

KSG

An Institute For **IAS** Exam...



CURRENT CONNECT

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Economic Survey: Vol 1

India can become a \$5 trillion economy by:

- ✓ Providing equal opportunities for new entrants.
- ✓ Enabling fair competition and ease doing business.
- ✓ Eliminating policies unnecessarily undermining markets through government intervention.
- ✓ Enabling trade for job creation.
- ✓ Efficiently scaling up the banking sector
- ✓ Introducing the idea of *trust as a public good*



Pro-business versus Pro-market:

- ✓ Pro-crony policies such as discretionary allocation of natural resources destroyed value in the economy
- ✓ Similarly, crony lending led to wilful default
- ✓ India's aspiration of becoming a \$5 trillion economy depends critically on:
 - Promoting 'pro-business' policy that unleashes the power of competitive market
 - Weaning away from 'pro-crony' policy that may favour specific private interests



Entrepreneurship and Wealth Creation at the Grassroots:

- ✓ Entrepreneurship at district level has a significant impact on wealth creation at the grassroots.
- ✓ Literacy and education in a district foster local entrepreneurship significantly.
- ✓ Physical infrastructure quality in the district influences new firm creation significantly.
- ✓ Ease of Doing Business and flexible labour regulation enable new firm creation.

Creating Jobs and Growth by Specializing to Exports in Network Products

- ✓ India has unprecedented opportunity to chart a China-like, labour-intensive, export trajectory.
- ✓ By integrating "Assemble in India for the world" into Make in India, India can raise its export market share and create well-paid jobs.
- ✓ Exports of network products can help India become a \$5 trillion economy by 2025



Undermining Markets: When Government Intervention Hurts More Than It Helps

Govt. interventions such as Essential Commodities Act, Debt waivers, etc. often ends up undermining the ability of the markets to support wealth creation.

Solutions:

- ✓ Some government intervention is necessary.
- ✓ However, government must systematically examine areas of needless intervention and undermining of markets.
- ✓ Interventions that have lost relevance in a transformed economy should be eliminated.



Financial Fragility In The NBFC Sector

Key drivers of Rollover Risk of the shadow banking system in India are as follows:

- ✓ Asset Liability Management (ALM) Risk,
- ✓ Interconnectedness Risk,
- ✓ Financial and Operating Resilience,
- ✓ Over-dependence on short-term wholesale funding.



Targeting Ease of Doing Business In India

- ✓ India has seen a jump of 79 positions to 63 in 2019 from 142 in 2014 in World Bank's Doing Business rankings.
- ✓ However, India still trails in parameters such as Ease of Starting Business.
- ✓ Suggestions for further Ease of Doing Business:
 - Close coordination between Ministry of Commerce, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, and Ministry of Shipping.
 - Individual sectors such as tourism or manufacturing require a more targeted approach.

Privatization and Wealth Creation

- ✓ 11 CPSEs underwent strategic disinvestment from 1999-2000 to 2003-04 for creation of national wealth.
- ✓ Disinvestment of CPSEs are required to:
 - Bring in higher profitability,
 - Promote efficiency,
 - Increase competitiveness,
 - Promote professionalism.

Thalinomics: The Economics of a Plate of Food in India

- ✓ An attempt to quantify what a common person pays for a Thali across India.
- ✓ A shift in the dynamics of Thali prices since 2015-16.
- ✓ Absolute prices of a vegetarian Thali have decreased significantly since 2015-16 across India and the four regions; though the price has increased during 2019-20.
- ✓ From 2006-07 to 2019-20: Affordability of vegetarian Thalis improved 29 %, Affordability of non-vegetarian Thalis improved by 18 %.



Golden jubilee of bank nationalization

- ✓ 2019 is the golden jubilee year of bank nationalization.
- ✓ However, India's Banking sector has not developed proportionately to the growth in the size of the economy.
- ✓ The onus of supporting the economy falls on the PSBs.
- ✓ PSBs can be made more efficient by measures such as Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) for PSBs' employees.

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 for registering yourself in our race to perfection.](mailto:evaluation@ksgindia.com) **Don't wait, it's your golden** chance to crack this exam and fulfill your passionate dream.

Team KSG

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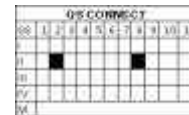
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Reservation in Promotion

News Excerpt

In a recent judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that states are not legally bound to provide quotas to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in government jobs and held that individuals have no fundamental right to claim reservations in promotions.



Pre-Connect

- The court gave the verdict during a case regarding the validity of a 2012 notification by the Uttarakhand government to fill up vacancies in government jobs without giving reservation to the SC/ST communities.
- The Uttarakhand High Court back then had struck down the notification.
- Through its verdict the apex court upheld the state government's decision and overturned the Uttarakhand HC's order which had asked the government to provide representation to the specified categories.
- The bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and Hemant Gupta said that there is no fundamental right which inheres in an individual to claim reservation in promotions. Also, no mandamus can be issued by the court directing state governments to provide reservations.

Analytica

- ✓ Agreeing that there is no fundamental right for claiming reservation in promotions in public jobs, the top court held that while articles 16(4) and 16(4A) of the Constitution give states the power to make such reservations, it is so only "if in the opinion of the state they are not adequately represented in the services of the state"
- ✓ State governments may exercise this above mentioned discretion in making such provisions, provided that it collects data showing the lack of representation to these categories in the government employment.
- ✓ The judgment says that the state will also have to justify its decision to provide reservations if challenged in a court of law. However, the state government needs to collect data when making provisions for reservation and not when the government decides not to provide quotas.
- ✓ The court thus ruled that even if the under-representation of SC/STs in public services is brought to the notice of the court, no direction can be issued by the court to the state government to provide reservation.

Article 16

- ❖ Article 16 of the Constitution pertains to matters of equality of opportunity in matters of public employment, while sub-sections 4 and 4A pertain to reservations to SCs/STs in appointments and reservations in promotions respectively.
- ❖ Article 16(4) states: "Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favor of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State."
- ❖ Article 16(4A) states: "Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any provision for reservation in matters of promotion, with consequential seniority, to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favor of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes which, in the opinion of the State, are not adequately represented in the services under the State."

Mandamus

- **Mandamus is among the "prerogative writs" in English common law.**
- It is a writ issued by a court to compel performance of a particular act by lower court or a governmental officer or body, to correct a prior action or failure to act.
- **Mandamus literally means 'we command'. When issued to a person or body, the writ of mandamus demands some activity on their part. It orders the person or body to perform a public or quasi-public duty, which they have refused to perform, and where no other adequate legal remedy exists to enforce the performance of that duty.**

- The writ cannot be issued unless the legal duty is of public nature, and to whose performance the applicant of the writ has a legal right.
- The remedy is of a discretionary nature — a court can refuse to grant it when an alternative remedy exists. However, for enforcing fundamental rights, the alternative remedy argument does not hold as much weight, since it is the duty of the Supreme Court and the High Courts to enforce fundamental rights.
- When a public officer or government does an act that violates the fundamental right of a person, the court would issue a writ of mandamus against such authorities so that the **person's rights are not infringed**.
- The writ can also be issued against inferior courts or other judicial bodies when they have refused to exercise their jurisdiction and perform their duty.
- Under Article 361, mandamus cannot be granted against the President or Governor of a State, **"for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office or for any act done or purporting to be done by him in the exercise and performance of those powers and duties"**
- The writ also cannot be issued against a private individual or body, except where the State is in collusion with the private party for contravening a provision of the Constitution or a statute.

Mandamus vs Prohibition & Certiorari

- Mandamus is used where the authority refuses to exercise jurisdiction; prohibition and certiorari are issued to prevent subordinate courts (and inferior tribunals) from usurping jurisdiction or from acting in excess to their jurisdiction. Hence, while mandamus is available against public authority; prohibition and certiorari are available against subordinate courts and inferior tribunals.
- Certiorari and prohibition deal with wrongful action, while mandamus deals with wrongful inaction.
- Mandamus acts where the authority concerned has declined jurisdiction; certiorari or prohibition act where courts (and tribunals) usurp jurisdiction not vested in them or exceed their jurisdiction

Mandamus vs Quo Warranto

- While mandamus is a command to a person or a body under a legal duty to do something; quo-warranto is a proceeding by which a person is asked to state by what authority he supports his claim to a particular office, liberty or franchise.
- In a mandamus proceeding, the petitioner must show that he is a person aggrieved but this requirement is not necessary in a quo-warranto proceeding. Mandamus and quo-warranto are concurrent remedies.

PEPPER IT WITH
M Nagraj and others vs UOI,
Venkataramana vs State of Madras,
Art 32, Art 226, Writs, Equality
Before Law, Equal Protection of Law

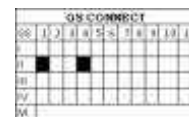
Conclusion

There is not an iota of doubt that Reservation and social justice is the need of the hour but it must be only to the extent that the efficiency of the govt. is not affected and merit is not compromised.

Gram Nyayalayas

News Excerpt

Recently, the Supreme Court has directed the states, which are yet to come out with notifications for establishing "Gram Nyayalayas", within four weeks, and asked the high courts to expedite the process of consultation with state governments on this issue.



Pre-Connect

- An Act passed by Parliament in 2008 provided for setting up of "Gram Nyayalayas" at the grass roots level for providing speedy access to justice to citizens at the doorstep and to ensure that

opportunities for securing justice are not denied to anyone by reason of social, economic or other disabilities.

- The bench noted that certain states including Haryana, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Telangana, Odisha and Chhattisgarh have not yet filed their affidavits on the issue despite the **court's direction last year**
- Overall, only 208 Gram Nyayalayas are functioning across the country, as against the required 2500 as per the 12th five-year plan.

Analytica

- ✓ Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner NGO National Federation of Societies for Fast Justice and others, placed before the bench the state-wise data showing the steps taken by the authorities for establishing and functioning of "Gram Nyayalayas" under the 2008 Act.
- ✓ Currently, as per the report submitted, Goa has issued two notifications regarding the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas but none are functioning. Haryana has issued notifications for 3 Gram Nyayalayas but only two are functional.

Gram Nyayalaya

- ❖ Gram Nyayalaya is a mobile court and exercises the powers of both Criminal and Civil Courts. The seat of the Gram Nyayalaya will be located at the headquarters of the intermediate Panchayat, but they will go to villages, work there and dispose of the cases.
 - ❖ It can try criminal cases, civil suits, claims or disputes which are specified in the First Schedule and the Second Schedule to the Gram Nyayalaya Act and the scope of these cases can be amended by the Central as well as the State Governments, as per their respective legislative competence;
 - ❖ The Gram Nyayalaya are supposed to try to settle the disputes as far as possible by bringing about conciliation between the parties.
 - ❖ The judgment and order passed by the Gram Nyayalaya are deemed to be a decree and to avoid delay in its execution, the Gram Nyayalaya can follow summary procedure for its execution.
 - ❖ Gram Nyayalaya are courts of Judicial Magistrate of the first class and its presiding officer (Nyayadhikari) is appointed by the State Government in consultation with the High Court of the State concerned; The Nyayadhikaris who will preside over these Gram Nyayalayas are strictly judicial officers and will be drawing the same salary and deriving the same powers as First Class Magistrates working under High Courts.
 - ❖ The Gram Nyayalaya will not be bound by the rules of evidence provided in the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 but shall be guided by the principles of natural justice and subject to any rule made by the High Court;
 - ❖ Appeal in criminal cases shall lie to the Court of Session, which shall be heard and disposed of within a period of six months from the date of filing of such appeal. Appeal in civil cases shall lie to the District Court, which shall be heard and disposed of within a period of six months from the date of filing of the appeal.
- ✓ Jharkhand had issued notifications for 6 but only one is functioning and Uttar Pradesh, which had to establish 822, had notified 113 Gram Nyayalayas but only 14 are functioning.
 - ✓ The major reason behind the non-enforcement includes financial constraints, reluctance of lawyers, police officials and other State functionaries to invoke jurisdiction of Gram Nyayalayas, lukewarm response of the Bar, non-availability of notaries and stamp vendors etc. are some of the issues indicated by the States which are coming in the way of operationalisation of the Gram Nyayalayas.
 - ✓ There has been no comprehensive empirical assessment of the success of diversion strategies towards reducing delay in the formal legal system.

- ✓ In the absence of a separate cadre of Gram Nyayadhikari, the Gram Nyayalayas are presided over by First Class Judicial Magistrates or Civil Judges (grade I or grade II) or in a few cases Chief Judicial Magistrates who are already over burdened with their regular judicial work.
- ✓ Further, the spirit of the legislation requires that as far as possible Gram Nyayalayas should be established where it would be of maximum utility to the villagers. But in practice some of the Gram Nyayalayas are established in cities/towns along with other regular courts having parallel jurisdiction. For example, in Indore the Gram Nyayalaya functions within the regular court premises.
- ✓ The infrastructure and security are grossly inadequate.
- ✓ Many of the stakeholders including the litigants, lawyers, police officers and others are not even aware about the existence of Gram Nyayalayas in the district court premises and no conferences or seminars have been organized for creating awareness about this institution.
- ✓ The number of cases disposed by Gram Nyayalayas is negligible and that they do not make any substantial difference in the overall pendency in the subordinate courts.

PEPPER IT WITH
Art 39A, Lok Adalat, Nyaya
Panchayat

Conclusion

- Access to justice by the poor and disadvantaged remains a worldwide problem despite diverse approaches and strategies that have been formulated and implemented to address it.
- Also, Justice to the poor at their doorstep is a dream of the poor.
- Hence, speedy setting up of Gram Nyayalayas in the rural areas would bring to the people of rural areas speedy, affordable and substantial justice.

Central Vigilance Commission

News Excerpt

Sanjay Kothari, the Secretary to the President, has been selected as the new Central Vigilance Commissioner by a high-powered committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The three-member panel also decided by majority the appointment of Suresh Patel as Vigilance Commissioner.

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Pre-Connect

- The Central Vigilance Commission is an-corruption watchdog with autonomous status.
- It is free of control from any executive authority and has the responsibility of monitoring all vigilance activities in the Central government besides advising various authorities in planning, executing, reviewing and reforming their vigilance work.

Analytica

- ✓ The Commission is considered the apex integrity institution of the country. Apart from overseeing the vigilance administration, it has also been tasked with superintendence over the CBI in corruption cases.
- ✓ It is also the designated agency for the protection of whistleblowers and examination of their complaints. It acts as a watchdog over the central government and its instrumentalities.
- ✓ The Supreme Court in the landmark judgment in the Vineet Narain case (1997) had directed **the following: "The Central Vigilance Commission shall be given statutory status.** Selection for the post of Central Vigilance Commissioner shall be made by a Committee comprising the Prime Minister, Home Minister and the Leader of the Opposition from a panel of outstanding civil servants and others with impeccable integrity to be furnished by the Cabinet Secretary. The appointment shall be made by the President on the basis of the recommendations made by the Committee."
- ✓ Pursuant to the said judgment, Parliament passed the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, giving statutory status to the Commission. It had incorporated the order of the Court for the selection and appointment of the CVC. It is imperative therefore that the process and

PEPPER IT WITH
DSPE-Delhi Special Police
Establishment Act 1946

procedures are followed meticulously.

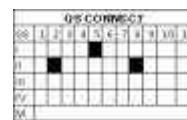
Conclusion

- The opposition termed the process adopted for appointment of the new Chief Vigilance Commissioner "illegal, unlawful and unconstitutional" and demanded its immediate scrapping. They demanded that the entire process needs to be scrapped in its entirety, a de-novo process needs to be instituted, a fresh search committee needs to be constituted, which is not conflicted. Applications need to be invited afresh
- Arbitrariness in top judicial institutions is fatal for democracy, and if anything of that sort has happened then the government needs to relook into matter.

Women in Armed Force

News Excerpt

The Supreme Court directed the Centre to grant permanent commission to all **women officers in the Army within three months, terming the Centre's argument of physiological limitations and social norms for denying them command posts "disturbing"**.



Pre-Connect

- A bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud said that an absolute bar on granting command posts to women officers in the Army is against the Right to Equality and hence there will not be any absolute bar.
- The bench said it is of the opinion that physiological features of women have no effect in granting permanent commission and they have to be given equal opportunity at par with their male counterparts in the armed forces.
- It said that **Centre's submission of physiological limitation** is based on flawed notion and there is no constitutional basis to deny them equal opportunity.
- The top court said permanent commission can be given to the women officers in the Army irrespective of their tenure of service.

Time-Line

- In 1992, the Indian Army began inducting women officers in non-medical roles.
- In 2007, the United Nations first all-female peacekeeping force made up of 105 Indian policewomen was deployed to Liberia.
- All wings of the Indian Armed Forces allow women in combat roles (junior ranks) and combat supervisory roles (officers), except Indian Army (inducted for support roles only) and Special Forces of India (trainer role only).
- Females are not allowed to serve in combat units like the Infantry, the Armoured Corps and Mechanized infantry.
- Under the Short Service Commission (SSC) scheme, women are allowed to enter Army Service Corps, Ordnance, Education Corps, Judge Advocate General (JAG), Engineers, Signals, Intelligence and Electronics & Mechanical Engineering branches of the Army.
- Only in certain streams like the Judge Advocate General, Army Education Corps (AEC) and the Military Police, women are given permanent commission at par with male officers.
- Unlike male officers who could have joined under the SSC scheme and could have opted for a permanent scheme at the end of ten years, women SSC officers did not have the same option.

However, Prime Minister has announced on Independence Day in 2018, that permanent commission would be granted to serving women officers of the armed forces. It will change the career paths of more than 3,700 women officers in the three services.

Analytica

Physical issues

- The natural physical differences in stature, strength, and body composition between the sexes make women more vulnerable to certain types of injuries and medical problems. This is particularly so during vigorous and intensive training.
- Pre-entry physical fitness levels tend to be lower in most women recruits compared with men, and hence, when standards of training remain the same for the two genders, there is a higher probability of injuries among the women.

Physiological issues

- The natural processes of menstruation and pregnancy make women particularly vulnerable in combat situations. Lack of privacy and sanitation can result in an increased incidence of genitourinary infections.
- The effect of prolonged deployment in difficult terrains and grueling physical activity on the reproductive health of women is still unknown.

Social and psychological issues

- Women tend to be more attached to their families, particularly their children. This translates into greater mental stress and requirement of social support to sustain themselves during prolonged separations from family.
- Another social aspect leading to mental stress in women in the military is that of isolation. This is due to the fact that men far outnumber women in the military, particularly in combat zones.
- The issue of military sexual trauma (MST) and its effect on the physical and mental well-being of women combatants is grave.
- MST may lead to grave, long-term psychological problems, including posttraumatic stress disorders (PTSDs), depression, and substance abuse.

Conventional Barriers

- The consequences of inserting a few women in an almost entirely male preserve, in cramped quarters, in inhospitable terrain, isolated from civilization, might raise conservative eyebrows of the society.
- Another major question that needs to be studied is the acceptance of orders of the women officers by the jawans.

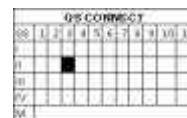
Conclusion

SC verdict ensures greater roles commensurate with individual merit and aptitude of women officers. Granting permanent commission (PC) and command positions for women officers is a **watershed moment and success** “against stereotypical mind-set and attitude,

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

News Excerpt

The union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution recently announced that a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will be established after consulting with industry representatives about the role and functioning of a proposed CCPA.



Pre-Connect

- Under section 10(1) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, CCPA is being constituted. The Act replaced The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, and seeks to widen its scope in addressing consumer concerns.
- The new Act recognises offences such as providing false information regarding the quality or quantity of a good or service, and misleading advertisement.

- The CCPA, introduced in the new Act, aims to protect the rights of the consumer by cracking down on unfair trade practices, and false and misleading advertisements that are detrimental to the interests of the public and consumers

Analytica

CCPA

- ✓ The proposed authority will be a lean body with a Chief Commissioner as head, and only two other commissioners as members — one dealing with matters relating to goods while the other looking into cases relating to services.
- ✓ It will be headquartered in the National Capital Region of Delhi but the central government may set up regional offices in other parts of the country.
- ✓ It will have an investigation Wing headed by director general. This wing will have the powers to enter any premise and search for any document or article, and to seize these. For search and seizure, the CCPA will have similar powers given under the provisions of The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- ✓ District Collectors too, will have the power to investigate complaints of violations of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and false or misleading advertisements.
- ✓ CCPA will have the powers to inquire or investigate into matters relating to violations of consumer rights or unfair trade practices suo-moto, or on a complaint received, or on a direction from the central government.
- ✓ CCPA will ensure that all standards on packaged food items set by regulators such as the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) are being followed.
- ✓ CCPA will have powers to recall goods or **withdrawal of services that are “dangerous, hazardous or unsafe; pass an order for refund the prices of goods or services so recalled to purchasers of such goods or services; and discontinuation of practices which are unfair and prejudicial to consumer’s interest”.**
- ✓ CCPA may ban the endorser of a false or misleading advertisement from making endorsement of any products or services in the future, for a period that may extend to one year. The ban

| CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT 1986 | PROVISIONS | CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT 2019 |
|---|------------------------|---|
| No separate regulator | Regulator | Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to be formed |
| Complaint could be filed in a consumer court where the seller's (defendant) office is located | Consumer court | Complaint can be filed in a consumer court where the complainant resides or works |
| No provision. Consumer could approach a civil court but not consumer court | Product liability | Consumer can seek compensation for harm caused by a product or service |
| District: up to ₹20 lakh State: ₹20 lakh to ₹1 cr National: above ₹1 cr | Pecuniary jurisdiction | District: up to ₹1 cr State: ₹1 cr to ₹10 cr National: Above ₹10 cr |
| No provision | E-commerce | All rules of direct selling extended to e-commerce |
| No legal provision | Mediation cells | ^{BCCI} Court can refer settlement through mediation |

Penalties

For manufacture, selling, storage, distribution, or import of adulterated products, the penalties are:

- ❖ If injury is not caused to a consumer, fine up to Rs 1 lakh with imprisonment up to six months;
- ❖ If injury is caused, fine up to Rs 3 lakh with imprisonment up to one year;
- ❖ If grievous hurt is caused, fine up to Rs 5 lakh with imprisonment up to 7 years;
- ❖ In case of death, fine of Rs 10 lakh or more with a minimum imprisonment of 7 years, extendable to imprisonment for life.

PEPPER IT WITH
2003 PIL in the Delhi HC
2006, Major Leena Gurav writ petition
2008, Defence ministry circular.

may extend up to three years in every subsequent violation of the Act.

- ✓ The CCPA can file complaints of violation of consumer rights or unfair trade practices before the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, and the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. It will issue safety notices to alert consumers against dangerous or hazardous or unsafe goods or services.

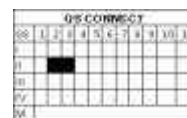
Conclusion

Hence, the new Consumer Protection Act proposes a slew of measures and tightens the existing rules to further safeguard consumer rights by introducing a central regulator, strict penalties for misleading advertisements and guidelines for e-commerce and electronic service providers.

Law Commission of India

News Excerpt

The Union Cabinet has approved the constitution of the 22nd Law Commission of India, for a period of three years.



Pre-Connect

- In pursuance of the authority conferred by Sec. 53 of the Charter of 1833, the first Law Commission was appointed in India in 1834. The commission consisted of Lord T.B. Macaulay. The commission was assigned the following tasks:

- a) Codification of penal law;
- b) The law applicable to non-Hindus and non-Muslims in respect of their various rights (Lex Loci Report);
- c) Codification of civil and criminal procedural law etc, etc.

- The Commission shall on a reference made to it by the Central Government or suo-motu, undertake research in law and review of existing laws in India for making reforms therein and enacting new legislations.
- It shall also undertake studies and research for bringing reforms in the justice delivery systems for elimination of delay in procedures, speedy disposal of cases, reduction in cost of litigation etc.

- Before finalizing its recommendations, the Commission will consult the nodal Ministry/ Department (s) and such other stakeholders as the Commission may deem necessary for the purpose.

Mandates of the Commission

- ❖ Identify laws which are no longer needed or relevant and can be immediately repealed;
- ❖ Examine the existing laws in the light of Directive Principles of State Policy and suggest ways of improvement and reform and also suggest such legislations as might be necessary to implement the Directive Principles and to attain the objectives set out in the Preamble of the Constitution;
- ❖ Consider and convey to the Government its views on any subject relating to law and judicial administration that may be specifically referred to it by the Government through Ministry of Law and Justice (Department of Legal Affairs);
- ❖ Consider the requests for providing research to any foreign countries as may be referred to it by the Government through Ministry of Law and Justice (Department of Legal Affairs);
- ❖ Take all such measures as may be necessary to harness law and the legal process in the service of the poor;
- ❖ Revise the Central Acts of general importance so as to simplify them and remove anomalies, ambiguities and inequities;

Analytica

- ✓ The Law Commission of India is a non-statutory body constituted by the Government of India

from time to time.

- ✓ The Commission was originally constituted in 1955 for independent India and is re-constituted every three years.
- ✓ The tenure of twenty-first Law Commission of India was upto 31st August, 2018.
- ✓ The various Law Commission have been able to make important contribution towards the progressive development and codification of Law of the country. The Law Commission has so far submitted 277 reports.
- ✓ The 22nd Law Commission will be constituted for a period of three years from the date of publication of its Order in the Official Gazette.
- ✓ It will consist of:
 - A full-time Chairperson;
 - Four full-time Members (including Member-Secretary)
 - Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs as ex-officio Member;
 - Secretary, Legislative Department as ex officio Member; and
 - Not more than five part-time Members.

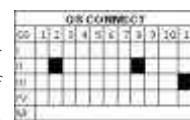
Conclusion

The last Law Commission, under Justice B.S. Chauhan (retd.), had submitted reports and working papers on key issues such as simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies and a uniform civil code. While it supported simultaneous polls, the Commission had said the time for a common code was not yet ripe. Hence, the Law Commission advises the government on complex legal issues on a regular basis.

Bodo Peace Accord 2020

News Excerpt

The central government announced that it has signed a “historic” accord for peace and development with four factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) – NDFB-Progressive (NDFB-P), NDFB-Ranjan Daimary (NDFB-RD), NDFB-Dhirendra Boro (NDFB-DB) and NDFB-Saoraigwra (NDFB-S, formerly NDFB-Songbijit).



Pre-Connect

- The accord includes a number of political and economic measures designed to strengthen the autonomy of the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD), now renamed as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), as well as mechanisms to rehabilitate the members of each armed group into everyday life.
- The accord was lauded for ushering in “a golden future for Assam and for the Bodo people.”

Analytica

- ✓ Bodos are the single largest community among the notified Scheduled Tribes in Assam. Part of the larger umbrella of Bodo-Kachari, the Bodos constitute about 5-6% of Assam's population.
- ✓ Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) is an autonomous body under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. There have been two Bodo Accords earlier, and the second one led to the formation of BTC.
- ✓ The area under the jurisdiction of BTC, formed under the 2003 Accord, was called the Bodo Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD) which is renamed Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).
- ✓ BTAD comprises Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri districts, accounting for 11% of Assam's area and 10% of its population.
- ✓ The new Accord provides for “alteration of area of BTAD” and “provisions for Bodos outside BTAD”.
- ✓ A commission appointed by the state government will examine and recommend if villages contiguous to BTAD and with a majority tribal population can be included into the BTR while those now in BTAD and with a majority non-tribal population can opt out of the BTR.

- ✓ This will lead to an increase in the Bodo population in BTR and decrease in non-tribal population, leading to mitigation of inter-community clashes wherever it was happening.
- ✓ The government will set up a Bodo-Kachari Welfare Council for focused development of Bodo villages outside BTAD — which opens up a way to potentially address the needs of Bodos outside BTAD.
- ✓ It also provides for more legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers to BTC; and amendments to the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to “improve the financial resources and administrative powers of BTC.”

BODO Language

- ❖ The Bodos, who are one of the oldest inhabitants of the region, have been pushed from one capital to another ever since the 12th century. As a result, they have lost their language and script
- ❖ Estimated to have 1.5 million speakers (Census 2011)
- ❖ Listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution (Through 92nd Amendment).
- ❖ Spoken in Assam, where the Bodo tribe constitutes about 5-6% of the population, and in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and West Bengal.
- ❖ Bodo is officially written in the Devanagari script, but the language has a history of having been written in at least three different scripts — until in 1974, the Government recognised Devanagari as its official script.
- ❖ It was only in 2003, under the then Bodo Accord, that the **language was listed in the Eighth Schedule**. “The 2003 Accord was very significant for language because it was the first tribal language to be included in the Eight Schedule
- ❖ Now the 2020 Accord makes Bodo the associate official language throughout Assam.
- ❖ The new Accord also promises to establish a separate directorate for Bodo medium schools, provincialise schools and colleges in the BTAD and establish a Cultural Complex-Centre of Excellence.

Potential Challenges

- Previous accords have created clear winners and losers that have sharpened inter and intra-ethnic cleavages. Hence, New Delhi will need to carefully monitor the situation as the fanfare surrounding the accord subsides.
- It remains to be seen how the 2020 Bodo Accord addresses the structural factors that have driven ethnic violence against the non-Bodos and fuelled subsequent counter-mobilisations in the past.
- Both the central and the state government would have to keep a close watch for the emergence of any potential recalcitrant groups made up of remaining militants from the NDFB-S, which, perceiving exclusion from the accord
- Given the fractured history of the Bodo movement, the prospect of recalcitrant elements remaining in Myanmar is not an unrealistic one, underlining the importance of efforts both by New Delhi and the NDFB-S leadership to reach out to these remaining elements.

PEPPER IT WITH
Schedule 5 and Schedule 6,
Schedule 8, Tribes of
northeast, PVTG

Conclusion

The most significant point is this Accord marks the end of the armed movement and the coming of all factions of the armed groups together to sign the Accord is a very big thing.

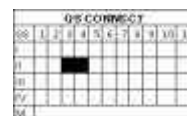
Motion of Thanks

News Excerpt

Recently Lok Sabha took up a **debate on motion of thanks for President’s address**

Pre-Connect

- The Trinamool Congress moved six amendments in what is set to be a



turbulent parliamentary debate on the Motion of Thanks to the **President's Address**

- President Ram Nath Kovind, in his speech at the joint session of the parliament, had praised the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the government's** decision to read down Article 370, laying the ground for a fierce debate between the opposition and treasury benches.

Analytica

- ✓ Article 86(1) of the Constitution provides that the President may address either House of Parliament or both Houses assembled together, and for that purpose require the attendance of members. However, since the commencement of the Constitution, there has not been any occasion when the President has addressed either House or both Houses assembled together, under the provision of this article.
- ✓ Article 87 provides for the special address by the President.
- ✓ Clause (1) of article 87 provides that at the commencement of the first session after each general election to the House of the People and at the commencement of the first session of each year, the President shall address both Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons.
- ✓ Such an Address is called 'special address';
- ✓ It is also an annual feature.
- ✓ No other business is transacted till the President has addressed both Houses of Parliament assembled together.
- ✓ Clause (2) of article 87 of the Constitution requires that provision shall be made by the rules regulating the procedure of either House for the allotment of time for discussion of the matters referred to in the President's Address.
- ✓ Accordingly, rules 14 to 21 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha make provisions for the discussion of the Address.
- ✓ Under rule 15, discussion on the matters referred to in the President's Address takes place on a Motion of Thanks moved by a member and seconded by another member.
- ✓ Members who are to move and second the Motion are selected by the Prime Minister and the notice of such a Motion is received through the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

President's Address

- It is the statement of policy of the Government and, as such, is drafted by the Government which is responsible for its contents.
- The Address contains a review of various activities and achievements of the Government during the previous year and sets out the policies, projects and programmes which Government of the day wishes to pursue with regard to the important national and international issues.
- The Address also indicates, in broad terms, items of legislative business which are proposed to be brought during the sessions to be held in that year.

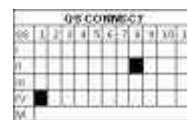
Child Witness

News Excerpt

Child Witness has been in the spotlight due to recent police questioning in Karnataka in relation to sedition charges.

Pre-Connect

- The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has pulled up the district police for violations, including repeated questioning of the children.
- Additionally, a public interest petition has been filed in the Karnataka High Court seeking a departmental inquiry against those policemen.
- The PIL has asked for guidelines to be issued to police regarding interrogation of minors in criminal proceedings in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Act and United Nations resolutions.



Analytica

International conventions on children

Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- ✓ Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989
- ✓ India has been a signatory since 1992
- ✓ In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration

United Nations: Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses in Crime

- ✓ **'Model Law'** provided a more specific set of guidelines in the context of child witnesses
- ✓ These guidelines recommend that authorities treat children in a caring and sensitive manner, **with interview techniques that "minimise distress or trauma to children"**
- ✓ They recommend specifically that an investigator specially trained in dealing with children be appointed to guide the interview of the child, using a child-sensitive approach to avoid repetition of the interview during the justice process in order to prevent secondary victimisation of the child.

Secondary victimisation is defined as victimisation that occurs not as a direct result of a criminal act, but through the response of institutions and individuals to the victim.

Indian Laws

- ✓ Under Section 118 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, there is no minimum age for a witness. Children as young as three years old have deposed before trial courts in cases of sexual abuse.
- ✓ Usually during a trial, the court, before recording the testimony of a child witness, determines his or her competency on the basis of their ability to give rational answers.
- ✓ A child is usually asked questions like their name, the school they study in, and the names of their parents to determine their competency.
- ✓ If the child is very young and does not understand the significance of taking an oath to speak the truth — which is administered to each witness before testimony — the judge or the staff explain to the child that he or she should speak the truth, thinking of whichever God they believe in.
- ✓ Trials involving children as witnesses have primarily been in cases of child sexual abuse.
- ✓ Other criminal cases where children are examined as witnesses have included those where a parent is the victim of violence at home, in the sole presence of the child.

Court Judgements

- ✓ The Delhi High Court has come up with guidelines for recording of evidence of vulnerable witnesses in criminal matters. A vulnerable witness is defined as anyone who has not completed 18 years of age.
- ✓ Focusing primarily on child witnesses giving testimonies that are recorded in court, the court guidelines underline the importance of the criminal justice system needing to respond proactively, sensitively, and in an age-appropriate manner when dealing with children.
- ✓ The lengthy process of navigating the formal and adversarial criminal justice system can affect the vulnerable **witnesses' psychological development. Hence, they allow for a facilitator for a vulnerable witness to be appointed by a court for effective communication between various stakeholders including the police.**

PEPPER IT WITH
Juvenile Justice Act, POCSO Act

Conclusion

While children can be pliable, their testimony can be considered after careful scrutiny. Hence, a streamlined system should be there to treat child witness so that their secondary victimisation can be avoided.

Election of Rajya Sabha

News Excerpt

Elections for various Rajya Sabha seats is to be held in March.

Pre-Connect

The 'Council of States' which is also known as Rajya Sabha, a nomenclature that was announced

08CONNECT

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Composition/Strength

Article 80 of the Constitution lays down the maximum strength of Rajya Sabha as 250, out of which 12 members are nominated by the President and 238 are representatives of the States and of the two Union Territories. The members nominated by the President are persons having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of such matters as literature, science, art and social service.

Allocation of Seats


The Fourth Schedule to the Constitution provides for allocation of seats to the States and Union Territories in Rajya Sabha. The allocation of seats is made on the basis of the population of each State. Consequent on the reorganization of States and formation of new States, the number of elected seats in the Rajya Sabha allotted to States and Union Territories has changed from time to time since 1952.

A JOURNEY SINCE 1952

Total members so far 2,282 (including 208 women and 137 nominated members)

Longest-serving members: Mahendra Prasad, serving the 7th term, followed by Manmohan Singh serving 6th term

Representation of women in Rajya Sabha increased from 15 (6.94%) in 1952 to 31 (12.76%) in 2014. It is currently 26, or 10.83%, of the strength of the House



120
 Bills passed by Lok Sabha and amended by Rajya Sabha

| Total sittings of the House till 249th session | Total number of bills introduced in Rajya Sabha | Number of bills withdrawn | Number of bills pending in Rajya Sabha | Total number of bills passed by Rajya Sabha | Number of bills passed by RS that lapsed due to dissolution of LS |
|--|---|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| 5,466 | 944 | 104 | 38 | 3,817 | 60 |

RAJYA SABHA FIRSTS

First bill passed: The Indian Tariff (2nd Amendment) Bill, 1952

First constitution amendment bill: The Constitution (Second Amendment) Bill, 1953 for readjustment of representation in Lok Sabha by increasing the size of population per constituency

First bill on law and order: The Preventive Detention (Second Amendment) Bill, 1952

First security bill: The Armed Forces (Assam & Manipur) Spl Powers Bill, 1958

First bill on pollution: The Prevention of Water Pollution Bill, 1969

First money bill deemed to have been passed by Rajya Sabha: The Appropriation (Railways) No.4 Bill, 1978

First bill referring to terrorism: The Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Bill, 1984

LANDMARK EVENTS

1 Casting vote by the chair: The only time a presiding officer of RS cast his vote was on August 5, 1991 when voting was tied 39-39 on a statutory resolution moved by opposition seeking disapproval of the CrPC (amendment) ordinance, resulting in opposition victory

2 Prez rule not just by RS: President Rule extended in Tamil Nadu and Nagaland in 1977, and for Haryana in 1991, only by RS when LS was dissolved

3 Removal of a judge: RS adopted a motion for removal of a judge in respect of Justice Soumitra Sen of Calcutta HC in 2011. He quit before the motion was taken up in LS

4 Expulsion of members: RS adopted a motion in 1976 to expel Subramanian Swamy after his activities were found to be derogatory to the dignity of the House. Chatrapal Singh was expelled in 2005 after the ethics panel found him guilty of accepting money for raising questions. Sakshi Maharaj was expelled in 2006 for irregularities in MPLAD projects

by the chair in the House on the 23rd August, 1954 has its own distinctive features. The origin of the second Chamber can be traced to the Montague-Chelmsford Report of 1918. The Government of India Act, 1919 **provided for the creation of a 'Council of State' as a second chamber** of the then legislature with a restricted franchise which actually came into existence in 1921. The Governor-General was the ex-officio President of the then Council of State. The Government of India Act, 1935, hardly made any changes in its composition.

Process for Election /Nomination

Electoral College: The representatives of the states and of the Union Territories in the Rajya Sabha are elected by the method of indirect election. The representatives of each state and two Union territories are elected by the elected members of the Legislative Assembly of that State and by the members of the Electoral College for that Union Territory, as the case may be, in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

The Supreme Court in 2018 scrapped the use of **'None of The Above' (NOTA) option in the Rajya Sabha elections**. A Bench, led by the then Chief Justice of India held that the NOTA option is meant only for universal adult suffrage and direct elections and not polls held by the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote as done in the Rajya Sabha.

Biennial/Bye-election: RS is a permanent House and is not subject to dissolution. However, one-third Members of Rajya Sabha retire after every second year. A member who is elected for a full term serves for a period of six years. The election held to fill a vacancy arising otherwise than **by retirement of a member on the expiration of his term of office is called 'Bye-election'**. A member elected in a bye-election remains member for the remainder of the term of the member who had resigned or died or disqualified to be member of the House under the Tenth Schedule.

Presiding Officers - Chairman and Deputy Chairman: The Presiding Officers of Rajya Sabha have the responsibility to conduct the proceedings of the House. The Vice-President of India is ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha. Rajya Sabha also chooses from amongst its members, a Deputy Chairman. There is also a Panel of Vice-Chairmen in Rajya Sabha, the members of which are nominated by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha. In the absence of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, a member from the Panel of Vice-Chairmen presides over the proceedings of the House.

Secretary-General: The Secretary-General is appointed by the Chairman of Rajya Sabha and holds rank equivalent to the highest civil servant of the Union. The Secretary-General works with anonymity and is readily available to the Presiding Officers for rendering advice on parliamentary matters. The Secretary-General is also the administrative head of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat and the custodian of the records of the House & works under the direction and control of the Chairman, Rajya Sabha.

Conclusion

Rajya Sabha has played a constructive and effective role in our polity. Its performance in the legislative field and in influencing the Government policies has been quite significant. RS has, in

Special Powers of Rajya Sabha

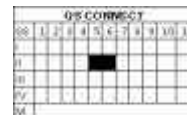
Rajya Sabha being a federal chamber enjoys certain special powers under the Constitution. All the subjects/areas regarding legislation have been divided into three Lists - Union List, State List and concurrent List. Union and State Lists are mutually exclusive - one cannot legislate on a matter placed in the sphere of the other. However, if Rajya Sabha passes a resolution by a majority of not less than two-thirds of members present and voting **saying that it is "necessary or expedient in the national interest" that Parliament should make a law on a matter enumerated in the State List, Parliament becomes empowered to make a law on the subject specified in the resolution, for the whole or any part of the territory of India.** Such a resolution remains in force for a maximum period of one year but this period can be extended by one year at a time by passing a similar resolution further.

fact, worked in a spirit of cooperation with Lok Sabha as per the Constitutional mandate. Rajya Sabha has prevented hasty legislation and has served as dignified chamber representing the federal principle. As a federal chamber, it has worked for the unity and integrity of the nation and has reinforced the faith of the people in parliamentary democracy.

National Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Conference

News Excerpt

Recently, 11th National Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) conference was concluded where agriculture minister urged that the KVKs should also focus on the small and deprived farmers.



Pre-Connect

- The Education Commission (1964-66) recommended to establish specialized institutions to provide vocational education, imparting training to the practicing farmers, school dropouts and field level extension in agriculture and allied fields especially in rural areas by including both girls and Boys.
- The ICAR mooted the idea of establishing Krishi Vigyan Kendras (Agricultural Science Centres).
- The KVKs are intended to create awareness among farmers at local level. It acts like a bridge between the laboratories and farmland.
- The first KVK was established in 1974 at Puducherry (Pondicherry). At present there are 713 KVKs working under various State & Central agricultural universities including ICAR, and NGOs.

Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta committee had suggested roadmap for implementing KVK scheme. The Committee submitted its report in 1974.

Activities envisioned for KVK

- KVK produce quality technological products (seed, planting material, bio-agents, livestock) and make it accessible to farmers, organize frontline extension activities, identify and document selected farm innovations and converge with ongoing schemes and programmes within the mandate of KVK.
- So, the KVKs have a great responsibility by taking the fruition of the laboratories to the field. Some other detailed activities are also overseen by KVK like-
 - It works as Knowledge and Resource Centre of agricultural technologies for supporting initiatives of public, private and voluntary sectors in improving the agricultural economy of the district.
 - It Provides farm advisories using ICT and other media means on varied subjects of interest to farmers.
 - Capacity development of farmers and extension personnel to update their knowledge and skills on modern agricultural technologies.
 - On-farm testing to assess the location specificity of agricultural technologies under various farming systems.
 - Frontline demonstrations to establish production potential of technologies on the farmers' fields.

Analytica

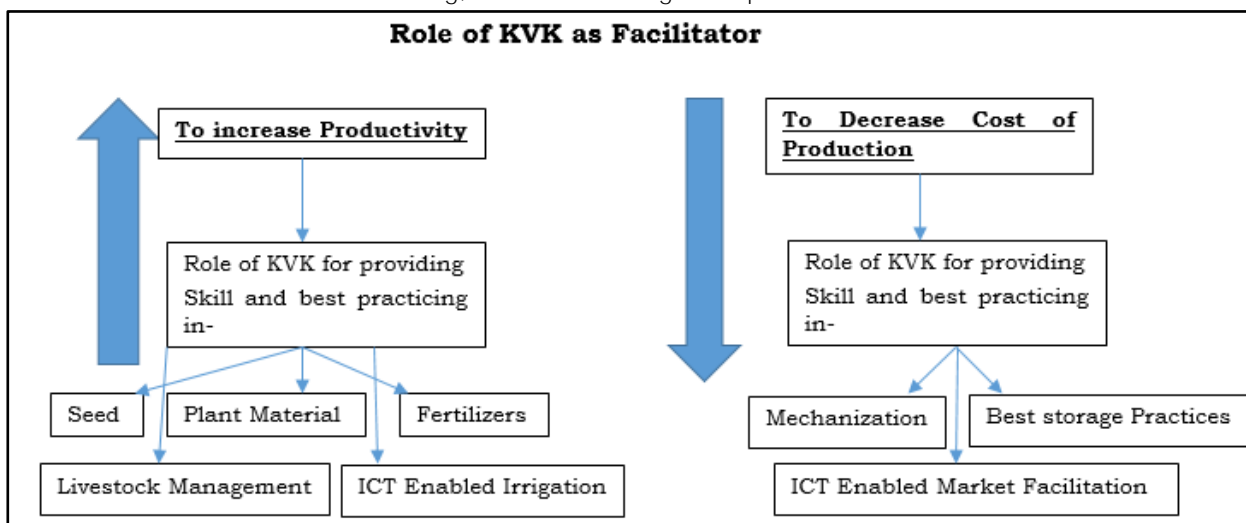
- ✓ There are three factors that have contributed to surplus food grains, - **primarily the farmers' labour**, secondly the role of agricultural scientists, labs and universities and thirdly the central **and state governments' farmer welfare policies, schemes and incentives**.
- ✓ KVK ensure that farmer gets superior and resilient seeds, irrigation and fertilizers for growing healthy crops, mechanized harvesting and a market facilitator that enable farmer to fetch best price for his produce. So, in long term duration this is likely to fulfill the target of doubling Farmers income.

Role of KVKs in Doubling Farmer's Income

- The Krishi Vigyan Kendras (Farm Science Centres) that serve in every rural district of the

country, can play a predominant role in doubling farmers' including the last marginalized farmer by imparting the adequate skill.

- **To make farmer's income double**, productivity should increase and the cost of production should fall. For this, farmers have to increasingly adopt best practices. Value addition at the farm level could also help increase their income. In this domain the role KVK is remarkable in order to achieve competent management by imparting skill.
- Moreover, KVK would help in accelerating the agricultural production and also attribute to the improving of the socio-economic conditions of the farming community. The KVKs are in evolution and can be projected as the future 'grass root level institutions' for empowering the farming community.
- KVK has acquired equipment that can rent out at nominal costs and sometimes even free. This could be **cited as 'paradigm shift' in Agriculture field as this is targeted to solve dual problems** of reduction in stubble burning, and decreasing the operation cost on farmers.



Way Forward

Though KVK made significant progress but the very vision is yet to percolate down to the poorest of poor farmers. Still marginalized farmer community and traditional agricultural practices are profound countrywide. There is a dire need to create ideal situation where agriculture sector becomes lucrative.

- **Structural Reforms:** In some regions KVKs are facing irregularities, issue of alleged corruption, and non- maintenance of equipment. KVKs should provide single window service to meet the farmers need. To avoid it there is a need of structural reform by making KVKs under PPP led model involving multiple stakeholder. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in each block should established in order to add a layer in the process.
- **Diversification:** Generally, KVK provides expertise on selective crops. Its ambit needs to be enlarged in the other areas for instance- fish seed production, ICT enabled services, green agriculture and strengthening of soil health program etc.

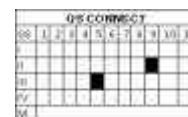
International IP Index 2020

News Excerpt

The International IP Index 2020 has been released recently by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's **Global Innovation Policy Center** (GIPC).

Pre-Connect

- The Index evaluates the IP framework in each economy across 50 unique indicators.
- The indicators create a **snapshot of an economy's** overall IP ecosystem and span nine categories of protection: patents, copyrights, trademarks, design rights, trade secrets, commercialization of IP assets, enforcement, systemic efficiency, and membership and



ratification of international treaties.

Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC)

The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center** is working around the world to champion innovation and creativity through intellectual property standards that create jobs, save lives, advance global economic and cultural prosperity, and generate breakthrough solutions to global challenges.

Goals:

- ❖ Provide world leaders, academia, industry experts, and the general public the authoritative business voice on innovation policy.
- ❖ Ensure domestic and international legislation, trade agreement negotiations and multilateral discussions, foster a healthy global innovation and creative environment.
- ❖ Bring together IP stakeholders at all levels – from governments to grassroots – to develop solutions together.

Key Finding of the Index

- IP remained at the crux of the China trade dispute. The US and China signed a Phase One trade agreement in 2020. The agreement includes reforms to better protect against trade secrets theft, pharmaceutical-related IP and patent infringement, and bad faith trademarks.
- Several emerging markets made progress towards implementing a range of pro-IP measures in order to attract investment.
- Developed and developing economies alike are undermining biopharmaceutical innovation, which reduces access to life-saving medicines and technologies and is the wrong approach to address health care costs.
- Recent free trade agreements (FTAs) have failed to strengthen global IP standards. Future agreements must do more to raise the bar for IP protection.
- Emerging markets are increasingly using international treaties to signal that their economies are willing to engage and abide by international IP standards.

Fact Box

- ♣ The US tops the scorecard with 95.28%.
- ♣ UK ranked second with 93.92%.
- ♣ India Stands at 40th place.

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2016 National IPR policy, The Patents (Amendment) Rules 2016, The "Copyright Act, WTO TRIPS, Berne convention

Analytica

Where India stands?

India ranked 40 out of 53 countries. Though rank of India has reduced from 36th place in **seventh edition (2019)**, India's overall score has increased in the eighth edition (2020).

Where India Scored?

- ✓ Continued strong efforts to combat copyright piracy through the 2019 issuing of **"dynamic injunction"** orders.



- ✓ 2019 precedent-setting case laws on online trademark infringement and damages.
- ✓ Generous R&D and IP-based incentive.
- ✓ Global leader on targeted administrative incentives for the creation and use of IP assets for SMEs.
- ✓ Strong awareness-raising efforts on the negative impacts of piracy and counterfeiting.

Where India Lags?

- Barriers to licensing and technology transfer, including strict registration requirements.
- Limited framework for the protection of biopharmaceutical IP rights.
- Patentability requirements outside international standards.
- No patent term restoration for biopharmaceuticals.
- Lengthy pre-grant opposition proceedings.
- Previously used compulsory licensing for commercial and non-emergency situations.
- Limited participation in international treaties.

Conclusion

Since the release of the 2016 National IPR policy, the government of India has made a focused effort to support

investments in innovation and creativity through increasingly robust IP protection and enforcement. To continue this upward trajectory, much more work remains to be done to introduce **transformative change to India's overall IP framework and take serious step to consistently implement strong IP standards. This will further solidify India's position as the world's fastest-growing economy, bolstering its reputation as a destination for doing business, to invest and to make in India, thereby supporting the growth of India's own innovative and creative industries.**

Why do countries need IP?

- ✚ IP drives Economy's Growth and competitiveness.
- ✚ Strong and Enforced IP rights protect consumers and Families.
- ✚ IP helps generate breakthrough solutions to Global challenges.
- ✚ IP rights Encourage Innovation and Reward Entrepreneurs.
- ✚ IP Property Creates and Supports high-paying jobs.

Compulsory Licensing

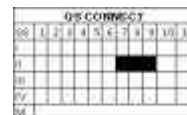
- ◇ It is when a government allows someone else to produce a patented product or process without the consent of the patent owner or plans to use the patent-protected invention itself.
- ◇ **It's when the generic copy is produced mainly for the domestic market, not for export.**
- ◇ **It is granted in accordance to WTO's agreement on intellectual property — the TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement, which took effect in 1995.**
- ◇ The patent owner still has rights over the patent, including a right to be paid for copies of the products made under the compulsory license.
- ◇ The TRIPS Agreement does not specifically list the reasons that might be used to justify compulsory licensing. So, existence of a health emergency is not a pre-requisite.
- ◇ In 2012 India granted compulsory license to Natco Pharma for the generic production of Bayer Corporation's Nexavar, a life-saving medicine used for treating Liver and Kidney Cancer.

Worldwide Educating for the Future Index (WEFFI) 2019 Report

News Excerpt

India jumped five ranks to 35th in the “Worldwide Educating for the Future Index (WEFFI) 2019”, as per a report published by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Pre-Connect



| | OS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
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- The Index is created by the Economist Intelligence Unit and commissioned by the Yidan Price Foundation.
- The index was developed to assess the effectiveness of the education system in preparing students for the demands of work and life in a rapidly changing landscape.
- It is the first comprehensive global index to evaluate inputs to education system rather than outputs such as test scores.
- It concentrated on the 15-24 age bands.

PEPPER IT WITH
Human Development
Report, SEQI, NEP

How are Countries Ranked?

The index ranks countries based on their abilities to equip students with skill-based education.

The report analyses education system from the perspective of skill-based education in areas such as:

- ❖ Critical Thinking
- ❖ Problem Solving
- ❖ Leadership Collaboration
- ❖ Creativity
- ❖ Entrepreneurship
- ❖ Digital and Technical Skills.
- ❖ Teaching Environment
- ❖ Socio-Economic Environment
- ❖ Policy Environment

| Categories | India 2018 Score | India 2019 Score |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Policy Environment | 61.5 | 56.3 |
| Teaching Environment | 32.3 | 52.3 |
| Socio-Economic environment | 33.3 | 50.1 |

Analytica

India's Position

- India ranked 35th on the overall index in 2019 with a total score of 53, based on three categories-policy environment, teaching environment and overall socio-economic environment. The country was ranked 40th with an overall score of 41.2 across categories in 2018.
- India has made particular strides in the policy environment, with a new draft national education policy published in early 2019 that explicitly mention future-oriented skills such as critical thinking, communication and entrepreneurship.
- Budget 2020, has highlighted a New Education Policy to be announced soon under **'Aspirational India'** that will focus on "greater inflow of finance to attract talented teachers, innovate and build better labs.

"Study in India" Programme

- ❖ Started by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- ❖ Main Objectives:
 - To attract foreign students to Indian institutions
 - To improve the soft power of India
 - Increase in global ranking of India as educational destination
 - Boosting market share of India in global education export from current 1% to 2%
- ❖ IND-SAT exam will be held for Asian and African students for scholarships to 'Study in India'.

Where the World Stands?

- Finland is ranked 1st followed by Sweden and New Zealand. Among developed countries, the UK and US demonstrated notable decline in ranking. Saudi Arabia ranked last.
- The third edition of the index shows that while more economies have incorporated the future skills agenda into their education policies over the past two years, policy implementation still remains weak in many nations.
- The recent rise of nativism and populism in some quarters of the world, along with a rejection

of globalization, makes the need for students to develop future-oriented skills like critical thinking and analysis even more urgent so that they can combat these forces effectively.

Where India Lacks?

- India's inability to utilize the opportunity of internationalising its higher education system is pulling her down. India should be a preferred destination for higher education. To address this issue, IND-SAT exam will be held for Asian and African students for scholarships to 'Study in India'. It shall be used for benchmarking foreign candidates who receive scholarships for studying in Indian higher education centers.
- A **decentralized education system is another shortcoming of India's education policy** according to the 2019 report.

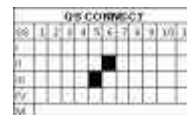
Conclusion

The rapid development of digital technology and the globalised nature of economic systems are creating an entirely new set of educational challenges for the world to adapt. Thus, the workers of the future will need to master a suite of adaptable interpersonal, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, and navigate an increasingly digital and automated world. If India has to take advantage of her demographic dividend, time is now to act.

National Technical Textile Mission

News Excerpt

Recently, government approved setting up of National Technical Textiles Mission with total outlay of Rs. 1,480 crore with a view to position the country as global leader in technical textiles.



Pre-Connect

- Technical textiles are textile materials and products used primarily for their technical performance and functional properties rather than their aesthetic or decorative characteristics.
- Some of the examples of 'Technical textiles' are '**mobiltech**' (products in vehicles such as seat belts and airbags, airplane seats) ; '**indutech**' (flame-resistant clothes used in the manufacturing industry) ; meditech (diapers, napkins, packs, bandages and sutures); agrotech (products go into the manufacture of poly houses and nets); and geotech (used to hold back soil).
- Earlier National Technical Textiles Mission, which was launched for a period of five years (2010-11 to 2014-15) was extended till March 2017.

Highlights

- The mission will also promote technical education at higher engineering and technology levels related to technical textiles.
- Skill development will be promoted and adequate pool of highly skilled manpower resources will be created for meeting the need of relatively sophisticated technical textiles manufacturing units.
- The mission will focus on usage of technical textiles in various flagship missions and



Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approves

National Technical Textiles Mission
at an outlay of Rs. 1480 crore

Components:

- Research, Innovation & Development
- Export Promotion
- Promotion & Market Development
- Education, Training, Skill Development

Objectives:

- Encourage technological Start-ups & Innovation
- Provide Skill Training to at least 50,000 people
- Develop higher technological education for technical textiles in higher educational institutes
- Encourage fundamental research in technical textiles (geo-textiles, agro-textiles, medical textiles) used in agriculture, infrastructure, defence equipments, space missions, etc.

Outcome: Indian Technical Textiles Market Size to increase from \$16 billion (2018-19) to \$40 billion by 2023-24. Register export growth of 10% per annum.

programmes of the country including strategic sectors.

- The use of technical textiles in agriculture, aquaculture, dairy, poultry, JalJivan Mission, Swachch Bharat Mission, Ayushman Bharat will bring an overall improvement in cost, water and soil conservation, better agricultural productivity and higher income to farmers per acre of land holding in addition to promotion of manufacturing and exports activities in India.

Analytica

Opportunities for the Technical Textile Industry

- ✓ Huge Market potential of technical textiles in the country.
- ✓ Huge potential for usage of technical textiles by institutional buyers like Defence, Security, Space & Marine, Health, Roads and Infrastructure, Medical etc.
- ✓ Huge export potential of technical textiles.

Weakness

- ✓ Dependence on import of technology and machinery for most of the high-end technical textiles products.
- ✓ Available resources have not been augmented and updated with changing trend
- ✓ Non-availability of skilled man power for technical textiles.
- ✓ Absence of regulatory measures for usage of technical textiles.
- ✓ Non-availability of indigenous highperformance specialty fibres for manufacture of technical textiles.

Threats

- ✓ Cheap imports of technical textile items from countries like China.
- ✓ Bilateral and multilateral agreements particularly with developed countries like the USA and EU.

Research initiative

- The research institutions have been developing technologies for technical textiles. For example, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has developed a liquid based on 'phosphorous functionalised graphene quantum dot' technology (pf-GOQ).
- The space agency ISRO has developed a high silica cloth, which it calls ISROSIL. It can withstand temperatures up to 1,650 degrees Centigrade.

Way Forward

Some Facts about Technical Textile

- ◇ Technical Textile Sector is the Sunrise Sector of the Textile Industry.
- ◇ Technical Textile Sector in India is one of the fastest growing segments of the Indian Economy.
- ◇ As per baseline survey of Technical Textile Industry in India, there are around 2100 units manufacturing Technical Textiles in India. Most of the units are concentrated in Gujarat followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.
- ◇ India has 4-5% share in the global Technical Textile Market size across twelve segments of Technical Textiles.
- ◇ Technical Textiles constitute 12-15% of the total textile value chain in India, However, in some of the European countries technical textiles constitute 50% of the total textile value chain.

HSN Code

- ❖ Stands for "Harmonized System of Nomenclature"
- ❖ Developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and it came into effect from 1988
- ❖ HSN code is a 6-digit uniform code and is accepted by about 200 countries making it near universal.
- ❖ This system has been introduced for the systematic classification of goods all over the world.
- ❖ This brings in a uniform classification of goods and facilitates international trade.

Indian technical textile sector is expected to grow significantly in the coming years. However, following concrete steps need to be taken to ensure efficient industry ecosystem to transform India into global technical textiles hub:

↔ Increasing awareness about the products will lead to higher adaptation of these products.

↔ Development and implementation of standards for technical textile products.

↔ Regulatory reforms supporting the usage of standardized technical textile products.

↔ Incentivising research and development in the field of technical textiles.

↔ Dedicated courses on technical textiles for entrepreneurship training.

↔ Promotion of exports of technology intensive technical textiles.

Details of Initiatives of Ministry of Textiles

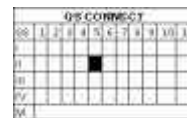
- ✚ Notification of 207 HSN(Harmonized System of Nomenclature) Codes in Technical Textiles.
- ✚ Technology Mission on Technical Textiles (TMTT)
- ✚ Focus Incubation Centre (FIC)
- ✚ Scheme for Promoting usage of Agro-textiles in North East Region
- ✚ Scheme for Promoting usage of Geotechnical textiles in North East Region
- ✚ Scheme for Promoting usage of Agro-textiles in India (Excluding North East Region)

In addition to these, Government of India has identified 92 application areas for mandatory use across 10 Central Ministries/Departments. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has developed standards for 348 technical textiles products.

The Delhi Model of Education

News Excerpt

There have been two kinds of education model in the country: one for the classes and another for the masses. The Delhi government sought to bridge this gap. Its approach stems from the belief that quality education is a necessity, not a luxury. Hence, it built a model which essentially has five major components and is supported by nearly 25% of the State budget. The validation of this model now creates a pathway for the set of reforms.



Key Components of the Model

- The first component of the education model is the transformation of school infrastructure. Dilapidated school buildings that lack basic facilities not only indicate the apathy of the government, but also significantly lower the motivation of teachers and the enthusiasm of students.
- The second component is the training of teachers and principals. Apart from the fact that a forum was created to encourage peer learning among them, several opportunities were given to teachers for their professional growth. They visited Cambridge University; the National Institute of Education, Singapore; IIM Ahmedabad; and other models of excellence in India. The exposure to new pedagogy and leadership training enabled Delhi to gradually move away from a uniform training model for all to learn from the best practices in India and abroad.
- The third component involved engaging with the community by reconstituting school management committees (SMC). The annual budget of each SMC is ₹5-7 lakh. The SMCs can spend this money on any material or activity, such as even hiring teachers on a short-term basis. Regular dialogue between teachers and parents was initiated through mega parent-teacher meetings.
- Fourth, there have been major curricular reforms in teaching learning. Special initiatives

to ensure that all children learn to read, write and do basic mathematics was launched and made part of regular teaching learning activities in schools.

- Fifth, there was no fee increase in private schools. While the first four components **impacted nearly 34% of children in Delhi's government schools, arbitrary fee hikes earlier** impacted about 40% of children who go to private schools. In the past, almost all the schools increased their fee 8-15% annually.

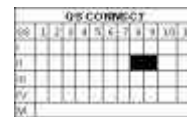
Conclusion

Today, the Delhi education model is considered to be the best model in the country and the transformation in the education system under the Delhi model should be replicated to raise the standards of education in India. The Delhi school of model will ensure both effective financial management and also better educational standards. For a better future of India, the government needs to give quality education to their students. Government also needs to take action on our National Education policy for the betterment of the education systems in India.

A future for the World's children Report

News Excerpt

Recently released **report titled 'A future for the World's Children'** warns about climate change, conflict and harmful marketing practices that drive obesity and threaten the health and future of children worldwide.



Pre-Connect

- The report is released by the **World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** and leading medical journal, The Lancet. The report analyzed data from 180 countries and compared performance on child survival and wellbeing, based on health, education, nutrition, equity and sustainability.
- The index shows that children in Norway, the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands have the best chance at survival and well-being, while children in the Central African Republic, Chad, Somalia, Niger and Mali face the worst odds.

Highlights

- The reports estimated that around 250 million children (under five years of age), in low and middle income countries are at risk of not reaching their development potential.
- **According to the report, if global warming exceeds 4° C by the year 2100 in line with current projections, this would lead to rising ocean level, heat wave, proliferation of diseases like malaria and dengue and malnutrition. All this will have devastating health consequences for children.**
- The report also highlights the distinct threat posed to children from harmful marketing.
- The report links predatory marketing to the alarming rise in **childhood obesity. Children's exposure to commercial marketing of junk food and sugary beverages is associated with purchase of unhealthy foods and consequent obesity.**

PEPPER IT WITH
UN Convention on the
Rights of the Child (CRC),
WHO, IPCC report

Analytica

- ✓ Despite dramatic improvements in survival, nutrition, and education over recent decades, **today's children face an uncertain future. Climate change, ecological degradation, migrating populations, conflict, pervasive inequalities, and predatory commercial practices threaten the**

health and future of children in every country.

- ✓ The report calculates the Flourishing Index (that measures the best chance at survival and well-being for children) and Sustainability Index (that takes into account per capita carbon emissions and the ability of children in a nation to live healthy lives) of 180 countries.
- ✓ India stands 77th on sustainability index and is at 131st on a ranking that measures the best chance at survival and well-being for children. The report says India has improved in health and sanitation but has to increase its spending on health.
- ✓ While some of the poorest countries have the lowest CO2 emissions, many are exposed to the harshest impacts of a rapidly changing climate. Promoting better conditions today for children to survive and thrive nationally should not be **at the cost of eroding children's future globally**.

Mortality Rates: A Comparison

| Indicator | India in 2005-06 | India in 2015-16 | Better than India | Worse Than India | On par with |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|--|---|-----------------|
| Infant mortality rate | 57 | 41 | Bangladesh (31), Nepal (29), Rwanda (31) | Haiti (52), Senegal (42), Pakistan (66) | Ethiopia (41) |
| Under-five mortality rate | 74 | 50 | Nepal (36), Bangladesh (38), Bhutan (33) | Pakistan (81), Rwanda (45), Botswana (44) | Madagascar (50) |

Source: National Family Health Survey, 2015-16

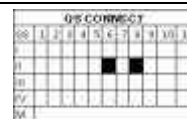
Conclusion

This report thus shows that the world's decision makers are, too often, failing to protect health of today's children and youth, failing to protect their rights and failing to protect their planet. This must be a wakeup call for countries to invest in child health and development, ensure their voices are heard, protect their rights, and build a future that is fit for children.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana & ADIP Scheme

News Excerpt

Recently, a mega camp for distributions of Physical aids and assistive devices to Divyangjan and Senior Citizens under ADIP and Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana respectively were organized by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India at Prayagraj.



Pre-Connect

- The Assistance to disable persons for purchasing/ fitting of aids/ appliances (ADIP) Scheme has been in operation since 1981 and has been revised with effect from 2017.
- Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana, a Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices to Senior Citizens belonging to BPL category was launched in the country in 2016.

PEPPER IT WITH
NSAP, ALIMCO, NHFDC,
DDRS, IGNDPS, Disabilities
Act, 2016 and Indira Awaas
Yojana

Highlights

| Scheme | Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana | ADIP Scheme |
|----------------|--|--|
| Objective | ➤ Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana is a scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior Citizens belonging to BPL category. This is a Central Sector Scheme, fully funded by the Central Government. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The main objective of the ADIP scheme is to assist the needy disable persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation, there-by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhance their economics potential. ➤ The aids and appliances supplied under the Scheme shall conform to BIS specifications to the extent possible. |
| Eligibility | Senior Citizens, belonging to BPL category and suffering from any of the age related disability/infirmity viz. Low vision, Hearing impairment, Loss of teeth and Locomotor disability will be provided with such assisted- living devices which can restore near normalcy in their bodily functions, overcoming the disability/infirmity manifested. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He/she should be an Indian citizen of any age. • Should hold 40% Disablement Certificate. • Income not exceed Rs. 20,000/- per month. • Persons who have not received assistance from the Government, local bodies and Non-official Organizations during the last 3 years and for children below 2 year of age this limit would be 1 year. |
| Implementation | The Scheme is being implemented by the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), a PSU under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societies, register under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 • Registered charitable trust. • District Rural Development Agencies • State Handicapped Development Corporations. • Local Bodies • Nehru Yuvak Kendras. |

Conclusion

In India, the elderly population is estimated to reach nearly 30 crore by 2050 and there are many people with disability/infirmities. As India is ageing, the elderly and disable persons should be viewed as contributors to the process of development and their ability to affect social betterment must be taken into account during policy and programme formulation at all levels. Public health care systems, social security and pensions for this ageing populace and disability are going to be big issues for governments around the world. Camp like this will help these persons physically, mentally and emotionally.

Government Initiatives for Specially-Abled

- ❖ Deendayal disabled rehabilitation Fund
- ❖ Scheme for financial assistance for skill training of PwD
- ❖ Disability Act 2016 increased the quota of reservation for persons with disabilities from 3% to 4% in government jobs and 3% to 5% in higher education institutions
- ❖ Accessible India campaign

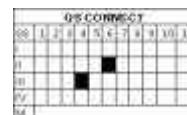
Government Initiatives for Elderly

- ❖ Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007
- ❖ Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme
- ❖ Rastriya Vayoshri Yojna (aids and assistive living devices are provided to senior citizens belonging to BPL category)
- ❖ Varishtha Pension Bima Yojna

PMFBY and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme

News Excerpt

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved revamping of the country's two nodal crop insurance schemes - **"Pradhan Mantri fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS)"** to address the existing challenges in implementation of crop Insurance Scheme



Pre-Connect

- Enrolment in the two schemes has been made voluntary for all farmers, including those with existing crop loans. When the PMFBY was launched in 2016, it was made mandatory for all farmers with crop loans to enroll for insurance cover under the scheme.
- The main objectives of the PMFBY are:
 - To provide insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers in the event of failure of any of the notified crops as a result of natural calamities, pests and diseases.
 - To stabilize the income of farmers to ensure their continuance in farming.
 - To encourage farmers to adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices.
 - To ensure flow of credit to the agriculture sector.

Objective of RWBCIS

- ❖ Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) aims to mitigate the hardship of the insured farmers against the likelihood of financial loss on account of anticipated crop loss resulting from adverse weather conditions relating to rainfall, temperature, wind, humidity etc.
- ❖ RWBCIS uses weather parameters as "proxy" for crop yields in compensating the cultivators for deemed crop losses. Pay-out structures are developed to the extent of losses deemed to have been suffered using the weather triggers.

Analytica

Government has proposed to modify certain parameters/provisions of ongoing scheme of PMFBY and RWBCIS:

- Allocation of business to Insurance Companies to be done for three years (Both PMFBY and

RWBCIS).

- Flexibility to States/UTs to implement the Scheme with option to select any or many of additional risk covers/features like prevented sowing, localised calamity, mid-season adversity, and post-harvest losses. Further, States/UT can offer specific single peril risk/insurance covers, like hailstorm etc, under PMFBY even with or without opting for base cover (Both PMFBY/RWBCIS).
- Government slashing its share of the premium subsidy from the current 50% to just 25% in irrigated areas and 30% for the unirrigated areas for the kharif season of 2020.
- Enrolment in two schemes has also been made voluntary for all farmers, including those with existing crop loans.
- Farmers pay a fixed share of the premium: 2% of the sum insured for kharif crops, 1.5% for Rabi crops and 5% for cash crops. Currently, the Centre and State split the balance of the premium equally. However, the revamp now reduces the burden on the Centre and increases the share of States.
- Central Share in Premium Subsidy to be increased to 90% for North Eastern States from the existing sharing pattern of 50:50 (Both PMFBY/RWBCIS).
- Above change is aimed to increase the coverage in the north-eastern region enabling farmers to manage their agriculture risk in a better way.
- Farm gate price will be considered for the other crops for which MSP is not declared.
- They can offer specific single peril risk covers, like a hailstorm, etc., under PMFBY.

Why there was need of change

- ✓ In earlier rules of PMFBY, farmers across the country had no choice. There was one single comprehensive insurance product, which covered risks right from pre-sowing to post harvesting.
- ✓ Every farmer who wanted crop insurance had to take this comprehensive product without any customization. This leads to payment of a higher premium. The farmer had no flexibility to choose for which risk they wanted to get insured and pay premium.
- ✓ **For example, suppose a farmer in Bihar doesn't want to take risk coverage for drought or a farmer in Rajasthan wants to opt out from flood coverage, there was no provision in earlier scheme.**
- ✓ That was demand from farmers groups for giving more flexibility and freedom to states and farmers in choosing insurance products for risk hedging as per the proneness of the particular state to the specific weather vagary.
- ✓ In addition to this rigid basket of risks, the scheme was made mandatory for loanee farmers, further restricting their choice.

Conclusion

With these changes in the **country's two nodal crop insurance schemes**, it is expected that farmers would be able to manage risk in agriculture production in a better way and will succeed in stabilizing the farm income. Further, it will increase coverage in the north eastern region enabling farmers of NER to manage their agriculture risk in a better way. These changes will also enable quick and accurate yield estimation leading to faster claims settlement.

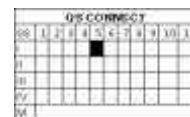
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

News Excerpt

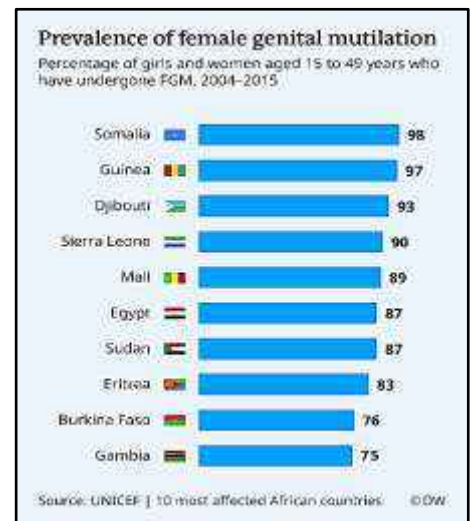
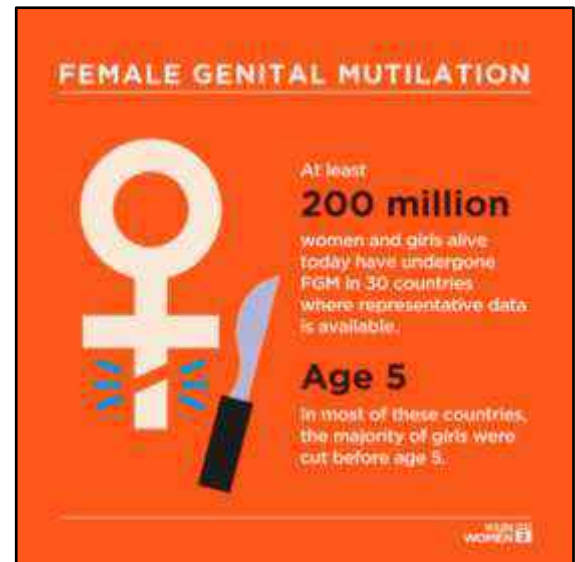
Every year February 6 is marked as the day of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

About FGM

- It is the procedure which involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.



- It is recognized as a violation of human rights and the health and integrity of girls and women.
- FGM is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15.
- FGM can cause severe bleeding, problem in urinating, infections, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.
- FGM reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women.
- FGM is often considered a necessary part of raising a girl, and a way to prepare her for adulthood and marriage.
- FGM is often motivated by beliefs about what is considered acceptable sexual behavior. It aims to ensure premarital virginity and marital fidelity. FGM is in many communities believed to reduce a woman's libido and therefore believed to help her resist extramarital sexual acts.
- FGM is associated with cultural ideals of femininity and modesty, which include the notion that girls are clean and beautiful after removal of body parts that are considered unclean, unfeminine or male.
- Though no religious scripts prescribe the practice, practitioners often believe the practice has religious support.
- WHO defines four types of FGM:
 - Type 1 (partial or total removal of the clitoral glans).
 - Type 2 (partial or total removal of the external and visible parts of the clitoris and the inner folds of the vulva).
 - Type 3 (infibulation, or narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal).
 - Type 4 (picking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area).



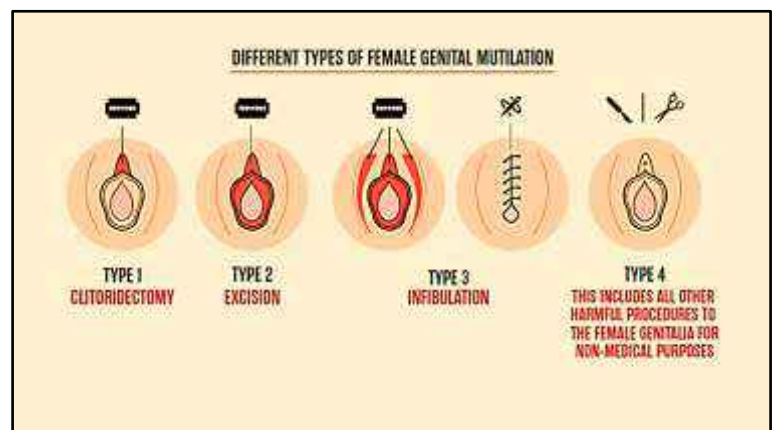
FGM-A Financial burden

- ▢ The economic costs of treating health complications of FGM stood around \$1.4 billion in 27 countries.
- ▢ This amount is expected to rise to \$ 2.3 billion in 30 years (2047) if FGM prevalence remains the same. However, if countries abandon FGM, these costs would decrease by 60% over the next 30 years.

What can be done?

In order to counter FGM there is need to focus on:

- ✓ Strengthening the health sector response:
 - Provide training to health care providers

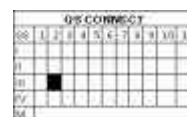


- to counsel FGM affected girls.
- o Create awareness in order to prevent the further occurrence of the practice.
- ✓ Building evidence:
 - o Generating knowledge about the causes, consequences and costs of the practice.
 - o Finding solutions to abandon the practice and take care of those who have experienced the FGM.
- ✓ Increasing advocacy:
 - o Developing publications and advocacy tools for international, regional and local efforts to end FGM.
 - o Develop tools for policy makers and advocates to estimate the health burden of FGM
 - o Estimate the potential public health benefits and cost savings of preventing FGM.

Union Budget 2020-21

News Excerpt

The Finance Minister recently presented the Union Budget 2020-21 in the Lok Sabha.



Pre-Connect

The Constitution refers to the budget as the **'annual financial statement'** that has been dealt with in Article 112 of the Constitution.

In addition to the estimates of receipts and expenditure, the budget contains the following:

1. Estimates of revenue and capital receipts;
2. Ways and means to raise the revenue;
3. Estimates of expenditure;
4. Details of the actual receipts and expenditure of the closing financial year and the reasons for any deficit or surplus in that year; and
5. Economic and financial policy of the coming year, that is, taxation proposals, prospects of revenue, spending programme and introduction of new schemes/projects.

Three prominent themes of the Budget 2020-21

- Aspirational India - better standards of living with access to health, education and better jobs for all sections of the society
- Economic Development for all - "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas".
- Caring Society - both humane and compassionate; Antyodaya as an article of faith.

The Key Highlights of Union Budget 2020-21

Action Points

- ▣ Blue Economy: Rs. 1 lakh crore fisheries exports to be achieved by 2024-25, 200 lakh tonnes fish production targeted by 2022-23. 3477 Sagar Mitras and 500 Fish Farmer Producer Organisations to involve youth in fisheries extension. Growing of algae, sea-weed and cage culture to be promoted.
- ▣ Kisan Rail to be set up by Indian Railways through PPP to build a seamless national cold supply chain for perishables milk, meat, fish, etc.



PEPPER IT WITH
Fifteenth Finance
Commission, FRBM Act.

- ❑ Krishi Udaan to be launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation on both international and national routes. This will immensely help improve value realization (on agricultural products), especially in the north-east and tribal districts.
- ❑ One-Product One-District for better marketing and export in the Horticulture sector.
- ❑ Measures for organic, natural, and integrated farming and the online national organic products market (Jaivik Kheti Portal) need to be strengthened.
- ❑ Zero-Budget Naturalto be included. Integrated Farming Systems in rain-fed areas to be expanded.
- ❑ PM-KUSUM, scheme to enable farmers to set up solar power generation capacity on their fallow/barren lands and to sell it to the grid, to be expanded; 20 lakh farmers to be provided for setting up stand-alone solar pumps.
- ❑ NABARD to map and geo-tag agri-warehouses, cold storages, reefer van facilities, etc. Warehousing will be made in line with Warehouse Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) norms. Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) to undertake such warehouse building.
- ❑ In livestock, the budget set a target of doubling milk processing capacity to 108 million MT from 53.5 million MT by 2025. Artificial insemination to be increased to 70% from the present 30%.
- ❑ Under Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana, 0.5 crore households will be mobilized with 58 lakh SHGs for poverty alleviation.
- ❑ Wellness, Water and Sanitation- budgetproposed to set up a viability gap funding to allow empanelment of hospitals through a public-private-partnership (PPP) model. To widen the scope of PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY). Aspirational Districts with no Ayushman empanelled hospitals to be covered in the first phase.
- ❑ Education and Skills-
 - Rs. 99,300 crores for education sector and Rs. 3000 crores for skill development is allocated in 2020-21.
 - National Police University and National Forensic Science University are proposed for policing science, forensic science, and cyber-forensics.
 - External Commercial Borrowings and FDI to be enabled for the education sector.
 - Ind-SAT is proposed for Asian and African countries as a part of Study in India program.
- ❑ Economic Development
 - To achieve higher export credit disbursement, a new scheme NIRVIK (Niryat Rin Vikas Yojana) is being launched which provides for high insurance cover, reduction in premium for small exporters and simplified procedures for claim settlement.
 - To position India as a global leader in Technical Textiles, a National Technical Textiles Mission has been proposed with a four-year implementation period from 2020-21 to 2023-24.
 - **All Ministries to issue quality standard orders as per PM's vision of "Zero Defect-Zero Effect" manufacturing.**
- ❑ Ports & Water-ways: Corporatizing at least one major port and its listing on stock exchanges to be considered. Economic activity along river banks to be energised as per Prime Minister's Arth Ganga concept.
- ❑ Airports: 100 more airports to be developed by 2024 to support Udaan scheme.
- ❑ Electricity: **"Smart" metering to be promoted.** More measures to reform DISCOMs to be taken.
- ❑ Culture & Tourism: 5 archaeological sites to be developed as iconic sites with on-site Museums: Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Shivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat), Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu).
- ❑ Environment & Climate Change: PM launched Coalition for Disaster Resilient

Infrastructure (CDRI) with Secretariat in Delhi. It is the second such international initiative after International Solar Alliance.

- ☐ Governance: Taxpayer Charter to be enshrined in the Statute will bring fairness and efficiency in tax administration. New National Policy on Official Statistics to promote the use of latest technologies including AI. Lay down a road-map towards modernised data collection, integrated information portal and timely dissemination of information.
- ☐ Financial Sector: Factor Regulation Act, 2011 to be amended to enable NBFCs to extend invoice financing to the MSMEs through TReDS (**Trade Receivables Electronic Discounting System**). Cooperative Banks to be strengthened by amending Banking Regulation Act for increasing professionalism & enabling access to capital.
- ☐ Infrastructure Financing: The budget proposed to set up an international bullion exchange at IFSC in GIFT City, which will lead to better price discovery of gold, create more jobs and enhance India's position in such market.
- ☐ Direct Tax-

- Corporate Tax: Tax rate of 15% extended to new electricity generation companies. Indian corporate tax rates now amongst the lowest in the world.
- Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) is abolished, making India a more attractive investment destination.
- Start-ups- with turnover up to Rs. 100 crores to enjoy 100% deduction for 3 consecutive assessment years out of 10 years.
- Cooperatives: Cooperative societies exempted from Alternate Minimum Tax (AMT) just like Companies are exempted from the Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT).
- Tax concession for foreign investments: 100% tax exemption to the interest, dividend and capital gains income on investment made in infrastructure and priority sectors before 31st March, 2024 with a minimum lock-in period of 3 years by the Sovereign Wealth Fund of foreign governments.
- MSMEs to boost less-cash economy: Turnover threshold for audit increased to Rs. 5 crores from Rs. 1 crore for businesses carrying out less than 5% business transactions in cash.

Increase in Insurance Cover for Bank Deposits

- ❖ Deposit insurance is offered by Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), a wholly owned subsidiary of the RBI.
- ❖ RBI recently increased the bank deposit insurance cover to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 1 lakh.
- ❖ Deposit insurance is a protection cover against losses accruing to bank deposits if a bank fails financially and has no money to pay its depositors.
- ❖ The move will help boost the confidence of people in the banking system after a scam last year in Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC Bank) which left lakhs of customers stranded.

Analytica

How will the Budget Impact Indian Economy?

- ✓ The big bet of the government to boost growth is push for investments in its industrial **sector and push for India's participation in the global value chains**. This is borne by further changes announced in the dividend distribution tax (DDT), moving its incidence from the company to the recipient. The Abolition of DDT would encourage companies to pay more dividends. This follows the corporate tax cuts announced in 2019, and will boost **India's attractiveness to investments especially by foreign companies**.
- ✓ Across a range of sectors, from toys, footwear, furniture, to electronics, machinery, and other items, custom duties have been raised along with greater scrutiny of imports from Free trade agreements. The government seems to be betting that greater protection from imports will help the domestic industry. However, there is a risk that higher custom duties dilute **India's efforts to integrate with global value chains**.

- ✓ The impact of the union budget on industries like information technology could be positive. There has been an allocation of Rs. 8,000 crores for a National Mission on Quantum Computing and Technology.
- ✓ The agriculture sector plays a significant role in boosting the economy of the country. The budget has proposed numerous reforms that aim to uplift agriculture economy (e.g. provision of agricultural credit has increased to Rs. 15 lakh crores (2020-21). The budget emphasized its goal to achieve the objective of **doubling farmer's income by 2022 and rolled out**, inter alia, a 16-point agenda to ensure a quick agriculture-led rural economic growth, allocating resources to important livelihood and rural infrastructure initiatives.

Way Forward

- Over the years, there has been a thrust on improving technology and capacity in the sectors like railways, rail, road, air and water. The outcome of these is projects like Dedicated Freight Corridor, High-Speed Rail, expressways, electric vehicles, PPPs in airports, etc. While the budget has appropriate announcements but execution needs attention.
- Fiscal deficit can be reduced to its desired level only by reducing the revenue deficit, not the capital expenditure. This can be possible through revenue augmentation and expenditure rationalization. Efficient management of expenditure is the key to fiscal consolidation; that is why Expenditure Reform Commission has been formed to reprioritize and rationalize non-plan revenue expenditure.
- The Budget continues a process of improving the design and implementation of the GST, which was initially too complicated and cumbersome. The GST will ultimately be a crucial **component in improving India's relatively low tax-to-GDP ratio**.

Thus, the Union Budget has managed to pull off a fine balancing act; finding equilibrium between economic growth and fiscal prudence. The budget tries to address various areas of the economy and focuses towards inclusive and sustainable development.

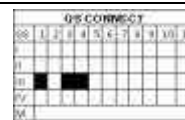
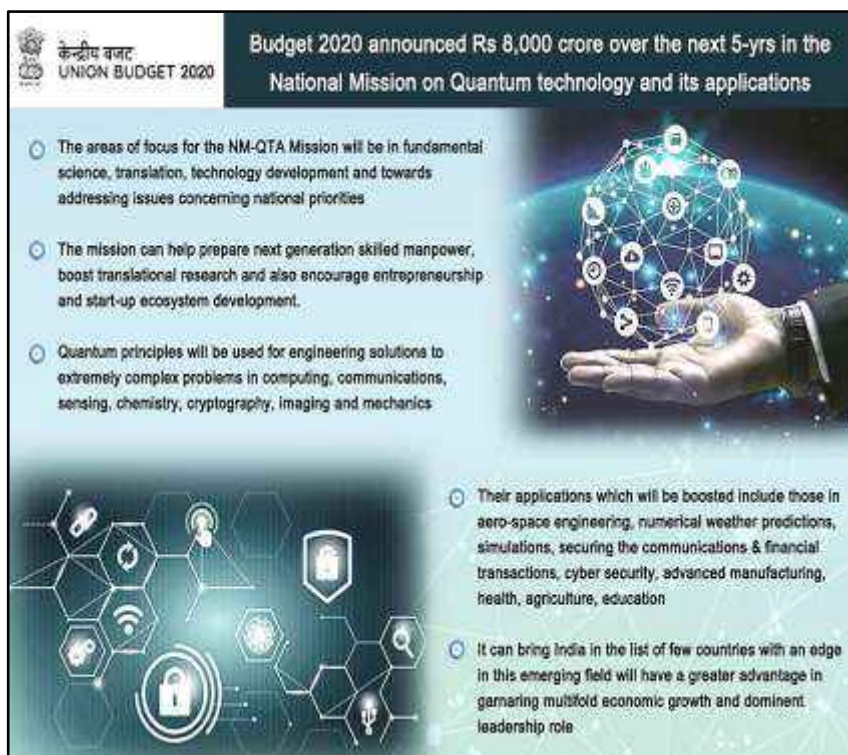
Farmers Producer Organisation (FPO)

News Excerpt

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister, has recently given approval for 10,000 FPOs to be formed in a five years period from 2019-20 to 2023-24 to ensure economies of scale for farmers. Support to each FPO to be continued for 5 years from its year of inception.

Pre-Connect

- FPO is one type of Producer Company (PO) where the members are farmers. Small **Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is providing support for promotion of FPOs**. PO is a



generic name for an organization of producers of any product, e.g., agricultural, non-farm products, artisan products, etc.

- In the Union Budget 2019-20, Government has announced creation of 10,000 new FPOs to ensure economies of scale for farmers over the next five years, for which a dedicated supporting and holistic scheme as Central Sector Scheme is proposed for targeted development of FPOs and its sustainability.

Highlights

- Initially there will be three implementing Agencies to form and promote FPOs, namely Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium (SFAC), National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).
- FPOs will be formed and promoted through Cluster Based Business Organizations (CBBOs) engaged at the State/Cluster level by implementing agencies.
- There will be a National Project Management Agency (NPMA) at SFAC for providing overall project guidance, data compilation and maintenance through integrated portal and Information management and monitoring.
- Initially the minimum number of members in FPO will be 300 in plain area and 100 in North East & hilly areas.
- Priority will be given for formation of FPOs in aspirational districts in the country with at least one FPO in each block of aspirational districts.
- FPOs will be promoted under "One District One Product" cluster to promote specialization and better processing, marketing, branding & export by FPOs.
- There will be a provision of Equity Grant for strengthening equity base of FPOs.
- There will be a Credit Guarantee Fund of up to Rs. 1,000 crores in NABARD with equal contribution by DAC&FW and NABARD.

PEPPER IT WITH
Equity Grant and Credit
Guarantee Fund Scheme,
NAM, MIDH Scheme.

Advantages

- ✓ Small and marginal farmers do not have economic strength to apply production technology, services and marketing including value addition. Through formation of FPOs, farmers will have better collective strength for better access to quality input, technology, credit and better marketing access through economies of scale for better realization of income.
- ✓ Government is providing various assistance such as Equity Grant Scheme, Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme through SFAC, to encourage more farmers to set up FPOs. Moreover, to promote agri-business activities, FPOs can also avail assistance under various schemes such as Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI), Venture Capital Assistance (VCA) and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) Scheme.

Concerns

- Direct market linkages- Many FPOs lack the capacity to manage the supply-chain operations and store the unsold produce, besides faltering in procurement, logistics and price negotiations. E-retailing and e-marketing are viable possibilities for FPOs.
- Promoter conundrum- The FPOs are generally mobilised by promoting institutions/resource agencies (RAs). While RAs normally have social mobilisation skills, they lack business development and marketing skills, which are critical for the success of FPOs as a business entity. Therefore, FPOs should be promoted only after ascertaining the need, absorption capacity, potential membership, and a strong business case in the given socio-economic context. In order to be successful, FPOs should be run by trained professionals.
- Professional capabilities- A few professional institutions are engaged in capacity building of various aspects of FPOs. However, a focus on management capabilities in the supply chain operations, business planning according to market intelligence and market development is clearly missing in majority of the training programmes. These require long term capacity investments, execution, negotiation skills, monitoring, statutory compliance, etc., inter-spaced with simulation, field demonstrations, internships and institutional attachments.

Way Forward

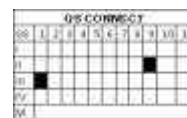
- Best practices like maintaining crop maturity indices, documenting plant protection chemicals used, geo-tagging the land under cultivation, etc. must be promoted.
- ICT tools and block-chain technology for agriculture are the need of the hour. Block-chain tech, using hyper ledger in the agri space, enables tracking inefficiencies and improving transparency in the value chain operations. This would also help identify better markets for the produce, **improve banker's comfort to finance such agri-supply chains** managed by farmers.
- It is time for funding agencies to focus on financing a few pilots in such agri block-chain technology to facilitate this transformation. Currently, only a few FPOs have developed mobile phone-based extension guidance to help reduce cost of cultivation and access information about market prices of commodities.

While FPOs do a good job in the provision of inputs, which is a kind of low-hanging fruit, linking the farmers to the markets with quality products is a challenge. The success of farmer organizations is critical for ensuring the success of smallholder and marginal farmers in India. FPOs will continue to blossom as an aggregator of aspirations for millions of farmers across the country.

USTR removes India from developing status

News Excerpt

Recently, the U.S. removed more than a dozen countries, including India, from its **list of countries that are classified as “developing” for trade purposes. These countries will now be classified instead as “developed” economies, thus stripping them of various trade benefits.**



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Pre-Connect

- The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is responsible for developing and coordinating U.S. international trade, commodity, and direct investment policy, and overseeing negotiations with other countries.
- USTR removed India, along with several other countries, from the list of beneficiaries of trade subsidy preference under the US countervailing duty (CVD) laws.
- CVDs are tariffs levied on imported goods to offset subsidies made to producers of these goods in the exporting country.
- The preferential treatment with respect to CVDs investigations falls under the **US' Generalized System of Preferences**

Talking business

■ India was in the 'developing country' list till February 10, eligible for relaxed norms

■ Country was taken off the list, as were Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam

■ New lists include 36 developing, 44 least developed nations

■ In 1998, U.S. had come up with lists of nations classified as per level of development

■ Lists helped determine if they were subject to U.S.' CVDs (countervailing duties)

■ A CVD probe was to be terminated if offending subsidy was too small

■ 1998 rule is now 'obsolete' as per USTR notice



PEPPER IT WITH
FTA, Generalized System of Preferences, OECD, UNCTAD, WTO, SCM Agreement, De minimis standard.

(GSP) scheme.

Analytica

Why is India being stripped of this status?

- ❑ The global trade share cut-off has been set by the US at 0.5%. In this regard, India crossed the threshold years ago, with India's world trade share in 2017 was 2.1% for exports and 2.6% for imports. Due to this and the fact that India is a member of G-20, the US said that India will be considered as a developed country, even if it's per capita GNI is below \$12,375 or Rs 8.82 lakh.
- ❑ The U.S. administration under President Trump has blamed fast-growing countries such as China and India of wrongly claiming trade benefits that are reserved only for the truly developing countries.

Key Concerns

- ✓ The current change in India's status under the **USTR's classification** has cast a shadow on India being able to restore preferential benefits under the Generalized System of Preference (GSP) as part of its trade talks with the US, as only developing countries are eligible for it.
- ✓ Under the GSP, Indian exporters could export their products to the US tariff-free. However, with the change of rules, Indian exporters will no longer get this benefit.

Impact

- CVD laws allow the US to hold an investigation into the trade policies of other countries to determine whether they are harming the US trade. With India no longer in the list of beneficiaries, the US can now hold an investigation.
- If the **investigation finds that India's policies allow exporters to sell their products** in the US at a lower rate and consequently harm the domestic traders there, the US can impose countervailing duty, a form of import tax, to make the Indian goods more expensive in the US markets.
- Any move to end duty-free access for foreign goods into the U.S., which becomes more likely after the change in trade status, will increase the overall tax burden on goods crossing international borders. This will add further pressure on the global economy, which has already witnessed a slowdown this year.

Conclusion

The recent US President trip to India will strengthen the United States-India strategic partnership and acme the strong and enduring bonds between the American and Indian people. India wants restoration of benefits under the GSP and more access for its products in the US. Recently, India offered to scale back tariffs on American dairy and other products that are imported into India. This came after the U.S. complained about the restricted access that American companies have to developing countries like India. If such trade tactics manage to bring down trade barriers on both sides, it can benefit the global economy. But, with both the U.S. and its various warring trading partners looking to protect their domestic producers rather than consumers who benefit from lower tariffs, a general fall in tariffs across the board seems unlikely.

What is the "developing country" status?

The office of the **United States Trade Representative (USTR)** maintains a list of countries that it classifies as "developing", "developed", and "least-developed". Countries that are classified as "developing" are allowed to export certain goods to the U.S. without being hit by punitive tariffs that are usually imposed on goods from "developed" countries.

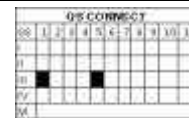
The "developing country" status owes its origin to the **U.S. Trade Act of 1974**, which authorised the **Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)** to help poor countries develop faster.

These benefits were extended further under the **World Trade Organization** wherein rich countries agreed to grant trade benefits to countries that classified themselves as poor. It is worth noting that about **two-thirds** of countries that are members of the **WTO** classify themselves as "developing" countries and avail benefits.

Cooperative Banks under RBI

News Excerpt

The Union Cabinet recently approved an amendment to the Banking Regulation Act to bring multi-state cooperative banks under the watch of the central bank and prevent a repeat of Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank-like crisis.



Pre-Connect

- Cooperative Societies is a State Subject under Entry 32 of the State List of Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- Cooperatives Banks are registered under the Cooperative Societies Act, 1912. These are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and Banking Laws (Application to Cooperative Societies) Act, 1965.
- PMC Bank is not the first case of failure of the cooperative banking system in India. The Madhavpura Cooperative Bank scam in 2001-02 was a clear signal to bring certain changes in the regulatory and supervisory structure of cooperative banks.

PEPPER IT WITH
Vaidyanathan Committee Report,
Core Banking Solution (CBS)

Advantages of Cooperative Banks

- Registration and legal requirements are comparatively easy compared to traditional banks. Moreover, it provides cheap credit to rural masses.
- Advancement in farming: Cooperative societies provide credit to agriculturalists at cheaper rates to buy inputs, warehousing facilities, marketing assistance and other facilities.
- These banks often provide assistance for buying cheap products and services and help them by introducing them to modern technology and better farming methods to improve their output.

R. Gandhi panel on reforms for the cooperative banking sector

Some of recommendations are as follows-

- ❖ Greater control and supervision of RBI upon the cooperative banks.
- ❖ Creation of umbrella organisation for supervising and coordinating the activities of all cooperatives. Such an organisation should be over and above the board of directors and should be reporting directly to RBI so as to bring it under better control.
- ❖ Amendment of the Banking Regulation Act to give more powers to the RBI over cooperative banks, empowering the RBI to wind up and liquidate banks independent of other regulators under the cooperative societies' laws, and allowing urban cooperative banks to be converted into small finance banks under the RBI's supervision.

Problems faced in the Indian Cooperative Banking System

- ✓ Dual control & Dependence of Finance - Cooperative banks are controlled under the dual system, i.e. by their respective State government as well as by RBI which poses a problem in coordination and management. Moreover, these depend heavily on RBI, NABARD and the government for refinancing facilities.
- ✓ Political interference- Politicians use them to increase their vote bank and usually get their representatives elected over the board of directors in order to gain undue advantages like sanctioning of loans which later gets written off.
- ✓ Lesser capital base- Raising working capital has been a major hurdle for almost all cooperative banks, as they have small capital base.
- ✓ Obsolete technology- Cooperative banks are often reluctant to adopt new technologies like computerized data management. Moreover, overdue loans are increasing yearly, restricting the recycling of funds.

Recent Government Initiatives

- Government Amended Banking Regulation Act to bring multi-state cooperative banks under the watch of the central bank. The amendments will apply to all urban co-operative banks and multi-state cooperative banks.
- Reserve Bank to have control over Cooperative banks.
- Now, Cooperative banks will be audited as per RBI rules. Prior nod from RBI will be required for CEO appointment.
- The move will ensure greater accountability and transparency in the functioning of cooperative banks.

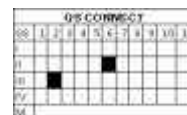
Conclusion

There is no end to scams in the Indian financial space, where, in a matter of years, public sector banks, private banks, non-banking financial companies, and also cooperative banks have been caught on the wrong foot. The inherent follies in their operations need to be addressed effectively if the public has to continue placing its trust in the banking system. Thus, the recent move of Amendment to the Banking Regulation Act to bring multi-state cooperative banks under the watch of the central bank by government will ensure better professionalism, corporate governance and will protect interest of depositors.

Vivad se Vishwas Scheme

News Excerpt

The Union Budget 2020-21 has proposed **'Vivad Se Vishwas' Scheme** (No dispute but trust) which aims at reducing litigations in the direct taxes payments.




Pre-Connect

- The Scheme gives complete waiver of interest and penalty if the scheme is availed before 31st march, 2020.
- The scheme was **introduced after the success of the "Sabka Vishwas (Legacy Dispute Resolution) Scheme,"** which was introduced to reduce litigations in taxation.

Highlights


- The Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas Bill 2020 was introduced in Lok Sabha after the scheme was announced in the Budget.
- It seeks to resolve direct tax dispute cases pending before various appellate forums: commissioner (appeals), ITATs, high courts and the Supreme Court.
- Those willing to settle the cases before March 31st may just need to pay the taxes and secure a full waiver on interests and penalties.
- The scheme is supposed to remain open till June 30th, but those availing it after March 31st needs to pay extra.
- Income tax cases being arbitrated abroad will be eligible to be taken up under the proposed 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme to settle disputes between the taxman and the taxpayer.

Objectives of 'Vivad Se Vishwas' Scheme



TIME & EFFORT

Reduce time and effort spent over long drawn litigation (~5 lakh cases), with the overall objective of improving ease of doing business in India



Tax Collection

Facilitate tax collection (~9 lakh crore of disputed tax) by the government stuck under litigation.

PEPPER IT WITH
Sabka Vishwas scheme, Pradhan
Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana 2016.

Analytica

Exclusions from the Scheme

The scheme applies to all the pending litigation except the following cases:-

- ✓ Cases related to search or seizure;
- ✓ Cases where the prosecution has been instituted on or before the date of filing of declaration;

- ✓ Cases related to any undisclosed foreign income or assets;
- ✓ Cases which are completed based on information received as a result of exchange of information with other tax jurisdictions.

PROS

- The distinguishing feature of the scheme is that it focuses on settling pending lawsuits with existing taxpayers, rather than trying to lure new taxpayers into the net by getting citizens to voluntarily disclose undeclared assets.
- Many of the post-demonetisation cases, now at the appellate stage, may get settled. Now, some of them who were served tax notices and, in some cases, faced income tax (I-T) **department's surveys and raids before getting tax demands** may find a remedy in a government scheme Vivad Se Vishwas. Moreover, People who did sham transactions in penny stocks will also use this new scheme.
- The scheme promises to wipe off the stigma that usually follows an I-T notice or raid. Moreover, the scheme will help business and industry to come out of litigation and concentrate on the wealth creation.

CONS

- The scheme offers only a quick-fix solution to resolve legacy tax litigation and does not address its root cause. The root causes for much of the direct tax litigation in India lie in the **Centre's unrealistically high tax targets set in the annual budget, collection-based performance incentives for tax officers and the discretionary powers vested in assessing officers** owing to loosely drafted tax laws and rules.
- Disputes relating to wealth, securities transaction, commodity transaction taxes and equalisation levy will not be covered under 'Vivad Se Vishwas' amnesty scheme. The scheme would also not cover those cases where the dispute is under the foreign black money act, benami property act and PMLA, among others.
- The scheme will not cover disputes pending before the Authority of Advance Ruling (AAR). However, if the AAR has determined the total income and the order has been challenged in High Court, it would come under the ambit of the scheme.

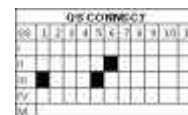
Conclusion

The '**Vivad se Vishwas**' scheme is expected to reduce tax litigation, which is a welcome move by the government. The scheme will undisputedly benefit the interest of taxpayers looking for an expeditious and rapid settlement of their tax claims raised by the department. But the Government is also required to give assurance to the taxpayer that the acceptance of any addition under the scheme will not be used as a tool to punish the taxpayer in other proceedings. A negotiated settlement – between the taxpayer and the CBDT- is a sensible way to resolve disputes without moving to court. It is an advantageous scheme for both the taxpayer and the revenue department.

Ease 3.0 for tech enabled banking

News Excerpt

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs recently unveiled EASE 3.0, the Public Sector Bank (PSB) Reforms Agenda 2020-21 for smart, tech-enabled banking.



Pre-Connect

- PSB Reforms EASE (Enhanced Access and Service Excellence) Agenda is a common reform agenda for PSBs aimed at institutionalizing clean and smart banking.
- **It was launched in 2018, and the subsequent edition of the program** — EASE 2.0 built on the foundation laid in EASE 1.0 and furthered the progress on reforms.
- Reform Action Points in EASE 2.0 aimed at making the reforms journey irreversible, strengthening processes and systems, and driving outcomes.
- The government in EASE 2.0, had proposed pushing liquidity in the public sector banks,

reconstituting the management committee and possible mergers among the ideal partners in the Indian banking sector.

Analytica

- Some of the new features that customers of public sector banks may experience under EASE 3.0 reforms agenda include facilities like **Palm Banking** for “End-to-end digital delivery of financial service”, “Banking on Go” via EASE banking outlets at frequently visited spots like malls, stations, complexes and campuses. **Within this, the Ministry’s idea is to establish** paperless and digitally-enabled banking at places where people visit the most.

PEPPER IT WITH
Standard Restructured
Assets (SRA), PMJDY, Asset
reconstruction companies
(ARCs), PJ Nayak Committee

- The government aims are to focus on digitalisation in the Public Sector Banks (PSBs) among themes that include responsible banking, customer responsiveness, PSBs as Udyami Mitra, credit take-off and deep financial inclusions.

Therefore, EASE 3.0 seeks to enhance ease of banking in all customer experiences, using technology, FinTech, alternate data and analytics.

- The Government has introduced several governance reforms. The governance reforms include:

- o arm’s length selection of top bank management through Banks Board Bureau,
- o introduction of non-executive chairpersons,
- o empowered bank Boards,
- o **strengthening of the Board committee’s system,**
- o enhancing the effectiveness of non-official directors, and
- o Leadership development and succession planning for the top two levels below the Board.

EASE 3.0: Digital & data-driven PSBs



Conclusion

EASE 3.0 will provide advanced solutions that will make the public sector banking smart and technology-enabled. Over the last five years, PSBs have not only cleaned up legacy stress and addressed underlying systemic weaknesses but have emerged stronger as a result of comprehensive and institutionalized EASE reforms. Thus, EASE 3.0 sets the agenda and roadmap for FY21 for their transformation into digital and data-driven NextGen Banking of the Future for an aspiring India.

Dividend Distribution Tax

News Excerpt

In order to increase the attractiveness of the Indian Equity Market, to provide relief to a large class of investors and to make India an attractive destination for investment, the Union Budget 2020-21 proposed to remove the Dividend Distribution Tax.



Pre-Connect

- The Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) is a tax levied on dividends that a company pays to its shareholders out of its profits.
- It is taxable at source, and is deducted at the time of the company distributing dividends. The dividend is the part of profits that the company shares with its shareholders.
- The law provides for the DDT to be levied at the hands of the company, and not at the hands of the receiving shareholder. However, an additional tax is imposed on the shareholder, who receives over Rs. 10 lakhs in dividend income in a financial year.
- DDT was first introduced on domestic companies in 1997. Prior to that, dividends were taxed only at the hands of shareholders.

When is the Dividend Distribution Tax paid?

- ❖ The tax has to be paid to the government within 14 days of the dividend declaration, distribution or payment whichever is earliest.
- ❖ If DDT is not paid within the given time period, interest at a rate of 1 per cent per month or part thereof starts getting accumulated till the amount is paid. The tax is paid separately, over and above the company's income tax liability.
- ❖ The income tax law doesn't provide for any deduction or credit to the firm for paying the DDT.
- ❖ Similarly, a taxpayer gets no deduction with respect to any expenditure or allowance or set-off of loss under the Act in calculating the income through dividends.

PEPPER IT WITH
Finance Act, Securities
Transaction Tax (STT), Long-
Term Capital Gains (LTCG) tax.

Analytica

- ❑ The government's proposed move to scrap the DDT and instead tax dividends only in the hands of the investor at the rate applicable to the investor's income bracket is sensible. It will encourage higher dividend distribution, leaving money with shareholders and making India an attractive destination for investment.
- ❑ According to the finance minister, levying DDT results in an increase in tax burden for investors and especially those who are liable to pay tax less than the rate of DDT, had the dividend income been included in their income. Foreign investors, too, don't end up getting credit on the Indian withholding tax against tax payable in their home country, and this lowers the rate of return on equity capital.
- ❑ Companies at present pay a DDT at the rate of 20.56%. This is paid in addition to income tax. Individuals who receive dividend income in excess of Rs 10 lakhs pay a dividend tax of 10%. So, dividends bear a tax of 25% at most, and this is not an equitable way to tax people.

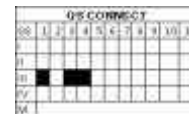
Conclusion

Abolition of DDT will thus benefit taxpayers as net receipt in their hands after taxes will increase. Moreover, the abolition of the DDT, would benefit companies in the long run, as by removing DDT, the quantum of profit available for distribution would get significantly enhanced.

Protected Special Agricultural Zone

News Excerpt

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister recently introduced a Bill in the Legislative Assembly seeking to declare the Cauvery delta region a Protected Special Agriculture Zone (PSAZ).



Pre-Connect

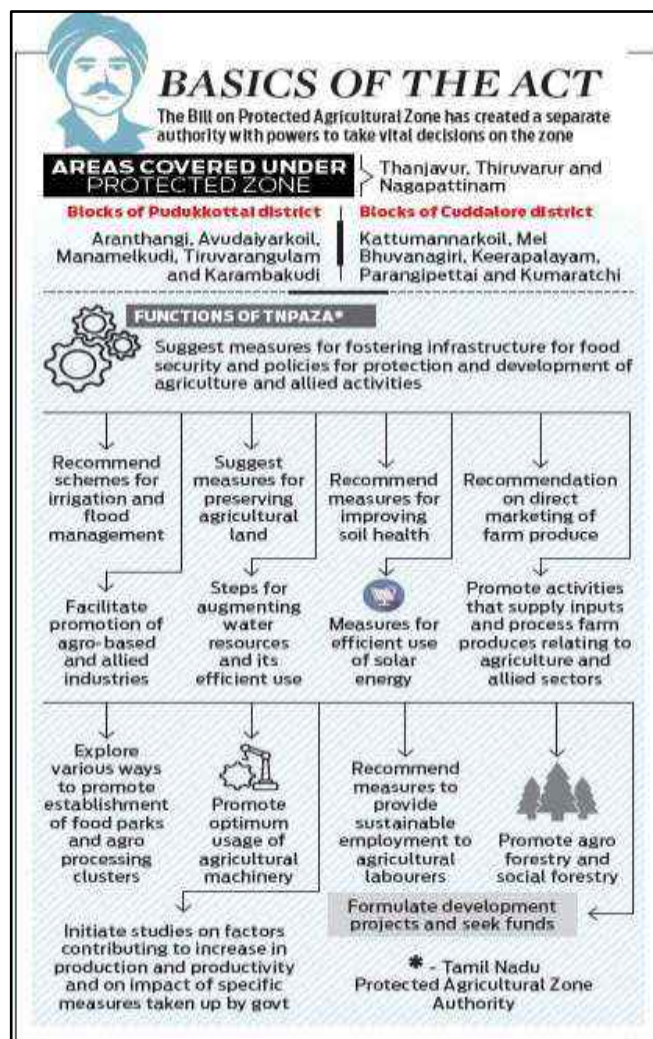
- The Cauvery Delta region is considered to be the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu. It also accounts for a large part of the production of food-grain and other agricultural produce in the state.
- Cauvery Delta Zone (CDZ) lies in the eastern part of Tamil Nadu. It is bounded by the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Palk strait on the south.
- The decision comes after a sustained protest was waged by farmers, youth, political and civil society organizations, as the farmers were facing severe issues due to continuous oil spillages, water, air and soil pollution.

Highlights

- ❑ The bill is proposed to protect agriculture and prohibit certain activities in the region as non-farming activities are adversely affecting agriculture and **threatening state's food security**.
- ❑ The proposed agriculture zone, as per the bill, includes Thanjavur, Thirvarur, Nagapattinam and five blocks in Cuddalore and Pudukottai.
- ❑ The bill fails to include Tiruchirappalli, Ariyalur and Karur which are geographically included in the Cauvery Delta.
- ❑ Zinc smelter, iron ore process plants, copper smelter, aluminium smelter tannery and ship breaking industries are prohibited in the agriculture zone as it will affect agriculture developments in the region.
- ❑ Any ongoing projects would not be disturbed. Infrastructure development projects like port development, laying of pipelines, road, telecommunication lines, power and water supply facilities will not be banned.
- ❑ The bill seeks to establish a 30-member Protected Agricultural Zone Authority headed by the Chief Minister to advise the Government on protecting and improving agricultural activities in the region.

Analytica

- ✓ The PSAZ, that the government created recently, is meant to offer farmers of the delta region relief from further hydrocarbon exploration. However,



PEPPER IT WITH
Special Economic Zone,
Environment Impact Assessment,
Shale gas/oil, HELP.

Why is Cauvery Delta Important?

- ❖ Spread over 28 lakh acres in 3 districts fully and 5 districts partially & covers all 35 blocks in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts and 24 blocks in Pudukottai, Tiruchi, Karur, Ariyalur and Cuddalore.
- ❖ Contributes about one-third of state's annual rice production- 22.4 lakh tonnes.
- ❖ Produces a total of 33.26 lakh tonnes of food-grains.
- ❖ Record production of coconut over 1.12 lakh acres, sugarcane over 20,260 acres and banana over 9,880 acres.

the move which is being received with enthusiasm has raised a few questions as well. The exclusion of certain areas of the districts, **the state government's** decision to stop any further exploration process and the single licensing policy for exploring all forms of hydrocarbon as per the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) which grants the companies the permission to explore the presence of all types of hydrocarbons in the region have raised suspicions over the positive outcomes of the announcement.

- ✓ **Notwithstanding the government's "protective measure"** for the Cauvery delta, it is common knowledge that the region is at a crossroads. Recurring problems over water availability, shrinking farm labour, growing presence of ageing farmers, changes in cultivation methods and lack of remunerative prices are looming large over the farm sector. Under such circumstances, questions do arise among experts and farmers as to whether it is advisable to hamper industrialization in the region.
- ✓ Land prices will fall- All barren lands should be made fertile before enforcing the Act. The prices of fertile land will fall after the PSAZ Act comes into implementation. It will not help the farmers who wish to sell their land due to poverty or due to personal requirements.

Conclusion

It is a welcome move that the Cauvery Delta is declared as a special protected agriculture zone to ensure the future of our food & ecological security leading to increased productivity in perpetuity. But as the debate continues on merits and demerits of making the Cauvery delta a protected zone, there exists an opinion among geologists that fears or concerns of people over hydrocarbon projects in general can be easily addressed if those in charge of such projects conduct themselves in a transparent manner and reveal salient features of their projects, including technology to be adopted and safety norms to be followed.

India-US Summit

News Excerpt

Recently, the President of the United States visited India, the visit set to improve ties between the two nations on various fronts. **It reflects the fact that world's largest and oldest democracies held fast to a steady upward trajectory in their mutual engagement and moved from being an Estranged democracy (remain detached during cold war) to Strategic partners (in the post-cold war era).**

Key-highlights of Summit

- India signed an agreement for the purchase of MH-60 Romeo helicopters which would worth around \$2.5 billion dollar, thereby highlighting a significant increase in defence, military and technological cooperation.
- **India's Petronet LNG** will invest in the American gas company

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India-US Trade Quagmire

Since 2016, when the new regime took over in the USA, the focus of the regime is on reducing its trade deficit with partnering nations.

With India, the US trade deficit stood at \$25.2-billion (in 2018) **is dwarfed by China's corresponding figure of \$346-billion.**

The new administration targeted India by slapping national security tariff of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum imported from India in 2018.

In 2019, it also ended India's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). It has also been termed as "Tariff King".

Major areas of contention include:

- Agriculture and Dairy Sector
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Protection barriers to FDI
- Medical devices
- E-commerce and Data localization norms

The US also changed the status of India from developing to developed country.

India also has concerns about the restrictions on visas for highly skilled professionals seeking to take up employment in the U.S.

Tellurians.

- Westinghouse in a commercial agreement will build 6 nuclear reactors in Andhra Pradesh.
- The much-hyped Trade deal was not signed between the two countries.
- On the Strategic front, both sides criticized indirectly the growing Chinese hegemony in South China Sea and Belt and Road Initiative.

Problems in India-US Relations

☐ New-US Pakistan Equation:

- The current regime has signed a peace deal with Taliban which was made possible only after the Pakistan support.
- In return for that support the US has softened its stand on Pakistan terror activities, it is also not opposing the Pakistan bid to internationalize the Kashmir issue.

☐ Interventionist US congress:

- The US congress has taken a strong stand against India, in the case of revocation of Article 370, new citizenship law and the NRC, which it believes challenges the India-US “shared values”.
- Though the US government official stand is in line with the Indian stand but criticism from the US Congress and some parts of US civil society is pushing the US administration to tell India to bring Kashmir to normalcy and not go ahead with the new citizenship law followed by the NRC.

Areas of Cooperation

Defence

- ⇒ India is in a privileged category of NATO and non-NATO US allies.
- ⇒ Both countries have signed an Industrial Security Annex which allows for greater collaboration among both countries private defence industries.
- ⇒ Both countries have military agreement that allows for the sharing of encrypted communication and equipment.
- ⇒ India-US held tri-service military exercises.
- ⇒ India also forms the part of the US Maritime Security Initiative.

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| <p>PEPPER IT WITH Indo-US Defence relations, GSP, Quad, Energy Security</p> |
|---|

Strategic

- ⇒ India-US holds 2+2 strategic dialogue at the ministerial level including Defence and External affairs minister.
- ⇒ The bilateral Strategic Energy Partnership was launched in April 2018 under which India has started importing crude and LNG from the **US. Now, the US is India's sixth-largest** source of crude oil imports and hydrocarbons.
- ⇒ **The USA also supports India's endeavors against the terrorism emanating across the border. It** played a crucial role in placing Pakistan in the grey-list of Financial Action Task Force.
- ⇒ Under the US Pivot to Asia policy India acts as an ideal balancer to check the aggressive rise of China. This has also led to creation of the concept of Indo-Pacific
- ⇒ The US has designated India as an integral part of the Indo-Pacific narrative by the conception of the Quad.

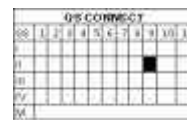
Moving Forward

- ✓ There is a need to take concrete action on the Civil Nuclear deal signed between the two countries. Westinghouse proposal is a welcoming step in this regard.
- ✓ India need to cooperate more with the US as without the United States, the Indo-Pacific could become part of a new Chinese tributary system. With US presence the region has the chance of creating a more organic rules-based order.
- ✓ At the same it is in the interest of India to pursue strategic hedging as in International politics there are no permanent friends or enemies only common interest.
- ✓ To realize the full potential of relations, the two governments must now strive to complete the unfinished agreements and set the course for a Comprehensive Strategic Global Partnership.

India-Vietnam Relations

News Excerpt

Recently, Vietnamese Vice President, Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh visited India. Vietnam **is pivotal to India's Act East Policy and its Indo-Pacific vision.** India and Vietnam relations are characterized as a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. India is privileged to share a strong development cooperation partnership with Vietnam.



Pre-Connect

- Both India and Vietnam share historical ties rooted in the common struggle for liberation from colonial India and the national struggle for independence.
- India supported Vietnam's independence from France, opposed American involvement in the Vietnam War, and supported unification of Vietnam.
- Though Both Vietnam and India were also close allies of the Soviet Union during the Cold War but both stressed on maintaining strategic autonomy.
- India even supported Vietnam during its invasion and occupation of Cambodia, despite the fact that this was not a particularly popular position internationally.
- India initially maintained Consulate-level relations with the then North and South Vietnams and established full diplomatic relations with unified Vietnam on 7 January 1972. India also supported Vietnam when China attacked it in 1979
- In 1992, Both countries established extensive economic ties, including oil exploration, agriculture and manufacturing.
- Both countries promulgated a Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation in 2003 in which they envisaged creating an "Arc of Advantage and Prosperity" in Southeast Asia.
- **Relations between the two countries were elevated to the level of 'Strategic Partnership' in July 2007.**
- **In 2016, the relations were further elevated to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership", a status that Vietnam shares with only two other countries – Russia and China**

Facets of India-Vietnam Relations

- ❑ Regional cooperation
 - Both countries closely cooperate in various regional forums such as ASEAN, East Asia Summit, Mekong Ganga Cooperation, besides UN and WTO.
 - **Vietnam has supported India's bid of UNSC permanent membership. It also invites India to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).**
 - ❑ Economic and Commercial Relations
 - India is among the top 10 Trading partners of Vietnam. Bilateral trade between two countries touched US\$ 13.93 billion in 2018.
 - Vietnam is the 4th largest trading partner of India among ASEAN countries after Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia.
 - There are 5 key sectors for economic cooperation between India Vietnam viz. Garment and Textile, Pharmaceuticals, Agro-Commodities, Leather & Footwear and engineering
 - Investment by India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) in Vietnam began in 1988 and still continues.
 - ❑ Science and Technology Cooperation
 - India and Vietnam have signed the Framework Agreement of cooperation in:
 - Outer Space
 - IT & Cyber Security
 - Use of Atomic Energy
 - Under ASEAN-India Cooperation mechanism Vietnam will have a Centre for Satellite Tracking and Data Reception.
 - Vietnam is also the largest recipient of Indian Technical and Economic

PEPPER IT WITH
Act East Policy, RCEP,
ONGC Videsh oil extraction
in South China Sea

Cooperation (ITEC) programs.

- ❑ Geo-Strategic convergence: Both countries share a common apprehension about the aggressive nature of China.
 - Vietnam on one hand complains about the assertiveness of China in the South China Sea (which China claims as its own territory), India is worried about its growing presence in the Indian Ocean.
 - China objected to the joint exploration of India and Vietnam in the Vietnamese waters due to the disputed political status of Spratly Island (it is recognized as Vietnam territory by India).
 - India also wishes to play a more assertive role in the Indo-Pacific region and Vietnam supports **India's policy. Both sides support:**
 - Peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region
 - Respect for National sovereignty and International Law
 - Freedom of Navigation mentioned under UNCLOS
 - Rule-based international order
- ❑ Defence Cooperation: India-Vietnam shares strong defence ties in fields like:
 - **Training: India trains Vietnam's armed forces in military equipment such as Kilo-Class submarines and Sukhoi aircraft.**
 - Finance: India had provided a US\$500 million line of credit to Vietnam for purchase of defence equipment.
 - Sale of Equipment: India is in discussion with Vietnam for selling large patrol vessels and BrahMos short-range cruise missile and Akash surface-to-air missile.
 - Exercises: Vietnam and India conduct various joint exercises such as VINBAX (Army), joint naval exercises. Further, Vietnam forms part of India's multinational naval exercise is also part of MILAN.
 - The convergence between the two countries is also due to the fact that both use Russian platforms.
 - Vietnam has also invited India to develop a naval facility which is significant that not even the US, a close ally of Vietnam in the region, was given this privilege.
- ❑ People to People relation: Both countries have facilitated a simplified visa regime to promote bilateral tourism. In 2017, Vietnam decided to extend e-visa facilities to Indian citizens travelling to Vietnam. India has e-tourist visa arrangement for Vietnamese citizens since 2015. The Indian Cultural Centre opened in Vietnam in September 2016, with the objective of **strengthening India's cultural presence in Vietnam.**

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Challenges in the India-Vietnam Relations

- ❑ Though Vietnam is building up its military strength to defend against China and building partnerships with other like-minded countries, it is also concerned about provoking China (like other Chinese neighbors).
- ❑ It is wary of being seen to be an integral part of the Quadrilateral Security Initiative (Quad).
- ❑ Vietnam also seems concerned about how far it wants to go in deepening the military relationship with India. It has been reluctant to buy additional equipment from India despite the presence of line of credit.
- ❑ India needs to be careful not to push Vietnam too far, especially considering its own reluctance **in being seen as "ganging up" against China.**
- ❑ Bilateral trade is increasing but is yet to meet expectations, compared to other countries with which India and Vietnam trade. Special attention should be paid to economic cooperation. There is a need to deepen investments as well.

The Future

- ✓ India and Vietnam have immense potential in terms of economic relations as both are growing

economies.

- ✓ India is a key pillar in the Indo-Pacific framework, and Vietnam is an important member of ASEAN.
- ✓ India has a very good education system, which can make important contributions to human resource development in Vietnam. At present, although several students from Vietnam study in India, the numbers are not high, and can be increased.
- ✓ Strengthening ties with Vietnam will eventually lead a step towards the realization of SAGAR (Security and Growth all in the region) initiative.
- ✓ India and Vietnam both can mutually benefit each other in the arena of Blue Economy and ocean security.

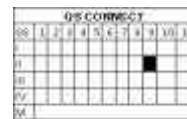
Conclusion

Vietnam and India's relations should not be looked at only from the prism of Vietnam is for India, what Pakistan is for China. There is a huge scope of cooperation in the multidimensional sector so that both mutually grow and contribute to regional peace and prosperity. Given their mutual convergence, it is likely that this relationship will only grow stronger in the coming years as well. This is a relationship that is poised to take off in the coming years, led by political leaderships in the two countries determined to make this relationship truly “strategic” in orientation.

India-Sri Lanka Relations

News Excerpt

Recently, Sri Lankan Prime Minister visited India, this visit becomes important especially after the recent change of guard in Sri Lanka. The visit can significantly alter the future of the India-Sri-Lanka ties.



Pre-Connect

- India and Sri Lanka have ties more than 2500 years old, based on intellectual, cultural, religious and linguistic interaction.
- Both countries have contacts at all levels, there is growth in Trade and Investment with cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, development, education, culture and defence.
- There is significant improvement in the implementation of developmental assistance projects cementing the bonds of friendship between the two countries.
- India had also extended its support to Sri-Lanka in the latter fight against terrorist forces such as the LTTE. India consistently favored negotiated political settlement of Sri Lanka ethnic problems, which is acceptable to all communities within the framework of a united Sri Lanka and is consistent with democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights.

Different facets of India-Sri Lanka Relations

Political Relations

- ☐ Ever since the civil war ended in Sri Lanka, the country is facing serious human rights allegations. This has created a new competition among the foreign powers for control over the island nation.
- ☐ Sri Lanka is also a member of BIMSTEC and SAARC in which India plays a leading role. Also, it forms part of India's **'Neighbourhood First'** policy.
- ☐ However, in recent times Sri Lanka has moved **closer to China and sidelined India's concerns** including over the rehabilitation of Tamils displaced by Civil-war.

Commercial Relations

- ☐ Sri Lanka is one of the priority destinations for direct investments from India. Among the SAARC countries it is **one of India's largest trading partners**. India is also the largest trade partner of Sri Lanka globally.
- ☐ India-Sri Lanka signed a free trade agreement in March 2000, it addressed local socio-economic sensitivities, safeguarding domestic interest and revenue implications. In order to

receive benefits of the agreement, there is need to comply with Rules of Origin criteria.

- ❑ To further boost economic ties both countries should sign CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) at earliest. The agreement will impart renewed impetus and synergy to bilateral economic interaction.
- ❑ Tourism is also an important sector of economic cooperation and India is the largest source market for Sri Lankan tourism. In tourism, India is the largest contributor with every fifth tourist being from India.
- ❑ India has also taken proactive steps to wither the burgeoning trade deficit between two countries.

Defence and Security Cooperation

- ❑ Both countries share a long history of security cooperation which has strengthened in recent times. India provides defence training to Sri Lankan forces.
- ❑ India-Sri Lanka joint military exercise is known as Mitra Shakti while Naval exercise is SLINEX.
- ❑ Both countries along with Maldives share a trilateral maritime security cooperation for surveillance, anti-piracy operations and for reducing maritime pollution in Indian Ocean Region.
- ❑ Recently, both countries also signed an agreement on countering Drug and Human trafficking.
- ❑ India also provided crucial intelligence to the Sri Lankan government about the Easter bombing, however it was not materialized by the Sri Lankans.

Cultural and Educational Relations

- ❑ India and Sri Lanka have signed the Cultural Cooperation Agreement in 1977 which defines Cultural Exchange between the two countries.
- ❑ Buddhism serves as a common link and both countries celebrated 2600th year of enlightenment by Lord Buddha
- ❑ India offers about 290 scholarship slots annually to Sri Lankan students.
- ❑ India provides e-Tourist Visa (eTV) scheme at concessional rate for Sri Lankan tourist.

Sri-Lankan Civil War

Sri Lanka has been mired in ethnic strife since its independence from British rule in 1948.

Majority of Sri-Lankan population consist of Sinhalese (82%), Tamil (9.4%) and Sri Lanka Moor (7.9%).

The root of ethnic conflict was the mistrust between the Sinhalese and Tamil, as the former resented British favoritism towards the Tamil migrant plantation workers from India.

Sinhalese majority made significant changes such as they changed country name from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, made Buddhism as primary religion and Sinhala was made official language.

In 1976, ethnic tensions boiled to its maximum when under the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran began campaign for independent homeland for Tamil in northern and eastern Sri Lanka.

In 1983, a full-scale civil war erupted between Sri Lankan Tamils and Sinhalese majority. India took an active role as it is home to more than 60 million Tamils also India and Sri Lanka are separated by narrow the Palk Strait (40 km).

India signed a peace accord also known as Indo-Sri Lankan Accord in 1987 to provide a political solution to the conflict.

Under the accord, India called for:

Establishment of provincial council system and devolution of power for nine provinces in Sri Lanka (the thirteenth amendment).

Under operation Pawan, Indian deployed peace keeping force (IPKF) to disarm militant group. Later IPKF was withdrawn as violence escalated.

In 2009, the violence in the Island finally ended with the destruction of LTTE. India has agreed to reconstruct the war-torn areas.

India voted against Sri Lanka in 2009, 2012 and 2013 at the US-sponsored UNHRC resolution to investigate alleged human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

Indian Diaspora and Indian Community

- ☐ Sri Lanka has significant numbers of People of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Indian Origin Tamil (IOTs). PIOs are both economically prosperous and are well placed in comparison with the IOTs.
- ☐ IOTs are mostly employed in either tea or rubber plantations in Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces.
- ☐ According to Government census figures (2011), the population of IOTs is about 1.6 million.

Irritants in the India-Sri Lanka Relations

☐ 13-A:

- Thirteenth amendment is the part of the India-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 and provides for political solution to the vexatious ethnic issue. It calls for the setting up of provincial councils as part of devolution of powers, particularly for Tamil minorities.
- In recent times, India reduced its reference to the issue from Tamil aspirations to expectations, Sri Lanka is yet to implement it completely.
- The present government has already decided to look for other alternatives as it believes that certain areas of 13th amendment of the constitution cannot be implemented.

☐ China Factor:

- In recent times, China had strengthened its strategic depth in the island through its Cheque-book diplomacy.
- Sri-Lanka had leased the strategic port of Hambantota (to be a part of the belt and road initiative) to Chinese for 99 years after it struck in China's debt trap.
- Before China took up the Hambantota port work on a construction-cum-concession basis, successive Governments in Colombo had offered the same to India, to no avail.
- China invested sufficiently in the infrastructure of Sri Lanka, which included building of Colombo international container terminal by China Harbor Corporation.
- Sri Lanka has promised that the Hambantota port will not be used for military purposes. Sri Lankan government has decided to retain its oversight of security operations.
- India on the other hand signed civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Sri Lanka which is its first nuclear partnership with any country.
- **India is also investing into Sri Lanka's infrastructure in the Northern and Eastern provinces. India is also planning to build Trincomalee Port to counterweight the Chinese developments at Hambantota Port.**

☐ Fishermen issue:

- Proximity of territorial water of both countries, particularly in the Palk Straits and the gulf of Mannar, incidents of straying of fishermen are common.
- To counter the conflict both countries signed treaties to demarcate International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). However, these treaties failed to address the concerns of fishermen who were restricted to limited fishing areas.

Why Sri-Lanka is important?

Sri-Lanka location in Indian Ocean Region makes its significant geopolitically for several major powers. For eg-

It served as main base for Eastern Fleet and British Royal Navy during world war II.

It had Defence and External Affairs Agreement with Britain and Maritime Agreement with USSR of 1962.

In 1980s it gathered intelligence for USA in the Indian ocean.

Sri Lanka has a list of highly strategic ports located among busiest sea lanes of communication.

It has natural deep-water harbor at Trincomalee which is the fifth largest natural harbor in the world.

Sri Lanka is important in regard with the **"Neighborhood First" approach and the "Sagar" doctrine, therefore India attaches "a special priority" to its relations with Sri Lanka.**

- o The main conflict is around the small islet of Katchatheevu which Sri Lankan fisherman lost to the other side of the IMBL. Fishermen risk their lives and cross the IMBL leading to conflict with the Sri Lankan Navy.
- o Both sides decided to deal with the issue of bona fide fishermen of either side crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line. These agreements helped in the detention of fishermen in a humane manner.
- o India and Sri Lanka have agreed to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of India and Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development of Sri Lanka as the mechanism to help find a permanent solution to the fishermen issue.

Analytica

India-Going Forward in Sri Lanka

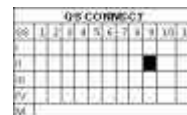
PEPPER IT WITH
String of Pearls, Katchatheevu
island, Fishermen Issue

- Sri-Lanka is a unique country politically in a sense that it has both President and Prime Minister being elected directly therefore they can belong to two different political parties. This situation affects the political coherence. But the present situation is now expected to change this situation.
- The new government has offered to neutrality when it comes to India-China power struggle. This must be acceptable to India as it has no need to develop either a military base in Sri Lanka or deploy its forces in an island that is physically so close to peninsular India. But **India, certainly can't accept a situation where Sri Lanka lets the People's Liberation Army turn the Emerald Island into an aircraft carrier for China, or for any other power.**
- Sri Lanka is looking for investments from major countries including India, Japan, Singapore and the US to invest in Sri Lanka. Therefore, there is considerable room for creative Indian policy for economic engagement with Sri Lanka under new government.
- Further, India should learn from its military intervention in Sri Lanka that its ability to shape **its neighbour's domestic politics is limited. India must realize that it can't make its entire relationship hostage to the question of Tamil minority rights. Moreover, Sri Lanka's opinion on Tamil is similar to India's stance on Kashmir.**
- Mutually reinforcing steps along different axes could hopefully expand the possibilities not just **for India and Sri Lanka but also resolve Tamil issues. These steps could include Sri Lanka's confidence building measures with the Tamils and greater cross-border economic cooperation between northern Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu.**
- India must be seen as a friend of all the communities in Sri Lanka that can offer its good offices to resolve problems between themselves. Sri Lanka too will find that incremental progress on the Tamil question will rapidly widen its space in regional and global affairs and create better conditions for a much-needed economic renewal.
- Rather than focusing on building the case against China, India must step up its efforts to show **what it is for. India can never match China's economic wherewithal to make a difference to Colombo's developmental requirements.** But it can carve out a niche role in some areas and also partner smartly with like minded strategic partners like Japan to make an economic and strategic difference in Sri Lanka.

Afghan Peace Deal

News Excerpt

The United states has finally ended its 18-year-old war in Afghanistan by signing the peace deal with Taliban in Doha. The agreement is also known as Doha Agreement.



Pre-Connect

- In the aftermath of the deadly **9/11 attack, the US launched its "War on Terror". It invaded Afghanistan with the aim of overthrowing the Taliban.**
- The war got derailed as the US became involved simultaneously in 2003 in Iraq under the pretense of destroying Weapons of Mass destruction when its objective was regime change.

- A key role in Afghanistan was later played by Pakistan in 2005, when it started supporting the Taliban and helped them in regroup and recover. This created an instability in Afghanistan. At **the same time, it exposed US's policy shortfalls.**
- In 2009, under the Obama administration, the US increased its vigour to have decisive victory over Afghanistan but soon they realized the futility of their objectives.
- In 2011, the US decided to withdraw its forces by 2014 and leave Afghan Security forces in charge of all combat operations. In 2014, the US decided to withdraw the bulk of its soldiers but at the same time few thousands were left to advise, train and assist the Afghan security forces under Operation Resolute Support.
- In 2017, the present administration changed the whole idea of American presence in Afghanistan from **"nation building" to "killing terrorist"**.
- The administrations concluded that the US has two roles in Afghanistan one is Military (Training and counter terrorism) and other was Political (peace settlement with Taliban)
- Since 2018, Taliban and the US officials were negotiating a peace deal.



Key Highlights of the Deal

- ☐ The deal set out a definite timeline of 14 months for the agreement to be materialized.
- ☐ There will be Comprehensive Ceasefire agreement between the Afghan government and Taliban.
- ☐ Timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan will be carried out, provided the Taliban adhere to their security guarantees and ceasefire. So, If the Taliban follows through on its commitments, all U.S. and other foreign troops will leave Afghanistan within fourteen months.
- ☐ Taliban will not allow any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies.
- ☐ The deal will also call for an intra-Afghan dialogue which will discuss the date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, including agreement over the future political roadmap of Afghanistan. The Taliban believes if it can reach an agreement with a foreign enemy, we must be able to resolve intra-Afghan disagreements through talks.
- ☐ Afghan government will also release 5000 Taliban fighters.

PEPPER IT WITH
Chabahar and Gwadar
Ports, INSTC, TAPI Pipeline,

Analytica

Possible Outcomes

- ⇒ The process could be complicated by a weak central government, afflicted by ethnic, sectarian, and tribal differences.
- ⇒ Another Vietnam:
 - Many experts have pointed that the deal resembles the US-North Vietnam of 1972 (Paris Peace Accord) which led to withdrawal of the US forces from Vietnam.
 - However, as the US withdrew North Vietnam pushed South Vietnam and finally occupied it, all this happened despite the US assurances to South Vietnam.
 - Critics pointed that the US withdrawal led to a better Vietnam today than earlier but one must not forget that there exists a huge difference between Ho Chi Minh and the Taliban.
- ⇒ Return of Anarchy:
 - There are huge chances that with the Taliban coming into power, the law will take the back seat while the Sharia will drive the country.

- There has been a sugar coating from Taliban in an NYT editorial that there will be Humans rights and Women rights, the only albeit is that they are allowed within Islam.
 - The Taliban will hardly share power with the Afghan Government. Thus, it is quite possible that even after the peace deal, the country will be back to civil war again.
- ⇒ Surge in Terrorism:
- There are high chances that instead of seeing decline in the incidents of violence there might be significant jump in terror incidents.
 - More than twenty terrorist groups operating inside the country, according to Afghan officials. Many of the groups are aligned with the Taliban or al-Qaeda, and the resurgence of the Islamic State is a concern.
 - **Furthermore, there's very limited capacity for the Taliban to control violence themselves, even if they wanted to.**
- ⇒ Status of Women:
- The position of women in Afghanistan is today is precisely the result of the U.S. and coalition involvement, and never could have emerged to this degree without the courageous stands by Afghan women activists.
 - **It's utterly absurd to believe the Afghan government and Taliban will ever find an outcome for Afghan women consistent with global values.**
 - Simply, to leave the fate of Afghan women to the intra-Afghan dialogue is a massive abdication of American and international responsibility to support universal human rights

Indian concerns

- ❑ **India had long stated stand on Afghan Peace Process that it should be “Afghan Owned-Afghan Led and Afghan-Controlled” in nature.** The Afghan government delegation participated in the agreement and there is a promise of Intra Afghan dialogue. So, India has accepted the Doha Agreement.
- ❑ However, with Taliban coming to power it would be a Lose-lose-lose situation as:
 - Security concerns: The deal makes obligatory on the part of Taliban to make sure that their land is not used to attack the US and its allies. But given **the “Alpha male” era of current international politics** it is unclear whether India, which is not a U.S. ally, is included in this clause, and whether Pakistan-backed groups that threaten India, would still operate in Afghanistan.
 - Gains for Pakistan: The deal also promises to take Taliban leaders off the UN Security **Council's** sanctions list, which could considerably bring down the number of terrorists harboured by Pakistan. This might benefit Pakistan during the June 2020 FATF Plenary.
 - Intra-Afghan Dialogue: There are huge chances that a Taliban led government might overshadow or thwart **the “Intra-Afghan” dialogue. This will** impact India's support for the election process for leadership in Afghanistan.
 - Taliban gains: The deal gives more to Taliban and the terms of the real peace deal is yet to be negotiated between the Taliban and the Afghan side, facilitated by the U.S. and thus the deal seems to be a one-sided deal.

Can India Leave Afghan to Pak?

- There have been some concerns in India that it must not leave Afghanistan to Pakistan and if there is a peace **keeping force being setup then India should send its force i.e. “put boots on the ground”.**
- This was earlier opined in the Iraq war but was rejected by government and was turned out to be a good decision.
- **India's competition with Pakistan in Afghanistan is justified on several grounds:**
 - Great Strategic importance so India **can't leave vacuum in that region.**
 - There has always been a foreign power which stabilized Afghanistan.

- Afghanistan is an important transit route to central Asia and Europe.
- Afghanistan is resource rich.
- **India can't cede Afghanistan to Pakistan.**
- However, there are counter logics to the above points
 - Afghanistan is of great strategic importance, but it is not for India as there is no terror plot, plotted against India in the Af-Pak region. In the last 45 years only 1 Afghan terrorist was found in India. So, Afghan are not against India. There is no terror sanctuary working against India in Afghanistan as they can be easily droned.
 - Afghanistan has never benefited from the presence of a big power and vice-versa. It is a country with great ethnic diversity and a large number of the same ethnic groups live in the neighboring country i.e. there are more pashtuns in Pakistan than Afghanistan. So, **Afghanistan doesn't have a core population, a country of minorities. This makes centralization of power impossible in the region.**
 - **India doesn't have transit right to Afghanistan as Pakistan doesn't allow it. To make it happen India needs to either conquer Pakistan (militarily which is not plausible) or have good relations. In the latter case, there would be no need for competition with other powers in Afghanistan. Even if India conquers PoK the topography doesn't allow India to drive to the Wakhan corridor, it is actually an irredentism on India's part.**
 - Afghanistan is a definitely resource rich but should India fight Pakistan for resources inside Afghanistan when it can do it with much less effort within India by resolving the Naxal issues.
 - Afghanistan is a place where "Great powers come to die" in 19th Century British failed to subdue it, in 20th century Soviet tried but failed and in 21st the US failed. Pakistan's border with Afghanistan is not settled, Pashtuns in Afghanistan don't **accept the "Durand line"**. So, the moment a National government comes to power in Afghanistan, there would be rise of nationalism which would create trouble for Pakistan. Pakistan already deployed 5-6 divisions of its army in the Af-Pak area, this might increase in case of conflict which is always better as those divisions are not facing India.
- Fighting Pakistan either through covert or overt operations in Afghanistan will provide justification for ISI to continue their activities in Afghanistan and their fantasy of strategic depth.

Way Forward

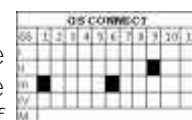
- ✓ Peace requires patience, compromise and more importantly active participation of all stake players. Thus, talking to only Taliban is a short-sighted policy.
- ✓ To resolve conflict within Afghanistan, the battlefield needs to be isolated, i.e. external support to the terrorist activities needs to be abandoned. Also, the countries need to keep their respective interests aside, to build peace in the region.
- ✓ The US needs to make its policy vis-a-vis Afghanistan clear.
- ✓ India and Central Asian Republics can help in establishing peace in the region.
- ✓ More militancy is witnessed in the region where the state fails to deliver. Thus, administrative reforms within Afghanistan are the need of the hour.
- ✓

Blue Dot Network Programme

News Excerpt

Recently, US president (on his maiden visit to India) & India are expected to have discussions on the Blue Dot Network, a proposal that will certify infrastructure and development projects. Observers have referred to the proposal as a means of **countering China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was launched over six years ago.**

Pre-connect



It is led by the US's International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the Blue Dot network was jointly launched by the US, Japan (Japanese Bank for International Cooperation) and

What is Blue Dot Network?

- ❖ The Blue Dot Network will bring together governments, the private sector and civil society under shared standards for global infrastructure development.
- ❖ The network will certify infrastructure projects that demonstrate and uphold global infrastructure principles.
- ❖ Certification by the Blue Dot Network will serve as a globally recognized symbol of market-driven, transparent and financially sustainable development projects.

By proposing a common standard of project excellence, the Blue Dot Network will attract private capital to infrastructure project in developing and emerging economies.

Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) in 2019 on the side lines of the 35th ASEAN summits in Thailand.

How is BDN different from BRI?

This US project is therefore a direct tentative response to the Chinese BRI. The two programs aim to strengthen connectivity in Asia, a continent suffering from a major infrastructure deficit, as noted by the Asia Development Bank.

- The US highlighted the participation of private companies and the respect for international standards in the BDN, which would differentiate it from the BRI.
- Chinese initiative, at its inception, suffered from lack of transparency and sustainability but BDN is up to the mark in term of transparency and sustainability.
- The major difference between the BRI and the BDN is that the Chinese initiative is today more advanced than BDN which still seems to be in its infancy.
- Despite soothing statements, **the “Blue Dot Network” has a strong geopolitical dimension**, and is the consequence of a Sino-American confrontation. We can thus notice that although **the “Blue Dot Network”** is a multilateral project bringing together the United States, Japan and Australia, it is President Trump, and he alone, who invited India to join the group. Japan and Australia seem to be less willing to rush in this new initiative, as many Japanese companies are already benefiting from the BRI.
- **The “Blue Dot Network” should therefore become one of the many development tools that can be use by Asian states to achieve development.**

China's Belt and Road

Initiative (BRI) is an ambitious programme to connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks along six corridors with the aim of improving regional integration, increasing trade and stimulating economic growth.

PEPPER IT WITH

35th ASEAN Summit, Act East Policy, Sino-American confrontation and US foreign policy towards China

Analytica

How BDN benefits India

- BND help India to continue to infrastructure modernization in order to address regional inequality issues and create new growth opportunities.
- The BDN would also enable New Delhi to advance its own **“Act East Policy”** strategy. For New Delhi, the BDN could create new exchanges with neighbours.
- **China is India's second economic partner, and therefore New Delhi remains interested in the BRI, but cannot officially join the Chinese initiative because of the Kashmir issue.**

Act East India

This policy, developed in 2014, aims to strengthen cooperation between India and its Southeast Asian neighbors. However, success has been limited mainly to the defense sector.

- There is a need for transparency and financial accountability when it come infrastructure development projects in India which will be definitely provided by BDN.
- BDN will smooth the progress of potential foreign investment for the Indian economy.

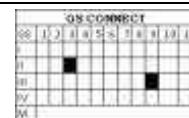
Way Forward

- ✓ India probably have the highest number of infrastructure project built in public-private partnership (PPP) mode in the last two decades. And, yet there is a huge and growing infrastructural deficit on the ground, and the vast bulk of projects that are essential requirement are not even on the drawing boards, leave alone being built. The way forward is to standardize big-ticket project implementation with transparent arm's-length finance and to carry out effective project delivery.
- ✓ We need to modernize infrastructure finance. Instead of reliance on opaque bank funding, we need to policy-induce an active and vibrant corporate bond market to cope up with much-needed transparency in big-ticket projects. The way ahead is to set up special purpose vehicles to garner all and sundry clearances for specific investments, and then to invite bids for project implementation.

Biodiversity Management Committee

News Excerpt

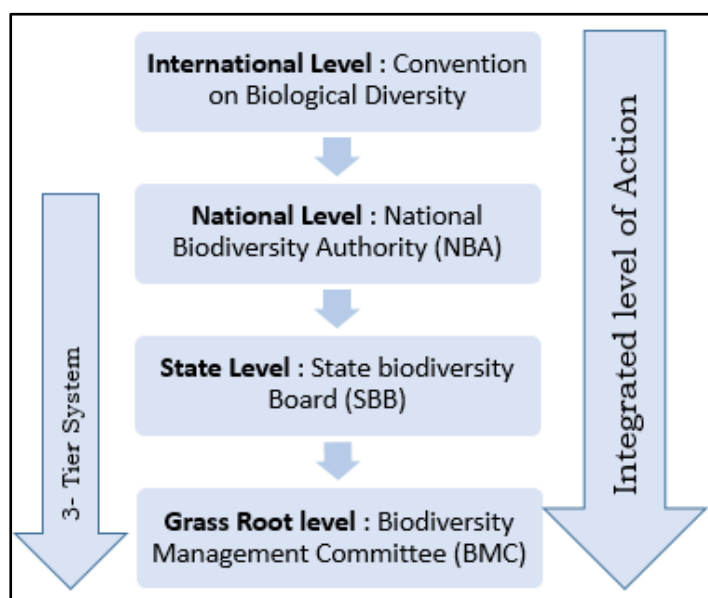
Recently, the Green Bench (National Green Tribunal) highlighted the issue of active implementation of the Biodiversity Act, 2002. The NGT directed for reports from the Union Government about constitution of biodiversity management committees (BMCs) and **People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs)** in every State.



Pre-Connect

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international Convention for conservation biological Diversity. The convention has been ratified by 193 countries including India.

- The convention envisions following objectives:
 - Conservation of biodiversity,
 - Sustainable use of the Bio-resources, and
 - Ensuring equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of the biological resources
- The Biological Diversity Act extends to the whole India, and its Rules mandates the establishment of BMCs at the local level including Panchayat and Municipal institution throughout the country.
- This act envisages a threetier system for implementing the above measures. For instance- BMCs are to be constituted at Gram Panchayat level, Mandal Parishad level and Zilla Parishad level.



State of BMCs & PBRs in India

- Earlier there were only 9,700 BMCs and 1,388 PBRs in 2016. The NBA has cited that 2,43,499 BMCs and 95,525 PBRs have been created so far.
- The primary responsibility of the BMCs are:
 - To include documentation and preservation of local biodiversity, utilization of biological resource, Management and conservation of Heritage Sites, Regulation of access to the biological resources and associated Traditional Knowledge for commercial and research

purposes, Biodiversity Education and Awareness building programs, Protection of Traditional Knowledge and to Conservation the traditional varieties/breeds of economically important plants/animals.

- To prepare **People's Biodiversity Register (PBR)**, which will contain comprehensive information on local flora and fauna, traditional and scientific knowledge, and information associated with regional species.
- A newlyproposed framework e-PBRs (PBRs in electronic form) will have significant utility than the physical notebooks as geo-tag is its imbibe feature. The new system of PBR will ensure the protection of intellectual property rights over the traditional knowledge since the information will not be shared without consent. So, it would diversify the livelihood opportunities with scientific way.

Local Biodiversity Fund

- It is created under the Biodiversity Act, 2002.
- It is applicable at the areas notified by State Government.

Sources:

- Any grants and loans made under Act.
- Any grants or loans made by the NBA.
- Any grants or loans made by the SBB.
- Any levy collected by BMCs.

Composition

- The BMC comprises of One Chairperson and Six Members, 1/3rd of nominated should be women and SC/ST reservation as per state demography.
- The local Member of the Legislative Assembly and Member of Parliament would be special invitees to the meetings of the Biodiversity Management Committees at different levels.

PEPPER IT WITH
Nagoya Protocol, Cartagena
Protocol, AICHI Targets, TEEB,
TEEB-India Initiative

Analytica

- Some Panchayati Raj Institutions refused to form BMCs due to the reason that the constitution of BMC would lead to undermining their authority over minor forest produce. **State Forest departments, Forest traders & mining lobby also don't cooperate with** existing BMCs for the same reason.
- Under the various biodiversity conservation programme run by UNDP and UNEP, these agencies **allow separate funding for BMCs**. Due to India's red-tapism the allotted fund is not utilized.
- The role of BMCs have been reduced, as of now its vital functions are to collect the data only (For PBRs) rather than to being a body that could galvanize sustainable movement at local grass root level.
- The BMCs are entrusted to create PRBs. The legal status of PBR register has been questioned on the grounds that it excludes some of inhabitants from decision making residing in the local region. For instance- Tribals in natural areas are not classified legally as residents. Their aspect of living and traditional practices are likely to exclude them from PBRs.
- However, PBRs may serve as a useful tool in providing baseline data that could be utilised for sustainable management programs for conservation of resources.

Moreover, there are certain benefits like-

- Through BMCs and PBRs, Community participation and widespread biological conservation initiatives can be guided in a collective manner **with a mix of 'traditional and scientific knowledge'**. In the long term it would help to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- Majority of people are unaware about regional fauna and flora, Such Committees will play a significant role in order to enhance people participation at grass root level by conserving the traditional practices.

Way Forward

- ✓ Under the 73rd constitutional amendment act the operational aspects of BMCs and PBRs are to

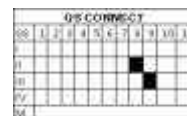
be Constitutionalized and legalised at grass root level in a clear defined way, so that the guiding provision would not be curtailed by respective State actors.

- ✓ Role of PBR should widen as it would help to trace how habitats are changing, and to understand the fragile parts of forests. India is land of biological and cultural diversity. Conservation of both could be achieved under the expanded version of PBR. Being a bottom-up exercise, it is also a means of understanding the overlap of cultural and natural biodiversity. For instance, several Endemic Birds Areas, like in the Western Ghats, are those where tribals like the Todas live. These communities have specific ways of interacting with the environment and have helped conserve it in a sustainable way.
- ✓ The relevance of efficient natural area monitoring will be lost if PBRs and Biodiversity Management Committees are not aligned under the provisions of local self-Government. It should be taken forward in order to achieve the elusive blend of tradition and modernity with truths from the ground.

1000 springs initiative

News Excerpt

Recently, the tribal ministry has launched '1000 spring initiative' in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This initiative is likely to bridge the development-deprivation gap in specific tribal pockets through Rejuvenating Natural Springs.



Pre-Connect

- According to Census 2011 data, access to safe and adequate water for tribal communities remains a major challenge. Nearly for half of Scheduled Tribe (ST) households, the access is 'unimproved'. Less than 20 % of them have water available on their premises.
- Many tribal communities live in hilly, thickly forested and hard-to-reach areas. Due to the hostile geography and complex hydro-geological limitations, the ground water development potential through conventional means is limited.

Countrywide Initiatives for Spring Rejuvenation

Natural springs are known as *dhara*, *mool*, *kuan* in the central and eastern Himalayas and *Chashma* and *naula* in the western Himalayas.

- National Mission on Himalayan Studies
- NITI-Aayog Report on Springs in the Indian Himalayan Region
- Dhara vikas programme by Government of Sikkim.
- HIMMOTTHAN - Mission Spring Revival (Uttarakhand).
- Rejuvenation of 100 springs by Government of Mizoram & Government of Nagaland.
- Grampari - Springbox model for water security in Western ghats.
- Vishaka Jila Nav Nirman Samiti (VJNNS) in the Eastern Ghats by Multi-stakeholders.
- Springshed Management in the Hill Districts of West Bengal.
- Capacity Building for Spring Revival by Govt. of Meghalaya.

Key Objectives

- Springs are natural sources of groundwater discharge and have been used extensively in the mountainous regions across India. The initiative will help in harnessing the potential of **perennial spring's** water to address natural scarcity of water in tribal areas.
- This initiative is intended to improve access to clean water which is essential for critical tribal development. Further it will foster the improved community led sanitation, nutrition and livelihoods.
- This initiative will focus on the preparation of a GIS-based spring atlas and integrated development solutions. Atlas has been developed to make this data easily accessible from an

online platform. For instance- Data of more than 170 springs have been uploaded on the Spring Atlas.

- Under the initiative tribal youth in rural belt have been trained as barefoot hydro geologists by combining traditional and scientific knowledge for identification and mapping of springs, and undertaking rejuvenation and protection measures in their habitations.
- This initiative includes provision of infrastructure ranging from piped water supply for drinking and irrigation to community-led total sanitation initiatives and backyard nutrition gardens, generating sustainable livelihood opportunities.

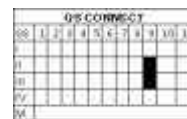
Analytica

- Benefits of Such initiative: Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impacts food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities. Further Sustainable Development Goal 6 recognizes the importance of access to clean water.
- Limitation: Spring discharge is reported to be declining due to increased water demand, changing land use patterns, ecological degradation and erratic trends in precipitation and threat of drying up.
- Expected Outcome: Rejuvenation of springs would lead to adequate quantity and quality of water for drinking and irrigation purposes. It will directly Empower communities to manage their water resources.

Northern European Enclosure Dam (NEED)

News Excerpt

A vast dam across the entrances to the North Sea could theoretically protect Europeans against sea level rise as the planet warms. To give effect, the Scientists from Germany and Netherlands have proposed the construction of the Northern European Enclosure Dam (NEED).



About NEED

- A dam between the North-East of Scotland and the west of Norway (476Km) and another one between the west point of France and the southwest coast of England (161Km) are part of NEED.
- NEED will separate the North Sea and Baltic Sea from the Atlantic Ocean. At various points of the barrier large water pumps have to be fixed to flow out water that currently flows in the North Sea to the other side of dam i.e. - Atlantic Ocean.
- It would protect more than 25 million Europeans residing in coastal areas from migration and against the consequences of an expected sea level rise over the next few centuries.
- Cost: It is projected that NEED costs around 250-500 billion euros which are 0.1% of the gross national product, annually over 20 years, of all the countries that would be protected by such a dam.
- Challenge: Crossing the Norwegian trench and building the physical structure in moving water will pose visible constructional challenges. Further this project will have adverse consequences on the marine and terrestrial ecosystem in irreversible way. EU as a political body is declining and consensus building between land locked countries and coastal countries will remain a puzzle.

Analytica

- Sea level rise is a slow but unstoppable process. It would result into unprecedented loss of physical places, Cultural sites, economic hubs, and ecological systems. For example-Indonesia is also shifting its capital Jakarta.
- Climate Change initiatives like UNFCCC, Paris Accord, and several other initiatives remain unchecked and doubtful. For instance- An optimistic prediction by IPCC states that sea level will rise between 30 to 60 Cm. by 2100, if the pledge under Paris Accord are met. However, there is disagreement at global level on the implementation of the Paris accord. It can be cited that these initiatives have delivered sub-optimal results and failed to give timely response to the adverse impacts of climate change. This forced countries to take region specific initiatives in Adaptation domain.



- Climate change is posing the threat of migration and displacement of communities which eventually resulted in livelihood loss and loss of Nation Income Ultimately. This trend will escalate the socio-political tension. For instance- In case of Pre-NEED, the Land locked EU National will be affected more because they have to share the burden of climate refugees (coastal migration) from another region of the EU.
- Analysis of Social Cost of Climate Change (NEED as a Case Study)

| Pre-NEED Problems | Post-NEED hopes |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal people would be forced to migrate. • Respective Governments have to arrange for alternatives in terms of Social-political-economic aspect. • At some point it will cause politico-Socio instabilities. • The changes in demography will further escalate the tension. • If the global mitigation effort remains unchecked, it would enhance the problem of climate change which can cause a drastic impact on Ecosystem and it will take a huge cost to reverse the changes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No migration due to the threat of Climate Change. • There will be no drastic change in demography. • Such a project seems to be a problem rather than a solution because it may induce human led disasters which might prove devastating in an unprecedented way for all related ecosystems including human settlement. • It provides short term measures only and involves huge cost. |

- As Climate change is becoming a reality, majority of **countries give preference to 'adaptation'** initiatives (build resilient infrastructure) over mitigation strategies advocated by global bodies and which are focussed on elimination of GHG.

Visible Impacts of NEED

- The tide motion in a large part of the North Sea along with the transport pattern of silt and nutrients mixing will be severely affected.
- The North Sea would eventually become a freshwater lake (if walled). That will drastically change the ecosystem and therefore have an impact on the fishing industry and entire marine ecosystem species.
- The maritime industry will likely be affected by sea level rise as and when ports are forced to relocate or be upgraded with protectionist measures.
- NEED will increase the cost for shipping, cause adverse impact on wildlife and biodiversity, shift global oceanic circulation which could affect weather patterns.

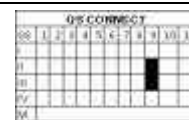
Conclusion

Global initiatives for climate change are derailed now for instance- **USA's withdrawal from Paris Accord**, Under-Funding to UN. The world has wasted precious time, after a decade of **procrastination on climate change**. The dictum '**Common but differentiated responsibility**' is understated by majority of developed countries. This resulted into growing disagreement over the fund allocation and strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change. Thus it creates a vacuum for '**integrated approach**' to fight climate change. There is a dire need to adopt integrated and streamlined effort in order to fight Climate Change for both developed and developing countries or else the fate of coastal nations will create a variety of problems for land locked countries. Our most urgent task today is to persuade nations of the need to return to multilateralism.

World Air Quality Report-2019

About Report

The World Air Quality Report is an effort of multi-stakeholders, based on the Data collected **through a centralized platform and prepared by 'IQ Air Visual'**. As per the Report 90% of the global population breathes in the air which is exceeding WHO exposure targets. Vast populations around the world lack access to air quality information.



Key Highlights

- Countries and regions in East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia suffer from the highest annual average PM2.5 concentration weighted by population.
- Bangladesh emerged as the top country in terms of PM2.5 exposure and India ranked 5th.
- Among BRICS countries India's rank is worst.
- Scandinavian countries, European countries and USA marked better Air quality and under exposure of PM2.5 level.
- There is a lack of monitoring data in numerous populated areas, particularly within the African and South American continents.

Key Parameter of the Report

- ❖ This report focusses on PM2.5 Concentration level as it is harmful to human health. Its microscopic size allows the particles to enter the blood stream.
- ❖ PM2.5 affects the respiratory system and travel throughout the body, causing far-reaching health effects such as asthma, lung cancer and heart disease.
- ❖ Air pollution is associated with low birth weight, increased acute respiratory infections and stroke.
- ❖ PM2.5 originates from combustion of vehicle engines, industry, fires, coal burning, sandstorms, agriculture, and chemicals reacting in the atmosphere.

Analytica

- This report has cited that developed countries tend to have more data availability and public access, than developing countries including India.
- India should enhance its monitoring network as awareness of air pollution is one of the most effective measures to tackle the problem of Air Pollution. Public air quality information drives public awareness, and creates demand for action.
- This report compares the level of PM2.5, however choosing PM2.5 as parameter may not project the clear picture of State of Air Quality. For instance, majority of chemicals are

responsible for poor state of air quality especially in Industrial cities.

- There are different ways to calculate the average pollution index. It is the primary reason that data often differs with two respective agencies.
- Meteorological conditions trapped the pollutants for instance- During winter to some extent Meteorological conditions are primarily responsible for peak level of pollution due to a **Geographical phenomenon called Temperature inversion.**

Impacts of Poor Air Quality

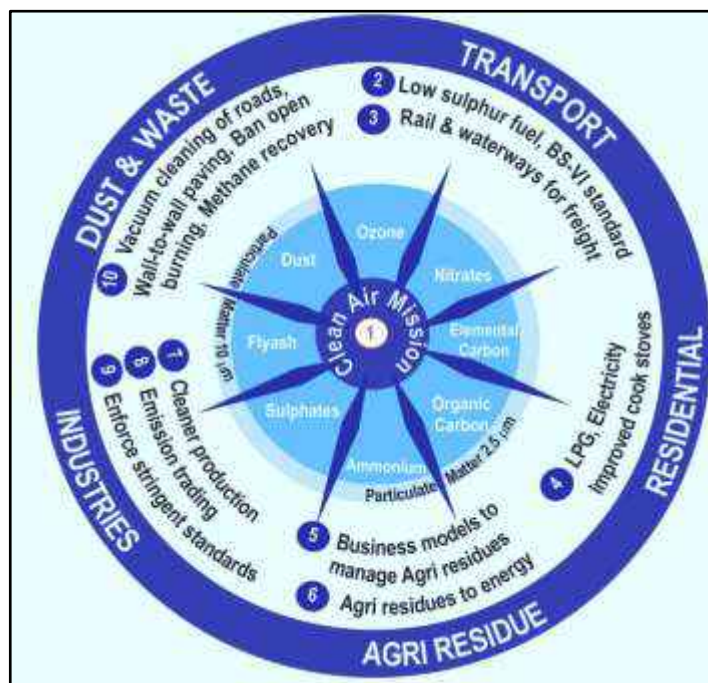
- ✓ Poor Air Quality have significant market impacts like-decreasing labour productivity, increasing health expenditures and declining agricultural crop yields. This can lead to global economic costs that gradually increase to 1% of global GDP by 2060.
- ✓ Poor air quality can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat, cause shortness of breath, aggravate asthma and other respiratory conditions, and affect the heart and cardiovascular system. Breathing polluted air for a long period of time can cause more serious problems.

India's Initiatives for Air Quality Improvement-

- 2019 marked the launch of **India's** first holistic National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), NCAP aims to reduce PM2.5 and PM10 air pollution in 102 cities by 20-30% by 2024 compared to 2017 levels.

India additionally **joined the UN's Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) as the 65th** member to collaborate with global leaders on air pollution solutions.

- India saw widespread improvements in PM2.5 levels in 2019, compared to the last years.
- SAMEER app has been launched wherein air quality information is available to the public along with provision for registering complaints against air polluting activities.



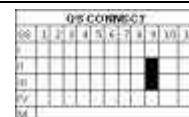
| <u>Major Anthropogenic Reason for poor Air Quality</u> | <u>India's Initiatives</u> |
|--|---|
| 1. The burning of fossil fuels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS VI Emission standard: These norms would drastically reduce vehicular pollution. By 2020 onwards BS-VI compliant vehicles will be available. • Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY): It was launched in India to promote the use of LPG as cooking fuel in order to reduce exposure to unhealthy smoke levels especially for women and children. |
| 2. Stubble Burning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is planning to establish the Bio-refinery in paddy regions. Crop residual will be utilized to make ethanol blended cleaner fuel. • The government is providing subsidy on crop residue management machinery to farmers. |

| | |
|---|--|
| 3. Mining and thermal Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of existing environmental standards and formulation of new standards for prevention and control of pollution from industries. Revision of emission standards including thermal power plants, cement plants, etc. |
| 4. Agriculture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convert agriculture residues and farm manure to electricity for rural power and biomass pellets for women who depend on biomass stoves. This strategy aims at developing and customizing gasification technologies for converting agricultural waste into useful energy. |
| 5. Power and other Industry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt cleaner and efficient production technologies such as supercritical technologies in power sector, vertical shaft kilns, hoffman kilns, and tunnel kilns for brick manufacturing. For urban households, it is recommended to improve energy efficiency of room air conditioners. Deploy National Emission Trading Schemes (ETS) |
| 6. Dust and Waste (Due to rapid urbanization) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement wall-to-wall paving of streets and vacuum cleaning of roads; enforce ban on open burning of solid waste; manage waste and recovery of methane from landfills. |

Our Future on Earth 2020 Report

News Excerpt

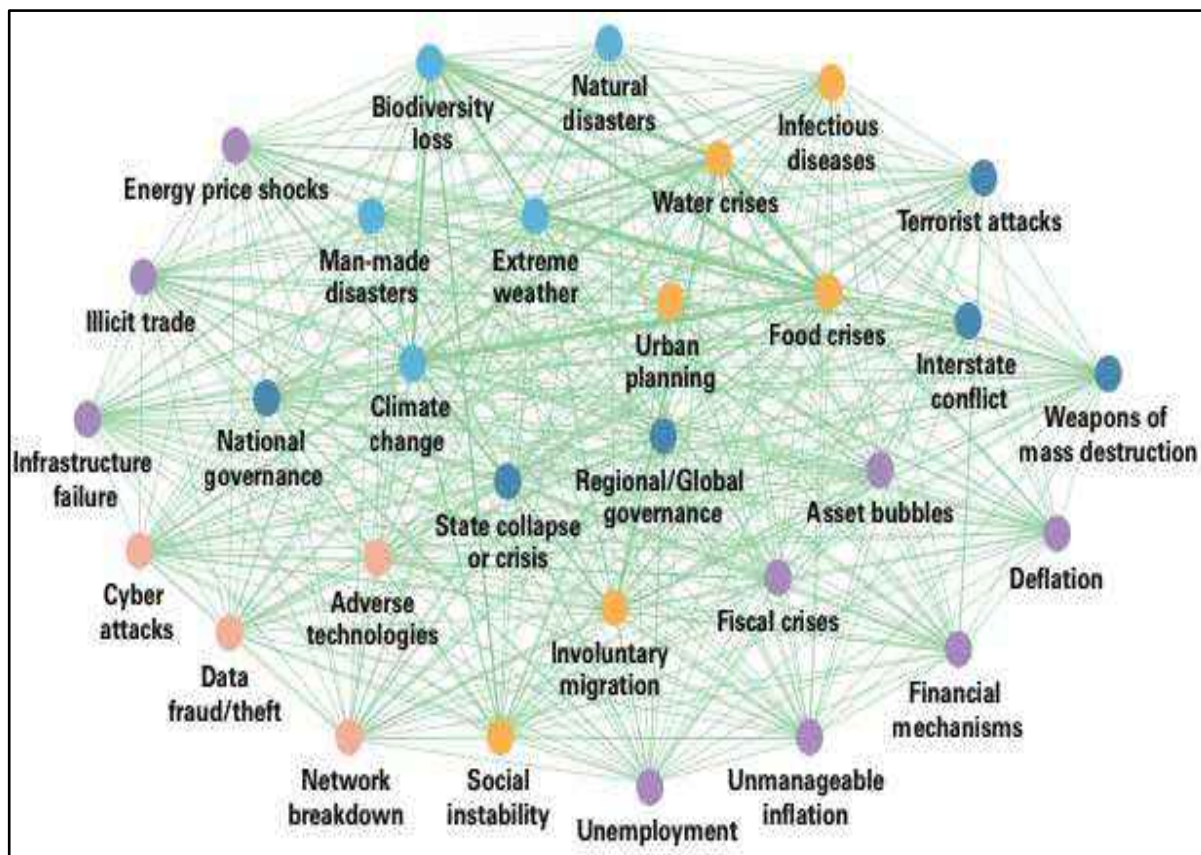
The report illustrates the challenge face by global citizenry from fires to food shortages that are the result of climate change. Report also inspire to bring transformable change. It also provides insight to move in a sustainable direction.



Key Highlights

- Relationship between Climate Change and Dormant political will:** This report has cited that many countries have not yet risen to the pledge in order to control climate change. Our response is not sufficient to halt climate change.
 - Political scenarios like Right-wing populism is on the rise around the world: a breed of politics that exploits people's fears during times of economic decline and growing inequality, and that focuses on nationalist tendencies to clamp down on borders and reject immigrants.
 - Climate change denialism is a thread that runs through many of the new right-wing nationalist and populist forces. The leaders of these right-wing populist forces are trying to dismantle or weaken multilateral organizations. For instance- the declining of United Nations or the European Union. These political groups threaten to derail progress on the global response to climate change.
- Interconnected web of Risks:** This report has highlighted the global risks which can create a cascade effect to shape a global systemic crisis. Five global risks that have the potential to impact and amplify one another like-failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation; extreme weather events; major biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse; food crises; and water crises.
- Marine Resource:** In future to avoid 'fish war', and ensure sustainable supply of food. Ocean should be remediated. Ocean plastic pollution has risen and mining of the sea level is about to become a reality. For these purposes the new United Nations treaty is under consideration.

- The report also highlighted-
 - The role of false news, social media and its impact on society.
 - Migration due to the political instability and climate change which trig demography led long-term challenges.
 - The aim of reducing carbon footprint and halting global warming below 2 degree Celsius by 2050.



- Extreme heat waves can accelerate global warming by releasing large amounts of stored carbon from affected ecosystems, and at the same time intensify water crises and/ or food scarcity.
- The loss of biodiversity also weakens the capacity of natural and agricultural systems to cope with climate extremes, increasing our vulnerability to food crises.

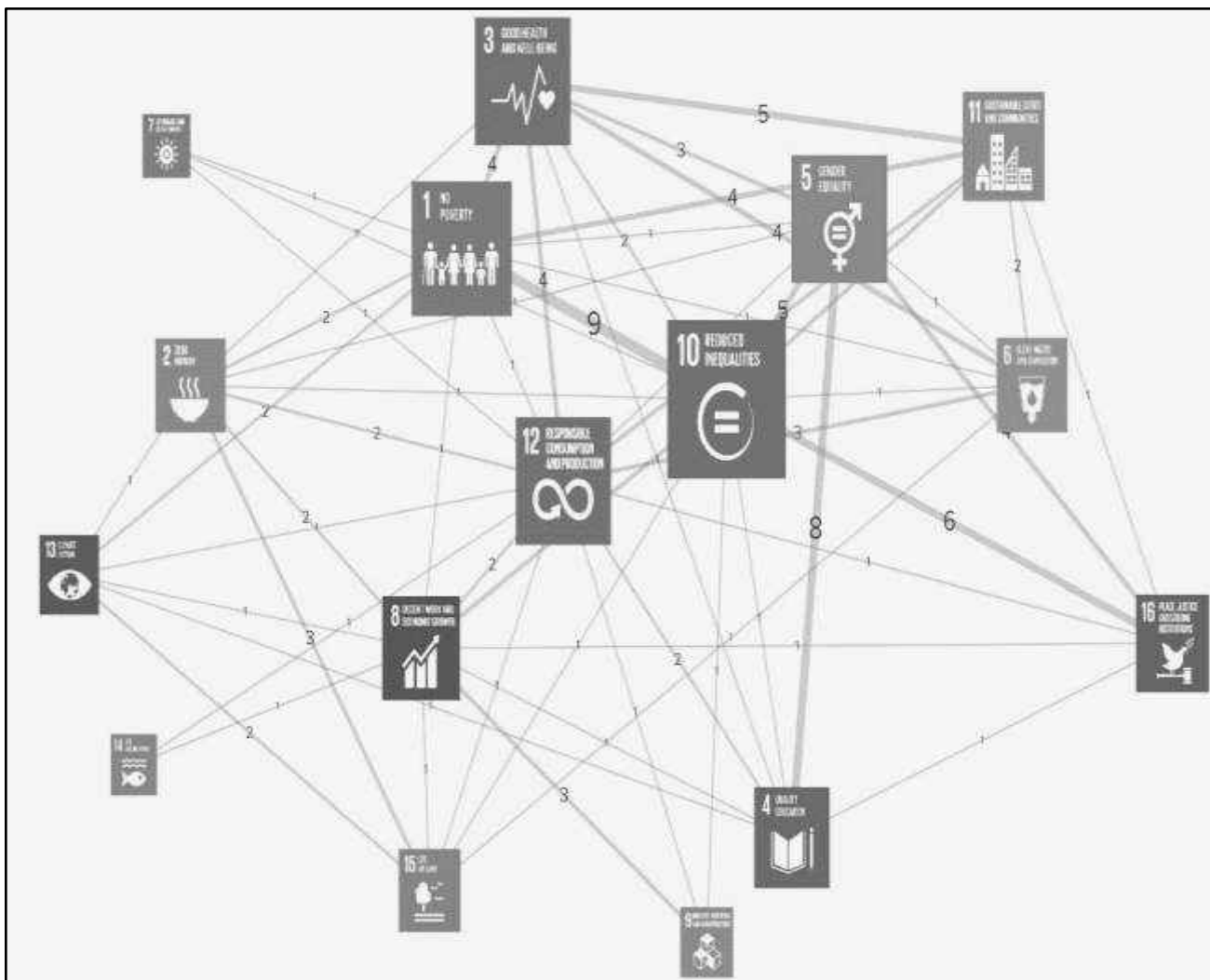
Analytica

- Most of the primary problems are the product of climate change which causes catastrophic damage to all ecosystems. For instance-Incidents of heat-waves cause food crisis and it gets worse in case of political instability.
- Secondary problems like political trends, lack of economic cooperation are co-inductive with primary problems to some extent. Adverse impact leads to economic losses.

Role of SDGs to endure Humanity

A Web of SDGs: SDGs are an interconnected web of sustainability that guide development balance in social, economic and environmental domain. The action in one area will affect outcomes in others **Further SDGs are only the 'interconnected solution' through 'integrated mechanism'** to avoid the risks analyzed in the report.

SDGs are designed to bring the world to several life-changing 'zeros', including zero poverty, hunger and minimal impact of climate change.



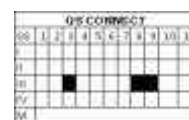
Conclusion

- ✓ The world is facing existential threats that demand steady action & vary from the climate crisis to the risk of nuclear war. There is a dire need to make a holistic and positive choice in order to secure our common future, and not retreat to dogma, failed policies, or defeatism.
- ✓ We should find sustainable development paths which ought to provide the impetus for a renewed search for multilateral solutions and a restructured international economic system of co-operation to make our planet habitat favourable for-ever.
- ✓ In order to avoid these threats and mobilize collective action, it will be imperative to engage different communities in dialogues on global risks and create a shared sense of risk.

'Muktoshri' Arsenic Resistance Rice

News Excerpt

The West Bengal government's rice research centre developed a new commercialized variety of rice called Muktoshri that can be grown in arsenic prone areas due to its resistant to arsenic.



Pre-Connect

- West Bengal is among the States with the highest concentration of arsenic in groundwater.
- Arsenic contamination has been envisaged as a problem of global concern in many countries like Taiwan, China, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal, USA but

Development of Flood and Drought Resistant Crops seed in India

The National Agricultural Research System (NARS) comprising Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural Universities has developed flood/drought tolerant crop varieties for different regions of the country. Several breed has been developed.

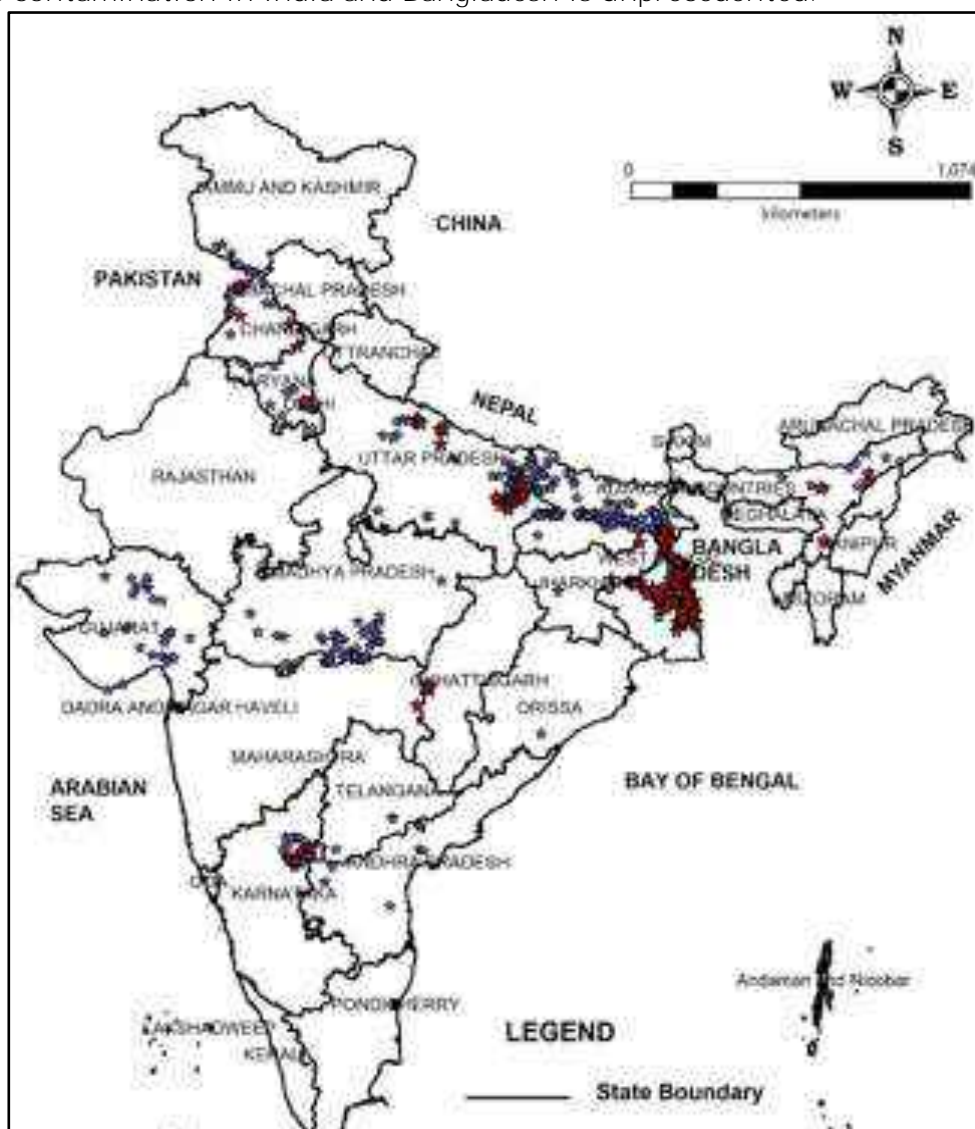
1. Deep water/submergence/ water logging tolerance- Rice, Maize, sugarcane and Jute
 2. Drought tolerance-Rice, Wheat, Maize, Sorghum, Pearl Millet, Barley, Chickpea Groundnut, Soybean, Sugarcane, Cotton, Jute.
- Bt. cotton is the only GM crop approved by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) in 2002 for commercial cultivation in the country.
 - Most of the countries are signatory to the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety which has well defined mechanism of regulation of Genetically Modified (GM) crops including bio-safety evaluation and environmental release. Further, acceptance of GM crops has increased at global level and area under GM crops increased from 1.7 Million hectare in 1996 to 191.7 Million hectares in 2018.

the severity of this contamination in India and Bangladesh is unprecedented.

- Arsenic is a naturally occurring trace element found in rocks, soils and the water in contact with them. Arsenic has been recognized as a toxic element and is considered a human health hazard.
- Long-term exposure to arsenic, mainly through drinking water and food, can lead to poisoning. Skin lesions and skin cancer are the most characteristic effects.

Features of New Rice variety

- The new rice variety, Muktoshruti (IET 21845), was developed jointly by the Rice Research Station at Chinsurah coming under



West Bengal's Agriculture Department and the National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow, over several years. A gazette notification for the commercial use of Muktoshrī was made by West Bengal last year.

- This variety uptakes very less amount of arsenic from soil and water in comparison to other varieties of rice. During field trial it was successful even in dry spells.

Arsenic Contamination in India

- ✓ The occurrence of Arsenic in ground water was first reported in West Bengal. The most affected areas are on the eastern side of Bhagirathi River. The occurrence of Arsenic in ground water is mainly in the aquifers up to 100 m depth. The deeper aquifers are free from Arsenic contamination.
- ✓ Apart from West Bengal, Arsenic contamination in groundwater has been found in the states of Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.
- ✓ The occurrence of Arsenic in the states of Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh is in alluvial formations but in the state of Chhattisgarh, it is in the volcanic rocks exclusively confined to N-S trending Dongargarh- Kotri ancient rift zone.

Effect of Arsenic on human health

- Long-term intake of arsenic contaminated water leads to arsenic poisoning or arsenicosis, with cancer of skin, bladder, kidney or lung or diseases of skin (colour changes, and hard patches on palms and soles), or blood vessels of legs and feet.
- Absorption of arsenic through the skin is minimal and thus hand-washing, bathing, laundry, etc. with water containing arsenic do not pose human health risks.

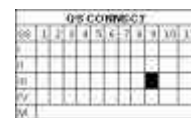
Alternative measures

- Uses of surface water sources
- Exploring and harnessing alternate arsenic free aquifers
- Removal of arsenic from groundwater using arsenic treatment plants/filters
- Adopting rainwater harvesting/ watershed management practices.

13 CoP on Convention on Migratory Species

News Excerpt

Recently, the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of the wild animals (CMS), an environment treaty under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, was hosted by India at Gujarat.



Pre-Connect

- In order to protect the migratory species throughout their range countries, a Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), has been in force, under the aegis of United Nations Environment Programme.
- Also referred to as the Bonn Convention, it provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats and brings together the States through which migratory animals pass, the Range States, and lays the legal foundation for internationally coordinated conservation measures throughout a migratory range.
- India has also signed Non-legally binding MOU with CMS on the conservation and management of Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008) and Raptors (2016).

The theme of CMS COP13 in India is, "Migratory species connect the planet and we welcome them home. **"The CMS COP 13 logo is inspired by 'Kolam', a traditional art form from southern India. In the logo of CMS COP-13, Kolam art form is used to depict key migratory species in India like Amur falcon, humpback whale and marine turtles.**

Highlights of the Convection

- The biggest threats for migratory species at risk of extinction are hunting, poaching, persecution and control.
- The Great Indian Bustard, the mascot for the COP-13 event, has seen a 90% decline in population since 1969 amid widespread poaching in neighbouring Pakistan.
- Ten new species were added to CMS at COP-13. Seven species were added to Appendix 1, which provides the strictest protection: the Asian Elephant, Jaguar, Great Indian Bustard, Bengal Florican, Little Bustard, Antipodean Albatross and Oceanic White-tip Shark.
- The Urial, Smooth hammerhead Shark and the Tope Shark were listed for protection under Appendix 2. The list covers migratory species that have an unfavourable conservation status and would benefit from enhanced international cooperation and conservation action.
- CMS COP 13 also adopted the Gandhinagar Declaration, which will send a message to the first negotiating session of the Open-ended working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework convening in Rome.

The COP also agreed on a number of cross-cutting policy measures to address threats to migratory species:

- Integrate biodiversity and migratory species considerations into national energy and climate policy and promote wildlife-friendly renewable energy.
- Strengthen initiatives to combat the illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory species.
- Address the unsustainable use of aquatic wild meat.
- Undertake a review of bycatch levels of sharks and rays, and further implement bycatch mitigation measures for marine mammals in national fishing operations.
- Deepen our understanding of the importance of animal culture and social complexity for the conservation of endangered species.
- To investigate possible trade in CMS Appendix 1 species and their conservation status.

Way Forward

Governments can do their part by taking a few key steps:

- ✓ Offer more attention and resources for the implementation of work already agreed by CMS parties. There are many exciting activities that have been approved by CMS already, including a study of illegal taking and killing of migratory birds that need more attention by the governments.
- ✓ Encourage critical non-member states to join CMS. At present, key countries along the EAAF and Americas flyways — namely the United States, Canada, China, Russia, Japan, and Indonesia — are not members. Conservation of migratory birds is at stake. The problems facing these flyways are daunting, but solvable. At CoP13, CMS gives us the opportunity to start reflecting on legal issues, and work together to make CMS an even stronger platform for

Migratory species are those animals that move from one habitat to another during different times of the year, due to various factors such as food, sunlight, temperature, climate, etc. The movement between habitats can sometimes exceed thousands of miles/kilometres for some migratory birds and mammals. A migratory route can involve nesting and also requires the availability of habitats before and after each migration.

National Action plan for conservation of migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway:

The Environment Ministry has launched the National Action Plan. The Action Plan emphasizes on coordinated effort of all the relevant stakeholders in conservation of migratory birds.

There are 20 Species of migratory birds which have been prioritized under the National Action plan in 2018.

Great Indian Bustard, is classified as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List 2019 and has been included in the CMS list in the 13th COP.

PEPPER IT WITH
Central Asian Flyway, EAAF,
Americas flyways and WCS

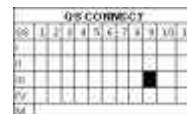
Parties and non-Parties.

- ✓ The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) works along the length of two critical flyways on either side of the Pacific Ocean — the Americas Flyway and the East-Asian Australian Flyway — looking for science-based solutions for conservation and sustainable coastal management issues.

'State of India's Birds 2020'

News Excerpt

At the ongoing UN 13th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) in Gujarat. The researchers have released a titled report 'State of India's Birds 2020', which highlighted that the bird population in India is on decline. More than 50 % of the Indian bird species have registered a decline over the last few decades.



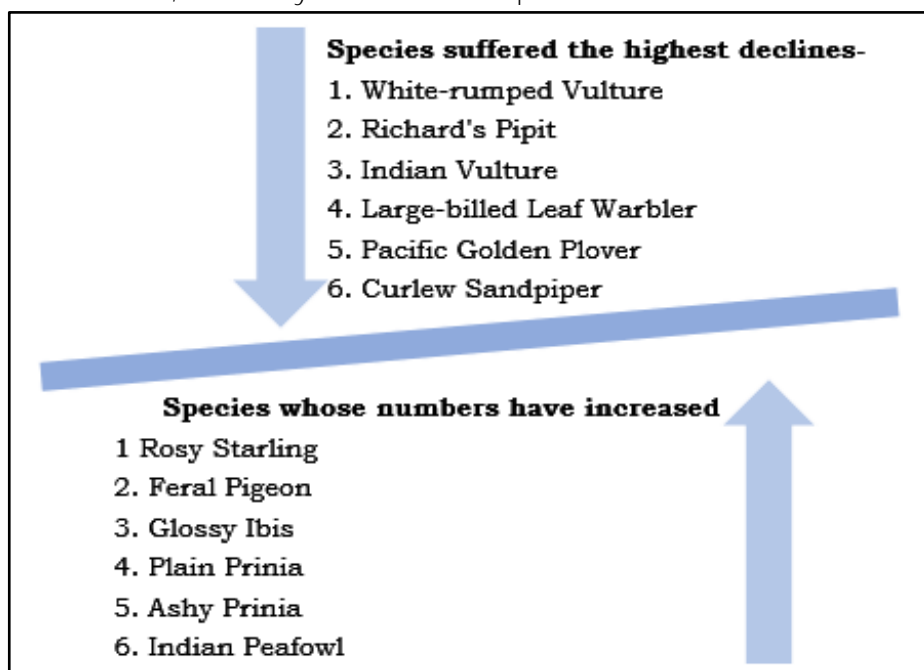
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Pre-Connect

- India has 8% of the known global biodiversity.
- India has diverse ecological habitats and also has four biodiversity hot spots. They are - the Eastern Himalayas, Western Ghats, Indo-Myanmar landscape and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- In addition, India is also home to around 500 species of migratory birds from across the globe. Conservation of wildlife and habitats has been a part of the cultural ethos of India, which encourages compassion and co-existence.

Major Findings

- The Great Indian Bustard (GIB), is being brought back from the brink. Having lost about 90% of its population during the last five-decade period.
- The findings were combined with the Red list of the IUCN and 101 species were categorised as **"high concern"**, 319 as **"moderate concern"** and 442 into **"low concern"**. Out of the species categorised as high concern, 26% are classified globally by IUCN as **"least concern"**.
- The local sparrow population was found to be roughly stable across the country as a whole, although it has fallen in the major cities.
- The population of migratory birds (both long distance and within the subcontinent) also showed a "steep decline".
- The report says that since the 1990s, the numbers of several species of vultures, bustards and other specialist grassland birds have also drastically dropped.
- The 12 Western Ghats endemics indicate a steep long-term decline. It is shown even by many common species like Crimson-backed Sunbird and Yellow-browed Bulbul.



Recently, the [flame-throated bulbul](#), also called the Rubigula, was chosen as the mascot of the 36th National Games to be held in Goa because it is the State bird.

- The report points out that the Indian vultures have experienced catastrophic population declines starting in the early 1990s. Inadvertent poisoning by the anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac is the prime reason for this decline.

Analytica

Reasons for drastic decline-

There are variety of reasons which attribute to the decline like-

- ✓ Growing threat from loss of habitat, widespread presence of toxins, and decrease in insect populations as well as nesting places, hunting and trapping by humans.
- ✓ Hunting and habitat loss are the two main reasons behind the decline. "Collision" with electricity lines is a prime current threat to birds.
- ✓ For the vast majority of Indian birds, lack of data has hindered a clear understanding of their faring pattern. Such an understanding is vital for conservation science, management and policy.
- ✓ There is no conclusive evidence on the effects of radiation from mobile phone towers on bird.

India's Effort: Indian government proposes a 10-year plan to protect birds and conserve their habitats. At least 1,317 bird species have been recorded in India.

H1N1

News Excerpt

Recently, six judges of the apex court of India were confirmed to be affected by Swine flu which is caused by the H1N1 virus.

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About Swine Flu

- It is a viral disease (highly contagious acute respiratory disease) also known as pig influenza, hog flu and pig flu.
- It is caused by swine influenza viruses (belonging to orthomyxovirus family) which are endemic to pigs.
- It is a subtype of Influenza A (H1N1) which affects humans the most.
- The virus contains glycoproteins haemagglutinin and neuraminidase. These perform two functions
 - The former clumps and binds red blood cells with virus in the infected cell.
 - Latter is a type of glycoside hydrolase enzyme which provides mobility to virus particles to move from one infected cell to another.
- Commonly it spreads with direct exposure to pigs, however, there have been instances of human to human spread.
- Its treatment includes anti-viral medication and Intravenous (IV) fluids.

PEPPER IT WITH
COVID-19, Zoonotic
Diseases, SARS, EBOLA, MERS

Pigmentary disorder

News Excerpt

Recently, studies on the problem of pigmentary disorders received a significant grant from Wellcome Trust/DBT India. This can help in solving the quagmire of pigmentary disorder.

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About Pigmentary Disorder

- Physiological pigmentation protects human skin from harmful UV radiations.
- An inefficient pigmentation process makes people prone to skin cancers.
- Major issue with this disorder is also the associated social stigma which affects the psychological well-being of the affected person.

How will the grant help?

- ☐ The current therapeutic strategies used in the alleviation of pigmentary disorders are not effective. The research would help in identifying the molecular components which regulates the

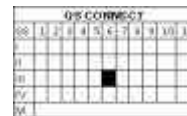
pigmentation process.

- ☐ It would also help in finding out commercially available drugs for treatment of such disorders thereby providing protection from UV-induced skin cancers.

Solar Orbiter Mission

News Excerpt

Recently, ESA (European Space Agency) and NASA launched the Solar Orbiter mission. The mission is said to be dedicated to solar and heliospheric physics.



Pre-Connect

- In 1990, NASA and ESA collaborated on a Sun mission known as Ulysses spacecraft.
- **The Spacecraft flew over the sun's poles and completed three passes before it ended in 2009.**
- The flaw with Ulysses spacecraft was its view was limited to the sun's equator.
- Solar Orbiter mission is a follow-up of Ulysses spacecraft.

About Solar orbiter

- ☐ It forms the part of the ESA Cosmic Vision 2015-2025 programme.
- ☐ **It will provide images of the sun's north and south poles.**
- ☐ It has a lifespan of 7 years and will come within 26 million miles of the sun.
- ☐ It will use a specially designed titanium heat shield coated with calcium phosphate to bear the heat of sun.
- ☐ **The mission will work in tandem with NASA's Parker Solar Probe.**
- ☐ Mission carries several objectives such as:
 - Examining the creation and controlling mechanism of heliosphere by the Sun.
 - In Situ and remote sensing observations of
 - ☐ Solar Winds
 - ☐ Heliospheric Magnetic field
 - ☐ Solar Energetic particles
 - ☐ **Sun's magnetic field**
 - ☐ Transient interplanetary disturbances
 - It will also examine various factors such as:
 - ☐ Source of coronal magnetic field
 - ☐ Driving force behind Solar winds
 - ☐ Heliospheric variability due to solar transients
 - ☐ Solar Eruptions and production of energetic particle radiation
 - ☐ Working of Solar dynamo

PEPPER IT WITH
Aditya L1, Parker Solar
Mission, Soho, SDO, Stereo

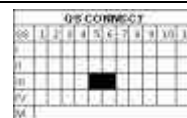
Importance of Solar Orbiter

- ✓ Study of the sun's magnetic field and solar wind will provide clear perception about space weather.
- ✓ Space weather impacts the satellites and astronauts on the International Space Station.
- ✓ Since the Sun's magnetic field is massive and provides a runway for solar winds to travel directly across the solar system, it can help in unraveling new information about our solar system.

SATHI

News Excerpt

Recently, The Department of Science & Technology (DST) has launched a new scheme known as Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institutions (SATHI). It is envisaged as a tool which will aid in building shared, professionally managed, and strong Science & Technology (S&T) infrastructure in the country.



About Scheme

- Under the scheme dedicated centers will be created which will house major analytical instruments to provide common services of high-end analytical testing.
- These Centres will follow an open and transparent policy in the matter of granting access for research.
- DST had so far established three centres viz. IIT Kharagpur, IIT Delhi and Banaras Hindu University.

PEPPER IT WITH
Nidhi, Digital India, Gyan
Network, Tara, Tiasn, Kiran

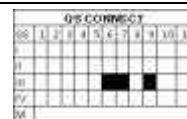
Benefits of Scheme

- It will help in eliminating the problem of accessibility of quality S&T infrastructure by academia, start-ups, manufacturing, industry and R&D labs etc.
- It will help in reducing the reliance on the foreign resources and machinery
- It will resolve the problem of redundancy and duplication of expensive equipment in the institutions, thereby saving money for maintenance.
- It will boost the practice of collaboration between institutions and across multiple disciplines to take advantage of developments, innovations and expertise in diverse areas.

Purified Terephthalic Acid (PTA)

News Excerpt

Government of India had decided to abolish the anti-dumping duty on imports of a PTA chemical. The reason cited for this step was larger public interest.



Pre-Connect

- PTA is a raw material used in polyester fabrics, around 70 to 80% of fabric and its component (such as staple fiber, spun yarn, sportswear, dresses, car seat etc.) production is based on it.
- Earlier, domestic PTA industry has complained about the cheap PTA (lower than manufactured in India) made available in the Indian markets due to foreign exports.
- To counter this dumping of PTA into the Indian market government imposed anti-dumping duty.
- However, the decision caused several negative impacts such as:
 - It reduced the competitiveness of the textile industry in India as the decision raised the production cost for polyester fabrics, thereby making them less attractive for their domestic and international buyers.
 - There was a surge in the import of polyester fabrics products while the exports declined.
 - There was also shortage of the raw material due to lesser capacity of domestic manufactures and shutdown of factories for maintenance.

Impact of decision

- It would allow for sourcing of raw material at affordable rates for domestic manufacturers from international markets.
- It would allow the textile industry to unlock its immense potential and generate employment.

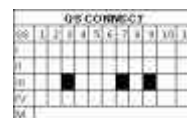
Locust Attacks

News Excerpt

In recent times, there have been major locust attacks in several countries in the western and southern Asia and in eastern Africa. The situation is extremely alarming in three regions – the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea area, and southwest Asia. The countries worst affected includes Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, Iran, Pakistan and India.

In India, it has affected border villages in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab – causing heavy damage to standing crop prompting state governments to sound high alert against locust attacks.

About Locusts



- They are a group of short-horned grasshoppers which have a swarming phase, it forms the part of the Acrididae family.
- Though they are usually solitary, in certain circumstances they become more abundant and gregarious.
- **Under normal circumstances, they don't affect agriculture, but in situations where there is rapid vegetation growth after a condition of drought, serotonin in their brains triggers a dramatic set of changes.**
- This situation causes abundant breed thereby making them gregarious and nomadic (or migratory).
- They form bands of wingless nymphs which later become swarms of winged adults. Both the bands and the swarms move around and rapidly strip fields and cause damage to crops.
- There are four species of locusts found in India these are:
 - Desert Locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*)
 - Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria*)
 - Bombay Locust (*Nomadacris succincta*)
 - Tree Locust (*Anacridium* sp.)
- They attack leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, bark and growing points, and also destroy plants by their sheer weight.
- The desert locust is most destructive, with a small swarm covering one square kilometer being able to consume the same amount of food in one day as 35,000 people.

Extent of Present Problems

- ☐ The present problem brings the reminiscence of the 1950s when this problem first occurred.
- ☐ In 2019, monsoon not only started before time but lasted a month extra. This situation created excellent breeding conditions for the locust. While at the same time good monsoon provided natural vegetation on which they could feed longer.
- ☐ State of Rajasthan is witnessing third generation of locust breeding which though is weak but breeds fast.
- ☐ In the month of October, 2019 peak infestation was reported in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- ☐ As natural vegetation dried out in December, the swarms got into cultivated areas and caused damage.
- ☐ Natural predators like birds do eat locusts but they are not enough to significantly reduce locust population level.

Climate Change and locusts

- ✓ Desert locusts thrive in the arid and semi-arid region. As the climate changes and temperature rises, locust swarms may cause more damage.
- ✓ Since, 20 of the fastest warming countries globally are in Africa, it is worst affected.
- ✓ Similarly, the wet weather in Horn of Africa due to Indian ocean dipole favors the multiplication of locust.

Countering the locusts

Direct Ways

- Use of organophosphate chemicals and aerial sprayers.
- Extend the research for biological and non-chemical control with focus on pathogens and insect growth regulators.

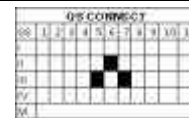
Indirect Ways

- There is need to deploy climate action solutions such as decentralizing solar dryers to agro-value chain actors can ensure that they can earn up to 30 times more by being able to preserve their harvest and sell during the offseason or gives them flexibility to compensate for unpredictable events such as these locust swarms.
- There is also a need to create enterprise opportunities for auxiliary value chains of fabricating these solar dryers. Interventions like this are critical to increase climate resilience for some of the most vulnerable communities across the continent.

Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP)

News Excerpt

Recently, the Department of Pharmaceuticals reiterated to the pharma companies to follow the Uniform code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP). This directive came in the wake of recent reports of widespread use of bribes and inducement by Pharma companies to the doctors to increase the sale of their products.



Pre-Connect

- India carries a huge potential in the pharmaceuticals sector. It is the largest provider of generic drugs accounting for 20 per cent of global exports in terms of volume.
- The Indian pharmaceutical market size is expected to grow to US\$ 100 billion by 2025.
- **Indian pharma's cost of production is about 33 percent lower than that of the US.**
- Labour costs are about 55 percent cheaper than the Western countries.
- India has the 2nd largest number of USFDA-approved manufacturing plants outside the US
- Pharma sector in India needs consolidation as it is highly fragmented.
- Indian Medical Association (IMA) and doctors are pushing for making UCPMP compulsory.

About UCPMP

- ☐ It is a voluntary code issued by the Department of Pharmaceuticals notified in 2015 to deal with the marketing practices of the Indian Pharmaceutical companies. The law is crucial for an industry that has nothing to regulate it—neither a law nor any guidelines.
- ☐ It is applicable on:
 - Pharmaceutical Companies
 - Medical Representatives
 - Agents of Pharmaceutical Companies which includes Distributors, Wholesalers, Retailers and **Manufacturers' Associations.**
- ☐ Major Provisions of the UCPMP includes:
 - It calls for putting an end to the pecuniary advantages and other benefits offered to people who prescribe or supply drugs by pharma companies or their agents. This includes any holiday or travel benefits offered in the name of being delegates.
 - It also provides for a free sample of drugs that can only be supplied to persons qualified to prescribe such product. There are also additional conditions in providing samples.
 - It calls for written contract in appointment of Medical Practitioners/HCPs as Affiliates and criteria for selecting affiliates must be directly related to the identified need.
 - It also provides for the number of affiliates retained must not be greater than the number reasonably necessary and must reflect the fair market value of the services provided.

Code of Medical Conduct (MCI)

Medical Council of India developed code of ethics for a doctor, which was last updated in 2002. These are legally enforceable group of laws. According to them:

- ❖ A physician cannot act as models in advertisement.
- ❖ It also bars a doctor from giving, soliciting or receiving any gift, gratuity, commission or bonus in consideration or return for the referring, recommending or procuring for any patient for the treatment.

Need of UCPMP

- ✓ The idea of pharma being a self-regulated industry didn't work out well. There are incidents where Doctors were found hand-in-glove with pharma companies which works negatively in the interest of patients (as they are forced to buy costly medicines).
- ✓ Moreover, there is no law to punish those guilty of unethical practice. There are a number of

challenges in Indian pharma industry when it comes to the arena of compliance.

- ✓ The industry is marred with fraudulent schemes which are deeply entrenched into the system and are mingled into the day-to-day operations and accounting practices employed in the industry.
- ✓ Owing to the complex manner in which these schemes operate, they remain concealed unless the substance of the activity is specifically analyzed.
- ✓ Various experts asked for immediate implementation of mandatory mechanism for company disclosures of payments towards doctors and professional bodies, including via third parties.

What can be done?

- Focus more on R&D and improving the development activities rather than marketing aspect.
- Doctors must be sensitized to adhere to the code of ethics and in case of violation appropriate punishment must be given.
- For pharmaceutical firms, there must be a legal code which is not only mandatory but also curbs the malpractices.
- There is also a need to develop a huge infrastructure for quality testing of generic drugs.

COVID-19

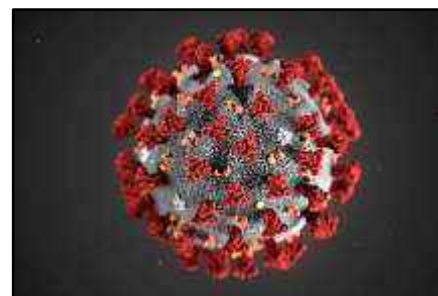
News Excerpt

Recently, a new virus named as novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV belonging to the Coronavirus family has claimed thousands of lives globally. The WHO has declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (global emergency) which was later changed into a Pandemic.

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Pre-Connect

- The “CO” in COVID stands corona, while “VI” is for virus and “D” for disease. The number 19 stands for the year 2019 when the outbreak was first identified.
- These are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface. “Corona” in Latin means crown.
- Its manifested symptoms may include fever, cough and shortness of breath.
- There are four common coronavirus that cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like common cold are:
 - 229E (alpha coronavirus)
 - NL63 (alpha coronavirus)
 - OC43 (beta coronavirus)
 - HKU1 (beta coronavirus)
- Coronavirus antibodies are also not effective as a person can catch the virus again in a few months.
- Coronavirus is a zoonotic disease (i.e. transmitted from animals) in the last few years, in the last few years world has seen various zoonotic diseases such as:
 - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)
 - SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) was identified in 2003. It was first infected humans in the Guangdong province of southern China in 2002.
 - It affected 26 countries and resulted in more than 8000 cases in 2003.
 - It transmits primarily from person to person.



Epidemic vs. Pandemic

OUTBREAK: A sudden rise in cases of a disease in a particular place.

EPIDEMIC: A large outbreak, one that spreads among a population or region. Covid-19 in China is considered an epidemic.

PANDEMIC: It is an epidemic that has spread on a more global scale, affecting large numbers of people. Generally, the WHO is looks out for sustained outbreaks on different continents before declaring an event as Pandemic.

- ❑ It shows symptoms similar to the influenza.
- ❑ No individual symptom or cluster of symptoms has proved to be specific for diagnosis of SARS.
- Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)
 - ❑ It was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012 and has since spread to several other countries.
 - ❑ It was caused by a virus known as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV).
 - ❑ Patients of MERS developed severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath.
 - ❑ Out of 10 about 3 or 4 patients with MERS reported fatality.
- Ebola outbreak in Africa: It spread to the humans from wild chimpanzees after those were killed and consumed.

About Novel Coronavirus

- ❑ Coronavirus (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from common cold to MERS and SARS.
- ❑ Antibiotics do not work against such viral pneumonia and there are no vaccines against them.
- ❑ Further, the virus is contagious even during incubation (even before a patient exhibits any symptoms), thus amplifying its transmissibility.
- ❑ However, this claim is refuted by the US scientist and they claim that the main driver of novel coronavirus transmission is people who exhibit overt symptoms. Such people will spread the virus more readily through coughing and sneezing.
- ❑ The median incubation period after infection is three days; the incubation period can also last more than three weeks as per one study.
- ❑ The antibody test can be used for detecting people infected with novel coronavirus but are asymptomatic or exhibit only mild symptoms. Two different antibody testing platforms (virus neutralization assay and ELISA assay) can be used to confirm past infection.
- ❑ Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:
 - The air by coughing and sneezing.
 - Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.

How WHO names a new Disease?

The name of a new disease should consist of a combination of terms. These terms consist of a generic descriptive term based on clinical symptoms (respiratory), physiological processes (diarrhoea), and anatomical or pathological references (cardic). It can refer to specific descriptive terms such as those who are afflicted (infant, juvenile, and maternal), seasonality (summer, winter) and severity (mild, severe). The name can also include other factual elements such as the environment (ocean, river), causal pathogen (coronavirus) and the year the new disease is first detected with or without mentioning the month.

Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)

- ❖ PHEIC is an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response.
- ❖ Such situations are generally:
 - Serious, sudden and unusual
 - Have implications beyond borders
 - Require immediate international action.
- ❖ PHEIC lead to boosting of public health measures, funding and resources to prevent and reduce global spread.
- ❖ In case of global emergency, all countries should be prepared for containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing and prevention of the onward spread of disease, and to share full data with WHO.

- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.
 - Rarely, fecal contamination.
- 2 Mapping the culprit:
- To counter the virus, the US had produced a 3D atomic scale map of the protein (spike (S) glycoprotein) of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that binds to and infects human cells.
 - This will allow scientists to develop vaccines and antivirals against the virus and even better diagnostics.
 - COVID-19 disease binds to the cellular receptor called angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2), which serves as the entry point into human cells with high affinity. This explains the high human-to-human transmissibility of the virus compared with the SARS coronavirus.
- Why China?

 - ❖ China is at centre of Covid-19 but it's not the first time, it happened earlier in the case of SARS-2002.
 - ❖ This happens because of Wuhan Wet market which offers wildlife.
 - ❖ China in 1970s was hit by huge famine owing to which the government gave control over the agricultural commodities.
 - ❖ Major Agri companies move into rearing of animal which are generally consumed such as pig, cock, etc. but few small farmers started serving wildlife such as snakes, turtle etc. which soon got government backing as it was feeding the people.
 - ❖ In 1980s, China amended the wildlife protection act and listed wildlife as resources owned by the state. This encouraged domestication of wildlife and also projected it as something human can benefit from.
 - ❖ Small farms turned into big industry and funneled into wet markets, also with this grew the illegal wildlife trade which included animals like pangolin, tiger etc.
 - ❖ After the outbreak of SARS which was traced back to Wet market, China banned these markets.
 - ❖ However, later it was lifted and the industry has grown over the year and now valued at \$140 billion.
 - ❖ **The majority of China doesn't consume wildlife, only minority of rich people consume it.**
 - ❖ China now need to take a firm action on wildlife wet markets.
- 2 Use of Convalescent plasma to counter COVID-19:
- **Chinese pharma's are using plasma taken from people who have recovered from the infection to treat critically ill patients.**
 - The same method was used when Ebola struck Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia in 2014.
 - The method has been used against measles, chickenpox, and rabies. In the case of rabies, it acts as passive immunization after dog bite and before disease develops.
- PEPPER IT WITH
H1N1, KFD, Zoonotic
Diseases, SARS, EBOLA, MERS,
Epidemic Act 1897

Is Novel Corona a Man-Made Disaster?

- ✓ According to WHO estimates there are millions of deaths occurring every year from zoonoses.
- ✓ Some 60% of new emerging infectious diseases globally are zoonoses. Over 30 new human pathogens detected over the last three decades out of which 75% originated in animals.
- ✓ This disturbing trend is linked with the close mixing of humans and animals, especially the unregulated handling of blood and other body products. This increases the chances of transmission of a virus from animals to humans.
- ✓ Globally, Animal markets are now acting as a breeding grounds as there is free interchange of pathogens between species and mutations.

Coronavirus in India

- There are multiple cases of the coronavirus reported in India with situations troublesome in Kerala.

- Incidentally, Kerala is also the state which dealt with the outbreak of Nipah virus, another zoonotic disease caused by fruit bat. However, the state machinery in Kerala reacted proactively and prevented the spread of the virus and Kerala was declared Nipah-free within a month.
- The screening is a big challenge as infected people do not show symptoms during the incubation period and hence thermal screening at airports and seaports will be unable to detect such cases.

What India needs to do?

- ☞ Strengthen the surveillance: The government needs to strengthen the present disease surveillance programme as various infectious diseases including those of the zoonotic variety are on the rise in India. Further, India always had seasonal outbreaks of dengue, malaria and influenza strains.
- ☞ Reduce the reliance on NIV (National Institute of Virology):
 - Though NIV is the only lab in India which has a biosafety level-4 (BSL-4) standards, reliance on it must be reduced and more private players be allowed in genome sequencing (it helps in understanding where the virus came from and how it spread) of viruses.
 - A prominent example of this is the Manipal Centre for Virus Research work in the incident of Nipah Virus.
 - The active involvement of private players is possible as due to presence of the latest sequencing equipment in many research labs the cost of sequencing falling, researchers are using genome sequences for genomic epidemiology.
- ☞ Capacity Building:
 - There is need to develop human technical expertise of Indian labs in the field of virology and epidemiology.
 - Also, India requires a comprehensive influenza surveillance system that disseminate surveillance data, and improve early response to influenza viruses with pandemic potential.

China-Pharma War

- ❖ As Coronavirus spreads far and wide there has been shortage of essential drugs to treat the victims of the virus in the European countries as well as in the USA.
- ❖ This is primarily due to China being a pharma production giant and to control the spread of virus it closed down the cities.
- ❖ The situation has again sparked debate over China being a hoarder of strategic resources and in any event of conflict it might deny access to drugs to its opponents.
- ❖ China has already done this by denying Japan access to Rare Earth Elements in backdrop of island dispute (Senkaku Islands / Diaoyudao Islands)
- ❖ India, on the other hand, though produce generic drugs is also depended on China for the raw material of those.
- ❖ This outbreak is the warning sign for the world to develop basic capability to ensure supply of essential drugs.

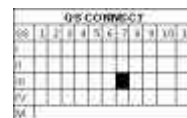
Yellow Rust

News Excerpt

Recently, there were reports from the parts of Punjab and Haryana that there has been a detection of Yellow rust in the wheat crop. This has raised concern regarding the yield of crop. It is linked to the recent rains coupled with increased temperature and humid conditions supporting the yellow rust.

About Yellow Rust

- It is a fungal disease also known as stripe rust.



Wheat Facts

- ❖ It is rabi crop i.e. sown in (October-December) and harvested from April onwards.
- ❖ It requires temperature between 10-15 degree Celsius during the sowing while 21-26 degree during harvesting with bright sunlight. The rainfall requirement is around 75-100 cm
- ❖ Major soil type of wheat lies in the Ganga-Sutlej plains and in the deccan i.e. fertile loamy and Black soil respectively.
- ❖ It is second most important cereal crop in Northern and north western India.
- ❖ China is the largest while India is the second largest producer of Wheat
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan are top 5 wheat producing states.

- It attacks the leaves of the wheat crop by restricting the photosynthesis and thereby causing shriveling of grain size.
- It is considered as the cool weather disease in the northern and north western region.

How to Counter?

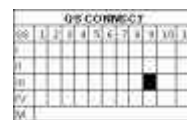
- ☐ There is need to develop varieties which are resistant to such phenomenon
- ☐ Further, the variants must be now effective and unlike the previous one must not be ineffective due to the acquisition of virulence to that particular resistance gene rendering the variety susceptible.

PEPPER IT WITH
Brown Rust, Black Rust, Blast Disease

Himalayan Wolves

News Excerpt

Recently, A study has found that Himalayan wolves, also called as Tibetan wolves, genetically distinct from grey wolves.



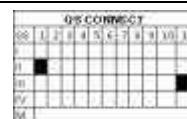
Important Facts

- These are found in the Tibetan Plateau of China, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.
- These wolves live in the high altitude and develop hypoxia adaptation.
- Such adaptations are seen in dogs and humans to mitigate the deleterious effects of free radicals that are produced in response to low oxygen availability.
- They fall under the Schedule 1, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and comes under the Appendix-1 of the CITES.

Prison Reforms by Supreme Court

News Excerpt

Recently, a Supreme Court panel provided several recommendations on the plaguing issue of status of prisons in India.



Pre-Connect

- Prison forms the part of State subject under the constitution of India.
- In 2018, the apex court had appointed a committee under the leadership of Justice Roy to look after multiple issues affecting the prison system in India.
- There are several problems prisons in India faces such as:
 - Overcrowding
 - Unnatural deaths
 - Inadequate and Un-trained staff
 - Unavailability of proper legal advice.
 - Higher rate of suicide in prisons- NCRB data suggests average rate is 50% more than

normal.

- Poor hygiene and sub-human living conditions
- Rampant violence and other criminal activities.
- Jails emerging as a University for grooming criminals.

Major Recommendations

- For every new prisoner, a free phone call to family member must be allowed in the initial first week.
- Modern cooking facilities
- Canteens for the purchase of essential items
- Speedy trial and Trial through video conferencing
- 30:1 prisoner-lawyer ratio
- Special Fast-track courts to deal with petty offences

PEPPER IT WITH
Mulla Committee, The Prison
Statistics India, Antarkranti,
Preventive detention

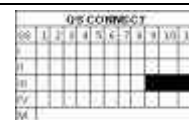
What can be done?

- There is need to bring structural reforms in order to address the issues of overcrowding and understaffing.
- Putting an end to the VIP cultures in the Jail as it makes them a heaven for politically connected criminals.
- Socio-economically disadvantaged undertrials must be provided with proper and appropriate legal guidance.
- There is also a need to sensitize the prison staff about the Fundamental rights of prisoners, for this both states and Centre needs to play a more pro-active role.
- A robust Whistleblower protection act is also the need of the hour.

Vadhavan Port

News Excerpt

Government of India had decided to set up a major port at Vadhavan near Dahanu in Maharashtra with a total cost of ₹65,545 crore. It will be built on the landlord model.



Pre-Connect

- Presently, there are 12 major ports in India
 - Deendayal Port (Earlier Known as Kandla Port), Gujarat
 - Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (biggest container port) (JNPT), Maharashtra
 - Mumbai Port
 - Vishakhapatnam Port, Andhra Pradesh
 - Chennai Port, Tamil Nadu
 - Mormugao Port, Goa
 - Kolkata Port, West Bengal
 - Pradip Port, Odisha
 - Tuticorin Port, Tamil Nadu
 - Cochin Port, Kerala
 - Ennore Port, Tamil Nadu
 - Panambur Port, Mangalore, Karnataka

Landlord Model

- ❖ In this model, ownership of the port rests with the publicly governed port authority while the operations are handled by private companies.
- ❖ In this model, Infrastructure is leased to private firms which provide and maintain their own superstructure.
- ❖ Private entities receive share of the revenue from the landlord.
- ❖ The role of landlord is limited to the public sector services such as award of bids for cargo terminals and dredging.

About Vadhavan Port:

- It will be 13th major port of India.
- It will be among the top 10 container ports in the world.

PEPPER IT WITH
Port Trust Board, Indian Ports
Association, Port Development
Plan, Article 364

- It will be constructed by formation of a special purpose vehicle with JNPT as the lead partner of 50% equity.

Significance

- Majority of the major ports in India work in the hybrid model of port governance.
- Under this model, therefore port trusts carry out terminal operation as well, this leads to a conflict of interest and against the objectivity.
- To boot competition, the component of neutrality is of utmost importance. It helps in assuring the fair competition between port service provider and the terminal operators.

BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise

News Excerpt

The second edition of the BIMSTEC disaster management exercise was conducted in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The focus of these exercise was on the protection of heritage structures.



Pre-Connect

- Disaster Management emerged as one of the key issues of discussion among the BIMSTEC member during the 2016 BRICS summit, where they were invited.
- Later in 2017, First edition of the exercise was organized which focused on the **region's preparedness and resilience**. It also focused on immediate deployment of regional resources for disaster response.

International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

- ❖ It is an Intergovernmental organization which was the outcome of UNESCO General Conference held in New Delhi in 1956.
- ❖ It was established in 1959 and India became its member in 1961
- ❖ It promotes the conservation of all forms of cultural heritage across the globe.
- ❖ Its operation is based on the UNESCO Universal declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001). The declaration calls for respect for the diversity and tolerance for international peace and security.

International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)

- ❖ It was established in 1991 as a global network under the UN umbrella.
- ❖ It deals with Urban Search and Rescue
- ❖ It sets minimum international standards for international coordination and response in the event of earthquake.

Key Highlights

- Except Bhutan and Thailand all BIMSTEC member participated in the exercise.
- The exercise also saw the participation of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration Cultural Property (ICCROM).
- The focus was on Heritage sites as these suffered serious damages in the recent earthquake in Nepal, while in India the same happened in 2001 Gujarat Earthquake. Therefore, it becomes an imperative to build the capacity of disaster response personnel.
- In India alone according to INTACH data there are close to 70,000 sites which have heritage value.

India Addressing Disaster Management

- ❖ India will establish an International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- ❖ India has improved its Disaster Risk Reduction efforts and hosted several exercises:
 - South Asian Annual Disaster Management Exercise (SAADMEx)
 - The Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR).
- ❖ India is also leveraging technology in management of Disaster through South Asia satellite, GSAT-9, and Tsunami Early Warning Centre

Significance


- It provides a platform for member states to evaluate existing capabilities
- It helps in improving emergence preparedness and strengthen regional response mechanisms.
- It helps in strengthening the multi-stakeholder's coordination in a disaster scenario involving players from international level to the local level.

PEPPER IT WITH
Humanitarian Assistance
and Disaster Relief (HADR),
CDRI, AMCDRR

Lucknow Declaration

News Excerpt

Recently, Government of India had organized a Defence Exhibition (DefExpo 2020) in Lucknow where first India-Africa Defence Minister's Conclave organized in which India and 50 African countries adopted "Lucknow Declaration".



Pre-Connect

- In 2015, during the India-Africa forum summit, India-Africa Framework for Strategic Cooperation led to cementing of multi-faceted partnership.
- India has contributed to the defence and security in African continent through setting up of Defence Academies and Colleges and deployment of training teams in several African Countries. India also provides defence equipment and ammunitions and Training programmes.
- India also participated in the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations such as during cyclone IDAI in Mozambique in 2019.
- In, 2019 first India-Africa field training exercises AFINDEX which will further strengthen cooperation in defence preparedness and security.
- India has participated in almost all the peacekeeping operations in Africa, along with many other African countries

Status of Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)

- ❖ India since 1996 had called for an intergovernmental convention to deal with International terrorism and enhance and prosecution and extradition of terrorists.
- ❖ However, there is no larger consensus among the global players over the adoption of terrorism convention.
- ❖ Discussions time and again had led to three major protocols which are:
 - International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted on 15 December 1997
 - International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted on 9 December 1999
 - International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, adopted on 13 April 2005.

Key Highlights

- On Peace and Security
 - It calls for conflict prevention, resolution, management and peacebuilding.
 - It also calls for increasing the participation of Women in peacekeeping.
- On Maritime Security
 - It calls for exchange of expertise and training for better Maritime cooperation.
 - It calls for strengthening regional and continental early warning capacities and mechanisms.
- On Terrorism

SAGAR

It is India's vision for the larger Indian Ocean. It includes elements such as:

- Safeguarding land and maritime territories. Addressing threats such as piracy and terrorism.
- Economic and security cooperation with littoral states.
- Capacity Building for better disaster management.

- It calls for taking resolute action against the menace of terrorism and root out all its forms and manifestations by eliminating its financing channels.
 - It also focused on halting the cross-border movement of terrorists.
 - It also urges the international community for the earliest adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the UNGA.
- On Indo-Pacific and SAGAR
- It calls for enhanced cooperation between India and Africa on the evolving concept of Indo-Pacific.
 - **It supports the India's vision of SAGAR** (Security and Growth for all in the Region) which is in tandem with the African Unions vision for peace and security in Africa.
- On UNSC
- It calls for ensuring strict compliance with UNSC sanctions regime on terrorism.

PEPPER IT WITH
Africa Peace and Security
Architecture, Silence the
guns in Africa, Agenda 2063

India-UK Joint Exercise



India-United Kingdom Joint Exercises

Indra Dhanush- Joint Air Force Exercise



- The Exercise was focused on the "Base Defence and Force protection". This was done as in recent times attacks on the military base has increased.
- It provides a platform for the both forces to share and jointly validate strategies and tactics to counter terror threats to their installations.
- The would help both forces to gain significantly from each other's operational experience, training philosophies, contemporary technologies and best practices followed.

Ajeya Warrior- Joint Military Exercise



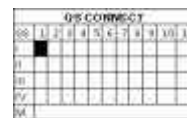
- Exercise can be termed as the shining example of long standing strategic ties between India and United Kingdom.
- The aim of exercise is to conduct training of troops in counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in both Urban and Semi Urban areas.
- Both the armies will also share their valuable experiences in countering such situations as also refine drills and procedures for joint operations wherever the need so arises.

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Kumbhabhishekam at Brihadeshwar Temple

News Excerpt

The 'kumbhabhishekam' (consecration) of the 1,010-year-old Brihadeshwar Temple was held after 23 years. This event was preceded by a dispute over the language to be used to conduct this auspicious ceremony which was settled by the Madras High Court. Consecration ceremony is generally performed when new idols are installed in a Temple. The kumbhabhishekam or sprinkling of holy water, marks the end of the ritual.



Pre-Connect

- The Great Living Chola Temples were built by kings of the Chola Empire. The UNESCO site includes three great 11th and 12th century Temples: the Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur, the Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikondacholisvaram and the Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram.
- The most impressive aspect of the Brihadeshwara temple is its vimana, which reaches to a height of sixty meters. The huge shikhara top the vimana is believed to weigh more than eighty tons.
- The Temple of Gangaikondacholisvaram, is famous for its bronze sculptures including that of Bhogasakti and Subhramanya.
- The Airavatesvara temple complex at Darasuram features a 24-m vimana and a stone image of Shiva. The front mandapa known in the inscriptions as Rajagambhiran tirumandapam, is unique as it was conceptualized as a chariot with wheel.

Chronology of the Great Living Chola Temples

Brihadeshwar Temple at Thanjavur
(By Chola King Rajaraja I (985 – 1020 CE))



The Brihadisvara temple at
Gangaikondacholapuram
(By Rajendra I (1012-1044 CE))



The Airavatesvara temple at
Thanjavur
(by the Chola king Rajaraja II
(1143-1173 CE.))

About Brihadeshwar temple at Thanjavur

- Known in the inscriptions as Dakshina Meru, the construction of this temple was inaugurated by the Chola King, Rajaraja I (985-1012 CE).
- The temple walls are embellished with exquisite mural paintings. Eighty-one of the one hundred and eight karanas, poses in Baharatanatya, are carved on the walls of the temple.
- There is a shrine dedicated to Amman dating to 13th century. Shrines were also added by Nayak and Maratha rulers.
- The temple is completely made of granite.

PEPPER IT WITH
Article 25, Dravidian temple
architecture, Essential Religious
practices doctrine, Indian *Young
Lawyers' Association v. State of
Kerala* case;

Analytica

- ✓ The struggle for supremacy between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions over the use of language to chant mantras during the ceremony ultimately took the matter to the court.
- ✓ A section of society had earlier demanded that it be held in Tamil, while 'Hindu Temple Protection Committee' insisted on continuance in Sanskrit as per existing practice.
- ✓ After a representation from Tamil groups, Government wanted that the ceremony be held in both Sanskrit and Tamil.
- ✓ 'Hindu Temple Protection Committee' moved a writ petition in Madras High Court to check "government interference" in traditional rituals. They argued that this will amount to taking away the right to profess religion guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution of India.
- ✓ The Madras High Court agreed with the state government's affidavit that the ceremony should be in both Sanskrit and Tamil.

Conclusion

For flourishing of one culture, perishing of another is not necessary. As the court judgments shows, peaceful coexistence of multiple cultures in a diverse society like ours is possible if they respect each other and equal opportunity is given to all to flourish.

Hampi

News Excerpt

Supreme Court backs move of Karnataka government to demolish restaurants near Hampi site for violation of the Mysore Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 1961. Previously, the Karnataka High Court had held that the Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority (HWHAMA) was empowered to order the demolition of the illegal buildings.

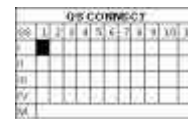
Also, ASI is planning to install barricades around famed stone chariot at Hampi to protect it from vandalism.

About Hampi

- Hampi was the last capital of the Vijayanagar empire (14th – 16th century AD) and is located at the bank of Tungabhadra river.
- The first capital of the Vijayanagar Empire was Aneundi which is also situated on the bank of river Tungabhadra.
- By 1500 CE, Hampi-Vijayanagara was the **world's second-largest medieval-era city after Beijing, and probably India's richest** at that time, attracting traders from Persia and Portugal
- Group of Monuments at Hampi is a UNESCO world heritage site.
- Virupaksha Temple is the oldest and the principal temple in Hampi with its inception in the 7th Century AD.
- The Vittala Temple in Hampi was built in 15th century AD. It is famous for its large stone chariot (which is also used in Konark and Mahabalipuram temples). Another feature of the Vittala Temple is the 56 musical pillars also known as SaReGaMa pillars. If these pillars are tapped gently, one can actually hear the musical notes. The Vittala temple represents the culmination of Vijayanagara temple architecture with associated buildings like Kalyana Mandapa and Utsava Mandapa.
- The Krishna temple complex, Narasimha, Ganesa, Hemakuta group of temples, Achyutaraya temple complex, Pattabhirama temple complex, Lotus Mahal complex are other important sites. The Raya Gopura, introduced first in the temples attributed to Raja Krishna Deva Raya, is a landmark all over South India.
- Most of the structures at Hampi are constructed from local granite, burnt bricks and lime mortar. The stone masonry and lantern roofed post and lintel system were the most favoured construction technique. The roofs have been laid with the heavy thick granite slabs covered with a water proof course of brick jelly and lime mortar.
- Vijayanagara architecture is also known for its adoption of elements of Indo Islamic **Architecture in secular buildings like the Queen's Bath and the Elephant Stables, representing** a highly evolved multi-religious and multi-ethnic society.

Some recent additions to UNESCO world heritage site list

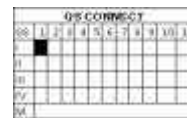
- ❖ Rani-Ki-Vav at Patan, Gujarat (2014)
- ❖ Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (2014)
- ❖ Archaeological Sites of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda Bihar (2016)
- ❖ Khangchendzonga National Park (2016)
- ❖ The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier (2016)
- ❖ Historic City of Ahmedabad (2017)
- ❖ Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (2018)
- ❖ Jaipur City, Rajasthan (2019)



KiLiki Language

News Excerpt

Lyricist Madhan Karky, the man behind the KiLiki language has launched a website to mark International Mother Language Day (February 21). This will help **anyone learn the “world’s easiest language”**.



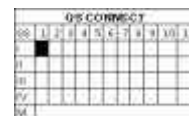
About KiLiki

kiLiki is a language created by lyricist Madhan Karky in 2013 for the Indian blockbuster Baahubali. Started as a fictional language, now kiLiki has evolved into a language with script grammar and more than 3000 words. KiLiki is designed to be a minimalistic language using minimum number of symbols to cover maximum sounds. KiLiki alphabet comprises of 22 symbols.

Kambala

News Excerpt

Two Kambala jockeys gained prominence and were compared to Usain Bolt after finishing 100m in around 9.5 seconds. Although many have argued that it is wrong to compare two sports.



Pre-Connect

It is a traditional buffalo race in paddy fields and generally takes place in coastal Karnataka (Udupi and Dakshina Kannada) from November to March. Traditionally, running buffaloes through the fields was used to thoroughly churn the soil, before sowing. It is also observed as thanksgiving to gods for protecting the animals from diseases.

Analytics

- Animal activists have criticized the sport arguing that Kambala involves acts of cruelty on animals which are not physiologically suited for racing and they run in the race due to fear of being beaten. Thus, it violates the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960. The Act prevents practices which involve unnecessary pain to the animal amounting to cruelty.
- The Supreme Court had banned jallikattu, bullock-cart races, and kambala events in its judgement on May 7, 2014. The judgement upheld that the Constitution of India read with legislation under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, provided that animals should be treated with compassion and dignity and be free from unnecessary pain and suffering.
- Various organizations of Karnataka opposed the ban based on various reasons.
- It was argued that traditional sports like Kambala helps in preserving and promoting traditions and culture.
- Kambala also plays vital role in ensuring survival and continuance of native breeds of cattle.
- The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance, 2017 approved the organising of kambala event, provided steps are taken to avoid cruelty to the participating bulls.

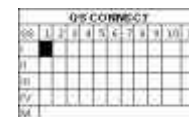
Conclusion

There must be balance between tradition and modern concepts like Animal rights. Need is to find a middle way which allows tradition while enforcing modern rights. 2017 Ordinance did just that.

Konark Sun temple

News Excerpt

ASI is preparing a plan to restore and preserve the nearly 800-year-old Konark Sun Temple in Odisha. In 1903, it was filled with sand by the British to prevent the structure from collapsing.



About Konark Sun Temple

- It is a 13th-century CE Sun temple attributed to king Narasinga Deva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.

- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Also called the Surya Devalaya, it is a classic illustration of the Odisha style of Architecture or Kalinga Architecture. It is also known as black Pagoda.
- Once over 200 feet (61 m) high, much of the temple is now in ruins, in particular the large shikara tower over the sanctuary; at one time this rose much higher than the mandapa that remains.
- The structures and elements that have survived are famed for their intricate artwork, iconography, and themes, including erotic kama and mithuna scenes.

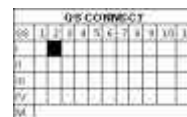
Some other Sun Temples in India

- ❖ Sun Temple, Modhera (Gujarat): Built during rule of Bhima I of the Chalukyan Dynasty in 1026-27 CE.
- ❖ Sun Temple, Martand (Jammu and Kashmir): Built during rule of Karkota dynasty in the 8th century.

Guru Ravidas

News Excerpt

Sant Ravidas Jayanti was celebrated on February 19th. This year is said to be the 642nd birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas.



About Guru Ravidas

- Guru Ravidas was a saint in the era of bhakti movement who is believed to be born in 1377 C.E.
- **His birthplace in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi** has now been named Shri Guru Ravidas Janam Asthan and has become a major place of pilgrimage for the followers of Guru Ravidas.
- **He belonged to a (so called) "untouchable" caste.**
- The saint chose to focus on spiritual pursuits and also penned several devotional songs which made a huge impact in the Bhakti movement during the 14th to 16th century CE

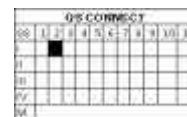
Teachings of Guru Ravidas

- Guru Ravidas spoke against the caste divisions and spoke of removing them to promote unity.
- He taught about the omnipresence of God and said that a human soul is a particle of God and hence rejected the idea that people considered lower caste cannot meet God.
- He said in his teachings that the only way to meet God was to free the mind from the duality.
- The Adi Granth of Sikhs, in addition to the Panchvani (of Dadupanthis) contains some of his compositions.
- His teachings resonated with the people, leading to a religion being born called the Ravidassia religion, or Ravidassia Dharam based on his teachings.

Dara Shikoh

News Excerpt

The Ministry of Culture has set up a seven-member panel of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), to locate the grave of the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh (1615-59). **He is believed to be buried somewhere in the Humayun's Tomb complex in Delhi.**



Pre-Connect

- He was the eldest son of Shah Jahan and was killed in 1659 after losing the war of succession against his brother Aurangzeb. According to the Shahjahannama, after Aurangzeb defeated Dara Shikoh, he brought the latter to Delhi in chains. His head was cut off and sent to Agra Fort, while his torso was buried in the Humayun's Tomb complex.
- **No one knows where exactly Dara Shikoh was buried. All that is known is that it's a small grave in the Humayun's Tomb complex.** Italian traveller Niccolao Manucci gave a graphic description of the day in Travels of Manucci, as he was there as a witness to the whole thing. That is the basis of the thesis.
- **He is often described as a "liberal Muslim" who tried to find commonalities between Hindu and Islamic traditions.** He translated Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads ('Sirr-i-Akbar' or 'The

Greatest Secret') into Persian.

- French traveller, Francois Bernier, was briefly physician to Dara Shikoh.
- He is said to be deeply syncretic, warm-hearted and generous but at the same time, an indifferent administrator and ineffectual in the field of battle.

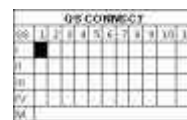
About Humayun's Tomb, Delhi:

- Humayun's Tomb was built in the 1560's, with the patronage of his son Akbar. It is an example of the Charbagh (a fourquadrant garden with the four rivers of Quranic paradise represented), with pools joined by channels.
- The mausoleum itself stands on a platform and has an irregular octagon plan with four long sides and chamfered edges. It is surmounted by a 42.5 m high double dome clad with marble flanked by pillared kiosks (chhatris). The domes of the central chhatris are adorned with glazed ceramic tiles. The structure is of dressed stone clad in red sandstone with white and black inlaid marble borders.
- The tomb is located near the Shrine of the 14th century Sufi Saint, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Since it is considered auspicious to be buried near a saint's grave, the area has become the 'dormitory of the Mughals' as in the cells are buried over 150 Mughal family members.
- UNESCO's world heritage site, it is the first of the grand dynastic mausoleums; and set a precedent for subsequent Mughal architecture. It is seen as a clear departure from the fairly modest mausoleum of his father, the first Mughal Emperor, Babur, called Bagh-e Babur (Gardens of Babur) in Kabul (Afghanistan).

Surajkund International Crafts Mela

News Excerpt

34th Surajkund International craft mela was organized in Surajkund, Faridabad (Haryana) from 1st to 16th February 2020. Himachal Pradesh is the 'Theme State' and Uzbekistan is the 'Partner Nation' for the Year 2020.



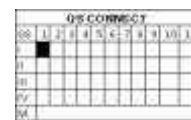
About Surajkund Mela

- The Surajkund Mela is unique as it showcases the richness and diversity of the handicrafts, handlooms and cultural fabric of India, and is the largest crafts fair in the world.
- It is organized by the Surajkund Mela Authority & Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.
- It was initiated in 1987 to promote the pool of skilled artisans, who used indigenous technology, but were suffering due to the cheaper machine-made imitations.
- Surajkund, the place where it is held, is named after Surajkund lake which according to Bardic traditions was built by Tomar dynasty king Suraj Pal (son of Anang Pal I) in the 10th century.

Rakhigarhi

News Excerpt

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the government's plan to fund 5 on-site museums, including the under-construction museum initiated by the Haryana government at Rakhigarhi. Other sites mentioned in the Budget — Hastinapur in Uttar Pradesh, Shivsagar in Assam, Dholavira in Gujarat and Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu.



Pre-Connect

- The site of Rakhigarhi is one of the biggest five known townships of Harappan civilisation on Indian subcontinent; besides Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Ganveriwala in Pakistan and Dholavira in India.
- It is a 5,000-year-old site that showcases continuity from the Harappan age to the present times. The village also has havelis that are a couple of hundred years old. It was excavated by Amarendra Nath, former director of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), in 1997. The ASI team unearthed a fire altar, parts of a city wall, drainage structures as well as a hoard of semi-

precious beads.

- In May 2012, the Global Heritage Fund, declared Rakhigarhi one of the 10 most endangered heritage sites in Asia.
- It is one of the sites from mature Harappan phase.

Recent findings

Recent study of DNA from skeletal remains excavated from the Harappan cemetery at Rakhigarhi negates the theory of the Harappans having Steppe pastoral or ancient Iranian farmer ancestry. For details see current connect- September 2019.

Mature Harappan phase

- ❖ The Early Harappan Phase from 3300 to 2600 BCE; the Mature Harappan Phase from 2600 to 1900 BCE; the Late Harappan Phase from 1900 to 1300 BCE
- ❖ Some important mature Harappan sites are: Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Chanhudaro (Arranged in North to South order; All in Pakistan);
- ❖ Rakhigarhi, Banawali, Kalibangan, Dholavira, Lothal (Arranged in North to South order; All in India)
- ❖ Several typical features which are associated with the Mature Harappan phase are city and town, town planning, mud brick and burnt brick houses, script, long-distance trade, cubical weight, seals, brick ratio, ceramics shape, water management system (proper drainage) and specialization in art and craft.

Miscellaneous

Earth's Second Moon or Mini Moon (2020 CD3)

- ♣ Earth has only one natural satellite called Moon which orbits around it. However, astronomers associated with the Catalina Sky Survey discovered the mini moon orbiting the Earth.
- ♣ It is an asteroid approximately the size of a small car, probably originating in the asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.
- ♣ As the asteroid tried to zoom past the Earth, the planet's gravity pulled it close. It became a moon thus.
- ♣ However, 2020 CD3 is a temporarily captured object which will eventually escape out of Earth's orbit. First mini moon observed by the Survey in 2006, has already escaped from Earth's orbit.
- ♣ The Catalina Sky Survey, a NASA-funded project in Arizona, is designed to study "Near Earth Objects" which could potentially hit the planet if they get too close.



Kala Kumbh

- ♣ "Kala Kumbh - Handicraft Thematic Exhibition" is being organized by the Ministry of Textiles. Exhibition is being organized to promote Geographical Indicator (GI) crafts and heritage of India. It is planned in major cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.
- ♣ The GI tag is given to products of a specific geographical location or origin with certain unique quality which is attributable to its geographical origin. Such exhibitions will create awareness of the rich heritage of the country. It will also increase sale of handicraft products and contribute to the livelihood security of artisans.
- ♣ The exhibition is sponsored by Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH). EPCH was established under Companies Act and is a non-profit organisation, with an object to promote, support, protect, maintain and increase the export of handicrafts.

Henneguya Salminicola

- ♣ Henneguya Salminicola is a parasite which lives inside the muscles of salmon and other fish.
- ♣ Researchers at Tel Aviv University (TAU), Israel discovered that this microscopic cousin of

jellyfish has no mitochondria.

- ♣ Mitochondria is known as the powerhouses of the cell. It makes use of oxygen to supply energy to the cell.
- ♣ Absence of mitochondria means that Henneguya Salminicola does not use oxygen for respiration. Its source of energy remains mysterious.
- ♣ **This discovery violates one of science's assumptions that all animals use aerobic respiration.**
- ♣ Some other organisms e.g anaerobic bacterias like Actinomyces, Bacteroides, Clostridium that are found in anaerobic environments also do not use oxygen. We also have examples of anaerobic fungi and amoeba. But this is the first time an anaerobic animal has been found.

Bengal Eastern Regulation Frontier (1873)

- ♣ The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations (BEFR), 1873 provides for The Inner Line Permit system (ILP).
- ♣ Inner Line Permit is an official travel document that is issued by the concerned state government to allow travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area in a state for a limited period.
- ♣ This was first framed by the British regulating the entry of outsiders in designated areas to protect Crown's commercial interest in those areas. Later, in 1950 Indian Government continued with the ILP to protect the interests of the indigenous people.
- ♣ Recently, the President of India amended the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations (BEFR), 1873 by using powers given under clause (2) of Article 372 of Indian Constitution. By this amendment, BEFR and hence ILP has been extended to Manipur also.
- ♣ This will ensure that provisions of Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 will not be applicable to Manipur as well in addition to Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram where BEFR were already applicable.
- ♣ Sixth schedule areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram have also been kept outside the ambit of CAA, 2019.

What is SyRI-and Identification Mechanism

- ♣ In a first anywhere in the world, a court in the Netherlands stopped a digital identification scheme called SyRI (System Risk Indicator). The Court cited exclusion, data privacy and human rights concerns as the reason behind this verdict.
- ♣ The court ruled that while using new technology to control fraud was acceptable, SyRI was too invasive and violative of the privacy guaranteed under EU laws and regulations.
- ♣ SyRI (System Risk Indicator) was developed by the Dutch government. It was done to prevent abuse of government benefits by using an algorithm to identify people who were most likely to commit fraud and receive government benefits.
- ♣ Government shared personal data about welfare recipients like taxes, vehicle registration, land record etc with a private company who analyzed that data and calculated risk scores. People with high risk scores could be investigated further.
- ♣ This mechanism was selectively applied in low-income and immigrant neighbourhoods.
- ♣ Civil society groups and NGOs moved to court alleging that the algorithm would begin associating poverty and immigrant statuses with fraud risk.
- ♣ The court found that opaque algorithmic decision-making puts citizens at a disadvantage to challenge the resulting risk scores.

SUTRA-PIC India

- ♣ Government has started an inter-Ministerial funding program called Scientific Utilization through Research Augmentation Prime Products from Indigenous Cows" (SUTRA-PIC India) to research on "indigenous cows" and their products (like milk and ghee) for various medicinal, nutritious and agricultural uses.
- ♣ Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of Ayush, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy along with many national institutions like Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR),

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) are collaborating to ensure full utilization of benefits of indigenous cows.

- ♣ Under this program funding will be provided to scientists/ academicians from Research Institutions, Academics, Grassroots Organizations and so on to carry out R&D work, technology development linked to capacity building at local level.

ICoSDiTAUS-2020

- ♣ The two-day International Conference on Standardisation of Diagnosis and Terminologies in Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha Systems of Medicine (ICoSDiTAUS-2020) was held in New Delhi.
- ♣ The Conference was jointly organized by the Ministry of AYUSH and the WHO.
- ♣ The event was dedicated to standardisation of Diagnosis and Terminologies of Traditional Medicine.
- ♣ The sixteen countries which participated included Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Serbia, Curacao, Cuba, Myanmar, Equatorial Guinea, Qatar, Ghana, Bhutan, Uzbekistan, India, Switzerland, Iran, Jamaica and Japan.
- ♣ **The conference concluded with adopting the “New Delhi Declaration on Collection and Classification of Traditional Medicine (TM) Diagnostic Data”.**

ERONET and ECI

- ♣ ERONET (Centralized Software for Electoral Roll Management and Form Processing) is a web-based system for Electoral officials, in 14 languages and 11 scripts, to handle all processes related to maintaining electoral roll.
- ♣ It automates the process of electoral roll management starting from elector registration. ERO-Net application is available pan India, to all citizens of India for enrollment/corrections/migration from Electoral Roll.
- ♣ The citizens now do not need to visit any election offices for any electoral process. Therefore, considerable reduction of time.
- ♣ It is also expected to resolve the issue of the existence of multiple entries for the same elector.

Hunar Haat

- ♣ Hunar haat is a skill fare organized by the Ministry of Minority affairs across various cities in India. Recently it was organized in the lawns of India Gate, New Delhi.
- ♣ Artisans, including women artisans, from across the country showcase their skills at Hunar Haat. **It has proved to be a “Mega Mission” of economic empowerment of needy master artisans and craftsmen.**
- ♣ This will result in employment opportunities to lakhs of artisans and craftsmen and people associated with them.
- ♣ **The central Government has also sanctioned 100 “Hunar Hubs” in different parts of the country.** These hubs will provide training to master artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts according to modern needs.
- ♣ All these initiatives will also provide international recognition to the country's traditional legacy of arts and crafts.

Apiary on wheels

- ♣ **“Apiary on Wheels”, is a unique concept designed by The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for the easy and cheaper upkeep and migration of Bee Boxes having live Bee colonies.** It is a platform which can carry 20 Bee Boxes from one place to another without any difficulty.
- ♣ With a connected solar powered fan to control temperature and sugar drips to feed bees, this innovative mechanism keeps bees alive in extreme summer.
- ♣ The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- ♣ It is entrusted with responsibility to promote khadi and other village industries in the rural areas to achieve wider objectives of creating self-reliance amongst the poor and building up a

strong rural community spirit.

School Health Ambassador Initiative

- ♣ School Health Programme is an initiative under Ayushman Bharat scheme, jointly rolled out by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- ♣ The School Health Ambassador initiative is an integral part of this programme.
- ♣ **Two teachers from each school, preferably one male and one female, will be selected as “School Health Ambassador”. They will teach students about the importance of health and preventive healthcare by organising culturally sensitive activity based sessions for one hour per week for 24 weeks in a year.**
- ♣ The first phase of implementation will be in all the public upper primary, secondary and senior secondary schools of aspirational districts. Subsequently, remaining districts will be taken up in the second year.
- ♣ The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has developed 24-hour curriculum, training materials for training of these ambassadors.

2 billion Kilometres to Safety Initiative

- ♣ **“2 billion kilometers to safety” initiative is a global campaign initiated by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).** It invites people to act in solidarity and run, walk or cycle to achieve a cumulative total of two billion kilometres.
- ♣ This is aimed to encourage people to support refugees by championing individual acts of solidarity. These acts, when taken together, acknowledge the resilience and strength of refugees.
- ♣ Why 2 billion? According to UNHCR, on average, refugees are forced to flee travel approximately two billion kilometres every year to reach the first point of safety.
- ♣ The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created in 1950, during the aftermath of the Second World War, to help millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes.

Why we Have Leap Years

- ♣ Year in which February has 29 days is called a leap year. A year is time taken by a planet to orbit its star once. A day is defined as the amount of time taken by a planet to rotate on its axis.
- ♣ It takes Earth approximately 365 days and 6 hours (5 hours, 46 minutes and 48 seconds) to orbit the Sun. It takes Earth approximately 24 hours — 1 day — to rotate on its axis. So, our year is not an exact number of days. Ideally our year should have 365.25 days.
- ♣ Because of that, most years, we round the days in a year down to 365. However, that leftover **piece of a day doesn't disappear. To make sure we count that extra part of a day, we add one day to the calendar approximately every four years.**
- ♣ So, if we do not count this extra 6 hours in 2017, 2018 and 2019, we have to add an extra 24 hours i.e one day to 2020, making it a leap year.
- ♣ Leap years are important so that our calendar year matches the solar year — the amount of time it takes for Earth to make a trip around the Sun.
- ♣ For example, say that July is a warm, summer month where you live. If we never had leap years, all those missing hours would add up into days, weeks and even months. Eventually, in a few hundred years, July would actually take place in the cold winter months.

Concept Clearing Assignment

1. The **recent outbreak of coronavirus** un.masks the hazards of overreliance on China's Pharmaceutical industry. Discuss. Also, critically analyze the capacity of Indian Health system in dealing with such pandemics.
2. With the recently concluded first India-Africa Defence Minister's Conclave, India has shown its intent of playing a more proactive role in security dynamics of Africa. Discuss. Also, highlight the critical initiatives taken by India in order to increase its strategic depth in the continent.
3. Multilateral disaster management exercises are crucial in building resilience against the impact of climate change. Discuss. Also, highlight the initiatives taken by India in building resilience against climate change.
4. The bonhomie between India and Sri Lanka is palpable, but the fault lines between the two countries are all the more visible now. Critically comment. Also, suggest some measures to bring the ties between the two countries on the right trajectory.
5. Despite growing strategic convergence, India should also be mindful of some of the limitations in the India-Vietnam ties. In the context of this statement discuss the various facets of India-Vietnam relations and also highlight the challenges in the relationship.
6. **The Afghanistan Peace deal is yet another example of the fact that the U.S. doesn't lose wars, it loses interest.** In the context of the statement discuss the possible outcomes of the newly signed Afghan peace deal. Do you think India should place boots on grounds in the aftermath of US withdrawal from Afghanistan? Substantiate your views with examples.
7. **The role of 'Kisan Vikas Kendra' (KVK) in doubling the farmer's income would be a paradigm shift.** To what extent do you think that KVK can substantially contribute to the visionary aim of 'doubling farming Income by 2022-23'. Critically Analyze?
8. Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) have potential to galvanize the sustainable biodiversity conservation movement at grass root level. Comment. And also highlighted the structural challenges faced by it?
9. Explain the reason behind poor Air Quality in India. Do you think India has taken sufficient initiatives to curb the adverse impact of poor Air Quality? Comment.
10. India is on the path of taking experimental research in the country to the next level. Critically evaluate the statement in light of the SATHI scheme launched by the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
11. Challenges such as the recent locust attacks and coronavirus which have scant respect for national borders call for the arch-rivals to find a common ground. Discuss this statement in **light of India's relation with Pakistan.**
12. Several state governments are reluctant to establish 'Gram Nyayalayas' due to structural and legislative flaws. Comment and also suggest measures to strengthen the provision of Gram Nyayalayas.
13. The Central vigilance commission (CVC) has been tasked with superintendence over the Central Bureau of investigation (CBI). Do you think that CVC is an effective body in the absence of any statutory provision and the need of comprehensive central legislation to remedy the issue of autonomy?
14. The Bodo accord has included a number of political and economic measures designed to strengthen the autonomy of the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD). Do you think that Bodo Peace Accord 2020 will halt the extremities in Assam? Substantiate your views.
15. Discuss the role of Rajya Sabha/Council of States in promoting the federal character of India. Do you think the upper house of parliament need some structural reforms? Justify your views.

P.T Oriented Questions

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Consider the following statements regarding to “1000 spring initiative”:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme. 2. Under the initiative tribal youth have been trained for the identification and mapping of springs. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2</p> <p>2. Consider the following statements regarding the “Northern European Enclosure Dam (NEED)” recently seen in news:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is a dam between North-East of Scotland and west point of France. 2. The dam will separate the Atlantic Ocean from the Baltic Sea and North Sea. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2</p> <p>3. Consider the following statements regarding the World Air Quality Report-2019:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This report focused on those particles which are so small that they can be detected with an electronic microscope. 2. African and South American countries suffer from the highest annual average of these particles. 3. According to the report among the BRICS countries India ranked 5th. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3</p> | <p>4. Which of the following statements best describe the term ‘Muktoshri’ recently seen in news?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is a new variety of rice that can be grown in arsenic prone areas. 2. This type of rice can also be grown in the soil with a high level of salinity. 3. This rice will help in fighting diseases like skin cancer. <p>Select the correct answer using the code given below:</p> <p>(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3</p> <p>5. Consider the following statement regarding the 13 COP on Convention on Migratory Species:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CMS COP 13 logo is inspired by traditional art form of southern India used to depict key migratory species. 2. Flame-throated bulbul, the mascot for the COP-13 event has seen maximum decline in the population. 3. Great Indian Bustard, is classified as Critically Endangered in the CMS list in 13-COP. <p>Which of the statements given above are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3</p> <p>6. Consider the following statements regarding the Blue Dot Network (BDN) and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participation of private companies in BDN makes it different from BRI in terms of transparency. 2. BDN which still seems to be in its infancy but today it is more advanced than BRI. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2</p> |
|--|---|

7. Which of the following statements is/are the **benefits of 'Farmers Producer Organisations (FPO)' recently seen in news?**

1. Large farmers will have better collective strength for better marketing access through economies of scale.
2. Assistance like Equity Grant scheme helps to encourage more farmers to set up FPOs to promote agri-business activities.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Which of the following is/are the reasons for the removal of India's status of **'developing country' from the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR)?**

1. India Crossed the global trade share cut-off which is set by the US.
2. India is a member of G-20
3. India per capita GNI is high.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only (b) 3 only
(c) 1 and 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
9. Which of the following best describes the **objective of 'Vivad Se Vishwas' Scheme,** recently seen in news?
- (a) It aims to reduce the litigations in the direct taxes payments.
(b) It will help to build trust of the public in private banks.
(c) The scheme will help in solving the disputes of cooperative banks.
(d) None of the above.

10. Consider the following statements regarding to Dividend Distribution Tax:

1. DDT is a tax levied on dividends that a company pays to its shareholders out of its net income.
2. **The Income tax law doesn't provide** any deduction or credit to the firm for paying the DDT.

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

11. Which of the following is/are the **objectives of 'National Technical Textile Mission' recently seen in news?**

1. Encourage technological Start-ups and Innovation
2. Special Skill training programme for rural youth.
3. Encourage research in technical textile which will be further used in space mission.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

12. With **reference to 'A future of the World Children Report', Consider the following** statements:

1. According to the report if global warming increases at the current projection it would lead to devastating health consequences for children.
2. The Index shows that children in India have the best chance at survival and well-being.
3. It is released by the WHO, UNICEF and the leading medical journal, The Lancet.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

13. Consider the following statements **regarding 'Gram Nyayalaya' recently seen** in news:

1. It is a mobile court which will go to villages to register cases of those victims which are not able to go to the Court.
2. It will deal with criminal cases and civil suits.

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

14. With reference to 'Central Vigilance Commission' consider the following statements:

1. It is an autonomous body which also superintendence over the CBI in corruption cases.
2. The appointment shall be made by the Prime Minister on the basis of recommendations made by the President.

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

15. Consider the following statements regarding the Provisions under Consumer Protection Act 1986:

1. Complaints can be filed in a consumer court where the complainant resided or works.
2. There is no provision for cases related to E-commerce.
3. Court can refer to settlement through mediation.

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. With reference to Protected Special Agriculture Zone, consider the following statement:

1. It is meant to offer farmers of the delta region relief from further hydrocarbon exploration.
2. Recently, Tamil Nadu Government declared Cauvery delta region a PSAZ.

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

17. Consider the following statements regarding the Locusts:

1. They are the group of short-horned grasshoppers which have a swarming phase.
2. They do affect agriculture after the condition of drought.
3. Recently border villages in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab experienced heavy damage by the Locusts.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

18. Which of the following best describes the 'Yellow Rust' recently seen in news?

- (a) It is a hot weather disease found in the southern part of India.
- (b) It is a disease which attacks the leaves of the wheat crop by restricting the photosynthesis.
- (c) It is a fungal disease which affects the production of rice in northern part of India.
- (d) None of the above

19. With reference to occurrence of Influenza virus, consider the following statements:

1. In temperate regions influenza is a year-round disease.
2. Travelling in the opposite hemisphere during the influenza season reduces the risk of being affected.

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

20. Recently, government of India launched a scheme "SATHI", which among the following is the ministry it belongs to?

- (a) Ministry of Labour & Employment
- (b) Ministry of Science and Technology
- (c) Ministry of Minority Affairs
- (d) Ministry of Food Processing

Industries

21. Which among the following factors are responsible for locust attacks in India?

1. Rainfall in South-East Iran
2. Change in Pattern of Migration of Locust
3. Changing wind pattern
4. Indian Ocean Dipole

Select the correct answers using the codes given below:

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

22. Recently, few terms are in news such as 229E, NL63, OC43, HKU1, these are types of?

- (a) Anti-Retroviral drugs
- (b) Viruses
- (c) Antibiotics
- (d) Probiotics

23. With reference to the production of wheat, consider the following statements:

1. India is the largest wheat producing country.
2. Uttar Pradesh is the highest wheat producing state in India.

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

24. Which among the following pairs is/are correct?

| Exercise | Partnering Nations |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. SAADMEX | SAARC |
| 2. Konkan | India-UK |
| 3. Ajeya Warrior | India-France |

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

25. Which among the following countries share a boundary with Vietnam?

1. China
2. Thailand
3. Laos
4. Cambodia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

26. Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2014)

1. Animal Welfare Board of India is established under the Environment protection Act, 1986.
2. National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body.
3. National Ganga River Basin Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

27. H1N2 virus is sometimes mentioned in the news with reference to which one of the following diseases? (UPSC 2015)

- (a) ADIS
- (b) Bird Flu
- (c) Dengue
- (d) Swine Flu

28. With reference to an organization known as 'Birdlife International' which of the following statements is/are correct? (UPSC 2015)

1. It is a Global Partnership of conservation organizations.
2. The concept of 'biodiversity hotspots' originated from this organization.
3. It identified the sites known/referred to as 'Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas'.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3</p> <p>29. With reference to the 'National Intellectual Property Rights Policy', consider the following statements: (UPSC 2017)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It reiterates India's commitment to the Doha Development Agenda and the TRIPS Agreement. 2. Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion is the Nodal agency for regulating intellectual property rights in India. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 only (b) 2 only</p> | <p>(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2</p> <p>30. What is the purpose of setting up of Small Finance Banks (SFBs) in India?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To supply credit to small business units. 2. To supply credit to small and marginal farmers. 3. To encourage young entrepreneurs to set up business particularly in rural areas. <p>Select the correct answer using the code given below:</p> <p>(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3</p> |
|--|--|

Answer Key

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. B 2. B 3. C 4. C 5. C 6. A 7. B 8. C 9. A 10. B | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. D 12. C 13. C 14. A 15. C 16. C 17. B 18. B 19. D 20. B | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. B 22. B 23. B 24. A 25. B 26. B 27. D 28. C 29. C 30. A |
|---|--|--|

India's Economic Performance in 2019-20

- ✓ GDP growth moderated to 4.8 %
- ✓ Real consumption growth has recovered
- ✓ India's external sector gained further stability
- ✓ Current Account Deficit (CAD) narrowed to 1.5 % of GDP
- ✓ Accretion of foreign exchange reserves.
- ✓ Sharper contraction of imports as compared to that of exports



External Sector

- ✓ India's BoP position improved to around US\$ 435 bn in 2019.
- ✓ Current account deficit (CAD) narrowed to 1.5% of GDP.
- ✓ Foreign reserves stood at around US\$ 460 bn.
- ✓ The merchandise exports to GDP ratio declined, entailing a negative impact on BoP position.
- ✓ Slowdown of world output had an impact on reducing the export to GDP ratio.
- ✓ Continuous decline in investment rate decelerated GDP growth
- ✓ Net FDI inflows remained higher in 2019 than 2018.
- ✓ Net remittances from Indians employed overseas continued to increase



Prices and Inflation

- ✓ Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation increased to around 4 %.
- ✓ Food and beverages was the main contributor to CPI inflation.
- ✓ CPI inflation has been highly variable across States.
- ✓ CPI inflation in rural areas is lower than the CPI inflation in urban areas.
- ✓ Rural inflation has been more variable across states than urban inflation.

Agriculture and Food Management

- ✓ The share of agriculture and allied sectors in the total GVA of the country has been continuously declining on account of relatively higher growth performance of non-agricultural sectors.
- ✓ Agricultural productivity is also constrained by lower level of mechanization in agriculture which is about 40 % in India
- ✓ Livestock income has become an important secondary source of income for millions of rural families.
- ✓ During the last 6 years, Food Processing Industries sector has been growing.



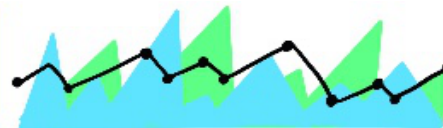
Services Sector

Services sector consists of:

- ✓ about 55 % of the total size of the economy and GVA growth.
- ✓ two-thirds of total FDI inflows into India.
- ✓ about 38 per cent of total exports.
- ✓ more than 50 % of GVA in 15 out of the 33 states and UTs.



Economic survey: Vol 2



Fiscal Developments

- ✓ Both revenue and non-tax revenue increased during 2019-20 compared to last year
- ✓ GST monthly collections crossed the mark of Rs. 1 lakh crore several times during 2019-20
- ✓ Change in corporate tax rate
- ✓ Measures to ease the implementation of GST
- ✓ Fiscal deficit of states within the targets set out by the FRBM Act



Monetary Management and Financial Intermediation

- ✓ Repo rate was cut by 110 basis points in four consecutive MPC meetings due to slower growth and lower inflation
- ✓ The Gross Non-Performing Advances ratio remained unchanged for Scheduled Commercial banks and increased slightly for the NBFCs.
- ✓ Bank Credit growth (YoY) moderated to around 7 %.



Sustainable Development and Climate Change

- ✓ In SDG India Index, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh are front runners while Assam, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh come under the category of Aspirants.
- ✓ India hosted COP-14 to UNCCD which adopted the Delhi Declaration.
- ✓ Forest and tree cover increased and has reached 80.73 million hectare and is 24.56 % of the geographical area of the country.



Industry and Infrastructure

- ✓ The industrial sector registered a growth of 0.6 per cent in 2019-20 as compared to 5.0 % during 2018-19.
- ✓ Fertilizer sector achieved a growth of 4.0 %
- ✓ Steel sector achieved a growth of 5.2 %
- ✓ Total telephone connections in India touched around 120 crore
- ✓ The installed capacity of power generation has increased to 3, 64,960 MW.



Social Infrastructure, Employment and Human Development

- ✓ India's ranking in Human Development Index improved to 129 in 2018.
- ✓ With 1.34 % average annual HDI growth, India is among the fastest improving countries.
- ✓ Total formal employment in the economy increased to 9.98 % in 2017-18.
- ✓ Gender disparity in India's labour market widened due to decline in female labour force participation especially in rural areas
- ✓ About 76.7 % of the households in the rural and about 96 % in the urban areas had houses of pucca structure.

OUR TOPPERS

KSG
An Institute For IAS Exam

KANISHAK KATARIA
(AIR - 1)



TESTIMONIAL

I am highly indebted to Khan Sir and KSG for their guidance and feedback, especially for the interviews. Khan Sir was very motivating and available for one-to-one interactions. His critical analysis and pinpoint identification of my strengths and weaknesses helped me a lot. I also followed his videos on Youtube which were quite beneficial. Thank You Sir for your support & guidance.

Signature: 

KSG
An Institute For IAS Exam

AKSHAT JAIN
(AIR - 2)




TESTIMONIAL

I would like to thank KSG and Khan Sir for their guidance and motivation. The mock interview at KSG was particularly helpful in understanding the intricacies of the interview/personality test. It helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses in a timely manner, and work upon them accordingly.

Signature: 

KSG
An Institute For IAS Exam


SRUSHTI JAYANT DESHMUKH
(AIR - 5)



TESTIMONIAL

Thank you so much to the entire team of Khan Study Group! KSG's foundation course has been my starting point. It has helped me a lot. The focus on answer writing from Day-1 really contributed a lot.

A special thanks to Khan Sir, for his motivating aura and good words.

Signature: 

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An Institute For IAS Exam

SHUBHAM GUPTA
(AIR - 6)



TESTIMONIAL

Khan Sir,


Thank you so much for always being encouraging and keeping a positive mindset. Your guidance for the personality test has helped me significantly in attaining the success that I have been able to. Your personal interaction with me has always motivated me to keep an inquisitive mindset and optimistic attitude.

Thanks again to you Sir and the entire KSG team.

Signature: 

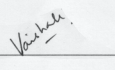
KSG
An Institute For IAS Exam

VAISHALI SINGH
(AIR - 8)



TESTIMONIAL

I cannot thank KSG & Khan Sir enough for their guidance throughout the interview process. It was much needed and, it were his words which inspired me to perform well. Thank you so much!

Signature: 

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An Institute For IAS Exam

GUNJAN DWIVEDI
(AIR - 9)



TESTIMONIAL

KSG played a very important role in my preparation. The excellent guidance I received from Khan Sir helped me achieve my childhood dream. Thankyou for all the support.

Signature: 

DELHI NORTH

2521, 1st Floor
Hudson Lane,
Vijay Nagar Chowk,
Near GTB Nagar
Metro Station
Delhi- 110009

DELHI CENTRAL

56/4, Bada Bazar
Marg, Old Rajender
Nagar Market, Near
Salwan Public
School Gate No- 2,
Delhi- 110060

JAIPUR TONK ROAD

403-404, 4th floor
Apex Tower,
Lal Kothi,
Tonk Road
Jaipur- 302015

BHOPAL M.P NAGAR, ZONE II

Plot No. 48, 1st & 2nd
Floor, Behind
Sargam Talkies,
Zone II, M.P Nagar
Bhopal- 462011

PATNA EXHIBITION ROAD

Above Toyota
Showroom,
CEAT Compound,
Exhibition Road,
Near Gandhi Maidan,
Patna- 800001

INDORE BHAWAR KUAN

232-233, 2nd Floor,
Veda Building, Near
Apple Hospital,
Bhawar Kuan Square
Indore- 452001

BENGALURU KORAMANGALA CHANDRA LAYOUT

116/C-1, 3rd Floor,
behind Airtel office
2nd Cross Road,
KHB Colony,
5th Block,
Koramangala
Bengaluru- 560095

94, 2nd floor,
Kasabha Hobli,
Above Domino's
Pizza, 4th Main Rd.,
Maruthi Nagar,
Chandra Layout,
Bengaluru,
Karnataka-560040

RANCHI SIRAM TOLI CHOWK

3rd floor
strawberry Hill
New garden
Siram Toli Chowk
Ranchi - 834001

9717 380 832

9811 293 743

8290 800 441

7509 975 361

7463 950 774

9893 772 941

7619 166 663

7619 136 662

7463 950 774