the scheme, the pregnant women will have a zero expense delivery and C-section facility in case of complications at public health facilities.

PEPPER IT WITH
PM SurakshitMatritva Abhiyan,
DAKSHATA programme, Janani
SurkshaYojna, National
Nutrition Mission

Why this scheme is important?

- India is one of the six countries accounting for 50% of maternal deaths worldwide. With proper healthcare facilities most of the maternal deaths can be prevented.
- MDG 5 asked to reduce maternal mortality by 75 percent & achieve universal access to reproductive health.

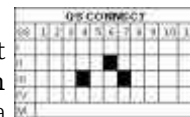
Conclusion

In our country where most of the maternal deaths are due to lack of appropriate care during pregnancy and childbirth, the Government intervention becomes essential. Especially in rural areas, lack of appropriate and timely information/advice is one of the key reasons for such deaths. The scheme can help in bringing down maternal and infant mortality rates in the country.

FSSAI Launches Trans-Fats free logo

News Excerpt

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare recently launched the “Trans Fat Free” logo of Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). This marked an important milestone in the movement against Trans-Fats and also provided a momentum to accelerate the ‘Eat Right India’ movement of FSSAI.



Pre-Connect

- Trans fat, also called trans-unsaturated fatty acids or trans fatty acids, is a type of unsaturated fat that occurs in small amounts in meat and milk fat. It is widely found in vegetable and fish oils, snack food, packaged and baked products, and fried fast food.
- Diseases like diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases are on a rise in contemporary society due to this.
- There is a widespread deficiency of vitamins and minerals among Indian population and prevalence of rampant food-borne illnesses.
- An estimated 5,40,000 people die each year globally of cardiovascular diseases, and consumption of food laced with industrially produced trans fats is a contributing factor. In India, the number of deaths is around 60,000.
- To tackle this menace the Government of India launched the Eat Right India Movement.

As part of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)-led ‘Eat Right India’ movement, the target is to reduce the industrially produced trans fatty acids in food supply to less than 2% by 2022.

About

- Union health minister has recently launched the “Trans Fat Free” logo during the 8th International Chefs Conference in the national Capital.
- The use of the logo by restaurants and food manufacturers, however, is voluntary.
- Food establishments that use trans-fat free fats/oil and do not have industrial trans-fat more than 0.2g/100g of food, in compliance with the Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018 are eligible to display the logo.

PEPPER IT WITH
Eat Right Movement, RUCO
Campaign, National Nutrition
Month, food for thought
program

Efforts to control the use of trans fat

- ✓ India is committed to eliminate it from the food supply and is progressing towards its objective of trans fat elimination by 2022 in a phased manner; a year ahead of the global target set by the WHO.
- ✓ About 1,000 chefs from different parts of the country took a pledge under the slogan ‘Chefs 4 Trans Fat Free’.

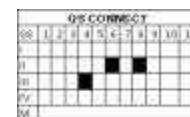
Conclusion

In order to tackle the menace of obesity and such other issues, the Government’s plan of a trans-fat free society is a welcome step. This program can surely help us to achieve the dream of reducing industrially produced trans- fatty acid in food supply.

National Nutrition Survey

Hematic Connect

India has made considerable progress in tackling malnourishment, but more children are showing early signs of diabetes and high cholesterol.



Pre-Connect

- In India 20 per cent of children under five years of age suffer from wasting due to acute **undernutrition. More than one third of the world's children who are wasted live in India.**
- Forty three per cent of Indian children under five years are underweight and 48 per cent (i.e. 61 million children) are stunted due to chronic undernutrition. India accounts for more than 3 out of every 10 stunted children in the world.
- The percentage of children who are severely underweight is almost five times higher among children whose mothers have no education than among children whose mothers have 12 or more years of schooling.

About the survey

- The first ever national nutrition survey of children and adolescents shows a growing risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension and chronic kidney disease, with many showing early signs of these diseases.
- The survey was conducted between 2016 and 2018 by the Ministry of Health And Family Welfare, with the **United Nations Children's Fund and the Population Council of India.**
- Previous national surveys studied the health status of children up to five years, and of those above 15 years.

Major findings of the survey

- ✓ Almost one in 10 children in the age group five to nine years, were pre-diabetic and 1 per cent were already diabetic.
- ✓ About 5 percent of children and adolescents in the age group 5-19 years, were overweight.
- ✓ About 35 percent of children who are younger than 5 years are stunted—low height for age; 33 percent are underweight, 17 percent are wasted—low weight for height; and 41 per cent are anaemic.
- ✓ About 34 percent of children in the age group 5-9 years, and 16 percent of adolescents had high triglycerides.
- ✓ About 7 percent of children and adolescents are at risk of chronic kidney disease, and 5 percent of adolescents have hypertension.

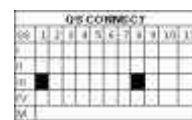
Conclusion

The findings of the survey is alarming, both the Government and civil society must come forward to tackle this menace. Health is central to the happiness and well-being of our society. It also makes an important contribution to economic progress, as healthy population live longer, are more productive, and save more. Programs like the National Nutrition Mission, Janani Suraksha Yojana, National Ayush Mission, Eat Right Movement etc can take a note of this survey and work accordingly.

Development Economics

News Excerpt

Recently, Nobel Prize in Economics has been awarded to three Development Economists (Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Michael Kramer) working in evolving policy interventions for reducing poverty. 2019 Nobel in Economics for an experimental approach towards poverty alleviation thus has initiated discussions about deeper shifts in economics.



Analytica

Contribution of 2019 Nobel Laureates in Development Economics.

- **This year's Nobel in economics was given for trio's contribution in reviving development economics, particularly through the popularization of "randomized control trials" (RCTs) that break larger questions about policy interventions into smaller, easier to test studies.**

- The Nobel Committee highlighted how their “**experiment-based** approach has transformed **development economics**” over the past decades. They mentioned specifically how, as a result of one such study, “**more than 5 million Indian children have benefited from programs of remedial tutoring in schools**”.
- Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer together have launched a movement within development economics that seeks to ensure that clear, unambiguous answers can be found to the question of whether a particular policy intervention is effective.
- This is extremely relevant when it comes to framing policy in low- and middle-income countries, where state capacity is quite limited and it is particularly necessary to be able to prioritize more effective policies over less.
- Duflo and Banerjee’s book, Poor Economics, is an argument for such evidence-based policy, particularly in the Indian context.
- The effect of such rigor on policy analysis is considerable, and as a consequence the RCT movement has almost taken over the development economics field.
- However, critiques of RCT argue that by reducing problems to manageable sizes for an RCT, the development economics profession is avoiding the really big, hard questions about whether systemic change is needed for growth and development.
- But for countries like India where resources, particularly in the least developed states and areas, are hard to come by, the results of RCTs are vital input into decisions. They ensure that vital years and budgets are not wasted.

Development Economics

- ❖ It is a branch of economics that focuses on improving fiscal, economic, and social conditions in developing countries.
- ❖ It attempts to explore some of the economic challenges peculiar to some of the poorest countries in the world. Development economics makes use of economic theory, econometric methods, political science, and demographics in its approaches.
- ❖ Development economics considers factors such as health, education, working conditions, domestic and international policies, and market condition with a focus on improving conditions in the world's poorest countries. In other words, it seeks to understand the economic aspects of the development process in low-income countries.
- ❖ The field also examines both macroeconomic and microeconomic factors relating to the structure of developing economies, and domestic and international economic growth.
- ❖ Development economics as a discipline first arose in the 1950s. However, earlier theories pointing towards this discipline started as early as the Seventeenth Century with the rise of the nation-state. Such approaches included Mercantilism and economic nationalism.
- ❖ Mercantilism was an economic system of trade that spanned from the 16th-18th century. It banked on the principle that the world's wealth was static, and consequently, many European nations attempted to accumulate the largest possible share of that wealth by maximizing their exports and by limiting their imports via tariffs.

Thematic Connect

Amartya Sen’s Conception of Development

- Amartya Kumar Sen is an Indian economist and philosopher. He is a recipient of Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998 **and India’s Bharat Ratna in 1999** for his work in welfare economics.
- **Amartya Sen’s concept of Development As Freedom (1999) is highly acclaimed. He argues that human development is about the expansion of citizens capabilities.**
- For Sen, freedom means increasing citizens access and opportunities to the things they have reason to value. Sen challenges the mainstream concept of measuring development by economic growth.

- Sen does acknowledge that increases in **poor people's incomes** do contribute to the expansion of their freedoms. However, he recognizes that increase of **income alone "has at best uneven and at worst has detrimental impacts on the majority of a country's population, and radical redistributive measures are necessary for the poor to benefit from growth"**.
- He points out that poverty, unfulfilled elementary needs, the occurrence of famines, the violation of political freedoms and neglect of the agency of women remain today despite **'unprecedented opulence'**.
- According to Sen, previous strategies to reduce these catastrophes are erroneous. His approach focuses on human flourishing as the entry point to the problem of poverty and global inequality rather than economic growth.
- Sen contends that all human beings are equally entitled to enjoy a life that they value.
- **Sen's work (1999) had a huge influence** on the establishment of a new paradigm in the early 2000s. Development was redefined in terms that include human rights as a constitutive part.
- **Sen's** capability approach challenges the world-view of elites. He manages to convince skeptical economists that social choice and public discussion is both possible and necessary. He contends that choices about growth strategies should be democratic.
- The Millennium Development Goals **are guided by Sen's ideas**.
- **However, his critiques are of the opinion that although Sen's approach seems radical in many ways**, in terms of markets it does not challenge the status quo, overlooking the detrimental exploitative affect that the market can have on the poor. According to them, Sen overlooks market-based power inequalities in the current context that need to be prevented.

Randomized Control Trials

- ✚ A randomized controlled trial is an experiment that is designed to isolate the influence that a certain intervention or variable has on an outcome or event.
- ✚ At any point in time, there are multiple factors that work in tandem to influence various social events. RCTs allow economists and other social science researchers to isolate the individual impact that a certain factor alone has on the overall event.
- ✚ Randomized controlled trials uses randomly picked samples. Since all random samples are subject to the same array of "confounding" factors, they are essentially identical to one another. Using these random samples, researchers can then conduct experiments by carefully varying appropriate variables to find out the impact of these individual variables on the final event.
- ✚ RCTs can be applied to study problems at the micro-level where the implementation of an individual program can be done in a randomized way that allows for a statistically satisfactory evaluation of the **program's impact**.

Sen-Bhagwati Debate

- While Sen believes that India should invest more in its social infrastructure to boost the productivity of its people and thereby raise growth, Bhagwati argues that only a focus on growth can yield enough resources for investing in social sector schemes.
- **Investing in health and education to improve human capabilities is central to Sen's scheme of things**. Without such investments, inequality will widen and the growth process itself will falter, Sen believes.
- Bhagwati argues that growth may raise inequality initially but sustained growth will eventually raise enough resources for the state to redistribute and mitigate the effects of the initial inequality.
- While Sen and his collaborator Jean Dreze are supporters of the entitlement-based public schemes, Bhagwati is admirer of what they call the Gujarat model of development.

Development Economics vs Economic Development

- ✓ Development is a process through which a society modernize in four key dimensions viz- Economically- Rise in productivity, Politically- A more responsive government, Administratively- Capable and effective governance and Socially- Equality
- ✓ Economic Development looks after the Economic aspect i.e. the growth of the national economy through improving productivity by using available resources more efficiently to obtain greater outputs of the goods and services that people value.
- ✓ Development economics studies all the four dimensions of development
- ✓ Development economics studies the transformation of emerging nations into more prosperous nations. Strategies for transforming a developing economy tend to be unique because the social and political backgrounds of countries can vary dramatically.
- ✓ Many development economists view the administrative capacity and performance of governments as a critical influence on economic development.

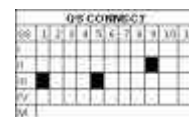
PEPPER IT WITH
Gujarat Model of Development,
Kerala Model of Development,
Concept of Missing women

Economic Growth	Economic Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Economic Growth is an increase in the the production of economic goods and services, compared from one period of time to another. ✚ Economic Growth is considered as single dimensional in nature as it only focuses on the income of the people of the country. ✚ Economic growth brings a quantitative impact on the economy and is commonly measured in terms of the increase in aggregated market value of additional goods and services produced, using estimates such as GDP. Increases in capital goods, labour force, technology, and human capital can all contribute to economic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Economic Development is a broader concept than economic growth. Development reflects social and economic progress and requires economic growth. Growth is a vital and necessary condition for development, but it is not a sufficient condition as it cannot guarantee development. ✚ Economic Development is considered as a Multidimensional phenomenon because it focuses on the income of the people and on the improvement of the living standards of the people of the country. ✚ Economic Development brings qualitative and quantitative impact on the economy including improvement in life expectancy rate, literacy rate, poverty rates, and mortality rate.

Ease of Doing Business

News Excerpt

The World Bank recently released its latest Doing Business Report (DBR, 2020). India has recorded a jump of 14 positions against its rank of 77 in 2019 to be placed now at 63rd rank among 190 countries.



Pre-Connect

- The DBR ranks countries on the basis of Distance to Frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice. This year, **India's DTF score** improved to 71.0 from 67.23 in the previous year.
- India has improved its rank in 7 out of 10 indicators and has moved closer to best international practices (Distance to Frontier score).
- Among BRICS nations, India's ranking is lower than that of China and Russia. The World Bank has recognized India as one of the top 10 improvers for the third consecutive year.

Analytica

Where did India Improve?

- **India's climb in the rankings seems to have come mainly from sharply higher scores** on three 'doing business' indicators — securing construction permits, trading across the borders and in Resolving Insolvency.
- **The World Bank found that India's top cities managed to drastically shrink the** number of days they took to give out construction permits, from 144 days last year to 95 days, while slashing their costs from 23% of the building value to just 5%. Single-window clearance for securing building permits in Delhi and a new online system in Mumbai brought this quantum change.
- From 80th on cross-border trade last year, its rank climbed to 68th this year. In 2017-18, importers spent 264 hours at the border complying with formalities, but only spent 97 hours in recent years. For exporters, the timeline shrank from 106 to 66 hours, delivering big savings.

Where the Challenge remains?

- ✓ It is glaring that under at least four heads- enforcing contracts, registering property, starting a business, and paying taxes — the scenario has hardly improved, as per the latest scores.
- ✓ Enforcing contracts: It implies much time and cost overruns in resolving commercial disputes, which is certainly not conducive for a thriving business environment. The way forward is to carry out long-pending reforms of judicial processes to do away with routine legal delays.
- ✓ Registering property: High stamp duty rates seem a perverse incentive to undervalue and underreport real estate transactions. There remains a host of rigidities in housing and real estate that need to be reformed to promptly do away with extensive opacity. While it takes 69 days to register a piece of property and costs about 8% of its value in India, the norm for OECD countries is just 20 days at half that cost. New Zealand gets this done in a single day.
- ✓ India also scores lowly for starting a business, a poor 136th. Its global rank has only moved just one notch in the past year, and primarily due to the decision to abolish filing fees for the simplified online format for incorporating a company and its memorandum and articles of association. Other countries seem to have done more.
- ✓ The other vexatious aspect that most business folk will readily identify with is paying taxes. Despite the advent of GST, India has remained a backbencher on this at a rank of 115th.

World Bank 'Ease Of Doing Business': Where India Stands

TOPIC	SCORE IN 2018	SCORE IN 2020	RANK IN 2018	RANK IN 2020
Starting a business	81.8	81.6	137	136
Dealing with construction permits	72.1	76.7	82	57
Getting electricity	89.2	89.4	34	33
Registering property	47.9	47.5	146	154
Getting Credit	80.8	80.0	32	35
Protecting Minority Investors	88.8	88.0	7	13
Paying Taxes	55.4	57.5	121	115
Trading across Borders	77.5	82.5	88	68
Enforcing Contracts	41.2	41.2	168	168
Resolving insolvency	49.8	63.3	108	52
Overall	67.5	71.8	77	68

Source: Doing Business, World Bank

Bloomberg | Quint

Government Initiatives

Some of the major indicator wise reforms undertaken by the Government towards easing the business environment in the country are as under:

Starting a Business:

- o The minimum capital requirement for public and private company has been eliminated under the Companies (Amendment) Act, 2015.

- o Govt. Introduced a single form SPICe (Simplified Performa for Incorporating Company electronically) by merging five different applications in it i.e. Name reservation, Company incorporation, Director Identification Number (DIN), Permanent Account Number (PAN) and the Tax Deduction/Collection Account Number (TAN).
- o Introduced an e-form AGILE.
- o Launch of a new and simplified web-based service i.e. R.U.N. (Reserve Unique Name) for reserving a name.
- o Incorporation fee reduced to zero for companies with authorized capital up to INR 15 lakhs
- o Online and common registration for EPFO & ESIC is provided on ShramSuvidha Portal.

Dealing with Construction Permits:

An online single window system has been introduced in Delhi (By Municipal Corporations in Delhi) and Mumbai (By Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai) integrating internal and external departments, removing requirement of visiting them individually.

Getting Credit:

Secured creditors are paid first during business liquidation, and hence have priority over other claims such as labor and tax.

Paying Taxes:

- o 17 indirect Central and State taxes have been replaced with a single indirect tax, Goods and Service Tax (GST), for the entire country.
- o Corporate income tax has been reduced from 30% to 25% for companies with a turnover up to INR 250 crore.
- o Electronic System for payment of Social Security Contributions has been introduced enabling easier return payment.
- o Making payment of EPF has been made mandatory electronically.

Trading Across Borders:

- o Time and cost to export and import has been reduced through various initiatives, including the implementation of electronic sealing of containers, upgradation of port infrastructure and allowing electronic submission of supporting documents with digital signatures.
- o e-Sanchit, an online application system, under the Single Window Interface for Trade (SWIFT) has been implemented. It allows traders to submit all supporting documents electronically with digital signatures.

Enforcing Contracts

- o National Judicial Data Grid has been introduced which makes it possible to generate case measurement report on local courts.
- o The Commercial Courts Act 2015 has been amended to reduce the pecuniary jurisdiction of commercial courts from INR 1 crore to INR 3 lakhs to establish commercial courts at the District Level. This will help in speedier disposal of commercial disputes and reduce pendency.

Resolving Insolvency

- o Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016 has been adopted that introduced a reorganization **procedure for corporate debtors and facilitated continuation of the debtors' business during insolvency proceedings.**
- o Section 42 of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code 2016 has been amended to provide that a creditor has the right to object to decisions of the liquidator accepting or rejecting claims against the debtor brought by the creditor itself and by any other creditor.

PEPPER IT WITH
WEF- global competitiveness index,
FDI inflows, SWIFT

Impact of EODB

- o The EODB rank significantly improves the chances of luring Foreign Investors, especially in a country like India, where FDI inflows are sin qua non for growth.

- o It also plays a crucial role in accessing funds from multilateral lending institutions like the World Bank, IMF, etc. as these institutes suggest measures for improvement before giving financial help.

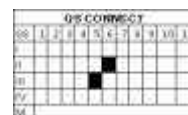
Conclusion

Improvements have taken place in the ranking due to the commitment of the Government to carry out comprehensive and complex reforms, supported by the bureaucracy which has changed its mindset from a regulator to a facilitator. The Government has undertaken an extensive exercise of stakeholder consultations to understand challenges of the industry, government process re-engineering to provide simplified and streamlined processes to create a more conducive business environment in the country. As a result of continued efforts, India's rank has improved.

17th Meeting of Maritime States Development Council

News Excerpt

Recently, Ministry of Shipping organized 17th Meeting of Maritime States Development Council (MSDC). It essentially expressed the need for Joint Efforts between Centre and States to Develop the Maritime Sector.



Pre-Connect

- MSDC is an apex advisory body for the development of the Maritime sector and aims to ensure integrated development of Major and non-Major Ports.
- The MSDC was constituted in 1997 to assess in consultation with State Governments, the future development of existing and new Minor Ports by the respective Maritime States either directly or through captive users and private participation.
- MSDC also monitors the development of minor ports, captive ports and private ports in the Maritime States with a view to ensure their integrated development with Major Ports and to assess the requirements of other infrastructure requirements like roads/rail/IWT and make suitable recommendations to the concerned Ministers.

Key Highlights of the Meet

- Need for the revival of 204 minor ports which have been the centers of maritime activity in the past was expressed.
- It was agreed that synergy between the Major and Minor ports is essential so that together they can bring port led development in the country.
- Ministry will consider making a national grid of ports so that cargo or agricultural produce located near the non-major ports can be shipped to major ports.
- It was decided to carry out extensive study for revival of each port, identifying the specific cargo linked to it and the downstream industry.
- The Ministry of Shipping is planning expansion of port capacity through the implementation of well-conceived infrastructure development projects, increasing the efficiency of port operations through the implementation of a package of recommendations to cut time and cost, digitization of processes to reduce and finally eliminate human interface and to strongly address environment related concerns.
- The conference also discussed issues like developing common and comprehensive guidelines for inland waterways barges so that barges of different states can move seamlessly in coastal waters.
- Port security which includes security of both major and minor ports was also discussed at length. It was decided that international levels of security would be ensured at every port in the country.

Analytica

Need for Port-Led Development in India

- ✓ **Approximately 95 % of India's merchandise trade (by volume) passes through sea ports.**
- ✓ Many ports in India are evolving into specialized centres of economic activities and services and are vital to sustain future economic growth of the country such as JNPT, Mundra Port, Sikka Port, Hazira Port etc.

- ✓ Indian ports still need to address infrastructural and operational challenges. For example, operational efficiency of Indian ports has improved over the years but still lags behind the global average. (High Turnaround Time at major ports compared to global average.)
- ✓ Last mile connectivity to the ports is one of the major constraints in smooth movement of cargo to/from the hinterland. Around 87% of Indian freight uses either road or rail for transportation of goods. A significant share of this cargo experiences “idle time” during its transit to the ports due to capacity constraints on highways and railway lines connecting ports to production and consumption centers. Although water-borne transport is much safer, cheaper and cleaner, compared to other modes of transportation, it accounts for less than 6% of India’s modal split.
- ✓ The constraints on connectivity and sub-optimal modal mix results in higher logistics cost thereby affecting the manufacturing sector and export competitiveness.
- ✓ The location of industries / manufacturing centers vis-à-vis the ports is also one of the important issues. While cost differential between India and China is not significant on a per ton km basis, China still has a lower container exporting cost, than the cost in India, due to lower lead distances.

Steps Taken by The Government

- SAGARMALA Project
 - The Sagarmala is a series of projects to leverage the country’s coastline and inland waterways to drive industrial development.
 - The project is mammoth with 150 initiatives with a total outlay of ₹4 lakh crore, spread across four broad areas.
 - Port Modernization and New Port Development: Modernize port infrastructure, add up to six new ports and enhance capacity.
 - Port Connectivity Enhancement: Improve port connectivity through rail corridors, freight-friendly expressways and inland waterways.
 - Port Linked Industrialization: Create 14 coastal economic zones or CEZs and a special economic zone at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in Mumbai with manufacturing clusters to enable port-led industrialization.
 - Coastal Community Development: Develop skills of fishermen and other coastal and island communities.
 - It is expected that that Sagarmala could boost India’s merchandise exports to \$110 billion by 2025 and create an estimated 10 million new jobs (four million in direct employment).
- A series of studies to bench mark the performance of Indian Major Ports with their international counterparts has been undertaken and steps to increase the capacity and productivity to global standards have been initiated.
- In order to enhance last mile connectivity, 211 road-rail projects worth Rs 250,907 Crore have been identified under Sagarmala. 15 multimodal logistic parks with an investment of Rs3,989 are also in the pipeline which will help in improving efficiency in freight movement under the program.
- Transfer of conventional activities to digital platforms, use of technology for moving cargo and simplification of processes have been done to promote business and facilitate ease of doing business. Ex. Installation of RFID System at 11 major ports.

Indian Ports are broadly classified as Major Ports and Non-Major Ports. The Major Ports are under the Union List while the Non Major Ports are under the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India. Hence, Major Ports are under the administrative control of Government of India while the Non-major ports are governed by the respective Maritime State Governments.

Conclusion

While Indian economy aiming to achieve a 5 trillion-dollar mark, **port led development has a lion’s share in fulfilling this dream. India** needs to address its operational challenges and infrastructure

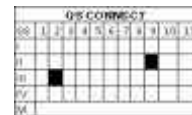
PEPPER IT WITH
Bharatmala, Make in
India, SEZs, CEZs

bottlenecks with optimal investment in order ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth. While ambitious program such as SAGARMALA definitely looks promising, much needs to be done and at a much faster pace.

OECD Proposal- Unified Approach

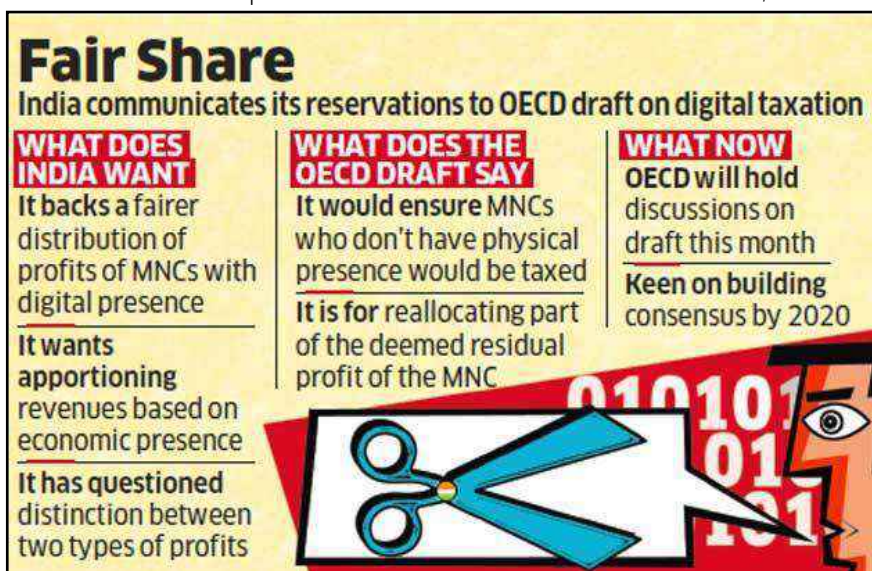
News Excerpt

The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the global grouping of 36 mostly high-income, free-market economies, has recently released a consultation paper proposing changes in the rules for taxing Internet giants such as Facebook, Apple, Google, Amazon, and Netflix. In essence, the proposal, called **“Unified Approach”**, aims to shift the standard of taxation from physical presence to sales in a particular market.



Why New Taxation Laws?

- There is an ongoing global battle over how to tax the digital economy.
- **As of now**, “highly digitalised businesses” can operate remotely and have high profits.
- Many companies have moved their source of profits to countries with low tax rates, such as Ireland.
- The proposal would give new taxing rights to countries with many users of such business models.
- India is among countries that rely on a **“significant economic presence model”**.
- In April, the Income-Tax Department proposed new taxing norms for MNCs, with a different weightage for digital companies, incorporating the number of users in India.



Fair Share
India communicates its reservations to OECD draft on digital taxation

WHAT DOES INDIA WANT	WHAT DOES THE OECD DRAFT SAY	WHAT NOW
It backs a fairer distribution of profits of MNCs with digital presence	It would ensure MNCs who don't have physical presence would be taxed	OECD will hold discussions on draft this month
It wants apportioning revenues based on economic presence	It is for reallocating part of the deemed residual profit of the MNC	Keen on building consensus by 2020
It has questioned distinction between two types of profits		

What is the "Unified Approach"?

- The Secretariat Proposal for a "Unified Approach" would focus on "consumer-facing businesses", which would cover highly digitalised business models and other highly profitable business models that interact with consumers.
- It proposes a new nexus, distinct and separate from the existing concept of the permanent establishment, which would ensure a company is taxable in a jurisdiction where its sales exceed a certain threshold even if it is not physically present in that market.
- The Secretariat proposal aims to reallocate to market jurisdictions a portion of deemed residual profit.
- It also proposes to allocate an appropriate fixed return for what are known as distribution activities, which simplify and improve the administrability of the current international tax rules.
- Finally, it recognizes that the facts and circumstances approach under the existing arm's length principle rules would continue to apply in the market/user jurisdictions, but that effective dispute prevention and binding dispute resolution between member jurisdictions would be needed to limit disputes and improve tax certainty.

- In short, the "Unified Approach" provides a package which reallocates taxing rights to market jurisdictions in certain circumstances in exchange for improved tax certainty.

The Case of India

- ✓ India has opposed such formulation citing that it would deny the country its proper share of taxes from multinationals such as Google, Facebook, Uber and Netflix, which generate substantial revenues locally.
- ✓ The government has proposed a more balanced principle for the taxation of such companies based on place of revenue generation.
- ✓ The proposed OECD formulation will mean India getting little revenue despite the large digital and business presence of companies. This is because only **"residual profit"** will be apportioned among the countries where a company has its markets.
- ✓ The government is of the view that multinational companies derive large revenues from countries such as India via their digital presence, without having a physical one, and has questioned the distinction between **"routine profit"**— which accrue due to physical presence — and **"residual" profit**.
- ✓ The Indian method focuses on revenue, wherein income is apportioned to each jurisdiction in line with operations there, which is fair to everyone and simpler to operate.
- ✓ In the case of outbound business from India — IT and software companies that export their services and products to developed markets, for instance — it is possible that residual profits will be attributed to markets there, thereby reducing taxable profits in the home country. There are also questions about the kind of businesses that will be covered.
- ✓ India is of the opinion that requirements of both developed and developing nations should be kept in mind, while arriving at a unified approach to ensure that divergent interests are adequately aligned and protected.

What is the Nexus Issue?

- ❖ Under the current international tax rules, "nexus" implies that a company has a sufficient economic relationship with a certain jurisdiction for that jurisdiction to be able to tax this particular company.
- ❖ Usually this meant the company would have some sort of physical presence in the jurisdiction.
- ❖ However, digitalisation has strained the applicability of this concept as companies can increasingly do business with customers from a remote location. This is particularly true of the remote sales of highly digitalised businesses.
- ❖ The new nexus rule would address this issue by being applicable in all cases where a business has a sustained and significant involvement in the economy of a market jurisdiction, such as through consumer interaction and engagement, irrespective of its level of physical presence in that jurisdiction.
- ❖ A revenue threshold could be used as the primary indicator of whether or not a company has a sustained and significant involvement in the economy of a jurisdiction.
- ❖ It is important to note that this new nexus rule would be introduced as a stand-alone rule, on top of the permanent establishment rule – to limit any unintended spill-over effect on other existing rules.

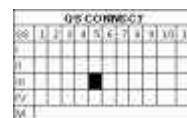
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BEPS, GAFAtax, Task Force on
the Digital Economy (TFDE)

Merger of BSNL and MTNL

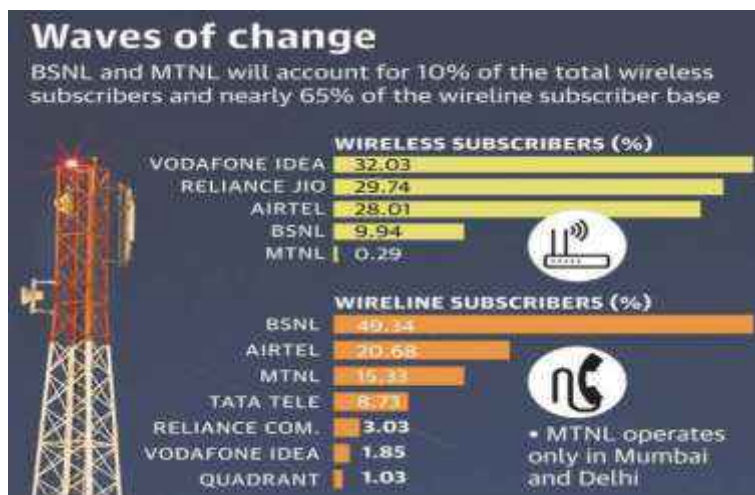
News Excerpt

In an effort to revive the beleaguered state-owned telecom firms Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL), the Union Cabinet recently approved a package worth nearly ₹70,000 crore. It also gave an in-principle nod for the merger of the two entities.

Pre- Connect



- MTNL was set up in 1986, by the government to expand the telecom network, introduce new services and raise revenue for telecom development needs of India's key metros, Delhi and Mumbai.
- The company is also present in Nepal through its joint venture, United Telecom Limited (UTL), and in Mauritius through its 100% subsidiary, Mahanagar Telephone Mauritius Limited (MTML).
- MTNL was among the first to deploy GSM cellular services, CDMA-based limited mobility services and also Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) much ahead of the others.
- BSNL, on the other hand, was incorporated in 2000, and took over the business of providing telecom services and network management from the erstwhile Central Government Departments of Telecom Services (DTS) and Telecom Operations (DTO). BSNL is India's oldest communication service provider and its history can be traced back to the British era.
- Since the telecom sector was opened up for private sector participation in 1995, BSNL and MTNL have become marginal players. In the mobile market, their combined customer share is 10.3% as of March 2019.
- The government recently announced a massive revival package of nearly Rs 70,000 crore for the ailing telecom PSU BSNL and MTNL.



PEPPER IT WITH
Interconnect Usage Charge (IUC), Idea Vodafone Merger

Analytica

Key Issues

- The big issue that the government plans to tackle is the large workforce. Both MTNL and BSNL are overstaffed. In fact, BSNL's staff cost is over 75 per cent of its total income as compared to 3-5 per cent for the private operators.
- For both BSNL and MTNL, their human resource and physical assets are still mostly concentrated around the landline business where they have been operating for decades.
- Debt is one area where BSNL and MTNL are relatively better off. The duo has a total debt of around Rs 40,000 crore, which is the lowest for any telecom company in India. But both BSNL and MTNL have failed to keep pace with technology changes. As landline numbers started shrinking, their operations were also pulled down due to a cocktail of negative factors such as poor



management, government meddling and very poor customer service.

- Cheap mobile/internet connections to politicians and Government employees drained MTNL resources.

Key Concerns

- ✓ When Government and Indian operators are continuing to push towards 5G deployment, it's almost ineffective for BSNL/MTNL to come out with 4G now.
- ✓ Large private telcos are already providing highly-competitive 4G across the country. It is expected that whenever BSNL/MTNL rolls out 4G, its coverage would not be as wider and affordable as private telcos.
- ✓ It seems far-fetched to assume that BSNL/MTNL could shift some of its existing customers - about 11.96 crore subscribers - to 4G. That's because most of their current subscribers are low-paying 2G/3G customers, and that too in rural areas - especially for BSNL. These subscribers are generally reluctant to shift from 2G to 4G even if the tech is available. Even the large private telcos like Airtel and Vodafone Idea have struggled to convince their large 2G subs base to make that shift.
- ✓ In the telecom business, upgrading networks is critical to survival, or otherwise the companies run the risk of becoming obsolete. That's exactly what happened to Reliance Communications that took a late decision to shift from CDMA to GSM, and even after making the shift, it could not invest sufficiently in GSM for years that ultimately resulted in its shutdown.
- ✓ Giving 4G is one thing but having the supporting infrastructure is equally important. While the plan talks about the raising of sovereign guarantee bonds and monetization of assets that would help in CapEx and OpEx expenses, the details are hazy as of now.
- ✓ The competition has already seen tariffs hit rock bottom even as usage of both voice and data has gone up manifold. The crunch is so severe that even much-experienced and battle-hardened operators such as Airtel and Vodafone- Idea are struggling to salvage business as they run into losses and mounting debt.

Cabinet's four ways Revival Plans

includes-

- ❖ Administrative allotment of spectrum for 4G services to BSNL and MTNL so as to enable these PSUs to provide broadband and other data services.
- ❖ The said Spectrum will be funded by the Government of India by capital infusion in these PSUs at a value of Rs 20,140 Cr in addition; the GST amount of Rs 3,674 Cr to this spectrum value will also be borne by the Government of India through Budgetary resources.
- ❖ By using this spectrum allotment, BSNL and MTNL will be able to deliver 4G services, compete in the market and provide high speed data using their vast network including in rural areas.
- ❖ BSNL and MTNL will also raise long-term bonds of Rs 15,000 Cr for which sovereign guarantee will be provided by the Government of India (GoI). With the said resources, BSNL and MTNL will restructure their existing debt and also partly meet CAPEX, OPEX and other requirements.
- ❖ BSNL and MTNL will also offer Voluntary Retirement to their employees, aged 50 years and above through attractive Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS), the cost of which will be borne by the Government of India through budgetary support.
- ❖ BSNL and MTNL will monetise their assets so as to raise resources for retiring debt, servicing of bonds, network upgradation, expansion and meeting the operational fund requirements.

Advantage of Merger

- It will increase competitiveness.
- It will improve its financial sustainability and will also widen the customer base.
- Have broader geographic footprint.
- It will help address technology gaps.

What are the available way-outs?

- One strategic option available for BSNL-MTNL is to disinvest completely.

- Another option could be to sell or shut down just the consumer-facing businesses and continue **to operate the enterprise business. In other words, become a 'network of networks' for other** players, offering optical fibre, towers and last-mile network to operators through lease, virtual network and unbundling arrangements.
- GOI could also assess the possibility of a larger consolidation by pooling the assets of BSNL-MTNL with other PSUs in the space — Railtel, Gailtel, Powertel and Bharat Broadband Network Ltd (BBNL) — and offering network services to private sector players. Combined, BSNL-MTNL and these PSUs would have 16-20 lakh km of optical fibre, and about 1,00,000 towers that could be used.
- Having a strong PSU will not only prevent private players from increasing tariffs as an easy means to wriggle out of the financial stress but also ensure that even rural consumers are catered too.
- When it comes to the national security, communication network is a key element. BSNL plays an important role in connecting strategic establishments across the country. This function cannot be given to any private operator.

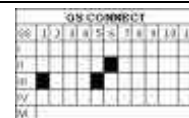
Conclusion

Unless the government doesn't improve governance, which means far lower interference of Department of Telecommunications at the micro level and greater powers being given to the current board, any amount of restructuring is not going to be of much help. Still, the revival initiative is a welcome step because if the government decides to shut down BSNL and MTNL, which many analysts insist is the only option; it will cost the exchequer about Rs 1.2 lakh crore in VRS and other (winding up) costs. In short, BSNL/MTNL are burdens that the government cannot simply let go.

One Nation One FASTag

News Excerpt

Recently, Minister of **Road Transport and Highways inaugurated the “One Nation One FASTag”** scheme at the Indian Mobile Congress in New Delhi. The plan aims to integrate the collection of tolls digitally and ensure seamless mobility of vehicles across India.



What is One Nation One FASTag?

- FASTag, affixed on the windscreen of a vehicle can be used to pay toll across all toll plazas in the country.
- MoU was signed between IHMCL (Indian Highways Management Corp Ltd) and GST Network (GSTN) for integrating E-Way Bill system with FASTag in order to overcome the existing challenge in track and trace mechanism for GST E-Way Bill (EWB) System and enhance the efficiency in its monitoring.
- The Scheme offers participating state authorities/agencies shorter turnaround time by allowing them to be a part of the robust FASTag solution architecture which already supports approx. 6 million tags with approximately daily 10 lakh transactions.
- At present, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is functioning as the Central Clearing House and 23 Public and Private sector banks are issuing FASTag.

Significance of the Move

- Under the National Electronic Toll Collection program of the Ministry, toll collection at national highways toll plazas is done through RFID based FASTags either manually or through other tags. This leads to inconvenience for the road users.
- One Nation One FASTag will allow for more efficient track and trace system for the GST E-Way Bill System and check the leakage of revenue at the toll plazas.
- With this integration revenue authorities will be able to track the goods vehicles to see whether they are actually travelling to the specified destination.
- The supplier/ transporter will also be able to track their vehicles through SMS alerts generated at each toll plaza.

- This initiative will remove bottlenecks and ensure seamless movement of traffic and efficient collection of user fee.
- **This is likely to reduce the nation's GDP loss by bringing down loss of fuel while waiting at toll plazas.**
- This measure is both time saving, as also controls pollution substantially.
- Seamless travelling at toll plazas will lead to ease of travelling.
- It is going to prove very important in the overall national highways development plan.
- Such electronically record system would give impetus to **'data-driven policy'** initiatives and create culture of **'big data analytics'**.

Limitations

- ✓ Security concerns: FASTag data can be misused easily by individuals with the identical tags and by the way of removal of tag.
- ✓ Inadequate Infrastructure: RFID enabled scanner require Line of Sight communication with respective Tags, at some toll plazas **'manual scanning'** restrict the ease of travelling.
- ✓ Federal Concerns: State highways belong to the states, in case of non-payment or faulty payment to the state agencies by NHAI, it may escalate the disappointment among parties. Further over-centralization by edging the scope of state regulatory agencies may create legal tussle among center and states.

Way Forward

- Broaden the scope of FASTag: Enabling usage of FASTag for making various vehicle related payments apart from toll payments, such as fuel payment, parking charges, traffic fines etc. would increase the timely delivery of services and revolutionize the current transport system in India.
- **FASTag as 'Aadhaar for vehicle'**: The FASTags can be linked to the insurance policies of the commuters to facilitate hassle free and secured journey.
- Integration of traffic violations can be streamlined under a **'Central Database'** and blacklisted vehicles could be mandated to pay the outstanding fine amount and their movement can be restricted. It could be an effective tool to limit the bandit.

Global Scenario

Japan: Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) program has achieved a usage ratio of 90% with a volume of approximately 70 – 80 lacs of daily transactions.

China: ETC operations in China majorly accept card-based payment mode.

European regions: These have been pioneers in the field of urban tolling, with the advancement of ETC technology in most of the European and US regions as well as smart cities such as Dubai, most of the toll booths are unmanned. All the vehicle related details are captured by high end RFID readers and cameras which are mounted at the toll booths. These data points are gathered in a centralized system and monitored by a centralized governing body.

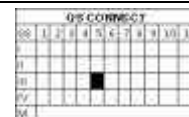
PEPPER IT WITH

National Highway Authority of India, UPI, RFID, Line of Sight communication

Global Unicorn List

News Excerpt

The Hurun Research Institute has recently released the first ever Hurun Global Unicorn List 2019, **a ranking of the world's billion-dollar tech 'start-ups'** founded in the 2000s and not yet listed on a public exchange. Report found the 494 unicorns in the world, based in 25 countries and 118 cities.



Highlights of the Report

- India was placed third with 21 unicorns, led by payments solutions platform One97 Communications (\$10 billion) and followed by cab aggregator Ola Cabs (\$6 billion); online educator Byju's (\$6 billion) and travel-stay finder OYO Rooms (\$5 billion).

- China pipped the US to lead by 206 versus 203, and together they accounted for over 80 per cent of the world's unicorns. Europe has 35 unicorns.
- By city, Beijing is the world's unicorn capital with 82, comfortably ahead of San Francisco with 55.
- As a region, Silicon Valley leads the world with 102 or 21 per cent of the world's unicorns.

Analytica

Start-up Ecosystem in India

- India is often described as **“The poster child of emerging markets”** for its vast commercial potential for startups, even niche products can have significant market potential.
- The 21 Indian Unicorns at global scale are result of favorable policies for the startups. There is **dire need to adopt ‘flexi-policy regime’** to increase the number of India led Unicorn at global Scale.
- Startups as Growth Drivers: In India, the startups are becoming important engines for growth, innovation and jobs generation through scalable technology to address various socio-economic deprivations.
- Government Initiatives: **‘Startup India’**, was initiated by GoI to build a strong ecosystem that is conducive for the growth of startup businesses. Other measures include a fund of 100 billion, financial support for incubators, establishment of tinkering labs, tax benefits, and a simplified recognition process for the setting-up of businesses.
- Seven central ministries launched schemes and policies promoting startups. So far, 14,036 startups have been recognized.

About Unicorn

The Unicorn is a term used for privately-held technology companies with estimated worth at least \$1 billion.

The Unicorns are the world's most exciting start-ups, leading a new generation of disruptive technology.

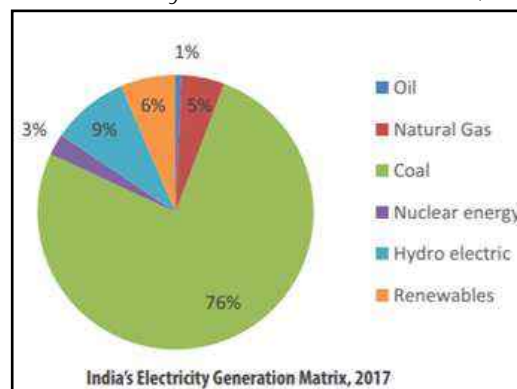
Why Start-ups are Important?

- ✓ Provide Opportunities: Startups can drive sustainable economic growth by generating large scale employment opportunities with impactful solutions, and thereby act as vehicles for socio-economic development and transformation.
- ✓ Impart Expertise: Startups are capable of disrupting the world economy and playing a vital role in Fourth Industrial Revolution. **They can absorb the world's top young talent interested** in working in these sectors.
- ✓ Enable Market innovations: Startups can solve problems in prevailing markets that are incredibly challenging, strife with corruption, and lack trust between stakeholders.
- ✓ Better Standards of Living: Startups can implement innovations and technologies to improve the living of people. There are many startups who is working for rural areas to develop the community.
- ✓ Increase in GDP: By supporting and encouraging more startups, it is possible to generate **more revenue domestically and consumer's capital will also flow around the Indian economy.**

Where We Lack-

- Investment limitation: For running a startup, a significant amount of working capital is required. Startups at early stages, are bootstrapped (i.e. self-funded through the founders' own savings or using capital from friends and family).
- Limited availability of fund restricts the growth of startups. Finding the right investor and raising funds is difficult, even in case of proven market validation.
- Information gap exists between those who provide solutions and those who are supposed to use them. Startups need to bridge this gap and develop an in-depth understanding of the customers and their needs.
- Complex regulatory environment: Startups in India often feel encumbered by bureaucratic processes. **There is specified criteria linked to the government's startup definition, but only few startups fulfilled them.** The criteria are lowered subsequently, but startups still seem to face difficulties obtaining registration certificates.

- o Further, as mentioned by Arvind Subramaniam in Economic Survey 2015-16, Indian Startups face “Chakaravyuha Challenge” which describes the ability to enter but not exit, with seriously adverse consequences.
- o Tax Policy: The tax policy remains unfriendly for startups especially after the implementation of the GST. The startups are required to file their taxes regularly, even if they do not yet generate any revenue.
- o Angel tax: It is a term used to refer to the income tax payable on capital raised by unlisted companies via issue of shares where the share price is seen in excess of the fair market value of the shares sold. The excess realization is treated as income and taxed accordingly. It is observed as the biggest barrier to the growth of Startups’.



Ways to improve the Startup Ecosystem in India-

- Diversification: The focus of Indian Startups remains on software and services, ecommerce and marketplaces, with slow variation into FinTech and Health-Tech. Startups should also work in the space of water, public health, governance, waste to energy generation and **management so that India can surpass the 'Big 2'**.
- Building engagement platforms, mediation, increasing fund allocation by government by creating a separate fund, and capacitate the actors in the ecosystem in order to create mechanisms for engagement between government, entrepreneurs, investors, technical experts, and citizens for problem identification and solution development.
- Tax Rationalization: Simplification of GST and liberal tax regime will provide a thriving ecosystem for startups.

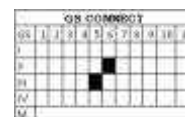
PRAKASH Portal

News Excerpt

Recently, Ministry of Power and Ministry of Coal jointly launched PRAKASH Portal (Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony).

Pre-Connect

- Existing Mechanism: An inter-ministerial group which has officials from Ministries of Power, Coal, Railways, CEA, power utilities and coal companies.
- It was observed that this mechanism faced several issues such as scattered information, correctness of data from different organizations, timely availability of data etc. This often led to difficulties in decision making
- PRAKASH Portal is developed by NTPC and sources data from different stakeholders such as Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) and coal companies.
- The Portal will make available four reports- Daily Power Plant Status, Periodic Power Plant Status, Plant Exception Report, Coal Dispatch Report.



Significance of the PRAKASH Portal

- It is being considered as an important step in ensuring adequate availability and optimum utilization of coal at thermal power plants.
- The Portal will help in mapping and monitoring entire coal supply chain for power plants, viz – Coal Stock at supply end (mines), coal availability at power generation stations, coal quantities in transit etc.
- Portal will bring benefits to various stakeholders (Coal companies, Indian Railways, Power Stations in making information available on a single platform.

- Ministry of Power /Ministry of Coal/ CEA/ POSOCO will be able to review overall availability of coal at thermal power plants in different regions.

Analytica

Indian Coal Sector

- ✓ **About 70% of power generated in India uses coal as the country is having the world's fourth largest reserves of coal (India's geological coal resource was around 315,149 million tonnes in 2017).**
- ✓ Besides playing a crucial role in the energy sector, coal is traditionally considered as an important economic sector in the country. It provides employment to around 355,000 people, although there is significant uncertainty around these numbers.
- ✓ Domestic coal has been able to meet only 75% of our annual coal demand.
- ✓ The shortfall in local coal availability is met through imports of around 200 mt (it was 195.4 mt in FY17 and 207.1 mt in FY16).
- ✓ **Despite Indian Government's commendable push for renewable energy, the country requires a base load capacity of coal-based generation for stability and various steps are being taken to boost coal production.**

Steps Taken by the Government

- The center recently allowed 100% FDI in the coal sector. It is expected to bring in greater efficiency, best possible technology, higher investment and more employment in coal-bearing areas especially in the mining sector. It would also lead to more revenue that can be used for development of the area and inhabitants around the mine by the State. Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra would benefit the most.
- *Other* steps taken by the government include easing of mine plan approval, doing away with the system of previous approval of government for grant of mining lease, streamlining the grant of permits and clearances, greater coordination with states in matters relating to land acquisition, grant of lease and creation of sufficient coal evacuation infrastructure.
- The government is also promoting diversified use of coal, like conversion of coal to synthesis gas and its use to produce methanol or fertilizers.

Way Forward

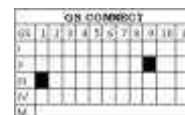
- Energy generation shift: Developed countries are reducing their dependency on coal-based energy generation and switching to the renewable sources of energy. India has also taken initiatives such as NAPCC, Target of 450GW (Renewed) renewable energy but needs dedicated efforts and streamlined mechanisms to bring such targets in to reality.
- Sustainable practices: Corruption and manual leakages must be checked, scientific mining methods must be adopted to streamline sustainable development.

PEPPER IT WITH
PMKKKY, EIA, Rat Hole Mining,
SEVA App, UTTAM App, SHAKTI
scheme, Paris Agreement goals

Asia Pacific Trade Investment Report

News Excerpt

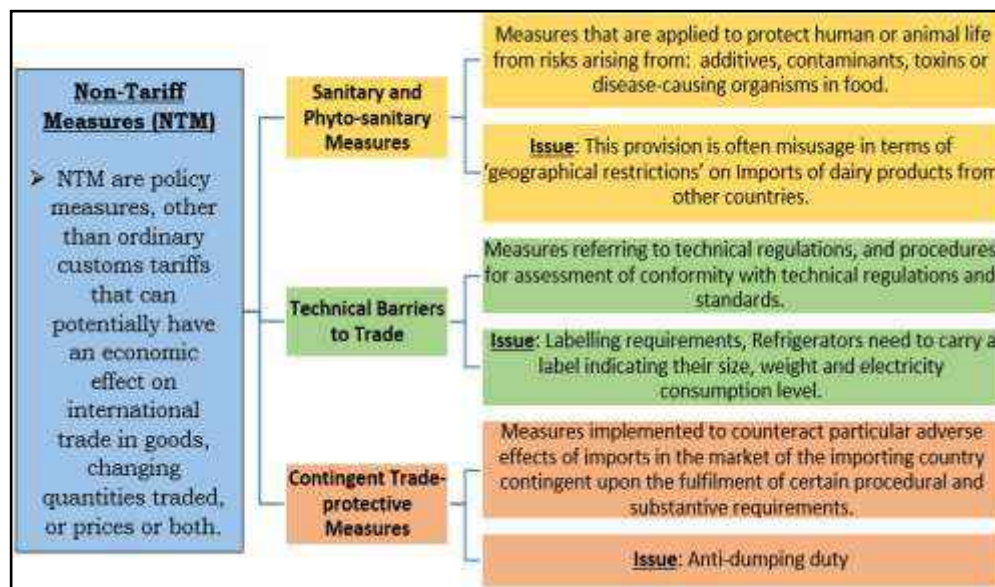
Recently, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) released The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2019.



Major findings of the Report

- Non-tariff measures (NTMs) have increased in the past two decades and are affecting trade as well sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Asian countries.
- NTMs affect 58 per cent of the trade in Asia-Pacific. Report stated that design or the implementation of NTMs in the Asia-Pacific region is less efficient.

- Case Study: The report cited the example of Sri Lanka. The South Asian country earned a lot revenue by exporting seafood. But then, the European Union (EU) instituted an import ban on **Sri Lankan seafood because of the country's systematic failure to regulate IUU** (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing. This was a type of NTM. On the one hand, the ban helped in conservation of marine resources and encouraged sustainable fishing. At the same time though, fisherfolk in Sri Lanka became poor.
- The report points out that major trade costs stem from the adoption of SPS and TBT of international standards. Developing economies find these divergent from those listed in the World Trade Organization SPS agreement.



- TFA: The report reviewed trade facilitation progress in Asia and the Pacific and stated that technology can help to bridge trade finance gaps by enhancing transparency in NTMs and related procedures, through trade digitalization, digitalization can also reduce NTM-related costs. Regional initiatives and cooperation have an important role to play in these areas, as reflected in the content of newer Regional trade agreements.
- NTMs & FDIs: NTMs have a significant impact on FDI, positive effect of NTMs on FDI may be offset by the negative effect on trade. Report on NTMs in the Asia-Pacific region revealed that domestic procedural obstacles – rather than the required standards embedded in NTMs – are the primary reason why foreign and domestic NTMs are perceived to be burdensome.

Measures Suggested by the Report:

- To address trade costs while maintaining the benefits of NTMs, countries need to further enhance cooperation at all levels.
- At the multilateral level, WTO agreements on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, technical barriers to trade (TBTs) and Trade Facilitation should be fully implemented, while international standards that are adapted to countries at different levels of development should be developed and adopted.
- Regional initiatives should also be actively pursued, such as NTM harmonization and mutual recognition initiatives in regional trade agreements.
- Digitalization of NTM-related procedures should also be prioritized, as already envisaged under the ASEAN Single Window Agreement and the broader Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.
- At the national level, new and existing NTMs and related procedures should be systematically subjected to sustainability impact assessments; this should include effective consultations with the private sector and stakeholders with special needs, including SMEs and women.

Relationship between Trade and SDGs

	Sustainable Development Goals	Linkages & Impacts
SDG-1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere.	Trade is an engine of economic growth and poverty reduction.
SDG-2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.	Trade is an engine, income and agricultural production. Trade affects access, availability and stability of food security.
SDG-5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	Trade can provide opportunities for the economic empowerment of women.
SDG-7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	Trade and global value chains are drivers of technological innovation and the production of renewable energy sources.
SDG-8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.	Trade can be an engine of economic growth and employment.
SDG-9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.	Trade can be an engine of economic growth and industrialization
SDG-10	Reduce inequality within and among countries.	Trade-led growth has often contributed to reducing inequality between countries.
SDG-17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.	Trade is a key means of implementation for sustainable development.

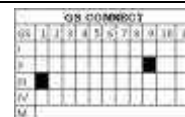
Global Wealth Report

News Excerpt

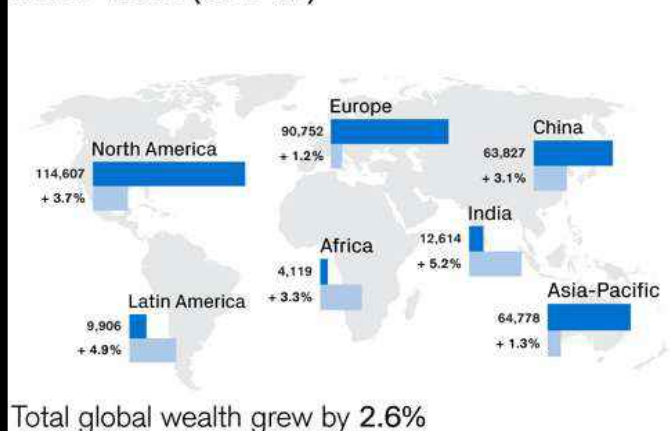
Recently, the Global wealth report was published by the Credit Suisse Research Institute. It is the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information on global household wealth covering all regions and countries, and all parts of the wealth spectrum from rich to poor.

Key highlights of the report

- Global wealth grew to USD 360 trillion and wealth per adult reached a new record high of USD 70,850, 1.2% above the level of mid-2018.
- Switzerland is ranked top in terms of wealth per adult with followed by Hong Kong and the US. Australia and Singapore rank four and six respectively.
- The US, China, and Europe contributed the most towards global wealth growth, US contributed more than half of the 1.1 million newly minted millionaires up to mid-2019 while Japan and China added 187,000 and 158,000 new millionaires



Global household wealth by region 2018–2019 (USD bn)



respectively.

Position of India

- Total wealth in India increased fourfold between 2000 and 2019, reaching \$12.6 trillion in 2019, making India the fifth globally in terms of the number of ultra-high net-worth individuals.
- According to the study, the wealth per adult in India grew by an average of 11% annually over the period 2000–2019 and the wealth per adult is estimated at \$14,569 in mid-2019 after a year of moderate growth.
- India has 8.27 lakh adults in the top 1% of global wealth holders which is 1.6% share of the global pool.
- There is still considerable wealth poverty, reflected in the fact that 78% of the adult population has wealth below \$10,000.
- India is expected to grow its wealth very rapidly and add \$4.4 trillion in just five years, reflecting an increase of 43%.

The wealth distribution

India was among the regions with the highest percentage change in wealth per adult at 3.3%. Wealth per adult in the country is estimated at \$14,569 as of mid-2019.

Change in wealth per adult 2018-19 (in %)		Wealth per adult 2019 (in \$)
India	3.3	14,569
Latin America	3.2	22,502
North America	2.7	417,694
China	2.6	58,544
Europe	1.2	153,973
Africa	0.4	6,488
Asia Pacific	-0.3	54,211
World	1.2	70,849

What needs to be done to reduce Income Inequality?

✓ Investing in Women:

- According to former IMF Chief Christine Lagarde recently, if women's participation in the workforce matched men's, Japan could grow at 9 percent per annum and India at 27 percent.
- McKinsey report in 2016 stated that women contribute only 17 per cent of India's GDP, and estimates that India could add \$700 billion to its GDP in 2025 by closing this gap.
- Helping women stay active in the workplace while raising a family is key to achieving this growth.
- This means more family-friendly work policies, such as paid parental leave and creating an environment where kids are allowed in the workplace. It also means that more men should take equal responsibility in raising kids and managing household chores.

✓ Investing in Agriculture:

- As per the World Bank, agriculture can help reduce poverty for 80 per cent of the world's poor who live in rural areas and work mainly in farming.
- It further states that 65 per cent of the poor working adults make a living through agriculture.
- More than one billion people have moved out of extreme poverty in recent decades, but 80 per cent of those that remain live in rural areas.

Steps Taken by the India to address Income Inequality

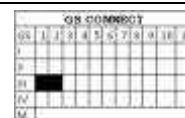
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY),
- ❖ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS),
- ❖ National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM),
- ❖ Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM),
- ❖ Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY),
- ❖ Indira Awas Yojana (IAY),
- ❖ National Health Mission (NHM),
- ❖ Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA),
- ❖ Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS),
- ❖ Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS),
- ❖ Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM),
- ❖ National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP),
- ❖ Swachh Bharat Mission etc.

- Providing farmers with a bundle of services like access to seeds, plant nutrients and production practices are critical. But today, climate smartness and climate resilience also need a special focus.
- Policy makers should also focus on risk mitigation mechanisms like weather insurance and risk prevention mechanisms.
- ✓ Reforming Workplace Laws:
 - **Reforms in workers' laws can reduce inequalities.**
 - Minimum wages and universal basic income (UBI) are two of the popular ways to reform workplace laws. They both have the same aim — raising incomes of the least fortunate to reduce the income gap. These are imposed by law and paid by the employer.
 - In developing countries such as India, despite having hundreds of pro-poor schemes, the biggest question is whether such benefit is reaching the poor. Hence addressing loopholes such as corruption, lack of modern technology and infrastructure for faster delivery of **benefits should be addressed before it's too late.**

RBI Study of Annual State Budget

News Excerpt

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently released the report **“State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2019-20”**, an annual publication that provides comprehensive data, information, analysis and an assessment of the fiscal health of states. The Report addresses the theme of **“Debt: States' Medium-Term Fiscal Challenges”**.



Highlights of the Report

- **States'** gross fiscal deficit (GFD) has remained within the FRBM threshold of 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) during 2017-18 and 2018-19. This has, however, been achieved by sharp retrenchment in expenditures, in particular, capital expenditure.
- For 2019-20, states have budgeted for a consolidated GFD of 2.6 per cent of GDP with a marginal revenue surplus (as against revenue deficits in the previous three years).
- The report pointed out that, with the combined GFP to GDP was at 6.4% as compared with the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Committee's (FRBM) medium-term target of 5%, there is a risk that private investment getting crowded out of the finite pool of financial resources
- Outstanding debt of states have risen over the last five years to 25 per cent of GDP, posing medium-term challenges to its sustainability.
- Incipient risks to debt sustainability emanate from losses of DISCOMs as well as potential invocation of guarantees.
- Among the factors responsible for fiscal stress in certain States are farm loan waivers that have been announced since 2014, with States like Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and recently Karnataka announcing agriculture debt waiver schemes.
- Loan waivers impact credit discipline, vitiate credit culture and dis-incentivize borrowers to repay loans, thus engendering moral hazard.

Why Studying State Finances is Necessary?

- States now spend one-and-a-half times more than the Union government.
- They employ five times more people than the Centre.
- Since 2014-15, states have increasingly borrowed money from the market. In fact, their total borrowing almost rivals the borrowing by the Union government.
- This trend, too, has serious implications on the interest rates charged in the economy, the availability of funds for businesses to invest in new factories, and the ability of the private sector to employ new labor.

PEPPER IT WITH
Utkarsh 2022, Indradhanush Scheme

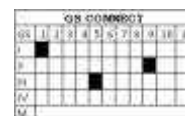
Measures Suggested by the Report

- ✓ Revenue generation holds the key to prudent debt management and can act as a circuit breaker in perverse debt spirals, highlighting the need to raise tax buoyancy and capitalise on technology enabled efficiency gains, while exploiting the scope for raising user charges wherever possible, with reduced reliance on borrowings.
- ✓ A combination of consolidation, reissuances and maturity elongation can help in improving liquidity, and in developing a secondary market with a diversified investor base with differential pricing operating as market discipline among states.

India-China Informal Summit

News Excerpt

Recently, second informal summit between India and China was held at the Mamallapuram, off Chennai in Tamil Nadu. Summit provides an opportunity for China and India to continue discussions on overarching issues of bilateral, regional and global importance. It is one such way for the two countries to deal with the ebb and flow in ties.



Pre-Connect

- Since 2016, India-China difference were widened due to ample of reasons such as the boundary dispute (Doklam crisis), the Belt and Road Initiative (CPEC), Indian membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and China's presence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.
- Both nations decided to adhere to the principle they agreed to in the bilateral meeting on the sidelines of SCO in 2017 in Astana dialogue which is never to allow their differences to become disputes.
- To tone down the differences Indian PM and Chinese President meet at Wuhan in China from which the term "Wuhan Spirit" had emerged.
- Wuhan, the site of the first informal summit,

Why Mamallapuram?

- ❖ Mamallapuram was once ruled by the Pallavas who helped Chinese against the Tibet aggressions-2000 years ago.
- ❖ Both regions shared an ancient maritime links.
- ❖ Celadon ware (pottery) of the first, second Century recovered on the eastern coast of Tamil Nadu provides a clue to Chinese maritime activities.
- ❖ Chinese coins dating to the same period were also found in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The ancient Tamil work "**Pattinapalai**," authored by Urutthiran Kannanar, a post Sangam period work, cites the anchorage of a Chinese ship on the eastern coast of ancient Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Chinese text the "**Han annals**" has a reference to contacts with the Tamil country.
- ❖ Emperor Wei (circa 185-149 BCE) encouraged traders and the Chinese text **Ch'ien Han Shu of the first century refers to Kancheepuram as "Huang-Che" and Chinese kings had sent presents to the then ruler of Kancheepuram.**
- ❖ Vayalur inscriptions (near Mamallapuram) points towards the fact Pallavas had sent envoys (6-7th Century AD) to China.
- ❖ Hiuen Tsang a Chinese Traveler visited Kancheepuram.
- ❖ Mamallapuram is also home of Bodhidharma, the founder of the Dhyana school of meditation at the Shaolin monastery in Henan province in China.
- ❖ Region also highlights the scope of economic cooperation between the India and China.
- ❖ Region has untapped potential for Chinese investments in India.
- ❖ Chinese FDI has seen a welcome spike since 2015.
- ❖ According to the Chinese side, cumulative FDI in India stands at \$8 billion.
- ❖ Mutual investments provide the ballast for the ship of bilateral relations.

is the place where Mao Zedong had displayed his vitality by swimming in the currents of the Yangtse river. Wuhan in present time straddles the great rail connectivity route to Europe envisioned in the BRI.

- At Wuhan, the two leaders thereafter agreed to direct their militaries to “earnestly implement various confidence building measures agreed upon between the two sides, including the principle of mutual and equal security, and strengthen existing institutional arrangements and information sharing mechanisms to prevent incidents in border regions.

Key Takeaways

Chennai Connect- A way Forward

- 2020- 70th Anniversary of India-China relations: 2020 is designated as Year of India-China Cultural and People to People Exchanges. It will be fully utilized to deepen exchanges at all levels including between their respective legislatures, political parties, cultural and youth organizations and militaries.
- High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue mechanism: Both Nations have decided to establish a High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue mechanism with the objective of achieving enhanced trade and commercial relations, as well as to better balance the trade between the two countries. They have also agreed to encourage mutual investments in identified sectors through the development of a Manufacturing Partnership.
- On other Outstanding issues: Both nations focused on the work of Special Representatives and urged them to continue their efforts to arrive at a mutually-agreed framework for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement based on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles that were agreed by the two sides in 2005.

India-China Border Dispute

- ✚ India-China shares a boundary of roughly 3488 Km
- ✚ Root cause of border dispute is that, while India believe that it has inherited **boundaries from the British, China doesn't** agree with the fact.
- ✚ The India-China border is divided into three sectors, viz. Western, Middle and Eastern.
- ✚ In Western Sector- It pertains to the Johnson line which makes Aksai Chin as an India territory this is countered by China as it did not agree with as it never acceded to the Johnson line.
- ✚ In the Middle Sector, the dispute is a minor one. It is the only one where India and China have exchanged maps on which they broadly agree.
- ✚ In Eastern Sector: It is over the MacMahon Line. Representatives of China, India and Tibet in 1913-14 discussed an agreement to settle the boundary between Tibet and India, and Tibet and China. Though the Chinese representatives at the meeting initiated the agreement, they subsequently refused to accept it. The Tawang tract claimed by China was taken over by India in 1951.
- ✚ Till the 1960s, China controlled Aksai Chin in the West while India controlled the boundary up to the McMahon Line in the East.

Analytica

What Such Informal Summits lacks?

Contemporary framework: Unlike 1988 modus vivendi, there is no definitive framework developed which can guide the complex relationship between the two countries in a rapidly changing and uncertain international environment. There was nothing to either guide a geopolitical accommodation or regulate the depth and range of issues that have come to define the relationship in the ensuing decades.

No Blue Print: Such approach is critiqued for not going far enough in terms of laying out a blueprint to resolve differences. The fact is both sides have contained much of the spiraling competition and mistrust, and, there is little doubt that an uncertain international environment motivated both sides towards such a choice.

PEPPER IT WITH

CPEC, BRICS, BCIM, BRICS, SCO, G-20, China-Russia-India Trilateral, Special Representative Mechanism, China-India Plus mechanism, RECP

India-China Relation- New Paradigm

Over the past decade, three historical forces have been shaping India-China relations. Some of these forces have been pushing both countries towards competition and some impelling them towards cooperation and collaboration.

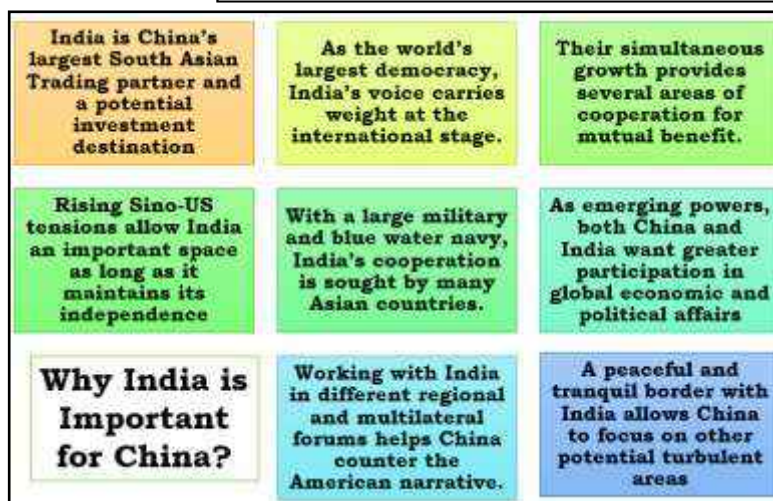
- ✓ Rise of Asia: It is a phase that is generally traced to the period after the 2008 global economic crisis.
- ✓ Decline of West: The West's declining capacity and inclination to responsibly manage international and Asian affairs. This pushes India and China and other re-emerging powers. These are going into new order building roles that would require coordination and cooperation to preserve global stability and co-develop new governance institutions and norms.
- ✓ China reorientations: There is palpable change in **South Asia with China's 2013 and 2014 policy declarations** of deepening ties with its periphery including with subcontinental states, followed soon after with the ambitious Belt and Road initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in April 2015.
- ✓ Indo-Pacific: Both the U.S. and China see India as "a swing power". The US wants India to swing to its side and join its Indo-Pacific strategy, the undeclared aim of which is to contain China's rise. For this its often proposed to have deeper security cooperation in Quad. China doesn't want India to swing to the other side. Though India conveyed its vision of the Indo-Pacific in the Shangri-La dialogue in which it made it clear that it is objectives in the Indo-Pacific are not directed against any country, and its support towards creating a rules-based and stable trade environment in the region. But the Chinese palpable skepticism continues over the India's intention in the



Three-point road map

India's China policy should be guided by three grand strategic goals

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



Indo-Pacific region.

Way-Forward

Taking Ties Forward

- o There is no gainsaying the fact that India and China must work together to forge stable relations in which competition does not lead to conflict nor differences to disputes.



Economic Engagements:

- China is keen to make investments in India, especially in building infrastructure and fifth generation technology architecture.
- India, on the other side, wants greater market access in China, to address the trade imbalance.
- For example, Despite its policies to destabilize China, President Nixon visited China in 1972 that led to a remarkable turnaround in Sino-American ties.

Multilateralism:

- India and China are pillars of an emerging world order. Both countries see the unilateral world order in decline, and are champions of multilateralism.
- Security and stability in Asia, is in the common interests of Both countries and are already cooperating on global issues like tackling climate change.

Dodging Pakistan Card:

- Pakistan card is negotiable which is shown in the recent times. For
- China agreed to place Pakistan FATF grey list, after India offered support for China's vice-chair push at the FATF. Same happened in case of Masood Azhar.
- If it's driven by realism, India should actually engage with Pakistan, which will not only calm down its borders, but also weaken China's Pakistan card.

Focus on its rise:

- India should learn from China as it hid its strength, hid for time. It was building capacities without letting external strains to derail the process.
- When a mightier U.S. reached out to China, it played along. Now it's confidently challenging the U.S., at least in the sphere of the economy.
- India should also turn the focus to its rise and building capacities, not on conflicts and rivalries. If it's driven by such a broader but a realist vision, India could expand the avenues of deep, tactical engagement with a powerful China.

- o India and China will always have to co-exist cheek by jowl, as they have done for millennia. It is in the larger interests of the two peoples that there be greater trust and cooperation and that there be deeper friendship at all levels.

- o As a first step, India and China must commit to respecting each other's 'core' interests.
- o India and China are still in a tactical engagement, not in a **strategic partnership**. But it's a tactical engagement with depth, not a short-term foreign policy adjustment. The challenge is to deepen this further, and for that they should not allow strategic glitches dictate terms for a bilateral partnership.

- o The more India-China overtake each other the more room for maneuver other powers will have. The recent stability in India-China relations is a choice made by both sides.

- o History is obliging both countries to step up and play constructive roles to shape the emerging world order even as it is impelling both sides to learn to co-exist in a common neighborhood.

Resolving Maritime Conflicts

- India-China must respect each other's maritime engagements with third parties so long as these engagements do not trample on their counterparts' interests.
- They bear an obligation to keep their surface and sub-surface fleets at some distance from their counterparts' naval bastions so as not to degrade the integrity of their second-strike deterrence capability.
- Both countries would be better-off exploring a broader bargain that resists the temptation to challenge each other's growing authority west and east of Sumatra, respectively.

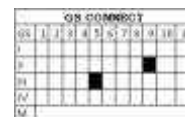
India-Saudi Ties

News Excerpt

Recently, India PM visited Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Saudi King. Indian PM participated in the Future Investment Summit and held bilateral talks with his Saudi counterpart.

Pre-Connect

- India-Saudi Arabia relations have gained a new trajectory in recent times.



- In 2016, Saudi Arabia conferred its highest civilian award to Indian PM.
- India had earlier also participated in the Future Investment Summit which was also dubbed as ‘Davos in the desert’, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The Crown Prince had also visited India in February 2019.

Key Highlights

- Strategic Partnership Council
 - India and Saudi Arabia are set to sign an agreement for creating a bilateral strategic partnership council.
 - The council will include multiple sections involving the External Affairs Ministry and NITI Aayog and counterpart organizations from Saudi Arabia.
 - The council will be jointly led by Saudi King and Indian PM.
 - Given the centralized nature of executive in both countries it would, hopefully, expedite the decision-making process.
 - The SPC would be a permanent bilateral platform with two verticals jointly serviced by the two Foreign and Trade and Industry Ministries.
- International Cooperation
 - Both sides condemned the interference of other countries in the internal matters of countries.
 - Both sides stressed the Security Council Resolution (2254) with regard to the situation in Syria, and emphasized the importance of preserving the unity of Yemen and achieving its security and stability, and the importance of a political solution to the Yemeni crisis on the basis of the GCC initiative, the outcomes of the Yemeni National Dialogue and the Security Council Resolution (2216).
- Security Cooperation

Timeline of India-Saudi Arabia Relations

- ❖ India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations reflecting the centuries old economic and socio-cultural ties.
- ❖ The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 was followed by high-level visits from both sides.
- ❖ King Saud visited India in 1955 and the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Kingdom in 1956.
- ❖ In 2006 the visit of King Abdullah, marked a “**a new era**” in the bilateral relationship.
- ❖ Both sides signed Delhi Declaration which imparted fresh momentum to the relationship and supplied the framework for developing more expansive ties.
- ❖ Later In 2010, India PM visited Saudi Arabia where both sides signed Riyadh Declaration according to which both sides agreed to elevate **their bilateral engagement to a “Strategic Partnership,”**

Both countries decided to enhance bilateral defence, security and anti-terror cooperation. Also, the first bilateral naval exercise is to be held soon.

Analytica

India-**Saudi** “*entente cordiale*”

- Deeper understandings: Saudi Arabia showed an understanding of recent Indian actions in Jammu and Kashmir while India strongly condemned the various attacks on Saudi civilian facilities.
- Kingdom Vision for 2030: Saudi Arabia is going through mega economic reform programs through its Kingdom Vision for 2030. This strategic document lists eight major partner **countries including India, the world’s third largest oil importer**. Saudi Arabia had committed to investing \$100 billion in India. At the Future Investment Initiative forum, India listed five “**trends**” in India with global investors’ remit:
 - ✓ Technology and innovation,

- ✓ Infrastructure development,
- ✓ Human resource development,
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Business-friendly governance.
- Energy Cooperation:
 - ✓ **Saudi Arabia has consistently** been India's number one supplier of crude oil, accounting for around 20 percent of its total oil demand.
 - ✓ Saudi Aramco is to be one of the two strategic partners in the proposed \$44 billion, 1.2 mbpd PSU refinery at Raigarh **on India's west coast.**
 - ✓ Saudi Aramco also to acquire a fifth of the Reliance refinery at Jamnagar and to **participate in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves.**
 - ✓ A preliminary agreement was signed between Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd and Saudi Aramco that will result in a greater Saudi role in setting up a second fuel reserve facility in Karnataka.
 - ✓ **The West Asia unit of India's Indian Oil Corp. Ltd** and Saudi Arabia's' Al Jeri company for downstream sector cooperation.
- Security Cooperation
 - ✓ Both nations have Joint Defense Cooperation Committee and Joint defense manufacturing.
 - ✓ Indian army trains the Saudi forces in mountain warfare.
 - ✓ Both nations have a comprehensive security dialogue at National Security Advisor level. This would enable both sides to explore new areas of cooperation alongside reinforcing the already thriving bilateral engagements.
 - ✓ India and Saudi intelligence agencies are working closely to provide data, real time information and tracking the movements of suspects as well as flow of finances through process of money laundering.
 - ✓ Both countries have signed an Extradition Treaty and Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons. Saudi has handed over a dozen suspects, including Abu Jundal, to India for their alleged role in various terror-related cases.
 - ✓ Saudi Arabia has interests to play a role in the Indian Ocean region. In order to enhance their maritime cooperation both countries decided to hold their first joint naval exercise in 2019-20. This will also help in safeguarding International trade via sea routes.
- Diaspora
 - ✓ India is the source of the largest expatriate community in Saudi Arabia with a 2.6 million-strong Indian diaspora.
 - ✓ **The contribution of Indian workers in building Saudi Arabia's economy and enriching its society and culture through has been repeatedly acknowledged by the Saudi royals and other high dignitaries.**
 - ✓ **The contribution of the Indian expatriate community in Saudi Arabia's contribution in the form of remittances in the sum of \$12-15 billion annually.**



- Cultural relations
 - ✓ The annual Hajj and the Umra pilgrimages are a regular and important focal point of India-Saudi cultural interaction.
 - ✓ Indians constitute one of the largest contingents of pilgrims to the Muslim holy cities of Makkah and Madinah.
 - ✓ The Indian government provides a subsidy to Hajj pilgrims at a total estimated cost of \$200 million annually.
 - ✓ India and Saudi Arabia have signed several agreements to provide opportunities for higher education, research, and training to their respective students, scholars and experts in their respective countries.
 - ✓ The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) has been active in organizing programs in Saudi Arabia aimed at promoting mutual cultural awareness and understanding.
- Decline of Pakistan Factor
 - ✓ Pakistan shares a strategic relation with Saudi Arabia, it provides Saudi's a security cover with its military and also at the same time it has often termed its nuclear bomb as "Islamic bomb" signifying the fact that it is accessible to Saudi Arabia when its needs arrive.
 - ✓ This prevented India and Saudi Arabia from discovering the strategic importance if engaging one another. But over the last few decades both countries have decided to disentangle themselves from certain inhibitions of the past.
 - ✓ There have been indications that Saudi Arabia is less interested in meddling in India's internal affairs. Saudi Arabia's stand after the India's abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

PEPPER IT WITH
Saudi Aramco, ICCR, Hajj pilgrim, Delhi Deceleration, Riyadh Deceleration, UNSC Resolution 2216

Issues

- Bilateral Trade and Investment:
 - ✓ The bilateral commercial and economic ties have still remained range-bound. Trade has drifted downwards largely due to lower crude prices.
 - ✓ According to the latest Indian data, the bilateral trade has fallen by 9.2% over the corresponding figure in 2018.
 - ✓ It was 5:1 in kingdom's favor and was dominated by the traditional commodities, revealing the need for greater Indian export promotion efforts.
 - ✓ The Saudi investment in India remains far below potential. The kingdom's cumulative investments in India are only \$229 million, or 0.05% of the total inbound FDI.
- Saudi Support to Wahabism:
 - ✓ Wahhabism has been Saudi Arabia's dominant faith, an austere form of Islam that insists on a literal interpretation of the Quran.
 - ✓ This has negative impact in the sensitive Kashmir valley in India- According to intelligence reports-'Ahle Hadith' as the followers of the Wahhabi practices are called in the Valley control over 2,000 mosques which preaches anti-India sermons.
 - ✓ The growing influence of Wahhabism in Kashmir and the narrative of the armed struggle was changing over the years from independence to the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate.
- Iran Factor
 - ✓ Iran and Saudi act as two different poles in the middle east.
 - ✓ India has huge interest in Iran in form of oil exports and Chabahar port. Therefore, it needs to perform a balancing act between the two countries.

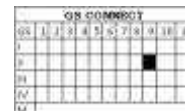
Conclusion

- The India-Saudi Arabia relationship has been transformed from a transactional relationship to a strategic partnership.
- Accordingly, the scope of cooperation has widened not just within traditional areas such as energy, migration, and trade but has expanded to other sectors, including investment, health, pharmaceuticals, IT, ICT, and space.
- Importantly, India and Saudi Arabia seem to have reached the point where, unlike in the past, they are both determined not to permit the further development of ties between them to be bracketed by their relations with third countries.

India-Africa Deepening Engagement

News Excerpt

Indian Vice President **visited the Comoros and Sierra Leone. This will boost India's ties with the strategically located countries in the Western Indian ocean region.**



Pre-Connect

- Various historical, cultural, and economic linkages underpin the Africa-India relationship. In recent times, India is increasingly investing in its relationship with Africa and its ties with the continent have acquired vibrancy and dynamism, marked by an unprecedented intensification of political engagement.
- The spirit of **'developing together as equals'** India-Africa bilateral partnership and it stimulates South-South Cooperation.
- The challenges facing India and African countries are similar. Both possess emerging economies with a demographic dividend and youth bulge.
- Just as India and Africa fought colonialism, both continue to work together for a just, representative, and democratic global order that has a voice and role for one-third of humanity that reside in both regions.
- **India is currently Africa's fourth-largest trading partner, and Africa's third-largest export destination.** Indian government initiatives like Focus Africa (2002), TEAM-9 (2004), Duty-Free Tariff Preference Scheme for Least Developed Countries (2008), and the institution of the India Africa Forum Summit (held in 2008, 2011, 2015), have succeeded in lifting bilateral trade and investment flows to new heights.
- India is a member of the International Contact Group on Somalia
- India has signed defence cooperation with South Africa (2000) Tanzania (2003), the Seychelles (2003) and Nigeria (2007).
- The Indian Ocean island states, particularly Mauritius and the Seychelles, occupy a special **position in India's security policy.** India has expanded its own security cooperation with these island states. On behalf of the government in Mauritius, India patrols and monitors the island state's **Exclusive Economic Zone, and trains police and army members in fighting pirates.**
- **India's engagement with the Indian diaspora in African countries has acquired new salience, enabling a shift from the policy of 'active-disassociation' in previous decades, to 'proactive association' in recent years.**

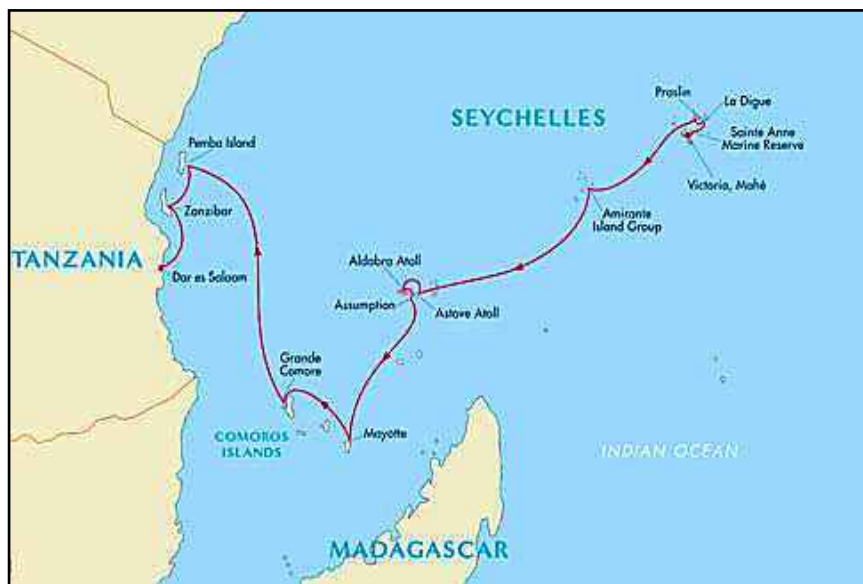
India ties with Sierra Leone

- India had contributed troops to the UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and also assisted country in the post conflict peace-building phase.
- India has also undertaken grant projects through IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation) fund and provided direct humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone during Ebola crisis in 2014 and during floods in 2017.
- Sierra Leone is also a beneficiary of Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.
- The bilateral trade has remained modest in the recent years and in 2018-19, it was US\$ 124 million.

- A small Indian diaspora is residing in Sierra Leone. There is a Hindu temple in Freetown. The Choitram Trust runs a charity hospital

India ties with Comoros

- ✓ In the last few years, **India's engagement** in various fields with Comoros has intensified.
- ✓ India has extended concessional lines of credit of US\$ 41.6 million for setting up of an 18 MW power plant in Moroni.
- ✓ Comoros avails scholarship/training programs offered by India under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation and ICCR schemes.
- ✓ India has been paying annual contribution of Comoros towards its membership of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- ✓ The Comoros sits at the northern end of the Mozambique channel and provided a strong base from which to control the channel.
- ✓ The Comoros is also a member of the Arab League that India always had strong ties with and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation that India has begun to reach out in recent years.
- ✓ **India's engagement with the Comoros generating a lot of enthusiasm, India could for all practical purposes complete its strategic axis in the Mozambique channel.**




Analytica

Vanilla Islands

What are the Vanilla Islands?

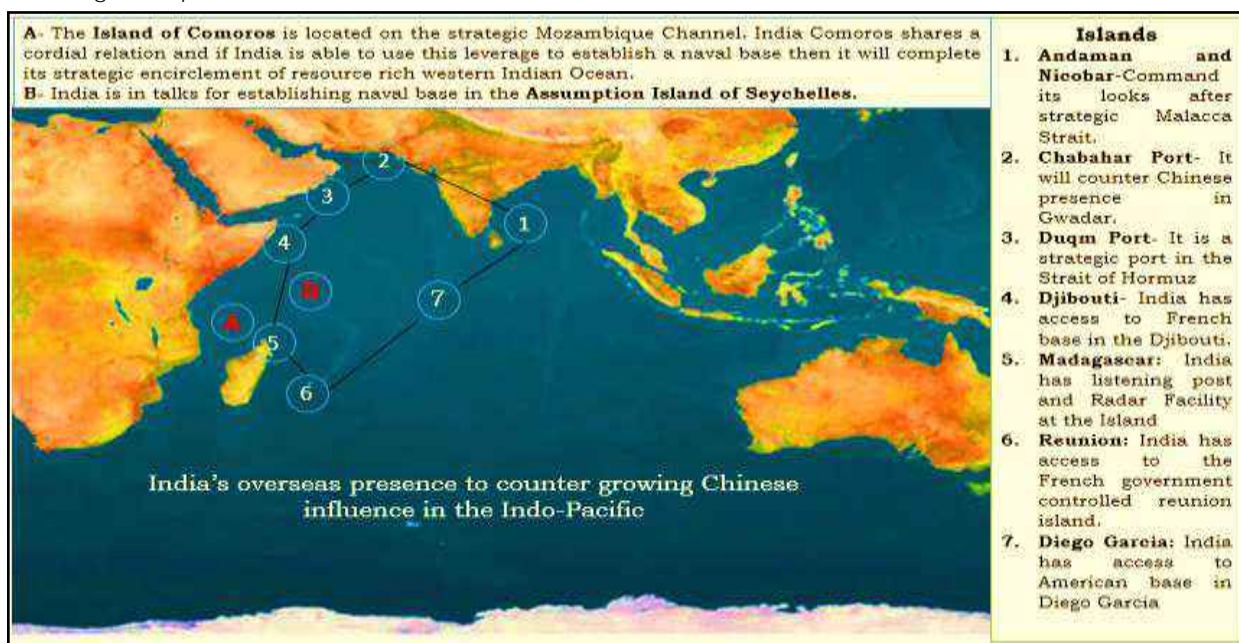
- o Vanilla Islands is a grouping of six island nations in south-west Indian Ocean who joined hands in 2010 to integrate their efforts to boost tourism. Mayotte, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion and Madagascar are its members.
- o The term 'Vanilla' is used because these countries are known for their export of the flavoring

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayotte is a part of Comoros archipelago. • It is a France-administered territory situated in the Mozambique channel. • It is the southernmost Muslim-majority territory (not a country as it is a part of France) in the African continent. • Madagascar is an island country situated approximately 400 Km off the coast of East Africa. • A former French colony, Madagascar is one of the least developed nations of the world. It is a member of the African Union (AU) as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC). • A small Gujarati merchant community exists here. • Reunion is another French territory located east of Madagascar. It has substantial presence of Indian origin people due to indentured labor from South India as well as Gujarati Muslim merchants. • The Roman Catholicism is the religion of the majority while Hindus make up 6.7 per cent of the population • Mauritius also has substantial presence of Indian diaspora. The island nation was formerly under the control of the Dutch, the French as well as the British, and got its independence in 1968. • Mauritius has highest HDI in the Africa and ranks highly on economic development. It also has the highest population density in Africa. • Around 50 per cent of the Mauritian population follows Hinduism followed by Christianity (32.7 per cent), and Islam (17.2 per cent). • The Republic of Seychelles is an archipelago country in the Indian Ocean with 115 islands. • Excluding the French regions, Seychelles has the highest nominal per capita GDP in Africa. • It has high Human Development Index (HDI) and is classified as a high-income economy by the World Bank. • Seychelles had no indigenous inhabitants and most of its present day population consists of African, French, Indian and Chinese origin people. A majority of the population of Seychelles follows Christianity. • In 1998, the Seychelles government declared Taipooosam Kavadi Festival a national holiday. 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">The Vanilla Profile</h2>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comoros is a small island nation situated in the warm Indian Ocean waters of the Mozambique Channel. • It is a volcanic archipelago with the largest city and capital at Moroni. Arabic and French are the two official languages. • The majority of the Comorians follow Sunni Islam and Comoros is the only Muslim-majority country in Southern Africa
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substance Vanilla.

Why they are important for India?

- China Factor: Just like India, China as well as other countries eye the resources of Africa, the islands situated on important sea lines of communication (SLOC) have become strategically important. This importance is further increased by China trying to increase its footprint in the Indian Ocean region. **The Chinese strategy of jeopardising India's standing in her own vicinity by building naval bases in the strategically located points of the Indian Ocean Region, has been effectively neutralized by India's vigorous counter measures in Vanilla Islands.**
- Climate change: **India also finds a convergence of goals in the islands' insistence on global measures to arrest climate change and developing Blue Economy grounded in the sustainable use of the resources of the ocean.**
- Strategic Importance:



- Important European countries like France, Britain and US maintain presence in the Indian Ocean through the territories in this region.
 - With all the sea lines of communication between Europe and the Indian Ocean came around Africa and went through the Mozambique channel, the Vanilla islands became attractive way stations.
 - Different Island nation groupings like Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and Caribbean community (CARICOM) command substantial numbers in the United Nations General Assembly, and therefore, are courted by big powers.
 - The Island enjoy vast exclusive economic zones (EEZ) to which they are entitled under the UNCLOS.
 - Economic Cooperation: Often small island nations like Mauritius are used for tax evasion-Base Erosion and Profit Shifting- therefore, better information exchange and coordination is warranted with the countries. The countries also stand to benefit from Indian tourists, economic aid,
- Cotton Diplomacy

 - ❖ India implemented a Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) for cotton in six African countries, namely – Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda from 2012 to 2018.
 - ❖ This programme was announced at the second India-Africa Forum Summit in 2011. It aimed at strengthening both the agriculture and textile part of the cotton value chain in Africa through a series of interventions which were grouped into two components.
 - ❖ The Cotton TAP is now extended to C4 Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali countries.

infrastructure projects, Indian security umbrella, and collaboration in maritime security, disaster management, humanitarian assistance, relief and rescue operations.

- o Counter-Terrorism: As terror group expand their reach to smaller states and South Asia, India and the island nations will need to collaborate in counter-terror operations, a lesson driven home by the ghastly Easter Bombings in Sri Lanka.

PEPPER IT WITH
Asia-Africa Growth Corridor,
Assumption Island Issue, Pan
Africa medical network, SLOCS,
CARICOM. UNCLOS. PIF

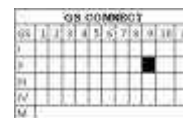
Way-Forward

- ◇ Government of India has established a separate Indian Ocean Division with a focus on the island states. It clubbed Maldives and Sri Lanka with Mauritius and Seychelles, but left out the other Vanilla Islands. To be effective in the south western Indian Ocean India need to treat the Vanilla Islands as a single strategic space. It can build on its traditional presence in Mauritius to launch substantive economic and defence cooperation with the littoral.
- ◇ Africa is a continent of limitless possibility, with increasing trade, investments, and a surge in **innovation**. **India's re-engagement** with Africa is taking place in a fast-changing and dynamic environment. African governments and leaders are playing an effective role in shaping the **continent's future and the region is witnessing rapid growth**.
- ◇ At a time when various non-western powers like Japan, China, Malaysia, and Singapore are stepping up their presence in Africa, it is imperative for India to regularly consult with its African partners, and leverage its unique blend of development packages, technology transfer, human resource development, and infrastructure development, in order to be truly recognized **as an 'alternative development partner'**.

Universal Postal Union

News Excerpt

India Post has now stopped taking new bookings for Pakistan-bound mails.



Pre-Connect

- The Universal Postal Union (UPU), founded in 1874, coordinates international mail delivery. The UPU has 192 member-countries and is headquartered in Bern. It has four units: the Congress, the Council of Administration, the International Bureau, and the Postal Operations Council.
- India joined the UPU on July 1, 1876 i.e. before independence.
- The International Bureau issued a Convention Manual in 2018, in which Article 17-143 **details steps to be taken in "Event of Temporary Suspension and Resumption of Services."**
- Under UPU rules, when a country decides to suspend exchange with a country, it must notify **the operator of the other country the duration for which services are being stopped**. The UPU's International Bureau too has to be notified.
- According to the three bilateral agreements between India and Pakistan, too, a prior notice has to be served before suspending services.

Analytica

Retaliatory step: In the wake of abrogation of Article 370, Pakistan has stopped postal mail between the two countries. Such retaliation would further worsen the relations between the two countries.

Minimal Impact: Such bans would not have a large impact at a time when communication has moved to the Internet. Longer routes of mail through other countries can also be taken reducing its significance further more.

Peremptory Hurdles: Some official communication has to be by posts. Thus official works would be stalled due to this ban like courts do not accept emails. If anyone at edges is arrested, the power of attorney that has to be sent to his lawyer cannot be couriered. It may lead to delayed justice.

Trade disruption: This will lead to Indian sellers re-evaluating their business models because communication is the lifeline of trade. This would impact both the countries negatively in the economic sphere as well.

Violation of International norms: The decision is directly in contravention of the World Postal Union's norms. The stopping of the postal service is a gross violation of human rights as **communication is basic in today's era.**

Risk of loss and unnecessary responsibility: Indian postal authorities have been compelled to put mail addressed to the country on hold. There is a risk of loss of these mails and the also has caused overburdening of work at the source destinations as well as unnecessary responsibility on the officers in charge.

Setback to literary world: It is also a setback for the literary world as the transfer of magazines and other publication to and from these 2 countries has also stopped.

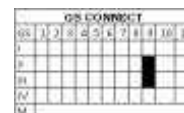
Way Forward

- The spirit of cooperation is utmost important for maintaining peace. The result of domineering acts always display in worsening the situation. There should be conciliation over the issues rather than proceeding in an imperious manner.
- The immediate restoration of the postal service should take place as exchange of literature across the border helps maintaining the cultural ties and affinity among the people of these two nations. Postal service is thus one of the major contributor in promoting peace and harmony.
- The postal service is the official means of communication in courts and other important offices and thus should be reinstated for undisrupted proceedings. Also it would help in faster delivery of justice by uninterrupted exchange of required documents.
- Violations of international norms hamper the world order and may motivate others to do the same. It may cause bitter dissention among the parties leading to discard. To counter this there should be international pressure to stop such violations.
- It may lead to displacement of trust on the institute which may fraught with danger the very existence of the organisation and hence there should be strict punitive actions to refrain the member countries from steering such violations.

MOSAiC Expedition

News Excerpt

Recently, MOSAiC - Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate began in Tromso, Norway. It is believed to be the largest-scale Arctic research expedition of all time.



What is MOSAiC Expedition?

- It seeks to build the first detailed profile of the Arctic environment year-round by spending a year trapped in the sea ice.
- The goal of the MOSAiC expedition is to take the closest look ever at the Arctic as the epicentre of global warming and to gain fundamental insights that are key to better understand global climate change.
- **The project with a total budget exceeding 140 Million €** involves Hundreds of researchers from 19 countries.
- Following in the footsteps of Fridtjof Nansen's ground-breaking expedition with his wooden sailing ship Fram in 1893-1896, the MOSAiC expedition will bring a modern research icebreaker close to the north pole for a full year including for the first time in polar winter.
- The backbone of MOSAiC will be the year-round operation of RV Polarstern, drifting with the sea ice across the central Arctic during the years 2019 to 2020.
- A distributed regional network of observational sites will be set up on the sea ice in an area of up to ~50km distance from RV Polarstern. The ship and the surrounding network will drift with

the natural ice drift across the polar cap towards the Atlantic, while the sea ice thickens during winter.

- The 32-year-old polar researcher from Kerala, Vishnu Nandan will be the only Indian aboard the multidisciplinary drifting observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAIC) expedition.

Analytica

Consequences of Arctic Climate Change

- Sea ice is critical to Arctic marine life - and it's projected to nearly disappear in the summer within a generation. The average temperature of the Arctic has increased 2.3°C since the 1970s.
- Ice dependent species such as narwhals, polar bears, and walrus are at increasing risk with shrinking sea ice cover. By 2100, polar bears could face starvation and reproductive failure even in far northern Canada.
- Shiny ice and snow reflect a high proportion of the sun's energy into space. As the Arctic loses snow and ice, bare rock and water absorb more **and more of the sun's energy, making** it even warmer. This is called the albedo effect.
- Melting ice is opening up previously inaccessible routes. With increased shipping comes spill risk (both fuel **and cargo**), "black carbon" emissions that help to speed the rate of Arctic melting, ship noise that may also affect whales, and icebreaking that can disrupt ice crossing routes for people and animals. There is no proven effective method to clean up oil spills in ice covered waters.
- Reduced ice cover is making offshore oil production in the Arctic more commercially viable. In 2014, the first commercial development of offshore oil (Prirazlomnoye) was pumped from Russian Arctic waters.

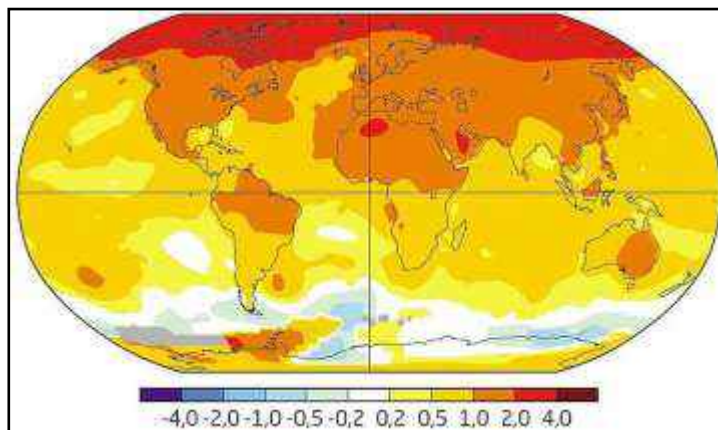


Fig: Near Surface Temperature Changes 1970-2017

- Southern species can pose a risk to existing Arctic species and systems. On the tundra, rising temperatures have brought a new competitor - **the Arctic fox's much larger cousin, the red fox**. Not only does the newcomer colonize their dens, it can also kill the smaller Arctic foxes.

Why MOSAiC Expedition matters?

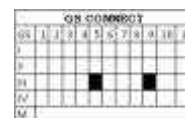
- ✓ MOSAiC aims at a breakthrough in understanding the Arctic climate system and in its representation in global climate models. MOSAiC will provide a more robust scientific basis for policy decisions on climate change mitigation and adaptation and for setting up a framework for managing Arctic development sustainably.
- ✓ The Arctic is the key area of global climate change, with warming rates exceeding twice the global average and warming during winter even larger.
- ✓ It is well possible that the Arctic ocean will become ice free in summer during the 21st century. This dramatic change strongly affects weather and climate on the whole northern hemisphere and fuels rapid economic development in the Arctic.
- ✓ Many processes in the Arctic climate system are poorly represented in climate models because they are not sufficiently understood.
- ✓ The understanding of Arctic climate processes is limited by a dramatic lack of observations in the central Arctic, especially in winter and spring. During these seasons, sea ice is so thick that even the best research icebreakers cannot penetrate into the Arctic and researchers have always been locked out.
- ✓ The dramatic changes in the Arctic climate system and the fast retreat of Arctic sea ice strongly affect global climate. The inability of modern climate models to reproduce Arctic climate change is one of the most pressing problems in understanding and predicting global climate change.
- ✓ MOSAiC sets out to investigate the heart of the Arctic climate system year-round – one of the largest uncharted areas in climate research.

PEPPER IT WITH
Svalbard Seed Bank, Himadri

Electric Vehicle (EVs)

News Excerpt

In a major decision to give a boost to Electric Vehicles (EVs) in country, Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC) and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, have recently approved amendments in Electric Vehicle Charging Guidelines and Specifications.



Key Highlights of the amendments

- A phase-wise installation of an appropriate network of Charging Infrastructure throughout the country has been envisaged in the Guidelines ensuring that at least one Charging Station should be available in a grid of 3 Km X 3 Km in the cities and one Charging Station at every 25 Km on both sides of highways/roads.
- It has been envisaged that in the first phase (i.e. 1-3 years) all Mega Cities with population of 4 million plus as per census 2011, all existing expressways connected to these Mega Cities & important Highways connected with each of these Mega Cities may be taken up for coverage.
- In the second phase (3-5 years) big cities like State Capitals, UT headquarters may be covered for distributed and demonstrative effect.
- Further, important Highways connected with each of these Mega Cities may also be taken up for coverage.
- To address the concerns in inter-city travel and long range and/or heavy duty EVs it has been provided that Fast Charging Station for long range and/or heavy duty EVs like buses/trucks etc., shall be installed at every 100 Kms.
- Guidelines specifies the type of chargers of different standards thus ensuring that the Public Charging Stations(PCS) owners have the freedom to install the chargers as per the market requirement.

Analytica

Why a transition to EVs has become inevitable?

There are several reasons to prove that transition to EVs has become inevitable:

- Poor air quality and noise pollution have sharply affected the quality of life, and pose a serious public health challenge.
- Fueling with electricity offers some advantages not available in conventional internal combustion engine vehicles. Because electric motors react quickly, EVs are very responsive and have very good torque.
- EVs can help the India have a greater diversity of fuel choices available for transportation. Our reliance on petroleum makes us vulnerable to price spikes and supply disruptions. EVs help reduce this threat.
- EVs can also reduce the emissions that contribute to climate change and smog, improving public health and reducing ecological damage. Charging EV on renewable energy such as solar or wind minimizes these emissions even more.

Possible hurdles in this transition:

- ✓ Industry leaders have pointed out that the existing supply chain and infrastructure are grossly inadequate for EVs of any kind. Batteries, which are the most important component of EVs and account for 40% of their price, are not domestically produced.
- ✓ It is stated that the country will be entirely dependent on imports for the lithium-ion batteries which are to be used, as in the case of petroleum.
- ✓ Charging stations are critical, as petrol pumps are for fossil fuel vehicles, but there are at present only 500 of them in the country. Tens of thousands of them would have to be set up if two-wheelers and three-wheelers are to go electric.
- ✓ There should also be dedicated supply of electricity to the charging stations. The industry will also need new EV technologies and will have to put in place an R&D system.

Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME India Scheme)

PHASE 1

In order to promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology and to ensure sustainable growth of the same Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises launched FAME-India Scheme- Phase-I from 1st April 2015. The scheme, which was initially upto 31st April 2017, was extended upto 31st March, 2019. Total outlay for FAME 1 was 895 crore.

PHASE 2

FAME India Scheme- Phase 2 came into effect from 1st April 2019 for a period of 3 years (2019-20 to 2021-22) with total outlay of 10000 crore. This scheme is the expanded version of the FAME India 1.

The main objective of the scheme is to encourage faster adoption of Electric and hybrid vehicle by way of offering upfront Incentive on purchase of Electric vehicles and also by way of establishing a necessary charging Infrastructure for electric

Steps taken by the government:

- FAME India- Phase 1 and FAMEINDIA Phase 2 schemes launched in 2015 and 2019 respectively are major initiatives aimed at transition to EVs
- **India's Electric Vehicle (EV) Mission 2030:** Government plans to have an all-electric fleet of vehicles by 2030
- **Automotive Mission Plan 2026:** It aimed at bringing the Indian Automotive Industry among the top three of the world in engineering, manufacture and exports of vehicles & components; growing in value to over 12% of India GDP and generating an additional 65 million jobs

- Green Urban Transport Scheme: It focused to reduce the emission of harmful carbon gas from the transportation, especially from government owned transport facilities. Under this scheme, government plans to launch the eco-friendly transportation facilities in urban areas across the nation, which run without damaging climatic conditions.
- The Niti Aayog has proposed transition of all three- and two-wheelers above 150 cc to electric by 2023 and 2025 respectively.
- Electric quadricycles, which until recently were illegal because they could not be registered under the Motor Vehicles Act (mandatory for any vehicle that plies on public roads), have now been allowed to get registered. These could soon replace (or supplement) diesel- and CNG-powered auto-rickshaws, much in use in smaller cities and towns and offering last-mile connectivity in large cities, too.
- Six state governments offer land and tax benefits to manufacturers in the EV sector--Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

PEPPER IT WITH

International Solar Alliance,
India's Renewable energy targets,
Bonn Challenge

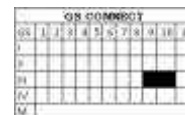
Conclusion

From above analysis it is clear that, though India is proactively taking steps, but lot needs to be done in order to tackle energy crisis and issue of environment sustainability. There are challenges, but they should not be used as reasons for not working to a plan. The country has lost much time in the case of electric vehicles and so it has to actually speed up the switch-over. The deadlines in many such situations are sometimes extended, but serious work to effect the transition must start now.

India's first e-waste clinic

News Excerpt

Recently, The Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have joined hands to set up India's first e-waste clinic in Bhopal.



Highlights

- The clinic is a three-month pilot project which, if successful, will be implemented elsewhere in the country.
- The clinic will be able to segregate, process and dispose waste from both household and commercial units.
- Either separate carts for the collection of e-waste will be designed, or separate bins will be attached to existing ones meant for solid and wet waste.
- The clinic is being conceived in compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.

The Menace of E-Waste in India

- India is one of the biggest producers of e-waste in the world. The Global E-waste Monitor 2017, published by the United Nations University, states that India generates about 2 million tonnes of e-waste annually and ranks fifth among e-waste producing countries, after the US, China, Japan and Germany.
- There is no updated government data on e-waste generated in the country.
- In India, the lack of an updated inventory of e-waste generated makes it difficult to quantify the e-waste recycled and disposed.
- An ASSOCHAM-KPMG study, Electronic Waste Management in India identified computer equipment account for almost 70 per cent of e-waste, followed by telecommunication equipment-phones (12 per cent), electrical equipment (8 per cent) and medical equipment (7 per cent) with remaining from household e-waste.
- According to a study in May 2017, the volume of waste is growing at an estimated 21 per cent annually.
- Unfortunately, India is ill-equipped in skilled labour to handle e-waste recycling. Only 1.5 per cent of e-waste generated in India gets recycled.

- Zero awareness about e-waste and its recycling, as well as the role of the unorganised sector are the added challenges to the problem.
- The base metals which can be reused are lost and results soil contamination due to unorganised and crude dismantling.
- A consumer of an electric or electronic device is not apprised of the end of value chain of the product.
- No information is provided along with the product packing about the e-collection centre for the product sold. The responsibility of the consumers is not specified along with the product.
- The deposit refund scheme (DRS) that aids the recycling of the product is not available in India.
- The lax of capacity with the urban local bodies leads to poor e-waste management and worsens the situation.

Pollutant	Occurrence
Liquid crystal	Displays
Lithium	Mobile telephones, Photographic equipments, video equipments, batteries
Mercury	Components of Copper machines and steam irons, batteries in clocks and pocket calculator, switches, LCDs
Nickel	Alloys, batteries, relays, semiconductors, pigments
PCB (poly chlorinated biphenyls)	Transformers, capacitors, softening agents for paints, glue, plastic
Selenium	Photoelectric cells, pigments, photo copiers, fax machines
Silver	Capacitors, Switches (contacts), batteries, resistors
Zinc	Steel, brass, alloys, disposable and rechargeable batteries, luminous substances

Steps Taken for E-Waste Management

- ✓ Basel convention on the control of Trans – boundary Movement of Hazardous waste and their Disposal, 1989
- ✓ Conference of Parties of the Basel Agreement, 2006 – to regulate the E-Waste movement
- ✓ E-waste (Management) Rules, 2018 aim to facilitate and effectively implement the environmentally sound management of e-waste in India. The collection targets under the provision of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in the Rules have been revised and targets have been introduced for new producers who have started their sales operations recently.
- ✓ E-Waste Awareness Program (In India)- The program aims to create effective awareness in various levels (of society) to reduce the adverse impact on environment and health arising out of the polluting technologies used in recycling e-waste in the unorganized sector.
- ✓ Ministry of Environment and Forests is responsible in identification of hazardous wastes and provides permission to exporters and importers under the Environment (protection) Act, 1986.
- ✓ Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) constituted under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 monitors the compliance of the conditions of authorization, import

Pollutant	Occurrence
Arsenic	Semiconductors, diodes, microwaves, LEDs (light emitting diodes), solar cells
Boron	Electron tubes, filler of plastic and rubber, lubricant additives
Brominated flame proofing agent	Casings, circuit boards (plastic), cables and PVC cables
Cadmium	Batteries, pigments, solders, alloys, circuit boards, computer batteries, monitor, Cathode ray tubes (CRTs)
Chrom	Dyes/Pigments, Switches, Solar
Cobalt	Insulator
Copper	Conductor Cables, copper ribbons, coils, circuitry, Pigments
Lead	Lead rechargeable batteries, solar, transistors, lithium batteries, PVC (polyvinyl chloride), stabilizers, lasers, LEDs, thermo electrical elements, circuit boards

and export and conduct training courses for authorities dealing with management of hazardous wastes.

- ✓ Directorate General of Foreign Trade constituted under the Foreign Trade (Development & regulation) Act 1992 to grant/ refuse license for hazardous wastes prohibited for imports under the Environment (protection) Act, 1986.
- ✓ Port Authorities and Customs Authorities under the customs Act, 1962 verify for any illegal traffic and analyze wastes permitted for imports and exports and also train officials on the provisions of the Hazardous Wastes Rules.

Conclusion

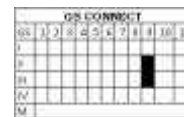
With the growing consumerism and increasing population, the e-waste issue is going acquire even worse form. Timely action, awareness programs and behavioral change is essential to deal with this serious problem which yet does not appear so-serious to common population. Pro-active government support and enthusiasm from private sector as well as strict enforcement mechanisms hold the key in order to ensure success of the efforts.

PEPPER IT WITH
Ban on Single use plastics, Solid waste management rules, e-waste management rules, Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions.

UN Report on Lead Concentration in Paints

News Excerpt

Recently, UN released report on the occasion of the World Lead Prevention Week which revealed that many of its members do not have proper laws inhibiting the concentration of lead in items like paints.



Key Highlights

- Only 13 countries have laws which prescribe that lead concentration should not be more than 90 particles per million (ppm).
- Ninety ppm is the concentration limit recommended by the Model Law and Guidance for Regulating Lead Paint published by the UNEP in 2018.
- It is the lowest and most protective regulatory limit for lead paints that has been set in India, the United States, Bangladesh, Canada, Cameroon, China, Ethiopia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Nepal and the Philippines.
- The largest economic burden of lead exposure was borne by low- and middle-income countries.
- Estimated annual costs (in international dollars) of lead exposure by global region, based on loss of IQ, include the following: Africa — \$134.7 billion; Latin America and the Caribbean — \$142.3 billion; and Asia — \$699.9 billion.
- Most of the paints tested for lead were found to exceed the 90 ppm or 600 ppm legal limit that has been set by many countries as an

Lead: Properties and health hazards

- ❖ Properties that are responsible for the many uses of elemental lead include its ductility, ease of welding, low melting point, high density, and ability to absorb gamma radiation and X-radiation, general chemical resistance.
- ❖ Lead is added to paints for various reasons, including enhancing the colour, reducing corrosion and decreasing the drying time. However, lead can reach soil, dust and groundwater through weathering or peeling of the paint.
- ❖ According to UNEP Report, lead exposure accounted for 1.06 million deaths from long-term effects and 24.4 million disability adjusted life years known as DALYs in 2007.
- ❖ Lead can cause permanent damage to the brain and nervous system, resulting in decreased IQ and increased behavioral problems.
- ❖ It can also cause anemia, increase the risk of kidney damage and hypertension, and impair reproductive function. Young children and pregnant women (developing foetus can be exposed) are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of lead.
- ❖ Even relatively low levels of exposure can cause serious and irreversible neurological damage.

achievable limit. In addition, many of these paints contained very high levels of lead, above 10,000 ppm of the dry weight of the paint.

- In Asia-Pacific, nine (23 per cent) countries had enacted laws. Here, the paint testing studies found 16-95 per cent samples containing lead above the set standards depending from country to country. The annual economic cost of childhood lead exposure in this region was found to be 1.88 per cent of the regional GDP.
- A study conducted in 2009-10 found that in India, as many as 72 per cent of the samples contained lead levels much higher than the limits prescribed by the Bureau of Industry Standards.
- The UNEP report said the cost of eliminating the use of lead compounds in decorative paint was much lower than removing these paints from surfaces in homes.
- The report also recommended that establishing laws and informing people about the hazardous effects of lead in paints remained key measures to curb its growing menace.

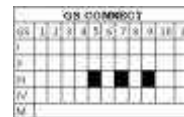
The Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint

It is a voluntary partnership formed by UN Environment and the World Health Organization to prevent exposure to lead, while promoting the phase-out of paints containing lead. The Lead Paint Alliance is guided by an advisory group chaired by the United States of America through the Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is also the part of this alliance.

Asbestos in Baby powder

News Excerpt

Recently, Johnson and Johnson (J&J) recalled 33,000 bottles of one lot of its talcum powder supplied in the United States (US), due to the presence of asbestos found in it.



Analytica

- Asbestos occurs naturally as bundles of fibers made up of minerals, according to the American Cancer Society. It's typically found in soil and rock throughout the world.
- Asbestos is a group of six naturally occurring fibrous minerals composed of thin needle like fibers.
- During talc mining, if talc mining sites are not selected carefully and steps are not taken to purify the talc ore sufficiently, the talc may be contaminated with asbestos.
- Application of Asbestos- Asbestos was nicknamed "the magic mineral" because its unique chemical composition and physical properties made it suitable for use in thousands of products from floor tiles to road signs, from sewage pipes to insulating mattresses.
- Health Issues-
 - o The fibres of which asbestos is composed are easily inhaled and remain embedded in the lungs.
 - o These fibres result in a variety of diseases including lung cancer, **"asbestosis"** and mesothelioma.

The Pneumoconiosis Fund

Rajasthan has recently announced the creation of a Pneumoconiosis Fund with the aim of streamlining the strategy to deal with pneumoconiosis. It will be financed from the District Mineral Foundation (DMF).

Highlights

- Rajasthan is the state with a high prevalence of pneumoconiosis, including silicosis.
- The number of deaths due to silicosis has increased in Rajasthan.
- Pneumoconiosis is a lung disease which mostly affects workers who work in the mining and construction sectors and deal with 2018 report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India with soil, silica, coal dust and asbestos. The disease includes asbestosis, silicosis and coal workers' pneumoconiosis.

- o Mesothelioma is a form of cancer that destroys the lubricating lining between internal organs.
- o Asbestosis is a chronic disease characterised by scarring in the lungs, which leads to long-term breathing complications.
- o According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 125 million people are directly exposed asbestos in their workplace annually. More than 1 million workers die each year from an asbestos-related disease.
- Due to its severe health implications Asbestos is now banned in 60 countries across the world including India. However, despite it continues to be imported and used in India in roofing sheets, insulation sheets and brake linings.
- The Supreme Court, in the case of Consumer Education and Research Centre v. Union of India accepted the well-established adverse effects of asbestos but these judgements are unfortunately yet to alter the ground realities.

Way Forward

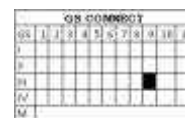
There is an urgent need to stop illegal and unauthorized mining of Asbestos and also need to protect workers from exposure. Strict work place regulations, provision of personal protective gear, methods to reduce exposure, medical monitoring of occupational exposures, **worker training programs could go a long way to protect India's workers and their families from asbestos.**

PEPPER IT WITH
Thermoset Plastic, Amorphous
Silica, Pulmonary Fibrosis

Aarey Forests

News Excerpt

Recently, the Bombay High Court dismissed petitions of the activists opposing tree-felling in the Aarey colony of Maharashtra, the prime green lung of the city. The tree felling in Aarey Milk Colony to make way for a car shed which is a part of the Mumbai Metro project has ignited an environment conversation debate in India.



Pre-Connect

- According to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017, the total forest cover is 7,08,273 sq. km, which is 21.54% of the total geographical area of the country. Forest and tree cover combined is 8,02,088 sq. km or 24.39% of the total geographical area.
- Madhya Pradesh (77,414 sq. km) has the largest forest cover in the country in terms of area. In terms of percentage of forest cover with respect to the total geographical area, Lakshadweep with (90.33%) has the highest forest cover.
- India is ranked 10th in the world, with 24.4% of land area under forest and tree cover, even **though it accounts for 2.4% of the world's surface area and sustains the needs of 17% of human and 18% livestock population.**
- *The Centre has no power to frame a law on forest land, as land is a state subject. The freedom to define land, not classified as forests by the Centre or state records, as forest has been the prerogative of the States since 1996.*

Analytica

What are the causes of deforestation?

- Illegal logging: Wood-based industries like paper, match-sticks, furniture need a substantial amount of wood supply. Wood is used as fuel most commonly and so large number of trees are cut down for fuel supplies.
- Shifting cultivation: The shifting cultivation is considered devastating and disadvantageous as it not only cause harm to the environment but also exerts negative impacts on economy.
- Diversion of forest lands for developmental activities: Forests loss for fulfilling the requirements like construction of roads, development of houses, mineral exploitation and expansion of industries. Increasing population directly affects forest as with the expansion of cities there is a need for more land for housing and settlements.

- Mining: Oil and mining of coal require a large amount of forest land. Construction of roads leads to deforestation as they provide the way to remote land.
- Agriculture expansion: The conversion of forests into agricultural land is a big reason for deforestation. Due to overgrowing demand for food products, many trees are chopped down for crops and for cattle grazing. Over 40% of the forests are cleaned to obtain land and meet the needs of agriculture and wood.
- Forest fires: fires caused in the forest each year either by manmade or natural results into huge loss of forest cover each year.
- Natural disasters: Natural calamities like floods, hurricanes, tsunami causes huge loss of trees.

Why deforestation is a threat to environment?

- ✓ Cutting trees both adds carbon dioxide to the air and removes the ability to absorb existing carbon dioxide.
- ✓ Removing trees deprives the forest of portions of its canopy, which blocks the sun's rays during the day and retains heat at night. That disruption leads to more extreme temperature swings that can be harmful to plants and animals.
- ✓ Deforestation alters land and so that many of the plants and animals do not survive.
- ✓ Deforestation in extreme cases pose the threat of extinction entire species. Millions of plants and animal species are on the verge of extinction due to deforestation.
- ✓ Deforestation leads to land erosion because the trees maintain the surface of the mountains.
- ✓ Chopping down of trees disrupts the flow of water and leads to floods in some areas.

Steps taken by the government of India to conserve forest

- At the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) 2015 in Paris, India joined the voluntary Bonn Challenge pledge to bring into restoration 13 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by the year 2020, and additional 8 million hectares by 2030.
- MoEFCC has recently launched a flagship project to build capacity on forest landscape restoration (FLR) and Bonn Challenge in partnership with IUCN. The pilot phase of the project will be of three and a half years implemented in the States of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Karnataka.
- The National Mission for a Green India: Aims at enhancing the quality of forest cover and improving ecosystem services from 4.9 million hectares (mha) of predominantly forest lands, including 1.5 mha of moderately dense forest cover, 3 mha of open forest cover, 0.4 mha of degraded grass lands.
- The Central Government is providing assistance to States Governments and Union territory Administrations under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme **“National Afforestation Program (NAP)”** for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas through people's participation.
- Use of forest land for industrial activities or any other non-forest purpose requires prior approval of Central Government under Section- 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- Various schemes have been launched by the Government of India such as: Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Soil Health Card Scheme, Soil Health Management Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna (PKSY), Per Drop More Crop, etc. which are helping to reduce land degradation.

Way Forward

- While implementing these green schemes, India faces enormous challenges such as the impact of Climate Change on the survival of planted saplings, the extension of dry areas and desertification etc. There is need for participatory models of afforestation and multi-stakeholder approach to regenerate and manage the forest resources.

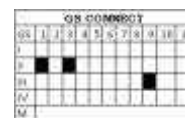
PEPPER IT WITH
CAMPA Act, National Afforestation
Mission, National green Mission,
Forest Policy Act 2018

- Realizing the strength of the tribal knowledge systems is essential to conserve forests and tribal culture.
- Forests and trees make vital contributions to both people and the planet. They contribute to socio-economic development. Striking the right balance in actions, investments and collaborations needs to be ensured to solve challenges such as food security, poverty alleviation, ecological conservation to ultimately achieve the goal of sustainable development.
- Indian tradition assigns much higher status and value to the living energy of the forests to attain spiritual and cultural regeneration of life. According to Rabindranath Tagore, life in forest is the highest form of cultural evolution. Hence it will not be an exaggeration to say that depleting forests are going to deprive us of material and spiritual security. Thus, best time to act for forest conservation is now, and best beginning is from our own selves.

Mizoram and Indian Forest Act Amendment

News Excerpt

The Mizoram government has recently **rejected the Centre's proposal** to amend the **"anti-indigenous people" Indian Forest Act, 1927**, as its provisions are in conflict with the special provisions the State enjoys under Article 371G of the Constitution.



What is the issue?

- Forest rights activists and tribal welfare organisations are against the bill that seeks to give higher management powers beyond what is provided in the Forest Rights Act of 2006, threatens to evict forest dwellers and promotes forest produce through private firms.
- Activists claim that reframed Indian Forest Act would challenge Mizo customary laws and practices, ownership and transfer of land as well as the powers conferred upon the autonomous district councils.

What Does Article 371G Say?

It states that no Act of President in respect of (i) religious or social practices of the Mizos, (ii) Mizo customary law and procedure, (iii) administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, (iv) ownership and transfer of land, shall apply to the state of Mizoram unless the Legislative Assembly of the state of Mizoram by a resolution so decides.

The draft Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill of 2019

- The draft bill brings in forest bureaucracy to manage "village forests" through joint forest management committee (JFMC).
- Though the concept of village forest exists in the original IFA, the FRA overrides all existing laws in recognising and vesting rights over forest land and resources with forest dwelling communities, including in conservation and management of forests through their Gram Sabha, thus making JFMC defunct or redundant.
- The draft bill introduces a new provision (clause 66) to allow forest bureaucracy to use fire arms and enter and search any premises on mere suspicion, just by informing Gram Sabha, to check forest offence.
- Clause 11 (3) empowers Forest Settlement Officer to act as "deemed as Collector proceeding under the Land Acquisition Act of 1894" for acquiring forest land.
- Further, clause 84 explains that such acquisition would be "deemed to be needed for a public purpose" **without defining the term** "public purpose" anywhere.
- Clause 66 treats a forest offender like terrorist, shifting the burden of proving innocence to the accused - existing criminal jurisprudence for the rest puts the onus of proving guilt on prosecution.

Impacts of the Amendments

- ✓ Amendments completely ignore the more democratic laws of post-colonial India such as the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 and Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) 1996, passed by Parliament of independent India in all its wisdom.

- ✓ They reassert and strengthen the forest department and take away already limited accountability that the department has had either towards respecting rights of the people or that of the wildlife and forest.
- ✓ Make large parts of forests easily available for hand over to the industry for commercial purposes and do away with the consent of the gram sabha before doing so.
- ✓ The idea of production forests completely negates the key principles of forest conservation enunciated by the NFP of 1988 and undermines the idea of 'community forest resources' established by FRA.
- ✓ The proposal for extension of 'deemed forest category' to all states and for continuing the provision for settlement of rights by FSO (which is now overridden by FRA) are some of the provisions which are recreating historical injustice which FRA seeks to undo. (plantations, protected areas etc).
- ✓ IFA amendments undermine the right of forest dwellers to live with dignity by having regressive provisions to give unfettered powers to the forest bureaucracy to deal with forest settlement and importantly with offences.

Way Forward

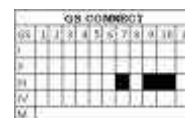
- o Though the intentions of the government behind the Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill, 2019 are good and aim at sincere conservation efforts, it has resulted into disappointment of the local population especially tribals as forests are the only viable livelihood source available to them and most importantly it is a part their cultural identity.
- o Conservation efforts should be such that it should involve local population, local government and voluntary groups with minimum possible interference of higher authorities.
- o In a long-term perspective consensus-based decision making in forest conservation and respecting the rights of tribals over forests without harming the precious natural resources hold the key.

PEPPER IT WITH
TRIFED, Forest Rights
Amendment Act.

C40-Clean Air Cities Declaration

News excerpt

In a bid to combat the menace of Air Pollution, New Delhi has recently joined the 37 other cities from around the world in signing the C40 'Clean Air Cities Declaration' at the C40 World Mayors Summit in Copenhagen.



Highlights of the Declaration

- The Declaration commits cities to set ambitious pollution reduction targets and implement substantive clean air policies by 2025.
- Before 2025, implement new substantive policies and programs to address the top causes of air pollution emissions within our city and under our control.
- By publicly reporting on their progress, the cities plan to generate a 'race to the top' in cleaning the air in the world's big cities.
- Integrate the relevant top pollution-reducing actions that are within city and under local control into Climate Action Plans.
- Raise awareness of air quality to help vulnerable citizens reduce their exposure, and to reduce the causes of air pollution, such as

C40 Cities

- ❖ C40 has developed the Fossil Fuel Free Streets Declaration which is endorsed by 12 cities from around the world.
- ❖ These cities pledge to transition to fossil-fuel-free streets by procuring, with their partners, only zero-emission buses from 2025; and ensuring a major area of their cities is zero emission by 2030.
- ❖ The C-40 network connects more than 90 of the world's leading cities to take bold climate action and build a healthier and more sustainable future.

traffic.

- Work with and advocate for regional, state, supranational, and national governments and institutions to take action on sources outside boundaries or control.
- Representing more than 700 million citizens and a quarter of the global economy, mayors of C-40 cities are committed to deliver on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air.
- Two cities from Bengaluru and Delhi signed the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration.

Analytica

Threat of Air pollution

- Air pollution is creating a global public health crisis - one that is rooted in social injustice. Typically, it is the poorest and most vulnerable communities that are most affected by dirty, polluted air.
- 9 in 10 citizens around the world breathe dirty air, and 7 million people die. prematurely each year due to air pollution.
- **91% of the world's population lives in places where air quality exceeds WHO guideline limits.**
- In 2016, a World Health Organisation (WHO) study found that fourteen of the **twenty world's most polluted cities belonged to India.**
- **Delhi, India's capital region, home to nearly 19 million people, is notorious for choking air that is now turning the iconic white marble walls of the Taj Mahal green.**
- **Two-thirds of India's population still lives outside of cities, and 80 percent of these households rely on biomass like wood and dung for cooking and heating.**
- Outdoor air pollution is pretty much a governance problem in India. Anti-pollution laws exist **in India but they aren't enforced well.**

PEPPER IT WITH

UNFCCC summits: Paris, Katowice, Kyoto Protocol, Emission trading scheme, Carbon off-set, AQI, SAFAR, International Solar Alliance.

Various Efforts by the Indian Government

- ✓ India is committed to clean environment and pollution free air and water. In fact, it is mandated in our constitution under Articles like 21, 48, 51A etc.
- ✓ In its INDC, India has pledged to improve the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 per cent by 2030 below 2005 levels. It has also pledged to increase the share of non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40 per cent by 2030. It has agreed to enhance its forest cover which will absorb 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂, the main gas responsible for global warming) by 2030.
- ✓ The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, was enacted to implement the decisions taken at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm in June 1972, in which India participated.
- ✓ Major strategies/steps to tackle increasing air pollution in Indian cities and urban areas include control and mitigation measures such as
 - Notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards and sector specific emission and effluent standards for industries; setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality;

Green crackers

- ✚ CSIR scientists have developed Less Polluting Firecrackers which are not only environment friendly but 15-20% cheaper than the conventional one.
- ✚ These crackers have been named as safe water releaser (SWAS), safe minimal aluminum (SAFAL) and safe thermite cracker (STAR).
- ✚ They are designed to have 30% less particulate matter pollution.
- ✚ These green crackers have a unique property of releasing water vapor and /or air as dust suppressant and diluent for gaseous emissions and matching performance in sound with conventional crackers.

- o Introduction of cleaner gaseous fuels like CNG, LPG etc and ethanol blending; promotion of electric vehicles through scheme such as FAME I and II.
- o launching of National Air Quality Index (AQI);
- o Leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI standards for vehicles by 1st April, 2020;
- o Banning of burning of biomass and promotion clean cooking fuel through schemes such as “Ujjawala”.
- o Promotion of public transport network
- o Pollution Under Control Certificate;
- o Installation of on-line continuous (24x7) monitoring devices by 17 highly polluting industrial sectors;
- o Notification of Graded Response Action Plan for Delhi and NCR identifying source wise actions for various levels of air pollution, etc.

Conclusion

- Sustainable development, in terms of enhancement of human well- being, is an integral part of India's development philosophy.
- Sustainable development Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities is crucial in our urbanizing world.
- Policies that make cities smart, resilient and green—through urban planning, technology and citizen participation—can provide better air quality and transform the urban landscape.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

In a bid to combat the menace of Air pollution, the Supreme court mandated the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to come up with an emergency, comprehensive action plan, which was mapped out and submitted to it in December 2016. After proper analysis and deliberation, it was accepted, thus introducing the Graded Response Action plan to the city of Delhi and the National Capital Region

What is GRAP all about?

- ✓ It is a set of stratified actions that are triggered in response to specific pollution levels.
- ✓ **It is referred to as a ‘graded’ plan, due to the fact that program functions in a** step by step manner, or in stages, which comprises measures such as prohibition on entry of trucks into Delhi; ban on construction activities, introduction of odd and even scheme for private vehicles, shutting of schools, closure of brick kilns, hot mix plants and stone crushers; shutting down of Badarpur power plant, ban on diesel generator sets, garbage burning in landfills and plying of visibly polluting vehicles etc.
- ✓ The nature, scope and rigor of measures to be taken is linked to levels of pollution viz. Severe + or Emergency, severe, Very poor, Moderate to poor and Moderate, after due consideration by authorities concerned.
- ✓ It aims to bring about a gradual form of pollution control. The actions are to be implemented in the entire NCR. Besides, action related to stubble burning is to be implemented by Government of Punjab.

Stubble Burning

KSG CONNECT												
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Environmental and health risk

- o Various studies estimate that crop residue burning released 149.24 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂), over 9 million tonnes of carbon monoxide (CO), 0.25 million tonnes of oxides of sulphur (SOX), 1.28 million tonnes of particulate matter and 0.07 million tonnes of black carbon.
- o Burning of crop residue causes damage to other micro-organisms present in the upper layer of the soil as well as its organic quality.
- o **Due to the loss of 'friendly' pests, the wrath of 'enemy' pests has increased and as a result, crops are more prone to disease.** The solubility capacity of the upper layers of soil have also been reduced.
- o This serves as the main factor in the urban Air pollution effect especially that of Delhi and its neighboring areas.
- o Over the past 30 years, researchers have unearthed a wide array of health effects which are believed to be associated with air pollution exposure. Among them are respiratory diseases (including asthma and changes in lung function), cardiovascular diseases, adverse pregnancy outcomes (such as preterm birth), and even death.
- o In 2013, the World Health Organization concluded that outdoor air pollution is carcinogen to humans.

CAPITAL'S NIGHTMARE

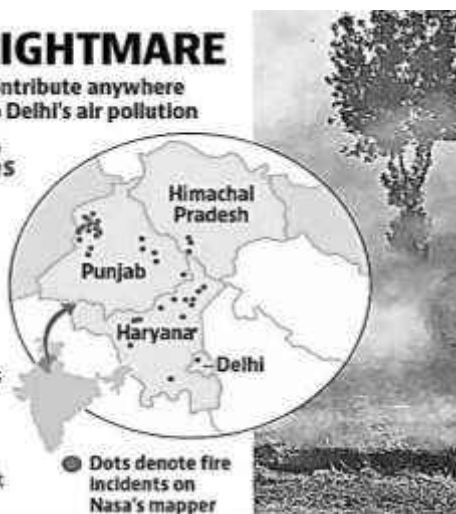
Stubble burning could contribute anywhere between 12% and 60% to Delhi's air pollution

One ton of stubble, on burning, releases

2 kg of SO₂
3 kg of particulate matter
60 kg of CO
1,460 kg of CO₂
199 kg of ash

Health Impact

- Winter crop-burning triggers heavy pollution in Delhi
- Can aggravate and trigger respiratory diseases
- Results in loss of soil nutrient and kill soil organisms



Implementation of existing laws:

- The *National Policy for Management of Crop Residues* has to be implemented properly in the states such as Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and U.P. to protect the parali (crop residue).
- Burning crop residue is a crime under Section 188 of the IPC and under the Air and Pollution Control Act of 1981.

Eco-friendly models:

Instead of burning of the stubble, it can be used in different ways like cattle feed, compost manure, roofing in rural areas, biomass energy, mushroom cultivation, packing materials, fuel, paper, bio-ethanol and industrial production, etc.

Rice Bio-parks:

- Eminent agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan suggested that the Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh governments could set up 'Rice Bio-Parks', where farmers could convert stubble into income and employment. Like in South India where stubble is not **burnt as there's economic value** as animal feed.
- We should adopt a do-ecology approach with farmers to convert rice stubble into income rather than making them agents of eco-disaster, the noted scientist suggested.
- The initiative, when it becomes fully functional is to increase income of farmers and provide jobs in value addition with goal of moving from poverty to prosperity.

Dirac Metals

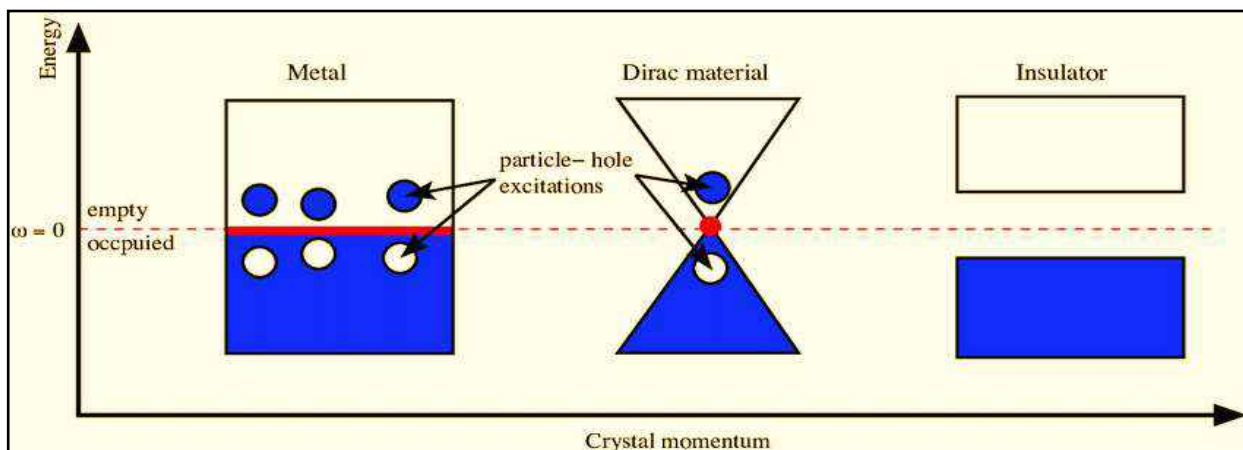
News Excerpt

Researchers from IIT Bombay have discovered special properties in a class of materials called “semi-**Dirac metals**”. This would help in developing transparent conducting films, the common use of which is in the touch screens used in mobiles. This material will enhance the Optical conductivity which is a measure of the opacity offered by the material to the passage of light through it.

ON CONNECT										
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What are Dirac Metals?

- A key aspect that decides the quality of conduction is the way energy depends on the momentum of electrons.
- Dirac metals differ from normal metals in that the energy depends linearly on the momentum. This difference is responsible for their unique properties.
- Semi-Dirac metals behave like Dirac metals in one direction and like normal metals in the perpendicular directions (since their microscopic structure is different along the two directions).



What makes Semi-Dirac metal unique?

- Charge carriers in any material acquires an effective mass which is different from their bare mass. The difference varies from material to material and depends on the nature of material.
- This effective mass and number of states available for the electron to occupy when it is excited by an electric field determine the conductivity and other such properties.
- Similar things happen in a semi-Dirac metal. In particular, the effective mass becomes zero for conduction along a special direction.

Significance

The energy-momentum dispersion relation can be linear, leading to large velocities and vanishingly small effective masses. The velocities can be over 100 times more than normal metals, thus increasing the mobility and currents that can be carried across devices made of these Dirac materials. In the semi-Dirac metals, these properties are direction dependent. The direction-dependence of the microscopical properties gives the material special optical properties.

PEPPER IT WITH
Semiconductor Wafer, LEDS

Anthrax Disease in India

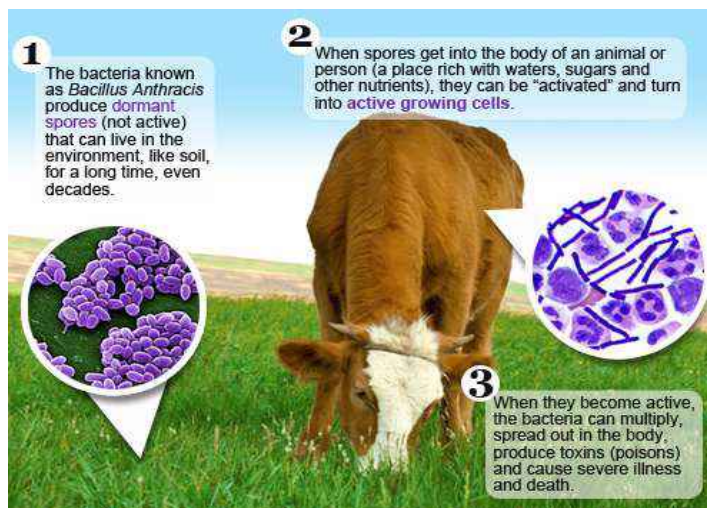
News Excerpt

Recently, two feral buffaloes died in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam after an anthrax outbreak. The forest department officials have been taking precautionary measures to control the spread of the disease.

ON CONNECT										
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About Anthrax

- Anthrax is an infectious zoonotic disease, caused by a gram-positive, rod-shaped '**Bacillus anthracis**' bacteria.
- It transmits through direct skin contact with spores, contact with infected animals or animal products like meat, inhalation of aerosolized spores, and Person-to-person transmission of inhalation.
- Anthrax is not contagious, which means it can't catch like the cold or flu. Anthrax is most common in agricultural regions of Central and South America, sub-Saharan Africa, central and southwestern Asia, southern and Eastern Europe, and the Caribbean.
- Anthrax spores are easily found in nature, can be produced in a lab, and can last for a long in environment. The microscopic spores could be put into powders, sprays, food, and water.
- Bacillus anthracis bacteria is also a biological weapon agent and it can sick or kill people, livestock, or crops.



Zoonotic diseases and public health trends in India-

- **About:** These are the diseases which are transmitted from animals to human beings. It can be a virus, bacteria, parasites or a fungus. India is one among the countries where Zoonotic disease causes high mortality and morbidity. Few of the examples are- Nipah Virus Kerala, Brucellosis in majority of Indian states.
- **Policy:** There is absence of a sound and effective policy that can counter the rising instances of zoonotic diseases. This is primarily due to the following facts such as
 - Absence of authentic data
 - Lack of awareness
 - Ineffective institutions
- **Challenges:** There are systematic challenges in prevention against Zoonotic diseases such as:
 - Population factor-Frequent Human-Animal interaction
 - Poverty among the rearing community- absence of vaccination and other preventive measures.
 - Weak Veterinary Institutions: Poor Sero-surveillance and lack of Diagnostic Facilities
 - There is no national programme on zoonoses managed by the Department of Animal Husbandry, Ministry of Agriculture
- **Government's initiative:** Government of India has taken several Initiative such as
 - One Health- Integrating Human and animal health together
 - Task Force comprising of both veterinary and environmental experts.
 - Veterinary public health to be part of National health Mission.
 - National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP)

Way Forward

There is a need to have a collaborative, multisectoral and trans disciplinary approach for designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation and to develop a close network between veterinary, medical laboratories and professionals at different levels supported by basic and applied

PEPPER IT WITH
Anthrax Attack, Nerve
Agents, Food and Mouth
Disease

research in order to minimize the impact of Zoonotic disease.

Modern disease surveillance system using new approaches and tools such as syndromic surveillance, geographic information system, robust vaccination programme, remote sensing, molecular epidemiology, information technology, bio-informatics should be adopted as preventive measures.

Drone Innovators Network Summit

News Excerpt

The *Drone Innovators Network Summit-2019* was held recently in New Delhi.

Pre-connect

The Drone Innovators Network began development at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, as a community of progressive governments, supported by industry, who are accelerating the adoption of drones.

About the Summit

- The summit was organized by the World Economic Forum under the aegis of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- The Summit saw various stakeholders like Officials from National & International Aviation Regulatory bodies, sharing ideas on the best path forward to maximize the benefits of emerging drone technology while protecting society from the risks.

Applications of Drone Technology

- Aerial Photography
- Search and rescue operations especially during crisis situation
- Precision Agriculture
- Shipping and delivery
- 3D mapping with drones
- Wildlife Study & Preservation
- Safety Surveillance and military
- Wireless Internet Access
- Research and nature science

PEPPER IT WITH
UAVs by DRDO, DGCA,
International Civil aviation
Regulation, Digital Sky Portal

India Drone Policy 2.0

The drone policy 2.0 is a roadmap for establishing a fully functional drone ecosystem that would allow commercial usage of drones in India.

Key Features includes:

- ✓ Drone can operate beyond the visual line of sight and fly above the current limit of 400 ft.
- ✓ It will establish the Drone Corridor which will keep commercial drone operations away from airspace of aircrafts. It will be enabled through a UTM system.
- ✓ It will lay down the new principles for enhanced airworthiness requirements.
- ✓ It also permits use of algorithms by removing the compulsory requirement of a human remote pilot itself. This would be on the condition of safety, security and privacy in the design of the drone.
- ✓ DigitalSky Service Providers (DSPs) will provide services to all other players in the drone ecosystem over the DigitalSky Platform. This ecosystem is further supplemented by the creation of drone ports, which will be designated areas dedicated to facilitating take-off and landing of the drones.
- ✓ The policy further envisages allowing night operations of drone in India.
- ✓ While Drone policy 1.0 essentially allowed hobbyists and recreational flyers to operate drones in the Indian airspace. On the other hand, Drone Policy 2.0 encompasses regulations for enhanced operations viz. flying beyond visual line of sight,

commercial usage by way of cargo delivery and autonomous operations without active human intervention.

Challenges Ahead

No tried-and-tested approach is present anywhere around the world, for India to follow. Therefore, it is difficult to anticipate where the technology will go and what problems it could potentially cause in the future. However, it is necessary that local governments take up a more proactive approach to managing the rapid adoption of drones. Moreover, help will be needed in the form of public and private partnerships to gain the much-needed experience and provide the necessary impetus to the nascent industry.

The Gandhian Challenge

News Excerpt

Recently, NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission and UNICEF India has launched **'The Gandhian Challenge'**, as this year will mark the 150th Birth anniversary of the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

About

- The Challenge let the students to share their innovative solutions/ideas to create a futuristic and sustainable world of their dreams, following Gandhi's principles.
- Ideas and solutions to the Gandhian Challenge may be expressed through broad categories: Art & Innovation (Letters, poems, painting, videos and photos, among others) and Science, Technology & Innovation (Robotics, IoT, sensors and 3D printers, among others).
- The most innovative, sustainable solutions/ideas will be showcased as a symbol of a larger movement by children taking root in every district of India. Children across India can access to more than 8000 Atal Tinkering Labs across all districts to support their innovative ideas.
- Through this partnership, AIM and UNICEF recognize every child's ability and right to voice their dreams for a world of their choice, following Gandhi's principles.

AIM

AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country.

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Atal Innovation Mission

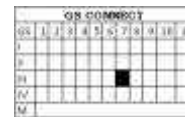
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- ❖ AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country.



Acute Flaccid Myelitis

News Excerpt

Recently the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (USA) has declared Acute flaccid myelitis (AFM) negative for Polio Virus thereby segregating it from Polio. Earlier AFM was considered as a polio like condition.



About AFM

- It is a type of neurological illness
- It causes weakness, paralysis which are similar to polio and inflammation of the spinal cord
- Though the exact nature of pathogen behind AFM has not been found, CDC believes its some sort of virus.

Indian Scenario

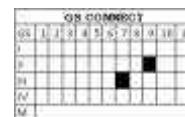
- The incidence of non-polio AFM had increased over a period of years after India was declared polio free. They had attributed it to increased number of polio rounds.
- In 2018, India reported 34,891 AFP cases with the states of Uttar Pradesh (12,359) and Bihar (6,914) states reporting the most cases. This is a drop of more than 10 percent from 2017 when 39,127 cases were seen in the country.

PEPPER WITH IT
Pulse polio Programme,
National policy for treatment
of rare diseases, West Nile
Virus, Autoimmune Disease

NHSRC collaboration with WHO

News Excerpt

Recently Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with World Health Organization formally announced the re-designation of National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), as the WHO Collaborating Centre for Priority Medical Devices and Health Technology Policy.



Thematic connect

- NHSRC has been set up under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) of Government of India to serve as an apex body for technical assistance.
- NHSRC mandate to assist in policy and strategy development in the provision and mobilization of technical assistance to the states and in capacity building for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at the Centre and in the states.
- The goal of NHSRC institution is to improve health outcomes by facilitating governance reform, health systems innovations and improved information sharing among all stake holders at the national, state, district levels through specific capacity development and convergence models.
- It has a 23 member Governing Body, chaired by the Secretary, MoHFW, Of the 23 members, 14 are ex-officio senior health administrators, including four from the states. Nine are public health experts, from academics and Management Experts.

Priority Medical Devices

- ❖ Launched in collaboration with the Government of the Netherlands.
- ❖ To determine whether medical devices currently on the market were meeting the needs of health care providers and end-users.
- ❖ This will help in identify gaps in the availability of preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic and assistive medical devices on the market.
- ❖ Aim of the project was to bring medical devices to the attention of policy makers and to help guide both industry and government on public health spending.

The NHSRC currently consists of seven divisions –

- Community Processes,

- Healthcare Financing,
- Healthcare Technology,
- Human Resources for Health,
- Public Health Administration,
- Public Health Planning,
- Quality Improvement in Healthcare

Significance

- ✓ Helps in ensuring scientific and technological advances
- ✓ Increase in Research and Development
- ✓ Development of innovative technologies
- ✓ Helps in achieving Universal health coverage.

PEPPER IT WITH
Medical Device Rules 2017,
National rural health
mission, Essential medicines

CLASS and Geo-tail Chandryaan-2

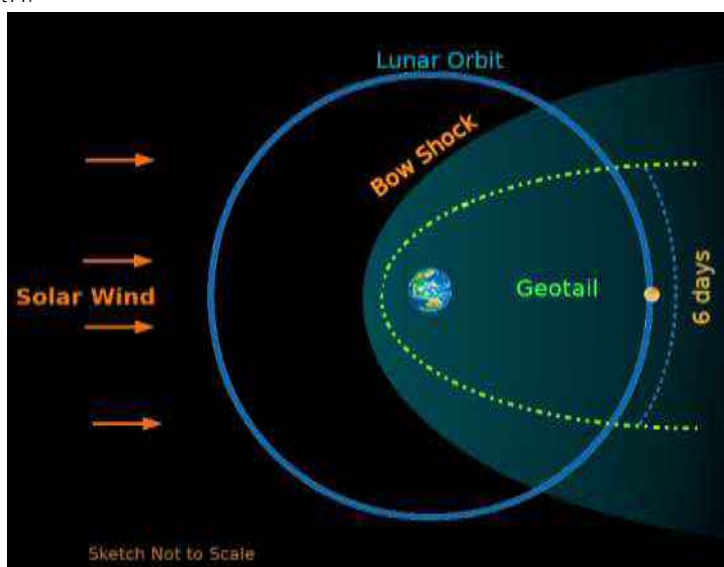
News Excerpt

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) through Chandrayaan-2, had detected charged particles during the mission. This was detected **during the orbiter's** passage through the Geotail.

[illegible]

About Geo Tail

- It is a region in space that allows the best observations. The region exists as a result of the interactions between the Sun and Earth.
 - Formation of Geo Tail
 - The Sun emits the solar wind, which is a continuous stream of charged particles.
 - These particles are embedded in the extended magnetic field of the Sun.
 - Since the Earth has a magnetic field, it obstructs the solar wind plasma.
 - This interaction results in the formation of a magnetic envelope around Earth.
 - On the Earth side facing the Sun, the envelope is compressed into a region that is approximately three to four times the Earth radius.
 - On the opposite side, the envelope is stretched into a long tail, which extends beyond the orbit of the Moon. It is this tail that is called the geotail.
-
- Sketch Not to Scale



CLASS (Chandrayan 2 Large Area Soft X-Ray Spectrometer)

- It designed to detect signatures of elements in the Moon's soil.
- The lunar soil can be best observed when a solar flare provides a rich source of X-rays to illuminate the surface.
- Secondary X-ray emission resulting from this can be detected by CLASS to directly detect the presence of key elements like Na, Ca, Al, Si, Ti and Fe.

PEPPER IT WITH
Aditya-L1 mission, Gaganyaan
mission Mangalyaan

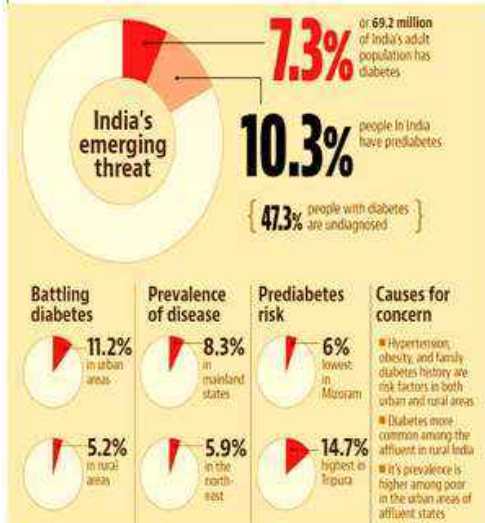
Diabetic Crisis in India

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Diabetic Crisis in India

What? Union Health Ministry's first National Diabetes and Diabetic Retinopathy Survey (2015-19) has revealed that the prevalence of Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) is 16.9 per cent while the prevalence of sight-threatening DR is 3.6 per cent.

Diabetes is a chronic disease caused when either pancreas does not produce enough insulin or the cells in the body do not respond properly to insulin. There are three types of diabetes -- Type 1 corresponds to first condition, Type 2 corresponds to the second condition, and Gestational Diabetes is formed during pregnancy.



NCRB Report-2017

News Excerpt

After a delay of two years, the Crime in India Report for the year 2017 was released recently by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

Pre-Connect

- NCRB was set-up in 1986 to function as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators based on the recommendations of the Tandon Committee to the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the **MHA's Task force (1985)**.
- NCRB's objective is to Create and maintain secure sharable National Databases on crimes and criminals for law enforcement agencies and promote their use for public service delivery.

Key Highlights

- **Offence Against State**
 - ✓ There has been a 30 per cent rise in incidents of offences against the state as compared to 2016.
 - ✓ This category includes offences such

The Criminal Procedure Code (Cr.P.C.) classifies all the crimes into two categories:

(i) Cognizable - Sec.2(c) Cr.P.C.

(ii) Non-cognizable - Sec.2(l) Cr.P.C.

- ❖ A cognizable offence or case is defined as the one which an officer in-charge of a police station may investigate without the order of a magistrate and effect arrest without warrant. Cognizable crimes are broadly categorised **as those falling either under the 'Indian Penal Code (IPC)' or under the 'Special and Local Laws (SLL)'**.
- ❖ Non-Cognizable crimes are defined as those which cannot be investigated by police without the order of a competent magistrate.

as sedition, waging war against the country and damage to public property among others.

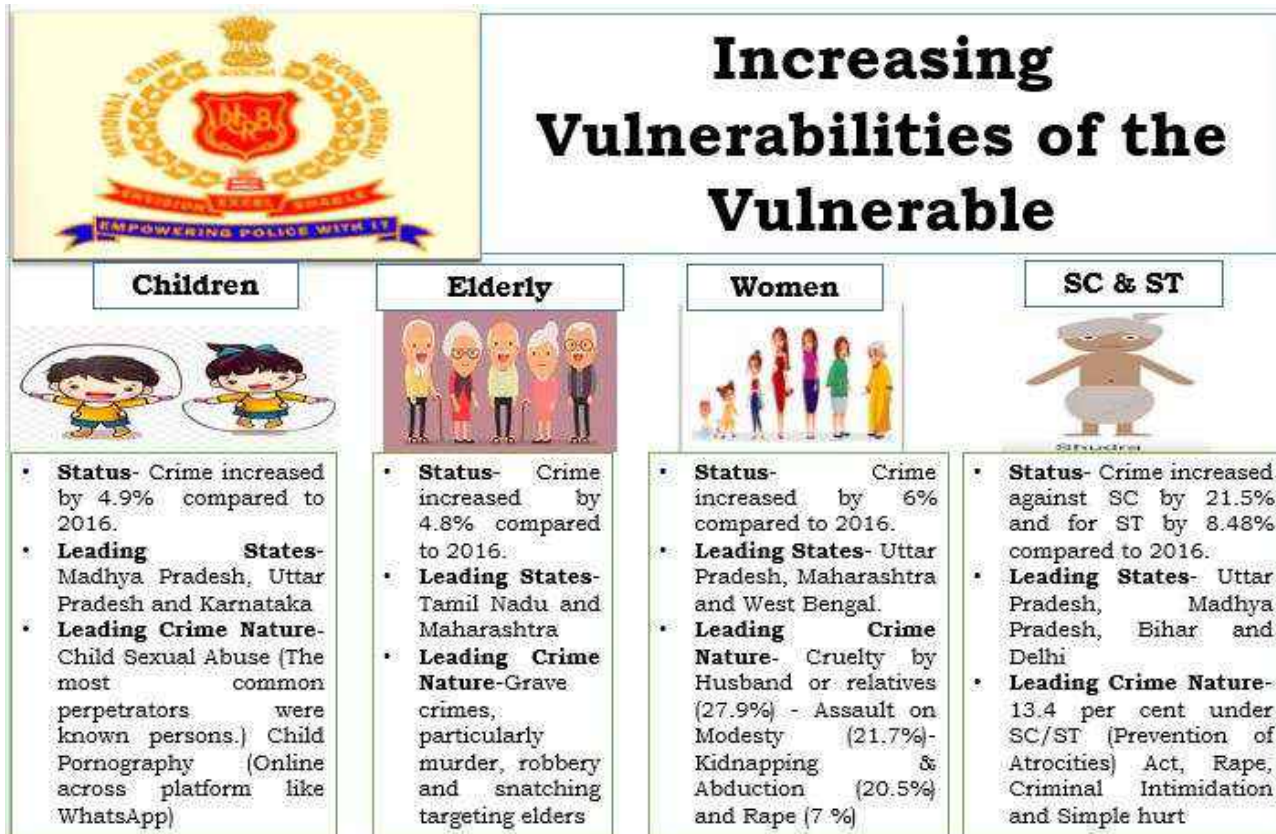
➤ Riots

- ✓ As per the report, 58,880 incidents of rioting were reported, of which the maximum incidents were reported from Bihar - 11,698, followed by Uttar Pradesh - 8,990 and Maharashtra - 7,743.
- ✓ Communal riots- The number of communal riots in the country has come down from 869 in 2016 to 723 in 2017.
- ✓ Riots due to caste conflicts- The report shows a drastic reduction in rioting incidents that occurred due to caste conflicts. Riots due to caste conflicts saw a 65 per cent decline in 2017 in comparison to 2016.



➤ Cyber-crime-

- ✓ A 77% rise in the number of cyber-crime cases was observed in 2017 compared to 2016.
- ✓ Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka registered the maximum number of such cases.



Analytica

Lacunae in NCRB Data

- ✓ Categorization Issue: Offences under crime have been categorised outside the provisions of the Indian Penal Code and other special and local laws. The non-legislative parameters for classifying some offences have not been adequately explained.
- ✓ Prison statistics:
 - Prison statistics do not provide any offence-wise data on undertrials and convicts.
 - This prevents cross-referencing and examination of the numbers in both reports.
 - Further, while prison statistics provide information on the different kinds of sentences being served by convicts, these numbers have not been categorized on the basis of offences. Thus, it is impossible to gain insights into the sentencing trends for various offences and in various States or formulate policy on sentencing.
 - While current prison statistics provide some information on the kind of facilities available for reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners, they do not go beyond the enrolment rate to evaluate their efficacy.
 - In the absence of information on the quality and impact of these programmes, robust policies cannot be formulated which would ensure successful reintegration of prisoners and provide those serving life-term imprisonment (52.6% of all convicts) an opportunity to reform.
 - These policies are especially important since 94.4% of those entering the criminal justice system were arrested for the first time.
- ✓ Issues in method of Computation:
 - The crime statistics report, while recording rates of recidivism, collates State-wise information on the number of juveniles and adults who were arrested earlier but not convicted, and those who were previously convicted.
 - However, the reliability of this data is questionable, given the understanding of recidivism as arrests of people who may not have been convicted earlier for crimes they were suspected or accused of committing, and who may not be convicted again.
 - This is especially problematic given that socio-economically marginalized people are known to repeatedly come in conflict with the law, and are routinely arrested and released on mere suspicion.
 - There are similar concerns about the presentation of data on arrests, convictions and acquittals. For instance, it is unclear if the number of persons acquitted, discharged and

Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & System (CCTNS)

It is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of Government of India.

Vision and Objectives of CCTNS-

- Keep track of the progress of Cases, including in Courts.
- Reduce manual and redundant Records keeping.
- Improve delivery of citizen-centric services through effective usage of ICT.

Challenges in Smooth Implementation of CCTNS

- Poor and Unreliable Connectivity
- Obsolete Hardware/ Software
- All FIR Registering Agencies not covered under CCTNS
- Absence of Crime Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence Tools
- Some States like West Bengal are not sharing complete data with the centre which is leading to incomplete database.

In spite of facing numerous challenges, CCTNS project has created a backbone for collating and analysing crime & criminal data across the country. More than 14,450 Police Stations & 6,000 higher offices are now connected through CCTNS and synching data to National Data Centre regularly.

convicted is calculated in reference to the number of persons arrested in 2017, or those charged and arrested in previous years.

- The statistics in this section do not speak to the total number of cases disposed of by courts in 2017.
- ✓ Hidden Variances:
 - The NCRB data on crime hide significant variances in case registration of serious crimes such as rapes and violence against women across States, which make it difficult to draw State-wise comparisons.
 - The total number of crimes committed against women country-wide increased by 6% since 2016, while those against Scheduled Castes went up by 13%. However there is the possibility of some States reporting such crimes better

Conclusion

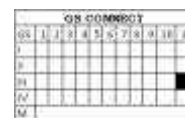
In a political system that pays little attention to those in conflict with the law, the importance of these statistics is undeniable. However, in order to explore more precise and effective solutions to criminal justice issues, NCRB must first take steps towards ensuring the accuracy, reliability and comprehensiveness of these reports.

PEPPER IT WITH
SC ST Act, Sexual Harassment at
the Workplace Act, Section 498-A
of IPC, ABHAY Surveillance Centre

22nd India International Security Expo

News Excerpt

Government of India at 22nd India International Security Expo has called for an increased and active participation of the private sector in defence manufacturing and decided to achieve the target of making the Indian defence industry worth \$26 billion by 2025.



Pre-Connect

- **India's defence sector has huge overdependence on the Russia and earlier it was on the Soviet Union.** This brought a significant change in the approach of India in defence industrialization from license based to production based focusing on indigenous design.
- Since 1980s DRDO is undertaking high profile projects and Government of India has been pumping huge resources in the R&D.
- In 1990s, a Self Reliance Review Committee (SRRV) was formed under chairmanship of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam which formulated a 10-year self-reliance plan under which, the self-reliance index (SRI) was formed to measure the self-reliance in Defence sector. SRRV set the target be increased from 30% in 1992-1993 to 70 % by 2005 though it is yet to be achieved. Last financial year SRI was at an abysmal 0.3.
- Few Examples of defence indigenization in India includes
 - Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)- to develop five missile system- Prithvi (surface-to-surface), Akash (surface-to-air), Trishul (the naval version of Prithvi) Nag (anti-tank).
 - Agni Ballistic missiles- Agni-I, II, III, IV, V
- Since indigenous defence production cannot fulfill the requirement of Armed forces India government has collaborated with various other countries such as Russia, Israel for e.g. Brahmos- joint production between India and Russia.

Recent Government Initiative

- Defence Procurement Policy (DPP) 2016 (Based on recommendations of the Dhirendra Singh committee)
 - It replaced old DPP 2013
 - New category was added- Buy Indian IDDM- Indigenously Designed, Developed & Manufactured (IDDM) has been introduced to promote indigenously designed & developed defence equipment's.

- E-Biz Portal: It allows for the application of Industrial License and Industrial Entrepreneur Memorandum online.
- DPP has allowed the Defence Acquisition Council to acquire weapons through a fast-track route which was earlier restricted to armed forces only. Further, Restriction of annual capacity in the industrial license for defence sector has been removed.
- Guidelines for DPSU ((defence public sector undertaking) and OFB (ordnance factory board)
 - Promote Participation of Private Sector particularly small manufacturing enterprises.
 - Short-term and Long-term outsourcing and vendor development plan in order to increase outsourcing from private players.
 - Vendor Development for import substitution.
- For establishment of a level playing field a uniform custom duty was proposed.
- FDI and FII reforms
 - Till 49% is allowed through FIPB route.
 - Beyond 49% through the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).
 - Condition of Indian Shareholder to hold at least 51% equity in case of FII is removed.
- Preference to 'Buy (Indian)', 'Buy & Make (Indian)' & 'Make' categories of acquisition over 'Buy (Global)' category, thereby giving preference to Indian industry in procurement.
- The **'Make' Procedure has been simplified** with provisions for funding of 90% of development cost by the Government to Indian industry and reserving projects not exceeding development cost of Rs.10 Crore (Government funded) and Rs.3 Crore (Industry funded) for MSMEs.
- **Separate procedure for 'Make-II' sub-category** has been notified wherein a number of industry friendly provisions such as relaxation of eligibility criterion, minimal documentation, provision for considering proposals suggested by industry/individual etc., have been introduced.
- Government has decided to establish two defence industrial corridors to serve as an engine of economic development and growth of defence industrial base in the country. These are spanning across Chennai, Hosur, Coimbatore, Salem and Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu and spanning across Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi, Kanpur and Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- An innovation ecosystem for Defence titled Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) has been launched in April 2018. iDEX is aimed at creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, Start-ups, Individual Innovators, R&D institutes and Academia and provide them grants/funding and other support to carry out R&D which has potential for future adoption for Indian defence and aerospace needs.
- The Ministry has instituted a new framework titled **'Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti'** which aims to provide boost to the IPR culture in indigenous defence industry.
- Government has notified a Policy for indigenisation of components and spares used in Defence Platforms with the objective to create an industry ecosystem which is able to indigenize the imported components (including alloys & special materials) and sub-assemblies for defence equipment and platform manufactured in India.

Strategic Partnership Model

- ❖ Based on the suggestion of Dharendra Singh Committee a **"Strategic Partnership Model"** was developed
- ❖ By this method, a few private sector firms would be declared as systems integrators based on their proven capability and they would tie up with foreign OEMs with the aim of laying down a strong defence industrial foundation.
- ❖ The firms would make long term investments to develop a base for R&D and production facilities.
- ❖ Initially four segments were chosen, fighter aircrafts, helicopters, submarines and armored fighting vehicles.

- Defence Investor Cell has been created in the Ministry to provide all necessary information including addressing queries related to investment opportunities, procedures and regulatory requirements for investment in the sector.
- Government has set up the Technology Development Fund (TDF) to encourage participation of public/private industries especially MSMEs, through provision of grants, so as to create an eco-system for enhancing cutting edge technology capability for defence applications.

Analytica

Why India need Indigenization?

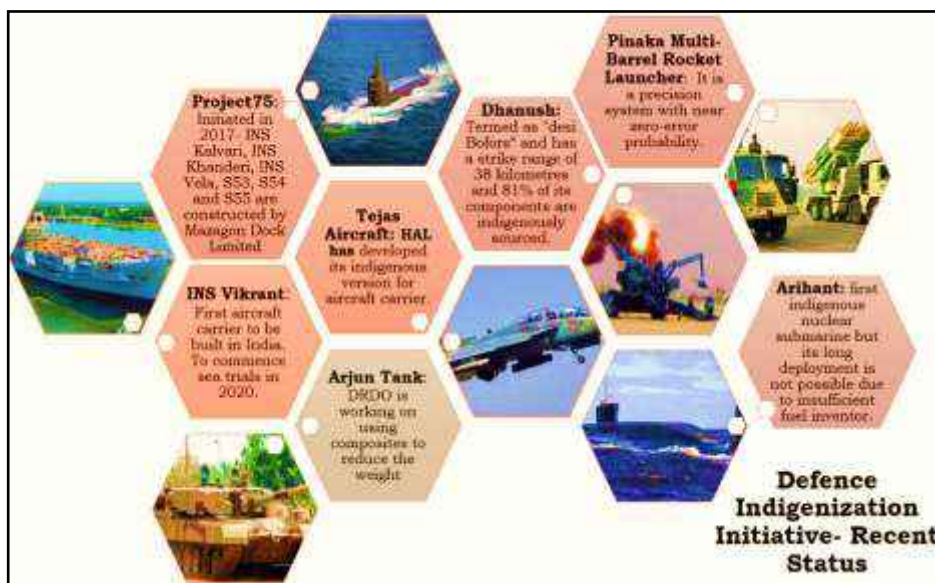
Current Status: According to SIPRI, **India was the world's second largest importer of major arms in 2014-18** and accounted for 9.5% of the global total. Further the report suggest that it rose by 3.1%. A report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG) highlighted the 90% import dependency of **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)** for 'raw materials and bought out items' for the production of indigenous. India is spending 2.4% of GDP on defence.

A vibrant defence industry is a crucial component of effective defence capability and to achieve national sovereignty and military superiority. The attainment of the same will ensure:

1. Strategic independence
2. Sovereign capability in selected areas
3. Cost effective defence equipment
4. Collateral benefits ensuing from the endeavors of defence industry.

Hence indigenization will help in:

- ◇ Reduction of Fiscal Deficit
- ◇ Diversify Indian export basket
- ◇ Employment Generation
- ◇ Increase Security in critical situation
- ◇ Develop Strategic capability



Challenges to the Defence Manufacturing

- **Make in India Issue:**
 - Lack of an institutional capacity and capability to take decisions to its logical conclusion.
 - The **"Make" procedure** has failed to achieve the results with just a few companies competing for one weapon system.
 - There is a lingering fear among the foreign investors that in the longer run they would lose out to the DPSUs.
- **Dispute Settlement Body**
 - The decision-making bodies need greater autonomy and authority. There is an urgent need of a permanent arbitration committee which can settle disputes expeditiously.
 - For e.g. In USA, the procurement agency DRAPA has a permanent arbitration committee which resolves such issues amicably and their decision is final.
- **Budget-Reality Gap:** While the Services do draw up long- and medium-term acquisition priorities, the priorities are not always linked to availability of funds. Each time there is a

budgetary squeeze, the priorities go haywire because meeting committed liabilities, in the case of international contracts, takes precedence over continuing orders for indigenous production.

- **Central Control:** In a hierarchical set up like the armed forces, priorities often follow the preferences of those in command, especially the Chiefs of Staff. Notwithstanding medium- and long-term procurement priorities being pre-determined, there is sufficient flexibility in the system to allow a Chief to re-order priorities, citing either resource constraints or changes in threat assessment.
- **Complex Relationship:**
 - The relationship between the R&D establishment, production agencies (public or private) and the end user is extremely weak and the producer is in no position ever to keep pace with technological improvements offered by foreign suppliers even if the production is under a Technology Transfer agreement.
 - The user is invariably reluctant to accept what he sees as an inferior product which he is compelled to buy at a higher price merely to keep indigenous production going.
 - Moreover, the producer is unable to respond to customer needs because it does not have requisite R&D support even for making marginal improvements in performance or adding features or making other user-specific alterations.
- **Rent Seeking Behavior:**
 - **Within the Government, the defence sector is the single biggest arena for ‘rent-seeking’** behavior. The opacity of transactions, the cloak of secrecy within which all decisions are veiled, the bewildering procedural labyrinth that has to be navigated for any procurement, the monopolistic nature of the market, the exclusivity of technologies shows that corruption is deeply embedded in the system as a whole and not in just one part of it.

What can be done?

- Expedite the formation of the Strategic Partnership in the four sectors identified. There would be objections galore against the four fortunate companies which get this privilege, therefore the decision-making process must be transparent and the decision taken non-negotiable.
- Set up a permanent arbitration cell to whom all objections are addressed and whose decisions are final and not subjected to review.
- The private sector must be allotted big ticket contracts to boost their confidence and morale.
- If the aim is to achieve export capability, then the weapon system must first be in service with our armed forces.
- Bridge a long-standing trust gap between the private industry and the Govt. Therefore the Govt. to ensure a level playing field for the private industry, DRDO, DPSUs and OFB.
- **In view of India’s strength in software greater emphasis be laid in fields such as AI and cyber security.** A concerted effort be made to **develop and manufacture the “chip” indigenously.**
- To enhance the confidence and authority of DRDO greater financial and administrative autonomy to be given.
- The offset programme has not fructified as envisaged. Hence the restrictions need to be identified and removed and offsets extended to the civil sector too for implementation.
- The staff at the Department of Defence Production need to be trained and given longer tenures to ensure continuity.
- Robust supply chain is critical for a defence manufacturer looking to optimize costs.


Conclusion

India cannot leap-frog to a higher defence technology trajectory virtually overnight. Transforming a low technology base to a higher plane will need time, patience and large-scale capital investment. It will also need strong support across the political spectrum. In the interim period, inevitably, there will be a further dip in defence preparedness. This short-term weakness in capacity building will need to be carefully weighed against long-term gains that will be strategic in nature. The risk involved will require fine political judgement backed by sound military advice. Consequently, defence planning in India had till recently been marked

by ad hoc decision making to tide over immediate national security challenges and long-term planning was neglected. This needs to be corrected and pragmatic measures need to be instituted to improve long-term planning.

Military Exercise 2019

ON COMBAT											
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Military Exercise- October 2019	
Dharma Guardian 	What- An Annual Joint Military Exercise between India Army and Japan Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF). Significance: Equip the contingents in counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in mountains area. Develop capabilities against global terrorism. Both countries along with US participate in Malabar exercise. Indian Navy has also access to the Japanese Djibouti Base and is a major partner in securing key sea lanes of communication between energy-rich regions like Middle East and energy importers like Japan. This cooperation can give fillip to their common interest in a free open Indo-Pacific.
Nomadic Elephant 	What- 14th edition of Indo - Mongolian joint military training. Participating Troops- 084 Air Borne Special (Mongolia) and RAJPUTANA RIFLES (India). Significance- Increase capability to conduct operation with cohesive subunit in adverse operational conditions and also enhance the interoperability of the two armies.
Ex-Eastern Bridge 	What- 5th Edition of Bilateral Joint exercise between Royal Air Force Oman (RAFO) at Air Force Base Masirah, Oman. Participating Fleet- MiG-29 and C-17 aircraft from India and Typhoon, F-16 and Hawk from Oman. Significance- professional interaction, exchange of experience and operational knowledge. Other Exercise- Naseem Al-Bahr (Naval) and AL Nagah (Military)
Exercise Shakti 	What- It is a biennial exercise which is conducted alternately in India and France. Significance: It focus on counter terrorism operations in backdrop of semi-desert terrain. Further it enhances understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the two Armies. Other Defence Exercise- Varuna (Naval) and Garuda (Air Force)
Exercise Ekuverin 	What- 10th Edition of Joint Military Exercise between Indian Army and Maldives National Defence Force- At Aundh Military Station Pune Significance: It Focuses on enhancing interoperability between the two forces for carrying out counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban environment under the United Nations mandate. Further it strengthens the ties between the two nations.
Exercise Kazind 	What- The 4th edition of annual military exercise between India and Kazakhstan army was organized at Pithoragarh. Significance: The aim of exercise is joint training of troops in Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism operations in both Jungle and Mountainous terrain. Exercise KAZIND 2019 can be termed as a facade of long standing strategic ties between India and Kazakhstan.

INS BAAZ

News Excerpts

Indian Navy Admiral visited INS Baaz, the southernmost air station of the Indian Armed Forces.

Pre-Connect

- INS Baaz was commissioned in July 2012, and is the southernmost air station of the Indian Armed Forces.
- INS Baaz is located at Campbell Bay on the Great Nicobar island, the southernmost and largest island of the Nicobar islands, in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- It is a part of the Andaman and Nicobar Command, the only tri-services formation of the Indian Armed Forces that was started in 2001.

Significance

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- The Andaman & Nicobar Islands are **strategically important for India's national security** as they provide a critical capability to monitor sea areas in the region.
- This island is located in less than 250 km by sea from Banda Aceh in Indonesia
- The base was first equipped with a runway of 3,500 feet but was later lengthened to enable larger aircraft to operate from it.
- The primary functions of the INS Baaz include
 - ✓ Build Maritime Domain Awareness
 - ✓ Airborne surveillance using aircraft and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)
 - ✓ Ensure Maritime Security in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea
- The location has been described as India's "window into East and Southeast Asia", and is in close vicinity of the Six Degree Channel, also called the Great Channel, one of the Indian Ocean's busiest shipping lines, carrying strategic cargo to East Asian countries.
- It is also close to the Strait of Malacca.
- The base also assists the local populace in times of need such as facilitating evacuation during medical emergencies.



PEPPER IT WITH
Strategic Importance of Strait of Malacca, 10 degree channel

Air Independent Propulsion System

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Air Independent Propulsion System

What? The DRDO has tested a land-based prototype of an Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) submarine to give a boost to the DRDO's plan to build AIP systems for Indian naval submarines. The land-based prototype was engineered to the form-and-fit of a submarine.

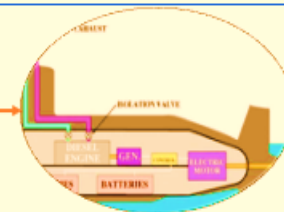


Conventional submarines use a diesel-electric engine, and must surface daily for oxygen for fuel combustion. Their underwater endurance time is less.

How the Technology Works?

Significance

Conventional diesel-electric variants are considered useful for coastal defence. They are optimized for stealth, and their weapons and sensors provide for effective operations close to the shore. The AIP cells are highly efficient, and do not have moving parts, thus ensuring that the submarine has a low acoustic signature.



AIP Allows the submarine to take in oxygen only once a week. This happened as in a Fuel Cell AIP, an electrolytic fuel cell releases energy by combining hydrogen and oxygen, with only water as the waste product.

Tipu Sultan

News Excerpt

Karnataka government recently stated that chapters glorifying Tipu Sultan, the 18th century ruler of Mysore, would be dropped from school textbooks.

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Contributions of Tipu Sultan-

- Tipu was instructed in military tactics by French officers in the employ of his father, Hyder Ali, who was the Muslim ruler of Mysore. In 1767 Tipu commanded a corps of cavalry against the Marathas in the Carnatic (Karnataka) region of western India, and he fought against the Marathas on several occasions between 1775 and 1779.
- During the second Mysore War he defeated Col. John Brathwaite on the banks of the Kollidam (Coleroon) River (1782). He succeeded his father in December 1782 and in 1784 concluded peace with the British and assumed the title of sultan of Mysore.
- He fought Company forces four times during 1767-99 and gave Governors-General Cornwallis and Wellesley bloody noses before he was killed defending his capital Srirangapatnam in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War. With Tipu gone, Wellesley imposed the **Subsidiary Alliance on the reinstated Wodeyar king, and Mysore became the Company's client state.**
- Tipu reorganised his army along European lines, using new technology, including what is considered the first war rocket.
- He devised a land revenue system based on detailed surveys and classification, in which the tax was imposed directly on the peasant, and collected through salaried agents in cash, **widening the state's resource base.**
- He modernised agriculture, gave tax breaks for developing wasteland, built irrigation infrastructure and repaired old dams, and promoted agricultural manufacturing and sericulture.
- He built a navy to support trade **and commissioned a "state commercial corporation" to set up factories.** As Mysore traded in sandalwood, silk, spices, rice and sulphur, some 30 trading **outposts were established across Tipu's dominions and overseas.**

Conclusion

Everybody thinks they know what's right and wrong. But it is not prudent to judge personalities of the past with present tenets. The disagreement over Tipu is old and has been brought alive every few years by political provocation. Studying history is important because it allows us to understand our past, which in turn allows us to understand our present. But it must not be seen through an ethnic, communal, regional or religious lens.

ParamahansaYogananda (125th birth anniversary)

News Excerpt

The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs recently released a special commemorative coin on ParamahansaYogananda to mark his 125th birth anniversary.

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About ParamahansaYogananda

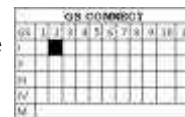
- ParamahansaYogananda (1893–1952) is considered one of the pre-eminent spiritual figures of modern times.
- Author of the best-selling spiritual classic '**Autobiography of a Yogi**', he went to America in 1920 from his native India, and was the first great master of yoga to live and teach in the West for an extended period (more than 30 years).
- He is widely recognized as the Father of Yoga in the West. He founded Self-Realization Fellowship (1920) and YogodaSatsanga Society of India (1917), which continue to carry on his spiritual legacy worldwide under the leadership of Brother Chidananda.

- ParamahansaYogananda has profoundly impacted the lives of millions with his comprehensive teachings on:
 - ✓ the science of Kriya Yoga meditation,
 - ✓ the underlying unity of all true religions,
 - ✓ the art of balanced health and well-being in body, mind, and soul.

Battle of Sinhagad

News Excerpt

Recently, a feature film was announced on the life of TaanajiMalusare, a brave military leader of the Maratha Empire. He is most famously known for his role in the Battle of Sinhagad in 1670 A.D.



Pre-Connect

- In the late 16th century, when Shivaji raised his arms against the Mughals, various iconic battles were fought between the Maratha and Mughal armies.
- In 1665 as per the Treaty of Purandar, Shivaji had to give up fort of Kondana to Mughals. The fort was thereafter considered almost impenetrable as this strategically placed fort was then one of the most heavily fortified. The fort was commanded by Udaybhan Rathore, appointed by Mughal army chief Jai Singh I.
- In February 1670, Shivaji deputed one of his most senior and trusted generals, TaanajiMalusare, to head a mission to capture Kondana.

TaanajiMalusare

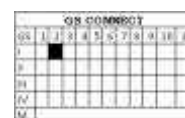
- He was the childhood friend and subedar of Chhatrapati Shivaji 's kingdom.
- He participated in various operations and campaigns of Chhatrapati Shivaji, especially during the attack of Lal Mahal.
- In the Battle of Sinhagad in 1670, he fought against Mughal fort keeper Udaybhan Rathore, until his last breath and paved the way for the Maratha victory.

PEPPER IT WITH
Battle of Nesari, Battle of
Purandar, Battle of Sangamner

Skandagupta Vikramaditya

News Excerpt

Recently Union Home Minister launched a book titled Guptvanshik-Veer: SkandguptaVikramaditya Ka ItihasikPunahsmaran, by Rakesh Upadhyay at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi.



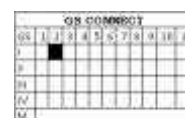
About Skandagupta

- The Gupta period has been described as the Golden Age of Indian history.
- The Junagarh Rock Inscription of Skandagupta of the Gupta era may be considered as the earliest epigraph of the Imperial Guptas.
- Skandagupta (455 - 467 AD) took over the Gupta empire and soon had to face with the formidable enemy, the Huns. He successfully repelled their early invasions and proved himself as an able king and administrator in times of crisis.
- As per Bhitari pillar inscription **Skandagupta's reign is** characterized by a constant struggle to maintain the empire mainly against the Huns.

Satnami Rebellion

News Excerpt

Recently author AmitaKaneekar, whose book Fear of Lions deals with the Satnami Rebellion during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb has spoken about the conditions which led to the peasant revolt.



Pre-Connect

In the history of revolts and rebellions, 1672 holds a special significance. In that year, the Satnamis — a sect comprising peasants, artisans and untouchables — rebelled against the mighty Mughal Empire.

Who are Satnamis

- ✓ Historians have called the Satnamis a monotheistic sect who followed neither Hinduism nor Islam and whose scriptures emphasised leading a life based on good conduct rather than on rituals and dogma.
- ✓ The earliest Satnamis were a sect of mendicants and householders founded by Birbhan in Narnaul in eastern Punjab in 1657.
- ✓ In the way of their religion, they have **dignified themselves with the title of 'good name', this being the meaning of Satnami.**
- ✓ They are not allowed to acquire wealth in any but a lawful calling.

PEPPER IT WITH
The Self-Respect Movement, Kabir Panth, Dharma ParipalanaYogam Movement, Satya ShodhakSamaj,

Key Highlights of the Revolt

- A Satnami Cultivator was murdered by a Mughal Pyada or foot-soldier. The Satnamis hit back and killed the foot-soldier.
- The local Mughal official sent a troop of soldiers to arrest those who had killed the foot soldier. But the community drove them away. Emboldened, the Satnamis attacked Narnaul, the main township in the area and destroyed the Mughal garrison. They even set up their own administration.
- The Satnamis marched towards Shahjahanabad (old Delhi), armed with the latest European-designed muskets that their leader had taught them to make. As Delhi quaked with fear, the emperor Aurangzeb himself took to the field.
- The Satnamis took on the over 10,000-strong Mughal army on March 25, 1672. Though the Satnamis fought bravely, they lost the battle and 2,000 Satnamis were killed.
- The killing of the youth may have been the immediate trigger, the reasons for the revolt were to do with the growing discontent against the policies of Mughal emperor in the Satnami sect.
- The entrenched caste structure of the era forced marginalised groups to join the fold and they protested against the high taxation policies.

Guru Ravidas

News Excerpt

Recently Supreme Court accepted the Centre's revised offer of 400 sq mt land in Tughlaqabad forest area for construction of Guru Ravidas Temple which was demolished by Delhi Development Authority following the court's earlier order.

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Bhakti Movement

- Sant Ravidas was a mystic of Bhakti movement from North India. He was one of the disciples of Ramananda. Also known by the name of Raidas, he is believed to be active in the 15th century CE.
- Like many poet saints of that era, he is venerated in the region of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh as well as Maharashtra. His devotional songs and verses made a lasting impact upon the Bhakti movement.
- Often called a “**Bhagat**” because of the devotional content in his philosophy. He was also a socio-religious reformer, a thinker, a theosophist, a humanist, a traveler, and a pacifist.
- Meera Bai considered Sant Ravidas as her Guru. She believed that one's future fate emerges from the very real substance of their Karma, rather than the illusion of "substance" that is their caste or creed.
- Adi Granth of Sikhs, in addition to the Panchvani are the two of the oldest documented sources of the literary works of Guru Ravidas.

PEPPER IT WITH
Guru Nanak, Guru-Shishya Culture, Kabir Das, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

- Owing to his devotional nature and not sticking to any particular religious belief, people of every caste and creed followed him. In the 20th century, people of various faiths and religions followed his teachings and they came to be known as Ravidassias.

Ancient Burial site of Chalukyas

News Excerpt

Recently some inscriptions have been found on an ancient temple at HuligemmanaKolla near Pattadakalu that probably belongs to Chalukya dynasty.

About the temple

- The temple may have once been the royal burial site of the Chalukya dynasty.
- There are eleven temples with lingas which were usually placed on top of a cremation site.
- Another linga without the tower, has an inscription stating that the place served as the funerary casket-bearing shrine of Vikramaditya-II.

About Chalukyas

- The Chalukya Dynasty was a powerful Indian royal dynasty that ruled large parts of southern and central India between the 6th and the 12th century C.E.
- The earliest dynasty, "Badami Chalukyas", ruled from their capital Vatapi (modern Badami) from the middle of the 6th century.
- There was efficient administration, overseas trade and commerce and the development of new style of architecture called "Chalukyan architecture".

PEPPER IT WITH
Pallava dynasty, Rashtrakuta
dynasty, Dravidian temples,
Pulakesin-I, Aihole Inscription

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Scientists excavate 'Ancient River' in Uttar Pradesh

News Excerpt

Recently, the Union Water Ministry has excavated an old, dried-up river in Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad) that linked the Ganga and Yamuna rivers.



National Mission for Clean Ganga

- NMCG is the implementation wing of National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (referred as National Ganga Council)
- It was established in the year 2011 as a registered society under Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Pre-Connect

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had conducted excavations under Saraswati Project since 2003 at different sites. But this report concluded that evidence from palaeochannels suggested that the mythological Saraswati River did indeed exist. The aim is to develop it as a potential

groundwater recharge source, according to officials at the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

Thematic-connect

What are Palaeochannels?

Palaeochannels are remnant of once active rivers/streams or in other words, are paths abandoned by rivers when they change their course either due to movement of tectonic plates or severe floods and cut new ones.

In the context of prevalent dryness in larger swathes of our country and the growing need for water, the palaeochannels hold good promise as rich repositories of groundwater. Some of the palaeochannels lie buried under younger sediments. They have proved to be a dependable source of supply in many parts of the world.

However there are many challenges faced by water management in general in India some of them are Sewage treatment, Restoring the flow, sludge control, Cost overruns and Governance glitches.

PEPPER IT WITH
CSIR-NGRI (National Geophysical Research Institute), Central Groundwater Board, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), UNESCO

Shirui Lily Festival

News Excerpt

The Department of Tourism of Manipur recently hosted the 3rd state level Shirui Lily Festival. It is an annual five-day State festival celebrated in Ukhrul district to spread awareness about the endangered state flower and to promote Ukhrul district as a potential tourist destination in Manipur.

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Pre-Connect

Shirui Lily, or *Lilium mackliniae*, a rare, pink-white flower, is the State Flower of Manipur found only in the upper ranges of Shirui Hills in Ukhrul district of Manipur. It was first discovered by English botanist Kingdon F Ward in 1946.

Thematic connect

- The festival was celebrated by the locals at their own level till 2016. In 2017, state government declared that Shirui Lily festival would be celebrated at the state level.
- It is organized by the Shirui Lily Festival Organizing Committee under the Department of Tourism, Manipur.
- It helps the people of all various communities and tribes residing in Manipur to come together and celebrate its rich biodiversity and cultural heritage.

PEPPER IT WITH
Tulip Festival, Cherry Blossom Festival, Tangkhul Naga Tribe

Veer Savarkar

News Excerpt

Recently, there was a discussion about conferring Bharat Ratna to Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, also known as “Veer Savarkar”.

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Pre-Connect

Born on May 28, 1883, in Baghpur, near Nasik, he was a great revolutionary in the history of **India's struggle of independence**. He was a great orator, scholar, prolific writer, historian, poet, philosopher and social worker.

Thematic Connect

- He encouraged the Indian students against the British colonial masters during his stay in London and supported **the use of arms in India's Struggle of Independence**.
- He wrote *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* in 1909, with the view that Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was the first expression of Indian mass rebellion against colonial rule.

- He established an organization, '**Mitra Mela**', which influenced the members to fight for "absolute political independence" of India. The organization later came to be known as '**Abhinav Bharat**' Society.
- He was arrested for the assassination of a British district magistrate in India, and after sentencing, he was transported to the Andaman Islands for detention.
- While imprisoned, he wrote "Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?" in 1923.
- He also founded the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha to preserve ancient Indian culture and worked in the direction of social welfare.
- He also joined Swaraj Party, formed by Tilak and founded the Hindu Mahasabha, a separate political party and was elected its President.

Miscellaneous

Indian Brain atlas

Recently IIT, Hyderabad researchers developed the Indian Brain Atlas.

Highlights

- A brain atlas is a brain map or a template which becomes the 'standard' against which brain abnormalities can be measured. It helps researchers compare findings from different brain imaging methods like Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and functional MRI (fMRI), or between healthy and diseased brain states, or across individuals.
- The study indicated that there is a significant difference in the size of Indian and Caucasian brains in terms of length, width, height and volume.
- Comparing the Indian, Chinese and Korean brain atlases which revealed that the Indian brain is comparable in terms of length with both the atlases, while it was significantly smaller in terms of height and width.

Advantages

The implication of this finding can be seen in treatment outcomes of neurological problems or brain related ailments - **like dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease** etc. Brain atlas could be used as a standard in neuroscience studies.

SEED Awards for start-ups 2019

- The SEED Awards for Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Development is an annual awards scheme designed to identify the most innovative and promising locally led start-up eco-inclusive enterprises in developing and emerging economies.
- Each year, multiple award categories are offered, ranging from country- or region-specific awards. Fourteen start-ups have been selected for SEED awards in 2019.
- The award highlights the contribution of green and social enterprises to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Tackling poverty and climate change, generating employment opportunities and contributing to economic development.
- SEED was founded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.
- It is a global multi-sectorial partnership for action on sustainable development and for the green economy that works in Asian and African countries and supports small and growing enterprises with business and capacity-building support.

UNESCO Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation, 2019

Recently, following four sites have been chosen from India for the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

- Award of Distinction for Vikram Sarabhai Library, IIM Ahmedabad
- Award of Merit for Keneseth Eliyahu Synagogue, Mumbai.
- Award of Merit for Our Lady of Glory Church, Mumbai
- Honorable Mention for Flora Fountain, Mumbai.

Key Highlights:

- ✓ The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation were established on 1999.
- ✓ **It provides award to the private individuals and organization's efforts to conserve structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.**
- ✓ The award aims to encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within their communities, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships.
- ✓ As it was the 20th anniversary, UNESCO co-organized the Asia-Pacific Heritage 20/20 Forum that provides an opportunity for industry practitioners to reflect upon how heritage conservation has evolved over the past 20 years, as well as to set a vision for linking heritage with sustainable development within the broad framework defined by UNESCO Agenda 2030 in the next 20 years.

Asia Environmental Enforcement Award

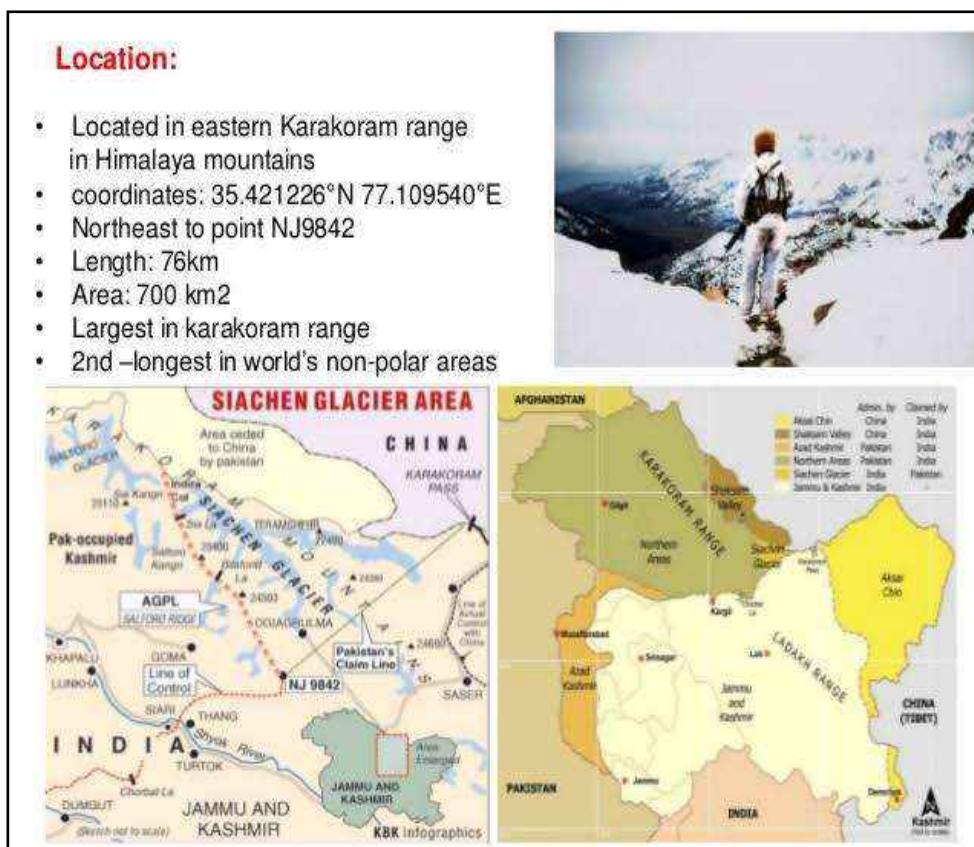
The prestigious Asia Environmental Enforcement Award for the year 2019 has been given to the 1996-batch IFS officer Ramesh Pandey for his excellent work in combating trans-boundary environmental crime by UN Environment in partnership with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

About the Award

- The Award publicly recognizes and celebrates excellence in enforcement by government officials and institutions or teams combating transboundary environmental crime.
- It is given to individuals or government organizations or teams that demonstrate excellence and outstanding leadership in enforcement of national laws to combat transboundary environmental crime.
- The thematic scope of the Awards covers any transboundary environmental crimes, such as illegal trade in wildlife, illegal trade in chemicals or waste, including plastic.

Highlights

- Illegal trade in wildlife undermines conservation efforts, harms economies, devastates livelihoods and compromises ecosystems on which we all depend. The Asian region is also one of the main destinations for illegally traded chemicals and waste.
- The category for Africa-Asia cooperation in the area of illegal trade in wildlife is sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme and finance by the Global Environment Facility, World Bank-led Global Wildlife Program.



Siachen Glacier now open for tourists

Recently, the **world's highest battlefield, Siachen Glacier** has been opened for tourists. Tourism will be allowed from Siachen base camp to Kumar Post that lies above 15,000 feet.

Highlights

- Siachen Glacier is **one of the world's longest mountain glaciers, lying in the Karakoram Range** system of Kashmir near the India–Pakistan border, extending for 70 km from north-northwest to south-southeast.
- It is the source for the Nubra River, a tributary of the Shyok, part of the Indus River system.
- The Glacier, once a demilitarized zone, came under the strategic control of India in 1984 following 'Operation Meghdoot'
- The highest post in Siachen is Bana Post, which is 23,000 feet.

Concept Clearing Assignment

1. "Free and fair elections are part of basic structure doctrine". In light of the above statement discuss the challenges for the Model code of conduct (MCC) and feasibility of legal enforcement of MCC through legislation.
2. India and China are still in a tactical engagement, not in a strategic partnership. Discuss. What in your opinion should be the strategy of India in taking forward its ties with China? Substantiate your views
3. Discuss the concept of a jurist person in law. How far is it justified to provide deities with legal rights against humans with fundamental rights? Give arguments in support of your answer.
4. Mergers of entities have been increasingly resorted to improve the viability of the enterprises. Discuss how far this rationalisation of entities would be successful. Also suggest some innovative steps to revive such entities apart from mergers.
5. In the era of globalisation, work load has been a major reason for decreasing productivity of labour force. In light of the above statement critically examine the Right to disconnect bill and its impacts. How far would it impact the employer?
6. **Understanding the earth's ice poles can prove to be a crucial link in efforts for conservation of environment.** Discuss the significance of MOSAiC expedition in this regard.
7. **"Growing India-Saudi Arabia ties will ensure not only the energy security for India but also provide it a strategic depth in the West Asian politics". Comment Also, Discuss the arenas of economic cooperation India will have in Saudis in the wake of new Kingdom Vision 2030.** How far do you think Iran issue will present a challenge to India-Saudi ties?
8. Discuss the concept of RCT (randomized control trials). Discuss its impact on development process in the third world countries. Also, discuss the major arguments against excessive reliance on RCT for planned interventions.
9. India has been constantly improving in ease of doing business report of the World Bank; however recent reports of high unemployment and core sector slowdown paint a different picture. In light of the above statement discuss what explains this contradiction? What does India need to arrest this slowdown in increasingly uncertain global environment?
10. **Swavalamban is not just 'Atmanirbharta' or Self-Reliance.** The route to Swavalamban goes via self-reliance and capacity building. Swavalamban is the ultimate goal of the nation if one **has to be prosperous, secure and developed". In the context of the statement discuss the status of Defence indigenization in India.** Also, suggest some measures to overhaul defence manufacturing in India.
11. National Crime records bureau data points towards the increasing vulnerabilities of vulnerable section of the society. Discuss. What in your opinion is the criticality of data in managing criminal jurisprudence in India? Also, critically comment on the methodology employed by NCRB in collection, assessment and assimilation of crime related data in India.

12. Children in India suffer from a developmental deficit. Explain the statement in light of various challenges for children to grow as a productive demographic asset for the country. Also, discuss various strategies and steps taken to counter the problem.
13. **Why China's Africa push is a concern for India? What are the underlying differences between Indian and Chinese Investment in Africa? Also, Highlight the role played by the Vanilla Islands in ensuring India's strategic control in the Indian ocean.**
14. Pollution has emerged as the biggest transnational threat in 21st century. Discuss various international and national initiatives to tackle the issue of pollution and how far they have been successful?
15. Drone technology has opened a new window of steady development in India and has capability to revolutionize the entire supply-Chain industry in India. Discuss. Also highlight the key aspects of India Drone Policy 2.0.

P.T Oriented Questions

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which of the following countries are covered under India's "The Cotton Technical Assistance Programme (TAP)"? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Egypt 2. Brazil 3. Chad 4. Nigeria 5. Uganda <p>Select the correct answer using the code given below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2, 3 and 4 only (c) 3, 4 and 5 only (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 2. With reference to "One Nation One FASTag" Scheme, consider the following statements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It employs LIFI technology, to enable contactless payment of tolls as a vehicle crosses a toll plaza. 2. These tags can be linked to the personal bank accounts. 3. A FASTag is valid for five years. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Consider the following statements about Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only such Indian institutes which are ranked in the overall top 100 or category-wise top 100 in the NIRF rankings are eligible to apply. 2. IIT Kharagpur is the National Coordinating Institute in implementing the SPARC programme. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2 4. Which among the following grounds are mentioned in the Constitution for a person to be disqualified from being a Member of Parliament? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holding an office of profit 2. Punished for social discriminatory practices 3. Voluntarily gives up membership of party on whose ticket one was elected. |
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4. An undischarged insolvent
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
(b) 1, 3 and 4 only
(c) 2, 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4.
5. Consider the following statements regarding Paleochannels:
1. These are paths created due to the glacial movements especially as a result of tectonic activities.
 2. They hold the potential to be developed as a reliable source of surface water supply along with Parent Rivers.
 3. Geological survey of India has recently found a Paleochannel of the Saraswati river.
- Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?
- (a) 1 and 2 Only
(b) 1 and 3 Only
(c) 2 and 3 Only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
6. Consider the following statements about Guru Ravidas:
1. Guru Ravidas was a contemporary of Guru Nanak Dev.
 2. Adi Granth and Panchvani are the two major sources of his literary work.
 3. Ravidassia is a religion formed in the 21st century, by the ardent followers of Ravidas's teachings.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1, 2 Only
(b) 2 and 3 Only
(c) 1 and 3 Only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
7. Consider the following statements regarding Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT):
1. It is a methodology of targeted intervention in developmental process.
 2. This methodology is widely accepted in third world countries for planning process.
 3. Recently Nobel Prize for economics has been awarded to Abhijeet Bannerjee for his work in RCT.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 Only
(b) 1 and 2 Only
(c) 1 and 3 Only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
8. Consider the following statement regarding C40 Cities Initiative:
1. It is a program of UNEP to bring together 40 most polluted cities to take action against pollution.
 2. Recently Clean Air Cities Declaration has been signed in Rio de Janeiro during C40 World Mayor meet.
- 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

9. The report, “State Finances: A study of Budgets” has been published by:
- Reserve Bank of India
 - NITI Aayog
 - Ministry of Finance, Govt of India
 - Budget estimates committee
10. With reference to the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2019, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- It is published by the UNESCAP and the UNCTAD.
 - According to the report, NTMs (Non-tariff measures) affect majority of the trade in Asia-Pacific.
- Select the correct answer using the code below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
11. With reference to the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), Consider the following statements:
- In a bid to combat the menace of Air pollution, the Environment Ministry mandated the Central Pollution Control Board to come up with this comprehensive action plan.
 - This plan covers 11 most polluted cities of India on a pilot basis.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
12. The terms Rotavator, Baler and Happy Seeder frequently seen in news are related to:
- Indigenously developed automatic seed sowing machines.
 - Seed separators developed by ICAR.
 - Machines employed in crop residue management.
 - Artificial Intelligence based fertilizer spraying machines.
13. Consider the following statements with regard to the Green wall of India:
- The project is first of its kind in the world and will be built along the Aravalli range
 - This project will address the issue of desertification.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
14. Consider the following statements about “Feed Our Future” Campaign:
- The campaign is an initiative of United Nations World Food Programme.
 - Under the scheme, a special funding mechanism is created for African countries to ensure a buffer stock is made available all the time.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

15. Consider the following statements about the SARAS Aajeevika Mela:

1. It is organised as a part of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
2. The mela is jointly organised by the Ministries of Commerce and Industry and Skill Development.
3. The mela will provide impetus to the skill development for women of Self-help groups and provide linkages with urban market.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

16. **“Mo sarkar”** is an initiative to collect feedback of government offices and their behaviour from the public visiting them. The initiative is started by which one of the following state Governments:

- (a) West Bengal Government
(b) Odisha Government
(c) Jharkhand Government
(d) Gujarat Government

17. Consider the following statements about the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme- DHRUV:

1. The Programme aims to identify and encourage talented children to enrich their skills and knowledge.
2. It is an initiative of Indian Space Research Organisation-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

18. The Gandhian Challenge has been in news recently, with regard to this consider the following statements:

1. It is a mission inviting volunteers to clean all India cities on the Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi.
2. It is an initiative of NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Labs.

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

19. Consider the following statements about the Suman scheme:

1. It aims to provide free medical services to pregnant women.
2. The government will also provide free transport under this scheme.
3. This scheme also provides monetary benefits to all eligible beneficiaries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

20. The terms SWAS, SAFAL, STAR recently seen in news are in the context of:

- (a) Green Crackers developed by CPCB.
(b) New rating system for electrical appliances.
(c) Indigenously developed stand alone solar power plants.
(d) None of the above.

21. **India's first e-waste clinic** is set up in which of the following city:
- Bengaluru
 - Bhopal
 - Hyderabad
 - Mumbai
22. MOSAIC Expedition, which was recently in news is:
- An expedition into the central Arctic to explore the Arctic climate system.
 - An expedition to find water in the red planet; Mars.
 - An expedition to find the truth about the Bermuda Triangle.
 - None of the above
23. The **"No Permission, No Take-off"** rule frequently seen in news is in context of:
- Drone Regulation
 - Civil Aviation rules during Cyclones
 - Operation Bandhar
 - Operation Meghdoot
24. Consider the following statements about Shirui Lily Festival:
- Shirui Lily festival is a unique species of ground lily that it is found only in Manipur.
 - It is a month long festival which features music dance and traditional drama.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
25. As per the latest Doing Business Report (DBR, 2020), India has not improved its ranking in which of the following parameters?
- Securing construction permits
 - Trading across the borders
 - Resolving Insolvency
 - Getting Credit
26. With reference to Mughal India, what is/are the difference/differences between Jagirdar and Zamindar? (2019)
- Jagirdars were holders of land assignments in lieu of judicial and police duties, whereas Zamindars were holders of revenue rights without obligation to perform any duty other than revenue collection.
 - Land assignments to Jagirdars were hereditary and revenue rights of Zamindars were not hereditary.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
27. If a wetland of international importance **is brought under the 'Montreux Record'**, what does it imply? (2014)
- Changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur in the wetland as a result of human interference.
 - The country in which the wetland is located should enact a law to prohibit any human activity within five kilo metres from the edge of the wetland
 - The survival of the wetland depends on the cultural practices and

- traditions of certain communities living in its vicinity and therefore the cultural diversity therein should not be destroyed
- (d) **It is given the status of 'World Heritage Site'**
28. Which Article of the Constitution of India safeguards one's right to marry the person of one's choice? (2019)
- (a) Article 19 (b) Article 21
(c) Article 25 (d) Article 29
29. The 'Fortaleza Declaration', recently in the news, is related to the affairs of : (2015)
- (a) ASEAN
(b) BRICS
- (c) OECD
(d) WTO
30. Consider the following : (2014)
1. Bats
 2. Bears
 3. Rodents
- The phenomenon of hibernation can be observed in which of the above kinds of animals?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) Hibernation cannot be observed in any of the above

Answers

- | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 11. D | 21. B |
| 2. B | 12. C | 22. A |
| 3. C | 13. B | 23. A |
| 4. B | 14. A | 24. A |
| 5. C | 15. C | 25. D |
| 6. D | 16. B | 26. D |
| 7. C | 17. A | 27. A |
| 8. D | 18. B | 28. B |
| 9. A | 19. A | 29. B |
| 10. C | 20. D | 30. C |