KSG

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Annual Status of Education Report
AGE 4-8 असर **ASER 2019** RURAL
Facilitated by PRATHAM

CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX

JANUARY 2020

STOP THE TG BILL 2016

binaries are unnatural

#KilltheBill

CURRENT CONNECT

Brexit- Britain Leaves European Union
A Brief Timeline

SEE YOU LATER.

1973
The UK joined the European Economic Community (EEC), the precursor to the European Union. From the beginning, the public and politicians split on the value of membership.

1975
The UK held its first nationwide referendum, which happened to be on membership in the European community. About 67 percent of the country agreed. But it did not settle question of the UK's place within Europe

1990
The Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990s more closely integrated the member-states, forming the modern EU. The "Maastricht Rebels" — something of a precursor to today's Brexiteers — battled to defeat its ratification in the UK, though they ultimately failed.

2008
The financial crisis in 2008 and the eurozone economic crisis that followed it intensified suspicion about the EU. The influx of immigrants from poorer EU states   and, later, fears over refugees and migrants from places like the Middle East and Africa tapped into darker fears about the future of Britain.

2016
In 2013, Britain's then-Prime Minister promised that he would hold a referendum on whether the UK should remain in the EU or leave if voted to power.

Referendum held in June, 2016 in which UK voted to leave out of the EU. A deadline of March 29, 2019 was set for Britain Exit

The vote of exit was the result of populism and anti-immigration wave. There was anger against establishment and English Nationalism was on rise . People also wished for better trade deals .

2019
Though the negotiations began for terms and conditions on which Britain will Exit the EU. There were many contentious issues, but the most prominent one was the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, whether it will remain free of tariff after the Brexit. EU extended the deadline of Brexit to 31st Oct 2019 with the change of guard followed. Re-negotiation with new administration extended the deadline to 31st January 2020. Northern Ireland will leave EU but will continue to follow EU rules on agriculture and manufactured goods, also will continue to enforce the EU's customs codes at its ports.

2020
From 1st Feb 2020, a 11 month transition period will begin which will decide on future relationship between EU and UK. This includes a trade agreement which both sides would prefer should be tariff free and keep trade barriers low. The two sides have to discuss security and law enforcement cooperation, access to fishing waters, banking, data and intelligence-sharing etc. Implementation of new northern Ireland system will also be a bone of contention. The transition period can be extended, one time, for up to two years, until the end of 2022 but it has to be decided by the end of June 2020. There are also chances of no deal Brexit which would have catastrophic effect on British economy

The Brexit comes at a time when Emmanuel Macron commented that **"Europe is on the edge of a precipice"**

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. **Don't wait, it's your golden** chance to crack this exam and fulfill your passionate dream.

Team KSG

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ENVIRONMENT

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

SECURITY

ART & CULTURE

S. No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
GS – I	Culture-Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.	Indian history significant events, personalities, issues and the Freedom Struggle	Post independence issues, National boundary and disputes	Indian society features, issues, globalization and diversity	Women – issues and developments	Urbanization – problems and remedies	Distribution of industrial phenomena and such resources – India and world	Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity.			
GS – II	Indian constitution- Amendments, acts and bills.	Legislative, executive and judicial processes.	Constitutional, non-constitutional, judicial, quasi-judicial, administrative and other types of bodies.	Federal structure and local bodies. Their powers and functions.	Government policies and various governance issues like transparency, accountability and – governance	Committees and schemes.	Non-government sections of our society, self-help groups and social sector, role of civil society, issues and initiatives	Vulnerable sections of our society - various issues and initiatives	International Relation -India and other countries, various Indian and international agreements, effects of other countries on India		
GS – III	Various measures to boost Indian economy- planning, policies, management.	Government budgeting and issues related to budget.	Agriculture, animal husbandry and transport	Food security- measures to boost food security and food processing. Issues related to land-land reforms	Industries and infrastructure-their growth and investment model	Space and technology, IT space, robotics and computer	Disease, biotechnology and human welfare	Innovations, intellectual property, Awards, initiatives, and other important aspects of S&T	Environment: Indian government initiatives, POI and other important judgment, various pollution, degradation and conservation efforts	Disaster & Disaster Management	Challenges to internal security, Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate. Cybersecurity; money laundering and its prevention.
GS – IV	Ethical issues related to family society, education, Corruption etc.	Ethics in public and private administration	Issues	Related laws and rules	Governance/e-Governance	Ethics in international issues	Personalities and their teachings	Other important topics			
Mis.											

Guidelines on Execution of Convicts

News Excerpt

Ministry of Home Affairs has recently moved to the Supreme Court to frame guidelines to execute death penalty of condemned prisoners within seven days of rejection of their mercy petitions.

Pre-Connect

- Multiple curative petitions and mercy pleas filed before the President of India have been rejected for the four convicts who are on death row since 2013

- The Ministry claims that the existing guidelines are 'Accused Centric' and do not take into account an irreparable mental trauma, agony, upheaval and derangement of the victims and their family members, the collective conscience of the nation and the deterrent effect which the capital punishment intends to make.

- Hence, MHA filed an application to seek **"appropriate clarification/modification and directions" in the** 2014 Shatrughan Singh Chauhan and another vs Union of India judgment that defined the procedure to be adopted in cases of prisoners on death row.

- In the *Shatrughan Chauhan versus Union of India* case in 2014, the Supreme Court in its judgment had specified that all steps for execution of capital punishment, including informing the convict and his/her family members, are required to be taken care of by the State governments/Union Territories concerned in accordance with the jail manual.

> ### Death Penalty in India
> ❖ Death Penalty given by subordinate Court (certified by HC) -->Appealed in High Court -->Appealed in Supreme Court -->Final Judgement ->Review petition -->Curative Petition -->Mercy Plea -->Repeated petition
> ❖ Death Penalty is given in rarest of rare Case
> ❖ *Bachan Singh* v State of Punjab brought up the question of the validity of capital punishment.
> ❖ It is a landmarkcase that gave birth to the **"rarest of the rare cases"** doctrine and still remains one of the most important cases in this subject.
> ❖ It gave constitutional validity of death penalty and the majority were of the view that neither Article 19 nor 21 is violated by capital punishment.

PLEADINGS OF MHA

- ➢ It has been observed that even after the judgment in the Shatrughan case, convicts of even heinous crimes under the garb of Article 21 take the judicial process for a ride.

- ➢ If the convict of death sentence wants to file mercy petition, it would be mandatory for a convict of death sentence to do so only within a period of seven days from the date of receipt of death warrant issued by the competent court.

- ➢ The court should mandate all the competent courts, State governments, prison authorities in the country to issue death warrant of a convict within seven days of the rejection of his mercy petition and to execute death sentence within seven days thereafter irrespective of the stage of review petition/curative petition/mercy petition of his co-convicts.

- ➢ It would be permissible for the death convicts to file curative petition after the rejection of **review petition only within a time to be stipulated by this Hon'ble Court and not thereafter"**.

REVIEW PETITION AND CURATIVE PETITION

- ✓ Review Petition and curative Petition can only be filed after the final judgement. Since the Supreme Court is the apex court of the Indian judiciary, its judgment is final. However, under Article 137 of the Constitution of India, the Supreme Court is given the power to review its own judgment, if there are errors apparent on the record.

- ✓ Review petition can be filed within 30 days of the final judgement.

- ✓ Curative petition: A second review of the judgment of the Supreme Court is granted through a curative petition.

- ✓ In the 2002 case of Rupa Ashok Hurra v. Ashok Hurra, a five-judge constitutional bench of the

Supreme Court unanimously held that in order to rectify gross miscarriage of justice in its final judgment, the court will "allow" the curative petition filed by the victim.

✓ There is no time limit on filing the curative petition.
✓ **A curative petition in itself doesn't automatically grant a right to a second review, certain** requirements must be fulfilled **before the court "allows" it. These are:**
   o Court reaffirms that litigants are barred from challenging the final decision.
   o Petitioner establishes that there was a genuine violation of principles of natural justice or an allegation of bias against the judge or judges who heard the case is proven.
   o Petition is accompanied with a certification by a senior lawyer.
✓ **Hence, it doesn't have constitutional validation** and is a judicial intervention

MERCY PETITION

- A convict who is given a death sentence and whose appeal to the Supreme Court to review its judgment has been dismissed has the option to file a mercy petition to the president within seven days from the date on which the superintendent of jail issues a notice to do so.
- Under Article 72 of the Indian Constitution, the president has the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence where punishment or sentence is:
   o Given by a court-martial.
   o Under a law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the union extends.
   o A death sentence.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Kehar Singh Case, Bhullar Case, Madhav Menon Committee on Reformative justice Reformative justice vs Retributive justice, Art 72 and Art 161

Conclusion

☞ While taking care of the rights of the convicts, it is more important and need of the hour to lay down guidelines in the interest of the victims, their families and in larger public interest.
☞ Otherwise the guilty of such gruesome and heinous offences would be permitted to play with the majesty of law and prolong the execution of the sentence awarded to them in accordance with the law

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Commissionerate System

News Excerpt

The Government of Uttar Pradesh had decided to implement the 'Commissionerate system' of policing in two districts viz. Lucknow and Noida. Under this system, more responsibilities were under the jurisdiction of an IPS vis-à-vis an IAS in dual system.

Pre-Connect

- Under the 7th Schedule of Indian Constitution, Police and Law & Order are under the jurisdiction of state governments.
- Presently, at the district level, a dual system of control exists in which superintendent of police (SP) and District Magistrate (DM) work in coordination to supervise police administration.
- Almost all states barring Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, UT of J&K, and some North-eastern states have a Commissionerate system. The British brought the system first in Kolkata and followed it in Mumbai and Chennai presidencies.

About Commissionerate System

> #### Police Act 1861
> ❖ Act was enacted as the aftermath of Revolt of 1857, where Britishers felt the need of a local force to prevent future revolts.
> ❖ The act introduced the concept of Policing in India and later even after the independence it was continued.
> ❖ It mandates Commissionerate system, in cities with more than 10 lakh population.

Table 1: Differences between the dual system of control and the commissionerate system
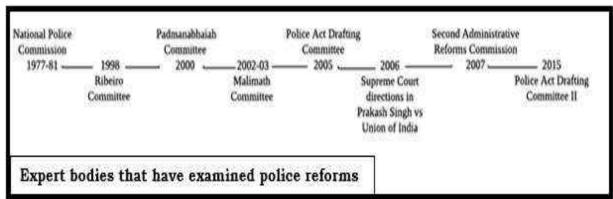
Dual system	Commissionerate system (53 cities)
• Dual command structure over the district police means that control and direction over the police vests with the SP (head of district police) and the District Magistrate (executive).	• Unified command structure with the Commissioner of Police (rank of the Deputy Inspector General or above) as the sole head of the force within the city. Allows for quicker responses to law and order situations.
• Separation of powers of the DM (e.g., issues arrest warrants and licenses) and the police (e.g., investigate crimes and make arrests). Therefore, less concentration of power in the police, and accountability to DM at the district level.	• Powers of policing and magistracy concentrated in Commissioner. Directly accountable to state government and state police chief. Lesser accountability to the local administration.
• SP is assisted by Additional/Assistant/ Deputy SPs, Inspectors and constabulary.	• Commissioner is assisted by Special/ Joint/ Additional/ Deputy Commissioners, etc. Inspector downwards rank structure is the same.

➢ In this system, a Commissioner of Police is drawn from the Deputy Inspector General rank or above and is assisted by Special/Joint/Additional/Deputy Commissioners.

➢ This system gives an integrated command structure. It helps fix responsibility with the Commissioner and eliminates blame games between civil administration and police when something goes wrong.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Police Reforms, Directions of the Supreme Court in Prakash Singh vs Union of India,

➢ Commissionerate system provides an enabling structure to deliver police services in a complex region.

National Police Commission 1977-81 — 1998 — Padmanabhaiah Committee 2000 — 2002-03 — Police Act Drafting Committee 2005 — 2006 — Second Administrative Reforms Commission 2007 — 2015

Ribeiro Committee — Malimath Committee — Supreme Court directions in Prakash Singh vs Union of India — Police Act Drafting Committee II

Expert bodies that have examined police reforms
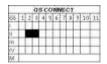
➢ The major flaw of this system is that it undermines the authority of a District Magistrate, who plays a larger role in a district administration.

All India Judicial Service (AIJS)

News Excerpt

Recently a report by Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy was released namely 'A primer on the All India Judicial Service - A solution in search of a problem'. The report points out several issues in pitching AIJS as a solution to judicial vacancies.

Pre-Connect

• Currently, the appointments of District Judges and Subordinate Judiciary are done by the respective State governments. But in recent years, there has been an invigorated push for the creation of a unified pan-India judicial service for appointing them.

- AIJS has been pitched as a solution to judicial vacancies, lack of representation for the marginalised and the failure to attract the best talent.

Analytica

Is AIJS the Panacea of Indian Judiciary?

➢ Though there are large number of vacancies in lower judiciary, they are ironically located in few High Court jurisdiction. Hence the larger need is to investigate the reasons and causes for a large number of vacancies in the poorly performing States.

➢ The issue of representation of marginalized sections in Judiciary is better addressed through reservation of post, which is followed in many states. AIJS on the other hand might leave OBC out of its ambit.

➢ Given the linguistic diversity of India, judges with sound knowledge of local language is sine qua non. This is the primary reason behind the fact that the proceedings of civil and criminal courts are to be conducted in a language prescribed by the respective State Governments.

Way Forward

India has a large pendency of court cases, and this has affected the judiciary's ability to provide justice. While the creation of an All India Judicial Services was seen as a solution to this and other problems since its introduction in 1958, the idea has received a mixed response. Hence a study on the basic problems of Indian Judicial System should be conducted comprehensively to reach to an all-encompassing solution.

Merits of AIJS
- Address the issue of shortage of judges in the court
- Reduce the Pendancy of cases
- Improve the quality of judges and hence the quality of justice
- Objectivity and transparency in selection of judges
- Younger judges can be promoted to HC and SC
- Reforms legal infrastructure of subordinate judiciary which was long pending
- End the turf between judiciary and executive regarding judicial appointments
- Appointing new judges will also address judicial absenteeism in many states.

Demerits of AIJS
- Judges need to have a clear understanding of local language for a fair trial
- No clarity on age bar becomes a conern (Minimum age eligibility)
- Not a comprehensive solutions to the basic problem of judiciary
- National Exam could be disadvantageous to entrance of less priviledged candidates in judicial service
- Local laws, customs ,practices varies across state. Training the judge from outside the state could become a challenge
- It may hamper the career progression of state judicial services officers.

History of AIJS
- ❖ The idea of AIJS was first mooted by the first Law Commission of India in 1958 in its 14th report.
- ❖ **AIJS was also supported by the chief justice's** conference of 1961, 1963, and 1965.
- ❖ The 42nd Amendment Act of 1976 made the provision for the creation of AIJS under article 312. But no such law has been made so far.
- ❖ Comprehensive guidelines for the creation of the AIJS were laid down by the Law Commission in its 116th report.
- ❖ Recent government at the centre has constantly been pushing for the creation of AIJS on the lines of All India Civil Services.
- ❖ NITI Aayog has also solicited for setting up of an All India Judicial Service (AIJS) for appointing and recruiting judges in lower courts through an all India judicial services examination in its document **'Strategy for New India@75'**.

PEPPER IT WITH
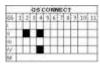Art 310-312, Judicial Accountability Bill, Subordinate courts and their powers

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Right to Private Property

News Excerpt

Recently, the Supreme Court in its judgment held **that a citizen's right to own** private property is a human right. Therefore, the state cannot take possession of private property without following the due procedure and authority of law.

Reasoning of Court

- The court opined that the state cannot trespass into the private property of a citizen and then claim **ownership of the land in the name of 'adverse possession'**

- Grabbing private land and then claiming it as its own makes the state an encroacher

- A welfare state cannot be permitted to take the plea of adverse possession. The State cannot be permitted to perfect its title over the land by invoking the doctrine of adverse possession to grab the property of its own citizens

> **Doctrine of Adverse Possession**
> Under the doctrine, a person who is not the original owner becomes the owner of a property because of the fact that he has been in possession of the property for a minimum of 12-years, within which the real owner did not seek legal recourse to oust him.

Right to Property in India

➢ Initially, Right to Property was a part of the Fundamentals rights under Article 19(1) and Article 31. However, certain restrictions were provided to safeguard the public welfare and interest of a Scheduled Tribe. Further, it made an obligation on the State to provide appropriate compensation before acquiring a private property.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Art 31A, 31B, 31C, Minerva Mills Case

➢ Later, the government found it difficult to implement its socialist agenda such as Land reforms & agrarian reforms which are often found themselves in legal quagmire.

➢ To counter these the government brought several amendments such as Article 31A, 31B, 31C to push forward its agenda. Finally, through the 44th Amendment Act of 1978 abolished the right to property as a Fundamental Right by repealing Article 19(1)(f) and Article 31 from Part III.

➢ The Act inserted a new Article 300A in Part XII under the heading 'Right to Property'. It provides that no person shall be deprived of his property except by authority of law. Thus, the **'right to property' remains a legal right or a constitutional right, though no longer a** fundamental right.

➢ It is not a part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

➢ The right to property as a legal right has the following implications:
  o It can be regulated i.e., curtailed, abridged or modified without a constitutional amendment by an ordinary law of the Parliament.
  o It protects private property against executive action but not against legislative action.
  o In case of violation, the aggrieved person cannot directly move to the Supreme Court under Article 32 (right to constitutional remedies including writs) for its enforcement. He can move the High Court under Article 226.
  o No guaranteed right to compensation in case of acquisition or requisition of the private property by the state.

Conclusion

In a democratic polity governed by the rule of law, the state cannot deprive citizens of their property without the sanction of law. Hence, it has been held that the right to property is now considered to be not only a constitutional or statutory right but also a human right.

Settlement of Bru tribe in Tripura

News Excerpt

Recently, a quadripartite agreement was signed among the Centre, state governments of Tripura and Mizoram and Bru-Reang representatives to facilitate permanent settlement of Bru refugees in Tripura with a Rs 600-crore rehabilitation package. This agreement seeks to end the 23 years old Bru refugee crisis.

Pre-Connect

- It will provide huge relief to members of Bru ethnic community who were forced to flee from Mizoram in 1997. This created a refugee crisis in Tripura.
- Initially in 2018, an agreement was signed and a package was sanctioned, but many people did not want to go back to Mizoram due to various vulnerabilities.

Highlights

➢ The new agreement will provide monetary assistance to create sustainable life for Bru refugees.
➢ The settlement of Brus will be cluster based.
➢ Both Centre and States will share the burden of remuneration packages.

Analytica

Merits:

✓ The agreement addresses the insecurities of a tribe that survived and fled violence.
✓ The decision is humanitarian from the point of view of the Brus, who were apprehensive about returning to Mizoram.
✓ The Brus would get voting rights in Tripura along with **"tribal status"**.

Demerits:

✓ The agreement would encourage the creation of ethnocentric States in the northeast
✓ It has the potential of creating conflicts between the Brus and indigenous communities of Tripura and Bengalis (as they had to vacate for Brus resettlement)
✓ Demand for such remuneration package can also be raised by other tribes such as Chakma
✓ There will also be pressure on the natural resources of the Tripura which already faces paucity of land. This might further escalate Socio-political tensions

> **BRU TRIBE**
> ❖ The Brusare spread across Tripura, Mizoram and parts of southern Assam
> ❖ They are one of the most populous tribes in Tripura.
> ❖ Also known as Reangs in the state, they are ethnically different from the Mizos, with their own distinct language and dialect and form one of the 21 scheduled tribes of Tripura
> ❖ While Mizoram has as many as 40,000 Brus living in the state, in Tripura, their numbers stand at approximately 32,000, spread across six refugee camps in the state.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> 6th Schedule and autonomous district Council, Tribes of North East

Conclusion

This agreement is an important milestone in bringing fast-paced development to the state of Tripura. However, there is a need to weigh in the implementation challenges before doling out administrative reforms.

Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019

News Excerpt

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, with an objective of protectingthe rights of transgender persons and their welfare, has come into force on 10th January 2020

Pre-Connect

- Traditionally, Transgender held significant position in the Indian History. They played

- significant roles in collecting taxes and duties in the Sultanate and Mughal courts.
- However, they were specifically targeted under the British Colonial rule through provisions like Section 377 of Indian Penal Code. The controversial section was the reflection of the British 1533 Buggery Act. Since then their marginalization and oppression began.
- In India, there exists a large number of socio-culture groups who identify themselves as like – shiv-shaktis, jogtas, jogappas, Aradhis, Sakhi, etc.
- The major challenge transgender faced after independence was civil personhood. Gender identity was made a crucial component of civil identity and government refused to recognize transgender as women or a third sex, the community was deprived of several important rights such as right to vote, own property, marry, education, etc. All this happened despite the presence of Article 14, 15, 21 and 23 of Indian constitution which explicitly prohibits **discrimination on the base of "Sex" among other** determinants.
- After decades of legal fight for their justice, the Supreme Court of India finally struck with two progressive landmark judgments. In 2014, the Court recognised the third gender and affirmed the constitutional rights of transgender persons in *NALSA v. UOI*. In 2018, the Court overruled Section-377 IPC on the basis that it violated fundamental rights enshrined within the Indian Constitution.

> ### Who are Transgenders?
>
> Transgender is an umbrella term which is used to describe a wide range of identities and experience. In the broad sense, it includes those people whose identity or behavior is outside the seterotypical Gender norms. Therefore, it includes people who do not identify as transgender but were subject to social oppressions and physical violence.
>
> The Act defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth. It includes trans-men and trans-women, person with intersex variations, genderqueers, and persons with socio-cultural identities

Highlights of the Act
- The act aims to end discrimination against transgender persons in access to:
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Healthcare
- It also provides several rights such as right to:
  - Movement
  - Reside
  - Rent
  - Occupy property
  - Reside with parents and immediate family members
- It provides equal opportunity in:
  - Hold public or private office
  - Enjoyment of goods and facilities,
  - Use of Public places
- It provides for National Council for Transgender Persons to advise, monitor and evaluate measures for the protection of their rights.The Council will also consist of five members from the transgender community and five experts from non-governmental organizations.
- The act criminalises denial of use of public places to transgender, removal of transgenders from household and village, etc.
- On the issue of identity, it provides that a transgender person may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of i**dentity, indicating the gender as 'transgender'.** A revised certificate may be obtained only if the individual undergoes surgery to change their gender either as a male or a female.

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Analytica

Merits

✓ It will make all the stakeholders responsive and accountable for upholding the principles underlying the act.

✓ It will bring greater accountability on the part of the Central Government and State Governments/Union Territories Administrations for issues concerning Transgender persons.

✓ It will benefit a large number of transgender persons, mitigate the stigma, discrimination and abuse against this marginalized section and bring them into the mainstream of society.

✓ It will lead to greater inclusiveness and will make the transgender persons productive members of society.

Concerns

▪ Issue of Self Identification:

o There are serious concerns that the act violates the very basic right of self-identification (**identifying one's gender as male, female, or third gender**). Identification from District Magistrate Screening committee is seen as a violation of the same.

o Further, since the committee providescertificate to an individual who has undergone a sex reassignment surgery. If one has not undergone sex reassignment surgery, one can only be identified as transgender, not as male or female. Transgender people believe this is coercing them into surgery whereas the demand for free or low-cost sex reassignment surgery has also not been met.

▪ No Deterrence: The provision for punishment for serious crimes committed against transgender people is substantially less severe than for the same crimes committed against cisgender people.

▪ No Reservation:The act also denies reservation to transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people, and requires them to be living with their birth families which are the site of physical and psychological violence in most cases.

▪ Applicability to private entities: There are no penal consequences in the event such private entities do not comply with the provisions of the act.

> PEPPER IT WITH NALSA Vs Union of India, Article 14, Article 21, Yogyakarta
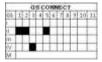
Way Forward

☞ Gender-sensitization should work in parallel with legal reform.

☞ It is also necessary that the transgender community holds internal debates and addresses issues that cause discrimination within the community.

☞ Political movements that talk about marginalized people must urgently include transgender persons.

☞ Hence, India has a long road ahead to gender justice, and the transgender community wants concerted efforts made to bring about legal reform so that transgender people are as free and empowered in their public and private lives like any other citizen of India.

Right to Protest

News Excerpt

Lately, there have been instances of protests in various parts of the country against CAA and NRC and the police action following the same. The recent example is of the police action in a university in Delhi, which has gained wide criticism throughout the country and has opened t**he debate on the relevance of 'Right to Protest'** which is derived from Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.

Pre-Connect

• The right to protest peacefully is enshrined in the Indian Constitution—Article 19(1)(a)

guarantees the freedom of speech and expression; Article 19(1)(b) assures citizens the right to assemble peaceably and without arms.

- All protests are legal only if they are non-violent and carried out with appropriate permissions.
- **Article 19(1)(3) says this right is subject to "reasonable restrictions" in the interest of public** order.
- The State can impose reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the freedom of speech and expression on the grounds of sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, contempt of court, defamation, and incitement to an offence.
- The State can impose reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right of assembly on two grounds, namely, sovereignty and integrity of India

Analytica

➢ Public protests are the hallmark of a free, democratic society, whose logic demands that the voice of the people be heard by those in power and decisions be reached after proper discussion and consultation.

➢ For this, the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are necessary.

➢ Supreme Court in *RamlilaMaidan Incident writ case* held that **"Freedom of speech, Right to** assemble and demonstrate by holding *dharnas* and Peaceful agitation are the basic features of a democratic system.

➢ Any arbitrary restraint on the exercise of such rights — for instance, imposing Section 144, shutting down internet etc, shows the inability of the government to tolerate dissent.

➢ An unreasonable limitation on protest is an affront to the very people in whose name a government is allowed to temporarily govern.

Sec 144 of CrPC

✓ With protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act intensifying at several places across many states, the governments have imposed Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) restricting the protesters from gathering against or in favour of the controversial law passed by Parliament

✓ **The provision has also been invoked repeatedly to restrict people's movement in Jammu and** Kashmir.

✓ The Supreme Court recently ruled that Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, imposing restrictions on citizens' fundamental right to assemble peacefully, cannot be invoked as a 'tool' to 'prevent the legitimate expression of opinion or grievance or exercise of any democratic rights

✓ The court also said the power under Section 144, being remedial as well as preventive, is exercisable when there is an apprehension of danger, but the danger contemplated should be **in the nature of an "emergency" and for the purpose of preventing** obstruction and annoyance or injury to any person lawfully **employed, the court said. It is the magistrate's call to assess the situation and take a call on** whether Section 144 should be imposed.

> PEPPPER IT WITH
> Art 19, Sec 141 of IPC,
> Doctrine of proportionality

✓ While exercising this power, the magistrate is duty-bound to balance the rights and restrictions based on the principles of proportionality and thereafter apply the least intrusive measure. Repetitive orders under the provision would be an abuse of power

✓ Under Section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code (1973), a magistrate can restrain an assembly, meeting or procession if there is a risk of obstruction, annoyance or danger to human life, health or safety or a disturbance of the public tranquillity or a riot or any affray.

✓ It is imposed in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger of some event that has the potential to cause trouble or damage to human life or property. Section 144 of CrPC generally bars assembly of five or more persons at a place

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INTERNET SHUTDOWN IN INDIA
DATA:
❖ 95 Internet shutdowns announced in India in 2019, 167 areas impacted, according to the Internet Shutdown Tracker, a portal which tracks such incidents across the country.
❖ Internet services have been suspended 357 times in India since 2014
❖ 67 percent of the world's Internet shutdowns in 2018 were in India

RECENT JUDGEMENT
❖ **The Union government's steps such as abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir** and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act have led to violent protests in parts of the country, forcing the administration to suspend Internet services to prevent rumour-mongering and thus prevent more violence.
❖ **In a landmark judgment, India's Supreme Court said indefinite internet shutdowns violate the country's laws concerning freedom of speech and expressi**on. The government must pass an order describing the reason and duration of the shutdown each time it wishes to implement this action.
❖ **The bench said the internet is a major part of citizens' rights that guarantee freedom of** expression. It added the government can only shut down the internet as an extreme measure. Plus, such an order will draw judicial scrutiny.

LEGAL ASPECT:
❖ Under Indian laws, the government can direct telecom companies to shut down services or take down sites, among other things.
❖ In situ**ations of public emergency or the interest of public safety the 'Temporary suspension of Telecom Services Rules, 2017' is invoked on a case**-to-case basis and action is taken as per the procedure.
❖ The government claims that the shutdown is always based on analysis of intelligence inputs and is subject to periodic review. This is a preventive measure used by the law & order administration as a last resort to address mass protests, civil unrest, so as to ensure peace
❖ In the era of fast social media dissemination of information/misinformation, internet shutdown is resorted to in select areas to avoid the breakdown of law and order and possible damage to human life and public property.
❖ Activists and researchers argue that this practice of shutting down the internet not just disrupts the smooth functioning of the state at large but is also not in line with the fundamentals of democracy. Internet shutdowns make human rights a hostage to the whims of the executive: the fundamental rights to speech, conduct business, access healthcare, express dissent, and movement of the people in a state, are compromised
❖ Shutting the internet results in an information blackout that can also create hysteria, panic and can result in even more discord. Internet shutdown cannot be a solution to a larger governance problem.

ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS:
The Government has embarked upon a programme to deliver services through mobile and internet apart from promoting a cashless economy. In the absence of internet connectivity, access to various citizens is impacted. Further, neither banking transactions using credit and debit cards nor internet banking can be done, which leads to hardships to common citizens

Conclusion
Protests are an 'essential dimension' of mankind. In fact, they are intrinsic to human existence. In India, the right to protest, to publicly question and force the government to answer, is a fundamental political right of the people that flows directly from a democratic **reading of Article 19. Hence, a government that promised 'sabk**asaath, sabkavikas, **sabkavishwas' should demonstrate its legitimacy by really listening to everyone provided** that the protests are legit, peaceful and non-violent

Transfer of Community Resources

News Excerpt

The Supreme Court recently asked the Government **not to transfer "invaluable"** community resources like village water ponds to a few powerful people and industrialists for commercialisation of the property as many areas of the country perennially face water crisis and access to drinking water is woefully inadequate.

Pre-Connect

- Protection of village commons is essential to safeguard the fundamental right guaranteed by Article 21 of our Constitution.
- These common areas are the lifeline of village communities, and often sustain various chores and provide resources necessary for life.
- The judgment came on a plea by an activist-lawyer against the **transfer of village ponds' sites of Saini Village in the National** Capital Region to some private industrialists by the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority.

> PEPPER IT WITH
> Community Resources,
> NGT, Article 21

- Excavators and other heavy machinery were attempting to take over a common pond used by the villagers for a century.
- Though the National Green Tribunal refused to intervene on the issue, the apex court ordered the authorities and the industrialists to remove all obstructions and restore the water bodies within three months.

Analytica

- The state cannot divest villagers of their existing source of water promising them with an alternative site where the water body can be replicated.
- Such an attitude would display "a mechanical application of environmental protection".
- There is no guarantee that the adverse effect of destroying the existing water body would be offset and people would be compelled to travel miles to access the alternative site.

Conclusion

Since time immemorial, certain common resources had been vested in village communities for collective benefit. Such protections, however, remained on paper. Powerful people and a corrupt system had appropriated these resources for personal aggrandisement. Hence, this judgement is a welcome step in protecting the lifeline of village communities by linking it with fundamental rights under Article 21.

Tenth Schedule and Power of Speaker

News Excerpt

The Supreme Court recently in **_KeishamMeghachandra Singh v. The Hon'ble_** _Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly_, pronounced a significant judgment in **relation to the Speaker's power to disqualify members of the** legislative Assembly on the grounds of defection.

Pre-Connect

- The Supreme Court has asked the Parliament to amend the Constitution to strip Legislative Assembly Speakers of their exclusive power to decide whether legislators should be disqualified or not under the anti-defection law.
- Parliament **needs to "have a rethink of whether disqualification petitions ought to be entrusted** to a speaker as a quasi-judicial authority when such speaker continues to belong to a political party either de jure or de facto".
- The court suggested to amend the Constitution to substitute the speaker of the Lok-Sabha and Legislative Assemblies as an arbiter of disputes concerning disqualification which arise under the Tenth Schedule with a permanent tribunal.

- This tribunal is to be headed by a retired Supreme Court Judge or a retired Chief Justice of a High Court or some other outside independent mechanism, to ensure that such disputes are decided both swiftly and impartially.
- This will strengthen the provisions incorporated in the 10th Schedule, which are so vital in the proper functioning of democracy

Analytica

- The office of the Speaker was empowered through the Anti Defection Law which is also referred to as the Tenth Schedule
- For over three decades the office of the Speaker has been under controversies for its decisions on the disqualification of MLAs who switch sides for profit or political power thus, undermining democracy. Demand to address this chronic problem has been gaining ground for long.
- Courts have consistently emphasised the limited power of judicial review vis-à-vis the **Speaker's powers under the** Tenth Schedule
- In the landmark case of KihotoHollohan v. Zachillhu (1992), the court ruled that the scope of judicial review in respect of an order passed by the **Speaker "would be confined to** jurisdictional errors only viz., infirmities based on violation of constitutional mandate, malafide intent, non-compliance with rules **of natural justice and perversity."**
- In Rajendra Singh Rana v. Swami Prasad Maurya (2007), when the Speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly decided upon the claim of a split in the legislative party but failed to decide on the disqualification of 13 MLAs, the Supreme Court ruled that the Speaker failed to exercise the jurisdiction conferred on him by the Tenth Schedule.
- The 2nd ARC recommended that President or Governor (not the presiding officer) should have the power to disqualify the defecting members on the advice of the Election Commission.

Anti Defection Law

- ❖ The Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution in 1985 by the 52nd Amendment Act.
- ❖ It lays down the process by which legislators may be disqualified on grounds of defection by the Presiding Officer of a legislature based on a petition by any other member of the House.
- ❖ A legislator is deemed to have defected if he either voluntarily gives up the membership of his party or disobeys the directives of the party leadership on a vote
- ❖ The law applies to both Parliament and state assemblies.
- ❖ As an exception, the law allows a party to merge with or into another party provided that at least two-thirds of its legislators are in favour of the merger.
- ❖ An independent member of a House (elected without being set up as a candidate by any political party) becomes disqualified to remain a member of the House if he joins any political party after such election.
- ❖ A nominated member of a House becomes disqualified for being a member of the House if he joins any political party after the expiry of six months from the date on which he takes his seat in theHouse.
- ❖ The 91st Amendment Act of 2003 omitted an exception provision from the schedule i.e., disqualification on ground of defection not to apply in case of split.

PEPPER IT WITH

Other powers of speaker, disputes related to membership of parliament, Party Whip and its powers, RPA, 52nd CAA, 93rd CAA

- In the Manipur Case, the court said the **Speaker "is bound to decide disqualification petitions within a reasonable period." What is reasonable will depend on the facts of each case, but** absent exceptional circumstances for which there is good reason, a period of three months from the date on which the petition is filed is the outer limit within which disqualification petitions filed before the Speaker must be decided
- Also, in the same judgement, the court talked about amending the constitution to form a permanent tribunal for such cases.
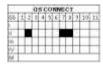
Conclusion

Instead of putting an alternative mechanism in lieu of the Speaker to decide on the disqualification petitions, which will change nothing, attention may perhaps be accorded to giving more teeth to the Tenth Schedule, which has so far, failed on many fronts.

Minority Institutions and Supreme Court Judgement

News Excerpt

Recently the Supreme Court held that States can regulate minority institutions i.e, the state is well within its rights to introduce a regulatory regime in the **"national interest" to provide minority educational institutions with well**-qualified **teachers in order for them to "achieve excellence in e**ducation.

Pre-Connect

- The judgment came in connection with the case **'***SK Md Raffiquevs Managing Committee, ContaiRahamania High Madrasah &Ors***.' that concerned the validity of the West Bengal** Madrasah Service Commission Act 2008, which had constituted a commission to appoint teachers in madrasas.

- The court upheld the validity of the 2008 Act.

  #### Key Highlights of the Judgement

- According to the court, government-aided minority educational institutions do not have the absolute right in deciding the appointment of teachers and that the state can introduce a regulatory regime and a mechanism to **select teachers in the "national interest" to ensure "excellence in educational institutions".**

- The apex court also asked to **strike a "balance" between the** twin objectives of excellence in education and the preservation of the **minorities' right to run their** educational institutions.

> ### ARTICLE 30
> ❖ Article 30 grants the following rights to minorities, whether religious or linguistic:
> - All minorities shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice
> - The compensation amount fixed by the State for the compulsory acquisition of any property of a minority educational institution shall not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed to them. (Added by 44th Const. amendment Act)
> - In granting aid, the State shall not discriminate against any educational institution managed by a minority.
> ❖ The protection under Article 30 is confined only to minorities (religious or linguistic) and does not extend to any section of citizens (as under Article 29)
> ❖ The term 'minority' has not been defined anywhere in the Constitution.
> ❖ The right under Article 30 also includes the right of a minority to impart education to its children in its own language.

- Also, regulations that embrace and reconcile these two objectives are reasonable.

- Education is broadly divided into two categories**– secular education and education "directly** aimed at or dealing with preservation and protection of the heritage, culture, script and special characteristics of a religious or a linguistic minority".

- For the latter, the court said to give maximum latitude to the management to appoint teachers.

- Reason for this as given by the court is 'only the teachers who believe in the religious ideology or in the special characteristics of the concerned minority would alone be able to imbibe in the students admitted in such educational institutions, what the minorities would like to preserve, profess and propagate.'

- Minority institutions where the cu**rriculum was "purely secular", the intent must be to impart** education availing the best possible teachers.

Analytica

West Bengal Madrasah Service Commission Act, 2008

➤ This Act mandated that the process of appointment of teachers in aided madrasahs, recognised as minority institutions, would be done by a Commission, whose decision would be binding.

➤ Under the act, it is held that if any regulations seek to ensure the standard of excellence of the institutions while preserving the right of the minorities to establish and administer their educational institutions, such regulations would not violate minority rights under Article 30(1).

Arguments against the judgement

➤ ContaiRahamania Madrasah Committee filed a petition against the judgement mentioning that the judgment by the **Bench was contrary to the Court's stand expressed in** Constitution Bench decisions like the T.M.A Pai case of 2002.

PEPPER IT WITH
TMA Pai Foundation Case 2002, Article 29,

➤ T.M.A Pai case of 2002 mentions that minorities have a fundamental right under Article 30 of the Constitution to administer their institutions and appoint teachers.

➤ **The 2002 case also said that regulatory measures of control should be very minimal" and "matters of day**-to-day management like appointment of staff, teaching and non-teaching, and administrative control over them, the management should have the freedom and there should **not be any external controlling agency".**

➤ Contai said the Bench had even contradicted a recent Court judgement in *Chandana Das (Malakar) versus State of West Bengal* which upheld the rights of the minority communities to establish and run their own institutions without government interference in day-to-day affairs of management like the appointment of teachers.

➤ The petition also argued that the judgment segregated a particular community from the **privilege of protection under Article 30. It asked what exactly was the "national interest" in** regulating the day-to-day functioning of minority educational institutions.

Minority Institutions In INDIA

▪ Minority educational institutions are of three types:
  o institutions that seek recognition as well as aid from the State;
  o institutions that seek only recognition from the State and not aid; and
  o institutions that neither seek recognition nor aid from the State.
▪ The institutions of first and second type are subject to the regulatory power of the state regarding syllabus prescription, academic standards, discipline, sanitation, employment of teaching staff and so on.
▪ The institutions of third type are free to administer their affairs but subject to operation of general laws like contract law, labour law, industrial law, tax law, economic regulations, and so on.

Conclusion

✓ A regulation framed in the national interest must necessarily apply to all institutions regardless whether they are run by majority or minority as the essence of Article 30(1) is to ensure equal treatment between the majority and minority institutions.

✓ An objection can certainly be raised if an unfavourable treatment is meted out to an educational institution established and administered by a minority.

✓ But if ensuring excellence in educational institutions is the underlying principle behind a regulatory regime and the mechanism of selection of teachers is so designed to achieve excellence in institutions, the matter may stand on a completely different footing.

NIA Act Challenged by Chhattisgarh Government

News Excerpt

The Chhattisgarh government recently filed a petition, citing Article 131 to challenge the Constitutional validity of the National Investigation Act, 2008. The petition contends that the NIA Act is *ultra vires* the Constitution and beyond the legislative competence of Parliament.

Pre-Connect

Chhattisgarh has referred to the Supreme Court judgment in State of Jharkhand vs State of Bihar and **Another (2015) to justify the suit's** maintainability.

Arguments of the Petition

- **NIA Act is beyond "legislative competence of the Parliament" and is against the "federal spirit" of the** Constitution. Since police is a state subject, the Centre cannot be given police powers.

- The provisions of the Act go against state sovereignty because the provisions of the Act leave no room for coordination and pre-condition of consent, in any form whatsoever, by the Central government from the State government

- Framing of legislation such as NIA Act by the Parliament, which creates an **"investigation" agency having** overriding powers over the **"Police" of a State, was never** the intention of the makers of the Constitution

- NIA Act, in its present form, **takes away the state's power** of conducting an investigation through police and confers unfettered discretionary and arbitrary powers on the Centre.

- NIA Act's enactment by Parliament and creation of **an "investigative" agency,** namely the National Investigation Agency, for investigating the scheduled offences committed in any particular State, is clearly an act of colourable legislation.

Analytica

National Investigation Agency(NIA)

Doctrine of Colourable Legislation

- ❖ This doctrine is based on the principle that what cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly.
- ❖ In other words, if the constitution does not permit certain provision of a legislation, any provision that has the same effect but in a roundabout manner is also unconstitutional.
- ❖ This doctrine is found on the wider doctrine of "fraud on the constitution".
- ❖ A thing is Colourable when it seems to be one thing in the appearance but another thing underneath.
- ❖ K C Gajapati Narayan Deo vs State of Orissa, is a famous case that illustrates the applicability of this doctrine.

Article 131

- ♠ It deals with the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court,
- ♠ Original jurisdiction of a court refers to its power to hear a case first
- ♠ Any dispute involving a question of law or fact on which existence of legal right depends comes under original jurisdiction of the SC. The disputes may be:
- - between the government of India and one or more states;
- - between the government of India and any state/states on one side and one or more states on the other;
- - between two or more states
  if the dispute involves any question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends: Provided that the said jurisdiction shall not extend to a dispute arising out of any treaty, agreement, covenant, engagements, and or other similar instrument which, having been entered into or executed before the commencement of this Constitution, continues in operation after such commencement, or which provides that the said jurisdiction shall not extend to such a dispute
- ♠ Article 131 of the constitution is unique because of the fact that Supreme Court has the power to directly listen to matters between 2 states governments or between the Centre and the state

- The NIA is a 'Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement **Agency'** formed by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government with the aim of investigating acts of terrorism.
- It came into existence in the backdrop of the November 2008 terror attacks on Mumbai and was enacted through central legislation -NIA Act 2008
- NIA is given powers to investigate terror-related cases across states without taking special permission from states.
- The Agency has been empowered to conduct investigation and prosecution of offences under the Acts specified in the Schedule of the NIA Act.
- Scheduled offences specify a list of offences under Acts such as the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967, Anti-Hijacking Act, Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Civil Aviation Act, etc.
- Officers of the NIA have all powers, privileges and liabilities which the police officers have in connection with the investigation of any offence.
- The act allows the central government to constitute Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences.
- There were certain amendments which were made to the law through the NIA (Amendment) Act, 2019.
- NIA now has received the powers to investigate terror crimes related to Indians and Indian interests abroad.
- The Act seeks to allow the NIA to investigate additional offences, under human trafficking, offences related to counterfeit currency or banknotes, manufacture or sale of prohibited arms, cyber-terrorism, and offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908
- After the amendment, the central government may designate Sessions Courts as Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences after consulting the Chief Justice of the High Court under which the Sessions Court is functioning.
- Further, state governments may also designate Sessions Courts as Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences.
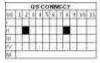
Conclusion

- ✓ **The NIA Act shows government's Zero tolerance towards Terrorism, but this legislation does** not provide the scope for obtaining the consent of the state government before operating in its jurisdiction which violates the federal principle enshrined in the Constitution.
- ✓ Hence, the plaint filed under Article 131 by the Chhattisgarh Government contends that the law violates provisions that set out a separation of powers between the state and the Centre.

Sub-Categorization of OBC

News Excerpt

The Union Cabinet recently approved a six-month extension in the tenure of the commission to examine sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC), which had been appointed in 2017 with the initial deadline of 12 weeks.

Pre-Connect

- The Cabinet has also approved an **addition to the commission's terms of refe**rencei.e now the commission will also study the various entries in the Central list of OBCs and recommend correction of any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors of spelling or transcription.
- The Government had constituted a Commission on 2nd October 2017 under article 340 of the Constitution.
- The four-member commission is headed by Justice (Retd.) G. Rohini, Chief Justice (Retd.), Delhi High Court.
- The commission has said that it would require some more time to submit its report since the repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors of spelling or transcription etc., appearing

in the existing Central list of OBCs need to be cleared.

Analytica

➢ This sub-categorization will enable more backward among the OBC communities to access the benefits of reservation for educational institutions and government jobs.
➢ It is constituted to examine the issues of the sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes with the following terms of reference:
   o To examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities included in the broad category of Other Backward Classes with reference to such classes included in the Central List;
   o To work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorisation within such Other Backward Classes; and
   o To take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes or communities or sub-castes or synonyms in the Central List of Other Backward Classes and classifying them into their respective sub-categories.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Article 15, Article 16, NCBC, Kalekar commission, Article 340, Mandal Commission

➢ Challenges that the commission might face:
   o to develop a methodology for sub-categorisation of OBCs
   o availability of information regarding the social and educational backwardness of various castes and the state-wise variations of a particular caste
➢ Mandal commission set up in 1979 recommended 27 per cent reservation for socially and educationally backward classes in higher education and government jobs.
➢ But over the years it was observed that the benefits were mainly availed by the dominant groups of OBCs.
➢ Hence, this exercise of sub-categorization is being carried out to make sure the benefits of reservation among castes included under the umbrella of OBC are equitably distributed.

Conclusion

The government's efforts for equal distribution of OBC reservations will create a positive impact on the backwards among the backward classes. It will be an ardent task for the Justice Rohini Commission to sub-categorise OBCs, at the same time the commission also has the responsibility to work out a formula that is acceptable to the communities within OBCs.

Enemy Property Act

News Excerpt

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is going to lead a Group of Ministers (GoM) as they seek to dispose of what is believed to be 9,400 'enemy properties', with a total estimated value of Rs 1 lakh crore.

Pre-Connect

• A total of 9,280 enemy properties had been left behind by Pakistani nationals, and 126 by Chinese nationals. The government estimates the value of these properties at approximately Rs 1 lakh crore.
• Two other high-level committees will be set up to oversee the sale of these properties, which are currently under the oversight of the Custodian of Enemy Property for India under the Enemy Property Act (1968).

Analytica

ENEMY PROPERTY ACT, 1968

➢ The Enemy Property Act, enacted in 1968, provided for the continuous vesting of enemy property in the Custodian of Enemy Property for India. The central government, through the Custodian, is in possession of enemy properties spread across many states in the country.
➢ Properties of those who chose to migrate to China after the 1962 Sino-Indian war was also

vested into the Custodian of Enemy Property (CEPI).

➢ In 2017, Parliament passed The Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2016, which amended The Enemy Property Act, 1968, and The Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971.

➢ It expanded the definition of 'enemy' to include the heir or successor of an enemy, **"whether a citizen** of India or a citizen of a country which is not an enemy; and the succeeding firm of an enemy firm, irrespective of the nationality of its members **or partners."**

➢ The amendment disallows any claim to the property made from relatives of individuals who originally owned the property, prior to the government re-possessing them.

➢ It prohibits civil courts from entertaining any disputes with regard to enemy property. It does not provide any alternative judicial remedy (eg. tribunals). Therefore, it limits judicial recourse or access to courts available to aggrieved persons.

➢ Several provisions of the law will retrospectively come into effect from 1968 when the Enemy Property Act was enacted

➢ The 1968 law prohibited the transfer of enemy property by an enemy if it was against public interest or if it was done to avoid transfer of property to the

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Enemy Property

❖ Enemy property refers to property or assets held or managed on behalf of an enemy subject or an enemy company.

❖ With respect to India, it refers to assets left behind by individuals who migrated to Pakistan or China and are no longer citizens of India.

❖ These assets include land, buildings, shares held in companies, jewellery of the citizens of enemy countries.

❖ It also included some movable property.

❖ The Central government took over properties of citizens of China (in 1962) and Pakistan (in 1965 and 1971) under the Defence of India Acts.

❖ Defence of India Act ceased to function after the wars. To administer these properties, the Enemy Property Act was enacted in 1968 which later got amended in 2017

❖ The Tashkent Declaration,1966 included a clause that said India and Pakistan would discuss the return of the property and assets taken over by either side in connection with the conflict.

❖ However, the Government of Pakistan disposed of all such properties in their country in the year 1971 itself

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Sale of Shares Of Enemy Property

♠ The Cabinet in November 2018 had given its go-ahead to the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) to sell 'enemy shares' and 'enemy properties'

♠ The government had vested these properties with the CEPI. As the CEPI has no expertise in selling of shares, the government has decided to rope in the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) for sale of these 'enemy shares', many of which are not even listed on the stock exchanges.

♠ The DIPAM will also decide on the modalities for appointing merchant bankers and legal advisors for sale of these shares. The proceeds of the share sale will be accounted for as disinvestment proceeds

♠ In April 2019, the government has sold 'enemy properties' worth ₹1,874 crore, as it seeks to fast-track the sale process of such assets to meet the ₹90,000-crore disinvestment target set for the current fiscal.

♠ It will lead to monetisation of moveable enemy property lying dormant for decades. Sale proceeds from this may be used for development and social welfare programmes.

custodian. The new law prohibits all transfers by an enemy. The amended law says that enemy properties will continue to vest with the custodian, even after the death of enemies; even if the legal heir is an Indian; and even if the enemy changes his nationality.

➢ Under the old law, the custodian could sell an enemy property only "in the interest of preserving the property" or "to secure maintenance of the enemy or his family in India". Now, the custodian can dispose of an enemy property after getting approval from the Central government.

➢ Earlier, the custodian was supposed to maintain the enemy and his family if they are in India from the income derived from the property. The custodian will no longer be responsible for providing for the enemy and his family.

Conclusion

The thrust of the enemy protection (Amendment) Act was to guard against claims of succession or transfer of properties left by people who migrated to Pakistan and China after the wars. This was done with an aim to negate the effect of a court
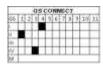
PEPPER IT WITH
Erstwhile Raja of Mahmudabad Case, DIPAM, CEPI

judgment in this regard in which the court ordered in favour of Son of erstwhile Raja of Mahmudabad when he claimed stake on raja's property after his death.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy

News Excerpt

The Union Cabinet has approved the amendments to the Medical Termination of **Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971, which will help strengthen women's reproductive** rights and prevent unsafe abortions along with giving its nod to extend the upper gestation limit for abortion from the existing 20 weeks to 24 weeks.

Pre-Connect

• **India will soon have one of the world's most liberal abortion legislations.**

• The MTP Bill raises the legally permissible limit for an abortion to 24 weeks from the current 20 weeks.

• For pregnancies that are between 20-24 weeks opinions will be required from two doctors rather than one.

• This has been specially done keeping in mind **"vulnerable women including** survivors of rape, victims of incest and others like differently-abled women, Minors etc.

• The upper gestation limit will not apply in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities diagnosed by a Medical Board.

• The composition, functions and other details of the Medical Board are to be prescribed subsequently in Rules under the Act.

• It also has a provision to protect the privacy of the person seeking an abortion.

Need for Amendment
❖ The MTP Act, 1971 was replete with unclear language, which resulted in doctors refusing to perform abortions even within the stipulated 20 week gestation limit.
❖ Women had to seek the approval of the judiciary, which, by most accounts, did not always come in time.
❖ MTP Act, 1971 failed to keep pace with advances in medical technology that allow for the removal of a foetus at a relatively advanced state of pregnancy.
❖ A number of foetus abnormalities are detected after the 20th week, often turning a wanted pregnancy into an unwanted one.

Analytica

MERITS

➢ The changes in the act are for expanding access of women to safe and legal abortion services on therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian or social grounds.

➢ It is a step towards the safety and well-being of the women and many women will be benefited by this.

➢ This will increase access of women to safe medico-legal services and will thus reduce maternal

mortality and morbidity arising out of unsafe abortions.

➢ The change accepts failure of contraception as a valid reason for abortion not just in married but also in unmarried women.

➢ The proposed increase in gestational age will ensure dignity, autonomy, confidentiality and justice for women who need to terminate pregnancy.

➢ Most foetal abnormalities are diagnosed before 20 weeks but abnormalities in the heart, brain and genetic abnormalities get detected only after 20 weeks.

➢ The 20-week deadline caused a phobia which often led to abortions on suspicion of anomalies. **The Cabinet's decision will not only reduce unsafe abortions but it will also save many normal** foetuses from being aborted on such suspicion.

➢ The extension will particularly help women from low socio-economic strata who cannot access healthcare services in a specific time frame and end up in a Catch-22 situation when there is a seriously malformed foetus that is past 20 weeks.

➢ In the times when countries, including many states in the US, are restricting abortion, it is **heartening to see a trend of liberalization of abortion laws, which in today's day and age, is not** a privilege but an absolute right of every woman.

➢ The current amendment will also ensure clarity amongst medical practitioners, who have in the past shown inhibition towards pregnancy termination procedures especially in cases of survivors of rape and incest – where survivors were subsequently forced to approach the courts for judicial sanction.

CONCERNS

➢ The new piece of legislation should be worded in a manner that obviates frequent appeals to the judiciary. Such fine print would — more significantly — be essential to accomplishing one **of Bill's main goals: "Giving reproductive rights to women".**

➢ There are concerns that a more liberal abortion law can aggravate the situation where ante-diluvian preference for a male child keeps sex determination centres in business in spite of their illegal status. T**he litmus test of the proposed MTP law's claims to being women**-centric lies in addressing all such concerns.

➢ All women are not included in the law, as in, the bill includes some conditionality that could result in a denial of reproductive rights of women, especially those with limited resources and poor access to services.

➢ Much like the 1971 MTP Act, which required a physician's permission for abortion to happen, this amendment suggests anyone seeking abortion between 20-24 weeks will need the approval of two physicians to go through the process, which makes this process far less accessible for many women, especially women from the marginalised sections and rural communities, who may not have access to any medical practitioners.

➢ Also, if a pregnancy has to be terminated between the 5th (20 weeks) and 6th month (24 weeks) due to foetal abnormalities, the permission of a medical board is required, which again may be hard for many to access, and for those who can, it might be a long bureaucratic process, making the abortion a very cumbersome process.

➢ Although the law and the proposed amendment that has been backed by the Centre sound great on paper, their implementation remains tough given that abortion is still widely stigmatised in India, and there is very little awareness about the laws.
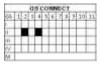
Conclusion

India will now stand amongst nations with a highly progressive law which allows legal abortions on a broad range of therapeutic, humanitarian and social grounds. The new MTP (Amendment) Bill, 2020, is a milestone which will further empower women, especially those who are vulnerable and victims of rape.

Legislative Council of Andhra Pradesh

News Excerpt

The Andhra Pradesh assembly recently passed a resolution to abolish the state's legislative council.Miffed with the constant opposition by Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in the council, the ruling government of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) decided to dissolve it.

Pre-Connect

- The assembly had passed a bill creating an unprecedented three capitals for AP namely, Amaravati, Visakhapatnam, and Kurnool
- The main opposition, TDP (27 members out of the total of 58 in the council are from TDP) voted to **refer it to a select committee rather than doing government's bidding to pass the bill** saying that such a critical legislation seve**rely impacting the state's administration and** finances needs elaborate scrutiny.
- The YSRCP which has a majority in the assembly, miffed with the constant opposition in the council, decided to dissolve it.

Analytica

Strength

- Maximum strength of the council is fixed at one-third of the total strength of the assembly and the minimum strength is fixed at 40
- Though the Constitution has fixed the maximum and the minimum limits, the actual strength of a Council is fixed by Parliament.

Election

- The members of the legislative council are indirectly elected.
- 5/6th of the total number of members of a legislative council are indirectly elected and 1/6th are nominated by the governor.
  - o 1/3rd are elected by the members of local bodies in the state like municipalities, district boards, etc.,
  - o 1/12th shall be elected by electorates consisting of persons residing in the State who have been for at least three years graduates of any university in the territory of India,
  - o 1/12th shall be elected by electorates consisting of persons who have been for at least three years engaged in teaching in such educational institutions within the State, not lower in standard than that of a secondary school,
  - o 1/3rd are elected by the members of the legislative assembly of the statefrom amongst persons who are not members of the assembly,
  - o Remaining 1/6th are nominated by the governor from amongst persons who have special knowledge or practical experience of literature, science,art, social service and cooperative movement (only applicable for leg. council and not for Rajya Sabha)

> ### Legislative Council Creation
> - ❖ In the states havingbicameral system, the state legislature consists of the governor, the legislativecouncil (Vidhan Parishad) and the legislative assembly (Vidhan Sabha)
> - ❖ The Constitution provides for the abolition or creation of legislativecouncils in states.
> - ❖ Accordingly, the Parliament can abolish a legislative council (where it already exists) or create it (where it does not exist), if the legislative assembly of the concerned state passes a resolution to that effect.
> - ❖ Such a specific resolution must be passed by the state assembly by a special majority, that is, a majority of the total membership of the assembly and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the assembly present and voting.
> - ❖ This Act of Parliament is not to be deemed as an amendment of the Constitution for the purposes of Article 368 and is passed like an ordinary piece of legislation (ie, by simple majority).

➢ The members areelected in accordance with the system of proportional representation bymeans of a single transferable vote.

➢ The bonafides or propriety of thegovernor's nomination, in any case, cannot be challenged in the courts.

➢ Like the Rajya Sabha, the legislative council is a continuing chamber, that is,it is a permanent body and is not subject to dissolution. But, one-third of itsmembers retire on the expiration of every second year. So, a member continues as such for six years.

➢ The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are elected by the council itself from amongst its members.

➢ The ultimate power of passing an ordinary bill is vested in theassembly. At most, the council can detain or delay the bill for a period offour months—three months in the first instance and one month in the secondinstance.

➢ The Constitution does not provide for the mechanism of a joint sitting of both the Houses to resolve the disagreement between the two Houses overa bill.

➢ When a bill, which has originated in the counciland was sent to the assembly, is rejected by the assembly, the bill ends andbecomes dead.

➢ The council has been given much lesser significance, position and authority as compared to the Rajya Sabha at the Centre.

> ### Legislative Council Of AP
> ♠ Strength of Andhra Pradesh Legislative council: 58
> ♠ Formed in 1958 under article 168 of constitution of India
> ♠ In 1980s, it was abolished on the ground of being unnecessary, unpopular and a burden on state exchequer
> ♠ Since 1989, many attempts were made to revive the legislative council
> ♠ Finally,in 2007 Parliament passed the legislation to revive the Legislative council of state

> PEPPER IT WITH
> Division Vote, Art 168, Art 169, Bicameralism

Merits of LC
- Check against Hasty Legislation
- A Check on Despotic Tendencies of Lower Chamber
- Accommodation of Election Shy Talent
- Hardly a Barrier as can't stall a bill for more than 4 month
- lessens the burden of the lower House bills of non-controversial nature can start their course in the Councils first
- Thorough Discussion on the Bills by More Mature and Seasoned Members

Demerits of LC
- Not an Effective Check as the bill becomes an act even if LC doesn't pass it
- Either Superfluous or Mischievous (People from same party which is dominant in lower house)
- serves only as stronghold of vested interests rather than progressive legislation
- Backdoor Entrance of the Defeated Members
- Costly Institution and a burden to excehquer
- hotchpotch of representation
- Utility Doubtful

Conclusion
✓ Alegislative council, not held hostage by electoral imperatives, could even become a bulwark
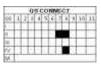
against today's blatant populism that is wrecking state finances or governance generally.

✓ Legislative council **can't** stall a bill indefinitely: no bill passed by the legislative assembly can be delayed beyond four months. So, the council must be seen as a feedback loop that helps Andhra Pradesh assembly perfect their legislations, not a stumbling block.

✓ **The circumstances under which Andhra Pradesh's legislative assembly passed a resolution recommending the abolition of the state's legislative council, in fact, make out a strong case for** retention of such councils.

✓ **Nevertheless, A.P.'s proposal will bear fruit only if Parliament passes a law to that effect, based on the State's request.**

Ethical Veganism

News Excerpt

An employment tribunal in the United Kingdom has ruled that "ethical veganism" is a philosophical belief protected by British law against discrimination.

What is meant by Veganism?

A vegan person does not consume meat products and also products that are derived from animals (such as milk, eggs, etc.) Thus, veganism is a lifestyle choice to refrain from eating meat as well as products made from or by animals.

Meaning of ethical veganism

An ethical vegan is someone whose lifestyle and choices are shaped by the desire to avoid cruelty and suffering to animals at all practical costs.

Ethical veganism goes far beyond a plant-based diet. It considers it wrong to use any product made from animals, e.g. leather products.

Ethical vegetarianism

Ethical veganism is different from ethical vegetarianism which makes a distinction between products made from animals, such as meat, and products made by animals, such as milk. Ethical vegetarianism is opposed to products made from animals in particular.

Ethical omnivorism

Ethical omnivorism permits the use of some animal products and may restrict the use of others based on some ethical criterion.

> **Origin of the term "*VEGANISM*"**
> ❖ The term "vegan" was coined in 1944 by a small group of vegetarians who broke away from the Leicester Vegetarian Society in England to form the Vegan Society.
> ❖ They chose not to consume dairy, eggs, or any other products of animal origin, in addition to refraining from meat, as do vegetarians.
> ❖ **The term "vegan" was chosen by combining the first and last letters of "vegetarian."**
> ❖ Veganism is currently defined as a way of living that attempts to exclude all forms of animal exploitation and cruelty, be it from food, clothing, or any other purpose.

Benefits of veganism

• For the animals: All sentient creatures have a right to life and freedom. Avoiding animal products is one of the most obvious ways to take a stand against animal cruelty and animal exploitation.

• For your health: Well-planned vegan diets follow healthy eating guidelines and contain all the nutrients that our bodies need. Research has linked vegan diets with lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and lower rates of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.

• For the environment: One of the most effective things an individual can do to lower their carbon footprint is to avoid all animal products.

• For people: Plant-based living is a more sustainable way of feeding the human family. A plant-based diet requires only one third of the land needed to support a meat and dairy diet. This becomes significant amid rising global food and water insecurity.

Analytica: Veganism in India

➢ Mahatma Gandhi, one of the foundational proponents of ahimsa, shied away from dairy **consumption as some of the practices such as 'khalbachha' or 'phooka' involved in dairy** production were violent in nature.

➢ Two different movements are taking root in India at the moment. On the one hand, as the **economy grows and people's disposable incomes increase, there's more consumption of meat and dairy products. On** the other, as people are exposed to social media and as the world becomes smaller due to globalisation, veganism is increasingly being embraced.

> PEPPER IT WITH
> Deontology, Utilitarianism, Consequentialism, Virtue ethics

➢ **There's also a massive increase in young people talking more about issues like animal rights** and sustainability and this has led to restaurants and supermarkets catering to this demand, offering more vegan options.

➢ While currently non-vegetarian (including egg) products are labelled with a red dot and vegetarian products labelled with a green dot there has been a greater demand to label vegetarian products with a brown dot and vegan products with the green dot symbol to **distinguish them further by indicating that they don't contain any animal ingredients or** cruelty.

➢ From Greta Thunberg talking about going vegan to information on how the meat and dairy industries are wreaking havoc in a country already facing water scarcity, hunger, pollution and climate change, people in India are slowly realising the impact individual food choices have on the planet.

Women, Business and Law Index

News Excerpt

India has taken the top spot in the South Asian region in the World Bank's Women, Business and Law (WBL) Index 2020.

Highlights

- **The index examined laws and regulations affecting women's economic opportunities across** 190 economies.

- There are eight parameters -- workplace, pay, mobility, marriage, parenthood, pensions, assets and entrepreneurship. India beat the Maldives to get the top rank in the South Asian region.

- The World Bank study particularly commended the measures adopted by Maharashtra to **remove restrictions on women's ability to work in jobs deemed dangerous.**

- **However, compared to other BRICS countries, India's score was second**-to-last. South Africa topped the WBL index among the BRICS grouping.

- While scoring 100 in the indicators of mobility, workplace and marriage, India scored poorly with respect to pay (25).

Women, Business and the Law (WBL)

➢ Women, Business and the Law (WBL) is a World Bank Group**'s** project collecting unique data on the laws and regulations that restrict women's economic opportunities.

➢ When societies achieve gender equality, economies become more resilient. That's why Women, Business and the Law is committed to informing research and policy discussions about the **state of women's economic opportunities and empowerment.**

➢ Women, Business and the Law celebrates the progress made while emphasizing the work still to be done to ensure economic empowerment for all.

➢ Since 2009, Women, Business and the Law has enhanced the study of gender equality and informed discussions on improving women's economic opportunities and empowerment. The dataset offers objective and measurable benchmarks for global progress toward gender equality. Comparable across economies, the data is useful for research and policy discussions on improving women's economic opportunities

Analytica: Economic participation of women in India

✓ The female labour force participation in India has fallen to 26 per cent in 2018 from 36.7 per cent in 2005, amid lack of access to quality education and underlying social, economic barriers limiting the opportunities for women.

✓ 95 per cent or 195 million women are employed in the unorganised sector or are in unpaid work.

✓ The range of challenges for women and girls echoes across Asia and India – access to quality education, digital divide, which limits them from gaining employable skill sets and entering the workforce or establishing an enterprise.

✓ A set of underlying social, economic and political barriers limits opportunities for women.

✓ The education ecosystem needs to go through a set of system strengthening initiatives, including the introduction of digital and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education in schools, which in turn will introduce girls to various career choices

Govt. Steps TowardsFacilitating Women's Economic Participation

❖ Pradhan Mantri MatruVandana Yojana (PMMVY), (erstwhile Maternity Benefit Programme) to contribute towards better enabling environment by providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and nursing mothers.

❖ Scheme for Adolescent Girls aims at girls in the age group 11-14, to empower and improve their social status through nutrition, life skills, home skills and vocational training.

❖ RastriyaMahilaKosh (RMK), for extending micro-finance services to bring about socio-economic upliftment of poor women.

❖ Mahila e-Haat, a unique direct online digital marketing platform for women entrepreneurs/ SHGs/ NGOs

❖ Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra, which will empower rural women through community participation to create an environment in which they realize their full potential

❖ Working Women Hostelto ensure availability of safe, convenient accommodation for working family, along with daycare facilities for their children, wherever possible in urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

❖ STEP scheme was set up to provide skills to women so that they can take up gainful employment. It also provides the right competencies and training for women to become entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

Giving women equal opportunities in the workplace

PEPPER IT WITH
Gender Gap Index, Women, Peace, and Security Index, Gender Inequality Index

leads to more successful economies. This is only possible if timely legislative reforms are introduced. The success of an economy is directly proportional to higher female labour force participation.

Democracy Index

News Excerpt

India slipped 10 places to 51st position in the 2019 Democracy Index's global ranking which is published by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) .

Pre-Connect

• The EIU Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.

• The Democracy Index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture.

- Based on their scores on 60 indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: full democracy; flawed democracy; hybrid regime; and authoritarian regime.
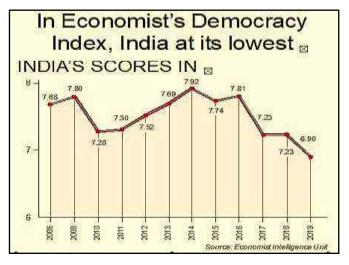
Highlights

➤ India's overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90.

➤ The primary cause of the democratic regression was an erosion of civil liberties in the country.

➤ India was included in the "flawed democracy" category.

➤ China's score fell to 2.26 in the 2019 index, and the country is now ranked 153rd, close to the bottom of the global rankings.

➤ Among other emerging economies, Brazil was ranked 52nd with a score of 6.86, Russia stood at 134th with a score of 3.11

➤ The overall list was topped by Norway, followed by Iceland and Sweden.

Analytica

✓ Civilisation progresses with the evolution of institutions designed by humans to govern their affairs. Institutions of electoral democracy have evolved over the centuries. By various yardsticks, democracy is shining in India.

✓ India has a great Constitution. It conducts free and fair elections. Its Parliament has passed many landmark laws since Independence.

✓ However, democracy consists of much more than elections and passage of laws. Failures of governance (and democracy) in India can be seen in so-**called 'backward areas' in the heartlands.**

✓ In the popular discourse about democracy, too much attention has been given to the vertical institutions required for people to elect their leaders, and too little to the lateral institutions required to create harmony amongst people.

✓ When problems are complex, good governance requires effective methods for **people's participation. Referendums of the entire electorate give an illusion of good democracy** — that the people have been consulted. But this is not enough. voters should be educated about what they are voting for.

✓ Healthy democracies need three vibrant layers of institutions. At the bottom is the public space and the media in which people must be free to speak up if they want to. On the top is the layer of constitutional institutions — parliaments, courts, etc.

✓ Social media has enlarged the public space enormously. Many more people are speaking up and many issues are being raised. Social media provides a good platform for opposing views.

✓ There is fear that India may be slipping down the path where a majoritarian view is imposed from above to strengthen the government. This may strengthen government on the ground, while stifling democratic governance.

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)

❖ The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) is an organization that provides forecasting and advisory services to assist entrepreneurs, financiers, and government officials.

❖ The EIU provides country, industry, and risk analyses based on the work, research, and insights of a worldwide network of economic, political, and business experts.

❖ Additionally, the EIU has a system of country specialists that provide country-specific insight and analysis.

❖ The Economist Intelligence Unit operates as an independent research and analysis business within the London-based Economist Group, the media company that publishes The Economist magazine.

In Economist's Democracy Index, India at its lowest
INDIA'S SCORES IN
Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

Way forward

It is imperative for India to build intermediate level, unofficial or semi-official institutions for non-partisan deliberation amongst concerned citizens. The government must give more space for such institutions to form and operate.

When there is global despair about the ability of democratic institutions to deliver the benefits of **good governance to citizens, this innovation must become India's invaluable contribution to the history of democracy's evolution.**

Conclusion

India does have the highest rating among South Asian democracies. But its performances on several yardsticks makes it a flawed democracy. If we want the largest democracy to count among **the world's greatest, there must be serious introspection among all stakeholders.**

ASER 2019

News Excerpt

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)-2019 has been released with a focus on children aged 4-8 years this year.

Pre-Connect

- If development programs are to lead to desired outcomes, their impact on the ground needs to be regularly assessed.
- ASER seeks to use simple yet rigorous methods to generate evidence on scale on the outcomes of social sector programs.
- **Since 2005, the NGO Pratham's Annual** Status of Education Reports (ASER) have **shone a light on a critical failure of India's** education system: A large number of school-going children across the country are short on basic learning skills.
- These reports have led to debates on seminal policy interventions such as the Right to Education Act and have been catalysts for meaningful conversations on the pedagogical deficiencies of the formal school system.

Learning levels

Five-year-old children in private schools fared better in learning tasks than those in govt. schools and anganwadis

% of students who completed the tasks	Govt. pre-school	Private kinder-garten
COGNITIVE TASKS		
Sorting	77.5	87.2
Pattern recognition	43.4	49.9
BASIC LANGUAGE		
Picture description	63.7	76.6
Listening comprehension	23.5	40.4
BASIC MATHS		
Counting objects	36.8	57.6

- The latest edition of ASER directs attention to children between four and eight years of age and **suggests that India's learning crisis could be linked to the weakness of the country's pre-primary system.**

Highlights

- ASER surveyed 37,000 children between 4 and 8 years in 26 rural districts across 24 States.
- They asked each child to do a variety of tasks testing cognitive skills — sort images by colour and size, recognise patterns, fit together a four-piece animal puzzle — as well as simple literacy and numeracy tests.
- Social and emotional development was tracked through activities using cards with faces showing happiness, sadness, anger and fear.
- The survey shows that among Class 1 children who could correctly do none or only one of the tasks requiring cognitive skills, about 14% could read words, while 19% could do single digit addition.
- However, of those children who could correctly do all three cognitive tasks, 52% could read words, and 63% could solve the addition problem.

➢ Only 16% of children in Class 1 in 26 surveyed rural districts can read text at the prescribed level, while almost 40% cannot even recognize letters.
➢ Only 41% of these children could recognize two-digit numbers.

Private schools ahead

✓ Of six-year old in Class 1, 41.5% of those in private schools could read words in comparison to only 19% from government schools.
✓ Similarly, 28% of those in government schools could do simple addition as against 47% in private schools.
✓ This gap is further exacerbated by a gender divide: only 39% of girls aged 6-8 are enrolled in private schools in comparison to almost 48% of boys.

Importance of early education

▪ The early years, defined globally as age 0-8, is known to be the most important stage of cognitive, motor, social and emotional development in the human life cycle.
▪ A large body of worldwide research demonstrates that exposure to enabling environments and access to appropriate inputs during these years is fundamental to ensuring that children have a firm foundation.

Draft NEP 2019 and early education

❖ Draft National Education Policy seeks to increase the focus on early childhood care.
❖ The Committee for Draft National Education Policy observed several quality related deficiencies in the existing early childhood learning programmes.
❖ **These include: (i) curriculum that doesn't meet the** developmental needs of children, (ii) lack of qualified and trained teachers, and (iii) substandard pedagogy.
❖ Currently, most early childhood education is delivered through anganwadis and private-preschools. However, there has been less focus on the educational aspects of early childhood.
❖ Hence, the draft Policy recommends developing a two-part curriculum for early childhood care and education. This will consist of: (i) guidelines for up to three-year-old children (for parents and teachers), and (ii) educational framework for three to eight-year-old children.
❖ This would be implemented by improving and expanding the anganwadi system and co-locating anganwadis with primary schools.

▪ The ASER report shows that a large number of factors determine the quality of education **received at this stage, including the child's home background, especially the mother's** education level; the type of school, whether anganwadis, government schools or private pre-**schools; and the child's age in Class 1.**

Analytica

o Due to the lack of affordable and accessible options for pre-schooling, too many children go to Std I with limited exposure to early childhood education.
o Although the anganwadi network across India is huge, by and large, school readiness or early childhood development and education activities have not had high priority in the ICDS system.

> PEPPER IT WITH
> SWAYAM, Vidya Lakshmi, RTE Act

o Private preschools that are mushrooming in urban and rural communities have increased access to preschool but are often designed to be a downward extension of schooling. Thus, they bring in school-like features into the pre-school classroom, rather than developmentally appropriate activities by age and phase.
o Age distribution in Std I varies considerably between government and private schools, with private schools in many states having a relatively older age distribution. A big part of the differences in learning levels between government and private school children may be due to these differences in age composition right from the beginning of formal schooling.

Way forward

◊ A reworking of curriculum and activities is urgently needed for the entire age band from four to

eight, cutting across all types of preschools and early grades regardless of whether the provision is by government institutions or by private agencies.

◊ There is considerable scope for expanding anganwadi outreach for three and four-year-old children. Expanding access to anganwadis is an important incremental step.

◊ Strengthening the early childhood components in the ICDS system would help greatly in raising school readiness among young children.

Conclusion

After several decades of efforts to universalize elementary education, there is widespread understanding of the importance of schooling. The year 2020 marks the 10th anniversary of the RTE Act. This is the best moment to focus on early education and ensure that 10 years later they complete secondary school as well-equipped and well-rounded citizens of India.

Time to Care

News Excerpt

The world's richest 1 per cent have more than twice the wealth of the rest of **humanity combined, according to Oxfam in its report 'Time to Care",** which called on governments to adopt inequality-busting policies.

Pre-Connect

- Oxfam is an international confederation of 20 NGOs working with partners in over 90 countries to end the injustices that cause poverty.

- Time to Care report by Oxfam outlines how global inequality is shockingly entrenched and vast, with the number of billionaires having doubled in the last decade.

- The report also shows how our economies are fueling the inequality crisis and enabling a wealthy elite to accumulate vast fortunes at the expense of ordinary people and particularly poor women and girls.

OXFAM REPORT'S KEY FINDINGS

The world's 2,153 billionaires have more wealth than 4.6 billion people.

The 22 richest men have more wealth than all the women in Africa. According to the UN, there are 326 million aged 20 and over.

The world's richest 1% have more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people. 1%

The value of unpaid care work by women aged 15 and over is $10.8 trillion annually.

The number of billionaires has doubled over the past decade.

India's richest 1 per cent of the population hold 42.5 per cent of national wealth.

India's top 10 per cent of the population holds 74.3 per cent of the total national wealth.

(Source: Oxfam International) IANS GRAPHICS

Highlights of the Report

➤ Governments are massively under-taxing rich individuals and corporations, and under-funding public services.

➤ Women and girls were burdened with disproportionate responsibility for care work and fewer economic opportunities.

➤ Economic inequality is out of control, with 2,153 billionaires having more wealth than 4.6 billion people in 2019.

➤ **The world's three richest people amassed a total of $231 billion over the past decade.**

➤ The total wealth of the top 20 billionaires has doubled from $672 billion to $1,397 billion since 2012.

➤ **India's richest 1 per cent hold more t**han four-times the wealth held by 953 million people who **make up for the bottom 70 per cent of the country's population, while the total wealth of all** Indian billionaires is more than the full-year budget.

Factors responsible for economic inequality in India

✓ Unemployment: The main reason for low level of income of the majority of Indian people is unemployment and underemployment and the consequent low productivity of labour.

- ✓ **Inflation:** Another cause of inequality is inflation. During inflation, few profit earners gain and most wage earners lose.
- ✓ **Tax Evasion:** In India, the personal income tax rates are very high. High tax rates encourage evasion and avoidance and give birth to a parallel economy.High tax rates are responsible for inequality in the distribution of income and wealth. This is due to undue concentration of incomes in a few hands caused by large- scale tax evasion.
- ✓ **New Agricultural Strategy:** **India's new agricultural** strategy led to the Green Revolution and raised agricultural productivity. But the benefits of higher productivity were enjoyed mainly by the rich farmers and landowners.

Key Recommendations

Oxfam is proposing the following six actions to help realize the rights of careers and to start closing the gap between unpaid and underpaid care workers and the wealthy elite, who have profited most from their labour:

- ❖ Invest in national care systems to address the disproportionate responsibility for care work done by women and girls.
- ❖ End extreme wealth to end extreme poverty.
- ❖ Legislate to protect the rights of all carers and secure living wages for paid care workers.
- ❖ Ensure that carers have influence on decision-making processes
- ❖ Challenge harmful norms.
- ❖ Value care work in business policies andpractices.

Way forward: Reducing Economic Inequality

- ▪ **Investing in women:** Women contribute **only 17 per cent of India's GDP. As IMF** Chief Christine Lagarde recently said, if **women's participation in the workforce matched men's, India could grow at 27 per** cent. More family-friendly work policies are required for this.

Let us not forget history. The Roman Empire was one of the richest on the planet, with wealth concentrated in the hands of a few elite and the rest were utterly poor. Warning signs of inequality were ignored and it resulted in civil war and the entire empire collapsed. Do we want that again? Let us collectively work towards making an equitable world.
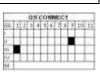
- ▪ **Investing in agriculture:** As per the World Bank, agriculture can help reduce poverty for 80 **per cent of the world's poor who live in rural areas and work mainly in farming.**
- ▪ **Reforming workplace laws: Reforms in workers' laws can reduce inequalities. Minimum** wages and universal basic income (UBI) are two of the popular ways to reform workplace laws. They both have the same aim — raising incomes of the least fortunate to reduce the income gap.
- ▪ **Distinguishing poor from non-poor:** In developing countries such as India, despite having hundreds of pro-poor schemes, the biggest question is whether such benefit is reaching the poor. Therefore, distinguishing the poor from non-poor properly is required.

PEPPER IT WITH
PMJDY, PMMY, PMJJBY

Global Investment Trend Monitor Report

News Excerpt

India was among the top 10 recipients of Foreign Direct Investment in 2019, attracting $49 billion in inflows, a 16 per cent increase from the previous year, driving the FDI growth in South Asia, according to the Global Investment Trend Monitor Report.

Pre-Connect

- FDI is a major driver of economic growth and a source of non-debt finance for the economic development of the country.

- Government has put in place an investor friendly policy on FDI, under which FDI up to 100% is permitted on the automatic route in most sectors/ activities.
- FDI policy provisions have been progressively liberalized across various sectors in recent years to make India an attractive investment destination.
- Some of the sectors include Defence, Construction Development, Trading, Pharmaceuticals, Power Exchanges, Insurance, Pension, Other Financial Services, Asset reconstruction Companies, Broadcasting and Civil Aviation.
- These reforms have contributed to India attracting record FDI inflows in the last 5 years. Total FDI into India from 2014-15 to 2018-19 has been US $ 286 billion as compared to US $ 189 billion in the 5-year period prior to that (2009-10 to 2013-14).

> ### Types of Foreign Direct Investment
> Foreign direct investments are commonly categorized as being horizontal, vertical or conglomerate.
> ❖ A horizontal direct investment refers to the investor establishing the same type of business operation in a foreign country as it operates in its home country, for example, a cell phone provider based in the United States opening stores in China.
> ❖ A vertical investment is one in which different but related business activities from the investor's main business are established or acquired in a foreign country, such as when a manufacturing company acquires an interest in a foreign company that supplies parts or raw materials required for the manufacturing company to make its products.
> ❖ A conglomerate type of foreign direct investment is one where a company or individual makes a foreign investment in a business that is unrelated to its existing business in its home country. Since this type of investment involves entering an industry in which the investor has no previous experience, it often takes the form of a joint venture with a foreign company already operating in the industry.

- In fact, total FDI in 2018-19 i.e. US $ 64.37 billion is the highest ever FDI received for any financial year.

Highlights

➢ The Global Investment Trend Monitor report compiled by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) states that the global foreign direct investment remained flat in 2019 at $1.39 trillion, a one per cent decline from a revised $1.41 trillion in 2018.

➢ This is against the backdrop of weaker macroeconomic performance and policy uncertainty for investors, including trade tensions.

➢ Developing economies continue to absorb more than half of global FDI flows.

➢ South Asia recorded a 10 per cent increase in FDI to $60 billion and this growth was driven by India, with a 16 per cent increase in inflows to an estimated $49 billion. The majority went into services industries, including information technology.

➢ India attracted an estimated 49 billion dollars of FDI in 2019, a 16 per cent increase from the 42 billion dollars recorded in 2018.

➢ The FDI flows to developed countries remained at a historically low level, decreasing by a further six per cent to an estimated $643 billion

➢ The FDI to the European Union (EU) fell by 15 per cent to $305 billion, while there was zero-growth of flows to United States, which received $251 billion FDI in 2019.

➢ The United States remained the largest recipient of FDI, followed by China with flows of $140 billion and Singapore with $110 billion.

FDI in India

✓ India mainly attracts investments from countries like Mauritius, Singapore, Japan, the U.K.,

the Netherlands, the U.S., Germany, Cyprus, France, and the U.A.E.

✓ The sectors that received maximum FDI include services, computer hardware and software, construction development, trading, automobile, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and power.

✓ India received $37.3 billion capital inflow in 2017-18 as compared with $36.3 billion in the previous fiscal. During the 2015-16, the country received $36.06 billion.

✓ India received a $27.2 billion foreign investment in the first half of 2019 and the pace is said to have sustained thereafter.

FDI Reforms and Benefits

▪ In the coal sector, for sale of coal, 100% FDI under automatic route for coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure will attract international players to create an efficient and competitive coal market.

▪ Further, manufacturing through contract contributes equally to the objective of Make in India. FDI, now being permitted under automatic route in contract manufacturing, will be a big boost to Manufacturing sector in India.

TOP 10 HOST ECONOMIES	FDI inflows ($ billion)	
	2018	2019
United States	254	251
China	139	140
Singapore	78	110
Brazil	60	75
United Kingdom	65	61
Hong Kong, China	104	55
France	37	52
India	42	49
Canada	43	47
Germany	12	40

BusinessToday.In

Source: UNCTAD

▪ Easing local sourcing norms for FDI in Single Brand Retail Trading (SBRT) will lead to greater flexibility and ease of operations for SBRT entities, besides creating a level playing field for companies with higher exports in a base year.

▪ Permitting online sales prior to opening of brick and mortar stores brings policy in sync with current market practices. Online sales will also lead to creation of jobs in logistics, digital payments, customer care, training and product skilling.

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↔ India is optimistic of continuing to be one of the world's favourite Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) destinations in 2020 on the back of the government's liberalised norms.

↔ Despite a slowdown in the global economy, foreign investment inflows have not been impacted.

↔ The healthy growth in the overseas investments is proving that there is a lot of optimism and enthusiasm about India as a foreign investment destination.

↔ With the ongoing policy reforms in sectors ranging from single brand retail trading, civil aviation, real estate broking service and simplification of legal and regulatory system, India is **improving its ranking in the World Bank's Ease of D**oing Business global ranking.

Way Forward

To ensure the revival doesn't fade, the government must undertake the following steps:

o Enforce a tighter control regime and constantly monitor all mechanisms to ensure that there are no stutters in the system.

o Take decisive punitive actions against defaulters to send a strong message to global investors that the watchdog is alive and kicking.

o Provide more benefits and incentives, and easier processes to seek larger foreign investments. While the improvement in the ease of doing business ranking is a big positive, the government has to maintain a consistent upward learning curve and communicate new

evolutionary developments to the world.

o Widen investment avenues by bringing the benefits of organisation to more real estate sub-asset classes such as rental housing development, student housing and senior citizen living.

o So far, India has not been able to take advantage of this ongoing relocation of production facilities out of China. But it should gradually facilitate foreign firms setting up manufacturing bases in India, providing a boost to both employment and exports.

First Global Social Mobility Report

News Excerpt

India has been ranked very low at 76th place out of 82 countries on a new Social Mobility Index compiled by the World Economic Forum (WEF), while Denmark has topped the charts.

Pre-Connect

- Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, or groups through a system of social hierarchy or stratification.

- **The WEF's Global Social Mobility Index assesses the 82 economies on '10 pillars' spread** across the following five key dimensions of social mobility: Health; Education (access, quality and equity, lifelong learning); Technology; Work (opportunities, wages, conditions); Protection and Institutions (social protection and inclusive institutions).

DRAGS ON GROWTH

India among the five countries that stand to gain the most from a **better social mobility score**

Fair wages, social protection and lifelong learning are the biggest drags on **social mobility** globally

India ranks **76th out of 82 economies**; 41st in **lifelong learning** and 53rd in **working conditions**

THE AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT FOR INDIA INCLUDE SOCIAL PROTECTION (76TH) AND FAIR WAGE DISTRIBUTION (79TH)

Highlights

➢ In the case of India, it ranks 76th out of 82 economies with a score of 42.7. It ranks 41st in lifelong learning and 53rd in working conditions. The Areas of improvement for India include social protection (76th) and fair wage distribution (79th).

➢ The Nordic nations hold the top five spots, led by Denmark in the first place (scoring 85 points), followed by Norway, Finland and Sweden (all above 83 points) and Iceland (82 points). Rounding out the top 10 are the Netherlands (6th), Switzerland (7th), Austria (8th), Belgium (9th) and Luxembourg (10th).

➢ Among the G7 economies, Germany is the most socially mobile, ranking 11th with 78 points, followed by France in 12th position. Canada comes next (14th), followed by Japan (15th), the United Kingdom (21st), the United States (27th) and Italy (34th).

➢ Among the world's large emerging economies, the Russian Federation is the most socially mobile of the BRICS grouping, ranking 39th, with a score of 64 points. Next is China (45th), followed by Brazil (60th), India (76th) and South Africa (77th).

> PEPPER IT WITH
> World Social Protection Report, World Employment and Social Outlook, International Platform on Health Worker Mobility, Global Gender Gap Report
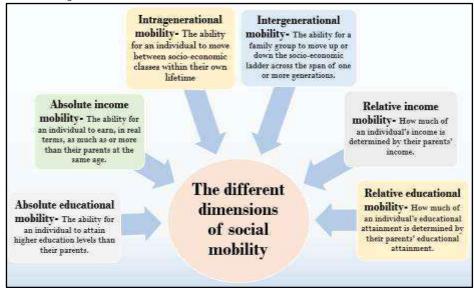
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✓ In the Fourth Industrial Revolution, human capital is the driving force of economic growth, and frictions that prevent the best allocation of talent and impede the accumulation of

human capital may significantly limit growth. Inequalities of opportunity and low social mobility underpin such frictions, and also hinder the drivers of productivity. Low Social Mobility can erode the foundations of economic growth.

✓ The two most frequently-cited causes of polarization of economic inequalities are globalization and technology. Globalization has increased inequality within countries by transferring low-skilled jobs in high-productivity sectors from high-income economies to lower-income ones and, consequently, penalized workers in specific locations and jobs. Technology has impacted inequality by reducing demand for low-skilled jobs and rewarding high-skilled jobs disproportionately.

✓ Despite a significant decrease in the percentage of people living in absolute poverty, there are several areas for improvement for India to provide more equally shared opportunity to its population. First, because of low life expectancy and a low health access and quality performance, it

scores 54.6 on the Health pillar. Education is an engine of social mobility. But achievement is not balanced fairly.On the education front, it scores 41.1 on the Education Access pillar and 31.3 on Education Quality and Equity, due to its pupil-to-teacher ratios, which are still very high across pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, among other factors.

✓ In terms of work opportunities, India has the second-highest level of workers in vulnerable employment in the ranking (76.2%), behind Saudi Arabia and a low female labour participation rate (29.8% of the male labour participation).

✓ Another area where real structural reform needs to take place is in terms of fair wages. Social protection coverage is also very low in comparison with its regional peers, and overall social protection expenditure is very low (2.68% of GDP). The combination of these factors is detrimental to the social mobility of its population.
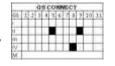
Conclusion

Improving social mobility must be the fundamental imperative of this new decade. As long as an individual's chances in life remain disproportionately influenced by their socio-economic status at birth, inequalities will never be reduced. Creating societies where every person has the same opportunity to fulfil their potential in life irrespective of socio-economic background would not only bring huge societal benefits in the form of reduced inequalities and healthier, more fulfilled lives, it would also boost economic growth.

Corruption Perception Index

News Excerpt

India has been ranked at the 80th position among 180 countries and territories in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) prepared by Transparency International.

Pre-Connect
- **India's rank**ing in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI-2019) has slipped from 78 to 80 compared to the previous year.
- The 2019 CPI draws on 13 surveys and expert assessments to measure public sector corruption in 180 countries and territories, giving each a score from zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

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➤ This **year's Corruption Perception** Index (CPI) shows corruption is more pervasive in countries where big money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments listen only to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals.

➤ In the Asia Pacific region, the average score is 45, after many consecutive years of an average score of 44, which **"illustrates general stagnation" across the** region. China has improved its position from 87 to 80 with a score of 41 out of 100, a two-point jump.

➤ Despite the presence of high performers like New Zealand (87), Singapore (85), Australia (77), Hong Kong (76) and Japan (73), the **Asia Pacific region hasn't witnessed substantial progress in anti**-corruption efforts or results.

Status check

The Corruption Perceptions Index uses a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). The global average for 2019 is 43

Country	Score in 2019	Rank in 2019	Change in rank from '18
Denmark	87	1	0
New Zealand	87	1	1
U.K.	77	12	-1
U.S.	69	23	-1
India	41	80	-2
China	41	80	7
Brazil	35	106	-1
Pakistan	32	120	-3
Russia	28	137	1
Bangladesh	26	146	3
Somalia	9	180	0

➤ If we look at India and the countries around it on the index, and at the top 10 (least corrupt) countries, we realise that the former group contains nations with huge socio-economic inequalities, and the latter contains nations with a high degree of social and economic justice. In that sense, Singapore along with the European and European-settler countries ranked as the 10 least corrupt nations. In short, many believe that corruption is directly proportionate to the socio-economic gap in a nation.

➤ Moreover, in India, unfair and opaque political financing and undue influence in decision making and lobbying by powerful corporate interest groups result in stagnation or decline in control of corruption.

Way Forward

✓ Manage Conflicts of Interest - Governments should reduce the risk of undue influence in policy-making by tightening controls over financial and other interests of government

> PEPPER IT WITH
> Central Vigilance Commission, Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), Lokpal

officials. **Governments should also address "revolving doors", establish c**ooling-off periods for former officials and ensure rules are properly enforced and sanctioned.

✓ Control Political Financing- In order to prevent excessive money and influence in politics, governments should improve and properly enforce campaign finance regulations. Political parties should also disclose their sources of income, assets and loans, and governments should empower oversight agencies with stronger mandates and appropriate resources.

✓ Reinforce Checks and Balances- Governments must promote the separation of powers, strengthen judicial independence and preserve checks and balances.

✓ Strengthen Electoral Integrity- For democracy to be effective against corruption, governments must ensure that elections are free and fair. Preventing and sanctioning vote-buying and misinformation campaigns are essential to rebuilding trust in government and ensuring that citizens can use their vote to punish corrupt politicians.

✓ Tackle Preferential Treatment- Governments should create mechanisms to ensure that

service delivery and public resource allocation are not driven by personal connections or are biased towards special interest groups at the expense of the overall public good.

✓ Empower Citizens- Governments should engage civil society and protect citizens, activists, whistle-blowers and journalists in monitoring and exposing corruption.

State Energy Efficiency Index

News Excerpt

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power and New & Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship recently released **the 'State Energy Efficiency Index 2019', which tracks the** progress of Energy Efficiency (EE) initiatives in 36 states and union territories based on 97 significant indicators.

Pre-Connect
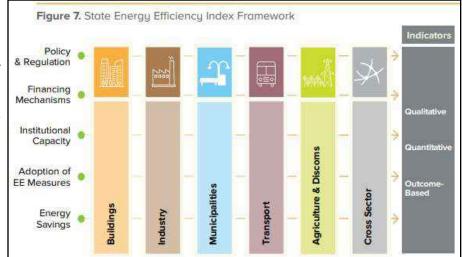
- The index is developed by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in association with Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE).

- The first such Index, **the "State Energy** Efficiency Preparedness Index **2018", was launched** on August 1, 2018.

- State Energy Efficiency Index 2019 incorporates qualitative, quantitative and outcome-based indicators to assess energy efficiency

Figure 7. State Energy Efficiency Index Framework

initiatives, programs and outcomes in five distinct sectors – buildings, industry, municipalities, transport, agriculture, and DISCOMs. New indicators for this year include adoption of Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) 2017, energy efficiency in MSME clusters, etc.

Highlights

➢ The State Energy Efficiency Index categorises states as **'Front Runner', 'Achiever', 'Contender' and 'Aspirant'** based on their efforts and achievements towards energy efficiency implementation.

➢ Haryana, Karnataka and Kerala have topped the State Energy Efficiency Index 2019 and were kept under **the 'Achiever' category.**

➢ For rational comparison, States/UTs are grouped into four groups based on aggregated Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES) **required to meet the state's actual energy demand** (electricity, coal, oil, gas, etc.) across sectors.

> PEPPER IT WITH
> BEE, ECBC, Perform Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme, Indo-Japan Energy Dialogue.

Analytica

✓ Rate of progress in energy efficiency is slowing.

✓ Digitalisation can unlock more efficiency by providing gains in end-use efficiency & other services, such as flexible load, that increase the efficiency of the entire system.

✓ Most of the first-generation energy efficiency policies prepared by BEE under

programmes on Standards & Labelling (S&L), ECBC, Perform Achieve & Trade (PAT), etc. are understood by states but more emphasis must be given on ensuring greater compliance to achieve savings.

✓ In the industrial sector, 35 industrial units across 13 States reduced their energy intensity through the adoption of EE measures, based on data gleaned from energy conservation awards. On a positive note, 11 States have installed centralized control and monitoring systems for street-lighting in some municipalities within the State. In the transport sector, six States have released Electric Vehicle (EV).

✓ Mandatory compliance checks.

Way Forward

▪ Proactive role must be embraced by states in policy formulation and implementation to **shift the focus from "policies in place" to "policies successfully implemented".**

▪ Strengthening the mechanism for data capture, management and public availability of data: **For this year's Index,** State Designated Agencies (SDAs) proactively contacted various state departments to gather data. However, SDAs should further enhance their engagement with state departments and private sector to enable a robust mechanism for Energy Data Management System.

▪ Enhancing the credibility of EE schemes: Ensuring the integrity of programs that have direct or indirect linkages with common consumers is significant to energy efficiency market transformation. States must demonstrate an approach which includes enforcement and compliance checks as well as independent monitoring and verification of savings, which is integral to all EE policies and programs.

▪ **Thus, efficient use of energy is the fastest, cheapest and cleanest way to meet India's rising energy demand and power the nation's growth.** The State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index will help in implementing national energy efficiency initiatives in states and meet both State as well as national goals on energy security, energy access and climate change.

Global Talent Competitiveness Index

News Excerpt

India has moved up eight places to the 72nd position in the 2020 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI)released recently that measures and ranks countries based on their ability to grow, attract and retain talent.
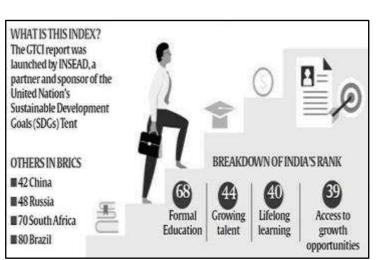
Pre-Connect

• GTCI is an annual benchmarking tool developed in 2013 by INSEAD, in partnership with the Adecco Group and Google. The GTCI 2020 was released at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

• The index, which includes 70 variables and covers 132 countries, ranks India at no. 72.

Highlights

➢ Switzerland, USA and Singapore took the top-three positions in GTCI 2020.

➢ As far as the regional group (Central and Southern Asia) is concerned, Kazakhstan, India and Sri Lanka took the top three spots in the region.

- In the BRICS grouping, China was ranked 42nd, Russia (48th), South Africa (70th) and Brazil at 80th position.
- The report, which measures countries based on six pillars — enable, attract, grow, and retain talent along with vocation and technical skills, and global knowledge skills — ranked India 44 in growing talent — highest position among six pillars.
- Theme for 2020 was **'Global Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence'**. It explores how the development of artificial intelligence (AI) is not only changing the nature of work but also forcing a re-evaluation of workplace practices, corporate structures and innovation ecosystems.

Analytica

> PEPPER IT WITH
> SDGs, Global Competitiveness Report

- ✓ GTCI is an Input-Output model in the sense that it combines an assessment of what countries do to produce and acquire talents (Input) and the kind of skills that are available to them as a result (Output). It helps in attracting FDI & creative people (through high-skilled migration).
- ✓ As per GTCI 2020, when it comes to India, **more could be done to improve the country's** educational system (68th in Formal Education). India's key strength relates to growing (44th) talent, primarily by virtue of the possibilities for Lifelong Learning (40th) and Access to Growth Opportunities (39th). Its highest-ranked sub-pillar, however, is Employability (28th), but the ability to match labour market demand and supply stands in contrast to **the country's poor Mid**-Level Skills (113th), which result in a mediocre score in Vocational and Technical Skills (76th).
- ✓ **India's greatest challenge is to address its weak ability to attract (92nd) a**nd retain (95th) talent. With regard to the former pillar, there is a need to strengthen the role of minorities and women in order to raise the level of Internal Openness (104th). As for the latter pillar, India's low scores in the indicators that relate to the quality of life (Lifestyle, 115th) fall well short of its more positive showing in Sustainability (53rd).
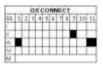
Way Forward

- Its definition should be broadened to include apprenticeships, training, and continuous education as well as experience and access to growth opportunities.
- AI policies and programmes should work to minimise negative outcomes and increase access to AI thus bridging digital divide.

BRIEF Report

News Excerpt

The heightened political tension between India and Pakistan since the past one year has adversely impacted border economy, according to the Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF) report.

Pre-Connect

- Over the last five years, the bilateral trade trajectory has been volatile. From a high of $2.70 billion in 2013-14, it fell to $2.40 billion in 2017-18. During this time, **while Pakistan's exports to** India were (and have been) **fairly consistent, India's** exports decreased.
- Overall, India still manages to have a significant trade surplus

BRIEF
Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF) is a research and consulting organisation with focus on policy research, diagnostic studies, program implementation, industry and market research as well as assessment of various schemes and interventions in the socio-economic domain.
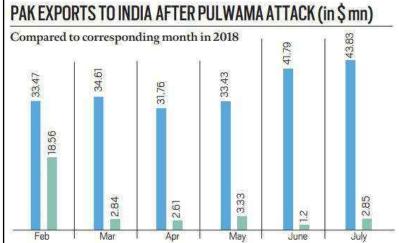
Its past engagements have spanned across areas such as international trade facilitation, infrastructure and policy aspects among others, with special emphasis on India and other countries in South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

with Pakistan (about $1.4 billion in 2017-18). Interestingly, these figures reflect only the direct trade between the two countries.

- Indirect trade (largely routed through a third country like the United Arab Emirates) is estimated by much research to be up to 10 times more — exemplifying the existence of a huge bilateral trade potential, provided the tariff and non-tariff barriers are addressed and steps taken towards increasing awareness and building confidence among the trading communities.

Highlights

➢ At least 9000 families, in Punjab and about 900 families in Kashmir have been directly impacted by the shutdown of trade between India and Pakistan across the Wagah-Attari border and the Line of Control (LoC) involved in small trade, handicrafts sellers, truckers, labourers, and hotel owners.

➢ After the Pulwama terror attack in Kashmir in February that prompted India to carry out airstrikes on a terror camp in **Pakistan's Balakot, New Delhi** withdrew the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Islamabad. It subsequently raised customs duty to 200% on all goods received from across the border.

➢ **Exports to Pakistan "mainly" go** through the sea route (about 80%), while imports, including rock salt, dry dates, cement and gypsum, come largely through the land route in Punjab.

PAK EXPORTS TO INDIA AFTER PULWAMA ATTACK (in $ mn)
Compared to corresponding month in 2018

Feb: 33.47, 18.56
Mar: 34.61, 2.84
Apr: 31.76, 2.61
May: 33.43, 3.33
June: 41.79, 1.2
July: 43.83, 2.85

Analytica

✓ The trade potential between India and Pakistan according to the World Bank, is $37 billion will help in elevating poverty.

✓ Trade ties between the two countries hit rock bottom when Islamabad, recklessly, suspended all trade ties after the Article 370 decision in August. Earlier, India had unilaterally increased custom duties on all Pakistani products to 200%, post the Pulwama terror attack in February. On its part, Pakistan did not honour its most favoured nation obligation towards India for a very long time

✓ Unlike national economies, border economies generally experience a sudden boom-bust cycle on account of political changes, trade bans, price and exchange rate and tax fluctuations. It is the local economies that will suffer the most

Way forward
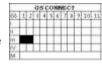
▪ India-Pakistan relations have always been viewed through the prism of Kashmir. But the opening of the Kartarpur corridor has unlocked the possibility of looking at bilateral relations through the prism of Punjab.

▪ Alternative sources of livelihood can be generated to keep border economies afloat.

▪ Given the present situation in J&K, it is imperative that India plans an outreach connecting all stakeholders from across the spectrum. However, there is need for a revised strategy towards re-initiation of cross-LoC trade.

▪ Other steps such as clarifications on harmonised system codes to avoid misrepresentation of commodities, rules of origin to avoid third country goods, GST rates and inter-State taxation rules to avoid tax evasions, and a trader registration policy to ensure credible traders are involved in this trade.

▪ Digitisation of systems and procedures at the trade facilitation centres.

Stagflation

News Excerpt

Recently, the rise in retail price inflation to a nearly six-year high of 7.35% in December 2019 has led to increasing worries that the Indian economy may be headed towards stagflation.
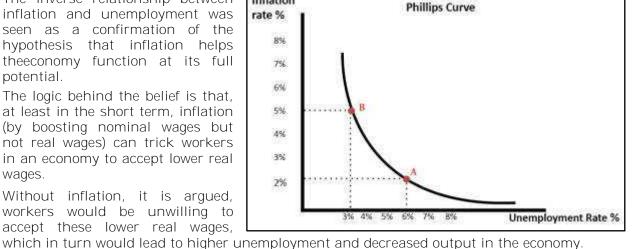
Pre-Connect

Stagflation: Overview:

- Stagflation is an economic scenario where an economy faces both high inflation and low growth (and high unemployment) at the same time. A word stagflation is derived by combining two words i.e. stagnant growth and rising inflation.
- The conventional view among economists is that there is an inverse relationship between economic growth and inflation.
- The idea was first proposed by New Zealand economist William Phillips, after whom the "Phillips Curve" is named, based on statistical studies of inflation and unemployment.
- The inverse relationship between inflation and unemployment was seen as a confirmation of the hypothesis that inflation helps theeconomy function at its full potential.

- The logic behind the belief is that, at least in the short term, inflation (by boosting nominal wages but not real wages) can trick workers in an economy to accept lower real wages.
- Without inflation, it is argued, workers would be unwilling to accept these lower real wages, which in turn would lead to higher unemployment and decreased output in the economy.
- At the same time, economists argue that an inflation rate beyond a certain level, at which point labour and other resources in the economy are fully employed, will have no employment or growth benefits.
- Accordingly, policymakers are often advised to maintain a certain inflation rate to ensure that unemployment is kept to a minimum and the economy is operating at full capacity.
- The simultaneous presence of high inflation and low economic growth under stagflation, however, challenges the conventional view that inflation helps an economy operate at full capacity.
- It was the stagflation in the United States in the 1970s, caused by rising oil prices after the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries cut supplies abruptly, which first led many to question the validity of the Phillips Curve.

Is India Facing A Stagflation?

➢ Over the past six quarters, economic growth in India has decelerated with every quarter. In the second quarter (July to September), for which the latest data is available, the GDP grew by just 4.5%.

➢ With growth decelerating every quarter and now inflation rising up every month, there are growing murmurs of stagflation.

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Arguments in Favor

✓ Most economists have blamed the slowdown on the lack of sufficient consumer demand for goods and services.

✓ Subsequently, to boost the demand the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cut its benchmark rates i.e. Repo rate, five times in 2019

✓ The expectation among analysts was that these interest rate cuts would spur demand and boost the economy.

✓ In the second half of 2019, prices of goods began to rise at a faster pace on the back of the **RBI's rate cuts.**

✓ But the growth rate of the economy continued to fall significantly.

✓ This combination of rising prices and falling growth has led many to believe that India may be sliding into stagflation.

Arguments Against

However, a section of economists is of the opinion that although it appears so at first glance, India is not yet facing stagflation. The reasons given are as follows:

☞ Although it is true that Indian economy is not growing as fast as it has in the past or as fast as it could, India is still growing at 5% and is expected to grow faster in the coming years.

☞ **India's growth hasn't yet stalled and** declined; in other words, year on year, our GDP has grown in absolute number, not declined.

☞ Retail inflation has been quite high in the past few months, yet the reason for this spike is temporary because it has been caused by a spurt in agricultural commodities after some unseasonal rains.

☞ With better food management, food inflation is expected to come down. The core inflation – that is inflation without taking into account food and fuel – is still benign.

☞ **Retail inflation has been well within the RBI's target level of 4% for most of the year.**

☞ A sudden spike of a few months, which is likely to flatten out in the next few months, it is still early days before one claim that India has stagflation.
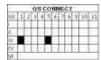
Conclusion

While the risk of stagflation will set in only if inflation becomes uncontrollable, it would be prudent to watch out for increased risks of such an event occurring. Emphasis should be on boosting consumer demand and structural reforms to bring the Indian economy from the gloom of economic slowdown and fears of stagflation.

GOCO Model

News Excerpt

To improve operational efficiency the Indian Army has decided to implement the Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) model for its base workshops and ordnance depots.

Pre-Connect

What is GOCO model?

• The GOCO model was one of the recommendations of the Lt. Gen. DB Shekatkar (Retd.) **committee to "enhance combat capability and re-balancing defence expenditure."**

• Here the assets are owned by the government but will be used and operated by a private party.

• The private party will not make any capital investments.

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The service provider should be an Indian registered company with at least 10 years of working experience in related domains and have an average annual turnover of ₹50 crore for each of the last 3 financial years.

Selected Service Provider will take over present infrastructure and related services.

Maintenance of complete infrastructure will be thereafter the responsibility of the service provider.

Existing civilian manpower/workforce will have to be absorbed by the selected Service Provider

Fig 1: How GOCO Model Works?

Analytica

Issues and Concerns

➢ The assets owned by Govt will be operated by the private industry on agreed terms. The process of transfer of assets would have to be protracted with expertise being gradually absorbed by the private industry.

➢ The present infrastructure will require investment for upgrading Plant and Machinery and training of employees.

➢ Private companies will insist on the government rationalizing the workforce and replacement of Army personnel. There could be some disruptions in its equipment maintenance resources.

Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property

News Excerpt

KVIC in recent times is fighting cases in several countries including Germany for violation of the Khadi Mark regulations. State-owned Khadi Village Industries **Corporation is eyeing international trademark for 'khadi' under the Paris** Convention for protection of industrial property to prevent any product from masquerading as **'khadi' nationally or globally.**

Pre-Connect

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)

- The KVIC is a statutory body formed in 1957 by an act of Parliament, 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956'.

- It is an apex organisation under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, with

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regard to khadi and village industries within India, which seeks to plan, promote, facilitate, organise and assist in the establishment and development of the industry in the rural areas. The broad objectives that the KVIC has set before it includes:

- o The social objective of providing employment.

- o The economic objective of producing saleable articles.

- o The wider objective of creating self-reliance amongst the poor and building up of a strong rural community spirit.

About the Convention

➢ The Paris Convention was adopted in 1883 and was the first major step taken to help creators ensure that their intellectual works were protected in other countries.

➢ It applies to industrial property in the widest sense, including patents, trademarks, industrial designs, utility models, service marks, trade names, geographical indications and the repression of unfair competition.

➢ The Paris Convention, concluded in 1883, was revised at Brussels in 1900, at Washington in 1911, at The Hague in 1925, at London in 1934, at Lisbon in 1958 and at Stockholm in 1967, and was amended in 1979.

➢ The Convention is open to all States. Instruments of ratification or accession must be deposited with the Director-General of WIPO.

World Intellectual Property Organization

❖ The origins of WIPO can be traced to 1883, when 14 countries signed the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, which created intellectual-property protections for inventions, trademarks, and industrial designs.

❖ The convention helped inventors gain protection for their works outside their native countries. In 1886 the Berne Convention required member countries to provide automatic protection for works that were produced in other member countries in the field of literary/music/artistic work.

❖ The two organizations, which had established separate secretariats to enforce their respective treaties, merged in 1893 to become the United International Bureau for the Protection of Intellectual Property (BIRPI), which was based in Bern, Switzerland.

❖ It is established by a convention signed in Stockholm in 1967, began operations in 1970 and became a specialized agency of the United Nations in December 1974. It is headquartered in Geneva

❖ It is an international organization designed to promote the worldwide protection of both industrial property (inventions, trademarks, and designs) and copyrighted materials (literary, musical, photographic, and other artistic works).

The substantive provisions of the Convention fall into three main categories:

1. National treatment:The contracting state (Stateswhich have consented to be bound by a Convention) must grant the same protection to nationals of other Contracting States that it grants to its own nationals.

Note: Nationals of non-Contracting States are also entitled to national treatment under the Convention if they are domiciled or have a real and effective industrial or commercial establishment in a Contracting State.

PEPPER IT WITH
WTO, GI Tag, IPR Index

2. Right of priority: The convention provides for the right of priority in the case of patents, trademarks and industrial designs.

3. Common rules: The Convention lays down a few common rules:

Do's	Don'ts
✓ Provide for effective protection against unfair competition. ✓ State emblems and other official mark can be used with the permission of WIPO. ✓ Grant and annulment of Patents is not dependent on the contracting states for the same invention i.e. one state is not obliged to follow the other on the same invention. ✓ Industrial design must be protected irrespective of the fact that the concerned industry is not present in the contracting state ✓ Protection to Trade names must be provided	× Refuse registration and prohibit 　○ Duplication or imitation of Trademark 　○ Use without authorization × It does not regulate the conditions for the filing and registration of marks. × Prohibits direct or indirect use of a false indication of the source of goods × Exclusive rights conferred to a patent only under certain conditions. × No domestic law can 　○ Refuse 　○ Invalidate 　○ Restrict Grant of a patent

Cotton Sector in India

News Excerpt

The country's recent hybrid seed model for cotton is criticized that it favours seed companies over farmers.

Pre-Connect

- Cotton is one of the most important cash crops and accounts for around 25% of the total global fibre production.
- Cotton is also one of the most important commercial crops cultivated in India. In the raw material consumption basket of the Indian textile industry, the proportion of cotton is around 59%.
- It plays a major role in sustaining the livelihood of an estimated 5.8 million cotton farmers and 40- 50 million people engaged in related activities such as cotton processing and trade.
- India also has the distinction of having the largest area under cotton cultivation in the world i.e. about 11 million hectares.

> ### The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL)
> ❖ Established in 1954.
> ❖ An autonomous, non-profit body.
> ❖ It has been the international face of cotton textiles from India facilitating exports worldwide.
> ❖ The Council enables better understanding of Indian and International trade policies, emerging trade issues, social and environmental compliances, quality management and sustainable business practices.

Production and Consumption of Cotton

➢ India is the country to grow all four species of cultivated cotton *Gossypiumarboreum*and *herbaceum*(Asian cotton), *G.barbadense*(Egyptian cotton) and G. *hirsutum*(American Upland cotton). *Gossypiumhirsutum*represents 88% of the hybrid cotton production in India and all the current Bt cotton hybrids are G.*hirsutuim.*

➢ In India, majority of the cotton production comes from nine major cotton-growing states, which are grouped into three diverse agro-ecological zones,
  ○ Northern zone: Comprising States of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan,
  ○ Central zone: Comprising the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and
  ○ Southern zone: Comprising the States of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
  ○ Besides this, cotton is also grown in the States of Tamil Nadu and Orissa.
  ○ Cotton cultivation has also gained momentum in small areas of non-traditional States such

as Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tripura, etc.

➤ India is the largest producer of cotton in the World. India is also a leading consumer of cotton.

➤ Presently, Cotton is a freely exportable commodity from India. India exports Cotton mainly to Bangladesh, China, Vietnam, Pakistan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand etc.

➤ Although India is a major producer and exporter of cotton fibre, a small quantity of long fibrevariety of cotton which is not available in the country is imported.

Problems Faced by the Indian Cotton Sector

Though India is one of thelargest producers of cotton in the world still there are significant challenges faced by cotton sector in India such as:

✓ Stagnation in the productivity vis-à-vis global production. Thereby carrying high opportunity cost as the land under cotton cultivation can be used elsewhere.

✓ High input cost as India is the only country that grows cotton as hybrids and the first to develop hybrid cotton back in 1970.

✓ The use of insecticide expanded due to use of Hybrid cotton has caused further outbreaks of secondary pests such as American bollworm or Pink bollworm.

✓ Agricultural distress is extremely high among cotton farmers and the combination of high input and high risk has likely been a contributing factor.

A Policy for Hybrid Cotton

▪ Before GM cotton, India persisted with hybrids from 1980-2002, while other countries shifted to HDP.

▪ A second phase where the question of *hybrids versus compact varieties* could have been considered, was at the stage of GM regulation when *Bt-cotton* was being evaluated for introduction into India.

▪ There was a need for comprehensive agricultural research and agro-economic conditions for its applicability to Indian Geography.

> PEPPER IT WITH
> Bt Cotton, Bale, Lint, GEAC

Its impact: The scope of evaluation by the *GM regulatory process in India was narrow*, and did not take this into account. Consequently, commercial BT-hybrids have completely taken over the market, accompanied by the withdrawal of public sector cottonseed production. The Indian cotton farmer today is left with little choice but to use BT-hybrid seed produced by private seed companies.
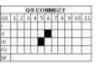
Way Forward

☞ It is important to recognise that adoption of any new technology such as Bt is a choice and not an imperative. For example, some of the major cotton-producing countries such as Brazil (until 2012) and Turkey (up to the present) have achieved high productivity without the use of GM cotton by using alternative pest-management approaches.

☞ The risk assessment in GMO regulation has to be strengthened to enable exercising of this choice by careful and comprehensive evaluation of costs and benefits.

☞ The solution to the dystopic Indian cotton system lies in developing an ecological understanding using the SS-HD cotton as a basis.

☞ Small and subsistence farmers of India have paid a huge price on the gallows of current hybrid Bt cotton, and they deserve honest on the ground solutions.

Mission Purvodaya

News Excerpt

Recently, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel has launched *Mission PURVODAYA: Accelerated development of eastern India* through integrated steel hub in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Pre-Connect

• Despite being endowed with natural resources, Eastern India region has lagged behind in

socio-economic development as compared to some other parts of the country.

- Growth of steel industry through such a hub would lead to significant employment opportunities across the entire value chain and will play a significant role in overall socio-economic growth of Eastern India, thus reducing the disparity between the East and other regions of the country.

Highlights of Mission Purvodaya

Purvodaya in the steel sector is aimed at driving accelerated development of Eastern India through the establishment of an integrated steel hub. The proposed Integrated Steel Hub, encompassing Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Northern Andhra Pradesh, would serve as a torchbearer for socio-economic growth of Eastern India.

The objective

To enable swift capacity addition and improve the overall competitiveness of steel producers, both in terms of cost and quality.

PEPPER IT WITH
Steel Production in India, National Steel Policy 2017, Major Industrial Location of Iron and Steel industry in

3 key focus elements:

1. Capacity addition through easing the setup of Greenfield steel plants
2. Development of steel clusters near integrated steel plants as well as demand centres.
3. Transformation of logistics and utility infrastructure which would change the socio-economic landscape in the East

Using the potential of Eastern India:

- Eastern states of India (Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal) and Northern part of **Andhra Pradesh collectively hold ~80% of the country's iron ore, ~100% of coking coal and a** significant portion of chromite, bauxite and dolomite reserves.
- There is presence of major ports such as Paradip, Haldia, Vizag, Kolkata etc., with >30% of **India's major port capacity.**
- **In India's march towards a $5 trillion economy, the 5 Eastern states can play a major role** where the steel sector can become the catalyst.
- This Eastern belt has the **potential to add more than 75% of the country's incremental steel** capacity envisioned by the National Steel Policy. It is expected that out of the 300 MT capacity by 2030-31, over 200 MT can come from this region alone, driven by Industry 4.0.

Development Support Services to States for Infrastructure Projects

News Excerpt

Recently, NITI Ayog launched an initiative to support development in Union Territories it is known as Development Support Services to States for Infrastructure Projects.

Pre-Connect

- Ensuring a robust pipeline of delivery and investment in infrastructure projects would be **critical in maintaining India's strong economic growth trajectory.**
- A key action area for the Government of India to ensure this would be to have the efficient institutional capacity to deliver investable projects and establish well-developed and equitable contracting models to generate investor/private player confidence.
- With the above in view, NITI AAYOG has started an initiative to provide Development Support Services to States (DSSS) for the development of projects of State/national importance.

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About DSSS

- **NITI Aayog has implemented a structured initiative for "Development Support Services for States (DSSS) for Infrastructure Projects" with a vision to ach**ieve transformational, sustained delivery of infrastructure projects with state of art capacity disseminated at all levels of

governance.
- ➢ The key objective is creating PPP success stories.
- ➢ The DSSS Infrastructure initiative involves providing project-level support from Concept planning to financial closure by State Governments / UTs.
- ➢ NITI Aayog has appointed M/s Ernst & Young LLP (EYLLP) as its consultant to formalize the initiative and to engage with states to identify a project shortlist and providing transaction management for implementing selected infrastructure projects on ground.
- ➢ Phase I of the initiative was completed in FY 2018, wherein a demonstrable project shelf consisting of 10 projects were selected from out of over 400 projects received from States based on a multi-staged project selection framework criteria like responsiveness of submissions, readiness, land availability, impact, replicability, risk, viability assessment and state commitment.
- ➢ During the financial year 2018-19, Phase II of the initiative was completed, and the selected projects haveprogressed onto the transaction stage.

Highlights of the MoU
- ✓ The partnership lays thrust on the identification of high impact priority projects, expedited project implementation, addressing the structural level issues and creating unique models of development for Union Territory of Ladakh.
- ✓ NITI Aayog aims to assist in identification of prioritized infrastructure projects and provide end-to-end transaction management support.
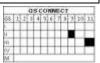
Conclusion
Initiatives such as DSSS are commendable steps which are much needed given the dire need of development of infrastructure in India. They have the potential to create job opportunities, develop a world-class infrastructure which is essential to attract foreign investments and improve the standard of living of the people. Such steps can in a way be considered as gateways to achieve the dream of 5 trillion-dollar economy of India.

Emigration Reforms in India
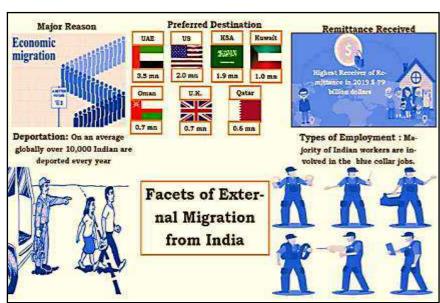
News Excerpts
Recently, nine fishermen belonging to Kerala and Tamil Nadu undertook a perilous sea journey from Yemen to flee from their sponsor and arrived at the coast of Cochin. This has sparked larger debate around the Emigration Reforms required in India.

Pre-Connect
- Emigration in India was defined under the Emigration Act of 1983. The act was enacted to address the large-scale emigration of Indian workers to the gulf region.
- The Act also vests in the Protector General, the responsibility of ensuring the protection and welfare of the emigrants and regulating the recruitment process to prevent malpractices.
- The act provided for

Facets of External Migration from India

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separate processes of emigration for skilled and unskilled labourers, based on their educational qualifications and the destination. Those who intend to migrate to United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Malaysia, Libya, Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, Brunei, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Syria, Lebanon, and Thailand with an educational qualification below class 10th, are required to get an Emigration Clearance (ECR) from the office of the Protector of Emigrants.

- Since 1983, the scale and migration from India has changed drastically and the act lacked several capacities such as
  o The act only takes economic immigration into account. This shows the restrictive manner in which the policy framework views emigration.
  o Sub-optimal utilization of existing resources.
  o Delays in prosecution of illegal agents.
  o Lack of legislative provisions for effective programs like pre-departure orientation, skill upgradation etc.
- Government of India had decided to replace the existing act with a new Emigration Bill, 2019.

Emigration Challenges

➢ **Absence of Migration Policy:** **It affects India's ability to use the potential offered by Indians in** the international labor market. Further, there is a lack of database on various aspects of migration such as profiles of migrants, their job profile, and country of destination.

➢ **Unauthorized recruitment agents:** A large number of unauthorized recruitment agents are present in India, these agents lure people into unrealistic promises and often use illegal means to send people abroad. They have created a syndicate of drugs and human trafficking.

➢ **Skill Development:** The skill sets of migrant workers is a major hindrance in finding overseas employment.

➢ **Referral wages:** The government has fixed minimum referral wages to regulate the wages of Indian workers employed in the Emigration Check Required countries. These wages have not kept pace with economic changes in the destination countries, which may result in reduced preference for Indian workers.

> ### MEA Digital Policies for Emigrants
> ❖ e-Migrate System: Comprehensive and online database of emigrants, Missions, Recruiting Agents, Foreign Employers, Insurance Agencies
> ❖ Madad: It is a portal for online lodging of the grievances of the emigrants, which are attended to on priority basis.

➢ **Gender and migration:** There is an urgent need for a gender-sensitive migration policy, which takes into account gender-speci**fic concerns and risks. The government's approach towards** female migrant workers focused mostly on ensuring their protection and safety. However, this may be a short-term approach that impacts the opportunities of women migrants.

Draft Emigration Bill

Government has decided to replace the Emigration Act 1983 with a new bill and the major changes suggested in the bill are:

✓ **Institutional Framework:** The bill proposes a three-tier institutional framework, with the MEA as the nodal ministry.
  o At the top level, Central Emigration Management Authority (EMA) has been proposed for policy guidance and supervision.
  o In the middle, a Bureau of Emigration Policy and Planning, and a Bureau of Emigration Administration shall handle day-to-day operational matters and oversee the welfare of emigrants.
  o At the bottom, nodal authorities in states and union territories shall coordinate on aspects of management related to both emigrants and returnees.
  o This could allow vertical policy coherence on emigration matters—particularly in promoting and managing safe, orderly and regular emigration.

✓ **Registration/Intimation:** It makes mandatory digital registration/intimation of all

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categories of Indian nationals proceeding for overseas employment as well as students pursuing higher studies abroad, Further, registration of agencies and sub-agents has been made compulsory. It also proposes a rating of agencies.

✓ Clearly Defined Roles of Agencies: They must provide for a comprehensive policy which focuses on the welfare of emigrants and their empowerment. It includes proper documentation, insurance, skill upgradation as well as pre-departure orientation programmes.

✓ Emigration Clearance: **The bill doesn't provide for differential categories which means** that all emigrants will have to undergo the same procedure for emigration clearance. Hence **it abolishes two passports regime based on a person's educational qualifications.This will** significantly improve the collection of migration flow data.

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Short Falls of Draft Emigration Bill

▪ Exclusionary Nature: **It doesn't provide for Indians reuniting with family members abroad** which constitute a major chunk of out-migration from India. **It doesn't look after the economic** or political freedom **of its migrant. It doesn't look after the numerous** instances of Indian **spouses being 'lured' abroad in marriage and then stranded or exploited. The law is also silent** on the undocumented migrants. These migrants live in incredibly precarious situations, with many living in poverty.

▪ White-Collar Problem: It lacks management structures and policies that better reflect the current nature and pattern of emigration especially concerning the aspirations of and challenges for white-collared emigrants.

▪ Lack of representation: Proposed EMA has representation form only two ministries. It notably excludes representation of the ministry of commerce and industry, which handles important economic negotiation for e.g. it is currently involved in the negotiation of Mode 4 negotiations (movement of natural persons) under the General Agreement on Trade in Services at the WTO. This shall necessitate a cross-sectoral approach in emigration management.

▪ Legislation Issues: The current international paradigm relating to labour market protectionism demands a wider approach than the present legislative framework.

▪ Return Migration: Amigration cycle has four stages- the pre-departure, journey, destination and return. The Bill addresses only the first three parts of the cycle while completely ignoring return migration. Globally, one in four migrants today is a return migrant. Return migration in Kerala alone ranges between 1.2 and 1.5 million.

▪ Agencies: These intermediaries play an instrumental role in minimising information asymmetries and migration costs. The prescribed regulatory process in India has inadvertently created barriers to migration thereby increasing the cost of emigration.

▪ Wrong Assumptions: There is also an erroneous assumption that Indian migrants in a developed destination country have sufficient protection and welfare. The draft Bill personifies the government's primary view of emigration policy as a means for managing the export of human resources rather than a humanitarian framework to safeguard Indian migrants overseas.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Indian Community Welfare Fund, PravasiBharatiyaSahayata Kendras, PravasiBharatiyaBima Yojana, PravasiKaushal Vikas Yojana,Pre-Departure Orientation Programmes, PravasiBhartiya Divas

Way-Forward

☞ There is a need for Migrant Worker Welfare Centres at international airports to provide information.

☞ There is a need to create a digitized database with records of all migrant workers, their recruitment companies, skills, and educational qualifications.

☞ There is a need to create a separate department under the Protector of Emigrants to investigate complaints of exploitation and abuse by recruiters.

☞ There is a need for a rights-based approach that is inclusive of all Indian migrants abroad, can

be considerate and provide them with adequate security and welfare.
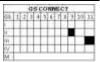
☞ MEA should take suo moto actions by engaging the Protector of Emigrants offices in states or districts where more complaints are received. Further, these offices should lodge complaints with the local police so that illegal recruitment can be curbed.

☞ Focus must be on Five core elements in preparing the workforce for global mobility including (i) alignment of qualifications with global standards, (ii) infrastructure development, (iii) credible assessment and certification framework, (iv) pre-departure orientation, and (v) job linkage

☞ MEA should coordinate with the Ministry of Labour and set up a committee for reviewing the referral wages on an annual basis.

☞ A 24*7 women helpline should be established in Indian Missions abroad.

West Asia Crisis and India

News Excerpt
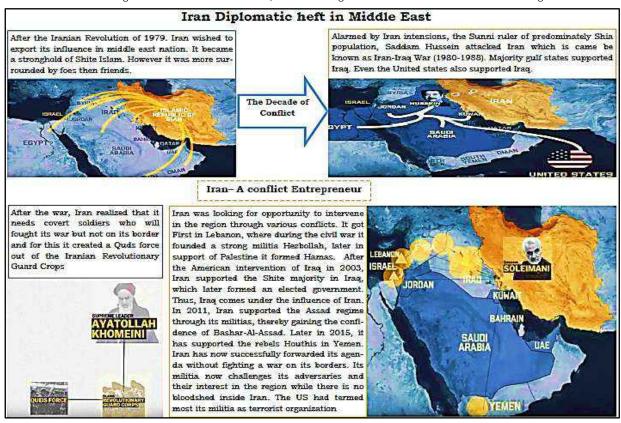
Recently, the governments of the United States in a drone strike killed a top Iranian general in Iraq. In retaliation, Iran targeted the military bases of the US in Iraq. In the confusion of these incidents, Iran accidentally shot down a Ukrainian Civilian Aircraft killing all the passengers. These incidents have once again placed middle east on the edge. It has also created new foreign policy challenges for India.

Pre-Connect

• Ever since the election of the new government in the United States in 2016. **"Make America Great Again vs Death to America"** has come to loggerheads.

• The United States withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) also known as Iran Nuclear Deal and imposed various sanctions crippling the Iranian economy.

• The US also through its law of CAATSA (Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions

Iran Diplomatic heft in Middle East

After the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Iran wished to export its influence in middle east nation. It became a stronghold of Shite Islam. However it was more surrounded by foes then friends.

The Decade of Conflict

Alarmed by Iran intensions, the Sunni ruler of predominately Shia population, Saddam Hussein attacked Iran which is came be known as Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). Majority gulf states supported Iraq. Even the United states also supported Iraq.

Iran– A conflict Entrepreneur

After the war, Iran realized that it needs covert soldiers who will fought its war but not on its border and for this it created a Quds force out of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Crops

SUPREME LEADER **AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI**

QUDS FORCE REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS

Iran was looking for opportunity to intervene in the region through various conflicts. It got First in Lebanon, where during the civil war it founded a strong militia Hezbollah, later in support of Palestine it formed Hamas. After the American intervention of Iraq in 2003, Iran supported the Shite majority in Iraq, which later formed an elected government. Thus, Iraq comes under the influence of Iran. In 2011, Iran supported the Assad regime through its militias, thereby gaining the confidence of Bashar-Al-Assad. Later in 2015, it has supported the rebels Houthis in Yemen. Iran has now successfully forwarded its agenda without fighting a war on its borders. Its militia now challenges its adversaries and their interest in the region while there is no bloodshed inside Iran. The US had termed most its militia as terrorist organization

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Act) has sworn to take action against those countries who indulge in business with American adversaries such as Russia, Iran and North Korea.

- The US has also intervened in the Iranian domestic protest against the current regime of Ayatollah Khomenei and there are allegations that the US is trying to change the regime in Iran.

- US and Iran are also at loggerheads in the larger West Asian Politics. Iran has been successfully able to create its pocket of influence in the region through its militia and is able to fulfil its vision of establishing direct connectivity between Iran and Lebanon. Their support to Bashar Al-Asad regime in Syria also runs counter to the American Interest.

- To show its strength Iran always showcases its ability to block the Strait of Hormuz- a critical lane for global supply of oil (for more read Current Connect, July 2019 Page 58)

Analytica

India's Reaction

India is tamely skewing its Middle East policy in favour of the informal US-Saudi Arabia-Israel Coalition and it seems that it went along with the US administration 'maximum pressure' policy on Iran. This seems prudent primarily for two reasons

Energy: Instability in the West Asia impacts the energy security of India. Not only the price of oil rises there are hindrance to the access to oil. For instance, though India had brought its import of Iranian oil to almost nil, it still depends on supply from Persian Gulf which Iran can block through Strait of Hormuz.

Diaspora: West Asian Countries host million of Indian expatriate who provide millions of dollars in form of remittances. Further, there sheer size will create problems in evacuation if any situation of armed conflict emerges in the west Asian Region

Connectivity: Through Bandar Abbas and Chabahar Port in Iran, India has crucial and critical connectivity link which connects Afghanistan through Zanraj Delaram Road. Though the Chabahar is immune to the US sanctions, it is of no use to India as no shipping firm will be interested in working with the country which faces serious Economic Sanctions. Further, The Chabahar also provides a route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, while the International North South Transportation Corridor (INSTC) gives us overland access to Russia and Europe. In many ways, it can be India's own Belt and Road Initiative.

Strategic Interest: India has deep strategic interest in West Asia as it is home to one of the largest Muslim population in world. When it comes to Iran, it become important in the wake of US withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Islamist group and its mentor Pakistan is poised to once again become the dominant force in Afghanistan. Both India and Iran share hardline position against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

- o The draconian nature of US sanctions, especially the newly enacted CAATSA.

- o India had made successful forays to the UAE and Saudi Arabia which are the economic power-house and can provide much needed investments in India. Government is targeting the Saudi and UAE sovereign wealth funds for promoting infrastructure construction in India.

- o Further, there is no significant challenge for India to meet the shortfall in crude oil imports from Iran due to support from UAE and Saudi Arabia.

India' Dilemma

➢ Challenge for India is to manage the political aspect of its relations with the US and Iran.

➢ **India's decision to stop sourcing of oil from Iran will affect bilateral relations. It also does not comport with India's pursuit of independent foreign policy and its endeavour to ma**intain strategic autonomy.

➢ On the other hand, if India were to continue to buy Iranian oil, say by sidestepping US sanctions, it is likely to impact the strategic relationship with the US.

India's option

India has two options.

✓ Outright rebellion: India found one or more informal arrangements and team up with EU, Russia, China and other SCO nations to defy US sanctions. But this will hamper the US-India relation more so in the regime of the current administration which is unlikely to look upon such a step kindly.

✓ Talks and Negotiations: India, on the other hand, can choose to continue its negotiation with the US to either secure a formal waiver or to have an informal understanding to buy Iranian oil. The likelihood of getting one is remote given the plausible supply of oil in the region. In the

meanwhile, India can offer Iran to enhance its investments in the Chabahar Port development project as well as consider initiating other developmental and connectivity projects to strengthen linkages to Afghanistan, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This will help India not openly defy the US or subvert its policy towards Iran but also at the same time ensure that its relationship with Iran is not completely derailed and it is also able to pursue an independent foreign policy.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that while India can wait for the easing of US-Iran tensions to resume buying oil from Iran, it is unlikely to undermine its relationship with the US to please Tehran.

Nepal China transit protocol

News Excerpt

Nepal-China Transit protocol will come into effect from February 2020, this will end Nepal's reliance on India for international trade. This is not a good sign for India as it means "closer" relationship between China and Nepal.

Pre-Connect

- Earlier Nepal has transported goods to and fro via the Kolkata Port.
- India and Nepal had signed transit treaty in 1978 which was renewed in 2013.
- However, Nepal has accused India of imposing economic blockade twice:
    - In 1989, when Nepal was trying to buy anti-aircraft guns from China
    - In 2015, on the grounds of non-inclusion of the minority communities – Madhesi and Janjati – in the new constitution of Nepal.
- For Nepal, its "India-Locked" status has given New Delhi leverage over Kathmandu, resulting in a search for an alternate solution via Chinese routes.

Kalapani Conflict

- ❖ Kalapani is a 35 square kilometre area situated on the eastern bank of river Mahakali. It is claimed by both India (Pithoragarh district, Uttrakhand) and Nepal (Darchula district) as an integral part of their territories.
- ❖ Kalapani is also a tri-junction point, where the Indian, Nepalese and Tibetan (Chinese) borders meet. The region has been manned by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police since 1962.
- ❖ The source of river Mahakali is at the heart of the dispute between the countries.
- ❖ The 1816 Treaty of Sagauli, signed between British India and Nepal, defined river Mahakali as the western border of Nepal. River Mahakali has several tributaries, all of which merge at Kalapani.
- ❖ India claims that the river begins in Kalapani as this is where all its tributaries merge. But Nepal claims that it begins from LipuLekh Pass, the origin of most of its tributaries.
- ❖ India has used tax records and surveys for upper reaches of river Mahakali to support its claims while Nepal has presented similar maps from 1850 and 1856, showing that river Mahakali begins in Kalapani.
- ❖ The two countries had formed the Joint Technical Boundary Committee in 1981 to resolve the dispute. Though the committee managed to resolve a large part of the dispute, they failed to reach a final settlement.
- ❖ In 1996, India and Nepalsigned the Treaty of Mahakali in 1996.

Analytica

Challenges to New Routes

The Nepal China Transit Protocol may not be the wisest solution for Kathmandu to adopt. There are three major challenges that Nepal will face:

➢ Language Barrier: China has been trying to popularize Mandarin in Nepal, which is not liked by many in Nepal and will have a long-term implication for Nepal.

➢ Long Distance: The protocol will cause a threefold increase in the trading distance from before. With China, it will be 3300 km while with India it is around 750 km only. This factor will discourage the traders for which logistics cost is bound to increase

➢ Geographical Barriers: Due to tough geographical features such as rugged terrain and numerous rivers, Nepal suffers from poor transportation and communication system. On the other hand, China has a very well-equipped transportation system with good roads. This is the reason behind the lacklustre performance of Chinese imports in Nepal.

India's Options
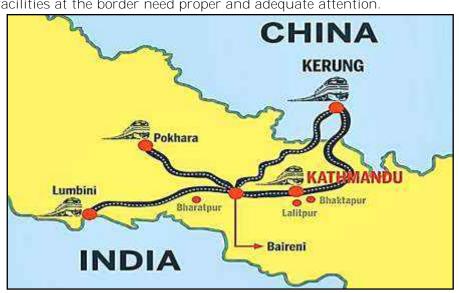
✓ Improvise on the congestion and inefficiency in the Kolkata port and provide adequate facilities within that port.

✓ Remove unnecessary restrictions that are prevalent on road transits.

✓ Excessive inspections and documentation could rather act against India instead of aiding the entire process.

✓ Housing and handling facilities at the border need proper and adequate attention.

✓ There is a need to manage movement of trains, arrangement of locomotives and freight rate as well as schedule so that there is no congestion faced by freight trains.

Conclusion

This is a testing time period for India–Nepal relations as the bilateral relations between China and Nepal is entering a new phase. Belt and Road initiative has been an essential opportunity for China to take its relations

China-Myanmar Pact

♠ Recently, Chinese President visited Myanmar where two countries signed important pact including the one on China-Myanmar Economic Corridor.

♠ This visit came in the backdrop of international isolation faced by Myanmar on the Rohingya Issue worldwide. Such kind of situation is often used by Chinese to strengthen their interest in the Indian neighborhood.

♠ China perceives Myanmar as a potential gateway to the Indian Ocean. This is evident from the fact that it signed a concession agreement and shareholders' agreement for the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ) deep seaport project.

♠ This seaport project provides China with an alternative to Straits of Malacca, which is currently their lifeline for energy transportation as well as a trade corridor.

♠ This rings alarm bell in India, as one more neighbor gets hooked to Chinese Cheque book diplomacy and ultimately get caught into debt trap.

♠ This also calls for India to invest more in Myanmar and deals with it without seeing it from the Rohingya perspective.

♠ The positive aspect for India is that large swathe of Myanmar is skeptical about these projects which have no significant benefits for Myanmar.
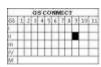
with the South Asian nations to a distinct level. Thus, it becomes important for India to revive its civilizational relations and to prioritize the only genuine way ahead – 'Neighbourhood First'.

Eight Wonders of SCO

Reciprocity to UAE

News Excerpt

Ministry of Law and **Justice has declared UAE to be a "reciprocating territory"** under Section 44A of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908.

Pre-Connect

- The agreement was the only remaining part of a 1999 agreement between the UAE and India related to cooperation in civil and commercial matters
- Reciprocating territories status makes decree passed by the court of those countries applicable in India, by filing a copy of the decree concerned in a District Court in India.
- The scope of the Section is restricted to decrees for the payment of money, not being sums payable **"in respect of taxes or other charges of a like nature or in respect of a fine or other penalty".**
- It also cannot be based on an arbitration award, even if such an award is enforceable as a decree or judgment.
- The court**s whose decrees are accepted are termed as 'superior Courts'.**
- **India had earlier declared 'reciprocating territory' to the following countries:**
    - o United Kingdom
    - o Singapore
    - o Bangladesh
    - o Malaysia
    - o Trinidad & Tobago

- o New Zealand
- o The Cook Islands (including Niue)
- o The Trust Territories of Western Samoa
- o Hong Kong
- o Papua New Guinea
- o Fiji
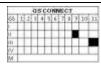
Significance

➢ It will help in bringing down the time required for executing decrees between the two countries.

➢ Indian expatriates in the UAE would no longer be able to seek safe haven in their home country if they are convicted in a civil case in the UAE thereby providing justice.

West Asia Peace Plan

News Excerpt

The US administration had presented a peace plan for the settlement between Israel and Palestine Conflict. The plan was the result of three-year negotiations. It seeks to give the Israelis an expansive state with **Jerusalem as its "undivided capital" and tight security control over a future Palestinian** state.

Pre-Connect

- In 1993, Israel and the Palestinians agreed for the status of settlements to be decided by negotiations, known as Oslo Accords

- Under Oslo Accords, a timetable for the Middle East peace process was established. It also planned for an interim Palestinian government in Gaza and Jericho in the West Bank.

- In 1995, Oslo II Accords was signed. It included provisions for the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from six West Bank cities and about 450 towns. Additionally, the pact set a timetable for elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council.

- The accords left the question of Jerusalem undecided.

  (For More on Israel and Palestine read Current Connect- November 2019-Page number-65)

What is New Plan?

➢ It provides for an independent Palestinian state

➢ It recognizes the Israeli sovereignty over West Bank Settlements.

➢ It allows Israel to annex the Jewish settlements on the West Bank as well as in the Jordan valley

➢ It allows for the return of Palestinian refugees who were forced out of their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. They can also move to the newly created Palestine.

➢ It proposes land swap for the Israeli annexation of the West Bank Jewish settlements.

➢ It will connect the Gaza Strip with the West Bank through a tunnel.

➢ The US will invest $50 billion in investment over a period of 10 years in case Palestine accept the proposal.

➢ On the issue of Jerusalem, the plan proposes to make Jerusalem an undivided capital of Israel while the Palestinians to get its capital (Abu Dis) in the east of the city — beyond the security borders Israel has already built. The US will also open its embassy in the region to cement it as Palestinians capital.

➢ It calls on Israel to freeze further settlement activities on the West Bank for four years which is the time provided for negotiations.

➢ While the Palestinian Authority should dismiss its current complaints at the International **Criminal Court against Israel and should also crackdown on "terrorist" groups such as Hamas** and the Islamic Jihad.

➢ The plan provides Palestine with more territory than what it held under Oslo Accords

(According to the Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into three areas and only one of them is under the direct control of the Palestinian Authority).

➢ The Arab towns in the southeast of Israel, which are close to Gaza, could become part of a future Palestinian state.

Analytica

Will this plan work?

There are various lacunas in the plan such as:

✓ Larger deviation: Majority of the world powers back the idea of the formation of a sovereign Palestinian state based on the 1967 border this would mean:

- o It would include the whole of West Bank and the Gaza Strip
- o East Jerusalem would be its capital including Haram-esh-Sharif, also known as Temple Mount, a holy site for both Muslims and Jews.
- o Issues like the right of return of the Palestinian refugees are to be settled in final negotiations.
- o However, it seeks to give Jerusalem and about 30% of the West Bank to the Israelis and has denied the right of return of the Palestinian refugees. Further, it provided the state that would be practically surrounded by Israel. It refrains Palestine from questioning the occupation in international fora.

✓ Balfour Resemblances: The plan was termed by many countries as a repetition of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which supported the development of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. This creates a serious doubt in the minds of people about the utility of the plan. It is also expected to quell the Palestinian cause, and the extremist and

Page 61

terror groups will ride on the coattails of the same.

✓ OIC and Arab League Backlash: OIC and Arab League have rejected the so-called plan as it does not meet the minimum rights and aspirations of Palestinian people. Further, it called upon on all member states not to engage with this plan or to cooperate with the US administration in implementing it in any form.

India's Response

- India has historically followed a balancing line in the Middle East's Quagmires and therefore it urged both sides to engage with each other, including on the recent proposals put forward by the US, and find an acceptable two-state solution for peaceful coexistence.

- India has since long been maintaining that Israel-Palestine conflict should be resolved through negotiation **"resulting in sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.**

Changing Israel-Arab Relations

❖ **Most of the Arab countries doesn't r**ecognize the Israel as a legitimate state but things are broadly changing which is evident from various fact such as:
  o UAE will have its first synagogue in 2022
  o Israel-Oman relations have strengthened, Oman is walking on the neutral line in regional conflicts.

❖ Arab states themselves have supported the Palestinian cause as per the convenience of their own domestic and/or foreign policy narratives and played the policy of **"**tiki taka**"**

❖ In recent times, Iran has emerged as a common threat for both Israel and many Arab states. Its militia Hezbollah and Hamas had created troubles for many in regions.

❖ The cracks in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) between UAE, Saudi and Qatar is another dimension. Qatar increased its outreach to Palestine in order to foster goof relations with Iran and Turkey.

Conclusion

The plan would rarely find support from Palestinian leadership whose people are living under occupation for decades. Therefore, they rejected the proposal plan even before its announcement. **They also don't consider the present US administration as an impartial mediator of peace because** of their recog**nition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.** However, it must be ruled out that the Palestinians are running out of time in the ever-evolving world for which their issue is a seven-decade-old problem with many contemporary challenges

India-Brazil Relations

News Excerpt

Government of India had recently invited Brazilian President as a Chief Guest for **the Republic Day parade in 2020. It will provide a boost to India's relation with** Brazil which is a prominent power in the Latin American region.
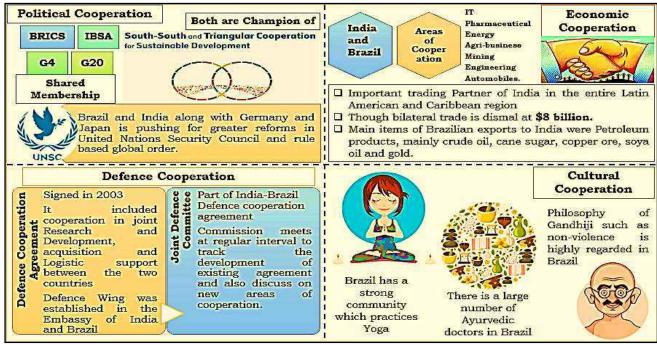
Pre-Connect

- India and Brazil share historical relation, the famous Portuguese Pedro Alvares found Brazil instead of India on his way to Goa, thereby creating a link between the two.

- During the colonial time, many Indians were transferred as indentured labor in the Latin American region.

- Diplomatic relation between the two countries was established in 1948.

- Both countries shared the common vision during the era of the cold war which was reflected in their joint opposition to the creation of the Non-proliferation Treaty.

- In 2006, India and Brazil signed a strategic partnership based on a common global vision,

shared democratic values.

Facets of India- Brazil Relations

Analytica

Challenges

➤ **Economic Cooperation:** The relationship between India and Brazil is viewed as a buyer-seller relationship which needs to be changed. Brazil played a crucial role in India-Mercosur Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) that **improves India's access to the** large South American market.

➤ **China Factor:** China with its deep pockets has emerged as the largest trading partner of Brazil. This makes Brazil dependent on China, its influence can be understood from the simple fact that while the position of Asia in **Brazil's international trade** has transformed, there remains no evident strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific region or India.

➤ **Political cooperation:** Despite being part of many multilateral arenas, India and Brazil are unable to develop a common vision.

➤ Climate Change: Both countries have divergent views on the issue of climate change. India is committed to combating global warming while Brazil has rejected scientific studies on climate change.

Conclusion

✓ India and Brazil are both emerging economies with shared values. Hence, they can provide much needed push to reforms in Global Governance.

✓ They have a lot to learn from each other as they face a lot of common challenges. Hence their cooperation on various multilateral and plurilateral forums such as IBSA and BRICS will be very beneficial for them to come up with plans to deal with various global issues.

Lessons from Brazil

❖ India can learn major lessons from the Brazil in the field of Universalization of Healthcare, especially when it runs an ambitious scheme of Ayushman Bharat.

❖ Brazil has drastically increased its health coverage which has led to increase in life expectancy, reduction in Infant Mortality Rate and increased vaccination every year. Millions of people take hospital admission and undergo ambulatory procedures. This has been made **possible with a very tightened budget (3.8% of Brazil's GDP) which is way lesser than the NHS 7.9% of Britain's GDP) of UK**

❖ Brazil provides number of lessons for India such as:
  o Provide Universal Healthcare, a constitutional status, the same what India did with Primary education.
  o Creation of community-based healthcare network of health care workers for expansion of coverage. There must be door to door assessment and awareness
  o Give up on the one-size-fits-all approach especially in the wake of heterogeneous regional realities.
  o Regional disparities in terms of resources and

Australian Bushfire

News Excerpt

Recently, the catastrophic **Australia's bushfires have razed more than 10.3 million** hectares of land, billions of animals have been killed and thousands are subjected to repeat evacuations as the unpredictable fires spread over large areas.

Pre-Connect

• An infrequent warming over the Antarctica has soared temperatures in the South Pole by more than 40 degrees Celsius and it is driving record-breaking warm temperatures in Australia. This rare phenomenon, known as sudden stratospheric warming (SSW).

• SSW occurs when rapid warming begins high up in the stratosphere. The rapid heating resulted into dry and windy conditions. It has increase the fire threat in a number of regions.

• The prolonged blaze this year has coincided with **Australia's harshest summer. Parts of the** country has recorded their highest temperature in December.

• **Australia's climate has warmed by just over 1** degree Celsius since 1910, leading to an increase in the frequency of extreme heat events.

• This has led to more rainfall in northern Australia but created drought-like conditions in the more densely populated southeast region.

Major Threats from Bushfire

- Smoke Pollution is one of the major threat.
- Plumes of black carbon which is very harmful to human health and climate change
- Bushfire can create their own weather i.e., they can drive thunderstorms, increasing the risk of lightning strikes and further fires.
- Survival of endangered species like dunnart - a mouse-like marsupial, black glossy cockatoo etc, on the island will become difficult.
- The fires have also caused a drop in the bird, rodent and insect populations. These creatures are the building blocks of the ecosystem and the fall in their population is bound to have long-term impacts.
- The fires impacted the wine industry, household and economy at large scale.

The Indian Ocean Dipole
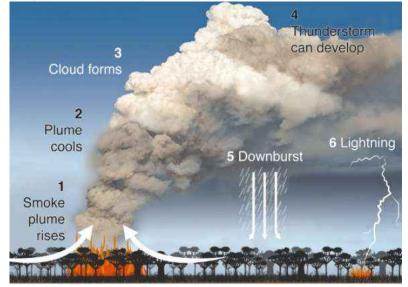
- ❖ The Indian Ocean Dipole - often called the "Indian Niño" because of its similarity to its Pacific equivalent - refers to the difference in sea-surface temperatures in opposite parts of the Indian Ocean.
- ❖ Temperatures in the eastern part of the ocean oscillate between warm and cold compared with the western part, cycling through phases referred to as "positive", "neutral" and "negative".
- ❖ The dipole's positive phase in 2019 - the strongest for six decades - means warmer sea temperatures in the western Indian Ocean region, with the opposite in the east.
- ❖ The result of this unusually strong positive dipole this year has been higher-than-average rainfall and floods in eastern Africa and droughts in south-east Asia and Australia.
- ❖ Extreme climate and weather events caused by the dipole are predicted to become more common in the future.

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- ➤ Australia is in the midst of a prolonged drought, there is strong evidence to indicate that nearly all the drivers of the extraordinary heat and dryness in Australia has led to these unprecedented forest fires, and are directly linked to the global climate change.
- ➤ This problem has been compounded by the presence of one of the strongest-ever positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) events.
- ➤ Fires are actually a part of **Australia's ecosystem. Many** plants depend on fire to cycle nutrients and clear vegetation. For instance eucalyptus trees in Australia depend on fire to release their seeds, but extreme weather conditions have turned something familiar into abnormal.

- ➤ Australia is home to nearly 250 animal species, some of them are endemic like the koalas and kangaroos. The climate induced fires will aggravate this situation and affects the various ecosystem irreversibly.

Criticism of Australia's Climate Policy

- ✓ One-third of global coal exports come from Australia, accounting for 7% of global carbon emissions.
- ✓ The country is the largest exporter of coal and liquefied natural gas in the world, and the energy sector is an important employer here.

✓ **Present government has defended the country's coal industry despite criticism from** environmentalists.

✓ Australia has also invited scorn for counting carbon credits under the Kyoto Protocol instead of making new reductions to meet its emissions targets.

What Needs to be Done?

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Forest Fires and disaster management, Amazon Forest Fires, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972

- **Farming practices:** The potentially practicable recommendations from the research regarding farming practices to reduce bushfire risk include:Strategically located firebreaks, Cutting and baling paddocks for hay or straw, Harvest management to reduce stubble height, Post-harvest stubble management.

- **Fire access tracks and firebreaks:** Fire access tracks and firebreaks should be established according to the level of bushfire risk, the need for property and natural asset protection and the management of primary production. A zoned approach should be undertaken to prioritise bushfire management actions and should be undertaken within the scope of the Bushfire Management Committee plan.

- **Harvest management:** The reduction of stubble height to about 10cm to 15 cm during harvesting should be considered to reduce the risk of a spread of a bushfire. The use of straw choppers or spreaders on headers will also hasten the decomposition of crop residues.

- **Stubble management:**Post harvest stubble management, such as grazing, rolling, chaining, harrowing or slashing can significantly reduce the risk of a bushfire spreading. In addition, it may help with snail management, avoids environmental issues associated with burning stubble and it may make seeding easier.

- **Haystack management:** Haystack fires have a range of causes and they can spread quickly into the surrounding area and may initiate a bushfire if they are not managed appropriately.

- **Vehicles, plant and equipment management:** Farmers need to consider the risk of fire before grinding, welding, slashing, mowing, or driving vehicles or plant through dry grass, pastures or crops. Driving vehicles with catalytic converters through dry vegetation is particularly hazardous.

Way Forward

In a rapidly changing climate, land management requires a long-term adaptive strategy, underpinned by sound analysis and research, supporting laws and policies, with sufficient funding and human resources. Bipartisan political support and leadership continuity are needed to sustain it.

Note: For more details on forest fires and their mitigation and control measures, please refer to KSG Current Connect, August 2019- Page number- 65

Complete phase-out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b

News Excerpt

India has successfully achieved the complete phase-out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b, which is a chemical used by foam manufacturing enterprises and one of the most potent ozone-depleting chemicals after Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). (HCFC)-141 b is used mainly as a blowing agent in the production of rigid polyurethane (PU) foams.

Pre-Connect

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has brought out a notification in the Gazette of India through which the issuance of import license for HCFC-141b is prohibited from 1st January 2020 under Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Amendment Rules, 2019 issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. It is a chemical used by foam manufacturing enterprises.

- HCFC-141b is not produced in the country and all the domestic requirements are met through

imports.

- The Ministry adopted a structured approach to engage with foam manufacturing enterprises for providing technical and financial assistance in order to bring out a transition to non-ODS and low GWP technologies under HCFC Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP).

Analytica

Impact of the Move:

➢ The phase-out of HCFC-141b from the country has twin environmental benefits viz.
  o Assisting the healing of the stratospheric ozone layer, and
  o Towards the climate change mitigation due to transitioning of foam manufacturing enterprises at this scale under HPMP to low global warming potential alternative technologies.

> **Hydrochlorofluorocarbons**
> - ❖ Hydrochlorofluorocarbons, commonly known as HCFCs, are a group of man-made compounds containing hydrogen, chlorine, fluorine and carbon.
> - ❖ They are not found anywhere in nature.
> - ❖ HCFC production began to take off after countries agreed to phase out the use of CFCs in the 1980s, which were found to be destroying the ozone layer.
> - ❖ Like CFCs, HCFCs are used for refrigeration, aerosol propellants, foam manufacture and air conditioning.
> - ❖ Unlike the CFCs however, most HCFCs are broken down in the lowest part of the atmosphere, and pose a relatively lower risk to the ozone layer.
> - ❖ Unfortunately, HCFCs are also very potent greenhouse gases, despite their very low atmospheric concentrations, measured in parts per trillion (million million).

➢ The polyurethane foam sector has links with important economic sectors related to buildings, cold storages and cold chain infrastructure, automobiles, commercial refrigeration, domestic appliances such as refrigerators, water geysers, thermo ware, office and domestic furniture applications, specific high-value niche applications etc.

➢ In India, the foam manufacturing sector is a mix of large, medium and small enterprises having varying capacities, with preponderance of MSMEs. Many of the MSMEs operate largely in the informal sector. These industries might get affected due to this phase out at least in the short term until they find some green alternative.

➢ To ensure minimal dislocation in the sector and for enhancing the capacities of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in converting to low-GWP non-ODS technologies, training and awareness programmes on non-ODS and low GWP alternatives to HCFCs including the adoption of such alternatives have been organized in close collaboration with Industry.

> **India's role in the Kigali Amendment**
> - ❖ In 2016, the signatories to the Montreal Protocol adopted the Kigali Amendment, which aims to phase down HFCs and stresses the importance of combining refrigerant management with the energy-efficiency aspects of cooling.
> - ❖ As a signatory to the Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment, India has committed to freezing HFC use by 2028 and phasing down HFCs by 85 per cent by 2047.
> - ❖ Globally, the agreement is expected to mitigate HFC use by 85 percent by 2045, causing a reduction of emissions equivalent to approximately 70 billion tonnes of CO_2 globally.

➢ MSMEs will also be facilitated for adequate tie-ups with system houses, laboratories for getting their material tested, etc, in addition to organizing study tours, field visits, etc.

Hydrochlorofluorocarbons Phase-Out Management Plan (HPMP)

✓ 19th Meeting of Parties to the Montreal Protocol in 2007 called for the accelerated phase-out of HCFCs, with specific reduction targets, as well as directions for the Executive Committee and the Parties to expedite actions that will prioritise projects and programmes to meet this phase-out.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Hydrocarbon Exploration Licensing Policy, International Solar Alliance, Survey of India, Montreal protocol, Kigali Agreement

- ✓ HPMP is an over-arching plan that was adopted in 2008 in order to achieve total phase-out of HCFCs.Countries are classified as-
    - o those with consumption in the servicing sector only
    - o those with consumption in both servicing and manufacturing sector
- ✓ The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) through its Ozone Cell implements the HCFC Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP) as per the reduction schedule agreed with the Protocol.
- ✓ It aims to phase out the use of HCFCs by switching to non-ozone depleting by 2030. The Government of India has now launched Stage II of HPMP for the 2017-2023 period which has a strong focus on HCFC phaseout in the building sector.
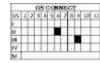
Jal Shakti Rankings

News Excerpt

Recently, Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Jal Shanti Rankings, 2019.

Highlights

- Gujarat has been ranked the best for parameters on efficiency targets in the

National Hydrology Project

Project Objective

To improve the extent, quality, and accessibility of water resources information,decision support system for floods and basin level resource assessment/planning and to strengthen the capacity of targeted water resources professionals and management institutions in India.

Project Highlight

- ✓ Central Sector Scheme, with 100% grant to the States
- ✓ Budget Outlay: about Rs3,640 Crore, with World Bank Assistance to the tune of 50% of the project cost
- ✓ Timeline: 8 years from 2016-17 to 2023-24
- ✓ Scale: Pan India
- ✓ Lead Agency: Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation
- ✓ Implementing Agencies: 49 (including 10 from Central Government and 39 from States)

Project Concept

- ✓ Modernizing Monitoring network: The project will establish & strengthen monitoring networks in project states, with a focus on deploying new sensors, data storage, and telemetry technologies across the whole country, to establish comprehensive, modern, automated, real-time monitoring systems for surface water and ground water.
- ✓ Transforming Knowledge Access: The project will build on the dramatic advances in cloud computing, internet, mobile devices, social media and other communication tools to modernize access to and visualization of customized water information by different stakeholders.
- ✓ Enhancing Analytical Tools: The project will develop and demonstrate tools for water resources assessment, hydro logic and flood inundation forecasting, water infrastructure operations, ground water modelling, and river basin and investment planning.
- ✓ Modernizing Institutions: The project will complement technology investments with investments in people and institutional capacity. Support will be provided for developing centres of expertise, innovative learning approaches, collaboration with academia and research institutes, and outreach programs. Office and equipment will be modernized to streamline work flows to effectively leverage the technology investments.

review of state and Central government water departments by the ministry of Jal Shakti.

- According to the ranking for 2019, Rajasthan is the third-best and Delhi is among the worst performing states.

- Among the seven Central departments reviewed, the Survey of India has got the top ranking followed by the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH) and Central Water Commission.
- **The Central Pollution Control Board, the country's pollution watchdog, has got the lowest** rank, in the ranking for the year 2019.
- The departments have been ranked on parameters for procurement, finance, real-time data acquisition system, data digitization, analytical work, training and updating MIS.
- The agencies have been given a score out of 100, and those scoring between 48 and 100 are called satisfactory; the ones scoring between 40 and 48 are moderately satisfactory; a score between 34 and 40 falls under moderately unsatisfactory category and score below 34 is in the unsatisfactory category.

The Jal Shakti Abhiyan

- ❖ The Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) is a time-bound, mission-mode water conservation campaign.
- ❖ Phases of JSA: Phase 1 from 1st July to 15th September 2019 for all States and Union Territories; and Phase 2 from 1st October to 30th November 2019 for States and UTs receiving the retreating monsoon (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu).
- ❖ In the short run, the campaign will focus on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level, including creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability using rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and management of household wastewater for reuse.
- ❖ For the long run, the government launched the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) with an aim to ensure piped water supply to all rural households by 2024.
- ❖ During the campaign, officers, groundwater experts and scientists from the Government of India were told to work together with state and district officials in **India's most water**-stressed districts for water conservation and water resource management by focusing on accelerated implementation of five target intervention.
- ❖ Hence, the JSA aims at making water conservation a Jan Andolan through asset creation and extensive communication.

Analytica

About Jal-Shakti Rankings

➢ Ranking has been done under the National Hydrology Project that aims to improve drought and flood management, creating a state-specific database on availability, plugging leakages in canals and dams and meteorological forecast on water resources information system.

➢ The ranking is part of the mid-term review of the Central and the state government departments dealing with water to achieve the target to provide piped drinking water connection to every household in the next five years.

> PEPPER IT WITH
> Jal Jeewan Mission, Swachha Bharat Mission, Rainwater harvesting

➢ Another aim of the ranking is to have a water resources information system (WRIS) for all states to create a real-time integrated National Water Information Centre (NWIC).

Way Forward

✓ Experts have said that ranking project will have an impact on the ground only if leakages are detected on a real-time basis and there are personnel to act on the alerts to be issued by the WRIS.

✓ Experts believe that the states need to strengthen their workforce on ground to deliver the benefits of the WRIS to people. The system can also help people in getting real-time alerts on water related natural calamities such as drought and floods.

Miyawaki Method of Afforestation

News Excerpt

Kerala Government has recently decided to develop forests based on Miyawaki method on the government office premises, residential complexes, school premises etc. Also, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), in a bid to facilitate sustainable green cover on the under-construction coastal road stretch has planned to plant the Miyawaki forest on the 70-hectare stretch of Phase 1 of the project.

Pre-Connect

What is Miyawaki Method of Afforestation

- It is named after the Japanese botanist and plant ecologist Akira Miyawaki.
- In this method, the soil of a future forest site is analyzed and then improved, using locally available sustainable amendments—for example, rice husks from a nearby mill.
- About 50 to 100 local plant species from the four categories i.e. main tree species, sub-species, shrubs, and ground-covering herbs are selected and planted as seedlings in a random mix like one that is found growing naturally in the wild.
- The seedlings are planted very densely—20,000 to 30,000 per hectares as opposed to 1,000 per hectare in commercial forestry.
- For a period of two to three years, the site is monitored, watered, and weeded, to give the nascent forest every chance to establish itself.
- During this early period, the plantings compete with each other for space and access to light and water—a battle that encourages much faster growth.
- In conventional afforestation techniques, 1 meter of growth per year is considered the norm. In the Miyawaki method, trees grow about 10 times faster.
- Once stabilized, the forest is left to flourish on its own without further interference.

Analytica

Benefits of the Miyawaki Method

- A unique methodology has proven to work worldwide, irrespective of soil and climate conditions.
- Approximately 30 times more trees are planted, as compared to conventional plantation techniques.
- A minimum of 300% more species in the same area as compared to conventional plantation species.
- A substantial 3000% increase in noise and dust isolation.
- Up to 30 times or more Carbon-dioxide absorption as compared to conventional forest.
- A completely maintenance-free, wild and native forest after the first three years.
- A completely chemical-fertilizer free forest that sustains itself and supports local bio-diversity.
- Customised modem day plantation that can be modified and inserted in everyday spaces available around us.
- A natural bulwark against soil erosion and Tsunami.

Criticism of the Miyawaki Method

- Critics have accused him of shilling for corporations like Toyota, which have contributed to deforestation in places such as India, and of creating monotonous-looking forests that are expensive to boot.
- Environmentalists have questioned the efficacy of the method that accelerates the growth of **trees and claims to match a forest's complex ecosystem. They believe that it is not a good idea** to force plants to photosynthesise fast. Also, a forest is not just the trees, but a complex ecosystem.
- The technique was started by the Japanese considering the climate in Japan and the regular occurrence of natural calamities like earthquakes. Environmentalists have questioned the suitability of the method for a tropical country like India.

- ✓ Miyawaki forests can only be grown at smaller spaces in or near cities. Such forests also lack some qualities of natural forests, such as medicinal properties and the ability to bring rain.
- ✓ Miyawaki Forests are very dense, which restricts the movement of any possible wildlife the forest might attract. Experts are of the opinion that nothing can replace something that is very natural in its form, like natural forests. However, it cannot be denied that these plantations can supplement and complement them.

Importance of Urban Afforestation

- The rapid expansion of cities takes place without any land-use planning strategy and the resulting human pressure has highly damaging effects on forests, landscapes, as well as green areas in and around cities.
- The environmental impacts of urbanization are often intensified by climate change and include increased pollution, decreased availability of food and resources, as well as increased poverty and frequency of extreme climatic events.
- Urban trees can help to mitigate some of the negative impacts and social consequences of urbanization, and thus make cities more resilient to these changes.
- Trees can contribute to the increase of local food and nutrition security, providing food such as fruits, nuts and leaves for both human consumption and fodder. Their wood, in turn, can be used for cooking and heating.
- Trees play an important role in increasing urban biodiversity, providing plants and animals with a favourable habitat, food and protection.
- A mature tree can absorb up to 150 kg of CO_2 per year. As a result, trees play an important role in climate change mitigation. Especially in cities with high levels of pollution, trees can improve air quality, making cities healthier places to live in.
- Strategic placement of trees in cities can help to cool the air between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius, thus reducing **the urban "heat island" effect, and helping urban** communities to adapt to the effects of climate change.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Zero Budget Natural Farming, Van Dhan Yojana, National Green Mission, State of forest Report

- Large trees are excellent filters for urban pollutants and fine particulates. They absorb pollutant gases (such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, ozone and sulphur oxides) and filter fine particulates such as dust, dirt or smoke out of the air by trapping them on leaves and bark.
- Research shows that living in close proximity of urban green spaces and having access to them, can improve physical and mental health, for example by decreasing high blood pressure and stress. This, in turn, contributes to the well-being of urban communities.
- Mature trees regulate water flow and play a key role in preventing floods and reducing the risk of natural disasters. A mature evergreen tree, for instance, can intercept more than 15 000 litres of water per year.
- Trees also help to reduce carbon emissions by helping to conserve energy. For example, the correct placement of trees around buildings can reduce the need for air conditioning by 30 per cent, and reduce winter heating bills by 20-50 per cent.
- Planning urban landscapes with trees can increase property value, by up to 20 per cent, and attract tourism and business.

Conclusion

The method is being extensively used in and around metro cities like Bengaluru by activists, corporate firms as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, and even individuals. The utility of the method cannot be completely denied but the fact remains true that such forests cannot be compared to natural forests and biodiversity. Thus, it should be ensured that the Miyawaki forest does not become a tool to convert large forest lands for industry applications. In the long run, sustainable methods of development are going to give long-lasting results and in this wake utility of Miyawaki Forests should be analyzed scientifically.

Smog Tower

News Excerpt

Recently, a prototype air purifier was inaugurated in the national capital. In November 2019, the Supreme Court had directed the Centre and the Delhi **government to prepare a plan to install 'smog towers' across the capital to** deal with air pollution.

What is a 'Smog Tower'?

- Smog towers are structures designed to work as large-scale air purifiers.
- They are usually fitted with multiple layers of air filters, which clean the air of pollutants as it passes through them.
- The smog tower installed in Delhi is capable of treating 6,00,000 cubic metres of air per day and can collect more than 75 per cent of particulate matters (PM) 2.5 and 10. After the cleaning, the tower releases clean air.

Other Examples in the World

- China, which has been battling air pollution for years, has two smog towers in its capital Beijing and in the **northern city of Xi'an.**
- **The Xi'an tower is dubbed** the **world's** largest, and has reportedly brought down PM 2.5 by 19% in an area of around 6 sq. km in its vicinity.
- The 100-metre (328 feet) high tower has produced 10 million cubic metres of clean air every day since its launch, and on severely polluted days, is able to bring down smog close to moderate levels.

- A second tower that is coming up in Delhi has large-scale air filters shall draw in the air through fans installed at the top before passing it through the filters and releasing it near the ground.
- The filters installed in the tower will use carbon nano-fibres as a major component and will be fitted along its peripheries.
- The tower will focus on reducing particulate matter load.
- Apart from IIT-Bombay and IIT-Delhi, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) will also be involved with the project.

PEPPER IT WITH

Graded Response Action Plan, AQI, Odd Even Scheme, WAYU

Note: For further information on air pollution, please refer to KSG Current Connect, October 2019, Page no. 75

Saksham 2020

News Excerpt

Recently, the month-long fuel conservation campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA), Saksham 2020 was launched under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Pre-Connect

- Global fossil fuel consumption is on the rise, and new reserves are becoming harder to find.
- We currently consume the equivalent of over 11 billion tonnes of oil from fossil fuels every year.
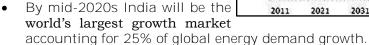
PETROLEUM CONSERVATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (PCRA)

- PCRA is a registered society set up under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India.
- As a non-profit organization, PCRA is a national government agency engaged in promoting energy efficiency in various sectors of economy.
- It helps the government in proposing policies and strategies for petroleum conservation, aimed at reducing excessive dependence of the country on oil requirement.
- It aims to become a center of excellence for conservation of hydrocarbons & environment protection for sustainable development on our inherent strength.
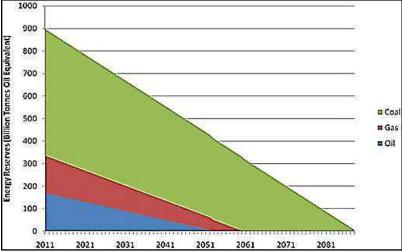
- Crude oil reserves are vanishing at a rate of more than 4 billion tonnes a year.
- If we carry on the same consumption pattern, our known oil deposits could run out in just over 53 years.
- 16 of the 20 largest oil fields in the world have reached peak level production making them too small to meet the global demand.
- In order to keep average global temperature increases below 1.5°C, we need to leave up to 80% of our fossil fuel reserves in the ground.
- By mid-2020s India will be the **world's largest growth market** accounting for 25% of global energy demand growth.
- **Today 83% of India's crude oil requirement is met through import.**

Analytica

About

Saksham 2020 is a flagship fuel conservation program of PCRA and Oil public sector undertakings under the guidance of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Objectives

➤ Aims to sensitize the masses about the conservation and *efficient use of petroleum products* towards achieving twin objectives of *better health & environment and securing the availability of Oil & Gas for future generations.*

➤ It also shows the way forward for enhancing Conservation capabilities of people and help understand needs, issues & solutions for effective utilization of petroleum products and also to give the message that collective participation is the key to Conservation.
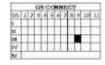
➤ It aims to deliver a strong message that sustainable future demands conservation of natural resources.

> PEPPER IT WITH
> **Paris Deal and India's INDCs,**
> IPCC special report on 1.5°C

Kuno National Park

News Excerpt

State government of Madhya Pradesh has declared Kuno as a National Park. It is underway to become second home for Asiatic lions. Recently, Supreme Court mentioned that African Cheetah from Namibia can be introduced in India.

Pre-Connect

- KunoPalpur is a wildlife sanctuary in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh in Central India.
- It is in news since last few years due to lion & Cheetah rehabilitation project.
- The sanctuary has a vast richness and diversity of indigenous flora and fauna which represents a typical cross-section of the dry deciduous forest of the Central India.

Highlights

➤ KunoPalpur Wildlife Sanctuary is underway to become **India's second home for the Asiatic lion.**

➤ It is to prevent decline, and possible extinction, in a single habitat due to natural disasters, epidemics, decline in prey or retaliatory killings.

➤ **Kuno's habitats have been fine-**tuned for these new entrants with abundant populations of

herbivores like nilgai, chital, sambhar and chinkara, who are the lions' natural prey.

➤ Geographically, Kuno also features the same kind of semi-arid vegetation in Gir, as it is under the same biogeographic zone. This should make the transition more seamless for the lions.

➤ The introduction of lions at Kuno is happening 29 years after it was first proposed.

About Asiatic lion

✓ Asiatic lions were once distributed up to the state of West Bengal in east and Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, in central India.

✓ At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the only abode of the Asiatic lion. The last surviving population of the Asiatic lions is a compact tract of dry deciduous forest and open grassy scrublands in southwestern part of Saurashtra region of Gujarat.

✓ Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions. The lions face the usual threats of poaching and habitat fragmentation.

✓ There are also cases of lions dying by falling into the unguarded wells around the Gir Protected Area.

✓ They are Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, in Appendix I of CITES and as Endangered on IUCN Red List.

> ### Gir National park
> ❖ It is the largest compact tract of dry deciduous forests in the semi-arid western part (Gujarat) of India.
> ❖ It is the last abode of the big and regal predator, Asiatic lion (Pantheraleopersica), an endangered animal species.
> ❖ It forms a unique habitat for many mammals, reptiles, birds and insect species along with a rich variety of flora.

Asia Pacific Drosophila Research Conference

News Excerpt

Recently, the Fifth Edition of the Asia Pacific Drosophila Research Conference (APDRC) was held in Pune, Maharashtra and was organized by the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER).

Pre-Connect

The APDRC Conferences are biennial events that aim to promote the interaction of Drosophila Researchers who use the fruitfly Drosophila as a model organism to address basic and applied questions. The conference is being conducted in India for the 1st time. The last edition was held in Osaka, Japan.

What is Drosophila?

• It is a genus of flies, belonging to the family Drosophilidae.

• Also called small *fruit flies*, pomace flies, vinegar flies, or wine flies.

• Found all around the world, with more species in the *tropical regions*.

• Can be found in deserts, tropical rainforest, cities, swamps, and alpine zones. Some northern species hibernate.

• Most species breed in various kinds of decaying plant and fungal material, including fruit, bark, slime fluxes, flowers *overripe or rotting fruits* and mushrooms.

• A few species have also switched to being *parasites or predators*.

> Focus Areas on APDRC5:
> ❖ Gametogenesis and Stem Cells
> ❖ Pattern Formation
> ❖ Morphogenesis and Mechanobiology
> ❖ Hormones and Physiology
> ❖ Cellular Neurobiology
> ❖ Behavioral Neurobiology
> ❖ Infection and Immunity
> ❖ Ecology and Evolution

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Govt. initiatives to Control Vector-Borne Diseases

1. National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme was launched in 2003-04 by merging several Disease Control Programs as follows:

1) National Anti - Malaria Programme
2) Kala - Azar Control Programme
3) National Filaria Control Programme
4) Japanese Encephalitis Control Programme
5) Dengue and Dengue Hemorrhagic fever

2. National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Malaria Elimination (2017-2022)

➢ India has made considerable progress in reducing its malaria burden.
➢ It has a vision of a malaria-free country by 2027 and elimination by 2030.
➢ The National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Malaria Elimination (2017-2022) has been developed based on the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) of the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP).
➢ The NFME 2016-**2030 outlines India's strategy for elimination of the disease by 2030.**
➢ The goals of the National Framework for Malaria Elimination in India 2016–2030 are:
  o Eliminate malaria (zero indigenous cases) throughout the entire country by 2030; and
  o Maintain malaria-free status in areas where malaria transmission has been interrupted and prevent re-introduction of malaria.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Filarisis, Dengue and other vector borne diseases, Lyme Disease etc.

➢ Recently, a three-day meeting encompassing the 30th National Congress on Parasitology and 1st Global Summit on Malaria Elimination was organized in New Delhi to discuss some latest advances and translational aspects of parasitology research, including strategies for malaria elimination.
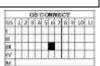
Conclusion

The world malaria report released by the World Health Organization (WHO) in November 2018 also stated that India reported 3 million fewer cases in 2017, a 24% decrease compared with 2016. The report also said India is on track for a 20-40% reduction. In spite of being the highest-burden country of the region, India showed a 22% decline in reported cases within a year.

Indian Data Relay Satellite System

News Excerpt
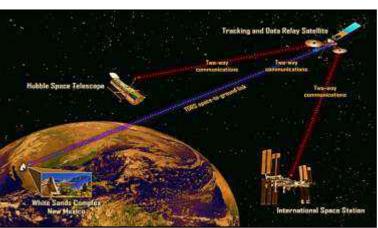
Government of India had decided to develop an indigenous Data relay satellite system which would be allowed for space-to-space tracking and communication of its space assets

Pre-Connect

- A relay satellite works similarly as racers in a relay race in order to transfer data between the ground and space.
- Satellites in orbit cannot pass along their information to the ground stations on Earth if the satellite does not have a clear view of the ground station.
- Relay Satellite serves as a way to pass along the satellite's information.
- It can also send information from the ground to the satellite to tell the satellite what to do

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BENGALURU: KORMANGALA 7619166663 & CHANDRA LAYOUT 7619136663 | BHOPAL: 7509975361
PATNA: 7463950774 | INDORE: 7314977441 | RANCHI: 7463950774 | www.ksgindia.com

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GSAT-30

- Part of **ISRO's earlier INSAT/GSAT** satellite series.
- Telecommunication Satellite configured **on ISRO's enhanced I**-3K Bus structure.
- It will provide communication services from Geostationary orbit in C (Covering Gulf countriesand a large number of Asian countries and Australia.) and Ku bands (Indianmainland and islands).
- In-orbit operational life of GSAT-30 is more than 15 years.

Vyom-Mitra

- ❖ It is a half-humanoid which is also first **"Women" astrona**ut of ISRO.
- ❖ It is powered by speech synthesis software and artificial intelligence.
- ❖ It will simulate the human functions required for space before real astronauts take off before August 2022.
- ❖ The half-humanoid will ride to space in the first test flight of the human space mission, Gaganyaan.

- Major Space powers such as the U.S. and Russia started their relay satellite systems in the late 1970s-80s and a few already have around 10 satellites each.

Analytica

IDRSS Overview:

- ➤ It will be a set of satellites that will track, send and receive information from other Indian Satellites.
- ➤ These weigh around 2000 kg and will be placed in geostationary orbits which are at a distance of 36000 km.
- ➤ A satellite in GEO covers a third of the earth below and three of them can provide total coverage.

Function:

- ➤ It will track and establish a continuous connection with Indian satellites especially those which are in the low-earth orbits which have limited coverage of earth.
- ➤ It will play a vital role in advanced LEO missions such as space docking, space station, as well as distant expeditions to moon, Mars and Venus.
- ➤ It will play a critical role in monitoring launches.

IRDSS and Gaganyaan

✓ The first beneficiary of IRDSS will be the crew members of the Gaganyaan mission of 2022. It will allow them to be fully and continuously in touch with mission control throughout their travel.

Bhuvan Panchayat V 3.0

- ❑ **It forms the part of ISRO's Space based information** support for decentralized Planning Update Project. It is for better planning and monitoring of government project.
- ❑ The program began in 2011to empower Panchayati raj institutions. Theweb portal was launched for visualization, planning and monitoring of schemes at panchayat levels.
- ❑ Services it offered to Stake holders:
  - o Database Visualization
  - o Data Analytics
  - o Generation of automatic reports
  - o Model-based products and services
- ❑ ISRO will collaborate with stakeholders to understand their data requirements
- ❑ It will help in providing geo-spatial services to aid gram panchayat development planning process of the

East Asian Observatory

- ❖ India is in discussion with East Asian Observatories Consortium of eight countries to be part of their project of building large telescopes and pool resources.
- ❖ It is formed by East Asian Core Observatories Association in order to pursue joint projects in astronomy within the East Asian Region.
- ❖ It is chartered as a non-profit Hawaii Corporation
- ❖ Member states are- China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea as full members and Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and **Indonesia as 'observers.**
- ❖ Participation of India will allow for the establishment of new kinds of telescopes which could aid the observation of new black holes and throw light on cosmic

✓ The first IRDSS will be sent towards the end of 2020. It will precede the pre-Gaganyaan experimental unmanned space flight which will have a humanoid dummy.

✓ A second one will follow in 2021. The two will offer near-total tracking, sending and receiving of information from the crew 24/7.

> PEPPER IT WITH
> IRNSS, Humanoid, Samsung NEON, Sony AIBO

✓ Without data relay satellites, ISRO would have to create a large number of ground stations everywhere or hire them globally and yet the crewed spacecraft would not be visible all the time.

107th Indian Science Congress

News Excerpt

107th edition of Indian Science Congress was organized at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Bengaluru. The theme of the event was Science & **Technology: Rural Development".**

Pre-Connect

• The idea of the Indian Science Congress Association was purported by two scientist Professor J. L. Simonsen and Professor P.S. MacMahon.

• The first meeting of the Congress was held from January 15-17, 1914 at the premises of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

• ISC since its inception is the major focal point for scientists, researchers and academicians interested in various aspects of scientific discoveries and technologies.

• ISC was the intellectual nursery of modern science in the country. Early ideas of how science and technology could aid the development of the new nation were incubated at ISC.

• The prime purpose of the ISC now is to draw school and science college students to hear Nobel Laureates and Indian-origin scientists from abroad to lecture about their work and the future prospects of science.

Analytica

Challenges faced by ISC

Several luminaries of India's science establishments — the Principal Scientific Adviser, secretaries from several ministries, the chiefs of major organisations such as ISRO or the Department of Atomic Energy were absent this year. This shows the decline in the quality of ISC, there are several reasons responsible for it such as:

➢ Creeping Pseudoscience: Distinguished Speakers invited in the events have resorted to mix of mythology and science and publicise far-fetched assertions such as Kauravas were born from stem-cell technology and the Vedas discussed avionics. These things have eroded the congress public image.

➢ Lack of innovation: There is a lack of innovation at the congress which is evident from the fact that several laboratories have re-run from old congressesor from similar and past science fairs.

➢ No real-life demonstration: **Many laboratories showcase their work as 'posters' rather** than actually showing demonstrations or working inventions. This fails the purpose of attracting young minds towards science.

Way-forward

Time has come for the Indian Science Congress to take a rebirth and make sure that it makes way for inspiring new ideas, or new models of taking science to the public. For this, it must take the following steps

✓ Pre-Screening of papers presented by speakers to stop the propagation of pseudoscience from its stage.

✓ Live Science experiments including students must be increased.

- ✓ Competition with monetary prizes must be organized to allow for presentation of innovation.
- ✓ Rural scientific development must be encouraged and hence a dedicated Rural Scientific innovation centre **could be created showcasing India's rural innova**tion.
- ✓ ISC should promote innovative solutions to global problems such as Climate change. For this, it must engage with eminent institutes such as IITs and present their innovation in the ISC for global investors.
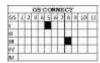
> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> VigyanSancharakSammelan, India ISC Expo, Rashtriya Kishore VaigyanikSammelan, Women Science Congress

- ✓ Its focus in research & development should provide a boost to a number of patents registered from India, from current 18% to at least 50% out the total applied patents.
- ✓ ISC should also make connections with Indian Diaspora so that the best of Indian minds can collaborate on a single platform. This will help in creating linkages between India and Global Science.

Gender Divide in Science

News Excerpt

In a recent study, it has been found that across the world, there are more men who are active in science, technology, engineering and medicine (STEM) than women.

Reasons for Gender Divide

Various reasons have been identified for the glaring gender divide which are:

- **Masculine Culture**: Presence of various stereotype that women are not fit for certain kinds of Job creates masculine culture. Further, there is lack of role models, for instance, out of the 866 Nobel winners so far, only 53 have gone to women, similarly, in life sciences and medicine, of the over 400 Lasker awards, only 33 have gone to women.
- **Lack of Exposure:** There is lack of sufficient early exposure to computers, physics and related areas compared to boys in early childhood. This can again attribute to the stereotyping of **computer field practitioners as 'nerds' with social awkwardness this pushes women into other** fields.
- **Gender Gap in self-efficacy**: This factor arises from the above two points as they create an impression of confusion and self-doubt among the women mind that whether they are eligible for STEM fields.
- **Gender inequality**: Analysis has revealed that research-intensive universities take fewer women students. They also earn lower salaries, receive fewer research grants and fewer citations of their research papers than men colleagues.

Situation in India

India is not better than the world and it is reflected from the fact that women form only 10-15% of STEM researchers and faculty members in the IITs, CSIR, AIIMS and PGIs. In private R & D labs, there are very few women scientists. There are several reasons responsible for it such as:

- ➤ **Societal reason**: Traditionally, India has been a patrilineal society with the notion that women need not take jobs, and that this notion has only recently been revised.
- ➤ **Lack of recognition**: Research recognition and honours received by Indian scientists, have hardly 10% women. The Bhatnagar Prize has gone to 18 women out of a total of 548. Interestingly, there are no (or a minute percentage of women experts) women in each of these juries.
- ➤ Less number of enrollment of women in PHD and research due to commitment in family.

Conclusion

It is of critical importance that more and more women participate in STEM for the development of science and its propagation. This is all the more important for India which is in the phase of its demographic dividend. Participation of women in STEM will also lead to better development of

children in early years (reduced Child Stunting and wasting in India) as an educated woman translates into an educated family. It will also provide a boost to the Indian economy which is facing both structural and cyclical slowdown.

Government must encourage more programmes like KIRAN (Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing), which is dedicated women scientist to restart their career again in research.

I-STEM Portal

News Excerpt

Government of India had launched a portal known as I-STEM portal which will act as the gateway for researchers to locate the specific facility/facilities they need for their R&D work and identify the one that is either located closest to them or available the soonest.

Pre-Connect

About I-STEM

- Indian Science, Technology and Engineering Facilities Map (I-STEM) will provide easy access to expensive research equipment and facilities anywhere in India.
- Institutes will provide access to researchers for both academic and non-academic work through an online reservation system.

Analytica

Significance

- ➢ Better and optimum utilization of publicly funded equipment and also avoid duplication of these equipments to the maximum possible.
- ➢ Reduce the cost of doing research in India
- ➢ **Provide essential equipment's necessary and** essential for regular use to each institute
- ➢ Boost the technical cooperation among various research institute.
- ➢ Compliments the Government initiative of Scientific Social Responsibility.
- ➢ Promote better synergies between Public and Private players.

NetSCoFAN

- ❖ Ministry of Health and family welfare had launched a network of research & academic institutions working in the area of food & nutrition.
- ❖ It will comprise of 8 components:
  - o Biological Nutrition
  - o Chemical Nutrition
  - o Biological and Chemical labelling
  - o Food of animal origin
  - o Food of plant origin
  - o Water &Beverages
  - o Food testing
  - o Safer &Sustainable packaging.
- ❖ FSSAI will act as a nodal institution which will develop a '*Ready Reckoner*' i.e. an inventory of research related activities
- ❖ FSSAI will also collate and develop database on food safety issues for risk assessment activities.

VigyanSamachar- **India's first S&T news agency**

News Excerpt

VigyanPrasar (VP) organized the inaugural workshop of the first science and technology news agency-- VigyanSamachar. This type of initiative is the need of the hour to sensitize science communication among all stakeholders.

Pre-Connect

About VigyanPrasar

- It is an autonomous organization of DST
- It has been entrusted to coordinate news stories received from Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) for all four media sources – print, electronic, digital, and social.

Analytica

Need for VigyanSamachar

➢ Rise in number of science and engineering publications from India which is also indicated in the recent National Science Foundation (USA) Report, where India ranked at number 3 spot.

➢ The representation of science in the news media remains limited. Recent studies indicate that science gets very little space both in English as well as vernacular media.

➢ Most of the scientific development go unpublished in various media. This limits the knowledge of scientific achievements and activities to limited people.

➢ Difference in the language of the scientists and social scientists and therefore science communication could help bridge the gap between the two.

➢ Earlier, the Government of India launched Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR) which also calls for greater communication between scientist and public at large.

Kangaroo Mother Care

News Excerpt

Recent studies have shown that 'Kangaroo Mother Care' helps inimproving the survival rate of stable low-birthweight new-borns in comparison with standard hospital care. Recent studied showed that KMC in India has helped in improving survival by 30% and 25%, in babies till 28 days and six months of age, respectively.

About Kangaroo Mother Care (A Method of care of Preterm Infants)

• Kangaroo mother care (KMC) or the intervention where babies are placed in skin-to-skin contact with their mothers and exclusively breastfed.

• Stable babies are defined as babies who do not need respiratory support or intravenous fluids and can accept oral feeds.

Analytica

Need for KMC in India

➢ **Out of 97% of the world's** low-weight babies are born in developing countries, India accounts for 40%.

➢ The infant mortality rate in India was at about 30 deaths per 1,000 live births.

➢ World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that it should be continued till baby attains a weight of 2.5 kg or till babies do not require kangaroo mother care anymore.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Pradhan Mantri MatruVandana Yojana, Perinatal Mortality, Postneonatal Mortality,
> Navjaat Shishu Suraksha Karyakram,
> Home Based New Born Care, ASHA, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram Ra shtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, MAA

Significance of KMC in India

✓ It could substantially reduce neonatal and infant mortality especially when 90% coverage is achieved.

✓ It will help in improving the breastfeeding and reduction of infections.

✓ It will also promote the growth and development of the child and increase mother-child bonding.

✓ It will also reduce stress in both mother and baby.

✓ In India, where access to critical medical services required by pregnant and lactating mother is quite difficult, KMC might come as an easy solution.

Novel Technology to Remove Heavy Metals From Water

News Excerpt

Researchers from IIT Bombay have successfully developed a carbon-based nanostructure which can simultaneously remove heavy metals such as arsenic, chromium, cadmium and mercury from wastewater with very high efficiency.

Pre-Connect

About

- Heavy metal refers to any metallic chemical element with high density and is toxic or poisonous at low concentrations. For eg. mercury (Hg), cadmium (Cd), arsenic etc.
- Objective of the test was to find a structure which can adsorb heavy metals found in industrial effluent having pH between the range of (pH 2-13).
- The team developed a Marigold like carbon-based nanostructure which is obtained through a single-step process of chemical vapour deposition followed by removing the silica template.
- This nanostructure showed 80-90% adsorption efficiency for all the four heavy metals studied.

Mechanism

- Majority of adsorption takes place as soon as water contaminated with heavy metal comes in the contact with the nanostructure.
- As the heavy metal chemically react and bind to **the surface of the nanostructure it doesn't leach.**
- Further, these heavy metals can be recovered by treating nanostructure with a mild acid.

Analytica

Advantage of Nanostructures

- ✓ Its hydrophilic or water-loving nature provides for extensive and rapid interaction between the heavy metal-containing water and the carbon nanostructure.
- ✓ It is based on the gravity-driven purification and hence no electricity is required.
- ✓ **It can be recycled and reused multiple times, so it's** cost-effective.
- ✓ It has high adsorption as surface area of nanostructure is easily accessible for heavy metals, unlike activated carbon.

> ### Nano-Structures
> - ❖ Their size is in the range between 1 nm and 100 nm.
> - ❖ Synthetic and nature and can be engineered
> - ❖ Different forms include nano-tubes, spheres and surfaces.
> - ❖ Carbon Nanostructures have wide range of application in medical and biotech field such as bio sensors, bio simulators, tissue implantation

> ### PEPPER IT WITH
> Carbon Nanotubes, Nanomedicine, Quantum Dots, Nanoelectronics

Significance

- ☞ Majority of the rural population in India drink water which is contaminated by heavy metals like fluoride, arsenic and nitrate.
- ☞ According to the Central Water Commission, 42 rivers in India are contaminated by heavy metals toxins beyond the permissible limit. West Bengal is worst affected with over 39 per cent of the total affected population in India.

Black Box Technology

News Excerpt

Recently, Iran accidentally shot down a Ukraine International Airlines Boeing 737-800. It is being termed as a Human Error and an investigation is being ordered.

Pre-Connect

About Black Box

- It is an electronic recording device placed in an aircraft solely for the purpose of facilitating the investigation of an accident.
- It has two critical components which are:
    - o Flight Data recorder
    - o Cockpit Voice Recorder

> ### PEPPER IT WITH
> Black Box Computer, ICAO, Black Box Testing

- Each recorder has a device fitted to it known as an Underwater Locator Beacon (ULB) which helps in locating them both after an air-crash.It can transmit from a depth as deep as 20,000 feet. But they come with limited battery life (90 days).

- It stores critical data from the plane's diagnostic systems as well as conversations between the pilots.

Analytica

Significance

➤ They help crash investigators find out what happened just before the crash.

➤ It is the most objective way to determine exactly what was going on in a flight that doesn't make it way safely to the ground especially in the absence of passengers and crew.

Conclusion

Air crashes are black swan events and airlines are under constant pressure to cut costs. But the spate of recent accidents shows that it certainly doesn't pay to cut corners on technology and safety equipment.

Accretion Burst Event

News Excerpt

Recently, Astronomers have noticed a rare event which occurs during the formation of Star. A Star is formed through the funnelling of matter propagated by the rotating disc of gas and dust theory. In the process of formation of a star, a star may swallow a huge amount of matter resulting in a burst of activities in the massive star. This is called an accretion burst event.

Why to understand such events?

- There is no clear understanding on the formation of massive stars and largely they remained a puzzle.
- This problem can be attributed primarily to two reasons
    o Location of these stars which is quite far away from the solar system.
    o They form in close proximity to other massive stars and hence their environment cannot be studied.

> **Maser**
> ❖ It is a microwave equivalent of Laser i.e. microwave amplification.
> ❖ It is observed using a telescope
> ❖ A maser flare is the sign ofan extraordinary event such as the formation of a star.

- These events, therefore, help in the development and testing of theories to explain the mass gaining ability of massive stars.
- To make the astronomy community aware of the importance of Maser monitoring. It is also to increase the number of sources monitored, the number of transitions monitored at, and increase cadence of observation.
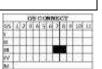
M2O (Maser Monitoring Organization)

➤ Formed in 2017 after the first event of Accretion burst in 2016.

➤ Its purpose is to
    o Create Awareness
    o Increase number sources to observe Accretion Burst
    o Increase cadence of observation

Polycrack Technology

News Excerpt

Government of India has commissioned the country's first Waster-to-Energy plan which is completely owned by it at the present stage. The Plant is based on the patented technology known as Polycrack Technology. This technology converts multiple feedstocks into hydrocarbon liquid fuels, gas, carbon and water
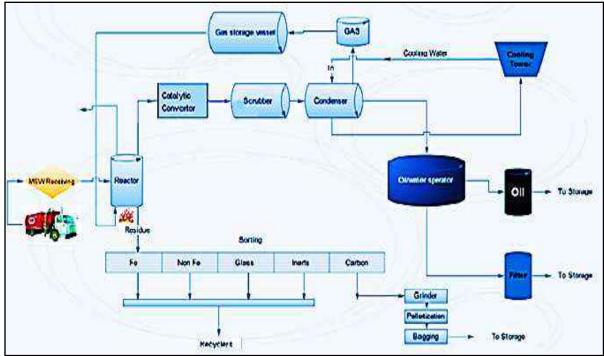
Pre-Connect

About Polycrack Technology

- It is based on a heterogeneous catalytic process in which catalyst and the reactants are not present in the same phase i.e. the state of matter, hence one can be liquid while others can be

solid.

- It also uses a Catalytic convertor which is a device that uses a catalyst to convert harmful compounds.
- It uses waste as a feeder material and produces light diesel oil which can be used to be light furnaces.

<u>Analytica</u>

Significance

- It decimates the requirement of the pre-segregation of the waste, therefore waste can be directly collected from source and fed into the plant.
- Tolerance to moisture eliminates the process of drying of waste after treatment.

- Processing and reformation of waste occur within a period of 24 hours.
- It also eliminates the requirement of biological decomposition as waste is treated as soon as received by the plant.
- There is zero discharge as all the constituents are converted into valuable energy.
- Less operating cost as it reuses the gas generated in the process of the plant in order to provide energy to the system.
- It does not cause atmospheric emissions except for the combustion of gases which have pollutants less than the prescribed norms across the world.

Vaccine-Derived Polio

News Excerpt

In the last one year or so, polio has made a comeback in countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Ghana, Myanmar, China, Cameroon, Indonesia and Iran, mostly as vaccine-derived polio infection.

Pre-Connect

- The World Health Organization (WHO) **defines polio or poliomyelitis as "a** highly infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children.
- The virus is transmitted by person-to-person, spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (e.g. contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.
- Initial symptoms of polio include fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck, and pain in the limbs. In a small proportion of cases, the disease causes paralysis, which is often permanent. There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented by immunization.**"**
- There are three variants of the poliovirus, numbered 1 to 3. For a country to be declared polio-free, the wild transmission of all three kinds has to be stopped. For eradication, cases of both wild and vaccine-derived polio infection to be reduced to zero.

> ### What is the Pulse Polio Programme?
> ❖ India launched the Pulse Polio immunisation programme in 1995, after a resolution for a global initiative of polio eradication was adopted by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 1988.
> ❖ Children in the age group of 0-5 years are administered polio drops during national and sub-national immunisation rounds (in high-risk areas) every year.
> ❖ According to the Ministry of Health, the last polio case in the country was reported from Howrah district of West Bengal in January 2011. The WHO on February 24, 2012, removed India from the list of countries with active endemic wild polio virus transmission.

> ### PEPPER IT WITH
> Injectable polio vaccine (IPV), acute flaccid paralysis (AFP)

Analytica

What is a vaccine-derived polio virus (VDPV)?

- ➢ In VDPV, the source of the virus is the vaccine itself. The oral polio vaccine called polio drops, which India deployed extensively to fight against polio, contain a live, attenuated or weakened poliovirus.
- ➢ When a child is vaccinated, the weakened vaccine-virus replicates in the intestine and enters into the bloodstream, triggering a protective immune response in the child. Like wild poliovirus, the child excretes the vaccine-virus for a period of six to eight weeks.
- ➢ Importantly, as it is excreted, some of the vaccine-virus may no longer be the same as the original vaccine-virus as it gets genetically altered during replication. In areas of inadequate sanitation, this excreted vaccine-virus can quickly spread in the community and infect children with low immunity.

Why is VDPV a matter of concern?

- ➢ The cases of paralysis due to VDPV are sporadic as the virus has to circulate for a long time in the community of under-immunised population before it can infect and cause paralysis in someone. Vaccine-associated paralytic poliomyelitis (VAPP) occurs in an estimated 1 in 2.7 million children receiving their first dose of the oral polio vaccine, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, a public-private partnership of national governments and WHO.
- ➢ The aspect that is a matter of concern is that India reports a high number of non-polio—AFP or paralytic—cases in children who are less than 15 years of age, which the study links to the VDPV. According to WHO, more than 50,000 AFP cases are investigated in India every year as a part of its surveillance system.

Indian Government Initiatives

➤ Under the Pulse Polio Programme, all states and Union Territories have developed Rapid Response Teams (RRT) to respond to any polio outbreak in the country.Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (EPRP) have also been developed by states, indicating steps to be undertaken in case of detection of a polio case.

➤ India introduced the injectable polio vaccine in the Universal Immunisation Programme. This was to reduce the chances of vaccine-derived polio infection, which continues to happen in the country.

➤ To prevent the virus from coming to India, the government has since March 2014 made the Oral Polio Vaccination (OPV) mandatory for those travelling between India and polio-affected countries, such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Syria and Cameroon.
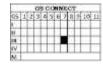
Conclusion

India needs to remain vigilant and maintain the population immunity and sensitive surveillance till global polio eradication happens as poliovirus is still circulating in other parts of the world which may re-infect India.

Neglected Tropical Diseases

News Excerpt

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day is being celebrated for the first time on 30 January 2020.

Pre-Connect

• Neglected diseases are conditions that inflict **severe health burdens on the world's poorest** people, mostly prevalent in tropical climates, particularly in areas with unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, substandard housing and little or no access to health care.

• Diseases are said to be neglected if they are often overlooked by drug developers or by others instrumental in drug access, such as government officials, public health programs. Typically, private pharmaceutical companies cannot recover the cost of developing and producing treatments for these diseases.

• Another reason neglected diseases are not considered high priorities for prevention or treatment is because they usually do not affect people who live in the United States and other developed nations.

• Neglected diseases also lack visibility because they usually do not cause dramatic outbreaks that kill large numbers of people.

• Some examples are – Malaria has infected around 300 million people living in the tropical region, Lymphatic filariasis is a parasitic worm disease, spread by mosquitoes, has affected around 120 million people in the tropical region etc.

• According to WHO, NTDs has affected more than one billion people and cost developing economies billions of dollars every year.

Analytica

Prevention

➤ By providing people with safe sources of drinking water, good sanitation, adequate housing and access to health care.

➤ For diseases that are spread by insects, simple measures such as pesticides or hanging nets around beds may help to prevent or reduce the risk of getting infected.

➤ For diseases caused by bacteria, an effective precaution may be to boil water used for drinking, cooking and hand washing.

➤ Other measures involve giving people medications that will prevent infection or greatly minimize the impact of infection

Challenges

✓ Many people with neglected diseases do not receive proper treatment. Due to lack of health care services, they do not get diagnosed with a disease until it is in an advanced stage that is difficult to treat.

✓ Even at a cost of less than 50 cents a day, such drugs remain too expensive for many poor people.

✓ **Pharmaceutical companies don't show any interest in research and production of medication** for NTDs as people in these regions have limited capacity to pay for the drugs.

✓ Most of the countries affected by NTDs are low/middle-income countries.

✓ A lack of clear policy to deal with rare diseases in India.

Government Initiatives

The main tropical diseases in India include Dengue, Trachoma, Leprosy, Lymphatic Filariasis, Soil-transmitted Helminthiases, Rabies and Kala-azar. The following national programmes in relation to tropical diseases are being implemented:

- National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP): for control of Dengue and elimination of Kala-azar and Lymphatic Filariasis, Malaria, Japanese Enephalitis, Chikangunia.
- National Leprosy Eradication Programme: India has achieved the elimination of leprosy at the national level in December 2005. Focus is now to achieve the elimination of leprosy at the district level.
- National Programme for Control of Blindness: services are provided for the control of Trachoma.
- School Health Programme: services are provided for the prevention of Soil-transmitted Helminthiases (National Deworming Initiative).
- National Policy for Treatment of Rare Diseases was brought by the government in 2017.
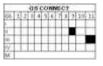
Way Forward

↔ Much needs to be done to address the challenges of NTDs. Public health experts need to develop better ways of delivering health messages and services to low-income people.

↔ Research and Development need to be promoted to develop low-cost drugs for NTDs.

↔ State governments need to wholeheartedly support the central government's guidance on rare disease policy, budget, etc. Karnataka is emerging as a model state in this regard with the establishment of a rare disease care centre of excellence at the Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health (IGICH).

↔ Government of India should make newborn screening mandatory for all treatable diseases across all states.

↔ A genetic and health non-discrimination policy should be strictly enforced in our society at all levels including educational institutions, employment and public facilities to accommodate disabilities of patients with rare diseases.

↔ Health insurance schemes in India should be mandated to cover genetic diseases and pre-existing conditions that may be inherited.

China-Pakistan Navel Axis

News Excerpt

Recently, the navies of China and Pakistan began their sixth bilateral naval exercise, titled Sea Guardians-2020, in the northern Arabian Sea. Such military exercises are expected to strengthen security cooperation between the two **countries, who are already "iron brothers."**
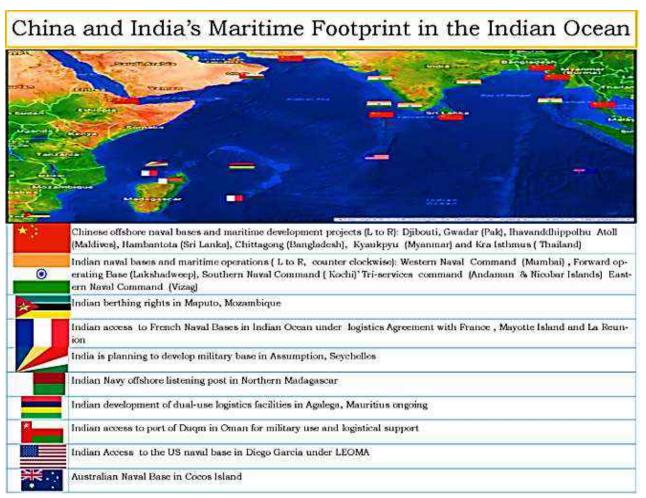
Pre-Connect

- The **"all-weather" relationship between China and Pakistan is centeredaround their common** perceptions of seeing a competitor in India.

- They have a strong military relation to the extent that almost 75% of tanks being used by the Pakistan Army and 65% of the aircraft used by the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) were of Chinese origin.

- China had a vital role in the technology transfer to Pakistan for its nuclear and missile programmes.

- Pakistan and China have also been working on the production of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) such as Caihong-5 and Wing Loong-I.

Concerns for India

The Exercise took place on India's west coast which is a critical security area. There are concerns such as:

China Factor:

China and India's Maritime Footprint in the Indian Ocean

Flag	Description
(China)	Chinese offshore naval bases and maritime development projects (L to R): Djibouti, Gwadar (Pak), Ihavandhippolhu Atoll (Maldives), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Chittagong (Bangladesh), Kyaukpyu (Myanmar) and Kra Isthmus (Thailand)
(India)	Indian naval bases and maritime operations (L to R, counter clockwise): Western Naval Command (Mumbai), Forward operating Base (Lakshadweep), Southern Naval Command (Kochi)' Tri-services command (Andaman & Nicobar Islands) Eastern Naval Command (Vizag)
(Mozambique)	Indian berthing rights in Maputo, Mozambique
(France)	Indian access to French Naval Bases in Indian Ocean under logistics Agreement with France , Mayotte Island and La Reunion
(Seychelles)	India is planning to develop military base in Assumption, Seychelles
(Madagascar)	Indian Navy offshore listening post in Northern Madagascar
(Mauritius)	Indian development of dual-use logistics facilities in Agalega, Mauritius ongoing
(Oman)	Indian access to port of Duqm in Oman for military use and logistical support
(USA)	Indian Access to the US naval base in Diego Garcia under LEOMA
(Australia)	Australian Naval Base in Cocos Island

- In the last few years, China had successfully placed a **"String of Pearls" to string together a** patronage network of multiple South Asian coastal nations through massive investment spending, focused port development projects, and collaborative naval equipment transfer.

- China will be using these ports for dual use; Hence its surveillance missions cannot be entirely

discounted given China's primary aim to secure its sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

➢ Such exercises increase **the PLA Navy's familiarity and understanding of the operational** conditions in this part of the Arabian Sea. If it works, it can be an alternate route for China in the event of a naval blockade by an adversary that closes the Malacca Straits choke point.

➢ China is also developing artificial islands to extend its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for eg. **In Maldives island's at the northernmost atoll –** Ihavanddhippolhu – it has came with a project known as the iHavan project.

India's Options

✓ Establish an area of Dominance: Naval Powers likes US (The Eastern Pacific Ocean) and China (South China Sea) have established cushions to avoid anti-access and area denial tactics from adversaries. India should develop a similar outlook to guard against Chinese encirclement of its strategic space.

✓ Partnering is necessary: For development of a strategic space India must recognize the benefits of partnering with non-residential maritime powers in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, it must not cling on to the non-alignment mentality. It should shed its traditional strategic reticence and ensure the safety of its own SLOCs.

✓ Operationalize Logistics Agreements: India should operationalize logistical agreements with France and the United States, in order to upgrade naval relations to gain berthing rights to Diego Garcia, Mayotte Island, and La Réunion, and allow its own bases to be used for logistical support by the French and American navies. Additionally, India can offer similar reciprocal berthing rights to Australia and gain access to its naval base in Cocos Islands.

✓ Support Stations: Indian need to develop logistical support stations on Assumption Island in the Seychelles and Agalega in Mauritius, also need to build upon its already existing listening post in northern Madagascar. At the same time step up the use of existing berthing rights with Duqm Port in Oman and Maputo in Mozambique.

✓ Connecting the dots: Connecting these offshore stations with its on-shore naval commands and island-based operating bases will allow the Indian Navy a larger operational expanse **beyond its immediate buffer zones. These logistical bases can also enhance India's capability to** establish sea-denial in the Indian Ocean.

✓ Expansion of Outreach: **India's** inability to develop interdependencies with neighboring countries, both economically and strategically, has left a void that China has dutifully fulfilled. Therefore, these moves should be accompanied with counter-theater presence in the Western Pacific, and diplomatic outreach to South Asian nations that are being courted by China.

Conclusion

China and Pakistan have had a decades-long strategic partnership, and they have conducted many military

| PEPPER IT WITH |
| CPEC, String of Pearls, Malacca Straits, Vanilla Islands |
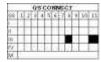
exercises. But it does appear as if these exercises are now getting more complex and are designed for more than simply symbolic demonstration of China-Pakistan friendship. These bilateral exercises need to be seen also in the context of the recent China-Pakistan-Iran-Russia naval exercise, all of which is likely to worry India as well others such as the United States. The options for India are simple – either it acquiesces to a Chinese hierarchy in the region by letting China encroach upon its sphere of influence, or it takes a stand to preserve its strategic space and **counters China's containment strategy by expanding its nautical reach out.**

NEST

News Excerpt

Ministry of External Affairs has announced the setting up of a new division on New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST).

About

- It will act as the nodal point for all matters connected to new and emerging technologies, particularly the current domains of Artificial Intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology, genetics (for example, genome editing CRISPR technology) or next-generation telecommunications including exchange of views with foreign governments and coordination with domestic ministries and departments.

- It will help in assessing foreign policy and international legal implications of emerging technology and technology-based resources.

- It will help in safeguarding Indian interests in multilateral engagements like UN, G20 etc. where rules governing the use and access to such technologies are discussed.

Why NEST?
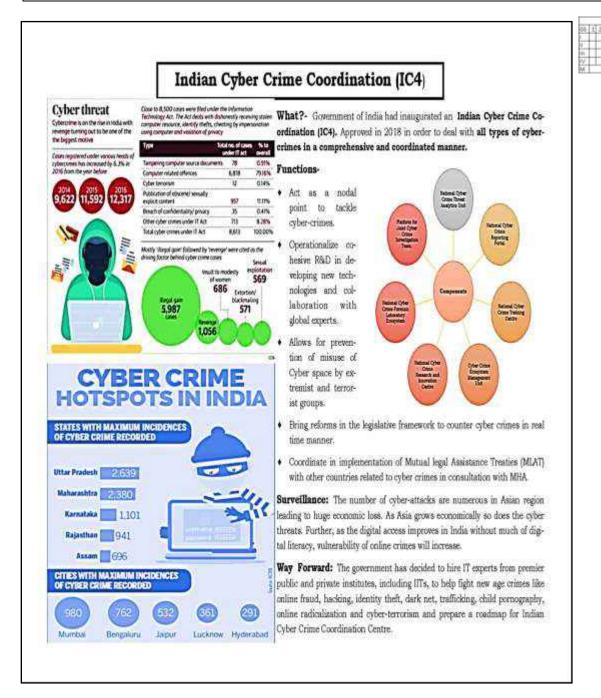
- **Challenges of Technopolitical Bipolarity:** The recent, dilemma India faced over choosing between telecom equipment of Chinese origin or of non-Chinese origin in 5G telecom equipment. It has exposed India to the grey spectre of growing global technopolitical bipolarity.

- **New Dimension in modern conflict:** It validates a new dimension of modern conflict which are:
    - Fight between belligerent futuristic technology systems
    - **Emerging technologies from technical giants' countries will become the flashpoints for** larger conflicts.

- **Address Vulnerabilities:** India cannot remain vulnerable of being used as Sandbox for foreign players to test and operate their dual-purpose (i.e. assistive and antagonistic) technologies on its citizens or within its territories. Therefore, it requires, meticulous scrutinization of the imports and assimilatio**n of emerging technologies into the nation's defence and civilian** research and development infrastructure.

- **Dedicated Assessment:** It will help in assessment of important aspects of technological cooperation such as the control, ownership, and beneficiaries of investment made in/out of the **India's high**-tech sector.

- **Strategic Safeguards:** Most countries, have introduced or strengthened regulations to safeguard strategic sectors, mostly in new and emerging technologies, from overseas investors with potentially inimical intentions. For example US has increased the scope of its Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States of America (CFIUS) which looks after the impact of FDI made on the national security.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Indo-Pacific Region, FDI in Defence Manufacturing, Defence Industrial Corridors

- **Export Portfolio:** It will also act asa key element in the entire security policy conveyor belt, comprising three Cabinet Committees – on Security, Economic Affairs, and Investment and Growth.Its analyses and recommendations can then be amalgamated with those of other ministries in this cabinet committee, which can comprehensively review imported technologies, build and evaluate domestic technological capabilities, and create a robust export portfolio of emerging technologies.

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (IC4)

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination (IC4)

Cyber threat

Cybercrime is on the rise in India with revenge turning out to be one of the biggest motive

Close to 8,500 cases were filed under the Information Technology Act. The Act deals with dishonestly receiving stolen computer resource, identify thefts, checking by impersonation using computer and violation of privacy

Cases registered under various heads of cybercrimes has increased by 6.3% in 2016 from the year before

2014	2015	2016
9,622	11,592	12,317

Type	Total no. of cases under IT act	% to overall
Tampering computer source documents	78	0.91%
Computer related offences	6,818	79.16%
Cyber terrorism	12	0.14%
Publication of obscene/ sexually explicit content	957	11.11%
Breach of confidentiality/ privacy	35	0.41%
Other cyber crimes under IT Act	713	8.28%
Total cyber crimes under IT Act	8,613	100.00%

Mostly 'illegal gain' followed by 'revenge' were cited as the driving factor behind cyber crime cases

- Illegal gain 5,987 cases
- Revenge 1,056
- Insult to modesty of women 686
- Sexual exploitation $69
- Extortion/ blackmailing 571

CYBER CRIME HOTSPOTS IN INDIA

STATES WITH MAXIMUM INCIDENCES OF CYBER CRIME RECORDED

Uttar Pradesh	2,639
Maharashtra	2,380
Karnataka	1,101
Rajasthan	941
Assam	696

CITIES WITH MAXIMUM INCIDENCES OF CYBER CRIME RECORDED

Mumbai	Bengaluru	Jaipur	Lucknow	Hyderabad
980	762	532	361	291

What?- Government of India had inaugurated an **Indian Cyber Crime Co-ordination (IC4).** Approved in 2018 in order to deal with **all types of cyber-crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.**

Functions-

- Act as a nodal point to tackle cyber-crimes.

- Operationalize cohesive R&D in developing new technologies and collaboration with global experts.

- Allows for prevention of misuse of Cyber space by extremist and terrorist groups.

- Bring reforms in the legislative framework to counter cyber crimes in real time manner.

- Coordinate in implementation of Mutual legal Assistance Treaties (MLAT) with other countries related to cyber crimes in consultation with MHA.

Components:
- National Cyber Crime Threat Analytics Unit
- National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal
- Platform for Joint Cyber Crime Investigation Team
- National Cyber Crime Training Centre
- National Cyber Crime Forensic Laboratory Ecosystem
- Cyber Crime Ecosystem Management Unit
- National Cyber Crime Research and Innovation Centre

Surveillance: The number of cyber-attacks are numerous in Asian region leading to huge economic loss. As Asia grows economically so does the cyber threats. Further, as the digital access improves in India without much of digital literacy, vulnerability of online crimes will increase.

Way Forward: The government has decided to hire IT experts from premier public and private institutes, including IITs, to help fight new age crimes like online fraud, hacking, identity theft, dark net, trafficking, child pornography, online radicalization and cyber-terrorism and prepare a roadmap for Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre.

Military Operation

Military Operations

'Winged Raider'

What?- The Indian Army has conducted its largest airborne exercise comprising of more than 500 special forces in the North-Eastern Theatre.

Significance:

- Helps in validation of new equipment's and platforms.
- Demonstrate and gauge the operational preparedness of the forces.
- Indicates towards the new focused approach on China's front.
- It is in tandem with other exercises such as exercise "Him-Vijay".
- Participation of Integrated Battle Groups.

' Operation Sankalp'

What?- Indian Navy deployed one warship in the **Strait of Hormuz** to ensure the safe passage of Indian vessels in the wake of deteriorating US-Iran Relations.

About:

- Operation was launched in June 2019 in the gulf region.

Significance:

- It will provide security and reassurance to the Indian merchantmen.
- It will help in monitoring the present situation and pro-actively react to any emergent crisis.
- For more on Strait of Hormuz and Iran refer June Current Connect Page 56.

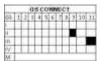## Operation Vanilla

News Excerpt

Indian Navy Launches 'Operation Vanilla' (to read more on Vanilla Island refer to Current Connect October 2019 Page 61) to Provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief at Madagascar. The Island is affected by Cyclone Diane.

About

- Indian Navy has deployed its large amphibious ship INS Airavat to provide critical relief material as well assistance and support in the relief operations.
- India has been the first country to respond to floods in the Madagascar

Significance

- ➢ Timely assistance provided to Madagascar by India is complementary to Indian policy and **vision of "Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR).**
- ➢ Island is also of significant importance for **India's s**trategic interest in the region. India is actively involved in the developing strategic and economic partnership with Madagascar, Reunion Islands and Comoros to balance the growing influence of China in the Indian ocean region.
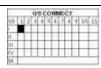
➢ It will provide great boost to India's soft power in the larger African region which is of significant importance for India.

➢ It will provide operational experience to Indian Navy in this part of Indian ocean region which can be utilized later.

Nagardhan Excavations

News Excerpt

Recent archaeological excavations at Nagardhan in Ramtek taluka, near Nagpur, have provided concrete evidence on the life, religious affiliations and trade practices of the Vakataka dynasty that ruled parts of Central and South India between the third and fifth centuries (A.D).

Pre-Connect

• Nagardhan is a large village in Nagpur district, about 6 km south of Ramtek taluka headquarters. The researchers excavated the site during 2015-2018.

• A Koteshwar temple dating back to the 15th-16th centuries stands on the banks of a stream. The existing village sits on top of the ancient habitation. The Nagardhan Fort stands south of present-day Nagardhan village.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Excavation carried out by ASI at **Maharashtra's Phupgaon**, Excavation by ASI in Gottiprolu, Andhra Pradesh.

• This was constructed during the Gond Raja period and later renovated and re-used by the Bhosales of Nagpur during the late 18th and 19th centuries. The area surrounding the fort is under cultivation and has archaeological remains.

• Some of the temples identified as KevalNarasihma, Rudra Narasimha and the one dedicated to Varaha could be traced to Ramtek, and showcase strong affinity to the incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

Analytica

Why is the excavation important?

➢ Very little was known about the Vakatakas, the Shaivite rulers of Central India between the third and fifth centuries. All that was known about the dynasty, believed to hail from the Vidarbha region, was largely through some literature and copperplates.

➢ There were assumptions that the excavated site of Nagardhan is the same as Nandhivardhan, the capital city of the eastern branch of the Vakatakas. It was after archaeological evidence from here that Nagardhan was understood to have served as a capital of the Vakataka kingdom.

➢ Scholars say archaeologists who had previously excavated the site had not done detailed documentation; thus an archaeological exploration was needed. During the joint excavations carried out by archaeologists some new facets of the life of the Vakatakas have emerged.

➢ Besides, **the scholars have traced archaeological evidence revealing the dynasty's** religious affiliations — the types of houses and palaces of the rulers, coins and sealings circulated during their reign, and their trade practices.

What is the significance of these finds?

➢ It is the first time clay sealings have been excavated from Nagardhan. The oval-shaped sealing belongs to the period when Prabhavatigupta was the queen of the Vakataka dynasty. It bears her name in the Brahmi script, along with the depiction of a conch.

➢ The presence of the conch, scholars say, is a sign of the Vaishnava affiliation that the Guptas held. The copperplate issued by Queen Prabhavatigupta starts with a genealogy of the Guptas, mentioning the Queen's grandfather Samudragupta and her father Chandragupta II. These are strong indicators of Vaishnava signatures on the royal seals of the Vakatakas, reiterate that Queen Prabhavatigupta was indeed a powerful woman ruler.

> Since the Vakataka people traded with Iran and beyond through the Mediterranean Sea, scholars suggest that these sealings could have been used as an official royal permission issued from the capital city. Besides, these were used on documents that sought mandatory royal permissions.

What else has been excavated from Nagardhan so far?

> Earlier results from the excavations here had traced evidence in the form of ceramics, ear studs of glass, antiquities, bowls and pots, a votive shrine and tank, an iron chisel, a stone depicting a deer, and terracotta bangles. Some terracotta objects even depicted images of gods, animals and humans, along with amulets, scotches, wheels, skin rubbers and spindle whorls.

> An intact idol of Lord Ganesha, which had no ornaments adorned, too was found from the site. This confirmed that the elephant god was a commonly worshipped deity in those times. On the means of living of the Vakataka people, researchers found animal rearing to be one of the main occupations. Remains of seven species of domestic animals — cattle, goat, sheep, pig, cat, horse and fowl — were traced in an earlier study by the team.

Conclusion

Excavation is the most time-honoured archaeological tool for understanding the processes of the human past, and it certainly represents the type of activity that most people attribute to archaeology. Thus, recent archaeological excavations at Nagardhan have provided concrete evidence on the life, religious affiliations and trade practices of the Vakataka dynasty that ruled parts of Central and South India between the third and fifth centuries.

NagobaJatara

News Excerpt

A month-long NagobaJatra festival has come to an end in Telangana.

About NagobaJatara Festival

- NagobaJatara is a tribal festival held in Keslapur village, Inderavalley Mandal Adilabad district, Telangana, India. It is the second biggest tribal carnival and celebrated by Mesaram clan of Gond tribes for 10 days.

- Tribal people from Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh belonging to the Mesram clan offer prayers at the festival. It starts in pushyamasam.

- The myriad hues of the lifestyle and culture of the people inhabiting this vast country forms an essential part of Indian tourism and dons it with a garb of uniqueness. The

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Gond Tribe, Pradhan tribe

NagobaJatara that occurs in the village of Keslapur in Adilabad district is one such unique event.

- The Gusadi Dance performance by dancers from the Gond tribe is a major special attraction of the event. In the night, the Gonds perform the Mahapuja of Nagoba, also known as Persa Pen or great god, which marks the actual beginning of the annual tribal fair.

Zo Kutpui Festival (Mizoram)

News Excerpt

The Mizoram government is organising Zo Kutpui (festival) in at least 10 states across India and countries such as US, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

About Zo Kutpui Festival

- The Zo Kutpui festival is an attempt to unify and strengthen the brotherhood among various Mizo tribes living in different parts of the world.

- The first edition of the festival will start in Tripura and then move to other states which have significant Mizo

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> ChapcharKut, MimKut, Pawl Kut, ThalfavangKut

population.

- The festival will witness various cultural programmes by different Mizo tribes, besides performance by various artistes belonging to Zo ethnic tribes of Mizoram and the Northeast.

About Mizo Tribe

➤ Mizo have settled in the states of Tripura, Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland, as well as in adjacent areas of Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh.

➤ The Mizo are agriculturists. They practice jhum cultivation; slashing of trees and forest, burning the left over to cultivate the land for their livelihood. They are also a hunting and warring tribe.

➤ Among the most prominent of the Mizo groups are the Lushai (whose name is often mistakenly applied to the entire Mizo community), Pawi (Lai), Lakher (Mara), and Hmar.

Harvest festivals of India
❖ Makar Sankranti (January)-North India
❖ Baisakhi (April)-Punjab
❖ Lohri (January)-Punjab
❖ Basant Panchami (Jan-feb)-Pan-India
❖ Bhogali Bihu (January)-Assam
❖ Wangala (November)-Meghalaya and Assam
❖ KaPomblangNongkrem(November)-Meghalaya
❖ Nuakhai(August)-Odisha
❖ GudiPadwa (March)-Maharashtra)
❖ Nabanna (November)-West Bengal
❖ Onam (Aug-Sep)-Kerala
❖ Pongal (January)-Tamil Nadu
❖ Ugadi (March)-Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka
❖ Vishu (April)-Karnataka and Kerala
❖ Agera (October)-Maharashtra
❖ Dree (July)-Arunachal Pradesh

Lord Curzon

News Excerpt

West Bengal Governor JagdeepDhankar was recently trolled on Twitter as he took to the micro-blogging site to post his picture with a caption where he referred to a table apparently used by Lord Curzon to sign Partition papers as "iconic".

About Lord Curzon

- On January 6, 1899, Lord Curzon was appointed the new Governor General and Viceroy of India. He was the youngest Viceroy of India. This was a time when British unpopularity was increasing due to the impact of recurring famine and the plague.

> **PEPPER IT WITH**
> Curzon-Kitchener controversy, Swadeshi movement.

- Curzon did little to change the opinion of the educated Indian class. Instead of engaging with the nationalist intelligentsia, he implemented a series of repressive measures.

- For instance, he reduced the number of elected Indian representatives in the Calcutta Corporation (1899). The University Act of 1904 brought the Calcutta University under the direct control of the government.The Official Secrets Act (1904) was amended to curb the nationalist tone of Indian newspapers.

- Few Significant Events likeAppointment of Police Commission (1902) under Sir Andrew Frazer **to review police administration, Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1904), Younghusband's** Mission to Tibet (1904), Establishment of Department of Commerce and Industry, etc. took place **under Lord Curzon's Rule.**

- Finally, Curzon ordered partition of Bengal in 1905. The partition led to widespread protest all across India, starting a new phase of the Indian national movement.

MISCELLANEOUS

International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated 2020 as the "Year of the Nurse and Midwife", in honor of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale. The year 2020 is significant for WHO in the context of nursing and midwifery strengthening for Universal Health Coverage.

During the Crimean War, Florence Nightingale and a team of nurses improved the unsanitary

conditions at a British base hospital, greatly reducing the death count. She was a trailblazing figure in nursing who greatly affected 19th- and 20th-century policies around proper care. She was known for her night rounds to aid the wounded, establishing her image as the 'Lady with the Lamp.'

MANI App

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently launched a mobile app for visually or hearing impaired people to identify the denomination of currency notes. It is called the Mobile Aided Note Identifier (MANI). It seeks to help such people who faced various problems in accessing the new and old currency notes of the Mahatma Gandhi Series. But the app does not authenticate a currency note as genuine or counterfeit while scanning them.

Using the app, a visually challenged person can scan and identify the denominations by checking the front or reverse side of a currency note, including folded notes. The app also works offline to scan and identify the denominations of currency notes once it is installed.

ELECRAMA 2020

Recently, 2020 edition of ELECRAMA was held at India Exposition Mart, Greater Noida in India.

ELECRAMA exhibition is one of the largest electrical trade fair, focusing on electrical and powder industry. It is a platform to connect the world with Indian industry in respect of technology, new trends and innovation for future energy transition. It is also a stage where all global leaders can meet and share their ideas to develop cost effective solutions for the world.

Bharti Script

IIT Madras has, recently developed a unified script for nine Indian languages, and named it as the Bharati script. The scripts that have been integrated include Devnagari, Bengali, Gurmukhi, Gujarati, Oriya, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil. English and Urdu have not been integrated so far.

It has also developed a method for reading documents in Bharati script using a multi-lingual optical character recognition (OCR) scheme. OCR schemes involves the separation of the document into text and non-text. The text is then segmented into paragraphs, sentences words and letters. Along with that, the team has also created a finger-spelling method that can be used to generate a sign language for hearing-impaired persons.

Seke Language

Recently, *it has been* reported that the "near-extinct" Nepalese language Seke has just 700 speakers around the world. According to the Endangered Language Alliance (ELA), Seke is one of the over 100 indigenous languages of Nepal.

It is Nepal's official language and is considered to be crucial for getting educational and employment opportunities outside villages. According to ELA, difficult conditions at home and job prospects elsewhere have brought speakers of Seke to places such as Pokhara, Kathmandu and even New York. Therefore, the vulnerability of the language is linked to the migration of people to places where Seke is not spoken, which has reduced the intergenerational transmission of the language. Furthermore, the younger generation does not find much use in learning the language, giving preference to Nepali and English.

Juice Jacking

SBI has warned its customers against charging mobile phones at charging stations as fraudsters can get a chance to rob off important data from phone.

The data cable that is seen in public charging stations, provides unauthorized access to attackers during the charging process, leveraging illegitimate access to get our personal information taken away. This is known as Juice Jacking, a type of cyber attack which originates from USB charging port installed at public places such as airports, cafes, bus stands, etc. Once the device is plugged-in and connection is established, it either installs malware or secretively copies sensitive data from a smartphone, tablet, or any other computer device.

Concept Clearing Assignment

1. The right of the people to peacefully assemble is a constitutional substitute for revolution. Critically analyze.

2. The answer to the current slowdown lies in economic reforms that can first lift the potential growth rate of the economy. Comment. Do you think Indian economy is heading towards stagflation? Substantiate your views.

3. As China makes deeper inroads in the Indian neighborhood andthe Indian ocean, it creates a new challenge for Indian diplomacy to construct a foreign policy that respects political boundaries and serves Indian interest at the same time. Discuss. Also suggest some measures to counter China's growing influence in the Indian ocean region.

4. Explain the reasons behind the under-representation of Women in science, technology, engineering and math's (STEM) across the globe. Do you think India has taken sufficient steps in promoting the participation of women in STEM? What role the State governments can play in promoting STEM among the Indian women?

5. The scale and size of catastrophic fires in recent times in different part of the world points towards rising impact of Climate Change. Comment. Also, suggest some measures to prevent the incidents of wild fires in India.

6. Highlight the challenges faced by the Indian emigrants. Despite aiming high, the Emigration bill falls short of its objective. Critically comment.

7. There is a dire need of streamlining the curriculum at the pre-school stage to build cognitive and early literacy and numeracy skills. Critically comment in the context of The Annual Status of Education Report 2019.

8. If India wants to cut down on corruption, it has to bring reforms that can help in reducing the huge chasm between the rich and the poor. Critically comment in the context of Corruption Perception Index. What role does combination of Law and democracy plays in cleansing the country of corruption?

9. For India to leverage its offensive and defensive cyber-capabilities it must shed its horses-for-courses approach. Critically comment in the context of newly created Indiancyber crime coordination. Also, do you think there is need of a Geneva like convention to keep the Internet safe, open, universal and interoperable?

10. The fulcrum of change and action in water management in India lies in the hands of states. Discuss. Also highlight the major challenges in the Urban water management in India. Suggest some measures to reform the water governance in India.

11. Lack of quality neonatal care, especially in rural areas, is the key reason for the high mortality rate among newborn babies. Discuss. Do you think introduction of new care techniques such as Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) can bring substantive reduction in the infant mortality and neo-natal mortality in India?

12. Do you think that the Transgender Persons Act which was conceived to be a remarkable achievement for a long-persecuted community failed to provide the fundamental right to self-identity? Substantiate your views.

13. What is Vaccine Derived Polio? Why it is a matter of concern in India? Highlight the initiatives taken by government to counter Vaccine Derived Polio.

14. **What do you understand by the term "Social Mobility" and why does it matter? In the context** of Global Social Mobility report highlight challenges faced by India in ensuring social mobility. Suggest some measures.

15. Denying peoplethe right over their hard-earned money is a colossal hazard for the financial system. In the context of the statement highlight the challenges in the deposit insurance cover in India and suggest some measures. Do you think trust in the banking system in India is waning? Substantiate your views.

P.T Oriented Questions

1. Consider the following statements about petitions filed after the Supreme Court judgement:
   1. A review petition can be filed only when a curative petition against the same judgement has already been disposed off.
   2. While review petition has a fixed time limit within which it can be filed, there is no such time limit on filing the curative petition.

   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

2. Consider the following statements about Bru tribes:
   1. In 2020, an agreement has been signed to permanently settle internally displaced Bru people in Mizoram.
   2. Provision of the sixth schedule applies to both the states which are parties to this agreement.
   3. Due to ethnic conflicts in 1997, thousands of Bru had to flee from Mizoram to Tripura.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1 only   (b) 1 and 2 only
   (c) 2 and 3 only   (d) 1, 2 and 3

3. What is/are the consequence/consequences of a country becoming the member of the Nuclear **Suppliers Group'?(CSE 2018)**
   1. It will have access to the latest and most efficient nuclear technologies.
   2. It automatically becomes a member **of "The Treaty on the Non-**Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons **(NPT)".**

   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

4. Which of the following statements are related to the rights of sexual minorities?
   1. National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India
   2. Section 487 of the Indian Penal Code
   3. The yogyakarta Principles
   4. Article 21 of Indian Constitution

   Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
   (a) 1, 2 and 3 only   (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
   (c) 1 and 4 only   (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

5. Consider the following statements with reference to anti defection law in India:
   1. A nominated MP of Rajya Sabha is outside the ambit of this law since he or she was not a member of any political party in the first place.
   2. According to the KihotoHollohanjudgement of the Supreme Court (SC), the President, not the Speaker, will decide on disqualification of a Lok Sabha MP under this law.
   3. After enactment of this law, defections of MPs and MLAs has completely stopped.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1 and 3 only
   (b) 2 and 3 only
   (c) 1 only
   (d) None of the Above

6. Which of the following statements is/are correct about provisions for linguistic minorities in Indian Constitution?
   1. According to Part III of Indian Constitution, they shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
   2. Duty of the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education is a directive under Part IV of Indian Constitution.

   Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

7. Consider the following statements with reference to Women, Business and Law (WBL) Index 2020:
   1. It has been released by the World Bank.
   2. Bangladesh has topped the Index among SAARC countries.
   Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?
   (a) 1 only   (b) 2 only
   (c) Both 1 and 2   (d) Neither 1 nor 2

8. Which of the following body publishes Democracy Index?
   (a) Transparency International
   (b) United Nations
   (c) The Economist Intelligence Unit
   (d) The Central Intelligence Agency of US

9. Consider the following statements about the Corruption Perception Index 2019, published by the Transparency International:
   1. It ranks countries based on perceived level of corruption.
   2. Because of the success of e-Governance projects, India has consistently improved its ranking over the last three years.
   3. It ranks countries based on corruption in both public and private sector.
   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1, 2 and 3   (b) 2 and 3 only
   (c) 1 only   (d) 1 and 3 only

10. Consider following statements about inflation:
    1. Stagflation is a situation when export is stagnant and inflation rate is high.
    2. RBI uses headline CPI (Combined) inflation as the nominal anchor for monetary policy stance.
    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. Consider the following statements about Cotton production and consumption in India:
    1. India is the world's largest producer and exporter of cotton.
    2. Bt. cotton is the only Genetically Modified (GM) crop in India.
    3. Though India is one of the largest producers of cotton in the world, **India's productivity (yield per unit** area), is much lower than other major cotton-producing countries.
    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 and 2 only   (b) 2 only
    (c) 2 and 3 only   (d) 3 only

12. Which of the following statements is correct about Madad portal?
    (a) This will provide a platform for Indian citizens living abroad to file consular grievances online.
    (b) This will provide a platform for women facing domestic violence to file online complaints.
    (c) This will provide a platform for someone caught in a disaster like situation to contact NDMA.
    (d) None of the Above

13. In the context of solving pollution problems, what is/are the advantages/advantages of bioremediation technique? (CSE 2017)
    1. It is a technique for cleaning up pollution by enhancing the same biodegradation process that occurs in nature.
    2. Any contaminant with heavy metals such as cadmium and lead can be readily and completely treated by bioremediation using microorganisms.
    3. Genetic engineering can be used to create microorganisms specifically designed for bioremediation.
    Select the correct answer using the code

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

14. Which of following countries are not LandLocked countries?
    1. Oman
    2. Ethiopia
    3. South Africa
    4. Iran
    5. Afghanistan
    Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
    (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
    (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
    (c) 3, 4 and 5 only
    (d) 2 and 4 only

15. Which of the following statements about **The Countering America's Adversaries** Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is correct?
    1. It is a U.S. federal law that aims to counter the aggression by Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures.
    2. India has not faced sanctions under CAATSA yet.
    Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
    (a) 1 only   (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

16. Consider the following statements with **reference to "Reciprocating territory"** status:
    1. **Recognising as "Reciprocating territory" means counter**-terrorism agencies of one country can carry out investigation in another.
    2. India has recently recognized UAE as **"Reciprocating territory".**
    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 regional grouping Mercosur?
    1. None of the Mercosur members are G4 members.
    2. India has a PreferentialTrade Agreement (PTA) with Mercosur.
    3. Only one of the member countries is landlocked.
    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 and 2 only
    (b) 1 and 3 only
    (c) 2 only
    (d) 2 and 3

18. Consider following statements about recent Australian bushfire:
    1. Positive Indian Ocean Dipole further fuels intensity of bushfire.
    2. Pyrocumulonimbus clouds seen over some regions of Australia are the result of bushfire.
    3. WMO has clarified that this is a local phenomena and Climate change has nothing to do with this.
    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 and 2 only   (b) 1 and 3 only
    (c) 2 only   (d) 1, 2 and 3

19. In India, if a species of tortoise is declared protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, what does it imply? (CSE2017)
    (a) It enjoys the same level of protection as the tiger.
    (b) It no longer exists in the wild, a few individuals are under captive protection; and now it is impossible to prevent its extinction.
    (c) It is endemic to a particular region of India.
    (d) Both (b) and (c) stated above are correct in this context.

20. Consider the following statements about Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b:
    1. India has successfully achieved its complete phase-out.
    2. It is both an Ozone depletion substance and a greenhouse gas.

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

21. Which of the following comparison between System of Rice Cultivation (SRI) and Miyawaki method of Afforestation (MMA) is/are correct?

1. In both methods, seedlings planted are denser than usual.

2. While SRI method reduces use of chemical fertilizers, Miyawaki method leads to a complete chemical-fertilizer free forest.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

(a) 1 only   (b) 2 only

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

22. Which of the following statements best describe Saksham 2020?

(a) The month long awareness campaign to sensitize officers about special needs of differently abled citizens.

(b) The month long fuel conservation campaign.

(c) Training camp for Olympic Gold Quest athletes who will be competing in the Tokyo Olympic 2020.

(d) None of the above

23. Consider following statements about National Parks in India:

1. The Central Government has sole responsibility of declaring an area as National Park in India.

2. Kuno National Park is on the way to becoming a second home for Asiatic lions.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

(a) 1 only   (b) 2 only

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

24. Consider the following statements with reference to Space programme of India:

1. Data relay satellite system will help the astronauts of Gaganyaan mission to stay in touch with earth.

2. Vyom-Mitra is a half-humanoid which will ride to space in the Gaganyan along with three astronauts.

3. GSLV Mk III is used to launch satellites into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

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

25. **The term 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' is sometimes** seen in the news in the context of (CSE2016)

(a) Pledges made by the European countries to rehabilitate refugees from the war-affected Middle East

(b) Plan of action outlined by the countries of the world to combat climate change

(c) Capital contributed by the member countries in the establishment of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

(d) Plan of action outlined by the countries of the world regarding Sustainable Development Goals

26. Consider following statements about NetSCoFAN:

1. It is a network of research & academic institutions working in the area of food & nutrition.

2. It is launched by the Ministry of Science and Technology.

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

27. Which of the following statements is not correct about Black Box technology?

(a) It is an electronic device which helps in investigation of aircraft accident.

(b) It warns pilots about impending unusual circumstances.

(c) It also records conversations between the pilots.

(d) It can also transmit data from the depth of a Ocean.

28. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Polio?
    1. It is a highly infectious bacterial disease, which mainly affects young children.
    2. Polio microbe can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.
    3. All SAARC nations have been declared as Polio free by WHO.

    Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
    (a) 1 and 2 only
    (b) 1 and 3 only
    (c) 2 only
    (d) 1, 2 and 3

29. **With reference to an initiative called 'The** Economics of Ecosystems and **Biodiversity (TEEB)', which of the** following statements is/are correct? (CSE2016)
    1. It is an initiative hosted by UNEP, IMF and World Economic Forum.
    2. It is a global initiative that focuses on drawing attention to the economic benefits of biodiversity.

3. It presents an approach that can help decision-makers recognize, demonstrate and capture the value of ecosystems and biodiversity.

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

30. Which of the following statements is not correct about the New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST), a division created by the Government of India?
    (a) It has been set up under the Ministry of Defense.
    (b) It will act as the nodal point for all matters connected to new and emerging technologies.
    (c) It will help in safeguarding Indian interests in multilateral organizations where rules governing the use and access to such technologies are discussed.
    (d) Its mandate shall include evolving **India's external technology policy in** coordination with domestic stakeholders.

Answer Key

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

NCRB Report- 2018: Annual Crime in India Report 2018

(* For more on NCRB please refer to Current Connect-

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NCRB along with it has also released Accidental Death and Suicides in India 2018 report which outlines death and suicide statistics of the country.
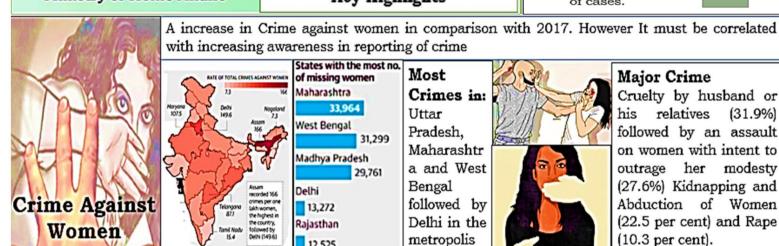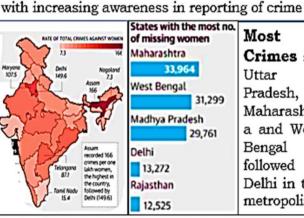
Key Highlights

Crime rate per lakh population has come down

A increase in 1.3% in the registration of cases.

A increase in Crime against women in comparison with 2017. However It must be correlated with increasing awareness in reporting of crime

Crime Against Women

RATE OF TOTAL CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

7.3 — 166

Haryana 107.5

Delhi 149.6

Nagaland 7.3

Assam 166

Telangana 87.3

Tamil Nadu 15.4

Assam recorded 166 crimes per one lakh women, the highest in the country, followed by Delhi (149.6)

States with the most no. of missing women

Maharashtra — 33,964

West Bengal — 31,299

Madhya Pradesh — 29,761

Delhi — 13,272

Rajasthan — 12,525

Most Crimes in:

Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal followed by Delhi in the metropolis

Major Crime

Cruelty by husband or his relatives (31.9%) followed by an assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (27.6%) Kidnapping and Abduction of Women (22.5 per cent) and Rape (10.3 per cent).

The total number of people who committed suicide in 2018 has **increased** from 2017.

Suicides in India

Highest among the **daily wage earners** comprising **22.4%** of such deaths.

Farmers and other Agri-sector workers accounted for **7.7 %** of the total number of suicides in the country.

States including West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Goa, Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Puducherry have Reported Zero Suicide by Farmers
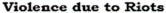
Maximum of the suicides were reported from Maharashtra followed by Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

Economic Offences

- Increased in comparison with 2017.
- Includes offences like
  - Criminal Breach of Trust
  - Forgery
  - Cheating
  - Fraud
  - Counterfeiting, etc.
- Most Crimes in
  - Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Bihar.

Violence due to Riots

Riots cases saw a significant rise and fall in certain areas. It increased disputes in such as:
- Industrial Dispute
- Water Dispute

It decreased in
- Communal
- Political
- Agrarian
- Student

Crime Against SC/ST

- In comparison with the year 2017 the incidents registered against the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe have declined for the first time in three years (absolute values) since 2016.
- These excludes IPC crimes where Prevention of Atrocities Act was not applied.

Cyber Crimes

- An increase in cybercrimes has been observed in 2018 compared to 2017.
- Majority of these crimes had motive of:
  - Fraud
  - Sexual Exploitation
  - Causing Disrepute

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KANISHAK KATARIA (AIR - 1)

TESTIMONIAL

I am highly indebted to Khan Sir and KSG for their guidance and feedback, specially 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: Akshat

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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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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 interactions 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:

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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: Vaishali

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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. Thank you for all the support.

Signature: Gunjan