

## ABOUT CURRENT CONNECT

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

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

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

Team KSG

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

## Judicial Infrastructure in India

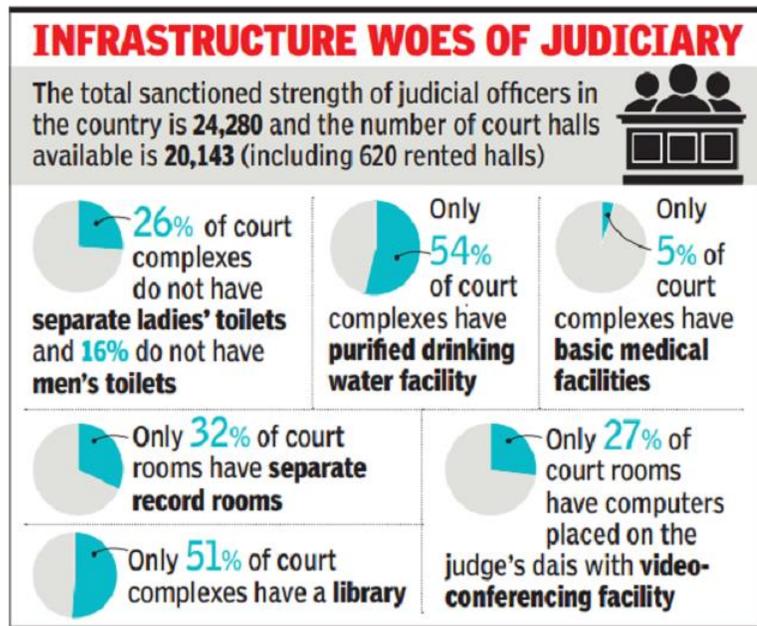
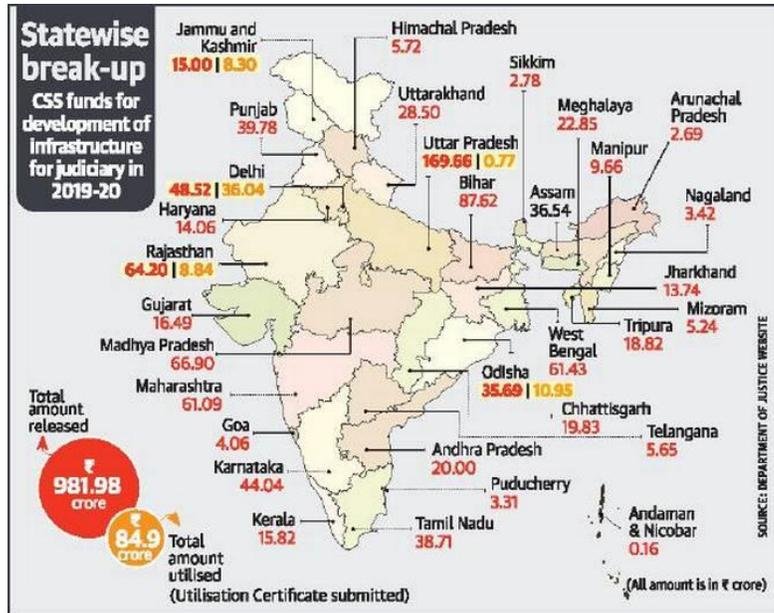
### News Excerpt

Chief Justice Ramanarecently suggested one central agency, with a degree of autonomy, for overseeing infrastructure development of subordinate courts in India.

### Pre-Connect

- Adequacy of Judicial Infrastructure is a pre-requisite for reduction of pendency and backlog of cases in Courts. Though primary responsibility of infrastructure development for the subordinate judiciary rests with the State Governments, the Central Government augments the resources of the state governments by releasing financial assistance under the National Mission for Judicial Infrastructure.
- The scheme aims at improving the physical infrastructure of the subordinate courts and also the housing needs for Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts in the country with a view to facilitate better justice delivery. The scheme covers all States and UTs and it does not cover construction of High Court buildings.
- The scheme allows new construction and upgradation or renovation of such existing court buildings but does not allow routine maintenance or upkeep. The central assistance to States/UTs is restricted to the budgetary provision of the Department of Justice available under the scheme during the financial year. However, States/UTs are free to spend additional amount as per their requirement from their resources. This scheme is not a reimbursement scheme. This scheme has been under implementation since 1993.

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### Background

- Of a total of ₹981.98 crore sanctioned in 2019-20 under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) to the States and the Union Territories for development of infrastructure in the courts, only ₹84.9 crore was utilised by a combined five States, rendering the remaining 91.36% funds unused.
- This underutilisation of funds is not an anomaly induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The issue has been plaguing the Indian judiciary for nearly three decades when the CSS was introduced in 1993-94.
- This is one of the reasons why creation of a National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India (NJIAI) was proposed, which aims at taking control of the budgeting and infrastructure development of subordinate courts in the country.

### Greater autonomy

- ✓ Chief Justice of India highlighted that the improvement and maintenance of judicial infrastructure is still being carried out in an ad-hoc and unplanned manner. He stressed on the need for “financial autonomy of the judiciary” and creation of the NJIAI that will work as a central agency with a degree of autonomy.
- ✓ The lack of one particular coordinating agency means each year the funds get lapsed. This claim is supported by the fact that in 2020-21, of the ₹594.36 crore released under the CSS, only ₹41.28 crore was utilised by Rajasthan.
- ✓ The data released by the Department of Justice further revealed that in 2018-19, of the ₹650 crore released by the Centre under the CSS, the utilisation certificate was submitted by 11 States for a total of ₹225 crore.
- ✓ The current fund-sharing pattern of the CSS stands at 60:40 (Centre: State) and 90:10 for the eight north-eastern and three Himalayan States. The Union Territories get 100% funding.

### National Legal Services Authority of India model

- The proposed NJIAI could work as a central agency with each State having its own State Judicial Infrastructure Authority, much like the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) model.
- It has also been suggested that the CJ could be the patron-in-chief of the NJIAI, like in NALSA, and one of the Supreme Court judges nominated by the Chief Justice could be the executive chairman.
- But, unlike NALSA which is serviced by the Ministry of Law and Justice, the proposed NJIAI should be placed under the Supreme Court of India.
- In the NJIAI there could be a few High Court judges as members, and some Central Government officials because the Centre must also know where the funds are being utilized.
- Similarly, in the State Judicial Infrastructure Authority, in addition to the Chief Justice of the respective High Court and a nominated judge, four to five district court judges and State Government officials could be members.
- The Chief Justice is mindful of the fact that the High Courts are independent of the Supreme Court. The only time when the Supreme Court comes in the picture is the appointment of judges of the High Courts.

### Conclusion

Good judicial infrastructure for courts in India has always been an afterthought. It is because of this mindset that courts in India still operate from dilapidated structures making it difficult to effectively perform their function. The lack of one particular coordinating agency means each year the funds get lapsed. It remains underutilised. If the NJIAI is placed under the Government, it will be much

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Constitutional Provisions for  
Judicial Review, Independence of  
Judiciary

like the current scheme of thing. Nobody will bother. There has to be a special purpose vehicle driven by a sense of belongingness and passion, with a degree of authority. That authority has to come from the Supreme Court.

## Private Member Bill

### News Excerpt

A member from Kerala has moved the private member motion to introduce the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the Upper House that would amend the Preamble.

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### Pre-Connect

- A member of parliament (MP) who is not a minister is a private member. The Bills introduced by private members are referred to as Private Member's Bills. The Bills introduced by ministers are called government Bills.
- The government bills have the backing of the government and reflect its legislative agenda. Whether the Private Bill has to be admitted or not is decided by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha.

### What is the procedure?

- The Private Member's Bills are either drafted by the Member of Parliament (MP) or his staff. The MP who wants to move a Private Member's Bill has to give at least a month's notice, for the House Secretariat to examine it for compliance with constitutional provisions and rules on legislation.
- While a government Bill can be introduced and discussed on any day, a private member's bill is only introduced and discussed on Fridays.
- In case of multiple Bills, a ballot system is used to decide the sequence of bills for introduction. The Parliamentary Committee on Private Member's Bills and Resolutions goes through all such Bills and classifies them based on their urgency and importance.

### Has any Private Member's Bill ever become a law?

- ✓ No Private Member's Bill has been passed by the Parliament since 1970, according to PRS Legislative Research. So far, the Parliament has passed 14 such Bills, six of them in 1956. The 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) witnessed the highest number of Private Member Bills introduced (999) since 2000. As many as 142 members have introduced Bills in the 16th Lok Sabha, of which 34 members have introduced 10 or more Bills.
- ✓ In comparison, 84 members introduced Bills in the 15th Lok Sabha, of which 11 members introduced 10 or more Bills. Though nearly 1,000 Bills were introduced in the 16th Lok Sabha, less than 10 were taken up for discussion, for a total of 50 hours.

### What does the Bill aim to achieve?

- The Bill, titled the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2021, seeks to substitute "EQUITABLE" for the word "SOCIALIST" in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- Secondly, for the words "EQUALITY of status and of opportunity", the Bill seeks to substitute the following:
  - "EQUALITY of status and of opportunity to be born, to be fed, to be educated, to get a job and to be treated with dignity,
  - ACCESS to information technology and all its implications, irrespective of caste, creed, social status or income;"
- Third, for the words "FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation", the Bill seeks to substitute the following, namely: –
  - "FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the community and the unity and

integrity of the Nation

- HAPPINESS, assuring a high gross domestic happiness”.

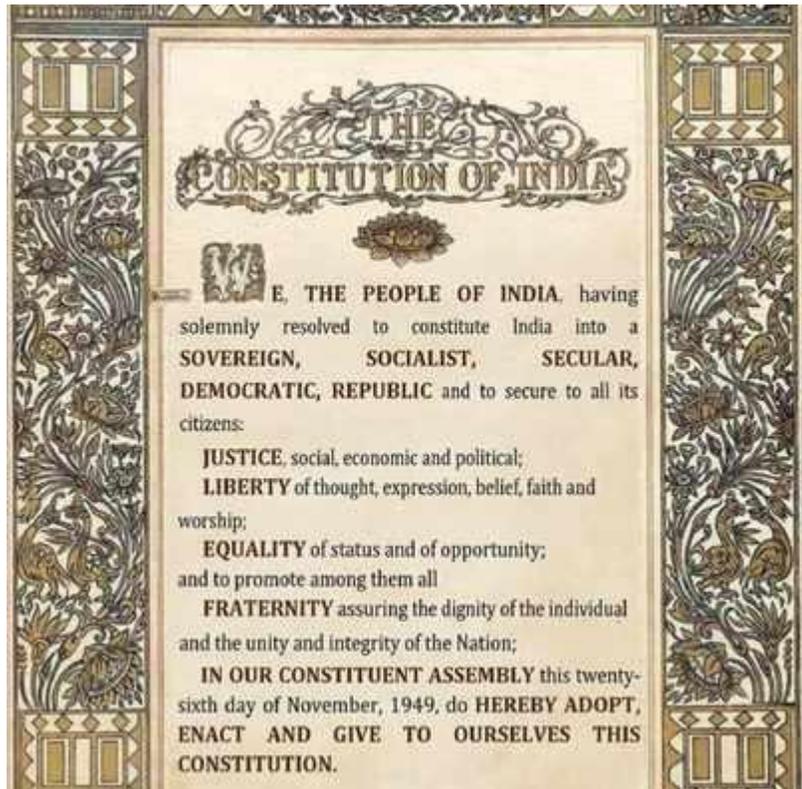
Was the Preamble to the Constitution amended earlier?

✚ The expression “SOCIALIST SECULAR” was inserted in the Preamble after the word “SOVEREIGN” and before the words “DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC” by the Constitution 42nd Amendment Act, 1976 during the Emergency. The amended phrase now reads as “WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens ...”

✚ The same amendment also inserted the words “and integrity” between the words “unity” and “of the Nation”. The amended phrase, at present, reads as follows:

- “FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation”;

✚ After the Indira Gandhi government introduced these amendments through a Government Bill, its successor Janata Party Government did not seek to reverse these changes, although the latter had reversed most of the draconian amendments to the Constitution, carried out during the Emergency.



Conclusion

As the Bill aims to achieve equality of status and opportunity to be born, fed, and educated, apart from guaranteeing jobs and access to information technology, it is possible to suggest that it will involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India, and therefore, will require the President’s recommendation in terms of Article 117(3) of the Constitution. It can also be suggested that these promises in the Preamble would involve revenue mobilisation through taxation, and therefore, impinge on the states’ interests in the federal set-up. The rigour of Article 274, may therefore, be attracted, barring the introduction of such a Bill.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Devices of parliamentary proceedings,  
Legislative Procedure in Parliament,  
Joint Sitting of Two Houses

Public Accounts Committee (PAC)

News Excerpt

Addressing a function to mark the centennial celebrations of Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Vice President of India said the PAC may be redesignated as Public Accounts and Audit Committee given the fact that audit review is also its core function.

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### Pre-Connect

- The Committee on Public Accounts is constituted by Parliament each year for examination of accounts showing the appropriation of sums granted by Parliament for expenditure of Government of India, the annual Finance Accounts of Government of India, and such other accounts laid before Parliament as the Committee may deem fit such as accounts of autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies (except those of Public Undertakings and Government Companies which come under the purview of the Committee on Public Undertakings).
- The Committee on Public Accounts is the oldest Parliamentary Committee and was first constituted in 1921. The Committee consists of 22 Members, 15 Members are elected by Lok Sabha and 7 Members of the Rajya Sabha are associated with it. The Speaker is empowered to appoint the Chairman of the Committee from amongst its members.

### Functions of the Committee

The Committee on Public Accounts scrutinizes the Appropriation Accounts of the Government of India and the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India thereon. While doing so, it is the duty of the Committee to satisfy itself: -

- (a) That the moneys shown in the accounts as having been disbursed were legally available for, and applicable to, the service or purpose to which have been applied or charged;
- (b) That the expenditure conforms to the authority which governs it; and
- (c) That every re-appropriation has been made in accordance with the provisions made in this behalf under rules framed by competent authority.

It is also the duty of the PAC:-

- to examine the statement of accounts showing the income and expenditure of State Corporations, trading and manufacturing schemes, concerns and projects together with the balance sheets and

statements of profit and loss accounts which the President may have required to be prepared or are prepared under the provisions of statutory rules regulating the financing of a particular corporation trading or manufacturing scheme or concern or project and the report of the C&AG

### Some Important Functions of the PAC

An important function of the Committee is to ascertain that money granted by Parliament has been spent by Government within the scope of the demand. The implications of this phrase are that

- (i) Money recorded as spent against the grant must not be more than the amount granted;
- (ii) The expenditure brought to account against a particular grant must be of such a nature as to warrant its record against the grant and against no others; and
- (iii) The grants should be spent on purposes which are set out in the detailed demand and they cannot be spent on any new service not contemplated in the demand.

The functions of the Committee extend, however, beyond the formality of expenditure to its wisdom, faithfulness and economy. The Committee thus examines cases involving losses, nugatory expenditure and financial irregularities. When any case of proved negligence resulting in loss or extravagance is brought to the notice of the Committee, it calls upon the Ministry/Department concerned to explain what action, disciplinary or otherwise, it had taken to prevent a recurrence. In such a case it can also record its opinion in the form of disapproval or pass strictures against the extravagance or lack of proper control by the Ministry or Department concerned.

Another important function of the Committee is the discussion on points of financial discipline and principle. The detailed examination of questions involving principles and system is a leading and recognized function of the Committee.

thereon;

- to examine the statement of accounts showing the income and expenditure of autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies, the audit of which may be conducted by the C&AG of India either under the directions of the President or by a statute of Parliament; and
- to consider the report of the C&AG in cases where the President may have required him to conduct an audit of any receipts and to examine the accounts of stores and stocks.
- If any money has been spent on any service during a financial year in excess of the amount granted by the House for that purpose, the Committee examine with reference to the facts of each case the circumstances leading to such an excess and make such recommendations as it may deem fit.

The Committee is not concerned with questions of policy in the broad sense though it is within its jurisdiction to point out whether there has been extravagance or waste in carrying out that policy.

### Analytica

- ✓ The main responsibility of democratic institutions is to make the government accountable and transparent to the people.
- ✓ Without Parliamentary committees, a Parliamentary democracy would be rendered incomplete. It is through the PAC that citizens keep a check on government finances. In Parliamentary democracy, accountability is central to governance.
- ✓ Presently, governments indulge in doling out freebies for various reasons. While ensuring the welfare and social security of the needy is an important obligation of the governments, it is time there is a wider debate on harmonising welfare and development objectives. Expenditures must be carefully balanced so that both short-term and long-term development objectives get equal attention.
- ✓ Since PAC has to examine the effectiveness of resource use in terms of socio-economic outcomes, it may be in order for the committee to examine the issue of balancing these two objectives for wider consideration.
- ✓ Democratic institutions not only have a crucial role in nation-building but today are seen as “effective platforms for solving problems of the people and fulfilment of their expectations”.
- ✓ Public Accounts Committee aids in finding better ways to raise the resources and, more importantly, to spend them efficiently on people’s welfare. With Parliament granting permission to the Executive to raise and spend funds, it has the duty to assess if funds were raised and spent accordingly.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Classification of the Parliamentary Committees, Departmental Standing Committees, Committees to Scrutinise and Control, Ad Hoc Committees

### Conclusion

In a developing country like India, constructive suggestions of the PAC have not only promoted optimal use of financial resources but have also helped in improving government policies and programmes. Till date, the committee works on non-party lines with a spirit of dedication and service to the country. There should be one common platform for PACs of Parliament and state legislatures. This will ensure better coordination and greater transparency and accountability of the Executive.

### Police Reforms in India

#### News Excerpt

Fifteen years after the Supreme Court had issued directions for police reforms, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the State Governments to set up Police Complaints Authorities as per the judgment in *Prakash Singh vs. Union of India, 2006*.

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Pre-Connect

- In 2006, Supreme Court passed a decision for case "Prakash Singh vs Union of India" for Central and State governments to implementing its seven directives for Police reforms. The seven directives contained setting up of various authorities/commissions, change in process, and increase in transparency.

**SEVEN DIRECTIVES OF SUPREME COURT**

- 1 **Constitute a State Security Commission**
- 2 **Fixed two-year tenure for DGP**
- 3 **Two-year term for SPs & SHOs**
- 4 **Separate Investigation and L&O functions**
- 5 **Set up Police Establishment Board**
- 6 **Set up Police Complaints Authorities at State & Dist levels**
- 7 **Set up National Security Commission at Centre level**



- One of the seven directives contained creation of Police Complaint Authority (PCA).
- In theJudgement, the fifth directive requires that PCA needs to be formed by each state which would investigate the complaints of serious misconduct by the Police. There should be a state level PCA and district level PCAs within each state.

- The state level PCA will investigate only complains against the police personnel who are of and above the rank of Superintendent of Police and the complaints would include incidents involving:

- Death in police custody
- Grievous hurt in police custody
- Rape or attempt to rape in police custody

**IPF Smart Policing Index 2021: Assam & Sikkim Emerge Among Top Five States with Best Police Services**

- The two northeastern states – Assam & Sikkim have been adjudged among top 5 states with the highest score on overall ‘Smart Policing Index 2021’ as per a survey conducted by the Indian Police Foundation (IPF).
- Assam Police ranked third in the list with SMART Index Score of 7.89. While, the Sikkim Police have ranked 5th with 7.18 Index Score.
- The index indicates the highest-level of citizen satisfaction and trust on police services of concerned states.
- Andhra Pradesh tops the index score with 8.11; Telangana – 8.10; Kerala – 7.53.
- The list referred Bihar as the lowest scoring state with 5.74 SMART Index Score.
- IPF basically identified 6 competency-based dimensions and three value-based dimensions of trust.

- The state level PCA will investigate only complains against the police personnel who are below the rank of Superintendent of Police and the complaints would include incidents involving:

- Death in police custody
- Grievous hurt in police custody
- Rape or attempt to rape in police custody
- Extortion
- Land/house grabbing
- Incident involving serious abuse of authority
- A victim, witness, or other person can file a complaint in PCA.

- Unfortunately, not every state has implemented this directive. Very few states have functioning Police ComplaintAuthorities. A person needs to check locally if there is PCA for their state and whether there is any prescribed form for the complaint.

Highlights

- The NHRC’s core advisory group on criminal justice system reforms has said there is an “immediate need to set up police complaints authorities at the State/UT and district level” as per the Supreme Court’s directives. The core group, recommended to the MHA and the States that the status of compliance should be displayed on the websites of the Ministry and the State

Home Departments.

- The NHRC group said the MHA and the Law Ministry should consider implementing the recommendations of the 113th report of the Law Commission to add Section 114 B to the Indian Evidence Act. This would ensure that in case a person sustains injuries in police custody, it is presumed that the injuries were inflicted by the police and the burden of proof to explain the injury lies on the authority concerned. It says to make legal framework technology-friendly to speed up criminal justice system.
- The core group recommended making the legal framework technology-friendly to speed up the criminal justice system. Presently the legal framework is not suitable for adoption of technology in the criminal justice system.

Conclusion

- ✓ The aftermath of George Floyd being choked to death by a white policeman in the US last year has lessons for us. There were countrywide protests and demonstrations. The Democrats in Washington even drafted a Bill called the Justice in Policing Act for police reforms. President Donald Trump, responding to the widespread demand for police reforms, signed an executive to establish a database which would track police officers with excessive use of force complaints in their records. It would, besides, give the police department a financial incentive to adopt best practices and encourage co-responder programmes in which social workers would join the police when they respond to non-violent calls involving mental health, addiction, and homeless issues. In India also, the parliamentarians need to speak regarding the need for police reforms?
- ✓ Our leaders should see the writing on the wall. Any spark of police misconduct could tomorrow lead to a prairie fire of popular indignation and protests across the country. We must, without further delay, build an environment where police become an instrument of service to the people, where gangsters do not thrive and become a menace to society.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Centre's Compliance with  
 Supreme Court Directives on  
 Police Reform, Seven Steps to  
 Police Reform

[All India Judicial Service \(AIJS\)](#)

News Excerpt

The proposal to set up an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS) has gained momentum as the Centre is making fresh attempts to build consensus with the state governments.

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Pre-Connect

- The AIJS is a national-level recruitment process for district judges on the lines of the Union Public Services Commission proposed by the Central government to “strengthen overall justice delivery system”.
- At present, Articles 233 and 234 of the Constitution of India deal with the appointment of district judges, and place it in the domain of the states.
- The selection process is conducted by the State Public Service Commissions and the concerned High Court, since High Courts exercise jurisdiction over the subordinate judiciary in the state. Panels of High Court judges interview candidates after the exam and select them for appointment.
- All judges of the lower judiciary up to the level of district judge are selected through the Provincial Civil Services (Judicial) exam. PCS(J) is commonly referred to as the judicial services exam.

Why has the AIJS been proposed?

- The idea of a centralised judicial service was first mooted in the Law Commission’s 1958

**DELHI: VIJAY NAGAR** 9717380832 & **OLDRAJENDER NAGAR** 9811293743 | **JAIPUR:** 8290800441  
**BENGALURU: KORMANGALA** 7619166663 & **CHANDRA LAYOUT** 7619136662 | **BHOPAL:** 7509975361  
**PATNA:** 7463950774 | **INDORE:** 7314977441 | **RANCHI:** 9939982007 | **www.ksgindia.com**

‘Report on Reforms on Judicial Administration’.

- The idea was to ensure an efficient subordinate judiciary, to address structural issues such as varying pay and remuneration across states, to fill vacancies faster, and to ensure standard training across states.
- A statutory or constitutional body such as the UPSC to conduct a standard, centralised exam to recruit and train judges was discussed. The idea was proposed again in the Law Commission Report of 1978, which discussed delays and arrears of cases in the lower courts.
- In 2006, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its 15th Report backed the idea of a pan-Indian judicial service, and also prepared a draft Bill.

What is the judiciary’s view on the AIJS?

- ✓ In 1992, the Supreme Court in All India Judges’ Assn. (1) v. Union of India directed the Centre to set up an AIJS. In a 1993 review of the judgment, however, the court left the Centre at liberty to take the initiative on the issue.
- ✓ In 2017, the Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance of the issue of appointment of district judges, and mooted a “Central Selection Mechanism”. A Senior advocate, who was appointed amicus curiae by the court, circulated a concept note to all states in which he recommended conducting a common examination instead of separate state exams.
- ✓ Based on the merit list, High Courts would then hold interviews and appoint judges.

Amicus Curiae submitted that this would not change the constitutional framework or take away the powers of the states or High Courts.

What is the opposition to the AIJS?

A centralised recruitment process is seen as an affront to federalism and an encroachment on the powers of states granted by the Constitution. This is the main contention of several states, which have also argued that central recruitment would not be able to address the unique concerns that individual states may have. Language and representation, e.g., are key concerns highlighted by states. Judicial business is conducted in regional languages, which could be affected by central recruitment. Also, reservations based on caste, and even for rural candidates or linguistic minorities in the state, could be diluted in a central test, it has been argued. The opposition is also based on the constitutional concept of the separation of powers. A central test could give the executive a foot in the door for the appointment of district judges, and dilute the say that High Courts have in the process. Additionally, legal experts have argued that the creation of AIJS will not address the structural issues plaguing the lower judiciary. The issue of different scales of pay and remuneration has been addressed by the Supreme Court in the 1993 All India Judges Association case by bringing in uniformity across states. Experts argue that increasing pay across the board and ensuring that a fraction of High Court judges are picked from the lower judiciary, may help better than a central exam to attract quality talent.

The constitution of All India Judicial Service will seriously erode the federal structure contemplated by the Constitution. The constitution of ‘All India Judicial Service’ with power of disciplinary action by the President (Central Government) completely oust the control and supervision of the District Courts vested with High Court under Article 235 of the Constitution.

Why is the government seeking to revive the idea of AIJS?

- The government has targeted the reform of lower judiciary in its effort to improve India’s Ease of Doing Business ranking, as efficient dispute resolution is one of the key indices in determining the rank.

- It is believed that AIJS is a step in the direction of ensuring an efficient lower judiciary. The government has countered the opposition by states, saying that if a central mechanism can work for administrative services — IAS officers learn the language required for their cadre — it can work for judicial services too.

Conclusion

No judge is ‘subordinate’ to any other. As constitutional beings, judges are limited in jurisdiction but also supreme within their own jurisdiction. The provision of AIJS was included in Article 312 of the Constitution through the 42nd amendment in 1976. But it would still require a bill to decide on its broad contours. The government believes that if such a service comes up, it would help create a pool of talented people who could later become a part of the higher judiciary — the High Courts and the Supreme Court.

**Restoration and Continuation of MPLADS**

News Excerpt

Centre has approved the restoration and continuation of Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) during the remaining part of Financial Year 2021-22 and up to Financial Year 2025-26 co-terminus with the period of 15th Finance Commission.

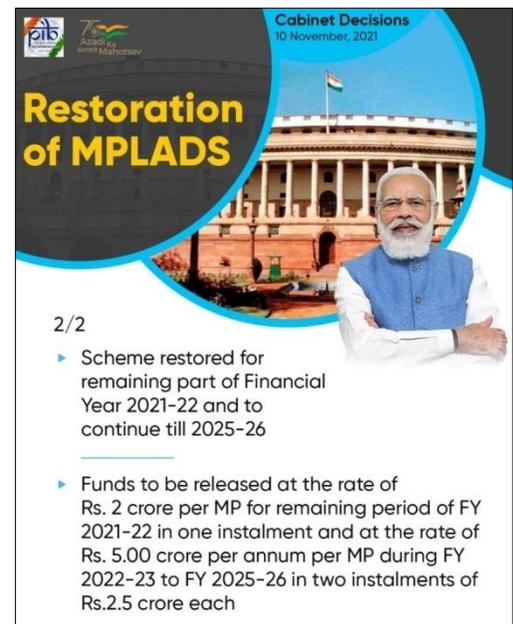
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Pre-Connect

- The MPLADS is a Central Sector Scheme fully funded by Government of India. The objective of the scheme is to enable MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets in the areas of drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc. primarily in their constituencies.
- The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per Member of Parliament (MP) constituency is ₹5crores, released in two instalments of ₹2.5 crore each, subject to the fulfilment of conditions as per the MPLADS guidelines.

Background

- The Ministry conducted a Third-Party Evaluation of the MPLADS works during 2021 in 216 districts across the country. The Evaluation Report recommended for the continuation of MPLADS.
- For managing the health and adverse impacts of Covid-19 in the society, the Cabinet in its meeting held on 6th April 2020, had decided not to operate MPLADS during the FY 2020-21 and 2021-22 and place the fund at the disposal of Ministry of Finance for managing the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic.
- Since, the inception of the Scheme, a total of 19,86,206 works has been completed with the financial implication of ₹54171.09 crore.



**Restoration of MPLADS**

Cabinet Decisions  
10 November, 2021

2/2

- ▶ Scheme restored for remaining part of Financial Year 2021-22 and to continue till 2025-26
- ▶ Funds to be released at the rate of Rs. 2 crore per MP for remaining period of FY 2021-22 in one instalment and at the rate of Rs. 5.00 crore per annum per MP during FY 2022-23 to FY 2025-26 in two instalments of Rs. 2.5 crore each

Implementation Strategy and Targets:

- ✓ The MPLAD scheme is governed by a set of guidelines, which are revised from time to time.
- ✓ The process under MPLADS starts with the Members of Parliament recommending works to the Nodal District Authority.
- ✓ The Nodal District concerned is responsible for implementing the eligible works recommended

by the Members of Parliament and maintaining the details of individual works executed and amount spent under the Scheme.

Analytica: Impact

- The restoration and continuation of MPLADS will restart the community developmentalworks in the field which are halted due to lack of funds under MPLADS.
- As the country is now on the road to economic recovery and the Scheme continues to be beneficial for the creation of durable community assets, in fulfilling the aspirations of locally felt needs of the Community, in skill development and creation of jobs across the country, thereby helpful in achieving the objective of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Accordingly, the Union Cabinet has now decided to restore MPLADS.
- The Ministry will release MPLADS fund at the rate of ₹2 crore per Member of Parliament for the remaining period of FY 2021-22 in one instalment and at the rate of ₹5 crore per annum per Member of Parliament during FY 2022-23 to FY 2025-26 in two instalments of ₹2.5 crore each.
- It will restart fulfilling the aspirations and developmental requirements of the local community and creation of durable assets, which is the primary objective of the MPLADS.
- It will also help in reviving the local economy.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Devices of Parliamentary Proceedings, Legislative Procedure in Parliament

Conclusion

As the country is now on the road to economic recovery and “the scheme continues to be beneficial for the creation of durable community assets, in fulfilling the aspirations of locally felt needs of the community, in skill development and creation of jobs across the country, thereby helpful in achieving the objective of Atmanirbhar Bharat”, a decision has been taken by the union government to restore the Parliamentarians’ access to the funds.

Centre to extend the tenures of CBI and ED

News Excerpt

President of India promulgated two ordinances that would allow the Centre to extend the tenures of the directors of the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate from two years to up to five years.

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- Director, CBI as Inspector General of Police, Delhi Special Police Establishment, is responsible for the administration of the organisation. With enactment of CVC Act, 2003 the Superintendence of Delhi Special Police Establishment vests with the Central Government save investigations of offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, in which, the superintendence vests with the Central Vigilance Commission. Director, CBI has been provided security of two-year tenure in CBI by the CVC Act, 2003. The CVC Act also provides mechanism for selection of Director, CBI and other officers of the rank of SP and above in CBI.
- The Directorate of Enforcement, with its Headquarters at New Delhi is headed by the Director of Enforcement. There are five regional offices at Mumbai, Chennai, Chandigarh, Kolkata and Delhi headed by Special Directors of Enforcement.

Central Bureau of Investigation

- At an early stage of World War-II, the Government of India realised that vast increase in expenditure for war efforts had provided opportunities to unscrupulous and anti-social persons, both officials and non-officials, for indulging in bribery and corruption at the cost of public and the Government. It was felt that Police and other Law Enforcement Agencies under the State Governments were not in a position to cope with the situation.
- An executive order was, therefore, passed by the Government of India in 1941, setting up the Special Police Establishment (SPE) under a DIG in the then Department of War with mandate to investigate cases of bribery and corruption in transactions with which War and Supply

Department of the Government of India was concerned.

- At the end of 1942, the activities of the SPE were extended to include cases of corruption on Railways also, presumably because the Railways were vitally concerned with movement and supply of war materials.

- In 1943, an Ordinance was issued by the Government of India, by which a Special Police Force was constituted and vested with powers for the investigation of certain offences committed in connection with the departments of the Central Government committed anywhere in British India.

- As a need for a Central Government Agency to investigate cases of bribery and corruption was felt even after the end of the war, the Ordinance issued in 1943, which had lapsed on 30th September, 1946 was replaced by Delhi Special Police Establishment Ordinance of 1946. Subsequently, the same year Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 was brought into existence.

- CBI derives power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.

Section 2 of the Act vests DSPE with jurisdiction to investigate offences in the Union Territories only. However, the jurisdiction can be extended by the Central Government to other areas including Railway areas and States under Section 5(1) of the Act, provided the State Government accords consent under Section 6 of the Act.

- The executive officers of CBI of the rank of Sub Inspector and above, exercise all powers of a station office in-charge of the police station for the concerned area for the purpose of investigation. As per Section 3 of the Act, Special Police Establishment is authorised to investigate only those cases, which are notified by the Central Government from time to time.
- After promulgation of the Act, superintendence of SPE was transferred to the Home Department and its functions were enlarged to cover all departments of the Government of India. The jurisdiction of SPE was extended to all the Union territories and the Act provided for its extension to States with the consent of the State Government. The Headquarters of SPE was shifted to Delhi and the organisation was put under the charge of Director, Intelligence Bureau. However, in 1948, a post of Inspector General of Police, SPE was created and the organisation was placed under his charge.

#### Directorate of Enforcement

- The origin of the Enforcement Directorate goes back to 1st May, 1956, when an 'Enforcement Unit' was formed, in Department of Economic Affairs, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (FERA '47); this Unit was headed by a Legal Service Officer, as Director of Enforcement, assisted by an Officer drawn on deputation from RBI, besides 03 Inspectors of Special Police Establishment; besides Delhi Hqrs., to start with, there were 02 branches – at Bombay and Calcutta.
- In the year 1957, this Unit was renamed as 'Enforcement Directorate', and another branch was opened at Madras. The administrative control of the Directorate was transferred from Department of Economic Affairs to Department of Revenue in 1960. With the passage of time, FERA'47 was repealed and replaced by FEMA, 1973. For a short period of 04 years (1973 – 1977), the Directorate remained under the administrative jurisdiction of Department of Personnel & Administrative Reforms.
- Directorate of Enforcement is a Multi-Disciplinary Organization mandated with the task of enforcing the provisions of two special fiscal laws – Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).
- Besides directly recruiting personnel, the Directorate also draws officers from different Investigating Agencies, viz., Customs & Central Excise, Income Tax, Police, etc. on deputation.

### Analytica

- ✓ The chiefs of the Central agencies currently have a fixed two-year tenure, but can now be given three annual extensions.
- ✓ While the change in tenure of the CBI Director was affected by amending the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, the changes to the tenure of the ED Director was brought in by amending the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.
- ✓ The Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021 read that provided that the period for which the Director of Enforcement holds the office on his initial appointment may, in the public interest, on the recommendation of the Committee under clause(a) and for the reason to be recorded in writing, be extended upto one year at a time.
- ✓ The ordinance provided further that no such extension shall be granted after the completion of a period of five years in total, including the period mentioned in the initial appointment.

### Conclusion

With a view to ensuring stability and continuity in the tenure of officers heading the two important agencies of the government and supervising sensitive cases, clear provisions have been made in the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, and the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, for extension, on the recommendation of the prescribed committee, in public interest and for reasons to be recorded in writing, beyond the initial approved tenure subject to the condition that the total tenure does not exceed five years. The posts such as that of the CBI Director are chosen by a high-level panel that not only included the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of India but also the Leader of the Opposition or the single largest Opposition party. Centre respected the independence of agencies such as the CBI and the ED.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Goods and Services Tax  
Council, Comptroller and  
Auditor General, Central  
Vigilance Commission

## SOCIAL ISSUES

### Health Expenditure in India

#### News Excerpt

Recently, National Health Accounts (NHA) estimates- 2017-18 has been released, which underscored that the Out-of-Pocket-Expenditure (OOPE) as share of total health expenditure and foreign aid for health have come down. The share of total Health Expenditure, Out-of-Pocket Expenditure has come down to 48.8% in 2017-18 from 64.2% in 2013-14.

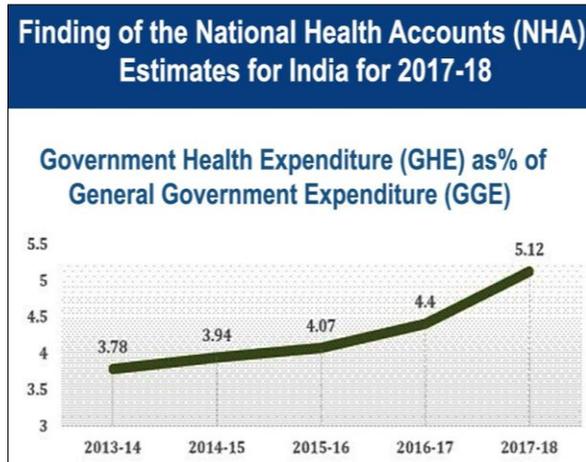
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#### Pre-Connect

- The National Health Account Report is produced by National Health System Resource Centre. This is the fifth National Health Account Report.
- The NHA estimates are prepared by using an accounting framework based on internationally accepted System of Health Accounts 2011, provided by the World Health Organization.

#### Important findings of the Reports

- Since the health expenditure is decreased in context year wise comparison but on the basis of government health expenditure in the total GDP, It has been increased. It has been increased from 1.15% in 2013-14 to 1.35% in 2017-18.
- The share of Government Health Expenditure in Total Health Expenditure has also increased over a time. As In 2017-18, share of the Government Health Expenditure was 40.8 % which was much higher than 28.6 % in 2013-14.
- Government Health Expenditure is also increased in terms of per capita from Rs 1,042 to Rs 1,753 between 2013-14 to 2017-18



#### Government Expenditure in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sectors:

- ✓ The government health expenditure in Primary and secondary care has been increased more than 80 per cent in government sector.
- ✓ There has been an increase in share of primary and secondary care in case of Government health expenditure from 75% to 86% in Government sector.
- ✓ In case of private sector, share of tertiary care has increased but primary and secondary care show a declining trend from 84 % to 74 %.

#### Social Security Expenditure on Health:

- The share of social security expenditure on health, which includes the social health insurance programme, Government financed health insurance schemes, and medical reimbursements made to Government employees, has increased.
- The report also depicts that the foreign aid for health has come down to 0.5%, which is showcasing India's economic self-reliance.

#### Key highlights in the budget regarding health and well-being include:

- Urban Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 will be implemented with a capital outlay of Rs 1.4 lakh

- crores over five years (2021-26).
- A new central scheme PM AtmaNirbharSwasth Bharat Yojana will be launched with an outlay of Rs 64,180 crore over six years. Rs 35,000 crore has been allocated for COVID-19 vaccines.
- Rs 13,192 crore has been allocated as finance commission grant for health.
- Rs 36,022 crore has been allocated as finance commission grant for water and sanitation.

**The factors attributing declining Out of Pocket Expenditure:**

- ✦ The factors attributing to this decline is the increase in utilisation and reduction in cost of services in Government health facilities.
- ✦ The Major heads for expenditure: National Health Mission, PradhanMantri Jan AarogyaYojana (PMJAY), PradhanMantriSwasthyaSurakshaYojana, National AIDS and STD Control Programme, Family Welfare Scheme, RashtriyaSwasthyaBimaYojana (RSBY).

**Way Forward**

Government Health expenditure is increasing comparatively with GDP of previous years but it needs some more expenditure in the Health Research. Apart from the expenditure in government sector, increasing expenditure in private sectors in the primary and secondary care can bring better health facilities.

**Job Loss during Covid-19: AQEES Report**

**News Excerpt**

Recently, the Government has presented a report so called All India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES) in the Parliament regarding the Job Loss during the COVID-19 Pandemic. According to the report-about 7.5 per cent job losses were seen during the lockdown.

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**Pre-Connect**

About AQEES:

It is the country’s first survey of domestic workers, the latest among a group of five national jobs enumeration campaigns aimed at discerning data on the country’s vast informal workforce that will feed a forthcoming National Employment Policy in Asia’s third-largest economy.

**Key Points of the Report:**

- In the report 9 key sectors have been covered in the survey. Out of which the Manufacturing Sectors recorded job losses of 14.2 lakh between the pre-lockdown (March 25, 2020) and post-lockdown (July 1, 2020) period.
- The Construction sector recorded a loss of 1 lakh, while trade and education sectors registered job losses of 1.8 lakh and 2.8 lakh, respectively.
- The financial Sectors recorded the job loss of 0.4 lakh while IT BPO sectors recorded a loss of 1 lakh during the same period.

SECTORS	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES (IN LAKH)			
	Prior to Lockdown (before March 25, 2020)		As on July 1, 2020	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Manufacturing	98.7	26.7	87.9	23.3
Construction	5.8	1.8	5.1	1.5
Trade	16.1	4.5	14.8	4
Transport	11.3	1.9	11.1	1.9
Education	38.2	29.5	36.8	28.1
Health	15	10.6	14.8	10.1
Accommodation & Restaurants	7	1.9	6.2	1.7
IT/BPOs	13.6	6.3	12.8	6.1
Financial Services	11.5	5.9	11.3	5.7
Total*	217.8	90.0	201.5	83.3

**Analytica**

Job loss of Male and Female workers:

- The job loss of female recorded 7.44 per cent while the job loss of male workers between the pre-lockdown and post lockdown period recorded at 7.48 per cent.
- The maximum Job loss for the male and female recorded in the Manufacturing sector- Job

loss for female in Manufacturing sectors reduced to 23.3 lakh (as on July 1, 2020) from 26.7 lakh (on March 25, 2020) While the job loss for the male sectors in Manufacturing sectors reduced to 87.9 lakh from 98.7 lakh during the same period.

- The report highlights that the employment in 9 key sectors rose to 3.08 % with 2013 as base year. The base year was chosen by the sixth economic census.
- As per the report, employment decreased in 27 per cent of the establishments due to the pandemic.
- As much as 81 per cent of the workers received full wages during the lockdown period (March 25-June 30, 2020), 16 per cent received reduced wages and only 3 per cent were denied any wages.

**About AQEES**

- ✓ It is the country’s first survey of domestic workers, the latest among a group of five national jobs enumeration campaigns aimed at discerning data on the country’s vast informal workforce that will feed a forthcoming National Employment Policy in Asia’s third-largest economy.
- ✓ For the first time, the survey has provided headcount of domestic workers and their employers through a nationwide household survey.
- ✓ The survey looks the specific features of the domestic works such as- Living Conditions, Employment Relationships, would be looked in an extensive manner which are not usually covered in the traditional force survey.
- ✓ AQEES has filled the gap in official short-term, high frequency jobs data- the economics usually remained dependent on the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), a government jobs survey, or data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), a private data firm.
- ✓ AQEES is part of four other annual surveys conducted by the labour bureau which are as under:
  - All-India Survey of Migrant Workers,
  - All-India Survey of Domestic Workers,
  - All-India Survey of Employment Generated by Professionals and
  - All-India Survey of Employment Generated in the Transport Sector.

**Conclusion**

In the current scenario, the job loss due to pandemic has shocked the working section of India, due to unavailability of correct information about the workforce has mismanaged the policy implementation announced by the central government, but now the All India Quarterly Establishment Employment Survey (AQEES), PLFS the correct working force in different sectors of the economy has pushed to do speedy policy implementation for each and every sections of the workforce especially it will increased the headcounts of female workforce.

**Wage Rate Index**

**News Excerpt**

Recently the Labour ministry has released the new series of wage rate index (WRI) with the base year being 2016.

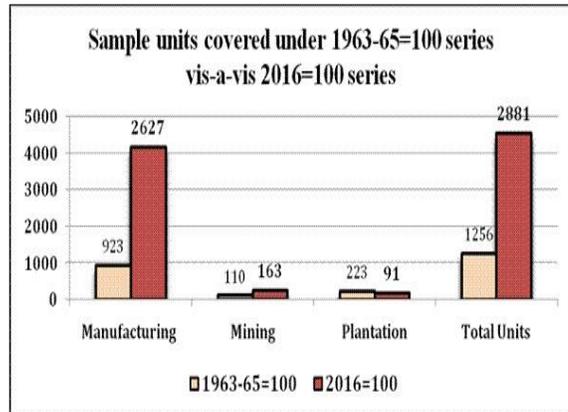
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**Pre-Connect**

Wage Rate Index (WRI):

- WRI with base year 2016=100 is being compiled and maintained by Labour Bureau, an attached office of Ministry of Labour & Employment.

- The Wage Rate Index of 37 industries is 119.7
- The new series of WRI with base 2016=100 will replace the old series with base 1963-65=100.
- The Report on “New Series of Wage Rate Index (Base 2016=100)” is an important publication meant to give insights into the concepts, definitions and methodology related to the new series of WRI.
- The New WRI Series with base 2016=100 would be compiled twice a year on point-to-point half yearly basis, as on 1<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> July of every year.



**Important Highlights of the Report**

Some of the major improvements made under the new series of WRI (2016=100) vis-à-vis old series (1963-65=100) are as follows-

- The weighting diagram in the new WRI series has been prepared from the results of the Occupational Wage Survey (Seventh) round. A total of 37 industries have been covered in the new WRI basket (2016=100) as against 21
- The selected 37 industries in the new series are categorized as 30 industries from Manufacturing sector, 4 industries from Mining Sector and 3 industries from Plantation Sector as compared to 14 industries from Manufacturing sector, 4 industries from Mining Sector and 3 industries from Plantation Sector in the old series.
- In the new WRI basket, the current wage data has been collected from 2881 units under 37 selected industries as against to 1256 units under 21 industries in the old series of WRI.
- About 700 occupations have been covered under 37 selected industries.

**More inclusive**

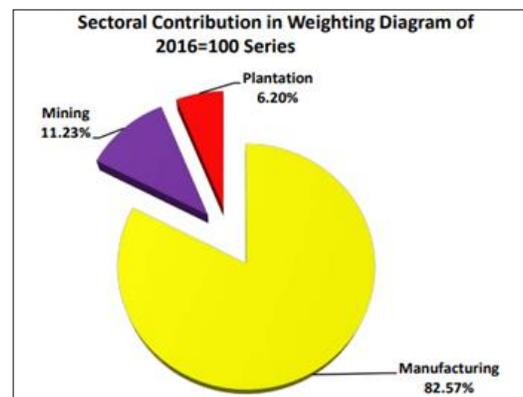
The new series seeks to cover 700 occupations and makes the wage rate index more representative, expanding the number of industries, sample size and the weightage of industries.

**Wage rate index base revision to 2016**

Sector	No. of industries		Weights (in %)		Sample units	
	1963-65	2016	1963-65	2016	1963-65	2016
Manufacturing	14	30	48.78	82.57	923	2,627
Mining	4	4	17.01	11.23	110	163
Plantation	3	3	34.21	6.2	223	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>2,881</b>

**WRI Index**

- ✓ All India Wage Rate Index Number for all the 37 industries stood at 119.7 in 2020 (half yearly 2) which shows an increment of 1.6 per cent over the index in 2020 (half yearly 1).
- ✓ Sixteen new Manufacturing Industries have been added in the new series of WRI basket, viz. Synthetic Textiles, Textile Garments, Printing and Publishing, Footwear, Petroleum, Chemical & Gases, fertilizers, Drugs & Medicines, Iron & Steel, Electrical Apparatus, Motor Vehicles, Motor Cycles, Tea Processing, Tyres & Tubes, Milk Products and Plastic Articles.



**Analytica**

- Mining Sector: In the new series, Oil Mining Industry has been newly introduced in the basket in place of Mica Mines Industry, to make mining sector more representative of the three

different kinds of Mining viz. Coal, Metal and Oil.

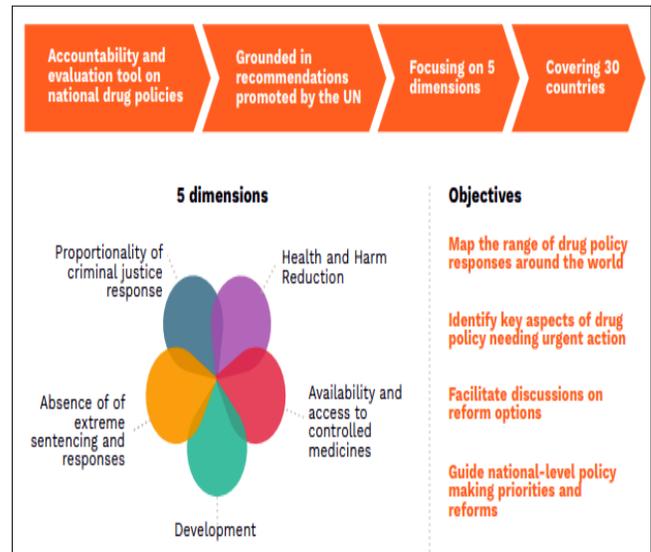
- Plantation Sector: Three plantation industries namely Tea, Coffee and Rubber have been retained in the new WRI basket with enhanced coverage.
- Intra-Sector Variations

The Highest Wage Rate Index:

- Among Thirty Manufacturing Industries, the highest Wage Rate Index during 2020 (half yearly 2) was recorded in Drugs & Medicines followed by Sugar, Motor Cycles, Jute Textiles and Tea Processing.

The lowest Index:

- Manufacturing Sector, Castings & Forgings, Woollen Textiles, Synthetic Textiles, and Textile Garments.
- Among Four Mining Industries, the maximum Wage Rate Index was recorded in Iron Ore Mines followed by Oil Mining, and Coal Mines, The minimum Wage Rate Index in this sector was recorded in Manganese Mines.
- In Plantation Sector, the maximum Wage Rate Index was reported in Tea Plantation whereas the minimum Index was recorded in Rubber Plantation.
- Out of total thirty seven industries covered for compilation of indices, the Wage Rate Index of twelve Manufacturing industries, two industries in Mining industries and one Plantation industry had lower Wage Rate Index than all industries combined Wage Rate Index of 119.7.



Significance of the WRI

- ✚ The new series of WRI has increased the scope and coverage in terms of number of industries, sample size, occupations under selected industries, weightage of industries etc.
- ✚ The Base revision of WRI will play a critical role in coming out with minimum wages and national floor wages along with other parameters.

Conclusion

The revised base year of Wage Rate Index helps government in deciding the wages of workers in different economic sectors as well as it has given the information to government to use the human resources. Thus the wage rate index is the major tool in deciding the wages and workers conditions in different sectors.

**Global Drug Policy Index**

News Excerpt

Recently Inaugural Global Drug Policy Index was released by the Harm Reduction Consortium.

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Pre Connect

- The Global Drug Policy Index provides each country with a score and ranking that shows how much their drug policies and their implementation align with the UN principles of human rights, health and development.

- It offers an essential accountability and evaluation mechanism in the field of drug policy
- It is a data-driven global analysis of drug policies and their implementation and is composed of 75 indicators running across five broad dimensions of drug policy: criminal justice, extreme responses, health and harm reduction, access to internationally controlled medicines, and development.
- Harm Reduction Consortium is the Global Consortium of different partners who prepare the policies for the drugs.

<b>RANKINGS OF SELECTED COUNTRIES</b>		
<b>RANK</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
<b>TOP 5</b>		
1	Norway	74/100
2	New Zealand	71/100
3	Portugal	70/100
4	UK	69/100
5	Australia	65/100
18	<b>India</b>	<b>46/100</b>
<b>BOTTOM 5</b>		
26	Mexico	35/100
27	Kenya	34/100
28	Indonesia	29/100
29	Uganda	28/100
30	Brazil	26/100

Important Highlights of the Index

- India is ranked at 18 out of 30 countries with overall of 46/100.
- It ranked Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, the UK and Australia as the five leading countries on humane and health-driven drug policies.
- Brazil, Uganda, Indonesia, Kenya, and Mexico are the Five lowest Countries.

Analytica

- ✓ None of the country has scored perfect score.
- ✓ Norway in spite of ranking on top has scored 74/100.

India's Performance at different dimensions

India's overall score is 46/100 and ranked at 18/100.

- ❖ Absence of Extreme Response-63/100
- ❖ Proportionality and Criminal Justice-38/100
- ❖ Harm Reduction - 49/100
- ❖ Access to Medicine - 33/100
- ❖ Development - Not Applicable.

Abolition of Death Penalty

- ✓ The report underscored that only three out of 30 countries- India, Indonesia, and Thailand retain the capital punishment for certain drug offences.
- ✓ The Death Penalty for drug offence is contrary to International Human Rights standards which have banned for death penalty for all "Most serious Offence" that is crime of extreme gravity involving Intentional Killing.

Indian Government Initiative

- The report has come at the time when the Indian Government is reviewing the provisions of Narcotic Drugs Psychotropic Substances Act 1985.
- As per the suggestion given by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, The users and dependent caught with small quantities of drug their families should be treated as "victims" and culprits and suggested compulsory treatment and rehab instead and penalties for such users.

Conclusions

The analysis show that drug law enforcement targets primarily non-violent offences and especially people who use drug only caught out of 30 countries surveyed have decriminalized drug use and possession and out of those only three managed to truly divert away from the criminal justice system. On the positive side most countries policy and strategy document explicitly support harm reduction. However implementation is a cause for cancer.

## Nutrition Smart Villages

### News Excerpt

As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, to commemorate the 75th year of Independence of India a programme on “Nutrition Smart Village” is to be initiated to strengthen the Poshan Abhiyan.

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### Pre-Connect

- This new initiative aims to reach out to 75 villages across India through the network of All India Coordinated Research Project on Women in Agriculture (AICRP-WIA) which is in operation at 13 centres in 12 States of India besides the coordinating institute located at Bhubaneswar.
- The initiative has been undertaken in line with the Prime Minister's call to all the academicians, agricultural scientists and all the institutions to adopt and transform 75 villages.

### WHAT IS A NUTRITION SMART VILLAGE?

An informed village that understands 'nutrition' in its practical terms and takes appropriate steps to address them. It is a village where -

- There is **no hunger and food insecurity**.
- All families are aware about the importance of 'First 1000 days'- window of opportunities', for healthy children and healthy mothers.
- Community is **aware of the linkages** between agriculture, natural resources, WASH, income and nutrition education with nutrition.
- Every woman in the reproductive age group and adolescent children **consume at least 5 food groups out of 10** on a regular basis.
- Every child receives **home cooked balanced diet** in appropriate frequency and consistency.
- An active village committee which promotes **interconnections between agriculture, natural resources, WASH, nutrition, and protection of natural habitats**.
- Families **grow and buy safe, seasonal and local produce**. Communities drive the local 'haat' or market by creating the demand for safe and environment friendly products.
- The community value **uncultivated foods and traditional recipes**.
- Every family has access to **safe drinking water**.
- Every family maintains safe **sanitation and hand washing** practices.
- Communities are **aware of the government schemes and entitlements** and can make service providers accountable.

### Objectives of the Initiative

- The objectives of the initiative are to promote nutritional awareness, education and behavioural change in rural areas involving farm women and school children,
- Harnessing traditional knowledge through the local recipe to overcome malnutrition and
- Implementing nutrition-sensitive agriculture through homestead agriculture and Nutri-garden.

### Poshan Abhiyan

- ❖ POSHAN Abhiyaan or **National Nutrition Mission** is Government of India's flagship programme to improve nutritional outcomes.
- ❖ It was launched to improve nutrition of children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- ❖ It was launched on the occasion of the International Women's Day on 8 March, 2018 from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan,
- ❖ The POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) Abhiyaan directs the attention of the country towards the problem of malnutrition and address it in a mission-mode.
- ❖ NITI Aayog is the implementing body of POSHAN Abhiyaan. The National Nutrition Strategy is released by NITI Aayog.

### Poshan Maah

- ❖ **The month of September is celebrated as Poshan Maah and was celebrated for the first time in September 2018.**
- ❖ **The activities in POSHAN Maah focusses** on Social Behavioural Change and Communication (SBCC).
- ❖ The broad themes were: antenatal care, optimal breastfeeding (early and exclusive), complementary feeding, anaemia, growth monitoring, girls' - education, diet, right age of marriage, hygiene and sanitation, eating healthy - food fortification.

## COVID Impact on Learning: ASER Report

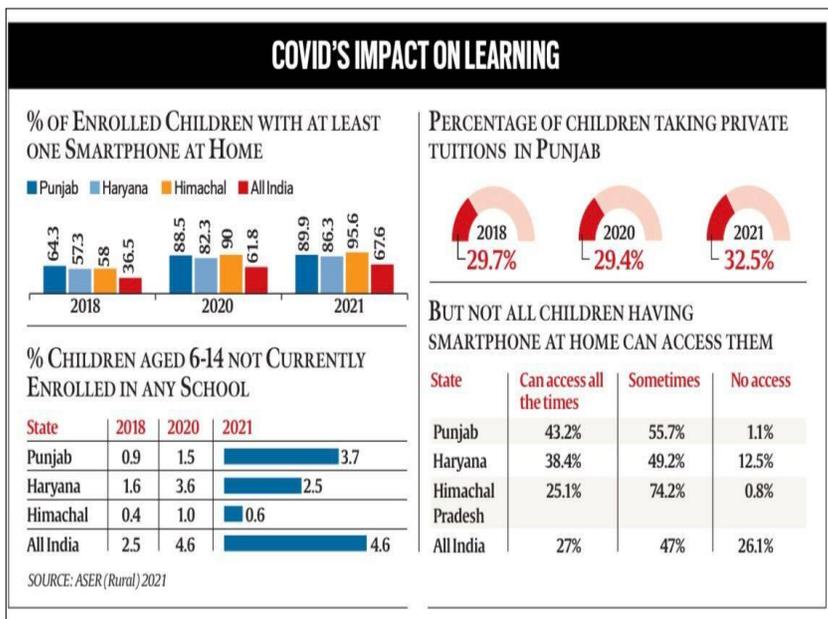
### News Excerpt

Recently the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of Annual Status of Education Report (ASER-2021) was released which underscored the impact of COVID-19 on Education.

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### Pre-Connect

- The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey is facilitated by Pratham Education Foundation.
- It is the oldest survey of its kind in the country, and well regarded for the range of insights it provides on levels of foundational learning at the elementary level.
- In the context of the pandemic, the ASER Centre switched its focus to access to learning opportunities in 2020,



### The key Highlights of the Report

- **Private to Government shift of Enrollment:** The report shows a “clear shift” from private to government schools — from 64.3 per cent in 2018 to 65.8 per cent in 2020, to 70.3 per cent in 2021.
- **Fall in private school enrolment** from 28.8 per cent in 2020 to 24.4 per cent in 2021.
- ASER 2021 survey shows an increase in dependence on private tuitions and an absence of ready access to smartphones.
- Specific attention is needed to help make up learning losses, especially in the lowest classes.
- According to report -government school enrolment had been declining since 2006 till it stabilised around 65% in 2018. Seen in this background, an increase of 5 percentage points over the last year is very significant.

### Analytics based on different aspects

#### Tuition Dependent:

- ✓ Growing dependency on tuition classes.
- ✓ The students belongs to poor family especially depended on poor family are depend on private tuition.

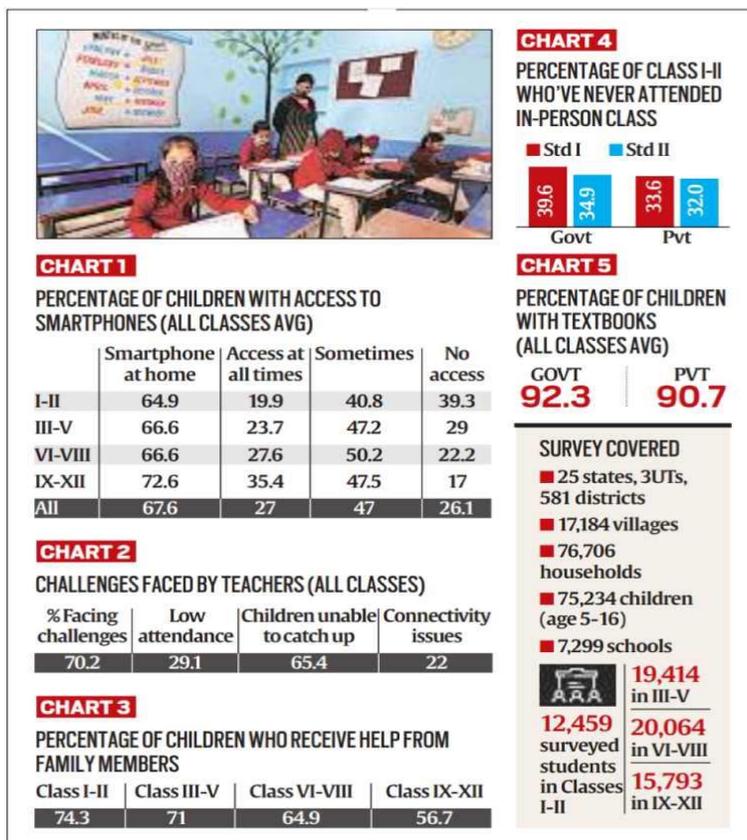
#### Digital Divide:

- ✓ The report states that about 1 in 3 children in Classes I and II have never attended an in-person class.
- ✓ The lack of digital access to the youngest entrants in formal education system is particularly vulnerable.
- ✓ Almost a third of all children in Classes I and II did not have a smartphone available at home.

- ✓ The percentage of enrolled children having at least one smartphone at home has risen between 2018 and 2021.
- ✓ The access to smartphones increases with age, with 35.4 per cent students in Classes IX and above having constant access.

**Learning Gap**

- ✓ 65.4 per cent teachers flagged the problem of children being “unable to catch up” as one of their biggest challenges.
- ✓ Their learning outcomes are set to be affected unless addressed with urgency.
- ✓ During the recent National Achievement Survey (NAS) of the central government, teachers and field investigators across the country reported that the primary grade kids struggled to make sense of questions to test basic comprehension and numerical skills.



**Silver Lining**

- ✓ The decline in the proportion of children not currently enrolled in the 15-16 age group which has the highest dropping out risk
- ✓ The proportion of 15-16-year-olds who were out of school was 16.1%. Driven by the government’s push to universalise secondary education, this number has been steadily declining from 2010 and stood at 12.1% in 2018. The decline continued in 2020 to 9.9% and to 6.6% in 2021.
- ✓ According to the survey, 91.9 per cent of enrolled children have textbooks for their current grade. But only about a third of children in grades I-II of yet-to-reopen schools reported having received learning materials.

**Conclusion**

Due to the pandemic the gross enrollment ratio has decreased as well as the education system at pre-primary level upper classes has been badly affected. The schools and classes remain closed. The worst condition of pandemic on education has seen in the rural areas where the children has failed to get proper education through smart phones because of unavailability of smart phones or digital media.

## SDG Urban Index: NITI Aayog

### News Excerpt

Recently NITI Aayog has released the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-Urban Index under the umbrella of Indo-German Development Cooperation. NITI Aayog also launched the inaugural SDG Urban Index & Dashboard (2021-22).

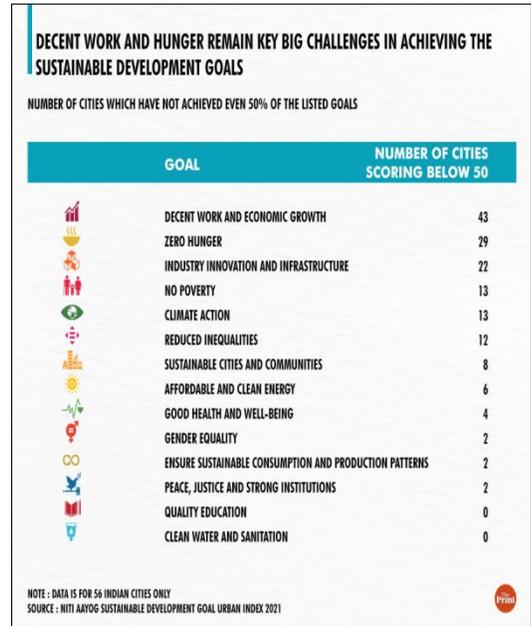
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### Pre-Connect

- The index and dashboard are a result of the NITI Aayog-GIZ and BMZ collaboration focused on driving SDG localization in our cities, under the umbrella of Indo-German Development Cooperation.
- The SDG Urban Index and Dashboard ranks 56 urban areas on 77 SDG indicators across 46 targets of the SDG framework.
- The index and dashboard will further strengthen SDG localization and institute robust SDG monitoring at the city level.
- It highlights the strengths and gaps of ULB-level data, monitoring, and reporting systems.

### Methodology

- The statistical methodology for the SDG Urban Index is drawn from the globally accepted methodology developed by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).
- The methodology, used for the SDG India Index and North Eastern Region District SDG Index as well, was finalised in close collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- SDG 14 (life below water) has not been included as it is relevant for only coastal areas, which are only a few of the selected cities, and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) has been excluded as the progress of its targets are monitored at the national level. While progress under SDG 15 (life on land) has been measured using two indicators,



Top 10 urban areas		Bottom 10 urban areas	
Urban area	Score	Urban area	Score
Shimla	75.5	Faridabad	58.6
Coimbatore	73.3	Kolkata	58.5
Chandigarh	72.4	Agra	58.2
Thiruvananthapuram	72.4	Kohima	58.1
Kochi	72.3	Jodhpur	58.0
Panaji	71.9	Patna	57.3
Pune	71.2	Guwahati	55.8
Tiruchirapalli	70.0	Itanagar	55.3
Ahmedabad	69.8	Meerut	54.6
Nagpur	69.8	Dhanbad	52.4

### Measuring Scale:

- ✓ The urban areas are ranked on a scale of 0-100.
- ✓ A score of 100 implies that the urban area has achieved the targets set for 2030.
- ✓ A score of 0 implies that it is the farthest from achieving the targets among the selected urban areas.
- ✓ Overall or composite urban area scores are then generated from the Goal-wise scores to measure aggregate performance of the urban area.

Urban areas have been classified as below based on their composite score:

- Aspirant: 0-49
- Performer: 50-64

- Front-Runner: 65–99
- Achiever: 100

Performance of different states:

Top Performer Urban cities:

Shimla, Coimbatore, Chandigarh, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi.

Top bottom Performers Urban cities:

Dhanbad, Meerut, Itanagar, Guwahati and Patna.

[Significance of the SDG Index or Dashboard](#)

The index and dashboard will further strengthen SDG localization and institute robust SDG monitoring at the city level. It highlights the strengths and gaps of ULB-level data, monitoring, and reporting systems. Tools such as this index and dashboard will contribute to the creation of an ecosystem in which all stakeholders will be equipped to adopt and implement data-driven decision making. This transformative change is quite essential, given the increasing prominence of our cities and urban areas in charting the future of development in India.

**Global Bribery Risk Ranking**

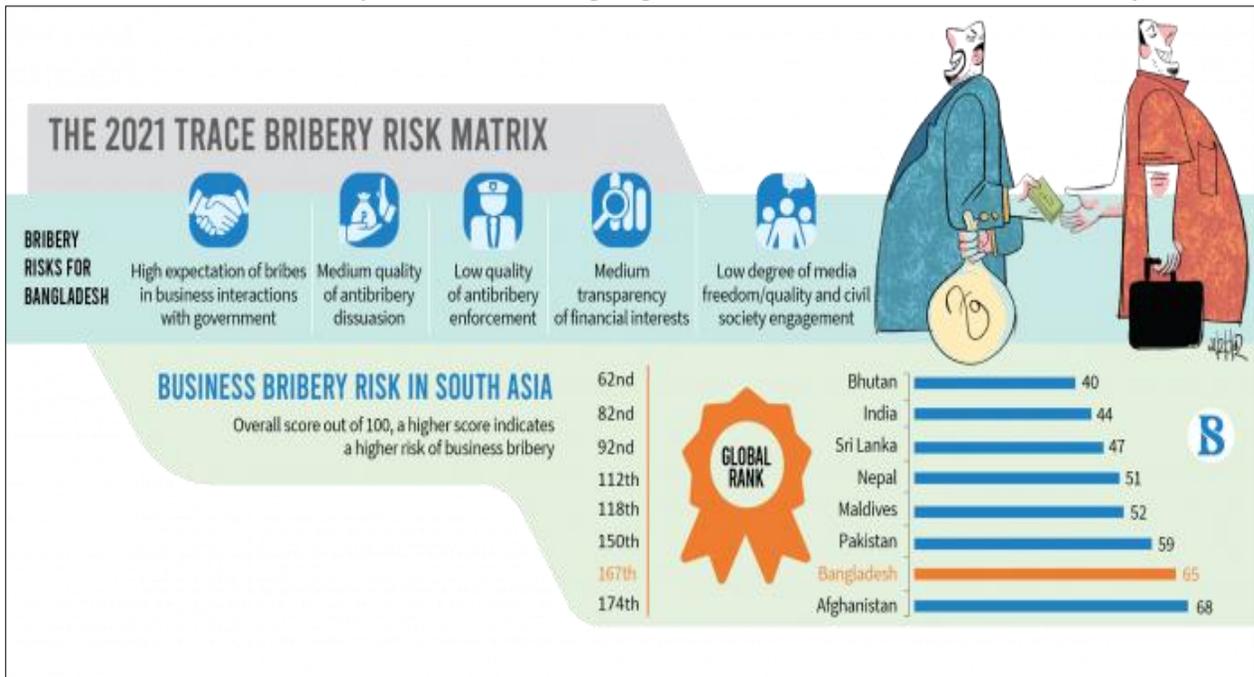
[News Excerpt](#)

Recently, Global Bribery Risk Ranking was released in which India has dipped five spots

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[Pre-Connect](#)

- TRACE, an anti-bribery standard setting organisation, measures business bribery risk in 194



countries, territories, and autonomous and semi-autonomous regions.

- This score is based on four factors — business interactions with the government, anti-bribery deterrence and enforcement, government and civil service transparency, and capacity for civil society oversight which includes the role of the media.
- It was originally published in 2014 to meet a need in the business community for more reliable and nuanced information about the risks of commercial bribery worldwide.

### The key highlights of the Ranking:India's position

- In 2020, India ranked 77 with a score of 45 while this year, the country stood at 82<sup>nd</sup> position with a score of 44, the data showed.
- India fared better than its neighbours – Pakistan, China, Nepal and Bangladesh. Bhutan, meanwhile, secured 62<sup>nd</sup> rank.
- Vanuatu, Peru, North Macedonia and Montenegro also scored 44, the same as that of India.

#### About TRACE

- ❖ TRACE is a non-profit business association dedicated to anti-bribery, compliance and good governance.
- ❖ Founded in 2001 to make it easier and less expensive to reduce the risk of bribery, TRACE is widely recognized for establishing compliance standards and advancing commercial transparency worldwide.
- ❖ Members include hundreds of multinational companies across all industry sectors.
- ❖ TRACE is headquartered in the United States and registered in Canada, with a presence on five continents.
- ❖ The TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix aggregates relevant data obtained from leading public interest and international organisations, including the United Nations, World Bank, V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg and World Economic Forum.
- ❖ This data helps companies to assess the likely risk of bribe demands in each country and to design compliance and due diligence programs tailored to that risk,

### Highest Bribery Risk

- North Korea, Turkmenistan, Venezuela and Eritrea pose the highest commercial bribery risk.
- ✓ Lowest Bribery Risk:
- Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden and New Zealand present the lowest.

### Analytica

- According to report by TRACE- over the past 10 years, the business bribery risk environment worsened significantly in countries that also experienced democratic backsliding: Egypt, Venezuela, Turkey, Poland and Hungary.
- All the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries saw an increase in commercial bribery risk over the past five years (from 2020 to 2021).

### Greatest Improver country

The countries that have shown the greatest trend toward improvement in the factors underlying commercial bribery risk are Uzbekistan, the Gambia, Armenia, Malaysia and Angola.

ECONOMICS

Bad bank for the agriculture sector

News Excerpt

In order to improve recovery of bad loans in the agriculture sector, leading banks have made a pitch for setting up an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) or a “Bad bank” specifically to deal with collections and recovery of farm loans.

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What is a bad bank?

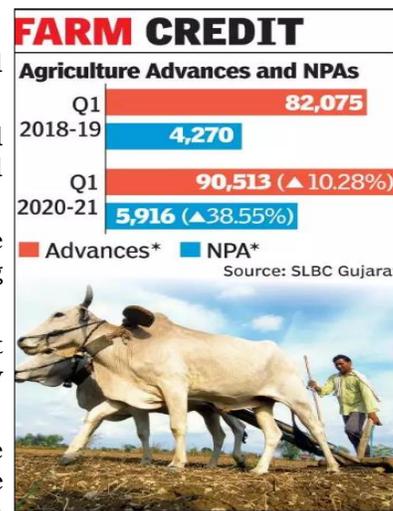
- Bad bank is an asset reconstruction company (ARC) or asset management company (AMC) i.e. an entity where all the bad loans from all the banks can be parked — thus, relieving the commercial banks of their “stressed assets” and allowing them to focus on resuming normal banking operations, especially lending.
- While commercial banks resume lending, the so-called bad bank, or a bank of bad loans, would try to sell these “assets” in the market and to recover the loans.

Analytica

- In order to address the issue of recovery in case of farm loans, discussions are required to be held with the Central government to bring in legislation for agriculture land similar to SARFAESI Act.
- Agriculture being a state subject, the recovery laws — wherever agricultural land is offered as collateral – varies from state to state. As agriculture market is scattered in India, different banks have to make efforts to capture and connect to these markets. It was felt if there was a single institution/ ARC; the cost of recovery can be optimized.

Need

- ✓ The announcement of farm loan waivers by states around elections leads to “deteriorating credit culture”.
- ✓ It would provide additional incentives such as subsidized interest rates on farm loans, promotion of farm-based industries as well as development of farm infrastructure.
- ✓ The laws for the enforcement of recovery of loan are often time consuming and in some states revenue recovery laws covering bank loans have not been enacted.
- ✓ A farm-focused ARC gathered pace after the government recently backed a similar institution to deal with industry NPAs.
- ✓ At present, there is neither a unified mechanism to tackle Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in the farm sector nor a single law that deals with enforcement of mortgages created on agricultural land.



Reasons behind high NPAs in agricultural sector

- Low agricultural growth and productivity that led to low income and low profit because of the inadequate prices of their produce.
- It is a function of increased financial stress among farmers.

**Data:** - At March-end 2021, banks’ gross NPA ratio for the agriculture sector was at **9.8 per cent**, whereas for industry and services it was at 11.3 per cent and 7.5 per cent, respectively, **as per the latest Financial Stability Report, June 2021**, released by the Reserve Bank of India.

- The farmers generally don't get or late settlement of their claim under the PMFBY because the insurance companies do not get adequate premium subsidies on time
- Highly dependent on natural phenomenon like rainfall for irrigation
- Consecutive natural disasters like flood, drought, etc. and crop failure its impact
- Loan waiver culture by the government across states encourages farmers to delay and stop the payment in order to get the waiver

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
PMFBY, Types of NPAs  
Financial stability report,  
ARCs in India

### Way Forward

To streamline the functioning of asset reconstruction companies (ARCs), a Reserve Bank panel has come out with a host of suggestions including the creation of an online platform for the sale of stressed assets and allowing ARCs to act as resolution applicants during the IBC process. There is a need to focus on holistic development based on long term reform of the agricultural sector. The focus should be on to make farmers capable enough (through maximizing their income source and minimizing the risk) to pay the loan back to banks. Loan waiver scheme by the government should be stopped, it discourages the farmers to pay and distort the financial condition of the banks.

## Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework for banks

### News excerpt

The Reserve Bank announced a revised Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework for banks to enable supervisory intervention at an “appropriate time” and also act as a tool for effective market discipline. Also, Payments banks (PBs) and small finance banks (SFBs) have also been removed from the list of lenders where prompt corrective action can be initiated.

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### Pre-connect

- The Reserve Bank’s PCA framework was introduced in December 2002 as a structured early intervention mechanism.
- The Revised PCA Framework was issued by the Reserve Bank on April 13, 2017 and implemented with respect to the bank financials as on March 31, 2017.
- The framework applies to all banks (SCBs) operating in India, including foreign banks and NBFCs(The PCA Framework for NBFCs shall come into effect from October 1, 2022) as well operating through branches or subsidiaries based on breach of risk thresholds of identified indicators.
- Indicators to be tracked for Capital, Asset Quality and Leverage would be CRAR/ Common Equity Tier I Ratio, Net NPA Ratio and Tier I Leverage Ratio respectively.

### Objective of the PCA framework

- The objective of the PCA Framework is to enable Supervisory intervention at appropriate time and require the Supervised Entity to initiate and implement remedial measures in a timely manner, so as to restore its financial health.
- The PCA Framework is also intended to act as a tool for effective market discipline. The PCA Framework does not preclude the Reserve Bank of India from taking any other action as it deems fit at any time, in addition to the corrective actions prescribed in the Framework.
- It aims to check the problem of Non-performing assets (NPAs) in the Indian banking sector.
- Its purpose is to help alert the regulators as well investors and depositors if a bank is

heading towards a trouble.

- The idea is to indicate the problem before it attains crisis situation.
- Essentially PCA helps RBI to monitor key performance indicators of banks, and taking corrective measures, to restore the financial health of a bank.

### What happens after the imposition of PCA?

A bank will generally be placed under PCA framework based on the audited annual financial results and the ongoing supervisory assessment made by RBI. RBI may take any of the following measures with respect to the financial condition of the bank:

- The RBI will impose mandatory restrictions on dividend distribution of profits.
- The RBI is empowered to slap restrictions on branch expansion, domestic or overseas, in addition to mandatory actions of the first.
- Appropriate restrictions on capital expenditure, other than for technological up gradation within Board approved limits
- And other discretionary actions.

#### **Capital adequacy ratio (CAR)/CRAR:**

- ❖ It is the ratio of a bank's capital in relation to its risk weighted assets and current liabilities. It is decided by central banks and bank regulators to prevent commercial banks from taking excess leverage and becoming insolvent in the process.
- ❖ **Capital Adequacy Ratio** = (Tier I + Tier II + Tier III (Capital funds)) / Risk weighted asset  
The risk weighted assets take into account credit risk, market risk and operational risk.
- ❖ The **Basel III** norms stipulated a capital to risk weighted assets of **8%**. However, as per **RBI norms**, Indian scheduled commercial banks are required to maintain a CAR of **9%** while Indian public sector banks are emphasized to maintain a CAR of **12%**.

### How effective is the tool?

- ✓ There are no easy answers as various banks moved into PCA zone at different periods, with its impact on each varying significantly. As Care Ratings noted, one has to wait another two quarters to get clarity.
- ✓ A look at the aggregate performance during the past three quarters threw up startling data. Non-performing assets (NPA) of all banks shot up from 16 per cent in March, 2017 and 20.5 per cent in March, 2018, to 21 per cent in September, 2018, indicating that the PCA framework has not been so successful in curtailing the NPAs in the banking sector.

### Way forward-

Prompt corrective action (PCA) framework is not a panacea to tackle the problem of NPAs. This is only a regulatory measure to identify the poor financial condition of the banks and to stop the further deterioration of the problem. In order to tackle the problem of NPAs, the focus must be on reform in the administration and clean up the banking sectors. Following are the suggestions that can be taken in order to fight the problem of NPA: -

- Stricter NPAs Recovery: The government should have to amend the laws and give more powers to banks to recover NPAs. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has brought in discipline because of fear of losing the asset.
- Credit Risk Management: Proper creditworthiness of clients and their skill and experience should be carried out. While conducting these analyses, banks should also do a sensitivity analysis and should build safeguards against external factors.
- Accountability: the management and the senior level executives are behind the big loan

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Payment Banks, Small  
finance Banks and

approvals and they should have accountability of the default.

- Big Banks and merger: The Narasimham Committee Report (1991), and the discussion paper on Banking structure in India – The way forward (Reserve Bank of India, 2013), emphasized that India should have three or four large commercial banks, with domestic and international presence, along with foreign banks.
- Corporate Governance: Although, the government had set up Banks Board Bureau in April 2016 to attract talent, corporate governance hasn't improved to the desired level with certain issues persisting and need to be resolved urgently. Even in the matter of appointments, it only makes proposals to the appointments committee of the cabinet, which is not very different from the pre-existing position.

### The Logistics Ease across Different States (LEADS) report

#### News Excerpt

Ministry of commerce and industry (MoCA) has released the logistics ease across different states (LEADS) report 2021.

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#### About LEADS report

The LEADS report is aimed at gauging the logistics performance of states and Union Territories (UT) and identifying areas where they can improve logistics performance.

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) launched the Logistics Ease across Different States (LEADS) in 2018 with the main objective of ranking States and UTs on the efficiency of their logistics ecosystem.
- States are ranked based on quality and capacity of
  - Key infrastructure such as road, rail and warehousing, and
  - Operational ease of logistics including security of cargo, speed of terminal services and regulatory approvals.
- The report has three dimensions which collectively influence logistics ease- infrastructure, services, and operating and regulatory environment which are further categorized into 17 parameters.
- Since its inception in 2018, each year LEADS report has followed a progressive methodology to provide a granular insight on the logistics performance at State/UTs level. LEADS 2021 has gone 2-step ahead in analysis of domestic and EXIM logistics ecosystem of the state.

**STATE RANKINGS**

- 1] Gujarat
- 2] Haryana
- 3] Punjab
- 4] Tamil Nadu
- 5] Maharashtra
- 6] Uttar Pradesh
- 7] Odisha
- 8] Karnataka
- 9] Andhra Pradesh
- 10] Telangana

**PARAMETERS**

**Infrastructure:** Road, rail, multi-modal, warehousing

**Services:** Service provider capability, road freight rate reasonability, cargo delivery timeliness

**Regulation:** Facilitation, ease of obtaining approvals, regulatory services efficiency

**TOP IMPROVERS (IN RANK)**

	2021	2019
Uttar Pradesh	6	13
Uttarakhand	13	19
Jharkhand	12	17

**KEY SUGGESTIONS**

Frame state logistics policy, master plan

Setup robust institutional mechanism

Single-window clearance system for logistics

Effective grievance redressal, dispute resolution mechanism

#### Findings of the report –

- India's logistics costs account for 13-14 per cent of GDP, compared to 7-8 per cent in developed countries.
- The government was aiming to bring down logistics cost by 5 percent over next 5 years.

- Top performers: Gujarat has retained the top spot on the Centre's annual logistics rankings for states, with Haryana and Punjab taking the second and third spots, respectively.
- Delhi stands at the top rank among UTs.
- North-Eastern states and Himalayan region: Jammu and Kashmir is the top ranker followed by Sikkim and Meghalaya.

#### Why Need to reform the logistical sector in India?

- ✓ India's logistics sector is highly defragmented.
- ✓ India's logistical cost is one of the highest and is one of the least efficient sectors in the world. High logistics cost reduces the competitiveness of Indian goods both in domestic as well as export market.
- ✓ Waste caused by the poor logistics costs around 4.3% of our GDP.
- ✓ The Indian logistics sector provides livelihood to more than 22 million people and improving the sector will facilitate 10% decrease in indirect logistics cost leading to the growth of 5 to 8% in exports.
- ✓ India's logistical sector needs an urgent reform not only to improve India's trade competitiveness but also to create more jobs, improve India's performance in global rankings and pave the way for India to become a logistics hub.
- ✓ Also, this sector also needs a reform to create a robust global supply chain throughout India.
- ✓ India's ranking in World Bank's "Logistics Performance Index" in 2018 has dropped from 35<sup>th</sup> (2016) to 44<sup>th</sup> rank.

#### Reasons for the least efficient logistical sector in India

- Excessive reliance of freight transport on roads and poor road infrastructure
- Fragmented logistics sector with low technology and poor integration with the modern information technology
- Underutilization of waterways for transport
- Institutional and Regulatory delays- at toll booths, checkpoints and ports
- Lack of alignment and coordination between States and the Center along with an intricate tax regime
- Less efficient and underdeveloped train freight transport system.
- Uneven terrains and security issues sometimes becomes hurdle to reach the remotest areas. Etc.

#### Steps taken by the government to improve the logistics sector in India:

- ✚ Development of Multi-Modal logistics parks in India.
- ✚ Dedicated freight corridor (DFCs): - At present there are two DFCs which are partially developed and launched than others. They are-
  - Eastern dedicated freight corridor (EDFC), and Western dedicated freight corridor (WDFC)
- ✚ PM Gatishakti National Master Plan.
- ✚ The Logistics Sector has been granted Infrastructure status.

- ✚ GST and E-way bill.
- ✚ The Commerce ministry is considering to replace the Multi-Modal transportation of goods (MMTG) Act, 1993 with a National logistics efficiency and advancement predictability and safety (NLEAPS) Act.
- ✚ Draft National logistics policy, 2020- it is released by the Commerce Ministry and aims at reducing logistics cost from 14 Percent to less than 10 percent by 2022.
- ✚ Logistics division in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry: It was newly established to coordinate integrated development of the sector via policy changes, improvement in existing procedures, identification of bottlenecks and gaps, and introduction of technology-based interventions.
- ✚ Integrated logistics portal: To connect buyers, logistics service providers and relevant government agencies.

Way forward:

India has the ability to compete with China and other Asian countries in export competitiveness but in order to do this the government must ensure the interests of Indian trade is served in order to achieve its GDP growth aspirations as well as protect India's manufacturing brand which, as of today, may not match the global standards. To achieve the target of becoming a logistical hub in the world and to reduce the associated cost, following steps needs to be taken in letter and spirit: -

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Logistics performance Index, Sagarmala & Bharatmala project, PM Gati sakti. NLEAPS Act.

- Extensive development of national waterways and promotion of transport in accordance with the National waterways bill, 2015.
- Expedited rationalization of rail freight traffic and investment in freight corridors (DFCs is a good step forward).
- Harness the potential of emerging technologies like RFIDs, bring in investment, create human capital and remove bottlenecks.
- There is an urgent need to have an integrated logistics policy that can cater the problem of multiple government and authorities level problems.

**Service exports from India**

News excerpt

Ministry of commerce and industry (MoCI) recently said that India could scale up its services exports to \$1 trillion by 2030 nearly five times of what it exported last fiscal.

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Key Points

- For this to materialize, the world's seventh-largest services exporter needs to boost opportunities in high-growth segments beyond the dominant information technology and IT-enabled services (ITeS), and improve focus on promising areas like higher education, hospitality and medical tourism.
- To support the services sector, the government has been actively pursuing market access opportunities via free-trade agreements with key economies (including the UK, the EU, Australia and the UAE) and is working on a programme that could replace the Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) in its current form.
- Aim for the first goalpost of \$500 billion, probably by 2025 or 2026, and should be looking at \$1 trillion service exports by 2030.

Current status of the service sector in India

➤ Services is a key driver of India's economic growth, employing nearly 26 million people

**DELHI: VIJAY NAGAR** 9717380832 & **OLDRAJENDER NAGAR** 9811293743 | **JAIPUR:** 8290800441  
**BENGALURU: KORMANGALA** 7619166663 & **CHANDRA LAYOUT** 7619136662 | **BHOPAL:** 7509975361  
**PATNA:** 7463950774 | **INDORE:** 7314977441 | **RANCHI:** 9939982007 | **www.ksgindia.com**

and contributing approximately 40% to India’s total exports.

- Services trade surplus was \$89 billion in FY21 and it has been the largest FDI recipient between 2000 and 2021, receiving 53% of FDI inflows.
- Services account for more than half of India’s GDP
- According the Economic survey 2020-2021–
  - Services sector now accounts for over 54% of the economy and almost four-fifth of total FDI inflows.
  - Services sector accounts for more than 50% of GSVA in 15 out of the 33 states and UTs.
  - India improved its position from 12<sup>th</sup> in 2018 to 9<sup>th</sup> in the list of the World’s largest FDI recipients according to the latest World Investment Report 2020 by UNCTAD.
  - Trade in Services: Export – India remained among the top ten trading countries in commercial services in 2019 accounting for 3.5% of world services exports.
  - Trade in Services: Import – Services imports exhibited sharper decline of 13.95% in Q1 of 2020-21 in comparison with services exports.
  - Net Exports- Sharper decline in services imports over exports led to an increase in net services receipts by 2.1% in Q1 of 2020-21 over the previous years.

India’s trade in services (2014-18)

Year	Exports	Imports	Trade balance
2014	157.20	128.36	28.83
2015	156.28	123.57	32.71
2016	161.82	133.53	28.29
2017	185.29	154.60	30.70
2018	205.11	176.58	28.52

Way Forward

- ✓ India has the potential to become the top service provider. This sector is boosting India’s transition from an ‘assembly economy’ to a ‘knowledge-based economy’. Service exports is doing well and this is the sunrise sector, as well as employment generating sector.
- ✓ The Ministry of commerce and industry is planning to set up two separate divisions that will focus purely on services exports. The ministry is also considering to dole out incentives on the lines of Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) scheme. India has been keen on greater movement of skilled professionals across national borders so that Indian professionals such as lawyers and accountants would get greater opportunities. Opening up the domestic legal services sector will benefit Indian lawyers as they would get huge opportunities in Europe, Australia and the US. The government has identified the 12 champion service sectors that has to be give focused attention for promoting their development, and realizing their potential. This need to be implemented in letter and spirit in order to become a 5trillion economy and achieve the targets of “Atmanibhar Bharat”.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 World investment report, SEIS, Schemes to promote export from India, CSSS

Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011

News Excerpt

Centre amends the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011 for enhanced protection of Consumer Rights. The amendments to come into effect from 1st April, 2022.

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Objective of the amendment

- To safeguard interest of consumers, the Department of Consumer Affairs under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has omitted the Rule 5 of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities), Rules 2011 defining the Schedule II prescribing the pack sizes of various types of commodities.
- A new provision has been introduced to indicate the unit sale price on pre packed commodities, which will allow easier comparison of the prices of the commodities at the time of purchase.
- Declaration reg. Mfd. Date: For reducing compliance burden and removing the ambiguity of declaration of date on pre packed commodities for consumers, the declaration has now been required to the month and year in which the commodity is manufactured for the pre packed commodities.
- MRP declaration simplified: The provisions of declarations of MRP have been simplified by removing illustration and providing for making the mandatory declaration of MRP in Indian currency inclusive of all taxes. This has allowed the manufacturer/packer/importer to declare the MRP on the pre packed commodities in a simplified manner.
- Declaration regarding commodities sold (in N or U): Now the quantities can be expressed in terms of the number or unit or pair or set or such other word which represents the quantity in the package. This will remove the ambiguity of declaration of quantity sold by number in pre packed commodities. (Earlier such declarations could be denoted as ‘N’ or ‘U’ only.)

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 One Nation One Standard,  
 and these consumer  
 protection laws

Other consumer protection laws in India:

- Consumer Protection Act, 2019
- Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules, 2020
- Information Technology Act, 2000. Etc.

Retail direct scheme by RBI

News Excerpt

Government has launched two customer-centric initiatives of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) with a view to provide opportunities to retail investors to participate in the government securities market and contribute towards nation-building.

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About the scheme launched

- Retail Direct Scheme- Retail Direct Scheme is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in Government Securities by individual investors. Under this scheme individual retail investors can open a Gilt Securities Account – Retail Direct Gilt (RDG) account with RBI. Using this account, retail investors can buy and sell government securities.

**What are the various kinds of Government securities that one can invest in through the Retail Direct platform?**

- ❖ Government of India Treasury Bills (T-Bills)
- ❖ Government of India dated securities (dated G-Sec)
- ❖ State Development Loans (SDLs)
- ❖ Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGB)

- This would provide access to small investors to earn assured returns by investing in securities and it will also help the government to garner funds for nation-building.

It offers retail investors a new avenue for directly investing in the securities issued by the Centre and the State governments.

Purpose of implementing Retail Direct Scheme

- ✓ The scheme would help broaden the investor base and provide retail investors with enhanced access to the government securities market — both primary and secondary.
- ✓ It said the scheme was a major structural reform placing India among select few countries which have similar facilities”. This scheme, among others, would facilitate smooth completion of the Government borrowing programme in 2021-22.

Way Forward

- While the intentions of RBI are noble, awareness about the G-sec market is low. From a credit quality perspective, retail direct is comparable to gilt funds, or target maturity funds with a portfolio of gilts and state development loans. The asset under maturity of gilt funds is much on the lower side anyway. So, depending on how fast the awareness spreads, this scheme will take off or just be there as a facility.
- Mutual fund managers also are not very concerned about retail investors getting direct access to G-securities. This scheme may not impact debt mutual funds. We have an example of the equity market where retail participation is as good as mutual funds. But it's a good thing for the debt market for two reasons: it will expand the debt market, and will see higher participation of retail investors which would imply better and wider understanding of the market which is still lacking. For people seeking a long term maturity profile, the debt market can be a good alternative for bank deposits.

For the retail investor, Government securities **offer an option for long term investment**. The **advantages for retail investors are as following:**

- ❖ **G-sec are risk free:** G-sec in the domestic market context are risk free and carry no credit risk.
- ❖ **G-sec offer decent yields for longer duration.** G-sec yield curve extends up to 40 years. With Government issuing securities at different points on the yield curve, G-sec offer an attractive option for savers who need low risk investment options for longer durations.
- ❖ **G-sec offer prospect of capital gains:** As there is an inverse relationship between bond price and interest rate, there is a prospect of capital gains when the interest rates moderate. One, however, must be conscious of market risks that could result in losses in case the interest rate cycle reverses.
- ❖ **G-sec have reasonable liquidity:** G-sec have reasonable liquidity and can be transacted on NDS-OM. With the introduction of Retail Direct Portal, retail investors can now participate easily in primary and secondary market.
- ❖ **G-sec help to diversify portfolio:** Investments in government securities would help in portfolio diversification and consequently reduce risk for retail investors.
- ❖ **Zero charges under Retail Direct Scheme:** Retail Direct Account is completely free of charge and does not involve any intermediary. It would reduce overall transaction charges for individual investors in terms of the charges which they are otherwise required to pay for investing through aggregators or taking indirect exposure through mutual funds.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
T-bills, State Development loans, Sovereign Gold Bonds, Gilt account

## The Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS)

### News Excerpt

Government has launched the RB-IOS, aimed at further improving the grievance redress mechanism for resolving customer complaints against entities regulated by the Central bank.

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### Pre-Connect

The Scheme integrates the existing three Ombudsman schemes (and are repealed) of RBI namely,

- The Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006;
- The Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies, 2018; and
- The Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions, 2019.
- In addition to integrating the three existing schemes, the Scheme also includes under its ambit Non-Scheduled Primary Co-operative Banks with a deposit size of 50 crore and above.

### Analytica:-

- Prior to the introduction of this scheme, the RBI had these three different ombudsman schemes to aid dispute resolution with respect to banks, NBFCs, and non-bank pre-paid payment issuers (PPIs). They were operated by the RBI through 22 ombudsman offices.
- This will make dispute resolution simpler, efficient and responsive.
- The Scheme adopts ‘One Nation One Ombudsman’ approach by making the RBI Ombudsman mechanism jurisdiction neutral.
- This, was intended to make the process of redress of grievances easier by enabling customers to register their complaints under the integrated scheme, with one centralized reference point.
- The RBI would appoint the Ombudsman and a Deputy Ombudsman for three years.
- Complaints may be made either physically to the Centralized Receipt and Processing Centre or the RBI’s offices; or electronically through the regulator’s complaint management system.
- History: - The Banking ombudsman scheme was launched in 1995, but the NBFC and the digital payments ombudsman were launched as recently as in 2018 and 2019 respectively, as NBFCs became serious retail lenders, and digital payments became mainstream.

### The Scheme (RB-IOS) covers the following regulated entities:

- ❖ All Commercial Banks, **Regional Rural Banks**, Scheduled Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks and Non-Scheduled Primary (Urban) **Co-operative Banks** with deposits size of Rupees 50 crore and above as on the date of the audited balance sheet of the previous financial year;
- ❖ All **Non-Banking Financial Companies** (excluding Housing Finance Companies) which (a) are authorized to accept deposits; or (b) have customer interface, with an assets size of Rupees 100 crore and above as on the date of the audited balance sheet of the previous financial year;
- ❖ All System Participants as defined under the Scheme.

RBI data shows that with increased awareness, digital penetration and financial inclusion, there was a steep rise in the number of complaints against various regulated entities. Complaints rose from 1.64 lakh in 2017-18 to 3.30 lakh complaints in 2019-20.

The ‘One Nation–One Ombudsman’ approach of the RBI will enable the customers to file

their complaint from anywhere at any time through portal or email, or through physical mode at one point of receipt, without the need to identify any specific ombudsman or scheme.

The salient features of the Scheme can be summarized as:

- ✓ It will no longer be necessary for a complainant to identify under which scheme he/she should file complaint with the Ombudsman.
- ✓ The Scheme defines deficiency in service as the ground for filing a complaint, with a specified list of exclusions. Therefore, the complaints would no longer be rejected simply on account of not covered under the grounds listed in the scheme.
- ✓ The Scheme has done away with the jurisdiction of each ombudsman office.
- ✓ A Centralised Receipt and Processing Centre has been set up at RBI, Chandigarh for receipt and initial processing of physical and email complaints in any language.
- ✓ The responsibility of representing the Regulated Entity and furnishing information in respect of complaints filed by customers against the Regulated Entity would be that of the Principal Nodal Officer in the rank of a General Manager in a Public Sector Bank or equivalent.
- ✓ The Regulated Entity will not have the right to appeal in cases where an Award is issued by the ombudsman against it for not furnishing satisfactory and timely information/documents.
- ✓ The complaints that are not covered under the ombudsman scheme will continue to be attended by the Customer Education and Protection Cells (CEPCs) which are located in the 30 regional offices of RBI.

Conclusion

There was a need to merge the three schemes as they had evolved over different periods of time, and had specified grounds of complaints which acted as a limiting factor. The separate schemes led to uneven redress across the customers of different entities, and had different compensation structures.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Banking ombudsman scheme, 2006 and others and issues involved

After an intensive review of the internal grievance redress of banks and other regulated entities, it was felt at the RBI that the three schemes should be merged into one. The thinking was to simplify the scheme by covering all complaints involving deficiency in service, and centralize the receipt and initial processing of complaints to enhance process efficiency. Now, the need is to proper management and implementation of the scheme.

Widening current account deficit (CAD) of India

News Excerpt

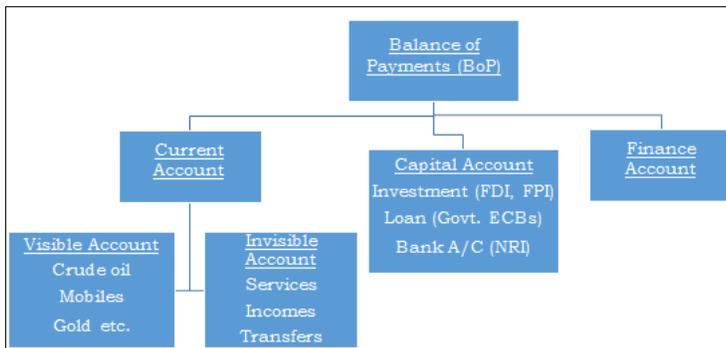
India's widening current account deficit (CAD), driven by the massive spike in commodity prices led by crude oil, is set to put pressure on the fragile recovery, as reported by brokerage report (Britishbrokerage Barclays) that has revised upwards its CAD forecast to \$45 billion or 1.4% of GDP by March.

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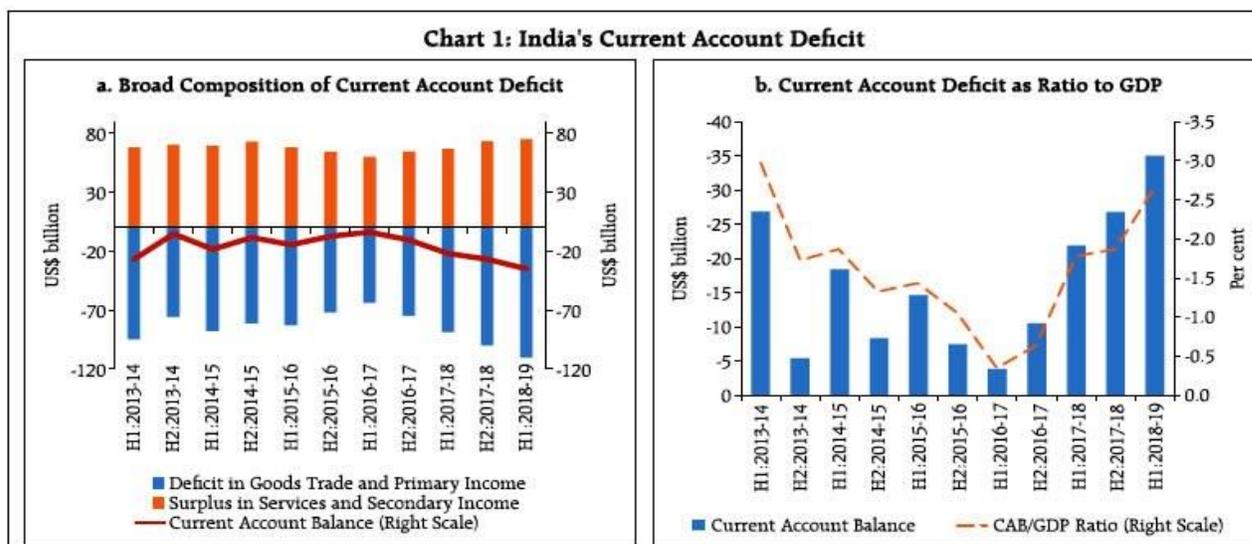
Pre-Connect

- Current Account Deficit (CAD) -The current account deficit is a measurement of a country's trade where the value of the goods and services it imports exceeds the value of the products it exports. It is one of the components of a country's balance of payments (BOP), other is the capital account.

- A current account deficit isn't always a bad thing. A country may have a deficit because it is importing large quantities of the raw materials it needs to produce goods and services it will export in the future. Its long-term strategy is to create a current account surplus, which ultimately makes it an attractive investment opportunity for foreigners.
- The deficit may be problematic, though, if a country allows continued overspending on imports when it could be spending money on domestic production.
- At the most basic level, a deficit means that more cash is going out than is coming in. And that money has to be made up from some other source, whether it is higher taxes or more debt.



Trend of CAD in India



Key Definitions

- ✓ Balance of Payments (BoP)
  - The BoP is a statistical statement that comprises transactions between residents and non-residents during a period. It consists of the goods and services account, the primary income account, the secondary income account, the capital account, and the financial account. The different accounts within the BoP are distinguished according to the nature of the economic values provided and received, under the double-entry system of accounting in the BoP.
- ✓ Current Account
  - The current account includes flows of goods, services, primary income, and secondary income between residents and non-residents and thus constitutes an important segment of BoP. While the “goods and services account” generally forms a major part of

the current account, the primary income account reflects amounts payable and receivable in return for providing temporary use of labour, financial resources, or non-produced non-financial assets (natural resources). The secondary income account shows redistribution of income between resident and non-residents, i.e., when resources for current purposes are provided without economic value being exchanged in return (transfers). The net effect of all the transactions under the above accounts is known as the “current account balance”.

- ✓ Capital Account
  - The capital account comprises credit and debit transactions under non-produced non-financial assets and capital transfers between residents and non-residents. Thus, acquisitions and disposals of non-produced non-financial assets, such as land sold to embassies and sales of leases and licences, as well as transfers which are capital in nature, are recorded under this account.
- ✓ Financial Account
  - The financial account reflects net acquisition and disposal of financial assets and liabilities during a period. The transactions under financial account appear both in the BoP and in the integrated IIP statement owing to their effect on the stock of assets and liabilities. The sum total of net transactions under the current and capital account represents net lending (surplus) or net borrowing (deficit) by the economy from the rest of the world, which is reflected in the financial account as net outflow or inflow of capital.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Twin deficit problem in India, Current and Trade account difference, Components of BoP in details

### India, the world’s largest recipient of remittances

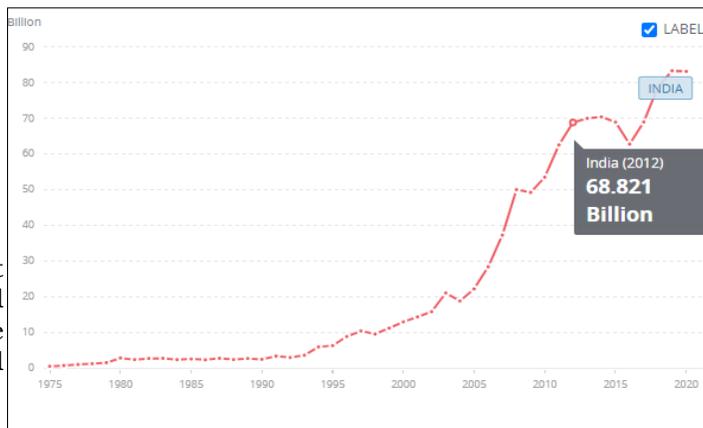
#### News Excerpt

India has received \$87 billion in 2021 and has become the largest recipient of remittances with the United States being the biggest source, accounting for over 20 per cent of these funds, according to the World Bank.

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#### More about the news

- India is followed by China, Mexico, the Philippines, and Egypt, as per the Washington-based global lender.
- In India, remittances are projected to grow three per cent in 2022 to USD 89.6 billion, reflecting a drop in overall migrant stock, as a large proportion of returnees from the Arab countries await return.



#### Analytica:-

- Remittances are an important source of family and national income and also are one of the largest sources of external financing.
- Remittances are funds transferred from migrants to their home country. They are the private savings of workers and families that are spent in the home country for food, clothing and other expenditures, and which

drive the home economy.

- For many developing nations, remittances from citizens working abroad provide an important source of much-needed funds.

Reasons for consistent flow remittances:-

- ✓ Better economic conditions in the host countries
- ✓ Shift from physical and cumbersome process to digital processes
- ✓ Change in oil prices and global exchange rate

Role of remittances in economic development:-

Remittances are directly received by households, who are often the true beneficiaries. It is therefore not surprising that several economists argue for the positive impact of remittances. An economist has described remittances as ‘dollars wrapped with care’. Remittances plays a significant role in improving the economic development of an economy. This can be summarized as:-

- Remittances can be used for basic needs such as food, sanitation, clothing, and energy for cooking. These economic activities have a direct effect on poverty reduction in low-income households living below or near the poverty line.
- When used to fund small businesses, education, or health, they can raise the level of physical and human capital – factors that contribute to long-run growth.
- Growth promoted by remittances can generate additional employment in recipient countries if the growth is inclusive.
- Remittances from non-resident Indians (NRIs) have been India’s bulwark in financing its current account deficit (CAD), even in times of a crisis.
- A potentially negative impact of remittances on economic activity cannot be overlooked. For example, remittance flows may reduce work effort or induce voluntary unemployment. This would have a negative impact on GDP.
- Several studies have investigated the aggregate effect of remittances on GDP in individual countries or group of countries. The findings have been mixed, ranging from no effect to a small positive effect.

**Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS)**

News Excerpt

Union Minister for Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), launched the Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS) for service Sector.

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About SCLCSS

- The scheme will help in meeting the technology related requirements of enterprises in the services sector.
- It has also a provision of 25% capital subsidy for procurement of Plant & Machinery and service equipment through institutional credit to the SC-ST MSEs without any sector specific restrictions on technology up gradation.

Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme for Technology Up gradation

Objective of the Scheme: -

- To facilitate technology up-gradation in MSEs by providing an upfront capital subsidy of 15 per cent (on institutional finance of uptoRs 1 crore availed by them) for induction of well-established and improved technology in the specified 51 sub-sectors/products approved.

- In other words the major objective is to upgrade their plant & machinery with state-of-the-art technology, with or without expansion and also for new MSEs which have set up their facilities with appropriate eligible and proven technology duly approved under scheme guidelines.
- The Scheme is a demand driven one without any upper limit on overall annual spending on the subsidy disbursal.

Various other measures taken by the Ministry of MSMEs

- ✓ Revision of **MSME definition** to extend maximum benefits to the sector. This have brought in a large number of micro and small units under the sector.

New definition: -

Revised MSME Classification			
Composite Criteria : Investment And Annual Turnover			
Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Manufacturing & Services	Investment < Rs. 1 cr. and Turnover < Rs.5 cr.	Investment < Rs. 10 cr. and Turnover < Rs.50 cr.	Investment < Rs. 20 cr. and Turnover < Rs.100 cr.

- ✓ Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro & Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)- The scheme aims at motivating first generation entrepreneurs towards self-employment by providing credit guarantee funding for third-party guarantee-free / collateral free loans.
- ✓ Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Component (CLCS & TU Scheme)- The scheme aims at facilitating technology upgradation in MSEs with state-of-the-art technology, with or without expansion and also for new MSEs which have set up their facilities by providing an upfront capital subsidy of 15 per cent (on institutional finance of up to INR 1 crore availed by them).
- ✓ Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) - To organize the traditional industries and artisans into clusters in order to make them competitive and provide support for their long- term sustainability.
- ✓ A Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industries and Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE) - To set up a network of technology centres and incubation centres to accelerate entrepreneurship and promote innovation to further strengthen the competitiveness of MSME sector.
- ✓ ZED Certification Scheme- The objective of the scheme is to enable MSMEs for manufacturing of quality products by inculcating Zero Defect & Zero Effect practices in manufacturing processes, ensure continuous improvement thereby supporting the Make in India initiative.
- ✓ Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for MSMEs.
- ✓ Numerous measures under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan- for example the measures include Rs 20,000 crore subordinate debt for MSMEs and Rs 50,000 crore equity infusion through MSME funds of funds. ETC.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Mudra yojana, Awareness on IPR scheme, Digital MSME, GramodyogVikasyojana

### Way Forward

MSME sector is the backbone of Indian Industry. Share of MSME Gross Value Added (GVA) in All India Gross Domestic Product at current prices (2011-12) for the year 2018-19 and 2019-20 were 30.5% and 30.0% respectively. It is the second largest employment generating sector after agriculture. It provides employment to around 120 million persons in India. So, the sustainability of the sector is very important for the successful running of the whole economy.

Considering the spectrum of challenges, it is imperative that the government bolsters its reforms and introduces some game changing measures for the sector.

- In terms of access to capital, pending or delayed payments to MSMEs should be accelerated. Close monitoring of payments to MSMEs through TReDS should be done at a central level.
- The sector will benefit if a considerate view is taken and changes happen, making credit and capital easily accessible to MSMEs. The lending ecosystem therefore needs to be eased and strengthened by leveraging digital technologies for a seamless lending process and for assessing credit risk of potential borrowers.
- Other policy changes that are should be discussed include:
  - Incentivizing digital adoption within the sector
  - Promoting digital literacy
  - Addressing skilling challenges
  - Reducing GST
  - Easing various licensing and compliance regulations
  - Making interventions that would guide the sector to wider markets, through e-commerce.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

India Joins G20's Troika

News Excerpt

India on December 1, 2021, joined the G20 'Troika'. Troika refers to the top grouping within the G20 that consists of the current, previous and the incoming presidencies — Indonesia, Italy and India. India will assume the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia.

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Pre-Connect

- The G20 is a strategic multilateral platform connecting the world's major developed and emerging economies. The G20 Summit is formally known as the "Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy".
- G20 was founded in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis as a forum for the finance ministers and central bank governors of 19 countries and the European Union.
- Its members represent more than 80 percent of world GDP, 75 percent of international trade and 60 percent of the world population.
- In 2008, the inaugural G20 Summit was held in Washington, D.C. in response to the global financial crisis. Since the Pittsburgh summit 2009, the summit meetings were held semi-annually until 2010 and annually from 2011 onwards.
- The G20 has no permanent Secretariat and the responsibility to set the Summit agenda rely on the host country. The Presidency rotates annually between 5 groups each having no more than 4 member countries.
- G20 discusses broad range of issues of global importance but global financial issues generally dominate the agenda.
- India will assume the G20 Presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia, and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023.

Highlights of the India's inclusion in G20 Troika

- The G20 is unique. Here, developing countries can display their political, economic and intellectual leadership on par with the most powerful countries.
- India's position has risen politically and economically in International realm. India can lead G20 for changes in reconfiguration of global financial regulations, design of a new framework for trade in services, changes in global supply chain, credit ratings, policies of central banks etc.
- India can lead G20 for strict compliance of policies related to climate change. India can fill the leadership vacuum in the field of climate change where developed countries are turning their back.
- Indonesia and India can work together to bring Asia led growth on the centre stage. It can work together to bring rapid and inclusive recovery of the global economy and enhancing global cooperation.
- India can work for availability of lending from multilateral banks, reform in International financial institutions and changes in Trade facilitation agreement.

India has obtained the opportunity to lead G20 for the first time. It needs to cooperate with G20 Troika members to form an effective agenda for its presidency. It should form a holistic agenda covering issues of importance like revival of COVID-19 wrecked economy, supply chain reforms, climate change, safety and security etc.

## India-Sri Lanka Cooperation

### News Excerpt

India has finalized an economic cooperation package to help Sri Lanka in reviving its COVID-19 hit economy. It is a four-pronged cooperation package comprising urgent food and health security, energy security, currency swap etc.

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### Pre-Connect

- India and Sri Lanka have a legacy of intellectual, cultural, religious and linguistic interaction and the relationship between two countries is more than 2500 years old.
- India has traditionally been among Sri Lanka’s largest trade partners and Sri Lanka remains among the largest trade partners of India in the SAARC.
- Sri Lanka enjoys a strategic location in the Indian Ocean increasing its geopolitical relevance to other countries.
- The two sides have discussed “four pillars” for short- and medium-term cooperation and these are:
  - Extension of a line of credit to cover the import of food, medicines and other essential items.
  - An energy security package including a line of credit to cover the import of fuel from India, and early modernization of the Trincomalee Tank Farm.
  - A currency swap agreement to help Sri Lanka address its balance of payment issues.
  - Facilitation of Indian investments in different sectors that would contribute to growth and expand employment.
- India and Sri Lanka have agreed to open direct lines of communication and to be in direct and regular contact with each other to coordinate on this initiative.

### Analytica

- The cooperation package has been finalized to revive the strains in the relationship caused due to delay over developing oil infrastructure in Trincomalee.
- Sri Lanka has scrapped a 2019 deal with India and Japan to operate the East Container Terminal at the Colombo port. The perception was that the Sri Lankan government favoured the Chinese projects and neglected the Indian ones.
- Sri Lanka is one of India’s major development partners with Indian grants alone amounting to around USD 570 million and the overall commitment is to the tune of more than USD 3.5 billion.
- India-Sri Lanka have historic people to people ties, similarity in culture, both have followers of Buddhism, common membership of multilateral forums and have supported each other at international level.

### Conclusion

India- Sri Lanka relation has spanned over centuries. It has its ups and downs but have survived and flourished over period of time. Both need to cooperate in field of trade and commerce, security, culture, foreign relations etc. for the betterment of its people. India should work in line of Neighborhood First policy and focus on maintaining its influence over Sri Lanka and avoid it swaying away to China.

## India ASEAN Summit

### News Excerpt

Indian Prime Minister participated in the 18th India-ASEAN Summit at the invitation of Brunei, the current Chair of ASEAN. The Summit was held virtually and saw participation from the Leaders of ASEAN Member States.

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### Pre-Connect

- India-ASEAN partnership has reached a milestone of 30 years of cooperation and leaders announced the Year 2022 as India-ASEAN Friendship Year.

- India underlined the centrality of ASEAN in India's Act East Policy, her vision for the wider Indo-Pacific partnership and adoption of the India-ASEAN Joint Statement on cooperation for peace, stability and prosperity in the region.



- ASEAN is a regional multilateral organization with focus on economic, social, cultural, security, educational etc. cooperation among its members and other countries.

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration).

- ASEAN is considered one of the most influential groupings in the region. India and several other countries including the US, China, Japan and Australia are its dialogue partners.
- India-ASEAN also has a free trade agreement (FTA) in place from 2010 for easy facilitation of trade of goods, services etc. and increased integration of the economies.

### Analytica

- India-ASEAN dialogue smoothens the cooperation between India and East Asia on many fronts.
- It focuses on cooperation for tackling global economic slowdown caused by COVID-19 and reforms in global healthcare system.
- Summit focused on importance of diversification and resilience of supply chains and the need to revamp the India-ASEAN FTA.
- Discussion covered issue of common concern like South China Sea, Terrorism etc. and importance of rule-based order with strict adherence to UNCLOS.
- It helps in maintaining a democratic, peaceful Indo pacific region and facing the dominance of China in Indo-Pacific region.

## India West Asia

### News Excerpt

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Palestinian counterpart Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh on the sidelines of the COP26 Summit in Glasgow. The high-level meeting focused on enhancing cooperation and strengthening bilateral relations between India and Palestine. This meeting came after a gap of more than 3 years when Prime Minister visited Ramallah, Palestine in February 2018.

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### Pre-Connect

- India has been supporter of Palestinian cause for a very long time and has exhibited its support on many multilateral forums.
- India was among the earliest countries to recognize the state of Palestine in 1988.
- India has supported Palestine in many ways. It provided budgetary support, educational support like building library, extending support under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) etc.
- India has transposed its policy from hyphenating ties with Israel and Palestine to much more evolved and pragmatic policy of de-hyphenation of its ties with Israel and Palestine.
- This new independent policy of relationship has based her course of action on its merit and demerits without linking it with other country.
- India’s support for Palestine is also necessary to maintain ties with other Arab countries for their essential natural resource-Petroleum.
- India is an energy deficit nation with more than 70% of its petroleum imports from West Asian countries, and its dependence will increase with growth of Indian Economy.
- India’s good relation with West Asia is necessary for its 11 million Diaspora working in Arab countries.
- India is the largest recipient of foreign remittances from West Asia.

### Highlights

- India has an important role to play in Middle East as it has good relations with all major countries in West Asia. India’s position has improved because of its enhanced diplomatic reach and growth of its economy.
- Palestine’s call for enhanced cooperation is a subtle message for support on multilateral platforms.
- Palestine has appreciated the India’s financial and technical support but also requested for its parallel political support.
- India needs to maintain a balance between its notable ties with Palestine and its enhancing relation with Israel.
- India can take advantage of growing cooperation between Israel and Arab countries. The signing of Abraham accords between Israel and UAE led Arab countries has opened the doors for India to steer the relations between Arab countries and Israel.
- India can partner with the USA to improve relations in West Asia, it will help in ensuring its energy requirements and also improving ties with Israel in fields of Defense, Agriculture, Research and technology etc.

### Conclusion

India’s pragmatic policy outreach has put India in advantageous position with respect to Arab countries and Israel, with changing stance of West Asia, it is now easier and beneficial for India to cooperate on many fronts. India now has the opportunity to demonstrate itself as a bridge for West Asia.

## India-France Defence Partnership

### News Excerpt

Indian National Security Advisor (NSA) AjitDoval met French President’s diplomatic advisor Emmanuel Bonne in Paris for the annual India-France strategic dialogue. India and France agreed to increase cooperation in fields of defence and security by enhancing intelligence and information sharing, bolstering mutual capabilities, expanding military drills and pursuing new initiatives in maritime, space and cyber domain.

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### Key Points

- AjitDoval and Emmanuel Bonne underlined the importance of Indo-Pacific region and need of cooperation in the region. They discussed various issue of regional and international importance.
- France restated its commitment to India’s vision of “Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)” and defence industrialisation, joint research and technology development in India across a wide range of advanced capabilities.
- France underlined its position in Indo-Pacific region as a “resident power”. Resident power is the one who does not possess territory in the region but is recognized as an important player in polity of the region.
- France also acknowledged partnership with India as a “major pillar” of its strategy for the Indo-Pacific region implying India has aprincipirole in this region.
- Both sides reaffirmed the vision articulated in the meeting on the margins of the G20 Summit in Rome that their strategic partnership has a vital role to play in advancing peace, stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Formation of trilateral security partnership AUKUS consisting of Australia, United Kingdom and the United States has also raised the desire of France to expand its cooperation with India.

### Defence ties with France

- France supported India on the issue of India’s 1998 nuclear test and opposed sanctions applied by US on India.
- India-France has a defence dialogue at the ministerial level.
- They have defence exercises like Varuna (Navy), Garuda (Air force), and Shakti (Army).
- India has purchased Dassault Rafale fighter jets and Panther choppers from France.
- France has supported India for reforms in United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

## Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan

### News Excerpt

The Third Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan was held in New Delhi. The security dialogue was chaired by National Security Adviser (NSA) AjitDoval. The dialogues focused on promotion of peace in the region and addressing security challenges. It called for “urgent humanitarian assistance” to the Afghan people.

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### Pre-Connect

- The NSA level dialogue saw representation from Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- The invitation was also extended to Pakistan and China but both had refused to participate in the dialogue.
- The dialogue was initiated by Iran in 2018 and first two meetings were held there.
- A joint statement titled the 'Delhi Declaration' called for "collective cooperation" against terrorism and drug trafficking in the region and "expressed concern over the deteriorating socio

economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

Analytica

- Delhi Declaration focused on combating terrorism in all its forms and formation of an inclusive, open government for people of Afghanistan. This hinted at a formation of regional front or coalition to apply pressure and incentivize Taliban.
- Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan has raised concerns for safety and security of India and its neighbouring areas.
- India’s attentiveness on Afghanistan issue is to secure a position for itself and have a say in the future of Afghanistan.
- India has not recognized the Taliban administration in Afghanistan and has not invited it for the dialogue, India believes in Afghan led Afghan owned peace process.
- India has been accepted as an important force for peace in Afghanistan as depicted by presence of Central Asian countries, Russia and Iran.
- India is playing an active role to pause the efforts of Pakistan and China to allure Afghanistan over its side.

Conclusion

India led the regional dialogue for a unified international response to the situation in Afghanistan. This forceful takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban has raised security concerns in Southern Asia. India is playing an active role for safety and peace of the people of Afghanistan and minimizing safety concerns for itself. India needs to bring in confidence countries like China, Russia, and Iran etc. for a peaceful solution of Afghanistan’s situation.

The Sydney Dialogue

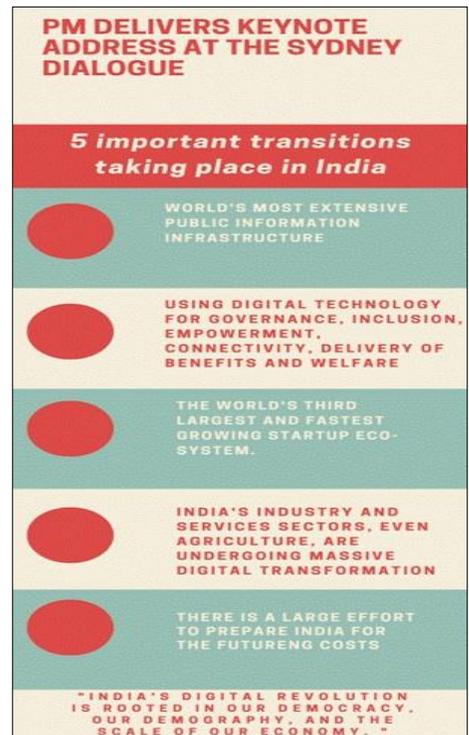
News Excerpt

Prime Minister NarendraModi delivered keynote address at The Sydney Dialogue on the theme "India's technology evolution and revolution". The Sydney Dialogue is an initiative of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. It is a forum on critical, emerging cyber technologies regarding its uses, opportunities, benefits and threat emerging out of it.

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Key Points of The Address:

- The Prime Minister described digital change as the change in an era and its impact on everything like polity, society and economy. It has raised questions on governance, ethics, law, rights etc.
- Digital change has assured new era of opportunities, progress and prosperity but also raised new risks and new conflicts across diverse threats from sea bed to cyber to space.
- The PM said “The biggest strength of democracy is openness. At the same time, we should not allow a few vested interests to misuse this openness”.
- India is ready to work with partners for shared prosperity and security. India's digital revolution is rooted in its democracy, demography and scale of economy. It is powered by innovation of youth.
- Prime Minister NarendraModi listed 5 important transitions taking place in India.
  - The world's most extensive public information infrastructure being built in India. Over 1.3 billion Indians have a unique digital identity; six hundred thousand villages will soon be



**PM DELIVERS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE SYDNEY DIALOGUE**

**5 important transitions taking place in India**

- 1. WORLD'S MOST EXTENSIVE PUBLIC INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE
- 2. USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR GOVERNANCE, INCLUSION, EMPOWERMENT, CONNECTIVITY, DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND WELFARE
- 3. THE WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST AND FASTEST GROWING STARTUP ECO-SYSTEM.
- 4. INDIA'S INDUSTRY AND SERVICES SECTORS, EVEN AGRICULTURE, ARE UNDERGOING MASSIVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
- 5. THERE IS A LARGE EFFORT TO PREPARE INDIA FOR THE FUTURE NG COSTS

**"INDIA'S DIGITAL REVOLUTION IS ROOTED IN OUR DEMOCRACY, OUR DEMOGRAPHY, AND THE SCALE OF OUR ECONOMY."**

- connected with broadband and the world's most efficient payment infrastructure, the UPI.
- Use of digital technology for governance, inclusion, empowerment, connectivity, delivery of benefits and welfare.
  - India has the world's third largest and fastest growing Startup Eco-system.
  - India's industry and services sectors, even agriculture, are undergoing massive digital transformation.
  - There is a large effort to prepare India for the future.

### Conclusion

Indian Prime Minister accepted the honour for inviting him to deliver the keynote address. It is seen as recognition of India's central role in the Indo Pacific region and in the emerging digital world.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Natural Farming

#### News Excerpt

NITI Aayog has organized a national workshop on Natural Farming and the Prime Minister emphasised on the need to adopt natural farming techniques to ensure better agricultural yield.

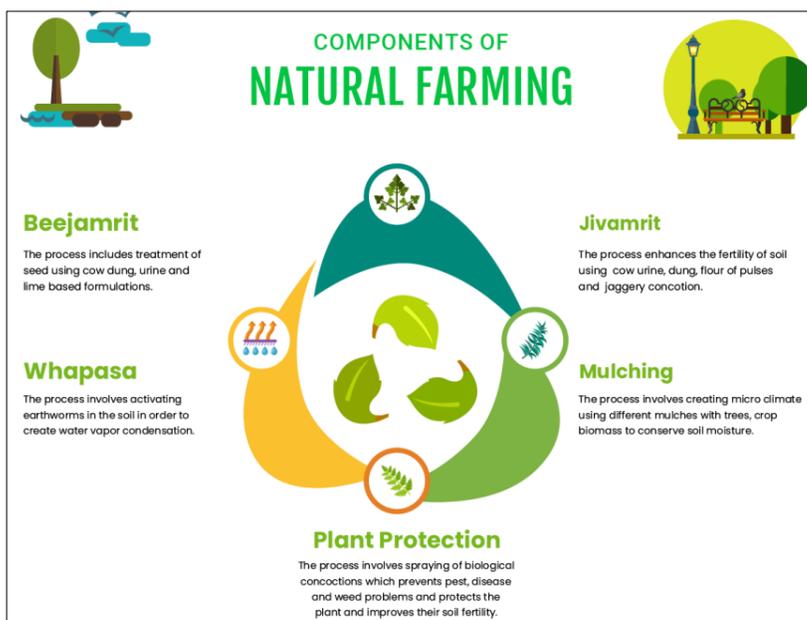
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#### Pre-Connect

- In India, Natural farming is stimulated as BharatiyaPrakritikKrishiPaddhatiProgramme (BPKP) under centrally sponsored scheme- ParamparagatKrishiVikasYojana (PKVY).
- BPKP aims at encouraging traditional indigenous practices— which are largely based on on-farm biomass recycling with an emphasis on mulching and use of cow dung and urine formulations.

#### About Natural Farming

- Natural Farming is a chemical-free traditional farming method.
- It encourages farmers to use low-cost homegrown inputs, eliminate the use of chemical fertilizers, and industrial pesticides.
- Natural farming advocates the cultivation of diverse species of crops depending on site-specific agro-climatic conditions.
- It often mimic as 'Zero Budget base Natural Farming' (ZBNF), ZBNF promotes the application of jivamrita —It is a fermented microbial culture that adds nutrients to the soil and acts as a catalytic agent to promote the activity of microorganisms and earthworms in the soil.
- Bijamrita, is used to treat seeds, while concoctions using neem leaves and pulp, tobacco and green chillis are prepared for insect and pest management.
- With the help of diversified/mixed cropping practices, farmers can harvest different types of produce at regular interval from small parcels of land and earn regular incomes.
- Natural Farming has shown evidence of increased resilience of farmlands along with protecting crops against extreme weather conditions by improving the fertility and strength of the soil.



#### Natural Farming in India

- ✓ There are several states practicing Natural Farming. Prominent among them are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Until now, under natural farming an area of 4.09 lakh ha area has been covered.

✓ Andhra Pradesh emerges as the top state to carry out natural farming.

### Benefits of Natural Farming

- **Improve Yield:** Natural Farming intended to increase yields by maximizing production factors like labour, soil, equipment and by avoiding the use of non-natural inputs like fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.
- **Increased Farmers' income:** By this farming technique, farmers can make agriculture as viable economic activity. Natural farming increase net incomes of farmers on account of cost reduction, reduced risks, similar yields, incomes from intercropping, increasing crop intensity along with availing fair price of the crop grown.
- **Minimize the cost of production:** Natural Farming aims to cut down production costs significantly by encouraging farmers to prepare essential nutrients and plant protection materials with locally available resources, thereby ending the need for external and commercial inputs like fertilizers and other chemicals.
- **Better Health:** Fertilizers and pesticides have been shown to have adverse impacts on farmers, consumers and overall environment. Farmers are exposed to contaminants while applying chemical inputs. By replacing such external inputs with locally made natural concoctions, inoculums, and decoctions, NF can reduce the incidence acute and chronic neurotoxicity, respiratory diseases and even cancer.
- **Employment Generation:** Natural Farming will lead to rural employment and increases the financial viability of small and marginal farmer. Natural Farming has the potential to generate employment opportunities across the agricultural value chain, from production, distribution, and retail of natural mixtures to market linkages for such produce. Further easy accessibility to natural inputs would bring in gender equality in the sector. Natural Farming can mitigate India's prolonged problems of both direct unemployment and disguised unemployment.
- **Environment conservations:** Excessive use of fertilizers in conventional farming has significantly contributed to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change. The number of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted per nutrient ton of fertilizer produced is 1.1 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>/nutrient ton in 2016. The climate change will have an impact on global food security and may affect the nutritional properties of some crops. Natural Farming aims to reduce risks associated with uncertainties of climate change by promoting the adoption of an agro-ecology framework.
- **Reduce Water Consumption:** Natural Farming is a pre-eminent practice that has proved to improve water retention capacity. It requires minimum water consumption and is known to reduce the dependency on resources like water and electricity. Thus, ultimately preserving groundwater reserve, improve water table, and reduce financial and labor stress on farmers.
- **Rejuvenate Soil Health:** Natural Farming is not simply farming without chemical fertilizers and pesticides, but rather it is organic farming with the added dimension of exploiting beneficial microorganisms to enhance soil quality and soil health. It employs the use of natural bio-inoculums instead of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This revives the soil microbiota and in turn, improves soil health.
- **Resilience:** Climate change poses critical risks for farmers, and endangers the soil, water, and other resources on which food production depends. Rising temperatures have already intensified droughts, heat waves, and cyclones, making it harder to grow crops. In this context, the crops grown under natural farming methods show great resilience to droughts and cyclones.

### Key Concerns related to Natural Farming

- ✚ Natural Farming may not be suitable for growing on a large scale. Moreover, in case of locust attack which is also cause by climate change, no use of pesticides may result into

significant losses in terms of crops yield.

- Initially, Natural farming is time-consuming. There could be a variance in terms of quality and quantity.
- India needed the Green Revolution to become self-sufficient and ensure food security. Expert warns against a wholesale move away from that model without sufficient proof that yields will not be affected. For Instance—Sikkim, has seen some decline in yields following a conversion to natural and organic farming.

Natural Farming and Sustainable Development Goals

- Natural farming practices- Socio-economic-environment- friendly farming will support in achieving the UN- Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
- Agro-ecological practices like Natural Farming being a cost-effective and ecologically compatible alternative would be an enabler in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. By reducing input costs, they can ensure better income and financial stability, which would in turn help alleviate poverty, bring in gender equality and ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns.
- Natural Farming would ensure food security and zero hunger through better yield, diversity in cropping and access to a suite of nutritional sources and income-generating crops throughout the year.
- The water-conserving and ecological-preservation aspects of Natural Farming contribute to the availability and sustainable management of water, reduction of CO2 emissions in various stages of agricultural value chain.
- The reduced use of chemical inputs in agriculture in turn would result in arrest of land degradation; reduce ocean acidification; and marine pollution from land-based activities. Natural Farming would ensure good health of farmers consumers and can contribute to the reduction of various diseases in the community.



Analytica

- Increasing food production and ensuring economic growth have often come at a huge cost to the environment. A constant decrease in forest cover and biodiversity over the years has been observed. Groundwater sources are also getting depleted unprecedentedly.
- High-input, resource-intensive farming techniques have caused deforestation, water scarcity and soil depletion.
- All these factors are contributing to the high levels of greenhouse gas emissions. A transformational process towards 'holistic' approaches such as agro-ecology, agro-forestry, climate-smart agriculture, and conservation agriculture is a necessity, and need of the hour.
- Practices such as agro-ecology, including Natural Farming, result in better yields without compromising the needs of the future generations. They are advocated by FAO and other international organizations.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Javik Bharat, Zero-tillage,  
 bio-stimulants, Fertigation,  
 PradhanMantriKrishiSinchaye  
 eYojana

Conclusion

Natural Farming offers a solution to various problems, such as food insecurity, farmers’ distress, and health problems arising due to pesticide and fertilizer residue in food and water, global warming, climate change and natural calamities. It also has the potential to generate employment, thereby stemming the migration of rural youth.

Net Zero Emission and India

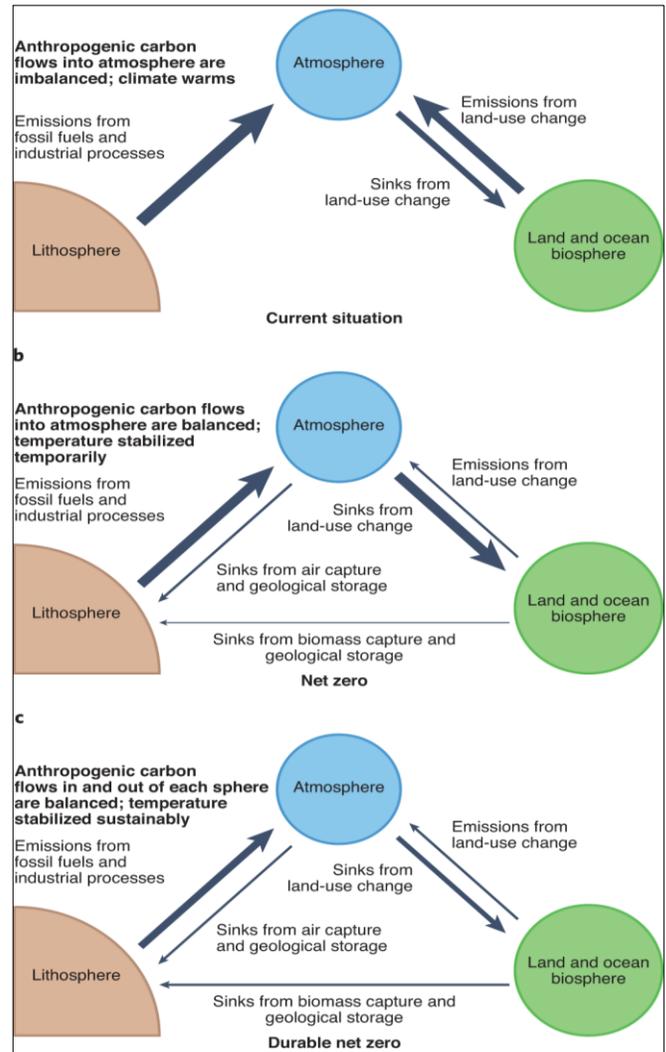
News Excerpt

Recently, In Conference of Parties-26 (CoP-26) India announced Net Zero Target to be achieved by 2070 under a five-point action plan.

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Background

- Net Zero is a state in which a country’s total emissions are offset by absorptions of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- The absorption of carbon from the atmosphere can be done through carbon sinks by increasing forest cover. Removal of dangerous gasses (GHGs) can be initiated from the atmosphere through advanced technologies, such as carbon capture and storage.
- As of now around 70 countries have promised to become Net Zero by the middle of the century, Net Zero Emissions are important for meeting the Paris Agreement goal of keeping global temperatures within 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial times.
- The US and Europe pledged to cut emissions to zero by 2050, while China promised to do it by 2060.



India’s Net Zero Emissions

- During the COP-26, it is the first time that India has taken any climate target in terms of its absolute emissions.
- In same event, as per the article 4 of Paris agreement, India's updated its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) first time since 2015.
- Key Targets:
  - India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500GW by 2030.
  - India will meet 50 %of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.
  - India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now to 2030.

- By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by 45% (from a previous target of 35%)
- Ways to achieve Net Zero Emissions for India:
  - According to CEEW's 'Implications of a Net-zero Target for India's Sectoral Energy Transitions and Climate Policy' study, India's total installed solar power capacity would need to increase to over 5,600 gigawatts to achieve net-zero by 2070.
  - The usage of coal, especially for power generation, would need to drop by 99% by 2060, for India to achieve net-zero by 2070.
  - The Consumption of crude oil, across sectors, would need to peak by 2050 and fall substantially by 90% between 2050 and 2070. Green hydrogen's contribution has to be raised by 19% of the total energy needs of the industrial sector.
  - As per the new NDC, 50% of electricity generation will come from renewable energy sources by 2030 and the target of achieving 450 giga watt non-fossil energy capacity has been increased to 500 giga watt by 2030.
  - India will have to undertake forestation of 30-40 million hectares, an area which is equal to the size of Rajasthan.
  - For achieving the net-zero target, India's cumulative undiscounted additional investment costs would be around \$81 trillion or about 35% of incremental GDP by 2050
  - While the pressure is building up on the developing economies in the G20, including India, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia and Turkey to commit to the net-zero target, many of them want developed countries to provide the funds needed for the developing world for the transition to cleaner fuels.
  - For the first time, India announced the target of achieving net zero emission by 2070 and that it will reduce carbon emissions by one billion tonnes by 2030. These were not a part of the 2015 NDCs.
- Need for adoption Net Zero Target:
  - According to the World Resources Institute, India's total GHG were about 3.3 billion tonnes in 2018.
  - It's projected to rise above 4 billion tonnes per year by 2030.
  - That would mean between now and 2030, India could be emitting anywhere between 35 to 40 billion tonnes at the current rates of growth.
  - Cutting 1 billion tonnes would, therefore, represent a reduction of 2.5 to 3 per cent in its absolute emissions in the business-as-usual scenario in the next nine years.
  - Moreover, to cope with the challenges of climate change and other linked issues, India should adopt net zero emission in letter and spirit.

### Analytica

- ✓ Now-a-days, Net Zero is much heightened concept to deal with the climate change. Net-zero as an idea itself is flawed. It means that countries will emit more; but they will mop up these emissions to say "net-net". The net-zero formulation does not assign any quantifiable emission reduction targets on any country. Net-zero plans relies on promises of future carbon removal – instead of reducing emissions now, Therefore, placing a risky bet.
- ✓ Net-zero is intrinsically inequitable. Antagonize the dictum of 'Common but differentiated responsibilities' Under Paris Agreement. Moreover, Net Zero is not enough on its own. That's because some irrevocable climate change has already happened, and even if the world stopped all of its carbon emissions even now, the effects of the emissions that have already

happened will continue to felts for decades.

- ✓ Global average temperatures have already warmed 1°C above preindustrial temperatures, and we’re already seeing evidence of more frequent and more extreme flooding, faster and more extreme coastal erosion; more frequent and more extreme droughts, water shortages and wildfires; and potentially permanent damage to habitats, plants, wildlife and cultural heritage.
- ✓ In all future climate scenarios, however fast we move in getting to Net Zero, we’ll experience a continued rise in sea level well into the next century, due to the long response time of sea levels to past emissions of greenhouse gases. Average sea level has already risen by around 16 centimetres since 1900 and could increase by over a metre by the end of this century.
- ✓ So even with the ambitious global and national actions we all want to see to reduce emissions, some further climate change is now inevitable. There is a need to be climate ready, focus should also be on adaptation so that global citizenry could became resilient to the future hazards and potential shocks.
- ✓ So Net Zero and adaptation are two sides of the same coin. We need both, and the best of all interventions are those that do both at the same time.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
**Carbon Capturing, Carbon sequestration, Carbon Sink, Soil Sequestration, GHGs, Green Climate Fund, Carbon Border Tax**

Way Forward

- India should focus on institutionalize the climate governance. This will require identifying linkages between development needs and low carbon opportunities.
- At National Level, there is a need of vital step for the policies for climate mitigation in the government budget, along with energy, roads, health and education. Specifically, growth targets should include timelines for switching to cleaner energy. With imaginative policies, robust institutions, and international finance, India will be able to cope with its Net Zero pledges.

**Outcomes of Conference of Parties-26**

News Excerpt

In November, CoP-26 to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) was held.

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Key Outcomes of CoP-26

- The discussions culminated in the signing of the “Glasgow Climate Pact,” a combination of pledges, commitments, and decisions made by countries that are parties to the UNFCCC and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
- The private sector, NGOs, and countries



outside the context of the formal UN framework also contributed a considerable range of initiatives and pledges, in a show of commitment from actors around the globe to reduce global warming.

<u>Glasgow Climate Pact</u>	<u>NDCs</u>	<u>Global Methane Pledge</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The Paris Agreement commits parties to limit the global average temperature. Within the Glasgow Climate Pact, countries agreed to focus on the 1.5°C target, recognising that limiting global warming to 1.5°C requires rapid, deep, and sustained reductions in global emissions, including reducing global CO2 emissions by 45% by 2030 (relative to the 2010 level).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Upon signing the Glasgow Climate Pact, parties were encouraged to submit revised or updated nationally determined contributions (NDCs) as soon as possible before COP27 (which will take place in Egypt in November 2022).</li><li>○ NDCs outline the efforts by each party to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.</li><li>○ The timeframe for updated NDCs is shorter than envisioned under the Paris Agreement, which contemplated a new/updated NDC every five years</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Outside the framework of the Glasgow Climate Pact, the US, the EU, and a number of other countries launched the Global Methane Pledge, committing to a 30% reduction in methane emissions by 2030 (from 2020 levels).</li><li>○ More than 100 countries have now signed the pledge, which aims to limit the particularly potent greenhouse gas.</li></ul>

<p><u>Adaptation and Mitigation Finance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Although, the developed countries had missed their 2020 target of providing US\$100 billion a year in climate finance to help developing countries.</li> <li>○ However, developed countries re-entered that commitment for the next five years. Their compliance will likely be closely monitored ahead of COP27, given how much publicity the issue received in Glasgow.</li> <li>○ Developed nations were also asked to “at least double” their support for climate change adaptation (as opposed to climate change mitigation) actions by 2025 relative to 2019 levels.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Article 6</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ COP26 finally led to agreement on the rules of the international carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, six years after that agreement was signed.</li> <li>○ The rules are likely to become ever more important as countries and companies aim to cut their emissions to net zero, and are likely to lead to increased interest in carbon offsetting schemes such as planting forests.</li> </ul> <p><u>Phase out domestic coal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A group of 46 countries, including the U.K., Canada, Poland and Vietnam made commitments to phase out domestic coal, while a further 29 countries including the U.K., Canada, Germany and Italy committed to end new direct international public support for unabated fossil fuels by the end of 2022 and redirect this investment to clean energy.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Deforestation Pledge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Around 100 national leaders pledged to halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by the end of the decade, underpinned by USD 19 billion in public and private funds to invest in protecting and restoring forests.</li> <li>○ In 2020, the world lost 258,000 sq km of forest — an area larger than the United Kingdom, according to WRI’s Global Forest Watch.</li> <li>○ The agreement vastly expands a commitment made by 40 countries as part of the 2014 New York Declaration of Forests, and promises more resources.</li> </ul>
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<p><u>Infrastructure for Resilient Island States:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On the sidelines of CoP-26, India launched this initiative that would focus on building capacity, having pilot projects, especially in small island developing states. Small Island Developing States or SIDS face the biggest threat from climate change.</li> <li>○ India intended to provide them timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring, coast-line monitoring etc. through satellite.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The One Sun One World One Grid project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ India and UK have launched a 'green grids' initiative—the One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) project—on the sidelines of the COP26 summit.</li> <li>○ The project aims to connect energy grids across borders to facilitate a faster transition to the use of renewable energy.</li> <li>○ The objectives of this initiative are to help and scale up the reforms to infrastructure and market structures needed to underpin the global energy transition.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Transparency</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In Glasgow, all countries agreed to submit information about their emissions and financial, technological and capacity-building support using a common and standardized set of formats and tables.</li> <li>○ This will make reporting more transparent, consistent and comparable.</li> </ul>
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Conclusion

COP26 resulted in the completion of the Paris Agreement rulebook and kept the Paris targets alive, giving a chance of limiting global warming. COP26 finally put the critical issue of loss and damage squarely on the main stage. The nature of multilateral negotiations such as those undertaken at COP26 means reaching a compromise that suited all stakeholders was always going to be challenging. Whilst many key topics were advanced in Glasgow, climate change will clearly continue to be a major topic for governments, companies, and the rest of the population.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, AICHI targets, Kunming Declaration, CBD, UNCCCD

Ganges River Dolphins

News Excerpt

The Jal Shakti Ministry released a guide for the safe rescue and release of stranded Ganges River Dolphins.

Pre-Connect

- The Ganges River Dolphin have been designated the National Aquatic Animal of India since 2010.

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- Ganges River Dolphins are listed as ‘Endangered’ under IUCN Red List Assessments.
- It is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act (1972).
- It is listed in ‘Appendix I’ of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

### About Ganga River Dolphins

- Ganges river dolphins prefer deep waters, in and around the confluence of rivers. Once present in tens of thousands of numbers, the Ganges river dolphin has dwindled abysmally to less than 2000 during the last century owing to direct killing, habitat fragmentation by dams and barrages and indiscriminate fishing.
- The distribution range of the Ganges river dolphins in India covers seven states namely, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
- Dolphins prefer deep waters, in and around the confluence of two or more rivers. It also shares habitat with crocodiles, freshwater turtles and wetland birds.
- The upper Ganga River, Chambal River, Ghaghra and Gandak Rivers, Ganga River, from Varanasi to Patna, Son and Kosi rivers, Brahmaputra from Sadia upto Dhubri and Kulsli River, a tributary of the Brahmaputra River, form ideal habitats for the Ganges river dolphin.
- The Gangetic Dolphins are generally blind and catch their prey in a unique manner.
- They emit an ultrasonic sound which reaches the prey. The dolphin then registers this image in its mind and subsequently catches hold of its prey.

### Major Threats

- ✓ Habitat loss, degradation due to the flood and excess water in rivers pose serious threat to the Ganga River Dolphins.
- ✓ Inland waterways, various anthropogenic factors, religious activities, Excessive harvesting and hunting are another set of threat faced by Ganga River Dolphins.
- ✓ Water pollution cause by agriculture and due to the urbanization related – on both the banks of River/chemical. Pollution also affects habitat and/ or species, Industrial effluents.

## Glasgow Declaration on Forests and Land Use

### News Excerpt

Recently, a declaration was introduced by the UK on the sidelines of CoP-26, to halt deforestation and land degradation by 2030.

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### Key Points

- Under the declaration, “trade” has been interlinked to climate change and forest issues.
- India, Argentina, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and South Africa are the only G20 countries that did not sign the declaration.
- Declaration focus on other key areas like–
  - Conserve forests and other terrestrial ecosystems and accelerate their restoration.
  - Facilitate trade and development policies, internationally and domestically, that promote sustainable development, and sustainable commodity production and consumption that work to countries’ mutual benefits and that do not drive deforestation and land degradation.
  - Reduce vulnerability, build resilience and enhance rural livelihoods, including

through empowering communities, the development of profitable, sustainable agriculture, and recognition of the multiple values of forests, while recognising the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, in accordance with relevant national legislation and international instruments, as appropriate.

- Implement and, redesigning of agricultural policies and programmes to incentivise sustainable agriculture, promote food security, and benefit the environment.
- Reaffirm international financial commitments and significantly increase finance and investment from a wide variety of public and private sources.
- Facilitate the alignment of financial flows with international goals to reverse forest loss and degradation.
- Governments representing 75% of global trade in key commodities that can threaten forests – such as palm oil, cocoa and soya – will commit to a common set of actions to deliver sustainable trade and reduce pressure on forests, including support for smallholder farmers and improving the transparency of supply chains.
- Actions are required in the interconnected areas of sustainable production and consumption; infrastructure development; trade; finance and investment; and support for smallholders, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, who depend on forests for their livelihoods and have a key role in their stewardship.

Reason for India’s unwilling

- India cited that the declaration interlinks trade to climate change and forest issues. Trade falls under the ambit of WTO and should not be brought under climate change declarations.
- India appealed for the removal of word “trade” but major countries did not agree. Therefore, India didn’t favours the declaration.

Conclusion

The sustainable land use is vital, Land use is essential to cope with the Paris Agreement goals, including tumbling vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C and following efforts to limit it to 1.5°C, noting that the science shows further acceleration of efforts is needed if we are to collectively keep 1.5°C within reach. Together we can succeed in fighting climate change, delivering resilient and inclusive growth, and halting and reversing forest loss and land degradation.

Extinction Risk for Leopards

News Excerpt

As per the study that has been published in the journal Global Ecology and Biogeography, in north India Leopard and other species are facing threat of extinction.

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Key Findings of the Study

- The leopard population of North India is at highest risk. For the North Indian leopard population, the study site covered Uttarakhand’s Rajaji National Park and Haridwar Conservation area. If at least 20% of the population has been killed by roadkill, the risk of local extinction can increase by 10%.
- Along with the leopard, population of four more animal recognized as being the most vulnerable to extinction in the next 50 years if the instances of roadkill persist.

- The leopard (*Pantherapardus*) faces an 83% increased risk of extinction in North India due to roadkill.
- Leopard is followed by the maned wolf and the little spotted cat, both of Brazil, and the brown hyena of southern Africa. Other populations found highly vulnerable include the lion-tailed macaque (*Macacasilenus*) and sloth bear (*Melursusursinus*) in South India.

<b>VULNERABLE TO EXTINCTION DUE TO ROADKILL</b>			
Species, location	Population road-killed	Probability of extinction	Time to extinction
Leopard, North India ( <i>Panthera pardus</i> )	19.4%	83%	33 years
Maned wolf, Brazil	36.4%	34%	30 years
Little spotted cat, Brazil	20-37%	0-75%	0-36 years
Brown hyena, Southern Africa	6-43%	3-100%	0-21 years

**OTHER SPECIES VULNERABLE TO ROADKILL**  
 Lion-tailed macaque (South India), sloth bear (South India), Amur tiger, Goa antelope (Tibet), wild yak (Tibet), Iberian lynx, African lion

Leopard in India

Habitat and Distribution:

- In India, the leopard is found in all forest types, from tropical rainforests to temperate deciduous and alpine coniferous forests.
- It is also found in dry scrubs and grasslands, the only exception being desert and the mangroves of Sundarbans.
- Its range stretches from the Indus river in the west, the Himalayas in the north, and all the way to the lower course of the Brahmaputra in the east.

Conservation Issues&Initiatives:

- The biggest threats facing the common leopard in India are increasing conflict with humans, poaching for illegal trade in body parts and loss of habitat. Leopards also die due to accidents on roads passing through and around protected areas.
- WWF-India’s Initiatives: WWF-India is conducting studies on the status of the leopard within Protected Areas, and its usage of wildlife corridors. WWF’s provides supports to strengthen anti-poaching efforts in the protected areas so that leopard poaching is reduced. WWF-India works with the state forest departments and local communities to manage conflict issues as well as raise awareness among villagers about the importance of conserving the leopard.

Protection Status:

- Common leopard (Indian leopard) is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and included in Appendix I of CITES.
- It is also listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List.

Analytica

Roadkill and Wildlife

- Roads are one of the most important factors affecting the ability of wildlife and their habitat. Roadkill is also linked with contiguousness of protected habitat, proximity to seasonal, permanent rivers and shrub vegetation
- Roads physically replace wildlife habitat and often reduce habitat quality nearby, fragment the remaining habitat, and cause increased mortality through vehicle collisions.
- Roads can alter survival and reproduction for wildlife, even among species such as birds that cross roads easily.
- Road infrastructure has negative impacts on wildlife conservation by increasing wildlife mortality, isolating populations, and reducing habitats and connectivity for wildlife populations.
- Roadkill is a threat to wildlife globally. The global and regional impacts of roadkill are

significant.

### Conclusion

There is a need to mitigate the impact of infrastructure by modifying human behavior using road signs, demarcating geo-fencing, construction of Eco-bridges or underpass for safer movement of animals and speed limits or through vegetation management such as clearing roadside vegetation to allow motorist to see the wildlife when they approach the road.

## Stubble Burning and Lung functions

### News Excerpt

Recently, in Punjab a study was conducted which assess the impact of stubble burning on lungs function.

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### About Stubble Burning

- Stubble burning is the act of clearing agricultural fields by burning the residue that is left on the land after harvesting, to ready it for the next round of seeding.
- Generally, the period from October to November the stubble burning instances spike due to the paddy crops which is harvested during this time and the residue left behind needs to be cleared to sow wheat.
- The burning is utilized as the easiest and cheapest method to clear the field.

### Key Points of the study

- The study was carried out in two phases—the first in October 2018 and the second phase in summer from March to April 2019.
- During the crop residue burning period, a two to three-fold increase was noted.
- The concentrations of PM2.5, the category of unburnt carbon particles considered most harmful to respiratory health, was found to increase more than twice between the two phases, from 100 g/m<sup>3</sup> to 250 g/m<sup>3</sup>.
- The respiratory symptoms including wheezing, breathlessness on exertion, cough in morning, cough at night, skin rashes, runny nose or itchiness of eyes etc. across all age groups (10-60 years).
- The highest number of respiratory complaints were reported by the elderly population (>40-60) and the lowest in the younger age group(>10-18) during crop burning period.
- Incidentally these are around 10-15 times the WHO prescribed air quality standards though the permissible standards by India’s Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) are higher.

### Effects of Stubble Burning

- As a result of stubble burning black carbon is released. Black Carbon directly contributes to environmental pollution, and are also responsible for the haze in Delhi and melting of Himalayan glaciers.
- The heat from burning paddy straw penetrates 1 centimetre into the soil. This kills the bacterial and fungal populations critical for a fertile soil.
- Burning of crop residue causes damage to other micro-organisms present in the upper layer of the soil as well as its organic quality.
- Due to the loss of ‘friendly’ pests, the wrath of ‘enemy’ pests has increased and as a result, crops are more prone to disease.
- The solubility capacity of the upper layers of soil also reduced.
- According to a report, one tonne stubble burning leads to a loss of 5.5 kilogram nitrogen,

2.3 kg phosphorus, 25 kg potassium and more than 1 kg of sulfur — all soil nutrients, besides organic carbon.

### [Alternative to the burning](#)

Farmers can also manage crop residues effectively by employing agricultural machines like:

- Happy Seeder which could be used for sowing of crop in standing stubble.
- Rotavator : used for land preparation and incorporation of crop stubble in the soil
- Zero till seed drill : used for land preparations directly sowing of seeds in the previous crop stubble
- Baler (used for collection of straw and making bales of the paddy stubble)
- Paddy Straw Chopper (cutting of paddy stubble for easily mixing with the soil)

On other hand, these machines are too costly and the government should come forward and provide better subsidy so that farmer can afford these machines.

## The Global Resilience Index Initiative (GRII)

### [News Excerpt](#)

To address the issue of data emergency that is contributing to the climate crisis. Multiple partners of 10 organization launched Global Resilience Index Initiative (GRII).

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### [Key points of GRII](#)

- GRII is aimed to build a universal model for assessing resilience to climate risks.
- GRII has been initiated with partial funding and in-kind contributions from the insurance sector and partner institutions for risk management.
- It will be an open-source resource can be used in aggregated risk management across sectors and geographies.
- GRII partners and supporters are:
  - Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
  - Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment (CCRI)
  - Fathom
  - GEM Foundation
  - Insurance Development Forum (IDF)
  - Oasis Loss Modelling Framework
  - UK Centre for Greening Finance and Investment (CGFI)
  - United Nations office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
  - University of Oxford
  - Willis Towers Watson
- The model will help countries to focus on national adaptation investments.
- The GRII draws upon significant cross-sector risk modelling experience, including public-private partnerships between governments, academia, insurance and engineering.
- The outcomes of this risk analysis will help close the insurance protection gap and direct investment.
- The coalition wants to achieve two immediate goals. First, they want to provide global open reference risk data developed using insurance risk modelling principles.

Expected Outcomes

- Systems and economies resilient to climate disruption can save millions of lives and livelihoods of the people especially the coastal ones.
- The modeling would channelize the financial flows and investments in accordance with Paris-aligned. GRII can play an important role by creating a shared understanding of mounting physical climate risks.

**Frothing in Yamuna**

News Excerpt

Recently, in Delhi toxic foam-laden water and layer of froth was seen floating over tracts of the Yamuna River.

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About Frothing

- Frothing is one of the signs of the exceptionally high levels of pollution in the river.
- Frothing is a phenomenon that takes place on many lakes and streams. Foam bubbles are produced when organic matter decomposes.
- These foam-producing molecules have one end that repels water and another that attract water and they work to reduce the surface tension on the surface of the water.
- These foam bubbles are lighter than water, so they float on the surface as a thin film that gradually accumulates.

**CHEMICAL FACTORS**

- 1 Untreated sewage coming from homes contains soap and detergent-like components
- 2 Effluent coming from paint, protective coating, pesticide, leather processing, plastic, oil production, waste paper cleaning and de-inking industries contains foam-forming chemicals (surfactants)

**BIOLOGICAL**  
Presence of microorganisms, like filamentous bacteria, which produce natural compounds that promote frothing

**PHYSICAL**

- 1 When water falls from a height at Okhla barrage, bubbles are formed
- 2 Frothing starts after the monsoon and since foam is stable in lower temperatures, it increases during winter

Causes of Frothing

- In vicinity of Delhi, River Yamuna get the release of untreated or poorly treated effluents, including sewage from those parts of the city that are not connected to the sewerage network and industrial waste, could lead to frothing. Specifically, phosphates in the river form the froth.
- Surfactants and phosphates are released from detergents in household activity and industrial laundry is also responsible for the releasing of such pollutants which contributes to the frothing.
- Moreover, the reason for foaming around this time of the year is that river is in a lean phase and the water flow is less. Pollutants, therefore, are not diluted. The turbulence at the barrage near Okhla generates foam from the phosphate.
- The water falling after discharge from the Okhla barrage causes the surfactants and foaming agents present in the wastewater or in the sludge on the river bed to get agitated, forming foam.
- The other sources are industrial effluents, organic matter from decomposing vegetation and presence of filamentous bacteria. The pollution from sugar and paper industries in Uttar Pradesh that travel through the Hindon canal also causes pollution in the Yamuna.
- Rapid urbanisation in Delhi NCR, for instance, is taking its toll. The expansion of

impermeable surfaces like concrete roads and pavements is preventing the recharge of groundwater aquifers and blocking the flow from water channels to lakes.

Implications

- ✓ Short-term exposure can lead to skin irritation and allergies. If ingested, these chemicals may cause gastrointestinal problems and diseases like typhoid.
- ✓ Long term exposure to heavy metals in industrial pollutants can cause neurological issues and hormonal imbalances.
- ✓ As a result of frothing, adverse environmental and public health consequences are inevitable. The River bank community may suffer from water borne diseases due to contaminated bore well water.
- ✓ Moreover, it could lead to the series of events which affect the quality of soil and consequent impacts in the food chain.
- ✓ Frothing would also lead to change the biological oxygen demand ratio which could trigger the instances of dead zone and biological deserts in river.

**PEPPER IT WITH  
Biological Oxygen Demand, Bio-Desert, Edge Effect, Micro-Pollutants, Heavy Metals**

Way Forward

- There is dire need to augment the sewage treatment infrastructure to reduce the impact of effluents.
- Wide scale public awareness campaigns are required to aware people about the issue; Public participation can also contribute to the reduction of pollutants from small drains.

**Climate change & Locust Incursion**

News Excerpt

Recently, panelists at the Global Landscapes Forum Climate hybrid conference have emphasized to include plans against pests (Locust) and diseases along with the mitigation strategies of climate change. The conference was held on the sidelines of CoP-26.

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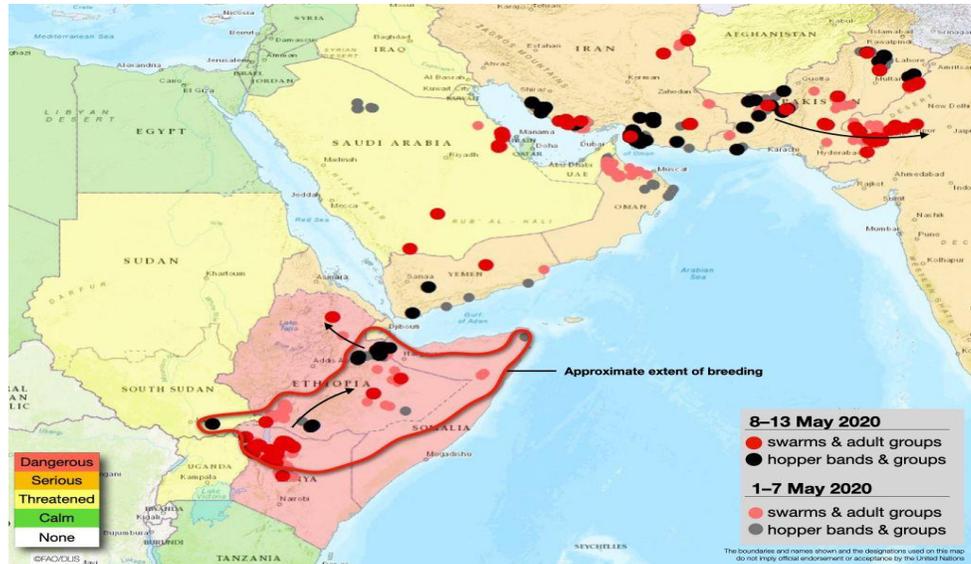
Pre-Connect

- The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is a knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, and aimed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of Paris Climate Agreement.
- It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UNEP and the World Bank and Charter Members.

About Locusts

- Locusts are species of short-horned grasshoppers. A single locust can eat its own body weight in food, which is about 2-2.5 grams.
- Locust can fly in swarms; millions of individual insects operate as a gigantic eating machine that can decimate large areas in a matter of days.
- Locusts form swarms that can cover 150 km in a single day.
- Locusts thrive in humid conditions, and outbreaks often follow floods and cyclones.
- Infestation of desert locusts, which has plagued a vast swathe from eastern Africa to India in recent years, is closely linked to climate change.

- Locusts have been a bane especially to farmers in several countries, including India, Pakistan and Iran.
- Locust infestations can also harm livelihoods and be a threat to regional investments in ensuring food security



### Locust and Global Climatic Circulation

- ✓ Indian Ocean Dipole:
  - Rainfall led to the population explosion of locust, particularly in East Africa and the Middle East. This was mainly due to the changes in the Indian Ocean Dipole, a pattern of changing temperature gradients in the Indian Ocean.
  - The western side of the Indian Ocean was unusually warm as compared to the eastern side. So when the western side was warm, evaporation turned into a rainfall in some parts of Africa.
- ✓ Change in cyclonic patterns over the Arabian Sea is the reason behind the locust invasions in east Africa, west and south Asia. Unusual rainfall in Iran helped locust in their breeding.
- ✓ Changes in climate have led to increases in cyclones, which feed locust swarms with water and warmth.
- ✓ Extreme weather events, notably heavy rainfall, increase the chance of a locust swarm forming; rain provides moist soil for the insects to lay their eggs in, and allows vegetation to grow and provide shelter and food.
- ✓ The recent locust outbreak along the India-Pakistan border may have been driven by the longer-than-usual monsoon rains across the region.

### Conclusion

The instances of locust proliferation are increasing in South Asia due to global warming and climate change, India must design appropriate strategies to combat the menace in the interest of food security. Preparedness is the key to the fight against desert locust swarms, followed by rapid action.

## Flood Zoning Legislation

### News Excerpt

Recently, the report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has pointed out serious lapses regarding flood plain planning and legislation. Even, many of the flood affected states haven't enacted flood plain zoning law.

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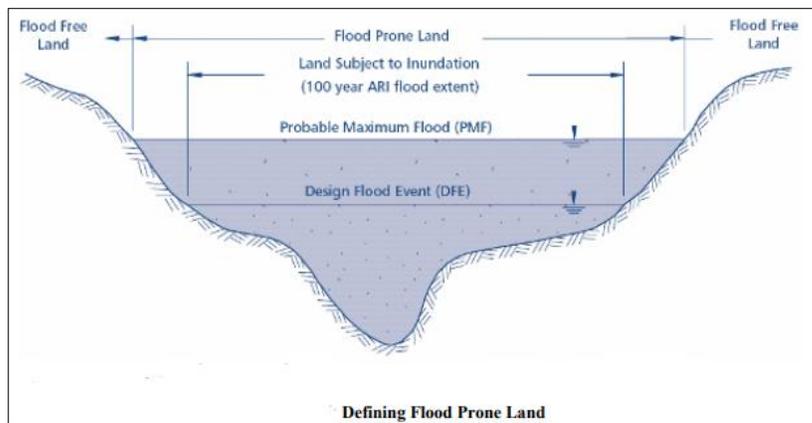
Pre-Connect

- Constitutional mandate: Floodplain zoning is firmly within the state government’s ambit as it deals with the land along the riverbanks and land is a state subject under entry 18 of List II.
- The Model Bill on Flood Plain Zoning (MBFPZ): This provides for flood zoning authorities, surveys and demarcation of floodplain area, notification regarding the limits of floodplains, prohibition on the use of the floodplains and power to remove illegal construction.
- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA): In 2008, NDMA issued guidelines for states for floodplain zoning as an important “non-structural measure” to mitigate floods.
- The Central Water Commission (CWC): CWC has unremittingly impressed upon the states to take follow-up action to implement the flood plain zoning approach.

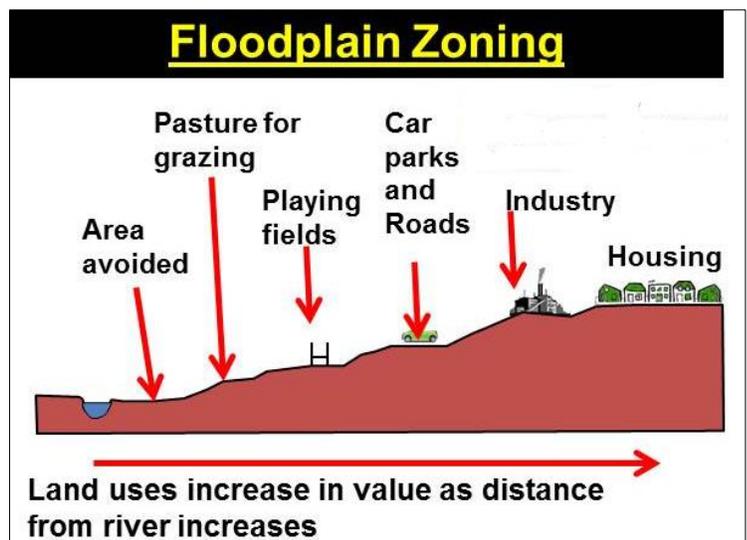
About Flood Plain Zoning

➤ The objectives of flood plain zoning is–

- To limit and regulate the encroachment of the respective zone that frequently comes under the effect of flood.
- To allow selected activities in the zone which come under the influence of the flood less frequently in such manner that they are susceptible to flood damages.
- To demarcate the zones that is subjected to flood only on rare occasion.



- Moreover, Flood plain zoning legislation limits the constructions activities and development in flood zones to lessen the risks associated with flooding.
- Additionally, legislation also looks for the specific building standards and construction materials to reduce potential flood damage.
- Floodplain zoning ensures that land on the floodplain isn't urbanized.



- The rampant riverbed and floodplain encroachments caused a huge loss of lives, property and infrastructure. Swollen rivers ruptured their banks and floodwaters gushed through houses built on the floodplains.
- The lack of regulation and enforcement of land use in the floodplains added to the severity

of the damage.

### Key Benefits of Flood Plains

- ✓ Natural floodplains provide flood risk reduction benefits by slowing runoff and storing flood water. They also provide other benefits of considerable economic, social, and environmental value that are often overlooked when local land-use decisions are made.
- ✓ Effective implementation of flood Plains legislation would reduce the risk of flooding to the man-made structures. Flood can't be avoided but its damages can be managed.
- ✓ Naturally, Flooding create good agricultural land in flood plains, as they get sediment carrying floodwaters that enrich the soil. In fact, floodplains are lands built up from soil left by floods.
- ✓ Floodplains often contain wetlands and other important ecological areas which directly affect the quality of the local ecosystem. Floodplains provide many important benefits for people and nature.

### Implications of lack of Flood Plain Zoning

- Loss to human life and crops: In absence of land regulation seasonal flood cause havoc on the riverine community. For instance—an analysis by the Data Centre of the Central Water Commission (CWC) showed that in the last 65 years (1952-2018) floods killed 109,412 people in the span. Over 258 million hectares of crops were damaged and 81,187,187 houses were raged. The total economic losses due to crop, house and other property damages came to Rs 4.69 trillion.
- Economic losses: Unplanned and unregulated development gets affected by flooding. Due to flooding Infrastructure got damaged. In November, 2019, the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti told the Rajya Sabha that India suffered a loss of Rs 95,736 crore in 2018 floods. This was 2.6 times more than the financial loss due to floods in 2017.
- Potential threats: In a study published in journal Nature Communications 2019, researchers estimated that coastal flooding risk in India had increased significantly. Some 36 million people in India were under risk, which was six times more than the earlier estimates.
- Extreme precipitation is also leading to extreme flooding. Last year in August Indian rivers reported high flood level in unprecedented number. In the month various rivers at 25 stations crossed their highest flood-level, according to CWC data.

### Bottleneck for implementation of zoning laws

- ✚ Despite the sound rationale and the concomitant benefits of undertaking floodplain zoning and regulation, the ruling dispensation in the states has chosen to remain oblivious to it.
- ✚ It has been more than four decades since the bill had been shared, and so far only three states—Manipur (1978), Rajasthan (1990), and Uttarakhand (2012)—have enacted legislation for floodplain zoning, while others, particularly the flood-affected Bihar and Assam, have shown varying degree of opposition.
- ✚ There are predominantly two reasons for this:
  - The constraints arising from evacuating the people who occupy the floodplains and resettling these people elsewhere considering the paucity of land.
  - Zone planning could restricts economic development as certain land uses are prohibited. if land cannot be used for building the current housing shortage will continue.
- ✚ The sheer scale of relocation and rehabilitation that needs to be carried out by adhering to the guidelines for each floodplain zone, is a daunting task even at its very inception.
- ✚ Land acquisition remains an area of contestation and governments have often been accused of unfair compensation and inadequate rehabilitation efforts. Therefore, the

political incentive to maintain the status quo while providing aid and compensation after every flood season far outweighs the other alternative that may disconcert constituencies.

- ✚ The existing urban agglomerations cannot be shifted and a certain degree of flood protection needs to be provided through embankments. But, at the same time, further development of urban infrastructure in the floodplains can surely be halted.
- ✚ Moreover, another critical aspect to keep in mind is that the benefits of floodplain zoning will accrue over large spatial and temporal scales. For instance, if the state of Assam were to undertake measures to restore floodplains and make more room for the Brahmaputra, the benefit would also trickle to downstream Bangladesh which will experience an increased lag time (the period between the peak rainfall and peak discharge), significantly reduced riverbank erosion and a healthy state of the river over a considerably long period.

### Conclusion

An overhaul of the current floodplain zoning policy architecture is the need of the hour. There are several structural gaps in existing policies. Any policy measure that seeks to achieve the governance objectives of restricting the losses caused by floods and regulating land use within floodplains should look to fill these gaps. Globally, floodplain zoning has emerged as an important strategy at the basin level land use management. India needs to adopt a forward-looking and proactive policy design to regulate the floodplains.

**PEPPER IT WITH  
NGT, CWC, Inter State  
Water Dispute Tribunal,  
Schedule VII, CPCB**

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Facial Recognition Technology

News Excerpt

Facial recognition technology will be introduced at airports by 2022. Passengers will be able to use a face scan as their boarding pass at four airports in the country.

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Pre-Connect

- The Airport authority of India (AAI) has engaged NEC corporation private limited to implement this technology as a part of the DigiYatra policy. It is the first of its kind.
- Facial recognition technology will be based on biometric boarding system.
- Currently no airport in India offers a facial recognition facility.
- Airports at Varanasi, Pune, Kolkata and Vijaywada will be the first to roll-out the facial recognition technology.

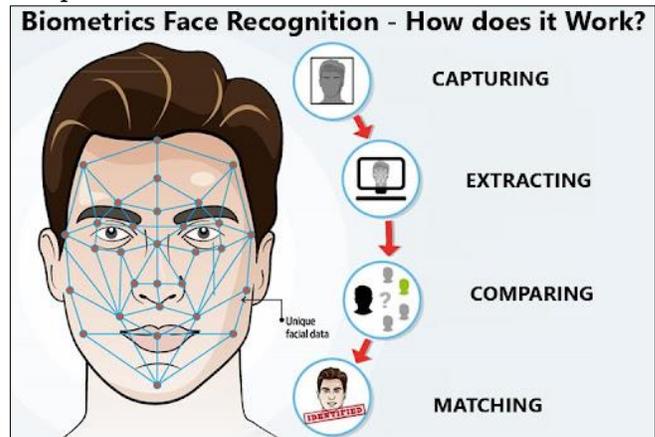
Key points about facial recognition technology

- Facial recognition is a way of recognizing a human face through technology.
- A facial recognition system uses biometrics to map facial features from a photograph or video.
- It compares the information with a database of known faces to find a match.
- Facial recognition can help verify a person’s identity, but it raises privacy issues.
- As per the major companies of cyber industry, the facial recognition market is expected to grow to \$7.7 billion in 2022, an increase from \$4 billion in 2017.
- That’s because facial recognition has many commercial applications. It can be used for everything from surveillance to marketing.

How facial recognition works

✓ Technologies vary, but here are the basic steps:

1. A picture of face is captured from a photo or video. Face might appear alone or in a crowd. Image may show looking straight ahead or nearly in profile.
2. Facial recognition software reads the geometry of face. Key factors include the distance between eyes and the distance from forehead to chin. The software identifies facial.
3. Facial signature — a mathematical formula — is compared to a database of known faces.
4. A determination is made. Faceprint may match that of an image in a facial recognition system database.



Advantages of facial recognition technology

- Finding missing people: With facial recognition, law enforcement agencies have been able to track down missing children, sometimes even after they've been missing for years.

- Identifying criminals: Law enforcement agencies can also use facial recognition to identify criminals or suspects in crimes.
- Making flying safer: Airports across the globe are using facial recognition to identify criminals and potential threats as they enter airports or try to board flights.
- More efficient shopping: Retailers can use facial recognition to make it easier for consumers to check out.

Key Concerns related to the facial recognition technology

- ✚ A threat to privacy: Facial recognition is often cited as an act of erosion of personal privacy. This technology also undermines the scope of fundamental rights of people.
- ✚ Mistaken identity: Facial recognition isn't reliable. For instance, law enforcement agency may mistakenly identify a citizen as a criminal suspect.
- ✚ Credibility: Criminals can trick facial recognition by wearing masks or facial disguises. This could lessen the effectiveness of this tech.
- ✚ Aging lowers its effectiveness: It is being observed that as people age, and their features change, facial recognition has an increasingly difficult time identifying them.

Way Forward

As a relatively new technology, Accountability should be reformulated to assure that government focuses on fundamental rights of citizens including privacy. In given context, a privacy commission would have to be established to enforce these rights.

**The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine**

News Excerpt

A new research has found that the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine protects against cervical cancer in women. It reduced the risk of developing the cancer in women between the ages of 14 and 16.

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About HPV

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a group of more than 200 related viruses, of which more than 40 are spread through direct sexual contact.
- HPV vaccination in combination with cervical cancer screening reduces the cancer to a point where almost no one develops it.
- Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV and the vaccine protects against two of the cancer-causing strains, which are HPV 16 and 18.
- It also shows that over a period of 11 years (since 2006), the vaccine prevented around 450 cervical cancers and around 17,200 cases of precancerous conditions.

Types of HPV vaccines

- Quadrivalent vaccine (Gardasil): It protects against four types of HPV (HPV 16, 18, 6 and 11). The latter two strains cause genital warts.
- Bivalent vaccine (Cervarix): It protects against HPV 16 and 18 only.
- Non valent vaccine (Gardasil 9): It protects against nine strains of HPV.

These vaccines prevent cervical cancer in women and girls who have not yet been exposed to the virus.

Status of HPV vaccination and cervical cancer incidence in India

- ✓ In India, bivalent and quadrivalent HPV vaccines were licensed in 2008 and a non valent vaccine was licensed in 2018.
- ✓ HPV vaccines would be given as a two-dose regimen, six months apart for girls below the

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age of 14 years. For those who are 15 and older, the vaccine is given in a three-dose regimen.

- ✓ Officially, the HPV vaccine has not been recommended for boys and males in India.

Conclusion:

Ideally, the vaccine should be administered before the individual makes their first sexual contact. While for teenagers, the vaccine is administered in a two-dose regimen, for those between the ages 15-26.

**NASA's DART mission**

News Excerpt

NASA will launch its first planetary defense test mission named the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART). The spacecraft will be launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from California.

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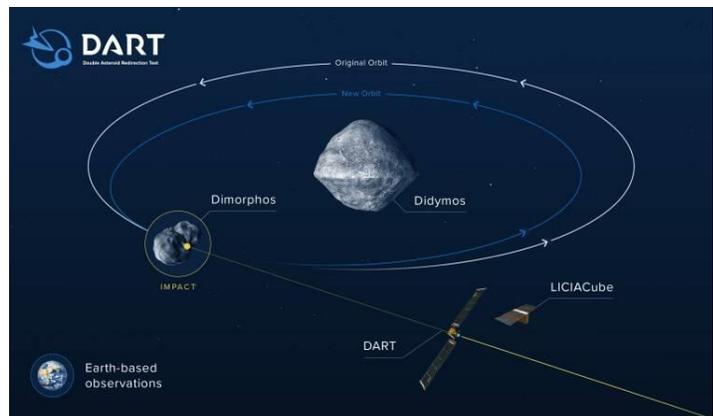
- NASA stands for National Aeronautics and Space Administration.
- NASA is a U.S. government agency that is responsible for science and technology related to air and space.
- The Space Age started in 1957 with the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik.
- The agency was created to oversee U.S. space exploration and aeronautics research.

SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket

- Falcon 9 is a reusable, two-stage rocket designed and manufactured by SpaceX for the reliable and safe transport of people and payloads into Earth orbit and beyond.
- Falcon 9 is the world's first orbital class reusable rocket.
- Reusability allows SpaceX to refly the most expensive parts of the rocket, which in turn drives down the cost of space access.

DART: First Test Mission to Defend Planet Earth

- ✓ DART is a planetary defense-driven test of technologies for preventing an impact of Earth by a hazardous asteroid.
- ✓ DART will be the first demonstration of the kinetic impactor technique to change the motion of an asteroid in space.
- ✓ DART is a low-cost spacecraft, weighing around 610 kg at launch and 550 kg during impact.
- ✓ DART has two solar arrays and uses hydrazine propellant for maneuvering the spacecraft.



Which asteroid will be deflected?

- ✚ The target of the spacecraft is a small moonlet called Dimorphos
- ✚ Dimorphos orbits a larger asteroid named Didymos.
- ✚ The asteroid and the moonlet do not pose any threat to Earth and the mission is to test the new technology to be prepared in case an asteroid heads towards Earth in the future.

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- ✚ The spacecraft will navigate to the moonlet and intentionally collide with it at a speed of about 6.6 kilometres per second or 24,000 kilometres per hour.
- ✚ It is a suicide mission and the spacecraft will be completely destroyed.

Why Dimorphos?

- It is a perfect system for the test mission because it is an eclipsing binary which means it has a moonlet that regularly orbits the asteroid.
- Earth-based telescopes can study this variation in brightness to understand how long it takes Dimorphos to orbit Didymos.

DART's single instrument, the Didymos Reconnaissance and Asteroid Camera for Optical navigation (DRACO), will provide first images from the spacecraft.

- DART will also carry a small satellite or CubeSat named LICIA Cube (Light Italian CubeSat for Imaging of Asteroids).
- LICIA Cube is expected to capture images of the impact and the impact crater formed as a result of the collision.
- The timing for the DART impact is when the Didymos system is closest to the Earth.

Didymos

Asteroid Didymos and its small moonlet Dimorphos make up what's called a binary asteroid system - meaning the small moon (Dimorphos) orbits the larger body (Didymos).

Norovirus

News Excerpt

Recently, 13 people have been found infected with Norovirus in Wayanad district of Kerala.

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Pre-connect

- A virus is a small collection of genetic code, either DNA or RNA, surrounded by a protein coat.
- A virus cannot replicate alone. Viruses must infect cells and use components of the host cell to make copies of them.
- Often, they kill the host cell in the process, and cause damage to the host organism.
- Viruses can be found everywhere on Earth.
- Viruses cannot be killed by antibiotics; only antiviral medications or vaccines can eliminate or reduce the severity of viral diseases, including AIDS, COVID-19, measles and smallpox.

About Norovirus

- Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea.
- People of all ages can get infected and sick with norovirus.
- Norovirus is sometimes called the stomach flu or stomach bug.
- Norovirus illness is not related to the flu which is caused by influenza virus.

The most common symptoms of norovirus are:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Stomach pain
- Fever

- Headache
- Body aches
- Norovirus causes inflammation of the stomach or intestines. This is called acute gastroenteritis.

### How Norovirus Spreads

Norovirus infection can be happened by accidentally getting tiny particles of feces (poop) or vomit from an infected person in your mouth.

This could happen if—

- ✓ Eat food or drink liquids that are contaminated with norovirus,
- ✓ Touch surfaces or objects contaminated with norovirus and then put your fingers in your mouth.
- ✓ If you have direct contact with someone who is infected with norovirus, such as by caring for them or sharing food or eating utensils with them.

### Prevention and Treatment

- There is no specific medicine to treat people with norovirus illness.
- If you have norovirus illness, you should drink plenty of liquids to replace fluid lost from vomiting and diarrhea. This will help prevent dehydration.
- Antibiotic drugs will not help treat norovirus infections because they fight bacteria, not viruses.

### Difference between Norovirus& Covid-19

There are a lot of similar symptoms, COVID tends to have more upper respiratory symptoms like cough and loss of smell and taste. Covid-19 is likely to cause chest pains, which is not a symptom of stomach flu. Shortness of breath is also a sign of COVID-19 and not norovirus.

## Shale Oil/Tight Oil

### News excerpt

Cairn Oil & Gas has announced that it is partnering US-based Halliburton to start shale exploration in the Lower Barmer Hill formation, Western Rajasthan.

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### Pre-Connect

Oil Shale:

- Oil shale is a sedimentary rock that is also a fossil fuel.
- Oil shale, formed millions of years ago from the remains of plants and animals trapped under intense heat and pressure.

### About Shale& Shale Oil

- Using modern technology such as multistage hydraulic fracturing or ‘fracking’ on horizontal and multilateral wells, ‘shale oil’ and ‘shale gas’ is extracted from an oil shale.
- This technology is relatively expensive as compared to conventional oil and gas recovery techniques and requires drilling more wells along with huge quantities of the ground water (3-4 million gallons per well).
- Shale oil refers to hydrocarbons that are trapped in formations of shale rock that can be extracted for refining.
- Shale oil is a type of unconventional oil found in shale formations that must be hydraulically fractured to extract the oil.

- Primary uses include heating oil, marine fuel, and the production of various chemicals.
- Shale oil can refer to two types of oil:
  - Crude oil that is found within shale formations or Oil that is extracted from oil shale.
  - Shale oil is also known as 'Tight Oil' as it is found in smaller and deeper reserves than conventional oil reserves.
- Russia and the US are among the largest shale oil producers in the world.

Tight oil:

- ✓ Tight oil differs from shale oil because tight oil can be extracted from not just shale formations but also sandstone and carbonates.
- ✓ Tight oil has become the largest source of domestic oil in the United States.
- ✓ The process of fracking to extract shale oil leads to an immense amount of environmental damage.

Pros of Fracking

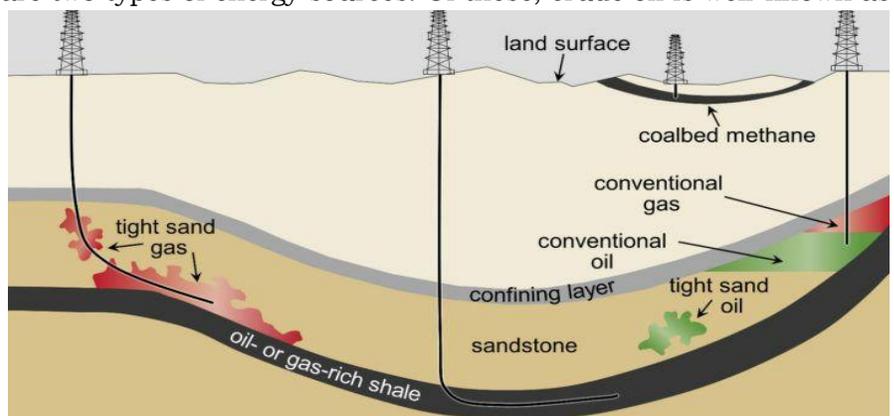
- Extraction methods are more flexible than traditional oil well drilling.
- Oil costs roughly \$1 million for each well made shale oil extraction profitable.
- Productivity has been increased.
- It reduces oil and gas prices.

Cons of Fracking

- It uses lot of natural resources which are limited.
- It can affect drinking water.
- The high-pressure pumping may trigger shifts in the fault lines that may cause earthquakes.

Difference between Shale oil and conventional crude oil

- ✚ Shale oil and crude oil are two types of energy sources. Of these, crude oil is well-known as the main energy source for several decades but, shale oil is considered as an emerging energy source that can be used as an alternative solution for high crude oil demand in the market.



- ✚ The key difference between shale oil and crude oil is in its composition;
  - Shale oil: Shale oil contains relatively large quantities of sulphur, nitrogen, and oxygen than that of crude oil. But, the cost of production of shale oil is comparatively low.
  - Crude Oil: Crude oil products can be categorized as follows.

Shale in India

Currently, there is no large-scale commercial production of shale oil and gas in India.

- According to EIA (Energy Information Administration), India's sedimentary basins have high potential of shale oil reserves measuring up to 63 trillion cubic feet (TCU). That is

more than 20 times the output of country's largest gas block KG-D6 in the Krishna Godavari Basin.

- > The Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) India has taken some early steps to identify prospective area for Shale Gas exploration and acquisition of additional geo scientific data.
- > As per DGH, India has several shale formations which indicate the presence of shale oil and shale gas in oil, gas and coal sedimentary basins such as Cambay, Gondwana, Krishna Godavari on land and Cauvery on land.

Shale Policy in India:

- » Government granted permission for Shale gas and oil exploration and exploitation initially only by NOCs (ONGC & OIL) in on-land nomination blocks i.e. blocks awarded to the NOCs on nomination basis before the advent of Pre-NELP and NELP PSCs.
- » The policy was announced with exclusive purpose of promoting Shale Gas & Oil operations in the existing on land PEL/PML areas under Nomination acreages in the overall interest of energy security in the country.

Challenges

Shale Oil/gas in India would greatly depend on several factors such as-

- o Timely approval from the State Governments
- o Land Acquisitions for exploration
- o Effective water management strategies
- o Environmental clearances
- o The biggest hurdle that Oil companies today face is getting these 'clearances' from numerous 'agencies' in India.

Conclusion

For India, Shale gas can be a great alternative. It has lower emissions and pollution levels as compared to Coal. India imports about 80% of its total crude oil requirements, the effective exploration of shale oil could lower the import burden and even reduce prices. The Indian regulators, the Government and Companies need to work together to overcome these challenges and explore this unconventional-energy source. Shale can actually be a 'game changer' for the Indian economy which is so energy-dependent.

Navic and its global use

News excerpt

Recently, the Vice President suggested to ISRO to give a thrust to the indigenously-developed regional navigation satellite system, NavIC for global use.

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About Navic

- IRNSS is an autonomous regional satellite navigation system being developed by ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization). The government of India approved the project in May 2006, with the intention of the system to be completed and implemented in the timeframe 2016.
- With the last launch of the constellation's satellite (IRNSS-1G), IRNSS was renamed Navigation Indian Constellation (NavIC) by India's Prime Minister.
- IRNSS stands for Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System called as NavIC abbreviated for Navigation with Indian Constellation; having primary service area of India and region

extending 1500 KM around it and extended service area is between 30th Parallel South to 50th Parallel North and 30th Meridian East to 130th Meridian East.

- IRNSS will provide two types of services
  - Standard Positioning Service (SPS): which is provided to all the users and Restricted Service (RS), which is an encrypted service provided only to the authorized users.
  - The IRNSS System is expected to provide a position accuracy of better than 20 m in the primary service area.
- Some applications of IRNSS are:
  - Terrestrial, Aerial and Marine Navigation
  - Disaster Management
  - Vehicle tracking and fleet management
  - Integration with mobile phones
  - Precise Timing
  - Mapping and Geodetic data capture
  - Terrestrial navigation aid for hikers and travelers
  - Visual and voice navigation for drivers

#### Objective

- To implement an independent and indigenous regional space borne navigation system for national applications. The IRNSS design requirements call for a position accuracy of < 20 m throughout India and within the region of coverage extending about 1500 km beyond.
- The IRNSS is being developed parallel to the GAGAN (GPS Aided GEO Augmented Satellite Navigation) program, the ISRO SBAS (Satellite Based Augmentation System) version of an overlay system for GNSS signal correction.
- The proposed IRNSS system will consist of a constellation of seven satellites and a supporting ground segment.
- Three of the satellites in the constellation will be placed in a geostationary orbit and the remaining four in a geosynchronous inclined orbit of 29° relative to the equatorial plane.

#### GAGAN –

- ✓ GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation is a satellite based augmentation system (SBAS) like of US-WAAS, European EGNOS, and Japanese MSAS, etc.
- ✓ Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS) is a wide-area augmentation system that provides augmented accuracy and integrity to a Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) signal such as GPS, GLONASS, Galileo, BeiDou OR Regional Navigation Satellite System such as NavIC (IRNSS), QZSS.
- ✓ GAGAN is the first SBAS system in the world to serve the equatorial region; primarily meant for aviation, provides benefits beyond aviation to many other user segments, and has been used by the State of Karnataka for forest mapping.

## White dwarf

### News excerpt

A team of astronomers confirm White dwarf with fastest spin that is one rotation every 25 seconds.

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### White dwarf

- White dwarfs are the hot, dense remnants of long-dead stars.
- They are the stellar cores left behind after a star has exhausted its fuel supply and blown its bulk of gas and dust into space.
- These exotic objects mark the final stage of evolution for most stars in the universe – including our sun – and light the way to a deeper understanding of cosmic history.
- White dwarfs are stars that have burned up all of the hydrogen they once used as nuclear fuel.
- Fusion in a star's core produces heat and outward pressure, but this pressure is kept in balance by the inward push of gravity generated by a star's mass.

### Key points

- When star reaches the end of their long evolutions, smaller stars—those up to eight times as massive as our own sun—typically become white dwarfs.
- Stars like our sun fuse hydrogen in their cores into helium. White dwarfs are stars that have burned up all of the hydrogen they once used as nuclear fuel.
- When the hydrogen used as fuel vanishes, and fusion slows, gravity causes the star to collapse in on itself.

### Red Giants

As the star condenses and compacts, it heats up even further, burning the last of its hydrogen and causing the star's outer layers to expand outward. At this stage, the star becomes a large red giant.

### Black dwarf

A Black dwarf is hypothesized as the final stage of the life cycle of a Sun-like Star. When Sun burns all of its hydrogen to helium, its core will shrink and it will rearrange itself, expanding its outer layers form a Redgiant Star.

### Importance

This discovery will help understand the physics behind accretion – how black holes and neutron stars feed material from their nearby stars.

## Havana Syndrome

### News Excerpt

Recently, US officers have reported symptoms of Havana Syndrome while the two were in India earlier this month. This is the first instance of the phenomenon being reported in India, at least on record, and could have diplomatic implications.

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### What is Havana syndrome?

- Havana syndrome is a series of debilitating symptoms.

- Following are the symptom of Havana Syndrome–

- Hearing a loud piercing sound at night and felt intense pressure in the face.
- Pain, Nausea and dizziness while the sound stopped eventually.
- Some people complained of continued pain and dizziness along with trouble concentrating.
- Confusion and disorientation that typically started with a sudden onset of pain and pressure in the head and ears.
- Difficulty concentrating, brain fog, memory problems, light sensitivity, and sleep-related complaints (drowsiness and insomnia.)

**What is Havana syndrome?**

The medical mystery named for the Cuban city where U.S. diplomats first experienced sudden, debilitating symptoms in 2016 has been reported by Americans serving in several other countries.

<p><b>Acute symptoms (often occurring suddenly) may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loud sounds (sometimes described as chirping, clicking or screeching) and pain in one or both ears; many felt the sensations came from a particular direction or were felt when in a specific location</li> <li>Tinnitus, hearing loss</li> <li>Intense pressure or vibration inside the head</li> <li>Difficulty with memory or concentration</li> <li>Visual disturbances</li> <li>Nausea</li> <li>Unsteady gait, loss of balance, vertigo/dizziness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Chronic symptoms (can last weeks, months or longer) may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headache</li> <li>Impaired concentration, memory loss</li> <li>Insomnia</li> <li>Depression</li> <li>Impaired balance</li> </ul>
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No definitive cause has been found, but scientific studies have noted many of the acute symptoms are consistent with exposure to directed radio frequency (RF) energy. One theory posits the use of RF energy by a U.S. adversary as a weapon or a tool of espionage.

- The long-term sequel of Havana syndrome include:
  - Migraine
  - Problems with distant vision
  - Squinting
  - Recurrent vertigo
  - Nosebleeds

Cause of Havana syndrome

- The most likely cause of Havana syndrome is assumed to be some type of a mechanical device that emits ultrasonic or microwave energy:
- Radiofrequency energy exposure through highly specialized bio weaponry could potentially create micro bubbles in the fluid inside a person’s ear. When those bubbles travel through the blood into the brain, they can cause minute air emboli that result in cell damage, similar to decompression sickness (disorder that deep-sea divers develop if they surface too quickly).
- Direct penetration of radiofrequency waves into the skull, which disrupts electrical and chemical activity in the brain and rewires certain neural pathways.
- Although debilitating, Havana syndrome is not fatal, and all afflicted individuals are still alive.

Havana syndrome treatment-

- ✓ Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans of affected individuals compared with those of healthy individuals show differences in the white matter structure.
- ✓ This supports the hypothesis that Havana syndrome is a disorder involving non-specific and unfathomable changes in brain activity and structure.
- ✓ The disease consists of alternative medicine modalities such as art therapy, meditation, breathing exercises, and acupuncture.
- ✓ A rehabilitation program consisting of specific neurological exercises administered in 1-hour sessions has been partially successful but needs further research.

## SECURITY

### Ocean Research Vessel- SagarNidhi

#### News Excerpt

Recently, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences visited the Indian Subcontinent’s Pioneer Research Vessel Ship “SagarNidhi”.

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#### About SagarNidhi:

- SagarNidhi was Commissioned for research in 2008, it helps National Institute of Technology (NIOT) in technology demonstration work on deep-sea mining and tsunami studies.
- The most fascinating aspect is the ship’s dynamic positioning system (DPS) which keeps the ship in a fixed position at mid- sea.
  - The DPS is a computer-controlled system which automatically maintains the position of the ship at mid-sea.
- The vessel is capable of carrying out geo-scientific, meteorological and oceanographic research, and is designed with blue-water capability with ranges of up to 10,000 nautical miles (19,000 km) for voyages lasting up to 45 days.
- It is the first Indian flagged research ship that reached the 66°S latitude [Antarctic waters], facing 11 storms and 73 nm/hr wind speed, witnessing nature’s harshest conditions.

- ❖ National Institute of Technology (NIOT) Chennai has the mandate to develop technologies for the sustainable harvesting living and non-living resources of the ocean.
- ❖ NIOT also has the mandate to deploy and maintain moored data buoys for the data collection that aids in the weather prediction, cyclone tracking and Tsunami Early Warning.

#### Analytica

- Research Vessel (Ships) is an important tool for ocean research and development of ocean technology.
- The role of SagarNidhi in exploring the ocean resources and participation in search and rescue operations.
- India, a traditionally maritime country with rich maritime heritage, has an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of about 2.37 million square kilometres wherein India enjoys the exclusive legal right to utilize all living and non-living resources.
- India has been allotted 75000 square kilometers in the Central Indian Ocean 10000 squarekilometres in the Southern Indian Ocean by the International Seabed Authority.
  - These areas are rich in minerals like Manganese, Cobalt and Nickel.

**India's Deep Ocean Mission**

- ❖ It is a multi-ministerial, multi-disciplinary programme with emphasis on development of deep-sea technology that includes development of manned Submersible rated for 6000 metre water depth along with technologies for deep sea mining, exploration of deep-sea mineral resources and marine biodiversity, acquisition of a research vessel for ocean exploration, deep sea observations, and capacity building in Marine Biology.

### Project 15B

#### News Excerpt

Recently, the Mazgaon Docks Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) has delivered the first ship of the Project 15B Class Destroyer Visakhapatnam to the Indian Navy.

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#### Pre-Connect

- India’s indigenous Destroyer construction programme commenced in the late 1990s with

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the three Delhi class (P-15 class) warships and this was followed by three Kolkata class (P-15A) destroyers commissioned a decade later.

- Presently, under the P-15B (Visakhapatnam Class), a total of four warships are planned (Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal, Surat).
- The contract for the construction of four Project 15B destroyers was signed in January 2011.
- The keel of Visakhapatnam was laid in October 2013 and the ship was launched in April 2015.

Features

- These ships are equipped with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and long-range Surface-to-Air missiles (SAM).
- The ship has several indigenous weapons systems like medium range Surface to Air Missile, indigenous torpedo tube launchers, anti-submarine indigenous rocket launchers and 76-mm super rapid gun mount.

P-15B Role

- ✓ The Indian Navy’s responsibilities to safeguard a large coastline of 7516 Kms and about 1100 offshore islands along with 2.01 million sq km Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have been enhanced in the present geopolitical scenario.
- ✓ Destroyers like the P-15B class shall play an important role in the larger oceans of the Indo-Pacific, making the Indian Navy a potent force.
- ✓ The guided missile Destroyers are deployed for various responsibilities like escort duties with the Carrier Battle Group to protect the Naval fleet against any air, surface and underwater threats.

Analytica

- The design of Project 15B has largely maintained the hull form, propulsion machinery, many platform equipment and major weapons and sensors as the Kolkata class to benefit from series production.
- These ships feature enhanced stealth features over the earlier class through the shaping of hull and use of radar transparent deck fittings which make them difficult to detect and also feature significant advances in automation and networking.
- The ship has a significant indigenous content of approx. 75% contributing towards AtmaNirbhar Bharat.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Scorpion Class Submarines

**Joint Naval exercise**

News Excerpt

The United States, Bahrain, Israel and the United Arab Emirates have begun a joint naval training in the Red Sea.

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Highlights

- The exercise follows the signing of the Abraham Accords in September 2020, which saw the UAE and Bahrain normalise their relations with Israel.
- Since February, Iran and its arch-enemy Israel have been accused of engaging in what analysts have called a "shadow war", in which vessels linked to each nation have come under attack in waters around the Gulf in tit-for-tat exchanges.
- Negotiations between Iran and major powers on reviving a 2015 nuclear deal resume in

Vienna, with failure carrying the risk of a sharp spike in regional tensions.

- The US 5th Fleet is based in the Gulf island state of Bahrain and operates in the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean.

Analytica

- The five-day exercise in the Red Sea is intended to enhance interoperability between participating forces.
- Maritime collaboration helps safeguard freedom of navigation and the free flow of trade, which are essential to regional security and stability.
- This marks the first time that the four states have publically acknowledged collaborating in maritime operations, especially as tensions over a nuclear deal with Iran continue to jeopardise stability in the Middle East.

**Defence Exercises**

India-France bilateral Army exercise	SITMEX-2021	INDO-THAI COORDINATED PATROL (CORPAT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The sixth edition of India and France Shakti 2021 was conducted in Frejus, France.</li> <li>❖ India has already conducted joint Air Force and Naval exercises with France earlier in the year.</li> <li>❖ It will focus on Counter Terrorism operations in backdrop of semi-urban terrain under United Nations Mandate with an aim to enhance military cooperation and inter-operability between the two Armies.</li> <li>❖ India and France carry out three biennial training exercises — Exercise Garuda with the Indian Air Force, Exercise Varuna with the Indian Navy and Exercise Shakti with Indian Army.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Recently, the 3rd edition of India, Singapore and Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX – 21 has been conducted in Andaman Sea.</li> <li>❖ It is being conducted annually since 2019.</li> <li>❖ It will enhance the cooperation between the participating navies towards augmenting the overall maritime security in the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Recently, the 32nd edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy was conducted.</li> <li>❖ The two navies have been undertaking CORPAT bi-annually since 2005 along their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).</li> <li>❖ It will enhance the operational synergy by exchange of information for prevention of smuggling, illegal immigration and for conduct of search and rescue (SAR) operations at sea.</li> </ul>

**Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (Ions) – 2021**

News Excerpt

Recently, the 7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs was hosted by the French Navy.

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Pre-Connect

- IONS Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) is the decision-making body at the level of Chiefs of Navies, which meets biennially.
  - 6th IONS and CoC was conducted by Iran Navy in April 2018 at Tehran.

Highlights

- It is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the

littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.

- The inaugural edition of IONS was held in Feb 2008 at New Delhi, with Indian Navy as the Chair for two years.
  - The chairmanship of IONS has been held by India (2008-10), UAE (2010-12), South Africa (2012-14), Australia (2014-16), Bangladesh (2016-18) and Islamic Republic of Iran (2018-21).
  - The IONS Chair is presently held with France.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

About SAGAR initiative and IORA

Members:

- ✓ IONS includes 24 nations that permanently hold territory that abuts or lies within the Indian Ocean, and 8 observer nations:
- ✓ The members have been geographically grouped into the following four sub-regions
  1. South Asian Littorals: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory)
  2. West Asian Littorals: Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates
  3. East African Littorals: France (Reunion), Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania.
  4. South East Asian and Australian Littorals: Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

Analytica

- IONS fits into India’s three-fold ambitions in the region:
  - Strengthening and deepening the relations with the Indian Ocean littoral states.
  - Establishing its leadership potential and aspirations of being a net-security provider; and
  - Fulfilling India’s vision of a rules-based and stable maritime order in the IOR.
  - IONS can help India to counter-balance the increasing presence of China in the region.
  - It will help India to consolidate its sphere of influence from the Straits of Malacca to Hormuz.
  - It would ensure that India has the scope to cooperate with the littoral states on issues of maritime security and awareness in the region.

**Advanced Electronic Warfare Suite**

News Excerpt

Recently, the Prime Minister handed over an advanced electronic warfare system 'Shakti' to the Indian Navy at a ceremony to be held as part of RashtraRakshaSamarpanParv at Jhansi.

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Highlights

- The Shakti Electronic Warfare (EW) system will provide an electronic layer of defence against modern radars and anti-ship missiles to ensure electronic dominance and survivability in the maritime battlefield.
  - This system will replace the earlier generation EW Systems of the Indian Navy.

**DELHI: VIJAY NAGAR 9717380832 & OLDRAJENDER NAGAR 9811293743 | JAIPUR: 8290800441**  
**BENGALURU: KORMANGALA 7619166663 & CHANDRA LAYOUT 7619136662 | BHOPAL: 7509975361**  
**PATNA: 7463950774 | INDORE: 7314977441 | RANCHI: 9939982007 | www.ksgindia.com**

- The system has been integrated with the wideband Electronic Support Measures (ESM) and Electronic Counter Measure (ECM) for the defence of Indian Navy Ships against missile attacks.
- The ESM of the system helps in finding accurate direction and interception of modern radars.
- The system has a built-in radar fingerprinting and data recording replay feature for post-mission analysis.
- The Shakti EW system has been designed and developed by Defence Electronics Research Laboratory (DLRL) Hyderabad.
- It will enhance the capabilities of the Indian Navy and termed it as a major milestone towards Atmanirbhar Bharat in areas of advanced defence technologies.
- It will augment navy's electronic intelligence capability for early warning, ships' defence against missile attack, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance for maritime domain awareness and ensure electronic dominance in the maritime battlefield.

#### Shakti System

- First Shakti system has been installed on-board INS Visakhapatnam and is being installed on-board Indigenous Aircraft Carrier, INS Vikrant.
- Twelve Shakti Systems are under production at Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) supported by more than fifty MSMEs at a total cost of Rs 1805 Crores.
- These systems are scheduled to be installed on-board capital warships under production, including P-15B, P-17A and Talwar class follow-on ships.

PEPPER IT WITH  
About light combat helicopter  
(LCH), Dhurv Helicopter

## ART & CULTURE

### UNESCO's Creative City

#### News Excerpt

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has picked up Srinagar as part of the UNESCO creative city network (UCCN) under the Crafts and Folk Arts category.

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#### Pre-Connect

- About Creative Cities Network: The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004. UCCN is aimed at promoting cooperation among member cities with the larger goal of sustainable urban development.
- Objective: Placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.

#### Highlights

- The process of nomination of Srinagar under the UNESCO 'Creative City Network' was undertaken and funded under the World Bank-funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project.
- Srinagar has become the 49th city of the world that joins UNESCO creative cities network 2021.
- The network involves folk art, media, film, literature, design, gastronomy and media arts.

As of now there are six Indian cities in The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) which are-

- Jaipur- Crafts and Folk Arts (2015)
- Varanasi- Creative city of Music (2015)
- Chennai- Creative city of Music (2017)
- Mumbai – Film (2019).
- Hyderabad – Gastronomy (2019) and
- Srinagar - Crafts and Folk Arts (2021)

### Kala SanskritiVikasYojna (KSVY)

#### News Excerpt

Recently Ministry of Culture implements a financial grant scheme known as Scheme of Financial Assistance for the Development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and Art under the "Kala SanskritiVikasYojna (KSVY)".

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#### Pre-Connect

Scheme of Financial Assistance for the Development of Buddhist/Tibetan Culture and Art:

#### Objective:

- To give financial assistance to the voluntary Buddhist/Tibetan organizations including Monasteries engaged in the propagation and scientific development of Buddhist/Tibetan culture, tradition and research in related fields.
- The quantum of funding is Rs.30.00 lakhs per year for an organization.

#### Highlights

- Kala SanskritiVikasYojna (KSVY), It is an umbrella scheme.
- It is implemented by Ministry of culture.

- This scheme is for to promote art and culture in the country.
- This is central sector scheme.
- Under KSVY, the ministry administers many schemes in which grants are sanctioned /approved for the holding of programs/activities.

The ministry implements many schemes under KSVY, where the grants are sanctioned/approved for holding programs/activities.

- Scheme of Financial Assistance for Promotion of Art and Culture
- Scheme of Financial Assistance for Creation of Cultural Infrastructure
- Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage

It aims to promote the 13 intangible cultural heritage of India which is recognised by the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

<u>S. No.</u>	<u>ICH Element</u>	<u>Year of Inscription</u>
1.	Tradition of Vedic chanting	2008
2.	Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana	2008
3.	Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre	2008
4.	Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India	2009
5.	Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala	2010
6.	Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan	2010
7.	Chhau dance	2010
8.	Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India	2012
9.	Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur	2013
10.	Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India	2014
11.	Yoga	2016
12.	Nawrouz, Novruz, Nowrouz, Nowrouz, Nawrouz, Nauryz, Nooruz, Nowruz, Navruz, Nevruz, Nowruz, Navruz	2016
13.	KumbhMela	2017

## AdiShankara

### News Excerpt

Recently, Prime Minister unveiled a 12-foot statue of AdiShankaracharya at Kedarnath, where the acharya is believed to have attained samadhi at the age of 32 in the ninth century.

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### Pre-Connect

- He composed the KanakadharaStotra.
- Shankara’s had philosophical debates with scholars such as MandanaMisra and his wife UbhayaBharati, KumarilaBhatta, etc.
- He was challenged by UbhayaBharati on aspects of kama, the celibate Shankara is said to have undergone parakayapravesha to gain knowledge about sex.
- GovindaBhagavatpada was the Guru of the AdiShankara.
- Shankara, also called Shankaracharya, born 11th May 788 AD,
- It is said that he was born in Kaladi village on the bank of the Periyar, the largest river in Kerala.
- His most renowned exponent of the Advaita Vedanta School of philosophy.
- He wrote commentaries on the *Brahma-sutra*, the principal Upanishads, and the *Bhagavadgita*.
- At the age of 32, AdiShankaracharya retired to the Himalayas and is believed to have entered a cave near Kedarnath.

### Key Works of Shankara

Shankara is said to have founded four monasteries

- Shringeri (south)
- Puri (east)
- Dvaraka (west) and
- Badarinatha (north)

### Work of Shankara

- Brahmasutrabhasya (Bhashya or commentary on the Brahma Sutra).
- BhajagovindaStotra.
- Nirvana Shatakam.
- PrakaranGranth.

### Philosophy of AdiShankara

- He gave the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta.
- He argues that there is no duality; the mind, awake or dreaming, moves through maya (“illusion”); and non duality (advaita) is the only final truth. That truth is concealed by the ignorance of illusion. There is no becoming, either of a thing by itself or of a thing out of some other thing.

## Best Tourism Village

### News Excerpt

Recently village of Telangana, Pochampally selected as one of the best Tourism Villages by United Nations World Tourism Organisation.

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### About United Nations World Tourism Organisation

- UNWTO takes charge of the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- UNWTO promotes the value of tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability, and offers leadership and support in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.
- A total of 44 villages from 32 countries across the five world regions were granted the recognition in 2021.
- This initiative recognizes those villages committed to making tourism a strong driver of their development and wellbeing in the line of SDGs.

### UNWTO's initiative

**Aim:** It gives award to those villages which are outstanding examples of rural destinations and showcase good practices in line with its specified nine evaluation areas like—

- Cultural and Natural Resources
- Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources
- Economic Sustainability
- Social Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Tourism Potential and Development and Value Chain Integration
- Governance and Prioritization of Tourism
- Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Health, Safety and Security

### Key Points

- Pochampally's Village has unique weaving styles and patterns. Pochampally, was awarded by UNWTO.
- It received special focus due to vocal for local initiative as a part of AtmaNirbhar Bharat.
- Award was given on the occasion of the 24th session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Madrid, Spain.
- It also aims to support villages to enhance their rural tourism potential through training and access to opportunities for improvement.
- The Ministry of Tourism recommended three villages for the UNWTO Best Tourism Village entry from India
- These were -
  - Kongthong in Meghalaya
  - LadhpuraKhas, Madhya Pradesh and
  - Pochampally in Telangana.
- Pochampally is often referred to as the Silk City of India for the exquisite sarees that are woven through a unique style called Ikat.
- This style, PochampallyIkat, received a Geographical Indicator (GI Status) in 2004.
- Pochampally is also known as BhoodanPochampally to commemorate the Bhoodan Movement that was launched by AcharyaVinobhaBhave from this village on April 18th, 1951.

## Miscellaneous

### National Sports Awards 2021

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- Recently, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2021.
- ‘Major Dhyan Chand KhelRatna Award’ is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of previous four years.
  - Recently, the Rajiv Gandhi KhelRatna award was renamed as Major Dhyan Chand KhelRatna award is the highest sporting honour in the nation.
  - It was instituted in 1991-1992 and the first recipient was Chess legend Viswanathan Anand.
- ‘Arjuna Award for outstanding performance in Sports and Games’ is given for good performance over a period of previous four years and showing qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of discipline.
- ‘Dronacharya Award for outstanding coaches in Sports and Games’ is given to coaches for doing outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis and enabling sportspersons to excel in International events.
- ‘Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime achievement in Sports and Games’ is given to honour sportspersons who have contributed to sports by their performance and continue to contribute to promotion of sports event after their retirement.
  - It was instituted in 2002.
- ‘Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar’ is given to corporate entities (both in private and public sector), sports control boards, NGOs including sports bodies at the State and National level who have played a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development.
- Overall top performing university in inter-university tournaments is given Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy.

### Paika Rebellion

- The rebellion was started in 1817 continued till 1825 and “is one of the beginnings of popular uprisings against the British in India”, the minister declared that it would now be included in the curriculum of NCERT.
- The Paika rebellion of 1817 took place nearly 40 years before the first sepoy mutiny.
- The Paikas were peasant militas of the Gajapati rulers of Odisha who offered military services to the king.
- The British established themselves in Odisha when the East India company dethroned the King of Khurda, Raja Mukunda Deva in 1803.
- The Paikas lost their estates when the new colonial establishments and land revenue settlements of the British came into force.
- The continuous interference in the economy and revenue systems led to exploitation and oppression of the peasants and farmers eventually triggering a rebellion against the British.
- A large number of Paikas were mobilised under the leadership of Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar, who then confronted the British on April 2, 1817.
  - Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mohapatra Bharamarbar Rai, the highest-ranking military general of Mukund Dev II, and erstwhile holder of the lucrative Rodanga estate, led an army of Paikas to join the uprising of the Kondhs.
- Bakshi Jagabandhu escaped to the jungles, and stayed out of reach of the British until 1825, when he finally surrendered under negotiated terms.

### ThevarJayanthi

- The Prime Minister paid tribute to PasumponMuthuramalingaThevar on the 114th birth anniversary (guru puja).
- ThevarJayanthi is celebrated on October 30 every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of PasumponMuthuramal.
- He was a freedom-fighter-cum-spiritual leader. He is seen as a deity among the Mukulathor community, a cluster community comprising the Kallar, Maravar and Ahambadiar.
- People of the Mukulathor community still make offerings as is done for deities in temples to the statue of Thevar installed in the busy Goripalayam junction in Madurai, among other places, on his Jeyanathi and Guru Pooja celebration.
- The socialist and a colleague of Subhash Chandra Bose, he served as the national deputy chairman of All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) from 1952.
- He was elected three times to the national parliamentary constituency.
- The Madras Presidency government brought in the Criminal Tribes Act in 1920 that branded entire communities as criminals.
- He was instrumental in getting the act repealed after continuous efforts in 1946.

### MaulanaAbulKalam Azad

- Every year, November 11 is celebrated as National education day, which commemorates the birth anniversary of independent India's first education minister, MaulanaAbulKalam Azad.
- In 2008, the ministry of human resource development decided to celebrate Azad's birthday as National Education Day.
- A pathbreaking thinker and intellectual, his role in the freedom struggle is inspiring.
- He was passionate about the education sector and worked to further brotherhood in society. He was a firm believer in the co-existence of religions.
- He was fluent in many languages including Arabic, Bengali and Persian.
- He was a member of Congress and in 1923, he became the youngest president of the party at the age of 35.
- He also worked as a journalist and contributed articles to several Urdu publications. In 1912, Azad published a weekly Urdu newspaper called Al-Hilal.
- He was actively involved in the Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement.
- He rejected the idea of a separate electoral system for Muslims and called for a single nation committed to secularism.
- He endorsed the Nehru report which was rejected by almost all the Muslim leaders since it ruled out the idea of separate electorates for minorities.
- In 1920, Azad, along with two others, became one of the founding members of the JamiaMilliaIslamia University, which was originally established at Aligarh, in United Provinces.
- He was posthumously awarded 'Bharat Ratna', India's highest civilian honor, in 1992.

### AcharyaKripalani

- Recently, the Prime Minister has paid tributes to AcharyaKripalani on his Jayanti (11<sup>th</sup> November). He was well-known as a Gandhian and a socialist.He was born in Hyderabad, Sindh in 1888.
- He was well-known for his work in the field of education, environment and other social

movements.

- He earned the moniker 'Acharya' around 1922 when he was teaching at the Gujarat Vidyapith, founded by the Mahatma a couple of years before.
- From 1912 to 1927, he taught at various places before becoming wholly involved in India's freedom movement. He met the Mahatma during the Champaran Satyagrah in 1917.
- He was a critic of the Indira Gandhi government and was arrested during Emergency in 1975.
- He was elected to the Constituent Assembly from United Province. He was the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights.
- The first no-confidence motion was moved during the third Lok Sabha in 1963 when Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister.
- The motion was moved by former Congress and Praja Socialist Party leader Acharya J B Kripalani.

#### Bharat Gaurav Trains

- To promote and attract tourism business, the Indian Railways launched Bharat Gaurav trains that will be operated by private players and run on theme-based circuits.
- All inclusive package to tourists including rail travel, hotel accommodation and sightseeing arrangement, visit to historical/heritage sites, tour guides etc. will be provided.
- According to the Bharat Gaurav policy, any operator or service provider, or virtually anyone, can lease trains from Indian Railways to run on a theme-based circuit as a special tourism package.
  - The tenure of the arrangement is a minimum of two years and maximum of the codal life of the coach.
- The annual 'Right of Use' charges calculated on the basis of the type of coach taken and the duration.
- These trains will help realise the vision of Prime Minister to showcase India's rich cultural heritage and magnificent historical places to the people of India and the world.

## Concept Clearing Assignment

1. Asset Reconstruction companies have come of age and stands as a very important component for reducing the non performing entities of the economy. Discuss.
2. All India Judicial Services are touted as the panacea for solving the pendency dilemma of the Judiciary system in the country. Critically Analyse.
3. The instances of flood can't be circumvented, but by the regulation of flood plain area the extent of impact could be diminished. Comment. And also highlight the bottlenecks for the implementation of flood plain zoning legislation.
4. In the times of reducing "Parliamentary Efficiency", Public Accounts Committee can become ever-relevant. Elucidate.
5. In the light of emerging dragon clout in South China Sea, India-ASEAN must develop strong bases over which can develop a modern and strong relationship. Discuss.
6. India's pragmatic policy outreach has put India in advantageous position with respect to the Arab countries and Israel. Discuss.
7. What is Net Zero emission? Explain India's approach to realize the Net Zero emission targets. In given context, what ways are obligatory for India?
8. Explain the intrinsic components of Natural Farming? To what extent do you think that natural farming would be a panacea for sustainable farming. Substantiate your views.
9. Examine the issues involved in implementation of facial recognition technology?
10. Discuss the role of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad in Indian National Movement?
11. India and France can best be called natural partners and their partnership has been firm with the passage of time. Comment.
12. MPLADS and MGNREGA can be the duo for reducing the unemployment conditions in the country and particularly in the rural areas. Comment.
13. What do you understand by the term "Private Member Bill"? How it is different from the government bill? What is the procedure to introduce a private member bill in the legislature?
14. France underlined its position in the Indo-Pacific region as a "resident power". What do you understand by the term "resident power"? Discuss the role of India to augment France's position in the Indo-Pacific region.
15. Adequacy of Judicial Infrastructure is a pre-requisite for reduction of pendency and backlog of cases in Courts. Elaborate the achievements of the National Mission for Judicial Infrastructure. What do you know about the formation of a new dedicated agency in news for the infrastructure development in the Indian Judiciary?

PT ORIENTED QUESTIONS

1. With reference to the verdict in the "Prakash Singh vs Union of India, 2006", which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. In it, the Supreme Court gave seven directives for police reforms to the Central and the state governments.
2. One of the directives contained creation of the Police Complaint Authority.
3. The fifth directive says that there should be a state level PCA and the district level PCAs.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004.
2. Srinagar and Jaipur are members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of Crafts and Folk Arts.

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

3. With reference to the "Private Member Bill", consider the following statements:

1. Any member of the legislature from the opposition party is a private member.
2. The Bills introduced by private members are referred to as Private Member's Bills.
3. The government bills have the backing of the government and reflect its legislative agenda.

Which of the Statements given above is/are not correct?

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

4. 'Glasgow Declaration' is sometimes seen in the news is related to-

- (a) Forests and Land Use
- (b) River interlinking
- (c) Pollution
- (d) Cheetah translocation

5. Consider the following statements:

1. There is the large-scale commercial production of shale oil and gas in India.
2. It is extracted using hydraulic fracking.
3. Russia and the US are among the largest shale oil producers in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

6. With reference to the "Public Accounts Committee", which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The Committee on Public Accounts was first constituted in the year 1921.
2. The Committee consists of 15 Members from the upper house of the Parliament.
3. President is empowered to appoint the Chairman of the Committee from amongst its members.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

7. Consider the following statements about SagarNidhi:

1. It was commissioned in 2020 for the country's marine research programme.
2. The vessel is capable of carrying out geo-scientific, meteorological and oceanographic research.
3. It helps in technology demonstration work on deep-sea mining and tsunami studies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

8. Consider the following statements regarding Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission:

1. It is ISRO's first planetary defense test mission.
2. The target of the spacecraft is a small moonlet called Dimorphos.
3. It is a suicide mission and the spacecraft will be completely destroyed

Which of the Statements given above is/are correct?

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

9. Consider the following statements regarding the Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS):

1. It will include all Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, and Co-operative Banks.
2. The RBI would appoint the Ombudsman and a Deputy Ombudsman for three years.
3. The scheme will follow 'One Nation-One Ombudsman' approach.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

10. Consider the following statements about AcharyaKripalani

1. He was the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Fundamental Rights.
2. He moved the first-ever no confidence motion on the floor of the Lok Sabha.

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:

1. Natural farming advocates the cultivation of diverse species of crops.
2. Natural Farming may not be suitable for growing on a large scale.
3. Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati Programme (BPKP) aims at encouraging traditional indigenous practices.

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

12. Consider the following statements:

1. India is the largest recipient of remittances in the world.
2. Remittance in India is growing consistently for the last 10 years.
3. Remittances play a significant role in improving the economic development of an economy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only

- (c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 2 and 3 only
13. Recently, India announced Net Zero Target to be achieved by 2070, in this context, consider the following statements:
1. It is the first time that India has taken any climate target in terms of its absolute emissions.
  2. India will meet 50 % of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.
  3. Net Zero is a state in which a country's total emissions are offset by absorptions of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

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
14. Consider the following statements regarding the "National Mission for Judicial Infrastructure":
1. Primary responsibility of infrastructure development for the subordinate judiciary rests with the Central Government.
  2. The Central Government augments the resources of the state governments by releasing financial assistance under it.
  3. It aims at improving the physical infrastructure of the subordinate courts and also the housing needs for Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 3 only  
(c) 2 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
15. Consider the following statements regarding the "National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India (NJIAI)":

1. The proposed NJIAI could work as a central agency.
2. There is not any provision of its state branches.
3. It is much on the model of National Human Rights Commission of India.

Which of the Statements given above is/are *not* correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 3 only  
(c) 2 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
16. Consider the following statements about Ganges River Dolphins:
1. They are generally blind and catch their prey in a unique manner.
  2. It also shares habitat with crocodiles, freshwater turtles, and wetland birds.
  3. They are listed as 'Critically Endangered' under IUCN Red List Assessments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only  
(b) 1 and 2 only  
(c) 3 only  
(d) 2 and 3 only
17. With reference to the G20 'Troika', which of the following statements is/are *not* correct?
1. It refers to the third world countries within the G20.
  2. It consists of the current, previous and the incoming presidencies — Indonesia, Italy and India.
  3. India will assume the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

18. Consider the following statements regarding the effects of Stubble Burning:

1. As a result of stubble burning black carbon is released.
2. The solubility capacity of the upper layers of soil is increased.
3. The heat from burning kills the bacterial and fungal populations critical for fertile soil.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

19. The term 'Project 15B' is often mentioned in the news in the context of-

- (a) Ships
- (b) Drones
- (c) Rover
- (d) Spacecraft

20. Consider the following statements regarding Pochampally Village in Telangana:

1. It was selected as one of the best Tourism Villages by United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).
2. It is also known as Bhoodan Pochampally to commemorate the Bhoodan Movement.
3. Pochampally Ikat received a Geographical Indicator (GI Status) in the year 2021.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

21. Consider the following statements

regarding the bilateral relations between the India and the Sri-Lanka:

1. India and Sri Lanka both have the followers of Buddhism.
2. Sri Lanka is one of India's major development partners with Indian grants amounting to around USD 570 million.
3. Sri Lanka has scrapped a 2019 deal with India and Japan to operate the East Container Terminal at the Colombo port.

Which of the Statements given above is/are correct?

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

22. With reference to the "India ASEAN Summit", consider the following statements:

1. India participated in the 18th India-ASEAN Summit at the invitation of Vietnam, the current Chair of ASEAN.
2. The leadership announced the year 2022 as India-ASEAN Friendship Year.
3. India underlined the centrality of ASEAN in India's Act East Policy.

Which of the Statements given above is/are correct?

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

23. With reference to frothing, consider the following statements:

1. It is one of the signs of the exceptionally high levels of pollution in the river.
2. It could also lead to the dead zone and biological deserts in rivers.
3. Foam bubbles are produced when organic matter decomposes.

Which of the Statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

- (b) 1 and 2 only  
(c) 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
24. With reference to the “India-France Defence Partnership”, which of the following statements is/are not correct?  
1. France supported India on the issue of 1998 nuclear test.  
2. India-France has a defence dialogue at the ministerial level.  
3. Both have defence exercises like Garuda (Navy), Shakti(Air force), and Varuna(Army).  
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:  
(a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 3 only  
(c) 2 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
25. Consider the following statements regarding the India West Asia bilateral relations:  
1. India has been supporter of Palestinian cause for a very long time and has exhibited its support on many multilateral forums.  
2. India gave recognition to the state of Palestine in the late 90s.  
3. India’s support for Palestine is necessary to maintain ties with other Arab countries for their essential natural resource-Petroleum.  
4. India’s good relation with West Asia is necessary for its 11 million Diaspora working in Arab countries.  
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
(a) 1, 3 and 4 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) 2, 3 and 4 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
26. With reference to India, Didwana, Kuchaman, Sargol and Khatu are the names of (UPSC 2020)  
(a) Glaciers  
(b) Mangrove areas  
(c) Ramsar sites  
(d) Saline lakes
27. Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2020)  
1. In the tropical zone, the western sections of the oceans are warmer than the eastern sections owing to the influence of trade winds.  
2. In the temperate zone, westerlies make the eastern sections of oceans warmer than the western sections.  
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
28. Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2020)  
1. The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is appointed by the Central Government.  
2. Certain provisions in the Constitution of India give the Central Government the right to issue directions to the RBI in the public interest.  
3. The Governor of the RBI draws his power from the RBI Act.  
Which of the above statements are correct?  
(a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only.  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
29. Consider the following: (UPSC 2020)  
1. Foreign currency convertible bonds  
2. Foreign institutional investment with certain conditions  
3. Global depository receipts  
4. Non-resident external deposits  
Which of the above can be included in Foreign Direct Investments?  
(a) 1, 2 and 3

- (b) 3 only  
(c) 2 and 4  
(d) 1 and 4
30. Consider the following statements:  
(UPSC 2020)
1. It was during the reign of Iltutmish that Chengiz Khan reached the Indus in pursuit of the fugitive Khwarezm prince.
  2. It was during the of reign Muhammad bin Tughluq that

- Taimur occupied Multan and crossed the Indus.
3. It was during the reign of Deva Raya II of Vijayanagara Empire X that Vasco da Gama reached the coast of Kerala.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 1 and 2  
(c) 3 only  
(d) 2 and 3

ANSWERS

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