

# CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION focus

MONTHLY NOTES BY RAU'S

150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY AND  
INCREASING RELEVANCE OF M.K. GANDHI 133

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IS THE PANACEA FOR  
THE GROWTH AND SECURITY OF THE NATION 143

BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN OTHERS 145

PROMOTING SPEEDY, COST EFFECTIVE  
AND EQUITY IN JUSTICE TO ALL 147

WISDOM FINDS TRUTH 149

## CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

logical . simple . targeted  
analysis & explanation  
of relevant news

## ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

Coverage from  
varied  
sources

## ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

Selected essays  
from Rau's  
GSI students

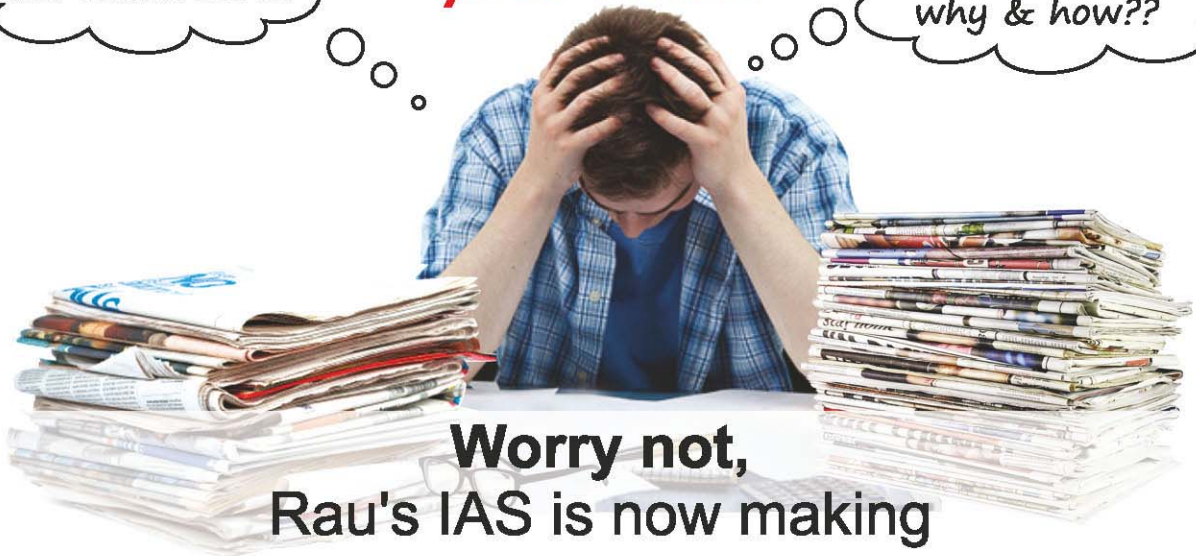
**OCTOBER  
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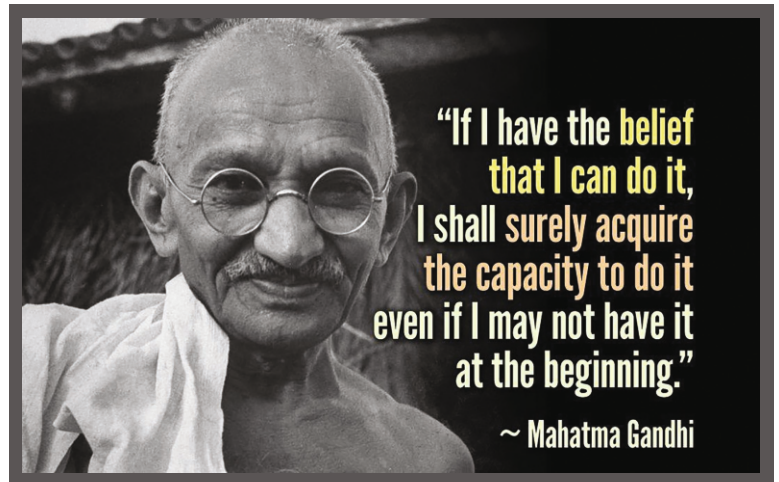
## FROM THE HINDU

- What to Read?
- Why? Prelims or Mains
- How? Key Facts & Takeaways



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editorial  
note



## A tribute to Mahatma Gandhi

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What made Gandhi great? The **first was the sheer longevity of his public life**. From the mid-1890s, when he decided to struggle for the rights of Indians in South Africa, till he drew his last breath in January 1948, Gandhi's political life spanned more than half a century. But it was not just the duration. It was also the breadth of his public engagements. Each year, each month, each day was spent in either thinking, writing, or mobilising people, in the quest for truth. His life was an open book. There has never been a leader as transparent about his private life down to the minutest personal detail, his public activities, and methods and objectives as the Mahatma was.

The **second was the quality of this public life**. Gandhi dealt with every big question of his time: Colonialism and the battle against it; the meaning of being an Indian; the diversity of India's social landscape; caste and religion; war and peace; the value of labour; economic organisation of society; and the most meaningful way to live one's life. Gandhi wrote extensively on each theme, but did not merely deal with it at an abstract level. He translated it into

reality. From living the ashram life to focusing on constructive work, from mobilising masses to gently arguing with his critics, Gandhi lived out his beliefs.

Gandhi also brought a set of values which changed the complexion of Indian public life. **Democracy**: for it, the Mahatma driven by his deep faith in human wisdom, deepened the roots of the Indian freedom struggle and took it beyond elite confines. **Non-violence**: for this was both an article of faith for Gandhi since he could see the ethical corrosion that came with violence, as well as a shrewd tactical ploy because he realised that the adversary had a more violent apparatus to quell a violent, even if just, movement. And, **Satyagraha**: for Gandhi realised that, while sticking to non-violence, there was no substitute for political struggle and came up with an innovative method to resist colonialism.

And finally, Gandhi brought a staggering **degree of empathy and understanding for everyone** — those who opposed him, those who came from different religious backgrounds, and those whose concerns were distinct from

his. It was this understanding that allowed him to construct an umbrella coalition. It was this understanding which enabled him to construct a coalition of individuals within his team — from a Jawaharlal Nehru to a Vallabhbhai Patel to a Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to a Rajendra Prasad — who may all have come from different political persuasions but were united in their devotion to him and the common goal of freedom. It was this understanding of the “other” that made him a truly secular hero, who was rooted in his own Hindu traditional idiom but could see the

indispensability of Hindu-Muslim unity for India to flourish. It was also this understanding that made him recognise the struggles of the “untouchables” and the need for radical reform in Hindu society.

In a nutshell, Mahatma's public life; his engagements; his transparency; his values; his response to themes that continue to animate the world today; his compassion; and his belief in pluralism, truth and peace made India what it is. He remains the conscience of the nation, and the greatest moral figure of modern history. The best tribute today would be to safeguard his vision.

# focus

CRITICAL NOTES FOR THE PREPARATION OF GENERAL STUDIES PAPERS

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

The sources relied for selection and analysis of issues are:

1. The Hindu, The Hindu (Sunday)
2. The Indian Express
3. The Times of India
4. Asian Age
5. The Tribune
6. The Economic Times
7. Hindu Business Line
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FOCUS is the Study Circle's monthly publication of contemporary issues and current affairs analysis. It is in fact a collective effort, by experienced educators in varied themes, of identifying current affairs in light of the UPSC syllabus, supplementing them with background information, explaining their related dimensions, lending them a generalist viewpoint and thus producing critical notes for the preparation of General Studies' syllabus.

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

## Features

### PART ONE | CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

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

### PART TWO | ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

- Coverage from varied sources

### PART THREE | ESSAYS FOR YOU

- Selected essays from Rau's GSI students

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

**Good Luck!**

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[ADMIN1:](#)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART ONE

### CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

02

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- # GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper II (Main)
- INDIA AND RUSSIA
  - # Bilateral Relationship 02
- INDIA AND USA
  - # Bilateral Relationship 05
- INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK 2019
  - # Report 06
- YEMEN CRISIS
  - # Conflict 08
- PRACTICE QUESTIONS 11

13

#### CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- # GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper II (Main)
- NATIONAL POPULATION REGISTER – NPR
  - #Rights issue #Governance 13
- RIGHT TO INTERNET ACCESS AS BASIC RIGHT
  - #Rights issue #Fundamental Right 14
- HINDI AS A PAN INDIAN LANGUAGE
  - #National Language #Official Language 16
- GOVERNMENT FUNDED NGOs UNDER RTI
  - # RTI #Pressure Groups 18
- CHANGE IN TERMS OF REFERENCE OF XV FINANCE COMMISSION #Financial Governance 20
- FISCAL WATCHDOG
  - #Regulatory Bodies #Fiscal Council 21

REDUCTION OF DISQUALIFICATION PERIOD OF SIKKIM CM #Election #Disqualification 22

JAN SOOCHNA PORTAL - RAJASTHAN #RTI 23

ECI TO MONITOR FAKE NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA #EC #Voluntary Code of Ethics 24

MEGHALAYA TO EXCLUDE UNREPRESENTED TRIBES #Tribes #Sixth Schedule 26

RESTRICTIONS OF FREE SPEECH AT COST OF SOCIAL WELFARE #Rights Issue #Freedom #Liberty 27

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE #Polity 29

IMPORTANCE OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES #Legislature 30

DALIT MUSLIMS TO BE CATEGORISED AS SCHEDULED CASTES # Scheduled Caste # Dalit 32

UK: PROROGUING PARLIAMENT MID-SESSION DECLARED INVALID #Judicial Review #Parliamentary Democracy #Rule of Law 32

GOOGLE'S RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN #Data Protection #Rights Issue #E-Governance 34

**CASE 1: PUBLIC PROSECUTOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM 36**

**CASE 2: FARMER FIELD SCHOOLS 37**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS 38

40

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- # GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper III (Main)
- MERGER OF BANKS- IS IT A PANACEA FOR THE PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS?
  - #Banking and Finance 40

INDIA'S GROWTH MODEL- CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES #Inclusive Growth	42	WTO DISPUTE OVER INDIA'S IMPOSITION OF CUSTOMS DUTY ON ICT PRODUCTS #WTO	59
DECODING THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM IN INDIA #JOBLESS GROWTH	43	WTO CASE ON DOMESTIC CONTENT REQUIREMENT #WTO	61
CORPORATE TAX RELIEF- BOOSTING PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT #Investment	44	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ATTACK ON SAUDI OIL FIELDS #International Trade	61
INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TRUST #Infrastructure	47	DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR ISSUANCE OF ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN #International Trade	61
TASK FORCE ON INFRASTRUCTURE #Infrastructure	47	LINKING OF MGNREGA WAGES TO INFLATION INDEX #Government Schemes	63
PMC BANK CRISIS- EXPLAINED #Banking	48	PM UJJWALA YOJANA- SUCCESS, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD #Energy	64
RBI REPORT ON STATUS OF EXTERNAL DEBT #Finance	49	NATIONAL ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAM #Livestock	65
SMALL FINANCE BANKS- ON-TAP LICENSING #Banking	51	SPECIAL MARKET INTERVENTION SCHEME #Agriculture	65
REDUCTION IN MERCHANT DISCOUNT RATES #Banking	51	SLOWDOWN IN THE AUTOMOBILE SECTOR #Industry	66
FPI INVESTMENT LIMIT IN GOVERNMENT BONDS #Capital Market	52	FDI IN COAL MINING- SIGNIFANCE AND IMPORTANCE #Coal Mining	67
AADHAAR ENABLED PAYMENT SERVICES #Banking	53	BIOTECH SECTOR- PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES #Industrial Development	68
STRATEGIC DISINVESTMENT AND GOLDEN SHARE #Capital Market	53	OILSEEDS- PRODUCTION, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD #Agriculture	70
BSE STARTUP PLATFORM #Capital Market	54	KRISHI KISAN APP FOR FARMERS #Agritech	71
SOVEREIGN GOLD BONDS #Capital Market	54	BAN ON EXPORT OF ONIONS # Agri-trade	72
MUDRA LOANS #MSMEs	55	WORLD TRAVEL AND TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS INDEX #Tourism	72
RECENT DECISIONS OF THE GST COUNCIL #GST	55	WORLD DIGITAL COMPETITIVENESS RANKING 2019 #Digital India	73
EQUALISATION LEVY #Taxation	56	LEADS INDEX #Logistics	73
RBI REPORT ON STATE FINANCES #Budgeting	57	INDEX OF EIGHT CORE INDUSTRIES #Industries	74
BOOSTER DOSE FOR EXPORTS #International trade	58	PRACTICE QUESTIONS	74

---



---

## 76

### SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

# GS Paper I & GS Paper II (Main)

SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY INDEX (SEQI) 2019

# Education **76**

ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION (AISHE)

#Education **77**

INDIA IODINE SURVEY

# Health # Nutrition **78**

MALNUTRITION IN INDIA

# Health **79**

POSHAN ABHIYAAN

# Health # Nutrition **80**

EAT RIGHT INDIA MOVEMENT

# Health #Nutrition **80**

EMERGING THREATS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

# Health **81**

SILICOSIS

# Health **82**

RURAL SANITATION STRATEGY

# Health # Sanitation **82**

ERADICATION OF MALARIA

# Health **83**

TB INDIA REPORT 2019

# Health **84**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS **85**

---

## 86

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper III (Main)

MAPPING DISEASE BURDEN IN INDIA

#Disease **86**

TB DIAGNOSIS KITS

#Diseases #Technology **87**

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IN E. COLI

#Antibiotic resistance #Diseases **87**

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES (CVD)

#Disease **88**

CONGO FEVER

#Disease **88**

CONTROLLING HEPATITIS B

#Disease **89**

AVIAN INFLUENZA (H5N1)

#Diseases **89**

VAPING DEVICES

#Technology #Diseases **90**

QUANTUM SUPREMACY

#Technology **90**

FINGERPRINT OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE

#Space Technology **91**

ASTEROID IMPACT DEFLECTION ASSESSMENT (AIDA)  
MISSION

#Space Technology **92**

EXOPLANET K2-18B

#Space Technology **92**

CHANDRAYAAN-2

#Space Technology **93**

GAGANYAAN MISSION

#Space Technology **93**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS **94**

---

## 96

### GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

# GS Paper (Prelims) and GS Paper I & III(Main)

SINGLE USE PLASTIC

# Pollution **96**

OUTCOME OF COP14

#Environment # Conservation **99**

SPECIAL CLIMATE SUMMIT AT UNGA

#Climate Change **101**

DIFFERENTIAL GLOBAL CARBON TAX

# Global Warming **102**

IPCC: SPECIAL REPORT ON THE OCEAN AND CRYOSPHERE  
IN A CHANGING CLIMATE  
# Climate Change **103**

RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGETS  
# Environment **105**

LIGHTNING  
#Disaster Management **105**

CLEAN MEAT  
#Biodiversity **107**

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD  
#Conservation **107**

PANGOLIN  
#Conservation **108**

NILGIRI TAHR  
#Conservation **109**

CRYODRAKON BOREAS  
#Biodiversity **109**

VULTURE CONSERVATION IN INDIA  
#Conservation **109**

NEW GINGER SPECIES  
#Biodiversity **110**

ENDOSULFAN  
#Pollution **110**

DEOCHA PACHAMI COAL MINE  
#Location #Resource **111**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS **111**

---

## 113

### HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

# GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper I (Main)

HARAPPAN PEOPLE  
#Ancient India **113**

EXCAVATIONS AT KANNUR  
#Ancient India **114**

EXCAVATIONS AT KEELADI  
#Ancient India **114**

PURANA QILA  
#Art and Culture #Medieval India **115**

HISTORY OF KASHMIR  
# Medieval India **116**

FIROZABAD  
# Medieval India **116**

KEMPEGOWDA STATUE  
#Medieval India #Art and Culture **117**

THE BENGAL FAMINE OF 1943  
# Modern India **117**

VALIVADE COMMEMORATIVE PILLAR  
# Modern India **118**

DAMARAM: MUSICAL INSTRUMENT  
# Art and Culture **119**

KAMMANDLU QUILT  
# Art and Culture **120**

ATHI VARDAR FESTIVAL  
# Art and Culture **120**

TUENSANG, NAGALAND  
# Art and Culture **121**

WHISTLING VILLAGES OF MEGHALAYA  
# Art and Culture **122**

ARANMULA SNAKEBOAT RACE  
# Art and Culture **122**

MARAYUR JAGGERY  
# Art and Culture **123**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS **124**

---

## 125

### SECURITY

# GS Paper III (Main)

DEFENCE MANUFACTURING HUB  
# Security #Industry **125**

PRIVATE SECURITY AGENCY LICENSING PORTAL  
# Security **126**

APACHE HELICOPTERS  
# Security **127**

LCA TEJAS

# Security **127**

ASTRA MISSILE

# Security **128**

BRAHMOS SUPERSONIC CRUISE MISSILES

# Security **128**

MILITARY EXERCISES

# Security **128**

PRACTICE QUESTIONS **128**

---

## 129

### MISCELLANEOUS

2019 IAAF WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

# Athletics #Global Tournament **130**

QUIZ TIME

# General Knowledge **130**

WHAT DID YOU ASK AT SCHOOL TODAY?

# Books to read and cherish **131**

INVICTUS

# Poem to inspire #Individual ethics **131**

---

## PART TWO

### ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

## 133

**150<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY AND INCREASING  
RELEVANCE OF M.K. GANDHI**

#ETHICS #INTEGRITY #APTITUDE **133**

## CASE STUDIES FOR PRACTICE

MAINS GS PAPER IV **141**

---

## PART THREE

### ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

## 142

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IS THE PANACEA FOR THE  
GROWTH AND SECURITY OF THE NATION**

# Science and Development

**SRAVANI (RAU'S BENGALURU STUDENT) 143**

**BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN OTHERS**

# Ethics

**SRAVANI (RAU'S BENGALURU STUDENT) 145**

**PROMOTING SPEEDY, COST EFFECTIVE AND EQUITY IN  
JUSTICE TO ALL #JUSTICE AND GOVERNANCE**

**MUSKAN ARYA (RAU'S DELHI STUDENT) 147**

**WISDOM FINDS TRUTH**

# Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude

**SNIGDHA GAUTAM (RAU'S DELHI STUDENT, BATCH M-  
5) 149**

**PART ONE**

**CURRENT  
AFFAIRS  
ANALYSIS**

**logical . simple . targeted  
analysis & explanation  
of all relevant news of the month**

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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

## BILATERAL RELATIONS OF INDIA

### INDIA AND RUSSIA

# BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

PRIMARY SOURCE	mea.gov.in	SECONDARY SOURCE	THE HINDU
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#### IN NEWS

During his recent visit to Russia, the Prime Minister of India attended the 20th India - Russia Annual Summit. He also participated in the 5th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) as the Chief Guest thus became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Vladivostok in far east Russia. The summit level meeting saw the two nations sign 25 pacts in area ranging from connectivity, oil and gas, deep-sea exploration, space, and energy.

**EEF:** The Eastern Economic Forum was established by Russia in 2015 to support economic development of Russia's Far East and to expand international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Russia's Far East is a sparsely populated area with harsh climatic conditions, due to which even agriculture can't be practised here, hence alternative means of economic development becomes essential. EEF is held every year in Vladivostok.

#### ► Relevance of cooperation in Far East for India and Russia

- **Balancing China:** So far, China was the major investor but Russia wanted to reduce sole dependence on China, hence India can be an alternative to diversify the cooperation in this region.
- **Potential benefits:** Immense possibilities that await India are in the form of coal, diamond, mining, rare earth, agriculture, timber, pulp & paper and tourism, among many others.

- **Interest of India:** India has unveiled the "Act Far East" policy to boost India's engagement with Russia's Far East region and announced a \$1 billion line of credit for the development of the resource-rich region. Several Indian companies have been successfully set up in the Russian Far East region, such as **M/s KGK in Vladivostok** in the field of diamond cutting and **M/s Tata Power in Kamchatka in coal mining**, among others.
- **New initiative:** A new sea route to India was explored. For this, a maritime route between Chennai and Vladivostok has also been proposed to increase connectivity between Russia's Far East and India, bypassing Europe, which would enable to transfer cargo between Chennai and Vladivostok in 24 days in comparison to over 40 days currently.

**Possible route:** An ocean liner travelling from Vladivostok to Chennai would sail southward on the Sea of Japan past the Korean peninsula, Taiwan and the Philippines in the South China Sea, past Singapore and through the Strait of Malacca, to emerge into the Bay of Bengal and then cut across through the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago to Chennai.



**Possible benefits of the route:** It will help in the upscaling of trade relations between the two nations. It will also increase India's presence in the Indo-Pacific, and especially the South China Sea, a deeply contested patch of the ocean that China considers its sole domain.

### OVERALL OUTCOME OF RUSSIAN VISIT

#### ► Focus on Trade

- The major takeaway from this meeting between the two countries is that **trade is going to be the thrust area now** in India-Russia relationship, which has so far been seen mostly from the prism of military and civil nuclear cooperation. For this, India and Russia have set a mutual target to bring the trade turnover to USD 30 billion by 2025, which will be almost three times the present level of USD 11 billion.
- Both sides have been executing **mutual settlement of payments in national currencies**.
- Both the countries have agreed to have an **investment protection agreement soon**. This would mean that the investments made by one country in the other would not be negatively affected by any of the decisions taken by the central government, at a later stage.
- Both have agreed to intensify joint work towards **eliminating barriers in mutual trade**, including protective measures, customs and administrative barriers. This would be facilitated by the proposed Trading Agreement between the **Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and India**.

**Note:** EAEU is a free trade area that includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia. The countries represent a market of some 183 million people and a combined GDP (PPP) of about US\$5 trillion.

#### ► Cooperation in the field of Energy

- The energy industry has traditionally been a key area of interaction between the two countries – this is an area where Indian and Russian economies complement each other beneficially. **Civil nuclear cooperation** between India and Russia is an important component of strategic partnership. Construction of the remaining four of the six **nuclear power plants at Kudankulam** is under way. Both sides are also exploring the possibilities of joint manufacturing of equipment and fuel.

- Successful cooperation in the **construction of the Rooppur NPP in Bangladesh** is a jewel of Indo-Russian nuclear cooperation in a third country. Both are looking to further expand similar cooperation in other countries.
- Russia has been a **major supplier of energy resources** such as coking coal, hydrocarbons and LNG. With the signing of the **Roadmap for cooperation in Hydrocarbons for 2019-24** during the Summit, both sides expect bilateral cooperation in this sector to touch new heights.
- Both sides are determined to **forge cooperation in geological exploration and joint development of oil and gas fields** in Russia and India, including offshore fields.
- India and Russia have also begun to consider the prospects for **expanding cooperation in hydro and thermal power**, energy efficiency as well as for designing and constructing facilities that generate energy from non-conventional sources.

#### ► Cooperation in the field of Technology

- Both the countries have strong collaboration in high-tech fields such as AI, Robotics, Pharmacy, Nanotechnology and space.
- Long association in space cooperation between **Roscosmos** and **ISRO** is touching new heights. Astronauts of India will receive training in Russia for Gaganyaan, i.e. Indian Human Space Flight.
- India and Russia stand firmly together for UNCOPUS(UN Convention for Peaceful Use of outer Space) and PAROS(Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space).
- Whenever the need arises, India and Russia would work together in Antarctica and Arctic as well.

#### ► Cooperation in the field of Defence

- India-Russia close cooperation in military and military-technical fields is a pillar of their bilateral Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership.
- Both sides undergo regular military contacts and joint exercises of the Armed Forces. The **2011-2020 Long-Term Program for Military and Technical Cooperation** is reaching its successful conclusion. Both the countries have agreed to extend the agreement for mutual military and technical cooperation for ten years. This extension will be for the period **2021 to 2030**.

- The two sides have also agreed to develop a framework for **co-operation on reciprocal logistical support** for their respective militaries.
  - India is also **purchasing the S-400 Missile Defence System**, ignoring the threat of **CAATSA(Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act)** sanctions from U.S.
  - India and Russia have entered into agreements to manufacture spare parts for Russian defence equipment, through Joint Ventures of both the countries, in India.
  - Joint venture to produce AK-203 rifles at Amethi.
  - India and Russia have also entered into a contract for **Ka-226T light utility helicopter** which is set to replace Chetak and Cheetah multipurpose helicopters used by Indian forces.
- **Cooperation in the field of Geo-politics**
- Russia supports India's candidacy for the **permanent membership of the NSG** (Nuclear Suppliers Group) and a **reformed UN Security Council**, reflecting contemporary global realities and making it more representative, effective and efficient in dealing with issues of international peace and security.
  - India and Russia are well aware that in today's era, multi-polar world is essential to ensure peace and stability. Accordingly, both **cooperate closely in BRICS, SCO and other global forums**. Russia will chair BRICS and SCO in the year 2020.
  - Both are focussing particularly on increasing the effectiveness of countering terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, cross-border organized crime, and information security threats, in particular by improving the functionality of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure.
  - Both strive for increased role of the SCO in international affairs and its contacts with the UN and its specialized agencies, the **Collective Security Treaty Organization CSTO**, the **Commonwealth of Independent States CIS**, ASEAN, Eurasian Economic Union, among others.
- Note:** CSTO is an intergovernmental military alliance that was signed in 1992. In 1992, six post-Soviet states belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States—Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—signed the Collective Security Treaty.
- Further, the **RIC(Russia-India-China) framework** is working towards promoting common approaches to pressing issues on the global and regional agenda with a focus on upholding international law, countering the expansion of protectionism and unilateral sanctions, and combating terrorism and other new threats and challenges.
  - Both the countries are on the same page when issues related to other countries crop up; such as **durable peace in Afghanistan, resolution of Syria conflict** exclusively through diplomatic and political means, full and effective implementation of the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action** on the Iranian Nuclear Programme (JCPOA), and realization of a **denuclearized Korean Peninsula**, among others. Both stand against external interference of any country in any other country's internal affairs.
  - Lastly, India has been following the developments in the Arctic region with interest and is also ready to play a significant role in the Arctic Council.
 

**Note:** The Arctic Council is formed of Russia, the United States, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland and Finland. India was an Observer at the Council from 2013 onwards and has been re-elected as an observer in 2019. Besides India, China, South Korea, Singapore, Italy and Japan also have Observer status at the Council. The council's main focus is well-being of the region's inhabitants and the its sustainable development along with protection of its environment.
- **Cooperation in other fields**
- India and Russia will further their **cooperation in areas** such as cyber security, counter-terrorism and environment protection.
- India and Russia have **agreed to organize a High Level Forum on Tiger Conservation** next year.
  - Both the countries agreed to establish **exchanges of cultural and business missions** between the states of India and the regions of Russia.
  - Both sides have been working towards **progressive simplification of visa formalities**, extension of **duration e- visa** to upto 1 year. Indians visiting Kaliningrad and Vladivostok regions of Russia are given free e- visa.

With changed global realities, in the wake of India's bid to diversify its foreign policy base, Russia continues to remain a core strategic partner for India. The need is to move forward

in areas of mutual strategic concern. To take this forward, the 21st India – Russia Annual Summit is to be held in India next year.

## INDIA AND USA

# BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

mint

**SECONDARY SOURCE**

THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*India and the US failed to announce a limited trade deal in New York during the meeting of Prime Minister and President of US, due to prevailing differences over the package.*

### BRIEF ON INDIA-US TRADE

- India and the US are close partners with convergence of interests and complementary characteristic of needs. Trade is an important part of this relationship.
- As per United States Trade Representative, India's goods and services trade with the U.S. totalled an estimated **\$142.1 billion in 2018**. Exports were \$83.2 billion, Imports were \$58.9 billion. This shows a favourable balance of trade for India, vis-à-vis the U.S.
- The U.S. goods trade deficit with India was \$21.3 billion and the U.S. services trade deficit with India was \$3.0 billion.
- In June 2019, the US **terminated India's designation as a beneficiary developing country** under the **Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme**, a practice being practised since the 70s allowing duty free access to products from developing countries.
- On this, India imposed retaliatory tariffs on **28 US products** including almonds and apples, in response to U.S. duties on steel and aluminium imposed in 2018.
- A row over market access and tariffs has escalated, leading to fears of a protracted dispute.
- Indian delegation which accompanied the PM had an intent to deliberate upon issues related to trade, and find

some way out of the unease existing between the two countries, as far as trade relations are concerned.

### ROADBLOCKS

**US concerns:** The US has the following main concerns when it talks about trade with India:

1. Unfavourable balance of trade vis-a-vis India.
2. Tariffs of (20%) on ICT products put by India.
3. Price caps on medical devices like stents, knee implants, etc.
4. Lack of access for dairy products and some other categories of agricultural goods.
5. Regulations around data localization and FDI in e-commerce.

**India's concerns:** India's concern in response to the U.S. concern regarding ICT product duties is that elimination of tariffs on IT products will also open up the gates for Chinese technology products flooding up Indian market. Further, India has the following main demands from the U.S., with regard to their trade interaction:

1. **Reinstatement of preferential market access** to U.S. markets under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, which was revoked in June this year.
2. **Facilitation of processes in agricultural product markets** where India already had access. This includes things like easier certification of food product irradiation facilities, greater access in some agricultural markets like table grapes, pomegranates, among others.

### WAY FORWARD

- The two sides though failed to bridge the gap in their positions but they narrowed their areas of difference. At least this can be taken as a reason for future hope.
- Both the countries need to acknowledge the contemporary global realities and understand that early resolution of these issues is in the interest of both, in the wake of a China turning from being assertive to aggressive.



## GLOBAL NEWS

# INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK 2019

# REPORT

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

un.org

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

THE HINDU

**IN NEWS**

*The report released by Population Division of UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs provides the latest estimates of the number of international migrants by age, sex and origin for all countries and areas of the world. The estimates are based on official national statistics on the foreign-born or the foreign population obtained from population censuses, population registers or nationally representative surveys.*

**Importance of the report:** The data provides critical insight into the important role of migrants and migration in the development of both countries of origin and destination.

It also emphasises on facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT**

- Total number of migrants globally reached an estimated **272 million**, up from 221 million in 2010.
- Currently, international migrants comprise **3.5 percent of the global population**, compared to 2.8 percent in the year 2000.
- The global number of international migrants has grown faster than world's population. Forced displacements across the international borders have continued to rise.
- In 2019, women comprise slightly less half of all international migrants. One out of every seven international migrants are below the age of 20 years. Three out of every four international migrants are of working age.
- Regionally, **Europe hosts the largest number of international migrants** (82 million), followed by North

America (59 million) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (49 million).

- At the **country level**, about half of all international migrants reside in just 10 countries, with the **USA hosting the largest number** of international migrants (51 million), equal to about 19 per cent of the world's total. **Germany and Saudi Arabia host the second and third largest numbers** of migrants (13 million each), followed by the Russian Federation (12 million), the United Kingdom (10 million), the United Arab Emirates (9 million), France, Canada and Australia (around 8 million each) and Italy (6 million).
- **India was the leading country of origin of international migrants** with a 17.5 million strong diaspora. **Migrants from Mexico constituted the second-largest** diaspora (11.8 million), followed by China (10.7 million), Russia (10.5 million), Syria (8.2 million), Bangladesh (7.8 million), Pakistan (6.3 million), Ukraine (5.9 million), the Philippines (5.4 million) and Afghanistan (5.1 million).

**MIGRATION INTO INDIA**

- India has 51.54 international migrants representing just **0.4% of the total population of India**. In contrast globally, the international migrant population across all countries is 27.2 crore, who represent **3.5 percent of the total global population**.
- Of the international migrants in India in 2019, the country of origin for 31 lakh - or just over 60 percent - was Bangladesh. Another 21 percent were originally from Pakistan and 10 percent from Nepal..
- The global number of international migrants has grown faster than world's population. Forced displacements across the international borders have continued to rise.

**THINGS TO KNOW ON INTERNATIONAL LAW AND MIGRATION****► INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)**

- **Established in 1951**, IOM is the leading **inter-governmental organization** in the field of migration and

works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

- With 173 member states, a further 8 states holding observer status, IOM is dedicated to **promoting humane and orderly migration** for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants.

- IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

- The IOM Constitution recognizes the link between migration and economic, social and cultural development, as well as to the right of freedom of movement.

- IOM works in the four broad areas of migration management:

- ✓ Migration and development;
- ✓ Facilitating migration;
- ✓ Regulating migration;
- ✓ Dealing with forced migration.

- IOM activities that cut across these areas include the promotion of international migration law, policy debate and guidance, protection of migrants' rights, migration health and the gender dimension of migration.

### ► REFUGEE CONVENTION

- The **1951 Refugee Convention** is the key **legal document** that forms the basis of international law regulating the **rights and duties of refugees and the host countries**. It is ratified by 145 countries.
- It **defines the term 'refugee'** and **outlines the rights of the displaced**, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them.
- The core principle is **non-refoulement**, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. This now considered a rule of customary international law.

### ► UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

- It serves as the **guardian of the 1951 convention** and its **1967 protocol**. According to the legislation, States are

expected to cooperate with UNHCR in ensuring that the rights of refugees are respected and protected.

- India has not ratified the 1951 Refugee convention and its protocol.

- When a State accedes to the 1951 Convention:

- ✓ it demonstrates its commitment to treating refugees in accordance with internationally recognized legal and humanitarian standards;
- ✓ it gives refugees a possibility to find safety;
- ✓ it helps to avoid friction between States over refugee questions. Granting asylum is a peaceful, humanitarian and legal act rather than a hostile gesture, and should be understood by the refugee's country of origin as such;
- ✓ it demonstrates its willingness to share the responsibility for protecting refugees; and
- ✓ it helps UNHCR to mobilize international support for the protection of refugees.

### ► NEW YORK DECLARATION FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

On 19 September 2016, Heads of State and Government came together for the first time ever at the global level within the UN General Assembly to discuss issues related to migration and refugees. This sent a powerful political message that migration and refugee matters had become major issues squarely in the international agenda. In adopting the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the 193 UN Member States recognized the need for a comprehensive approach to human mobility and enhanced cooperation at the global level.

### ► GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

**On 17 December 2018**, the United Nations General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugees, after two years of extensive consultations led by UNHCR with Member States, international organizations, refugees, civil society, the private sector, and experts.

- The Global Compact on Refugees **is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing**, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation.
- It **provides a blueprint** for governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that host

communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives.

- It constitutes a unique opportunity to transform the way the world responds to refugee situations, benefiting both refugees and the communities that host them.
- Its four key objectives are to:

- ✓ Ease the pressures on host countries;
- ✓ Enhance refugee self-reliance;
- ✓ Expand access to third-country solutions;
- ✓ Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

**What does the Global Compact on Refugees include?** The Global Compact on Refugees has four parts:

- An introduction setting out the background, guiding principles, and objectives of the global compact.
- The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), as agreed to by Member States in Annex I of the New York Declaration.
- A Programme of Action setting out concrete measures to help meet the objectives of the compact, including:
  - ✓ Arrangements to share burdens and responsibilities through a Global Refugee Forum (every four years), national and regional arrangements for specific situations, and tools for funding, partnerships, and data gathering and sharing.
  - ✓ Areas in need of support, from reception and admission, to meeting needs and supporting communities, to solutions.
- Arrangements for follow-up and review, which will primarily be conducted through the Global Refugee Forum every four years, an annual high-level officials meeting held every two years between forums, and the High Commissioner's annual report to the General Assembly.

► **GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION**

The global compact for migration is the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

The Global Compact for Migration is the first-ever UN global agreement on a **common approach to international migration** in all its dimensions. The global compact is **non-**

**legally binding.** It is grounded in values of state sovereignty, responsibility-sharing, non-discrimination, and human rights, and recognizes that a cooperative approach is needed to optimize the overall benefits of migration, while addressing its risks and challenges for individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination.

The global compact comprises 23 objectives for better managing migration at local, national, regional and global levels. The compact:

- **aims to mitigate** the adverse drivers and structural factors that hinder people from building and maintaining sustainable livelihoods in their countries of origin;
- **intends to reduce** the risks and vulnerabilities migrants face at different stages of migration by respecting, protecting and fulfilling their human rights and providing them with care and assistance;
- **seeks to address the legitimate concerns of states and communities**, while recognizing that societies are undergoing demographic, economic, social and environmental changes at different scales that may have implications for and result from migration;
- **strives to create conducive conditions** that enable all migrants to enrich our societies through their human, economic and social capacities, and thus facilitate their contributions to sustainable development at the local, national, regional and global levels.

## YEMEN CRISIS

# CONFLICT

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE BBC

IN NEWS

*Tensions in the Middle East have surged following attacks on two major oil facilities in Saudi Arabia at Abqaiq and Khurais. Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed responsibility.*

*The strikes put 5.7 million barrels per day of crude production out which over half of Saudi Arabia's oil production and 5% of global crude supplies causing 19% surge in crude prices with crude prices going up to \$71 a barrel. Analysts believe that in a worst case scenario of hostilities escalating or long term derailment of Saudi production, oil prices could rise above \$100 per barrel.*

**ABOUT YEMEN**

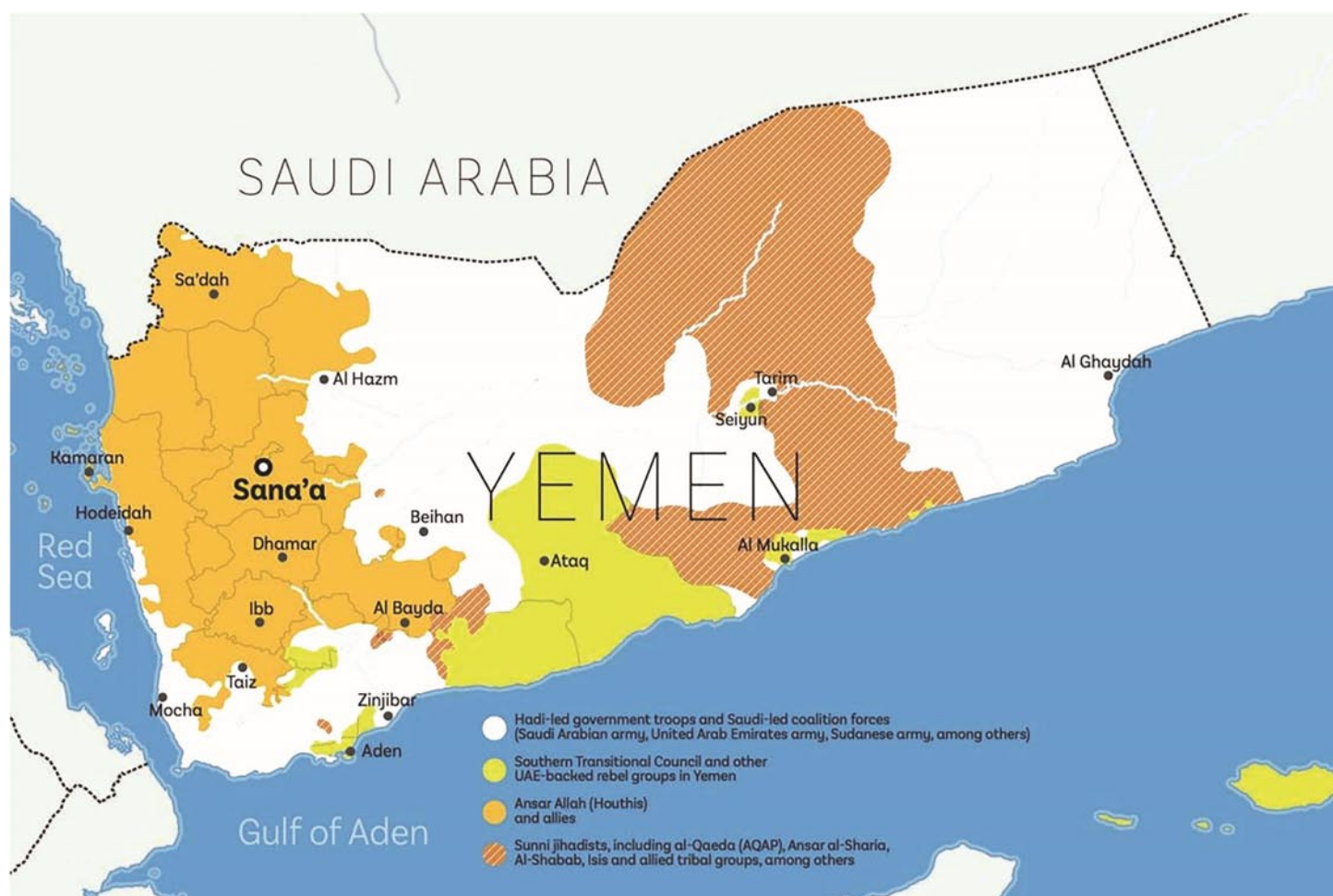
Yemen lies in the south-west corner of Arabian peninsula. It has a population of 27 million and per capita income of \$944, which is less than half of India. The poverty of Yemen is in sharp contrast to other middle eastern countries in the region. Though most Yemenis vouch for national unity, the country is divided into **two distinct cultural zones**.

1. **Northern part** of the country is hilly and fertile and has some oil reserves. The population in the north is **mostly**

**Zaidi** which is closer to the Shia sect followed in Iran. North remains rooted in esoteric Zaidi traditions.

2. **Southern part is mostly desert**. The southerners are mostly **Sunnis akin to a majority of the Gulf Cooperation Council**. The South was colonised by the British to protect the sea route to India became relatively more westernised. South Yemen had close links with India – the Nizam of Hyderabad relied on troops from Hadhramaut and Dhirubhai Ambani began his career in Aden.

► **Roots of the present conflict**



- In the 1930s, north Yemen's Imam ceded to Saudi Arabia three provinces that many Yemenis still considered their own.
- In the 1960s, north Yemen saw a six year long civil war in which the forces of Imam's fighters with Saudi support fought against the Republic forces backed by Egypt. The civil war resulted in the formation of Yemen Arab Republic in 1968.

- A united Republic of Yemen was established in 1990. In 1994, a section of the south tried to secede, but the insurrection was put down.
- In 2004, the northern Shia militia called '**Ansar Allah**' began an insurgency led by dissident cleric Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, head of the Zaidi sect, against President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

- In 2011, **Yemeni Arab Spring movement** managed to remove Saleh who was replaced by his southern deputy Abdrabhuh Mansour Hadi; however, Saleh remained influential till his assassination in 2017.
- **Al-Houthis rebelled against Hadi**, ousting him in 2014 and forcing him to flee to Riyadh where he currently resides and heads an 'internationally recognised' but largely ineffective government of Yemen.
- Saudi Arabia fears that an **al-Houthi led Yemen will become a surrogate of Iran**. Therefore, it created a military coalition comprising the UAE, Egypt and other Sunni powers with Pakistan reluctantly opting out. This coalition began a military campaign '**Operation Decisive Storm**' against the al-Houthis in March 2015, mostly through aerial bombardment, with army units supporting Mr Hadi's forces in southern Yemen. They also imposed a Naval Blockade.
- Despite four years of warfare, the **Houthis continue to control vast territory in Northern Yemen**. United Nations has described Yemen to be currently in the grip of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe, with over 11,000 deaths and 3 million internationally displaced.

### ► RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND PROSPECTS

- **Growing rift in Saudi led coalition:** In July, UAE announced a drawdown of its forces from Yemen. By the end of August, Yemeni government forces were compelled to withdraw from southern port of Aden leaving it to the UAE backed units of the Southern Transitional Council (STC). STC calls for an independent South Yemen and is against the presence of Islamists in Yemen such as **Islah party (member of Saudi led coalition)**, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State. UAE has trained thousands of STC and other Yemeni militias along with expanding its strategic presence in Eritrea and Somaliland.
- Analysts believe that the **current civil war will result into a de facto division of Yemen** roughly along the pre-1990 border: **between an al-Houthi led north and STC-dominated south**.
- Yemen's partition may **strongly impact the intra and inter-state dynamics from Yemen itself to the UAE-Iran-Saudi Arabia triangle**.
- Saudi Arabia's inability to attain its objectives in Yemen despite its deep pockets and enormous military resources

will make it more reliant on the large Sunni states such as Pakistan and Egypt.

- If a viable South Yemeni state takes shape, the STC's symbiotic ties with UAE would put Abu Dhabi in the driving seat along the geo-strategic Bab al Mandeb strait – a choke point connecting the Arabian Sea with the Red Sea onwards to the Suez Canal.

### ► OTHER POSSIBILITIES

- Saudi Arabia claimed that Houthi Rebels are not behind the attack but it is Iran. US, Germany, France and Britain have joined Saudi Arabia in blaming Iran for these attacks.
- After the attack, US has offered on **Patriot Missile defense system** and four ground based Sentinel radars to Saudi Arabia to bolster Saudi Arabia's security. Two additional Patriot batteries and one Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD) were also given orders to maintain a heightened readiness to speed up a possible deployment.

### ► INDIA'S INTERESTS

- As most of India's west bound sea trade passes **through Bab al Mandeb**. India therefore needs to watch the evolving situation carefully and revive long standing ties with the emerging stakeholders in Yemen particularly along the southern coastal belt.
- India is world's third largest crude oil importer with Saudi Arabia supplying nearly a fifth of India's crude imports. The attack on Saudi oil facility and resultant spike in the oil prices hits India precisely when Indian economy is already struggling.
- Tense regional situation and volatility in the oil markets will affect India's manpower and thriving economic engagement in the region.
- The attack could affect Saudi Aramco's ongoing negotiations of two major upstream investments in India totalling over \$30 billion with Reliance Industries and the proposed Ratnagiri Refinery.

India has condemned the Abqaiq-Khuras attacks. But for the future, India needs to be cautious and take proactive steps to guard its energy security needs such as:

1. Frontloading India's biofuel program
2. Expanding and quick implementation of India's strategic petroleum reserve

3. Transition of e-vehicles
4. Diversifying our sources of crude imports away from West Asia
5. Drones have emerged as a weapon of choice and can in future get into hands of terrorist organisation operational in South Asia putting much of our infrastructure on threat.

Many such affordable and effective platforms are easily available in international markets easily. India needs to put in an effective security strategy to guard against such drones attacks in future.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### MCQS

**1. The site of Khurais is located in which of the following countries?**

- (a) Iran
- (b) Yemen
- (c) Syria
- (d) Saudi Arabia

**2. Consider the following statements about International Migrant Stock 2019:**

- (1) USA has the largest number of international migrants.
- (2) The report has been published by the United Nations Population Fund.

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. Which of the following countries are members of Eurasian Economic Union?**

1. Armenia
2. Ukraine
3. Belarus
4. Kazakhstan

**Code**

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) All of the above

**4. Which of the following seas are connected by Strait of Bab-el –Mandeb?**

- (a) Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
- (b) Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea
- (c) Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea
- (d) Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea

**5. Consider the following statements:**

- (1) CSTO is an intergovernmental military alliance of six post-Soviet states.
- (2) India has ceased to be an Observer at the Arctic Council from 2019.

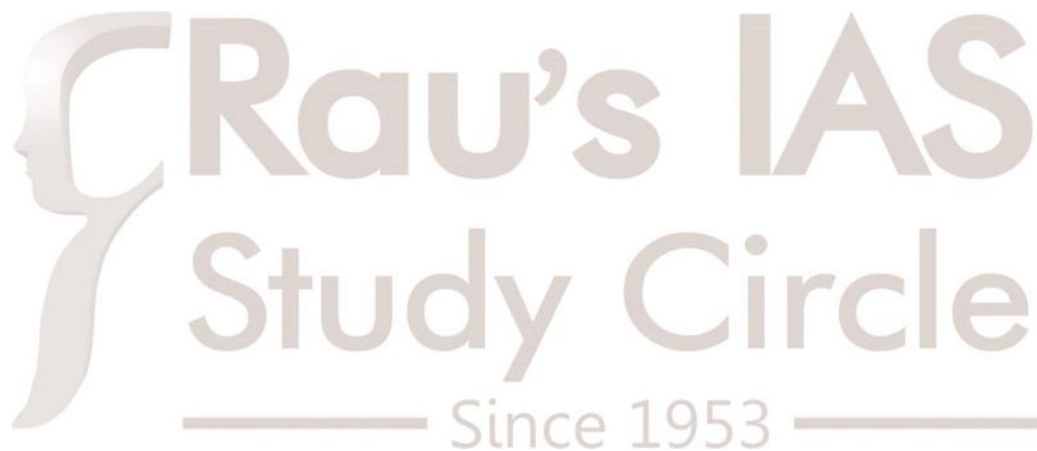
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

## DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** India Russia relations have traditionally been seen through the lens of defence and technology cooperation. However, in the light of Indian PM attending the Eastern Economic Forum as the chief guest, there has been a new beginning in the bilateral relations. Discuss.
- Q2.** India and the U.S. are strategic partners with growing degree of convergence of interests as well as ideology but still there are some issues that create friction in the smooth running of this relation. Critically analyse.

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



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# CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

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

## NATIONAL POPULATION REGISTER – NPR

#RIGHTS ISSUE #GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*

### IN NEWS

*In a recent address, Home Minister of India has floated the idea of “One Nation, One Card” and asserted that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) would be implemented across the country. In the same address, he also highlighted about the idea to resurrect National Population Register (NPR) all over again despite successful implementation of Aadhaar Card. So let us understand about National Population Register and how is it different from National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Aadhaar Card.*

### ABOUT NATIONAL POPULATION REGISTER (NPR)

- The National Population Register (NPR) is a comprehensive **identity database** maintained by the **Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** under Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It is a Register of **“usual residents of the country”** and will be prepared at the local, sub-district, district, state and national level.
- The NPR is being prepared under provisions of the **Citizenship Act 1955** and the **Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003**. It is mandatory for every “usual resident of India” to register in the NPR.
- As per **section 14A of Citizenship Act 1955**, it is compulsory for every citizen of the country to register in the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC). The

creation of NPR is the first step towards preparations of **National Register of Indian Citizen (NRIC)**.

- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, **“usual resident of the country”** is one who has been residing in a local area for **at least the last 6 months** or intends to stay in a particular location for the next six months.
- **Citizens & Foreigners** - Unlike the NRC, the National Population Register will not only include citizens but also foreigners as it would record even a foreigner staying in a locality for more than six months. The **NPR database would contain demographic as well as biometric details**.
- **Seeding with Aadhaar** - The government also plans to seed Aadhaar database with the updated NPR. This updated NPR database along with Aadhaar Number will become the mother database and can be used by various government departments for selection of beneficiaries under their respective schemes.

### BACKDROP TO NPR

- The data for the NPR were first collected in 2010 along with the house listing phase of Census 2011. In 2015, this data was further updated by conducting a door-to-door survey. Earlier, the roll out of NPR had slowed down due to overlapping with that of Aadhaar.
- NPR will again be conducted in conjunction with the house listing phase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 till 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 - the first phase of the Census 2021 - by the Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI) under the Home Ministry for Census 2021. Only Assam will not be included, given the recently completed NRC.

### HOW TO REGISTER FOR NPR?

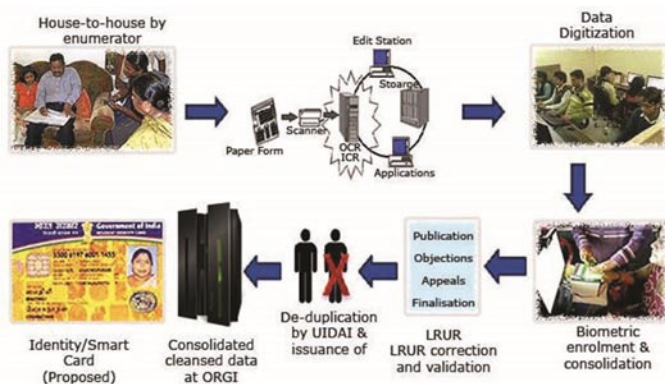
- During the first phase of Census 2011, enumerators have visited every household and have collected the details required for the NPR in a paper format. These forms have



## CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

been scanned and the data has been entered into an electronic database in two languages - the State language and in English.

- **Biometric attributes** - photograph, ten fingerprints and two iris images are being added to the NPR database by organizing enrolment camps in each local area. The enrolment will be done in the presence of Government servants appointed for this purpose.
- All usual residents who are above 5 years of age will have to attend the **enrolment camp** even if their biometrics have been captured under Aadhaar. For persons not enrolled under Aadhaar, they can also register themselves in the enrolment camps.
- If the household has not been covered during 2011 Census or if the individual has changed residence after 2011 Census, then they will have to fill up another form provided by government officials. These forms will be verified by the authorities and the individual's biometric details will be captured during the next round of biometric camps.
- Two camps will be held in every local area. If an individual misses the first camp, intimation will be provided to attend the second camp. In case, the second camp is also missed, government will allow to enrol at camps that would be set up at sub-district level until a designated date. After the date, if the individual does not enrol under NPR, then his/her name will be struck off the list.



### OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS OF THE MASSIVE EXERCISE OF NPR

- The **objective of the NPR** is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country and to help in better utilization and implementation of the benefits and services under the government schemes, improve planning and security in the country. The database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars.

- It will provide **solution to multifarious** problems facing the country that range from effective maintenance of law and order to efficient implantation of welfare schemes like MGNREGS, food security and nutrition campaigns etc.
- Updation of NPR will help in tracking criminal activities, and better planning and execution of government schemes. The NPR links biometric and demographic details of any ordinary resident, thus making it a comprehensive database of residents.

### CONNECTION BETWEEN NPR AND AADHAAR

- Data collected in NPR will be sent to Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for de-duplication and issue of Aadhaar number.

- So, the NPR will contain three elements of data:

1. **Demographic Data,**
2. **Biometric Data,** and
3. **Aadhaar - UID Number**

- A person who is registered under Aadhaar still has to register under NPR. In NPR, certain processes like the collection of data at the doorstep of the individual by authorized persons, collection of biometrics after following a certain process, authentication through social audit, verification by authorities etc. is mandatory.

**Census** - The responsibility of conducting the decennial Census rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India under Ministry of Home Affairs. Conduct of census in India is guided by **The Census Act, 1948**. The NPR exercise is different from the census and is not linked to the National Register of Citizens (NRC). For the purpose of the NPR, an ordinary resident is defined as a person who has resided in a local area for the past six months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months or more.

## RIGHT TO INTERNET ACCESS AS BASIC RIGHT

#RIGHTS ISSUE #FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT



### IN NEWS

*In Faheema Shirin v State of Kerala, the Kerala High Court declared that the right to Internet access is a fundamental right and forms part of right to privacy and the right to*

*education under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. So, it is important to recognise the right to Internet access as an independent right along with the need to reduce digital inequality as part of our basic literacy programmes.*

### THE PETITION

- A student in college of Kozhikode was expelled for using mobile phone during restricted hours. The student filed a petition challenging her expulsion for not adhering to restrictions on the use of mobile phone.
- She contended that the use of mobile phones amounted to a violation of fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under **Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution**.
- This is because access to internet through mobile phones or laptops, provided an avenue for the students to gather knowledge and the college authorities had no right to deny her fundamental right.

### JUDGEMENT

- The court observed, "*When the Human Rights Council of the United Nations has found that the right of access to Internet is a fundamental freedom and a tool to ensure right to education, a rule or instruction which impairs the said right of the students cannot be permitted to stand in the eye of law.*"
- The Judge observed that the action of the college authorities infringed the fundamental freedom as well as privacy and would adversely affect the future and career of students who want to acquire knowledge and compete with their peers.
- So, such restriction by college authorities on restriction of mobile phones cannot not be permitted to be enforced. The court further said that college authorities as well as parents should be conscious of the fact that the students in a college hostel are adults capable of taking decisions as to how and when they want to study.

### ► Digital Inequality

- Digital services provided by government and private organisations have led to a new kind of inequality namely digital inequality. **Digital Inequality is observed** because

of socio-economic conditions which leads to information poverty, lack of infrastructure, and lack of digital literacy.

- According to the Deloitte report, 'Digital India: Unlocking the Trillion Dollar Opportunity', in mid-2016, digital literacy in India was less than 10%. We are moving to a global economy where knowledge of digital processes will transform the way in which people work, collaborate, consume information, and entertain themselves. This has been acknowledged in the Sustainable Development Goals as well as by the Indian government and has led to the Digital India Mission.
- **Offering services online has cost and efficiency benefits** for the government and also allows citizens to bypass lower-level government bureaucracy. However, absence of Internet access and digital literacy will further widen the gap of digital inequality. So, digital literacy and internet access is a must to decrease the gap of digital inequality.

### CREATION OF DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO REDUCE DIGITAL INEQUALITY

- **Common Service Centres** operating in remote locations are physical facilities which help in delivering digital government services and informing communities about government initiatives. So, for citizens to access these services, state must provide internet access in remote areas which again need investment on a big scale by the government.
- The **Bharat Net Programme**, aiming to have an optical fibre network in all gram panchayats, is to act as the infrastructural backbone for having Internet access all across the country. However, the project has consistently missed all its deadlines while the costs have doubled.
- Similarly, the **National Digital Literacy Mission** has barely touched 1.67% of the population and has been struggling for funds.
- Incompletion of digital programmes of government on time is worrying because Internet access and digital literacy are dependent on each other, and creation of digital infrastructure must go hand in hand with the creation of digital skills.

# HINDI AS A PAN INDIAN LANGUAGE

#NATIONAL LANGUAGE #OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

PRIMARY  
SOURCE THE HINDU

## IN NEWS

*On the occasion of Hindi Diwas celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> September, the Home Minister of India while speaking on Hindi said that even though India is a country of many languages, and each language has its own significance, but it is necessary to have a common language that becomes the mark of India's identity globally. This has been seen by many including people from South India as imposition of 'One Nation, One Language' upon the whole country. Article 343 of the Indian Constitution says that official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari Script. So, let us understand about Hindi and various problems which might arise if Hindi is forcefully imposed upon the entire citizens as a national language.*

## ► Article 351

It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

## CAN HINDI UNITE INDIA?

- Despite Hindi being one of the most spoken language of India, it is not the mother tongue of many cultures and regions across our vast country.
- The **2011 Census listed 1,369 'mother tongues'** in the country. Hindi is only one among them. When the languages were enumerated, Hindi subsumed Bhojpuri, which is spoken by a little over five crore people.
- The Census has put Bhojpuri as a subset of Hindi. So, it may be true that Hindi is spoken by a large number of people in India, but it is equally true that it is not spoken by a majority of Indians.

- Language does not connect nation; it is Constitution, our history and some epoch-making phenomena, whether it is the Buddha, the Bhakti movement or the freedom struggle connects India. The government should not interfere with the linguistic behaviour or choices of people.

## REASON FOR OPPOSITION OF HINDI IN SOUTH INDIA

- The people of southern India hold strongly to the idea that they are Dravidian language speakers.
- Hindi belongs to the group of Indo-European languages and is no less foreign in their reckoning than English is to them.
- This view is independent of the fast-growing evidence from population genetics that Indo-European language speakers are very likely the most recent migrants into the subcontinent.
- It is not dependent on an assertion that the Dravidians themselves are the 'original inhabitants' of this land. It is based purely on the principle that privileging any one Indian language would be discriminatory.

## EXAMPLE OF ASHOKA

- It is a fallacy to imagine that we need a common language to feel connected. Indians already feel connected due to a shared history of several millennia.
- In an extraordinary phase of history India had the ruler Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty trying to unify the peoples of his far-flung kingdom **through ideals**.
- The language used in the Ashokan edicts found in the eastern part of the subcontinent is a type of Magadhi, likely the language of Ashoka's court; the language used in the edicts found in the western part of India is closer to Sanskrit; and a bilingual edict in Afghanistan is written in Aramaic and Greek.
- So, Ashoka was clearly aware of the bigger prize of national integration and had not allowed himself to be held back by narrow linguistic nationalism or imposition of any particular language in the whole country.

## CHALLENGES WITH ONE NATION, ONE LANGUAGE

- 'One nation, one language, one culture' **is a 19th century European idea that failed** to create unity and instead caused a lot of bloodshed in the world.

- Considering the diversity and pluralism in India, it can be said that this idea is not in tune with our history, culture or civilization and resembles a colonial reminiscent of the past.
- Even our constitution does not speak of any single language as a national language and rather emphasizes on the idea of **Scheduled Language as per Eight Schedule** which provides for 22 languages including Hindi.
- Further, imposing Hindi as a link language will face economic and cultural challenges. On economic front, it will reduce migration of people in different states (which do not speak Hindi as their mother tongue) as they will be considered as outsiders and this will lead to huge economic losses. Currently our mega cities are cultural hotspot as mostly migrated people from different states work in different sectors. E.g. Bangalore is known for its IT industry and people from all over the country and the world migrate to Bangalore for their livelihood.
- So, imposition of Hindi will create a language and cultural divide equivalent to fault lines which might prove disastrous economically. This will increase demand and propagation of state languages which will also hamper migration of people for their livelihood.
- Many tribal languages are disappearing rapidly because of lack of employment opportunities. Since, these languages are encouraged by respective state governments, hence their cultural and economic importance are also decreasing in their region.

### NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA IN NON-HINDI SPEAKING STATES

- Non-implementation of **'Three Language Formula'** in Hindi speaking states also increased emotional alienation of the people residing in non-Hindi speaking states. Based on **Kothari Commission Report**, Three Language Formula was suggested by **National commission on Education, 1968**.
- The Formula called for paying more attention on learning of regional languages outlining the **"three language formula"** to be applied in secondary education which was use of 1. Regional Language 2. Hindi and 3. English.
- At the secondary stage, State governments should adopt and vigorously implement the three-language formula, which includes the study of a modern Indian language,

preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking States."

- In the 'non-Hindi speaking States', Hindi should be studied along with the regional language and English. It added: "Suitable courses in Hindi and/or English should also be available in universities and colleges with a view to improving the proficiency of students in these languages up to the prescribed university standards."
- **The Problem** - Most non-Hindi speaking States did introduce Hindi but Hindi-speaking States bypassed the requirement to teach a non-Hindi language (preferably a South Indian language, said the original formulation). Instead of learning Tamil or Telugu languages that are older and richer than Hindi, they fulfilled the third language requirement with perfunctory Sanskrit.

### ► Draft Education Policy, 2019

- The Committee for Draft National Education Policy, 2019 chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan submitted its report on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019.
- The Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in June 2017. The report proposes an education policy, which seeks to address the challenges of: (i) access, (ii) equity, (iii) quality, (iv) affordability, and (v) accountability faced by the current education system.
- The National Education Policy 2019 envisions an India-centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all.
- The draft education policy **recommends the use of three language formula** from the primary level. It provides flexibility in the three-language formula such that students who wish to change one or more of the three languages they are studying may do so in Grade 6 or Grade 7, so long as they are able to still demonstrate proficiency in three languages (one language at the literature level) in their modular Board Examinations some time during secondary school.
- A choice of foreign language(s) would be as elective(s) during secondary school
- Sanskrit will be offered at all levels of school and higher education as one of the optional languages on par with all Schedule 8 languages

- In addition to Sanskrit, the teaching of other classical languages and literatures, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, will also be widely available in schools.
- It also provides for integration of vocational language in all educational institutions in a phased manner. This Policy aims to achieve 100% youth and adult literacy by 2030, and significantly expand adult and continuing education programmes.

#### ► Conclusion

- India has a rich language diversity as 10% of world languages are spoken in India. Any idea of one link language, whether Hindi or English, will be economically disastrous for India. It will not only slow down migration and reduce the ease of capital flow but will also result in slow decline of many regional and local languages of India which will be a huge cultural loss for the nation.
- Government must take adequate steps to promote all language including Hindi at all levels of the society. This will not only boost Hindi but also will give impetus to other language. People speaking other languages will not feel alienated and this will strengthen the idea of unity in diversity throughout the country. This will also allow local and regional languages adequate opportunity to nurture and develop thereby creating rich cultural and economic footprint.

## GOVERNMENT FUNDED NGOs UNDER RTI

# RTI #PRESSURE GROUPS

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

#### IN NEWS

*The Supreme Court has held that Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) "substantially" financed by the government fall within the preview of Right to Information Act, 2005. The court defined "substantial" as a "large portion" of amount.*

*SC held that NGOs which receive considerable finances from the government or are essentially dependent on the*

*government fall under the category of "public authority" defined in Section 2(h) of the Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005.*

#### ► Public Authority

- RTI Act, 2005 gives citizens the right to secure access to information under the **control of public authorities**, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority.
- RTI Act explains "**Public Authority**" as any authority or body or institution of self- government established or constituted—

- ✓ by or under the Constitution;
- ✓ by any other law made by Parliament;
- ✓ by any other law made by State Legislature;
- ✓ by notification issued or order made by the appropriate Government, and includes any
  - i. Body owned, controlled or substantially financed;
  - ii. Non-Government organization substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate Government

**Impact** - After this judgment, such NGOs which are substantially financed by the government has to disclose information on their functioning, finance, hierarchy, appointments etc. to citizens under RTI.

#### REQUIREMENT OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN DEVELOPMENT

- Development has become an all-inclusive concept and it includes not only economic but rather a multi-dimensional process involving reorganisation reorientation of an entire economic and social system.
- Development is a two side game and involves participation of the government as well for those the governance steps are being taken. Thus, to ensure inclusiveness in developmental programmes, government encourages participation from non-state actors like pressure groups, NGOs, SHGs etc.
- This participation not only helps in improving the quality of governance but also keeps the government aware of the situations on the ground. Let us understand how pressure groups and NGOs helps in the development process through their participation.

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## CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

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### PRESSURE GROUPS

- Pressure groups are the interest groups which work to secure certain interest by influencing the public policy. They exert pressure on the persons or body in power and influence Government decisions in their favour.
- They are non-aligned with any political party and work as indirect yet powerful group to influence the decision. They are present across the sectors in India and seek to influence the policy makers in order to advance their own objectives.
- Some of the prominent pressure groups in India are as follows: FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), CII (Confederation of Indian Industry), All India Kisan Congress, India Bar Association, All India Medical Council, media, The Tribal sang of Assam, Schedule Caste Federation, different Students Unions etc.

### ROLE OF NGOS

- Non-Government Organisations (NGO) is an institution or a private organisations which are free from government control and operate on non-profit basis. Traditionally, an NGO play an important role in the society as an implementing organisation, a catalyst and also as a partner which mobilizes the local resources for development.
- As development actors, NGOs have become the main service providers in countries where the government is unable to fulfill its traditional role.
- NGOs helps in capacity building in diverse fields such as health, education, environment awareness, social inclusion, skill enhancement etc. and also helps in filling the development deficit. Thus, NGOs are important stakeholders in the development process and helps in imparting their extensive knowledge for capacity building.

### HOW THEIR ROLE BENEFITS GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS?

1. **Supplementing electoral democracy** -They keep governments up to date with public opinion between elections and give voice to sections of society who might otherwise be unheard or overlooked.
2. **Capacity Building** by filling the development needs of citizens.
3. **Community Participation**- They encourage people's participation in policy or decision-making of the

government. For example, during the budget preparation finance ministry organizes the meetings with pressure groups of several areas of economy.

4. **Education** - Pressure groups & NGOs play an important role in promoting healthy discussion and debate, and broaden the variety of beliefs and views, leading to a better informed public. An educated electorate means that public policy will better reflect the needs of society.
5. **Benefits of competition** - Pressure groups constantly compete against each other which in turn even out the spread of power. This competition among non-state actors motivates them to perform better in their respective fields for development and benefit of the society. This in turn becomes productive for the government as well for the citizens.
6. It provides a **Platform** to raise important issues of regional and national importance including those whose belong to the margins of the society and are by themselves not capable to deliver their needs and requirement to the government.
7. They also work as the **agents of voiceless and vulnerable people** like prostitutes, LGBT, HIV victims, victims of custodial torture etc. to fight for their rights.

### ALLEGATIONS AGAINST NGOS & PRESSURE GROUPS

- These pressure groups and NGOs at time file unnecessary public interest litigations in Courts which are at times dismissed. This has led to an increase of PIL culture in the High Courts & Supreme Court.
- They at times are quite biased in favour of their own interest and present a suitable argument to suit their needs. Campaigns by pressure groups may not present a balanced argument and rather promote certain vested interests.
- Recently as per a report, the National Security Adviser suggested that some of these organisations by representing marginalised section of the society can lead to security issues especially regarding Left Wing organisations.
- Foreign funding received by these groups often make them vulnerable to defend the best interest of those who fund them rather than promoting the real cause.
- They at times present misleading arguments and create additional pressure on the government to act on certain

issues as per their desire without debating the pros and cons of the argument.

- They represent very small section of the society including those who fund their functioning so cannot be said to be truly democratic in their nature and functioning.

## CHANGE IN TERMS OF REFERENCE OF XV FINANCE COMMISSION

#FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE ECONOMIC TIMES

SECONDARY SOURCE BusinessLine

### IN NEWS

*The former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that Central Government should have consulted the states before unilaterally adding terms of reference for the 15th Finance Commission which seeks to create separate funds for Defence and Internal Security.*

### NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister has approved the proposed amendment to enable Fifteenth Finance Commission to address serious concerns regarding the allocation of adequate, secure and non-lapsable funds for defence and internal security of India.
- The amendment provides that Fifteenth Finance Commission shall also examine whether a separate mechanism for funding of defence and internal security ought to be set up and if so how such a mechanism could be operationalised.

### CRITICISM ON THE UNILATERAL DECISION OF CENTRE

- Manmohan Singh asserted that unilateral decision by the centre was against **the principle of co-operative federalism** and such a move is not good for our federal polity as envisaged by the constitution.

- He further stated that co-operative federalism demands give and take and therefore it is important that the central government should take the initiative to consult the States as often as necessary to carry them along rather than imposing its views.

### CONSTITUTION OF 15<sup>th</sup> FINANCE COMMISSION

- The Government of India, with the approval President of India, constituted 15th Finance Commission as per **Article 280(1)** of the Constitution.
- This Commission is headed by **Shri. N.K. Singh**.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> FC shall recommend for period of five years **commencing 1st April, 2020**.
- The Commission shall **use the population data of 2011** while making its recommendations.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE OF 15<sup>th</sup> FINANCE COMMISSION

The Commission may consider proposing measurable performance-based incentives for States, at the appropriate level of government, in following areas:

- Efforts made by the States in expansion and deepening of tax net under **Goods and Service Tax (GST)**
- Efforts and Progress made in moving **towards replacement rate of population growth**.
- Achievements in **implementation of** flagship schemes of Government of India, disaster resilient infrastructure, sustainable development goals, and quality of expenditure.
- **Progress made in increasing** capital expenditure, eliminating losses of power sector, and improving the quality of such expenditure in generating future income streams.
- **Progress made in increasing** tax/non-tax revenues, promoting savings by adoption of Direct Benefit Transfers and Public Finance Management System, promoting digital economy and removing layers between the government and the beneficiaries.
- **Provision of grants in aid** to local bodies for basic services, including quality human resources.
- Control or lack of it in incurring expenditure on populist measures.
- Progress made in sanitation, solid waste management and bringing in behavioral change to end open defecation.

## FISCAL WATCHDOG

#REGULATORY BODIES #FISCAL COUNCIL

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

The Indian  
EXPRESS

### CONTEXT

*There is a major institutional gap in India's Fiscal System. This gap has been recognized and identified by number of committees such as recent Finance Commissions and the FRBM Review Committee. International experience also points to the importance of such an institution. In order to overcome this gap, in many countries, a 'Fiscal Council' has been set up.*

*Accordingly, the Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission, NK Singh has recently recommended setting up of institutional mechanism like a 'Fiscal Council' to keep a check on Centre's fiscal consolidation. In this regard, let us understand as to what Fiscal Council is and how the setting up of Fiscal Council can improve the credibility of fiscal policy in India.*

**What is Fiscal Council?** A fiscal council is an **independent and non-partisan agency** which is set up to publicly assesses the government's fiscal performance against its stated objectives. Some of the functions that can be performed by Fiscal Council include:

- Producing independent forecasts related to GDP growth, tax buoyancy, inflation rate.
- Review the government's forecasts and assumptions related to tax collections, Fiscal Deficit, GDP Growth etc.
- Monitoring governments' fiscal performance including adherence to fiscal rules.

### INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH FISCAL COUNCIL

- In recent years, an increasing number of advanced and some emerging economies are using independent fiscal council in order to enhance the credibility of their fiscal rules.
- International experience suggests that fiscal councils can improve fiscal outcomes and accuracy related to government's forecasts related to fiscal parameters.
- For example, the United Kingdom created an Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) in 2010 and granted it statutory status in 2011 to provide independent analysis of the country's public finances.

- On similar lines, Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in USA supports the budget making process by providing independent analyses of budgetary and economic issues.

### FISCAL COUNCIL IN INDIA

- Keeping in view best international practices, the **FRBM Review committee** headed by N.K Singh and **D.K. Srivastava Committee on Fiscal Statistics** have proposed to set up independent Fiscal Council in India.
- The N.K Singh Review committee recommended that Fiscal Council should be an autonomous body, under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs).
- It is proposed that it should comprise a Chairperson and two Members to be appointed by the Central Government. The persons to be appointed ought to have significant experience in public finance, economics or public affairs.

### NEED FOR FISCAL COUNCIL IN INDIA

- The General Budget of the Government is based upon the forecasts related to Revenue Collection and Expenditure of the Government for the upcoming financial year. It has been observed that **generally the government overestimates revenue growth and underestimate expenditure growth.**
- Normally, it is found that the Government usually comes out with ambitious targets related to fiscal parameters such as Tax collection, reduction in Fiscal Deficit etc.
- However, the government fails to meet these ambitious targets as there is wide margin between the budget forecasts and actual targets met by the Government. Hence, it is required to ensure that the Government sets realistic fiscal targets.
- Further, in recent years, the Government has resorted to **Off-Budget financing** in order to reduce its expenditure and to contain Fiscal Deficit.
- Even the CAG has raised concerns with respect to off-budget financing since it understates the Government's Fiscal deficit and reduces the accountability of the Government to the Parliament.

### WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF FISCAL COUNCIL IN INDIA?

- **Fiscal Data Coordinator:** As a fiscal data coordinator, the Fiscal Council will have the responsibility of compiling and



collating centre, state, and local government fiscal data and provide individual and consolidated fiscal accounts of the governments in India on a timely basis and make such data accessible to governments and public.

- **Fiscal Data Analyst:** It should utilize the compiled fiscal data to provide valuable insights into the underlying fiscal trends and highlight their policy significance.
- **Fiscal Consolidation Path Monitor:** The central as well as state governments follow their respective fiscal consolidation paths according to targets set under their FRBM Acts. The Fiscal Council should monitor the compliance of these targets by the Central and State Governments. It should highlight deviations in the targets by publishing quarterly and annual reports.
- **Fiscal Policy Advisor:** Fiscal Council should provide guidance to the central and state governments on appropriate fiscal policy interventions aimed at improving growth and macro-stabilization outcomes.

## REDUCTION OF DISQUALIFICATION PERIOD OF SIKKIM CM

#ELECTION #DISQUALIFICATION

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

The Indian  
EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*Sikkim Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang, was barred from contesting elections for six years after the completion of a one-year prison term for corruption in 2018. However, he was granted a reprieve by the Election Commission of India (ECI), which reduced the disqualification period to just a year and a month. After the order of ECI, he is now eligible to contest elections.*

### BACKDROP

- Prem Singh Tamang, Chief Minister of Sikkim was disqualified on grounds of **corruption under Section 8(1)(m) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.**

- **Section 8(1)(m)** - A person convicted of an offence punishable under Prevention of Corruption Act shall be disqualified to contest elections for a further period of six years since his release.
- The CM's sentence came to an end in August 2018. Accordingly, he was barred from contesting polls until 2024.

### POWERS OF ELECTION COMMISSION

- The Sikkim Chief Minister approached the Election Commission of India (ECI) for a waiver of the remaining period of his disqualification.
- *Under **Section 11 of the RPA, 1951**, the ECI is empowered to remove any disqualification or reduce its duration for "reasons to be recorded" except offences under section 8A of RPA, 1951.*
- Section 8A provides for disqualification on **corrupt practices.**

### REASONS PROVIDED BY ECI FOR REDUCTION IN SENTENCE

- Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Election Commissioners Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra reduced Mr. Tamang's period of disqualification, cited **Section 11** of the **Representation of the People (RP) Act, 1951**, which allows the ECI to reduce or remove disqualification "for reasons to be recorded".
- As per EC's order, "alleged offence" for which the leader was convicted in 2016 took place in 1996-1997, when the minimum punishment prescribed for disqualification was of 2 years under the RP Act.
- The order of ECI noted that Mr. Tamang had been sentenced to one-year imprisonment on December 26, 2016, and the Section of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, under which he was convicted, had been omitted in an amendment in 2018. He completed the sentence on August 10, 2018.

### ► SECTION 123 OF RPA, 1951 DESCRIBES THE FOLLOWING AS CORRUPT PRACTICE:

- ✓ Bribery
- ✓ Undue influence
- ✓ Direct or indirect interference or attempt to interfere on the part of the candidate or his agent or by any other person with the consent of the candidate.

- ✓ Appeal by a candidate on the ground of his religion, race, caste, community or language.
- ✓ Use of, or **appeal to religious symbols** or the use of, or **appeal to national symbols**, such as the national flag or the national emblem to enhance the prospects of the election of that candidate or to affect the election prospect of any rival candidate.
- ✓ The promotion of, or **attempt to promote, feelings of enmity or hatred** between different classes of the citizens of India on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, or language, by a candidate or his agent or any other person.
- ✓ The propagation of the practice or the commission of sati or its glorification for election prospects.
- ✓ Publication of any **false statements** about rival candidates – including their personal character and conduct.
- ✓ Getting any assistance from any gazetted officer to enhance election prospects.

**Punishment:** Any person who in connection with an election under this Act promotes or attempts to promote on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language, feelings of enmity or hatred, between different classes of the citizens of India shall be **punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine or with both.**

- ▶ **RELATED INFORMATION:** Law made by Parliament to conduct elections & delimitation of constituencies
- **Article 324 of the Indian Constitution** provides for superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission. **Article 327** authorises the Parliament to make law for conduct of elections, to either House of Parliament or to the House or either House of the Legislature of a State including the preparation of electoral rolls, the delimitation of constituencies and all other matters necessary for securing the due constitution of such House or Houses. Accordingly Parliament has legislated Representation of People Act, 1951 and Representation of People Act, 1950.
- **Representation of People Act, 1951** - It provides for the conduct of elections of the Houses of Parliament and to the House or Houses of the Legislature of each State, the qualifications and disqualifications for membership of those Houses, the corrupt practices and other offences at

or in connection with such elections and the decision of doubts and disputes arising out of or in connection with such elections.

- **Representation of People Act, 1950** - It provide for the allocation of seats in, and the delimitation of constituencies for the purpose of election to, the House of the People and the Legislatures of States, the qualifications of voters at such elections, the preparation of electoral rolls, the manner of filling seats in the Council of States to be filled by representatives of Union territories and matters connected therewith.

## JAN SOOCHNA PORTAL - RAJASTHAN

#RTI

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

The Indian  
EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*Rajasthan has become the first state to launch Jan Soochna portal to strengthen the RTI Act by allowing the flow of latest information to the public. The portal will provide information about government authorities and departments by themselves to the public in the true spirit of the Right to Information Act. This will be in compliance with the Section 4(2) of the RTI Act mandating the public authorities to disclose information in the public domain so that people need not file applications under the law to obtain information.*

### ABOUT THE PORTAL

- The portal will provide information pertaining to 13 departments on a single platform.
- With different sections divided into districts, blocks and panchayats, the portal empowers the common people with access to useful information.
- The State government will set up **information kiosks** in village panchayats and **self-service e-mitra centres** in the towns to enable the people to access the information useful for them.
- The information pertaining to the number of beneficiaries of schemes, works undertaken in different areas, land

records and social security pensions will be available on the portal.

### PROPOSED BENEFITS OF THE PORTAL

- The portal would eventually turn out to be an effective medium for “**digital dialogue**” with the people as well as a strong instrument for ensuring transparency in governance.
- It will establish transparency accompanied by accountability as it places the power of making the State government accountable to everyone who accesses the information made available on the portal.

**Example:** As the information is available on the Internet, every citizen will be able to access such information. For example, the government of Rajasthan, like some other States, has waived farmers’ loans. The portal gives the details of every farmer in every bank branch whose loans have been waived, along with the amounts. Further Illegal mining has been a major issue in different parts of the country, with people unable to determine the details of clearances given. This portal gives the list of mines in every district, provides geographical coordinates, and the area where mining has been permitted, including the land deed identifiers. It also provides details about pollution and environment clearances.

- Finally, the portal provides details of production and royalties and taxes paid. This kind of information can facilitate a progressive partnership between government and citizens for a cleaner society.

### KEY CHALLENGES

- There are administrative challenges with regard to maintenance of the portal and providing information on a daily basis on wide range of subjects.
- Every person in a state cannot access internet and there is considerable amount of **lack of digital literacy** in state. So, the state must take proactive steps to reduce digital inequality by making people aware about the programme and making people participate through increased digital literacy starting at primary and secondary level in schools.

### STEPS INITIATED

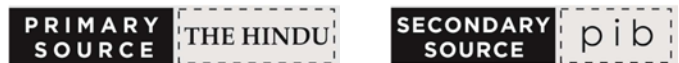
- Draft guidelines have been framed for the development and maintenance of the portal. Various departments of the government of Rajasthan, called Line Departments, have

been given a set of obligations that they are expected to fulfil. For example, they are expected to ensure digitization of records.

- In addition, the Department of Information Technology will serve as the nodal department for the development, operationalization and maintenance of the JSP.
- To ensure that the responsibilities are carried out, the **advisory group will be the monitoring agency**. Grievance redressal officers will be appointed so that citizens can make the State government truly accountable.
- The government of Rajasthan has also taken steps to **train citizens so that they are aware of the facilities available**. Therefore, it has been decided to host the JSP in decentralised locations, right down to the municipal ward and panchayat levels. They will have access to welfare schemes, revenue activities such as mining, and other service delivery issues such as health and education.

## ECI TO MONITOR FAKE NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

#EC #VOLUNTARY CODE OF ETHICS



### IN NEWS

*To monitor activities in cyberspace for the upcoming election in Maharashtra and Haryana, Election Commission of India (ECI) will set up a dedicated cell to monitor their activities on social media platforms. The cell will watch out for such uploads on social media which violates election norms by scanning all mediums like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram etc.*

### THE CELL WILL MONITOR THREE KINDS OF VIOLATIONS:

1. Any content being shared that might amount to defamation, rumour-mongering or fake news and such instances will be forwarded to the concerned police units for further action.
2. Violating Model Code of Conduct which will be reported to ECI.

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## CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

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3. Such posts which might give rise to law and order problems, in which case they will be removed from the internet.

The cell will also scan social media for posts by citizens drawing attention to willful violations of the model code of conduct by candidates or their supporters, including enticement for votes and use of force or intimidation.

### VOLUNTARY CODE OF ETHICS

- In the above context, Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) on behalf of its members has agreed to observe the "Voluntary Code of Ethics" during all elections including the ongoing general elections to the Haryana & Maharashtra legislative assemblies and various bye elections being held simultaneously.
- The highlighted features of "Voluntary Code of Ethics" are as follows:

- ✓ Social Media platforms will voluntarily undertake information, education and communication campaigns to build awareness including electoral laws and other related instructions.
- ✓ Social Media platforms have created a high priority dedicated grievance redressal channel for taking expeditious action on the cases reported by the ECI.
- ✓ Social Media Platforms and ECI have developed a notification mechanism by this ECI can notify the relevant platforms of potential violations of Section 126 of the R.P. Act, 1951 and other electoral laws. (**Section 126 - Prohibition of public meeting during period of forty-eight hours ending with hour fixed for conclusion of poll**)
- ✓ Platforms will ensure that all political advertisements on their platforms are pre-certified from the **Media Certification and Monitoring Committees** as per the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court.
- ✓ Participating platforms are committed to facilitate transparency in paid political advertisements, including utilising their pre-existing labels/disclosure technology for such advertisements.

### WHAT IS THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT (MCC)?

- The Model Code of Conduct for guidance of political parties and candidates is a set of norms which has been evolved with the consensus of political parties who have consented to abide by the principles embodied in the said

code and also binds them to respect and observe it in its letter and spirit.

- MCC has 8 parts -

1. General Conduct
2. Meetings
3. Procession
4. Polling Day
5. Polling Booth
6. Observers
7. Party in Power
8. Guidelines on Election Manifestos

**From which date the Model Code of Conduct is enforced and operational upto which date?** The Model Code of Conduct is enforced from the date of **announcement of election schedule by the Election Commission and is operational till the processes of elections are completed.**

### WHAT IS APPLICABILITY OF CODE DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS AND BYE-ELECTIONS?

- During general elections to House of People (Lok Sabha), the code is applicable throughout the country.
- During general elections to the Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha), the code is applicable in the entire State.
- During bye-elections, the code is applicable in the entire district or districts in which the constituency falls.

**What are the salient features of the Model Code of Conduct?** The salient features of the Model Code of Conduct lay down how political parties, contesting candidates and party(s) in power should conduct themselves during the process of elections i.e. on their general conduct during electioneering, holding meetings and processions, poll day activities and functioning of the party in power etc.

**Whether a Minister can combine his official visit with electioneering work?** No, The Ministers shall not combine their official visit with electioneering work and shall not also make use of official machinery or personnel during the electioneering work.

**Whether Govt. can make transfers and postings of officials who are related to election work?** There shall be a total ban on the transfer and posting of all officers/officials directly or indirectly connected with the conduct of the election. If any transfer or posting of an officer is considered

necessary, prior approval of the Commission shall be obtained.

## MEGHALAYA TO EXCLUDE UNREPRESENTED TRIBES

#TRIBES #SIXTH SCHEDULE

PRIMARY  
SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*Meghalaya wants to exclude “unrepresented tribes” from the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. This has left the minor tribes of Meghalaya in state of confusion. Meghalaya is divided into autonomous councils in the names of the three major matrilineal communities — Garo, Khasi and Jaintia. The minority tribes include the Hajong, Koch, Rabha, Boro and Mann.*

- On September 26, a sub-committee constituted by the State government had decided to recommend to the Standing Committee of Parliament the removal of the word “unrepresented tribes” from the amended Sixth Schedule.
- Currently, members of such minor tribes are nominated to the **autonomous district councils**. This distinction among tribes has resulted in tribes majoritarianism and the minority tribes after the amendment, will be made non-indigenous and unwanted in their own land.

### ► Sixth Schedule

- It provides for Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.
- It provides for creation of **Autonomous Districts** and **Autonomous Regions** by the Governor.
- If there are different Scheduled Tribes in an autonomous district, the Governor may, by public notification, divide the area or areas inhabited by them into **autonomous regions**.
- Governors of four states are empowered to declare some tribal dominated districts/areas of these states as

**autonomous districts** and **autonomous regions** by executive order. The Governor also has power to include any other area, exclude any area, increase, decrease, diminish these areas, unite two districts / regions, and alter the names and boundaries of these autonomous districts and regions.

- It provides for constitution of **District Councils** and **Regional Councils**.
- There shall be a District Council for each autonomous district consisting of not more than thirty members, of whom not more than four persons shall be nominated by the Governor and the rest shall be elected on the basis of adult suffrage. The elected members of District Council shall hold office for a term of 5 years.
- There shall be a separate **Regional Council** for each area constituted an autonomous region.

### ► Fifth Schedule

- It provides for **administration and Control of Scheduled Areas & Scheduled Tribes**.
- The Governor of each State having Scheduled Areas shall annually, or as required by the President, make a report to the President regarding the administration of the Scheduled Areas in that State.
- The executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to the State as to the administration of the said areas.
- Governors are empowered to make a report to President about administration of Scheduled Areas.
- Scheduled Areas are Such Areas as President may declare
- It provides for creation of **Tribes Advisory Council** which shall consist of not more than 20 members of whom three-fourths shall be the representatives of the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of the State.
- It shall be the duty of the Tribes Advisory Council to advise on such matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes in the State as may be referred to them by the Governor.

# RESTRICTIONS OF FREE SPEECH AT COST OF SOCIAL WELFARE

#RIGHTS ISSUE #FREEDOM #LIBERTY

PRIMARY  
SOURCE THE HINDU

## IN NEWS

*The Gates Foundation has awarded the Prime Minister its annual 'Global Goalkeeper' Award for initiating policies to advance the cause of public health and the building of several million toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission. However, the award has been criticised by many Nobel laureates as they believe that the present government has consistently undermined human rights and democracy and its social welfare programmes act as a trade-off for their freedom of speech and liberty. So, this is not the first time when trade-off between the right to life, liberty and freedom of expression on the one hand, and state provision of social goods on the other, has troubled theorists and defenders of human rights. In this backdrop, let us understand about Freedom, Liberty and Restrictions.*

**Black's Law Dictionary** explains freedom as the state of being free; liberty; self-determination; absence of restraint; the opposite of slavery. The power of acting, in the character of a moral personality, according to the dictates of the will, without other check, hindrance, or prohibition than such as may be imposed by just and necessary laws and the duties of social life.

## FREEDOM

- There are many types of freedom but the most essentially recognized freedom is **freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want** and **freedom from fear**. (also articulated by President Roosevelt of USA)
- Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right as stated in **Article 19 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

- Freedom is natural to human kind, it is part of the human condition, it lies at the heart of democratic theory, it is the reason why democracy exists, and it justifies the existence of democracy.
- Democratic movements throughout history have held up the flag of freedom as the 'absence of external impediments. The idea of Liberty emerged during 1789 in French Revolution. **John Stuart Mill called freedom as the struggle between liberty and authority.**

## HOW DO RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION IMPACT OUR DAILY LIFE?

- Freedom of speech is the bulwark of democratic government. This freedom is essential for the proper functioning of the democratic process.
- Freedom of speech and expression is regarded as the **first condition on liberty**. It occupies a preferred position in the hierarchy of liberties giving protection to all other liberties.
- John Stuart Mill in his book, **On Liberty** has expounded the idea of his concept of individual freedom within the context of his ideas on history and the state.
- Mill has stated that liberty depends on the idea that society progresses from lower to higher stages and that this progress culminates in the emergence of a system of representative democracy. It is within the context of this form of government that Mill envisions the growth and development of liberty.
- Mill undertakes a historical review of the concept of liberty. In the past, liberty meant primarily protection from tyranny. Over time, the meaning of liberty changed along with the **role of rulers, who came to be seen as servants of the people rather than masters.**
- This evolution brought about a new problem: **the tyranny of the majority**, in which a democratic majority forces its will on the minority. This state of affairs can exercise a tyrannical power even outside the political realm, when forces such as public opinion stifle individuality and rebellion. Here, society itself becomes the tyrant by seeking to inflict its will and values on others.
- Mill observes that liberty can be divided into three types, each of which must be recognized and respected by any free society. **First**, there is the liberty of thought and opinion. The **second type** is the liberty of tastes and

pursuits, or the freedom to plan our own lives. **Third**, there is the liberty to join other like-minded individuals for a common purpose that does not hurt anyone. Each of these freedoms negates society's propensity to compel compliance.

### PRESENT INDIAN CONTEXT

- This idea of Mill also holds true for India. We, as a nation are moving on the path of development but the culture of majority has started asserting its influence on our daily lives and has started affecting our right to choice. Right to choice may not be explicitly provided in the Constitution but flows from Article 19(1). State cannot regulate a citizen's right to choice or of dissent to a particular opinion.
- The Supreme Court had observed in **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India**, "Democracy is based essentially on free debate and open discussions, for that is the only corrective of government action in a democratic set up. If democracy means government of the people by the people, it is obvious that every citizen must be entitled to participate in the democratic process and in order to enable him to intelligently exercise his right of making a choice, free and general discussion of public matters is absolutely essential"
- **Reasonable Restriction** – Freedom of speech and individual liberty are enshrined in Articles 19(1)(a) and 21 of the Constitution. However, these rights, like all others, are not absolute but subject to reasonable restrictions.
- **Article 19(2)** provides for different grounds of reasonable restrictions. These include – the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

### VARIOUS TESTS LAID DOWN BY US SUPREME COURT DECISIONS ON REASONABLE RESTRICTIONS

- Earlier decision of U.S. Supreme Court had laid down the **'bad tendency'** test to determine whether the restriction was reasonable or not. As per the test, free speech or acts could be prohibited if they were likely to adversely affect the welfare of the public.
- Moving ahead, the US Supreme Court in *Schenck v. United States* (1919), laid down the **'Clear and Present Danger'** test to determine the reasonability of the restriction. As per the test, a restriction would be reasonable only if the

speech or action constitutes a clear and present (and not remote) danger to state security or public order.

- The **'Clear and Present Danger'** test was not consistently followed by the U.S. Supreme Court. In *Dennis v. United States* (1951), for instance, a **'Balancing'** Test was adopted.
- In *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969), the **'Clear and Present Danger'** test was expanded, and the **'Imminent Lawless Action'** test was laid down by the U.S. Supreme Court, which the court has followed since.
- The constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press do not permit the state to use force or of law violation, except where such free speech or free press is directed to incite or produce imminent lawless action.
- The word imminent is important as it refers to an event or incident which is likely to happen very soon or an incident which is fast approaching.

### IMMINENT LAWLESS ACTION' TEST IN INDIA

- Two decisions of the Indian Supreme Court **Sri Indra Das v. State of Assam (2011)** and **Arup Bhuyan v. State of Assam (2011)** followed the decision in *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, and so Brandenburg has become the law of the land in India as well. By applying the 'Imminent Lawless Action' test in India, various prosecution taken place in India can be challenged in the Courts.
- Imminent Danger test rests on proving that the accused pose "imminent danger" to the peace, tranquility and sovereignty of the country. Thus, it is upon the Supreme Court of India to follow 'Imminent Lawless Action' test in cases of reasonable restrictions as it pertains to an individual fundamental right of freedom and liberty which are the two most important fundamental rights as provided under Article 19 and 21 of the Indian Constitution.

### WAY FORWARD

- The democratic state is obliged to provide citizens with the basic preconditions for the exercise of freedom: health, education, sustainable living wage, satisfying work conditions, food and a decent standard of life.
- These social goods are, however but, milestones on the road to freedom. So, in the name of delivering government subsidies or welfare programmes, governments cannot take away freedom of its citizens.

- Supreme Court must make Imminent Lawless Action' test compulsory in all cases of restrictions of fundamental rights.

## UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

#POLITY

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

The Indian  
EXPRESS

### CONTEXT

*Article 44 of the Indian Constitution states that the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India. However, it is not so easy to make a uniform law on personal laws of all religions as each aspect of personal life like marriage, divorce, succession etc. are governed differently. So, Uniform Civil Code is an attempt to unify all civilian laws including personal laws for people of all faith living in India. UCC is the proposal to administer same set of secular civil laws to govern all people irrespective of their religion, gender, domicile, caste, etc. This law will be distinguished from public law and will subsume all laws covering marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and maintenance of different religions into one codified law. However, so far it has been difficult to achieve uniformity in personal laws of all religion.*

### UCC AND INDIAN CONSTITUTION

UCC has been provided for as a Directive principle of State Policy (DPSP) under part IV of the Indian constitution. Article 44 provides of a Uniform Civil code and reads "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India." The **objective of this endeavour** is to **harmonise diverse cultural practices and address the discrimination** meted out to various vulnerable groups under the garb of religious practices.

During the drafting of the constitution, UCC met with stiff opposition from various corners. Various minority religions especially the Muslims felt that UCC would curtail their freedom of religion, hence were apprehensive of replacing their personal laws with UCC. It was due to this apprehension that UCC was included as a DPSP rather than a Fundamental right and it was envisaged that it will be achieved gradually and not all at once. Nevertheless, having UCC embodied in DPSP reflects the intention of securing justice and equality for all citizens.

### BENEFITS OF UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

- It will do away with diversity in matrimonial laws, simplify the Indian legal system and make Indian society more homogeneous.
- It will de-link law from religion.
- It will create a national identity and will help in containing fissiparous tendencies in the country.
- It will also help in establishing social justice and gender equality in family matters.
- The introduction of UCC will promote monogamy among all the citizen of India including Muslim and it will lead to betterment in the position of women.
- It will also remove prejudices against women regarding personal laws on divorce and maintenance.
- It will help in strengthening the secular fabric of the country and promote unity.

### UCC AND THE SUPREME COURT

- a) **Shah Bano case:** In 1985, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of Shah Bano, who had moved the apex court seeking maintenance under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure after her husband divorced her. The then Chief Justice, Y.V. Chandrachud, observed that a Common Civil Code would help the cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties to law. The Court directed Parliament to frame a Uniform Civil Code.
- b) In the John Vallamattom v. Union of India case in 2003, Chief Justice V.N. Khare had observed: "It is a matter of regret that Article 44 of the Constitution has not been given effect to. Parliament is still to step in for framing a common civil code in the country."
- c) In 'Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowment vs Lakshmindra Swamiar of Sri Shirur Mutt', 1954, it was held that the right to religion and religious practices guaranteed under Articles 25 and 26 didn't extend to secular matters associated with religion. Article 25 is unequivocal that the right to practice and propagate religion is subject not only to laws regulating public order, morality and health but also to laws regulating any economic, financial, political "or other secular activity".

In this case, the Supreme Court upheld the formation of a board by law to supervise administration of secular affairs of temple so as to prevent mismanagement. Hence, marriage and succession cannot be considered intrinsic part of religion



though some rituals in marriage may be prescribed by religion.

*Goa is the only state where Uniform Civil code exists. The Goa Civil Code collectively called Family Laws, was framed and enforced by the Portuguese colonial rulers through various legislations in the 19th and 20th centuries. After the liberation of Goa in 1961, the Indian State scrapped all the colonial laws and extended the central laws to the territory but made the exception of retaining the Family Laws.*

### UCC AND LAW COMMISSION REPORT

- Recently, law commission submitted a report on reform of family laws. On the issue of Uniform Civil Code, Law Commission said that UCC is currently neither necessary nor desirable in India. In fact, the commission has **recommended religion-wise amendment in personal laws to end discrimination against women** within the communities.
- It urged the legislature to **“first consider equality within communities** i.e. between men and women rather than equality between communities”. This way some of the differences within personal laws which are meaningful can be preserved and inequality can be weeded out to the greatest extent possible without absolute uniformity.
- In the absence of any consensus on a uniform civil code the Commission felt that the best way forward may be to preserve the diversity of personal laws but at the same time ensure that personal laws do not contradict fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India. In order to achieve this, it is desirable that all personal laws relating to matters of family must first be codified to the greatest extent possible, and then the inequalities that have crept into codified law, should be remedied by amendment.

### ARGUMENTS AGAINST UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

- It will introduce State interference in religious affairs hence against the concept of secularism.
- UCC would violate personal laws of different religion gravely and would thus result in irreversible damage to their religion and the laws therein.
- Methodology to select which rule is good and bad as rules are based on once culture and norms.

### WAY FORWARD

- Hence, when and if Uniform Civil Code is brought about, it will have to ensure a balance between the protecting of fundamental rights and religious principles of different

communities. Before enacting a common personal law, it is necessary to take into confidence all religion and communities of India.

- Further, steps can be taken to legislate on such common matters which are least controversial but with complete consent of every community in India. The idea is to provide uniformity in set of rules by consent and not to create more fissures and fault lines in the name of enforcing a uniform common law for India.

## IMPORTANCE OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

#LEGISLATURE

PRIMARY SOURCE PRS

### IN NEWS

*The visible part of Parliament's work takes place on the floor of the House. Parliament meets for three sessions a year i.e., the Budget, Monsoon, and Winter Sessions.*

*However, Parliament has another forum through which a considerable amount of its work gets done. These are known as Parliamentary Committees. These Committees are smaller units of MPs from both Houses, across political parties and they function throughout the year. These smaller groups of MPs study and deliberate on a range of subject matters, Bills, and budgets of all the ministries.*

*During the recently concluded first Session of the 17th Lok Sabha, Parliament sat for 37 days. In the last 10 years, Parliament met for 67 days per year, on average. This is a short of amount of time for MPs to be able to get into the depth of matters being discussed in the House. Since Committees meet throughout the year, they help make up for this lack of time available on the floor of the House.*

### ABOUT DEPARTMENTALLY RELATED STANDING COMMITTEES

- There are 24 such Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs), each of which oversees a set of Ministries. DRSCs were set up first in 1993, to ensure Parliament could keep with the growing complexity of governance. These are permanent Committees that are

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## CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

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reconstituted every year. They consist of 21 Members from Lok Sabha, and 10 Members from Rajya Sabha, and are headed by a Chairperson.

- The DRSCs primarily look at three things: (i) Bills, (ii) budgets, and (iii) subject specific issues for examination.
- Other types of Standing Committees include Financial Committees which facilitate Parliament's scrutiny over government expenditure. Besides these, Parliament can also form ad hoc Committees for a specific purpose such as addressing administrative issues, examining a Bill, or examining an issue.

### ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

- **To ensure that a Bill is scrutinised properly before it is passed**, our law making procedure has a provision for Bills to be referred to a DRSC for detailed examination. Any Bill introduced in Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha can be referred to a DRSC by either the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Over the years, the Committees have immensely contributed to strengthen the laws passed by Parliament.

*For example, the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, overhauling the 1986 law, was recently passed during the Budget Session. An earlier version of the Bill had been examined by the Committee on Food and Consumer Affairs, which suggested several amendments such as increasing penalties for misleading advertisements, making certain definitions clearer. The government accepted most of these recommendations and incorporated them in the 2019 Act.*

- Parliament deliberates on matters that are complex, and therefore needs technical expertise to understand such matters better. Committees help with this by providing a forum where **Members can engage with domain experts and government officials during the course of their study**. For example, the Committee on Health and Family Welfare studied the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 which prohibits commercial surrogacy, but allows altruistic surrogacy. As MPs come from varying backgrounds, they may not have had the expertise to understand the details around surrogacy such as fertility issues, abortion, and regulation of surrogacy clinics, among others. The Committee called upon a range of stakeholders including the National Commission for Women, doctors, and government officials to better their understanding of the issues, before finalising their report.
- Committees also provide a **forum for building consensus across political parties**. The proceedings of the House

during sessions are televised, and MPs are likely to stick to their party positions on most matters. Committees have closed door meetings, which allows them to freely question and discuss issues and arrive at a consensus.

- After a Committee completes its study, it **publishes its report which is laid in Parliament**. These recommendations are not binding, however, they hold a lot of weight. For example, the Standing Committee on Health made several recommendations to the National Medical Commission Bill in 2017. Many of these were incorporated in the recently passed 2019 Bill, including removing the provision for allowing a bridge course for AYUSH practitioners.
- Besides Bills, the DRSCs **also examine the budget**. The detailed estimates of expenditure of all ministries, called Demand for Grants are sent for examination to the DRSCs. They study the demands to examine the trends in allocations, spending by the ministries, utilisation levels, and the policy priorities of each ministry. However, only a limited proportion of the budget is usually discussed on the floor of the House. In the recently dissolved 16th Lok Sabha, 17% of the budget was discussed in the House.
- Committees **also examine policy issues in their respective Ministries**, and make suggestions to the government. The government has to report back on whether these recommendations have been accepted or not. Based on this, the Committees then table an Action Taken Report, which shows status of the government's action on each recommendation.
- While Committees have substantially impacted Parliament's efficacy in discharging its roles, there is still scope for strengthening the Committee system. In the 16th Lok Sabha, DRSCs examined 41 Bills, 331 Demands for Grants, 197 issues, and published 503 Action Taken Reports.
- However, the **rules do not require that all Bills be examined by a Committee**. This leads to some Bills being passed without the advantage of a Committee scrutinising its technical details. Recently, there has been a declining trend in the percentage of Bills being referred to a Committee. In the 15th LS, 71% of the Bills introduced were referred to Committees for examination, as compared to 27% in the 16th Lok Sabha.
- With the DRSCs now constituted for the first year of the 17th Lok Sabha, they will soon begin their meetings to select the subjects they are going to examine. Some

Committees already have Bills to examine that were referred to them during the 16th Lok Sabha. Some of these Bills are: (i) the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2019, (ii) the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018, and (iii) the Registration of Marriage of Non- Resident Indian Bill, 2019. So far in the 17th Lok Sabha no Bill has been referred to a Committee yet.

## DALIT MUSLIMS TO BE CATEGORISED AS SCHEDULED CASTES

# SCHEDULED CASTE # DALIT

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*A group of Muslim activists want to spread awareness about Article 341 among the Muslim population about inclusion of Dalit Muslims as Scheduled Castes. As per this group, accommodation of Dalit Muslims on a par with Hindu, Sikhs and Buddhist in the Scheduled Castes category is the most burning issue at present.*

- **Article 341** mentions that President in a state after consultation with the Governor, by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union territory.
- As per **Article 341** - Parliament may by law include or exclude any caste, race or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in the above mentioned notification.
- So, we understand that only Parliament under **Article 341 (2)** is empowered to include or exclude any caste within the Scheduled Caste (SC) and state governments do not have such power.

## GLOBAL POLITICAL NEWS

## UK: PROROGUING PARLIAMENT MID- SESSION DECLARED INVALID

#JUDICIAL REVIEW #PARLIAMENTARY  
DEMOCRACY #RULE OF LAW

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*Supreme Court of United Kingdom in a major judgment has held that the actions taken by Prime Minister Boris Johnson to*

*prorogue Parliament were unlawful on the grounds of parliamentary sovereignty and democratic accountability.*

### HOW DID THE MATTER REACH THE SUPREME COURT IN UK?

- Boris Johnson led government was always in favour of exiting the European Union even without a deal. The suspicion around his action increased when the PM advised the Queen to prorogue Parliament for it to reconvene on October 14, 2019.
- The process was widely perceived to be a sharp and calculated move by the government to conclude the Brexit process with minimal parliamentary scrutiny.
- This triggered a legal challenge whereby the Scottish Court of Session found that the Prime Minister had misled the Queen on the issue of prorogation of Parliament. The matter was simultaneously heard by the High Court of

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## CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

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England and Wales, which ruled that the prerogative powers of the government were non-justiciable. These conflicting judgments became clear by 11th September, 2019.

- Because of the conflicting opinion, an appeal was heard by the Supreme Court between September 17 and 19 and the judgment was delivered on September 24, 2019.

### FOCUS AND IMPORTANCE OF JUDGMENT

- The Court held that the decision to advise Her Majesty to prorogue Parliament for five weeks was unlawful because it had the effect of frustrating or preventing the ability of Parliament to carry out its constitutional functions without reasonable justification. Thus, the court has quashed both his advice to the Queen and the Order in Council which officially suspended Parliament.
- Supreme Court of UK has asserted its judicial might to assert the constitutional legitimacy within a timeframe. This judgment becomes equally important for the countries following **Westminster Model** including India to uphold principles of their constitutional process and rule of law especially for the executive branch of government. The verdict was delivered unanimously by panel of 11 Justices.

### ► WESTMINSTER SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

The **Westminster system** is a democratic parliamentary system of government modeled after that of the United Kingdom system. It is founded on the British Palace of Westminster model of responsible government which comprises:

- A head of state who is the nominal or theoretical source of executive power, holds numerous reserve powers, but in practice is a ceremonial figurehead. Such examples include the British Sovereign or the President of India.
- An elected Parliament, with one or two Houses.
- A Government formed by the political party, or coalition, with majority support in the Lower House
- A Prime Minister or Premier, who heads the Government.
- A Ministry, drawn from members of Parliament – usually Government members – exercising executive authority and accountable to the Parliament
- A de facto executive branch usually made up of members of the legislature with the senior members of the executive

in a Cabinet; such members execute executive authority on behalf of the nominal or theoretical executive authority.

- The presence of opposition parties
- Dissolution of Parliament and regular conduct of elections
- An Independent Judiciary.
- At the heart of the system is the concept of the separation of powers between the three branches of government:
  - ✓ The **Legislature**: Parliament, which makes the law
  - ✓ The **Executive**: Governor, Prime Minister/Premier, Ministers, departments and agencies, which implement the law.
  - ✓ The **Judiciary**: the courts, which interpret and apply the law.

**Public Service** - Another key feature of the Westminster System is an apolitical, professional public service providing impartial advice to the Government of the day and implementing the Government's policies and programs. Another core requirement of the Westminster System is that the recruitment and promotion of employees in the public service is on the basis of merit.

### CONSTITUTION IN UK

- Unlike India, United Kingdom does not have a single document named as 'The Constitution'. It nevertheless possesses a Constitution, established over a period of years by common law, statutes, conventions and practice, works of authority, Acts of Parliaments and European Union legislation.
- The constitution of UK is not a codified document and has developed pragmatically and remains sufficiently flexible to be capable of further development. It includes numerous principles of law, which are enforceable by the courts in the same way as other legal principles.
- After the Boris Johnson episode, voices in UK are slowly growing for a 'written constitution' because on many occasions the British Prime Minister was unwilling to observe the unwritten rules. It is uncertain whether a written constitution in UK would be a write-up of the rules as they are understood now or if they would be entirely rewritten.
- A written constitution containing provisions on prorogation would have "at the very least" made it more

difficult for a prime minister to enforce the suspension of parliament.

#### TIMELY JUDICIAL REVIEW BY SUPREME COURT OF UK

- The entire judicial approach, in dealing with a matter concerning the “fundamentals of democracy”, underlines the **effectiveness of the judicial review process** when conducted in a timely manner.
- Supreme Court confirmed that the prorogation was “unlawful because it had the effect of frustrating or preventing the ability of Parliament to carry out its constitutional functions without reasonable justification.”
- So for countries following Westminster system of government, this judgment will naturally lead to increased introspection of executive actions and provide a boost to due parliamentary processes.

#### HINTS FOR INDIA

- The article highlights that two key executive actions of the government this year were passed in a hurry without proper legislative scrutiny -

1. The Constitutional 103<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act 2019 providing reservation for EWS.
2. Abrogating Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and introducing Jammu and Kashmir State Reorganisation Bill, 2019.

- The conventional practice is that legislative documents are provided at least a few days before they are tabled in Parliament. This is done for the MPs to understand the contents of the legislations, seek views and formulate their positions in the final law.
- **Rule 69** in Rajya Sabha mentions about ‘Motions after Introduction of Bills’ and ‘Scope of Debate’. As per the rule, discretion has been given to the Chairman in exceptional situations. But, every discretionary power does require that the Chairman must exercise it judiciously and with proper application of mind.
- So, such action of the executive undermining parliamentary process can be subject to judicial review including the action of Chairman to allow for discretion with respect to introduction of Bills without prior information and debate in the Parliament.

## GOOGLE’S RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN

#DATA PROTECTION #RIGHTS ISSUE #E-GOVERNANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*

#### IN NEWS

*European Court of Justice (ECJ) has ruled that Google does not have to apply the right to be forgotten globally but only in European Union Countries. It means that Google has to remove links from its search results only in Europe after receiving an appropriate request. This ruling is a result of a dispute between Google and the French Privacy Regulator. Google was supported by Microsoft, Wikipedia’s owner the Wikimedia Foundation, the non-profit Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, the UK freedom of expression campaign group Article 19 among others.*

#### APPLYING RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN SINCE 2014.

- Right to be forgotten is also known as the **“right to erasure”**. The rule gives citizens of European Union the right as they can demand from global search engines to delete their sensitive personal data from the web since 2014.
- Google has applied the right to be forgotten since May 2014 when the ECJ first ruled that under some circumstances European citizens can force global search engines to **delist webpages** containing sensitive information about them from queries made using their names.
- The idea is to hide sensitive information (eg. committing criminal offence, having extra-marital affair) if the details are found to be *inadequate, irrelevant or no longer necessary*. ECJ held that delistings must be accompanied by measures which effectively prevent or, at the very least, seriously discourage an internet user from being able to access the results from one of Google’s non-EU sites.
- EU General Data Protection Regulation (EUGDPR) which came into force in 2018 has added further obligations for the global search engine with respect to “right to be forgotten”.

#### KEY CHANGES BROUGHT BY EUGDPR

The aim of the GDPR is to protect all EU citizens from privacy and data breaches in our data-driven world. In the new EUGDPR, many new changes have been proposed to the regulatory policies which are –

### 1. Increased Territorial Scope

- Now, GDPR applies to all companies processing the personal data of data subjects residing in the Union, regardless of the company's location. Previously, territorial applicability of the directive was ambiguous leading to various disputes leading to excessive litigations.
- Now, GDPR makes its applicability very clear as it applies to the processing of personal data by controllers and processors in the EU, regardless of whether the processing takes place in the EU or not.
- The GDPR also applies to the processing of personal data of data subjects in the EU by a controller or processor not established in the EU. Activities of personal data relate to -
  - ✓ offering goods or services to EU citizens (irrespective of whether payment is required) and
  - ✓ the monitoring of behaviour that takes place within the EU.
- Non-EU businesses processing the data of EU citizens also have to appoint a representative in the EU.

### 2. Penalties

- Organizations in breach of GDPR can be fined up to 4% of annual global turnover or €20 Million (whichever is greater). This is the maximum fine that can be imposed for the most serious infringements i.e. not having sufficient customer consent to process data or violating the core of privacy by design concepts.
- There is a tiered approach to fines e.g. a company can be fined 2% for not having their records in order (article 28), not notifying the supervising authority and data subject about a breach or not conducting impact assessment.
- These rules apply to both controllers and processors. It means that 'clouds' are not exempt from GDPR enforcement.

### 3. Consent

- The conditions for consent have been strengthened and companies are no longer able to use long illegible terms and conditions for consent which are ambiguous and self-contradictory.

- The request for consent must be given in an intelligible and easily accessible form with the purpose for data processing attached to that consent.
- Consent must be clear and distinguishable from other matters and provided in an intelligible and easily accessible form, using clear and plain language. It must be as easy to withdraw consent as it is to give it.

### 4. Data Subject Rights

- **Right to Access** – It is right of data subjects to obtain confirmation from the data controller about processing of their personal data. The data controller has to tell their data subjects about the jurisdiction and purpose of data process.
- **Breach Notification** - Under the GDPR, breach notifications are now mandatory in all member states where a data breach is likely to “result in a risk for the rights and freedoms of individuals”. This must be done within 72 hours of first having become aware of the breach. Data processors are also required to notify their customers, the controllers, “without undue delay” after first becoming aware of a data breach.
- **Right to be Forgotten** – It entitles the data subject to have the data controller erase their personal data, cease further dissemination of their data and have third parties halt processing of their data. The conditions for removal of data – 1. data is no longer relevant to original purposes for processing or 2. data subject withdrawing their consent. Right to be forgotten also requires data controllers to compare the subjects’ rights to “the public interest in the availability of the data” when considering such requests for data removal.
- **Data Portability** - GDPR introduces data portability – the right for a data subject to receive the personal data concerning them – which they have previously provided in a ‘commonly use and machine readable format’ and have the right to transmit that data to another controller.
- **Privacy by Design** – The term “Privacy by Design” means data protection through technology design and takes the human aspects of privacy during the designing process of any technology. At its core, privacy by design calls for the inclusion of data protection from the onset of the designing of systems, rather than an addition. Privacy by design as a concept has existed for years, but has become part of the legal requirement with the GDPR. As per GDPR, ‘the controller shall implement appropriate technical and organisational measures in an effective way in order to

meet the requirements of this Regulation and protect the rights of data subjects'. Article 23 calls for controllers to hold and process only the data absolutely necessary for the completion of its duties (data minimisation), as well as limiting the access to personal data to those needing to act out the processing.

### COMPARING WITH INDIA

- In Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v Union of India commonly known as right to privacy judgment, the constitution bench held that right to privacy also includes **“Right to be left alone”**. It held that right to privacy includes preservation of personal intimacies, sanctity of family life, procreation, home and sexual orientation.
- And in all these aspects, right to privacy also entails, right to be left alone. The Court held that privacy safeguards individual autonomy and recognises the ability of the individual to control vital aspects of their life. Justice Srikrishna Committee on data protection has submitted a report on “A Free and Fair Digital Economy” and “Protecting Privacy, Empowering Indians.” The committee has also drafted The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018 almost on the lines of EUGDPR.

- **Chapter 6 of The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018** provides for various Data Principal Rights including right to conformation and access, right to correction, right to data portability, right to be forgotten and general conditions for the exercise of rights.
- The Bill also provides for Transparency and Accountability measures including Privacy by Design, Transparency, Security Safeguards, personal data breach, data safeguards, record keeping, data protection officers etc. The Bill also constitutes Data Protection Authority of India and an Appellate Tribunal to hear cases related to data breach.

### CONCLUSION

- The Bill has yet not been introduced in the Parliament. With growing technology and creation of exponential data every day, there is an urgent need for a data protection law as it was also stated by the constitution bench judgment in Justice Puttaswamy.
- So, without a data protection law in India, Indian Government cannot ask Google to delete personal data of Indians from the global search engine.

## CASE STUDY

**Note:** This section covers few case studies depicting how the government initiatives have brought changes at the ground level.

An aspirant can incorporate these points in the case study or GS answer related to the theme to enrich one's answer. These points will include humane approach in the answer as the challenges and recommendations are of ground level and show how important in community participation.

## CASE 1: PUBLIC PROSECUTOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

Across the country, government prosecutors are not known for being efficient. That is the reason India has embarrassingly low conviction rates — somewhere around 40 per cent as against the high 90s in countries like China, Japan and Canada. This conviction rate falls further depending on the state one is in and the concerned crime. For instance, cases of sexual violence see even lower conviction rates. The all-round weakness of the prosecutors to get the wronged party timely justice undermines the citizen's faith in the government and the overall system. But Madhya Pradesh is changing things.

It is doing this by training and incentivising its prosecutors to doggedly go after the criminals. For instance, when in a recent case in Katni district court, the lawyer defending a rape accused requested the court to summon the police because they had recorded statements of certain witnesses but did not produce them in court, Katni's District

Prosecution Officer (DPO) Dharmendra Taran was quick to react. "It was obvious that the defence lawyer was delaying the trial by trying to mislead the court," he says. So Taran submitted an application requesting the court to reject the defence lawyer's application. Similarly, in another rape trial, the DPO filed an application requesting the court to initiate action against a witness who had turned hostile.

Submitting applications like the ones Taran did, get state's prosecutors 10 points in a lower court and 20 in a Sessions court. Once the day's proceedings are over, prosecutors across MP open an app — "e-Prosecution MP" — designed and developed by the Directorate of Public Prosecution, and enter the record of their activities in court.

Called **Public Prosecutor Performance Evaluation System**, the daily activity and monthly performance information is analysed to evaluate best prosecutors at state and district levels using a well-defined formula. The details filled in by the prosecutors are reviewed by their reporting officers. Productivity and performance score for each prosecutor is generated using a matrix and rules. When a prosecutor ensures death sentence he gets 1,000 points, the highest an activity can get; life imprisonment earns 500 points and three-year conviction gets 300 points.

Those who were lazy, wanting to work for fixed hours and wait for their salaries remained so. But now that the performance is being evaluated everybody is motivated to be efficient and earn points". Those who do well are felicitated and those who falter are warned. And those who try to game the system by manipulating their numbers are given stiffer punishments.

The initiative has led to a better conviction rate. In 2018, there were 21 death sentences, the highest in the country in a year. The state also witnessed quickest death trial and the quickest life term trial that lasted for three days.

Once the evaluation system was in place, the department realised it did not have a branch to train prosecutors to improve their performance. The prosecutors are now trained by judicial officers who tell them what judges expect during the trial. Even defence lawyers are called during training sessions to train the prosecutors. Underperformers are given

separate training. Experts train them to improve verbal and non-verbal communication like voice modulation and expressions.

The department has taken another initiative to build team spirit by insisting they share lunch every Wednesday and share photographs on WhatsApp groups. The groups are also used to post written arguments which allow others to point out lacuna and court judgments that can be cited in support.

Another step taken by the department is to send a team of prosecutors at the time of final arguments to ensure that certain points are not skipped because even defence lawyers come with a team.

## CASE 2: FARMER FIELD SCHOOLS

**Farmer Field Schools** were developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization as an alternative to the top-down way of providing extension under the Green revolution. This has been in practice for a few decades in Southeast Asia. It involves giving **focused guidance to small groups of farmers** in their fields by way of learning-by-doing exercises.

Farmers in Karate, a village in the Baramati taluka of Pune, Vijay Salunkhe was mildly surprised when the agricultural assistant of his area talked about a "Farmer Field School" and asked him to attend it. Salunkhe, who grows mainly maize, and partly onion and bajra, in his 2.5 acres, is thankful that he agreed because these lessons in the "school" helped him to take preventive measures against the dreaded Fall Army Worm (FAW) for his maize crop.

While FAW infestation has been reported on 2.67 lakh hectares of the total 8.60 lakh hectares of maize area, most farmers have reported success in controlling the infestation to a great degree. Agriculture Commissioner SuhasDiwase says the government decided to launch a multi-pronged approach to combat FAW. This included a massive farmers education programme. this school has officers and staff of the agriculture department get farmers together on a fixed day to discuss issues related to their crops and fields. Unlike



bigger seminars or workshops, these schools are held much more regularly and with much smaller groups of farmers.

The topics discussed vary depending on the local conditions. Thus, the schools in Baramati had mainly focused on ways to control pests for maize and sugarcane – the crops most commonly cultivated here. In districts of Marathwada, on the other hand, such schools are providing guidance for crops such as cotton, tur, and moong etc.

**Information dissemination to farmers** through various channels including that of the Farmer Field School is to be credited for better pest control. They also focus on better agricultural practices to help farmers improve their yields.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### MCQS

**1. Consider the following statements about Ladakh:**

1. Ladakh has been declared as a Union Territory having a legislative assembly.
2. Bakarwals, Bots, Changpas, Baltis, Purigpas Dards, Mons and Changthang are the important tribes of Ladakh.
3. Aksai Chin falls under the newly created Union Territory of Ladakh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**2. Which of the following statements about National Commission for Scheduled Tribes is/are correct?**

1. It was added through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003.
2. It inquires into specific complaints relating to rights & safeguards of Scheduled Tribes and advise about their socio-economic development.
3. It can take measures to ensure full implementation of the Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.

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

**3. Which of the following languages have been provided under Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution?**

1. Bhojpuri
2. Assamese
3. Malayalam
4. Urdu
5. Bodo
6. Nepali

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only
- (b) 1, 2, 5 and 6 only
- (c) 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
- (d) 2, 3 and 5 only

**4. Consider the following statements about National Population Register (NPR):**

1. NPR will be prepared under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955.

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## CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

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2. NPR will create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.
3. NPR will utilise Census figures of 2011 and 2021.
- 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
5. "Right to be left alone" can be associated with which of the following?
- (a) Data Privacy  
(b) Passive Euthanasia  
(c) Insurance  
(d) Government Contracts

## DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** Discuss the role played by Parliamentary Committees to adequately scrutinize bills passed by Indian Parliament.
- Q2.** Digital India can emerge as a leveler for socio-economic development for all by removing digital inequality and by promoting basic literacy along with digital literacy. Comment.

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

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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

## LEAD ARTICLE

### MERGER OF BANKS- IS IT A PANACEA FOR THE PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS?

#BANKING AND FINANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE

BusinessLine

SECONDARY SOURCE

mint

SECONDARY SOURCE

Business Standard

#### IN NEWS

*The Government of India has recently proposed to merge 10 Public sector Banks into 4 large banks. After the mergers, there will be 12 public sector banks in India, including State Bank of India and Bank of Baroda. The Idea behind the merger of the Banks is to strengthen the balance sheets of the Public Sector Banks and kick start the credit creation in the Indian Economy to propel the GDP Growth.*

*However, a large number of concerns have been raised with respect to merger of the Public Sector Banks. Critics have pointed out that it may not be the right time to undertake the merger. They have also highlighted that undertaking merger without bringing in banking reforms would be disastrous.*

*In this regard, let us understand the different dimensions related to Merger of Public Sector Banks in India.*

#### BACKGROUND TO THE MERGER OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

- The suggestion of consolidation among PSBs has been quite old. **Narsimhan Committee Report in 1991** recommended a **three tier banking structure** in India

through establishment of three large banks with international presence, eight to ten national banks and a large number of regional and local banks. The **PJ Nayak Committee** on improving the governance of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) had also recommended for merger of PSBs.

- In August 2017, the Union Cabinet had given in-principle approval for Public Sector Banks to amalgamate through an **Alternative Mechanism (AM)**. The Alternative Mechanism (AM) is headed by the Union Finance Minister and gives in-approval for the merger of Public Sector Banks. The final scheme of merger is notified by Central Government in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India. Subsequently, the Associate Banks of SBI and Bharatiya Mahila Bank got merged into State of Bank of India. It was followed by the merger of Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank and Bank of Baroda in 2018.

#### GOVERNMENT'S DECISION

Under the scheme of amalgamation, Allahabad Bank will be merged with Indian Bank (anchor bank - Indian Bank); PNB, OBC and United Bank to be merged (PNB will be the anchor bank); Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank to be merged (anchor bank - Union Bank of India); and Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank to be merged (anchor bank - Canara Bank).

This move would bring down the number of Public Sector Banks to 12. The government has also announced capital infusion totalling over Rs 55,000 crore into public sector banks.

Apart from the announcement of Bank mergers, the Government has proposed certain reforms in the Governance framework as listed below:

1. To make management accountable to Board, Board committee of nationalized banks to approve performance of General Manager and above (including MD);

2. To recruit Chief Risk Officer from market, at market-linked compensation to attract best available talent;
3. To enable succession planning, Board to decide system of 'Individual Development Plans' for all senior executive positions;
4. To ensure sufficient tenure, Boards given flexibility to prescribe residual service of two years for appointment of GM and above;
5. Flexibility given to Boards of large PSBs to enhance sitting fees of non-official directors (NODs).

### **RATIONALE FOR THE MERGER OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS (PSBS)**

- **Fragmented Banking Structure in India:** Indian banking sector is highly fragmented, especially in comparison with other key economies. Additionally, most of the PSBs in India are competing within themselves; most of them have same business models and compete in the same segments as well as same geographies. Thus, merger of the Banks would lead to consolidation of Banking Structure in India
- **Need to build capacity to meet credit demand:** India needs to have global sized banks that can support the investment needs of \$ 5 trillion economy and sustain economic growth. To meet the growing credit demand of the economy, the Public Sector Banks need to be well capitalized and need to enhance their capacity to lend to larger companies and larger projects.
- **Need for larger capital base to manage NPAs :** Public Sector Banks (PSBs) which form approximately 72% of the Indian banking system are among the most affected by the high non-performing asset (NPA) problem at present. This has further resulted into a slowdown of credit growth in our economy, thereby reducing private investment and our potential economic growth. The merger of Banks would lead to reduction in the net NPA ratio of the merged bank and kick start credit creation.
- **Merger of Weak Bank with Strong Bank:** The merger of weak banks (higher NPAs and low profits) with the strong Banks would prevent the collapse of the weak banks and protect the customers and financial system.
- **Benefits for the Government:** The merger of the Public Sector Banks would reduce the financial burden on the Government on undertaking frequent recapitalisation of the Public Sector Banks. It would also help the Government in meeting the stringent capital requirements stipulated under the BASEL III Norms. The reduction in the

number of the Public sector banks to 12 would enable the government and RBI to monitor the performance of the Public Sector banks easier.

- **Significant cost benefits from synergies:** Larger distribution network will reduce operating and distribution costs with benefits for the amalgamated bank, its customers and their subsidiaries. The merged bank would be able to provide wider range of products and services through leveraging of bank subsidiaries and leveraging of a larger network for offering more value-added non-banking services and products.

### **RISKS AND CHALLENGES**

- **Systemic Risk:** It has been argued that a failure of a very large bank may have adverse impact on the economy as witnessed during the financial crisis of 2008. The 2008 crisis highlighted that presence of large financial institutions pose systemic risk to the economy and such institutions are "too big to fail". Further, in event of any such crisis in future, the onus would lie on the government to bail out the institutions, thus posing a moral hazard.
- **Merger of Weak Bank with Strong Banks:** The merger of banks is undertaken to prevent the collapse of the weak banks. However, in some of the instances, poor balance sheets of the weak banks could end up hurting the balance sheets of the strong Banks. This may in turn lower the profit margin of the strong Banks.
- **Low Positive Correlation between Size and Efficiency:** The merger of PSBs is undertaken on an assumption that a large sized bank would be more efficient than a small sized bank. However, such positive correlation between Size and Efficiency is not always true. In case of India, some of the small sized banks are considered to be much more efficient than the large sized Public Sector Bank.
- **Human Resource Integration:** One of the most challenging problems which could hinder the consolidation process would be in terms of human resource integration and management as many employees would fear job loss and disparities in the form of regional allegiances, benefits, reduced promotional avenues, new culture, etc.
- **Employment Creation:** The Merger of Banks would reduce the need for hiring fresh employees and hence this could in turn aggravate the present unemployment situation in the Indian Economy.
- **Timing of the Merger:** Some of the economists have questioned the timing of the present merger of the PSBs. Instead of focusing on credit creation to boost the present

economic slowdown, the PSBs would end up concentrating more on completing the necessary formalities and paper work in completion of merger and thus it may end up hurting the economic growth in the near term.

- **Customer Retention:** The other challenge is customer retention. SBI's recent merger with its associate banks saw customers of associate banks opting to move their business to rival lenders as result of a lack of comfort in banking with the larger parent.

**Way forward:** While there are clearly benefits in this merger, it is important to note that the merger is not the panacea to remove all the economic ills of the PSBs. It is being argued that such mergers only push problems below the carpet, as the fundamental challenges are not being addressed. If governance issues afflicting the PSBs are not addressed, merging two or three public sector banks may not change the architecture. There is urgent need for the government to implement the recommendations of PJ Nayak Committee to strengthen the governance of the Public Sector Banks. Further, some of the other measures which the government should undertake include:

- **Focus on Strong Leadership:** The Merger of Banks would require strong leadership at the top accompanied by integration of technology and human resources. We need to have the people at the top level who should be able to

focus on integration planning, revamp the Human resources (HR) practices and culturally integrate the expanded workforce. Hence, the current heads of the anchor banks must be provided with security of tenure of 3 years so as to avoid any uncertainties in managing the merger process.

- **Strengthen Human Resources:** The Public sector Banks are under equipped in key areas of technology, Human Resources Management and Risk Management. Hence, there is a need to recruit professionals from the market so as to improve the competitiveness and efficiency of the PSBs.
- **Focus on Service Delivery:** The PSBs should ensure that they do not face shortage of the front line staff which can compromise the service delivery. Further, these front-line staff must be provided with necessary training and capacity building to improve the effectiveness of service delivery.
- **Banking Reforms:** The Government should also consider the Narsimhan committee recommendations on converting some of the weak banks into regional banks. Banks such as Bank of Maharashtra that have higher regional concentration could be turned into vibrant regional banks to serve agriculture, trade and commerce.

## INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

### INDIA'S GROWTH MODEL- CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

#INCLUSIVE GROWTH

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

IN NEWS

*The Government of India has recently come up with a grand vision of realizing \$ 5 trillion economy by the end of 2024. Accordingly, India needs to have a relook at its growth model*

*which has failed to provide inclusive growth and development. India's vision of \$5 Trillion economy must address the various concerns of India's growth Model. In this regard, let us discuss various concerns and challenges with India's growth model and what measures should India undertake to promote inclusive and sustainable growth in India.*

#### CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES WITH INDIA'S GROWTH MODEL

- **Lack of Inclusive Growth:** The rapid growth of the Indian Economy in the last 2 decades has not translated into greater benefits to the people in the lower rungs of the Indian Society. As per Credit Suisse, 1% of the wealthiest in India have increased their share in wealth from 40% in 2010 to 60% in the last five years. The richest 10% in India

own more than 4 times the wealth than the remaining 90%. Going forward, richest 10% in India would take away the majority share of \$ 5 trillion economy.

- **Poor Human Capital Formation:** India needs to optimally utilize its demographic dividend to sustain higher GDP growth rates. However, the **human capital formation continues to remain poor**. The Literacy rate of 71% (2015) in India is much lower as compared to other countries such as Rwanda, Morocco, Congo etc. According to Annual Status of Education Report, the learning outcomes in India have continued to remain poor. Further, India's poor health and nutrition status is evident in number of reports such as Global Hunger Index (GHI), Human Development Index (HDI), National Family Health Survey (NFHS) etc.
- **Jobless Growth:** The rapid growth of the Indian Economy has not translated into creation of employment opportunities in India. According to the recent **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) estimates**, the unemployment in India has increased to 45 years high of 6.1%.
- **Environmental Destruction:** The economic growth in India has led to severe depletion and degradation of environmental resources. The recent IPCC report has warned India of the seriousness of the climate change and its adverse impact on the environment.
- **Economic Slowdown:** The GDP growth rate has declined to 5% accompanied by slowdown in Investment, Savings and Exports. The Automobile sector has been severely affected due to decline in the consumption expenditure leading to retrenchment of around 3.5 lakh workers. Overall, all the major Industries are facing the brunt of the economic slowdown.
- The crisis in the manufacturing sector has been further compounded by the agrarian distress. The Agriculture sector has been affected by rising input costs, low price of agricultural produce and low public investment leading to decline in the income levels of the farmers. This has further accentuated the decline in the aggregate demand in the economy.

#### SUGGESTIONS

- **Focus on Human Capital Formation:** India cannot realise its vision of \$ 5 trillion economy without investing in Human Capital Formation. The Government investment in Education has to increase to **6% of the GDP** from the present 4%. Similarly, the Government investment in health has to increase from **1.5% to 3% of GDP**. Such

increase in the public Investment would ensure equitable and inclusive growth.

- **Focus on Boosting Demand in the Economy:** Since the present economic slowdown is on account of decline in the consumption expenditure, the Government must focus on boosting the demand in the economy without worrying about the Fiscal Deficit targets. Some of the measures proposed in the article are as given below:
- **Agriculture Sector:** The Government must increase the public investment in Agriculture in terms of Infrastructure, provision of Inputs, facilitating access to markets so as to ensure fair and remunerative prices to the farmers.
- **MGNREGA:** The Government must allocate more funds to the MGNREGA programme to alleviate the agrarian distress and boost demand in the rural areas.
- **Creation of Employment Opportunities:** The Government must focus on promoting labour intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, gems and jewellery. The Government should also raise public employment by filling up all vacant posts in the central and state governments.

**Finally,** The reform measures announced by the Government so far would not be able to address the present economic slowdown mainly because of mainly 2 reasons:-

- **Firstly,** these measures address only the supply side measures and do not boost the consumption expenditure.
- **Secondly,** these measures do not address the needs of the weaker sections which is quite critical for enhancing consumption expenditure. The Government should look at the weaker sectors and sections not only to improve their well-being but also to get out of the present economic slowdown.

## DECODING THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM IN INDIA

#JOBLESS GROWTH

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

#### IN NEWS

*According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Report, the unemployment in India has increased to 45-year high of*

6.1%. The increase in the unemployment in the recent times has contributed to the decline in the consumption expenditure leading to economic slowdown.

The problem of unemployment has actually got accentuated after 2012. In this regard, let us understand as to what factors could have possibly contributed to the increase in the unemployment in India, particularly after 2012.

**Current Labour Market Scenario in India:** Based upon the official employment surveys and Census data, there were around 471 million persons who were employed and around 30 million people who were unemployed. The unemployment in India has actually increased between 2012 and 2018. Further, the unemployment problem is particularly concentrated among the people in the age group 15-29 who account for almost 21 million among the 30 million unemployed.

**REASONS FOR HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE AGE-GROUP 15-29 YEARS**

**Increase in the number of Job Seekers:** There has been drastic increase in the potential workers for the non-agricultural sectors. The potential non-agricultural workforce in India grew at the rate of 14 million a year between 2005 and 2012, which rose further to 17 million a year between 2012 and 2018. This is on account of the following reasons:

- ✓ **Increase in the working-age population** in India due to demographic dividend.
- ✓ **Higher enrolment of the young population in the higher education** leading to increase in job aspirations.

- ✓ **Decline in the agricultural workforce** from 260 million (2005) to 197 million (2018) mainly due to decline in agricultural incomes (Push factor) and rural-urban migration for better employment opportunities (Pull factor).

**Decrease in the employment creation:** Between the years 2005-2012, construction sector emerged as the major driver of employment creation and it was able to absorb a large number of people who had exited from Agriculture. However, post 2012, the construction sector started facing slowdown. This was accompanied by the decline in the agricultural incomes as well. Further, the employment creation in other critical sectors such as manufacturing, services etc too remained inadequate to cater to the increase in the number of job seekers between 2012 and 2018.

Hence, the higher employment in India could be attributed to the deepening of the mismatch between potential supply of and demand for labour after 2012.

**WAY FORWARD**

India is presently facing demographic dividend wherein the share of the working-age population is around 53%. The demographic dividend would start reducing after 2 decades and hence India needs to make optimum use of this opportunity by creating a large number of formal sector, well-paying jobs.

The Government must make adequate investment in human capital formation such as promotion of skills among the youth. It should also focus on the revival of the MSMEs which are considered to be major drivers of employment creation.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT

**CORPORATE TAX RELIEF- BOOSTING PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT**

#INVESTMENT



**IN NEWS**

The Union Finance Minister has recently stated that the Government has brought in the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2019 to make certain amendments in the Income-tax Act 1961 and the Finance Act 2019. This has been done in response to the present economic slowdown so as to provide corporate tax relief to the corporate sector and promote greater amount of investment in the Indian Economy. In this regard, let us understand various reform measures announced by the Government and how these measures are likely to impact the Indian Economy.

**ABOUT CORPORATE TAX IN INDIA**

The Corporate Tax is a **form of direct tax** to be paid by companies on their income. It has been imposed under the Income- Tax Act. Both Domestic as well as foreign companies are liable to pay corporate tax in India. While a domestic company is taxed on its universal income, a foreign company is only taxed on the income earned within India.

For the purpose of calculation of taxes under Income tax act, the types of companies can be defined as under:

**Domestic Company:** Domestic Company is one which is registered under the Companies Act of India and also includes the company registered in the foreign countries

having control and management wholly situated in India. A domestic company includes private as well as public companies.

**Foreign Company:** Foreign Company is one which is not registered under the companies act of India and has control & management located outside India.

The following can be considered as income of the company:

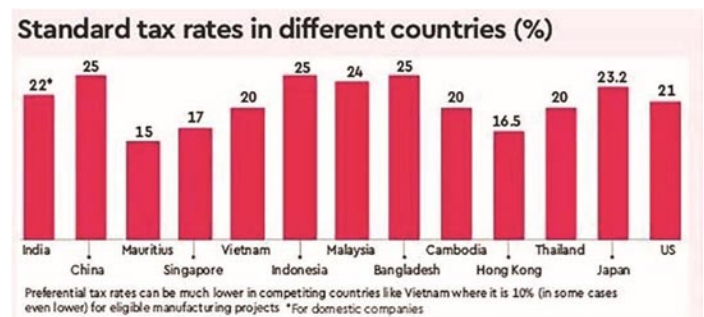
- ✓ Profits earned from the business
- ✓ Capital Gains
- ✓ Income from renting property
- ✓ Income from other sources like dividend, interest etc.

**PRESENT CORPORATE TAX RATES IN INDIA**

Type of Company	Corporate Tax Rate	Surcharge on net income greater than Rs 1 Crore and less than Rs 10 Crores	Surcharge on net income greater than Rs 10 Crores	Secondary and Higher Education Cess
Domestic Company with annual turnover less than Rs 400 Crores	25%	7%	12%	4%
Domestic Company with annual turnover more than Rs 400 Crores	30%	7%	12%	4%
Foreign Company	40%	2%	5%	4%

**Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT):** Some of the companies in India used to show profits under the Companies Act. However, the same companies show zero profits under the Income Tax Act. Such companies were able to show zero profits under Income Tax Act by taking advantage of depreciation, deductions, exemptions etc. provided under the Income Tax Act (Tax Avoidance).

The Government has introduced MAT so as to bring such "Zero Tax" companies under the tax bracket. The MAT was levied at 18.5% of the book profits of the company. Every company is required to calculate its corporate tax liability as provided in the table shown above. It would be also be required to calculate its MAT Liability. The Company would be then required to compare its MAT and Corporate Tax liability and pay whichever is higher among the two.



**GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON TAX CHANGES**

- **Corporate Tax Relief:** The Corporate tax rate for all the domestic companies has been cut to 22% provided they do not avail of any exemptions. The effective tax rate for the domestic companies will now be 25.7%, inclusive the



surcharge and cess. Further, such company shall not be required to pay MAT.

- **Boost to Make in India:** Companies incorporated in India after 1st October 2019 and beginning production by 31st March 2023 will enjoy an even lower tax rate of 15%, provided they do not avail of any other incentives. The Effective tax rate for these companies will be 17% inclusive of surcharge and cess. Further, such company shall not be required to pay MAT.
- **Reduction in MAT:** A company which does not opt for the concessional tax regime and avails the tax exemption/incentive shall continue to pay tax at the pre-amended rate. However, these companies can opt for the concessional tax regime after expiry of their tax holiday/exemption period. Further, in order to provide relief to companies which continue to avail exemptions/incentives, the rate of Minimum Alternate Tax has been reduced from existing 18.5% to 15%.
- **Rollback of Buyback Tax:** The Union Budget 2019-20 had introduced 20% tax on the buyback of shares by the companies. This had impacted the investor sentiment as the buybacks were a popular instrument with firms keen to give cash back to shareholders. The government has now decided to withdraw this tax.
- **Rollback of surcharge on Capital gains:** The Finance Act 2019 had raised the surcharge on income tax from 15% to 25% for incomes in the range of Rs 2 to Rs 5 crores and from 15% to 37% for those earning more than Rs 5 crores. In order to stabilise the flow of funds into the capital market, the Government has declared that enhanced surcharge introduced by the Finance Act, 2019 shall not apply on capital gains arising on sale of equity shares. The enhanced surcharge shall also not apply to capital gains arising on sale of any security including derivatives, in the hands of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs). However, with respect to other sources of income such as salary, profession or rent above Rs 2 crore, the surcharge increase will continue.

#### **LIKELY IMPACT**

**Boost Private Sector Investment:** The Investment-GDP ratio in India has reduced from 34% in 2011-12 to 29% in 2017-18. The Government's move to reduce the corporate tax rates is set to give fillip to private sector investment create

employment opportunities and boost the economic growth and development.

**Boost Make in India:** The Corporate tax rate in India was considered to be 50% higher as compared to the other countries and hence discouraged the Investment. This announcement of the Government is expected to bring the corporate tax rate in India on par with the other countries and hence promote more amount of FDI into India leading to a major boost to "Make in India". This move comes at the right time as the MNCs are looking to shift their bases out of China amid its ongoing trade war with the USA.

**Revenue Loss and Fiscal Deficit Target:** According to the government's estimates, the fiscal deficit was to reduce from 3.4% at end of 2018-19 to 3.3% by the end of 2019-20. The total revenue foregone for the reduction in corporate tax rate and other relief estimated at Rs. 1,45,000 crores and it is expected to increase the fiscal deficit by 0.7% to 4% of GDP. Hence, it would be difficult for the government to maintain its fiscal deficit at the desired targets.

**Boost Capital market:** The withdrawal of Surcharge on the capital gains arising from the sale of equity shares is expected to boost the investor sentiment in the capital market. The SENSEX has already posted its second biggest single day gain in more than a decade.

#### **WAY FORWARD**

- The recent government's move to reduce the corporate tax rates is a welcome step. However, the question now is whether these steps will stimulate demand and investments. Other challenges include the ongoing trade war between the US and China, as well as higher crude oil prices following the attack on Saudi Aramco's facilities.
- Further, some of the economists have also raised concerns that the move would adversely affect the government's finances leading to higher fiscal deficit.
- The Government has to ensure that the recent move should lead to increase in the investment and employment opportunities accompanied by increase in the consumption expenditure leading to increase in the GDP Growth rate.

# INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TRUST

#INFRASTRUCTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

## IN NEWS

*The Union Road transport and Highways ministry has recently proposed to set up Infrastructure investment trust (InvIT) under the aegis of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to boost the investment in development of Road projects in India.*

## ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TRUST

### (INVIT)

- A mutual fund company pools in money from the retail investors and invests that money in the financial market in the form of shares, bonds, debentures etc. The profit earned from such investments is in turn distributed among the investors.
- It is similar to Mutual fund. However, it invests the pooled money of the investors in the infrastructure projects such as roads, ports, airports etc. The money earned from such investments is in turn distributed among the investors in the form of dividend. They are mutual fund like instruments wherein several investors pool in funds with infrastructure as the underlying asset class.
- They are regulated by SEBI and accordingly, SEBI has notified SEBI (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014 providing for registration and regulation of InvITs in India. India's first InvIT was launched by IRB Infrastructure Developers (IRB ID) in 2018.

## SEBI GUIDELINES FOR REITS

- All the InvITs should be registered with the SEBI as Trusts and they should be listed on the stock exchanges.
- Minimum 80% of the pooled money of the InvITs should be invested in completed revenue generating infrastructure projects while the balance 20% can be invested in under construction projects, equity shares of infrastructure companies, G-Secs etc.
- The minimum value of the assets owned by REITs should be Rs 500 crores.

- The minimum offer size of the REIT should be Rs 250 crores.
- The minimum investment by an investor should be Rs 10 lakhs i.e. an investor cannot invest less than Rs 10 lakh.
- Minimum 80% of the pooled money of the REITs should be invested in rent generating and completed properties while the balance 20% can be invested in under construction projects, equity shares of real estate companies, G-Secs etc.
- 90% of the profits generated by InvITs should be distributed among the investors in the form of dividend.

## BENEFITS OF SETTING UP INVIT

**Benefits to retail investors:** The small retail investors would be able to invest in long term infrastructure projects and earn dividend without any hassles. The investors are allowed to trade their investments on the stock exchanges facilitating easier entry and exit.

**Benefits for Infrastructure Development:** The InvITs would provide the much needed long term financing for the infrastructure sector projects in India. This would reduce the present burden on the banks and NBFCs and help them address the problem of Asset-Liability Mismatch (ALM).

# TASK FORCE ON INFRASTRUCTURE

#INFRASTRUCTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE

pib

SECONDARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

## IN NEWS

*A Task Force under the chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs has been constituted by the Union Finance Minister to identify the infrastructure projects for Rs 100 lakh crore worth investment to be made by India by 2024-25.*

**Background:** In his Independence day Speech, the PM had highlighted that India would invest Rs 100 lakh crores on infrastructure over the next 5 years. To achieve the GDP of \$5 trillion by 2024-25, India needs to spend about \$1.4 trillion (Rs. 100 lakh crore) on infrastructure. In the past decade (FY 2008-17), India invested about \$1.1 trillion on infrastructure. The challenge is to step-up annual infrastructure investment

so that lack of infrastructure does not become a binding constraint on the growth of the Indian economy.

To achieve this task, a Task Force under the chairmanship of Secretary (DEA) has been constituted by Union Finance Minister to draw up a **National Infrastructure Pipeline** for each of the years from FY 2019-20 to FY 2024-25.

**THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE TASK FORCE ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

- To identify technically feasible and financially/economically viable infrastructure projects that can be initiated in FY 2019-20.
- To list the projects that can be included in the pipeline for each of the remaining 5 years between FY 2021-25.
- To estimate annual infrastructure investment/capital costs.

- To guide the Ministries in identifying appropriate sources of financing.
- To suggest measures to monitor the projects so that cost and time overrun is minimized.

**Note:** The **National Infrastructure Pipeline** would include green field and brownfield projects costing above Rs 100 crore each. Other qualifications for inclusion in the pipeline for the current year will include availability of a DPR, feasibility of implementation, inclusion in the financing plan and readiness/ availability of administrative sanction. Each Ministry/ Department would be responsible for monitoring of projects so as to ensure their timely and within-cost implementation.

BANKING AND FINANCE

**PMC BANK CRISIS- EXPLAINED**

#BANKING



**IN NEWS**

Recently, the RBI has imposed a set of restrictions on the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank for the alleged irregularities in reporting NPAs. This decision of the RBI comes at the time when the Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) have accumulated higher amount of NPAs. Hence, the very fact that the cooperative banks are under-reporting their NPAs raises grave concern over the poor balance sheets of the Banks in India. Further, the RBI's decision to impose withdrawal limit of Rs 10,000 on the depositors money has also caused wide spread panic among the depositors of the Bank. This comes at a time when the Public confidence in the Banking system was getting restored after the demonetisation and people were coming forward to deposit their money with the Banks. Hence, the latest crisis in the PMC Bank would dent

the public confidence in the Banking System. It also raises grave concern over the regulation of the cooperative Banks.

Cooperative banks seem to fail with alarming regularity. In this regard, lets understand as to But what are cooperative banks, how are they different from commercial Banks and what can be done to prevent a repeat of PMC Bank Crisis?

**What are Cooperative Banks?** A cooperative bank is a financial entity which belongs to its members, who are at the same time the owners and the customers of the bank. Cooperative banks are often created by the persons belonging to the same locality or professional community or sharing a common interest. A cooperative bank generally provides its members a wide range of banking and financial service such as loan deposit, banking account, etc. They are broadly classified into urban or rural co-operative banks based on their region of operation.

**HOW ARE COOPERATIVE BANKS DIFFERENT FROM SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL BANKS?**

- **Mode of Establishment:** Commercial banks are companies under the Companies Act , or the public sector banks under a separate law formulated by the parliament. On the other hand, cooperative banks have been established under the laws of cooperative societies of different states.

- **Levels of Operation:** Unlike the Commercial Banks, the cooperative banks have a configuration of three tiers, with the State Cooperative at the Apex level, the central / district cooperative bank at the district level and the primary rural Cooperatives.
- **Regulation:** Only some of the sections of the 1949 Banking Regulation Act (fully applicable to commercial banks) are applicable to cooperative banks. The Banking related operations of the Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) are regulated by the RBI which lays down capital adequacy, risk control and lending norms while their management is regulated by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies either under the State or Central government.
- **Distinction between Shareholders and Borrowers:** While there is a clear distinction between a commercial bank's shareholders and its borrowers, in case of UCBs, borrowers can double up as shareholders.
- **Motive:** Unlike the Commercial Banks, Cooperative banks operate according to the principle of cooperation and not completely based on profit motive.

**WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE PMC BANK?**

According to the annual report of PMC Bank (2018-19), the bank had a deposit base of over Rs 11,000 crore and reported a net profit nearly Rs 100 crore. However, it was involved in financial irregularities in extending loans to a bankrupt company, Housing Development & Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL).

As per the RBI's regulations, exposure of the Bank to a single entity should not exceed 15% of its total loan portfolio. However, the PMC Bank had extended around Rs 6500 crores worth loans to HDIL, which amounted to almost around 70% of its loan portfolio. Hence, the exposure of PMC bank to HDIL Company was almost 4 times higher than the regulatory requirements.

Further, the PMC Bank also failed to report the NPAs which arose from extending loans to HDIL Company. It is being stated that the actual NPA number of the PMC Bank stands at 60-70% as against the reported net NPA of 2.19%. Though the RBI is still inspecting the bank's balance sheet, if the NPA numbers turn out to be true, it will be the highest in the banking industry so far.

The PMC Bank even extended the loans to the company even after the company went bankrupt. All this was done in order to avoid any kind of penal action from the RBI which would have curbed the lending by the Bank.

**What has been the response of the RBI?** The RBI has imposed a withdrawal restriction of Rs 10,000 per depositor

for the next 6 months. The PMC Bank would not be allowed to accept fresh deposits or grant new loans without the prior approval of the RBI for the next 6 months. Further, the RBI has put the PMC Bank under its directions, which means that it has taken over the Bank's operations. The Bank's management has been superseded and the Board has been dissolved.

**What is the way forward?** After six months, RBI will take a call on whether to relax some restrictions or extend the period based on the bank's books. The RBI will try to clean up the bank's balance sheet and fix its asset-liability mismatch. In the long run, the RBI has to implement the recommendations of High Level Panel on Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) to strengthen the governance and regulation of the Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs). Some of these recommendations include:

- ✓ **Conversion of UCBs into Commercial Bank:** A business size of Rs 20,000 crore or more may be fixed as the threshold limit for the operation of UCB. Beyond this threshold, a UCB may be expected to convert itself into a commercial bank.
- ✓ **Conversion of other UCBs into Small Finance Banks (SFBs):** Smaller UCBs voluntarily willing to convert to SFBs can do so irrespective of the threshold limit provided they fulfil all the eligibility criteria and selection processes prescribed by RBI.
- ✓ **Board of Management (BoM) in addition to Board of Directors (BoDs):** The Concept of BoM has to be one of the mandatory licensing conditions for licensing of new UCBs and expansion of existing ones.

**RBI REPORT ON STATUS OF EXTERNAL DEBT**

#FINANCE



**IN NEWS**

*Recently, the RBI has published a report on the status of External Debt of India as of June 2019. In this regard, let us look at some of the important highlights of the report.*

### UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC DEBT IN INDIA

- **Article 292** of the Indian Constitution states that the Government of India can borrow amounts specified by the Parliament from time to time. **Article 293** of the Indian Constitution mandates that the State Governments in India can borrow only from internal sources. Thus the Government of India incurs both external and internal debt, while State Governments incur only internal debt.
- However, as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission, access to external financing by the States for various projects is facilitated by the Central Government, which provides the sovereign guarantee for these borrowings.
- The Public Debt of the Central Government includes both internal and external debt. The Internal debt includes the money raised by the Government from the domestic market through various sources such as the issuance of **Treasury Bills (T-Bills)** and **dated securities (Bonds)**.

### ABOUT THE EXTERNAL DEBT IN INDIA

- The External debt includes the total money owed by the Union Government, State Governments, Corporations or Indian Citizens to foreign creditors. The Foreign Creditors could be Foreign Government, Multilateral Institutions (World Bank, IMF etc), private commercial banks etc.
- One way of classifying external debt is the two-way scheme based on duration - **long and short-term**. Long term debt is defined as debt with an original maturity of more than one year, while short term debt is defined as debt with original maturity of one year or less.
- Further, the External Debt can be categorised into **Sovereign (Government)** and **Non-Sovereign Debt**. The Sovereign Debt basically includes the borrowings of the government and FPI investment in the G-Secs.
- The External Debt in India is shown under the following heads:
  - ✓ **Multilateral Debt:** Debt from the multilateral institutions such as World Bank, IMF, ADB etc.
  - ✓ **Bilateral Debt:** Debt from sovereign countries such as Japan, Germany etc.
  - ✓ **Trade Credits/Export Credits:** Loans and credits extended for imports directly by overseas supplier, bank and financial institutions to sovereign and non-sovereign entities in India.
  - ✓ **External Commercial Borrowings:** loans from commercial banks, other commercial financial institutions

as well as the money raised through issue of securitized instruments like bonds.

### ✓ NRI Deposits

### BASICS TERMS ABOUT THE EXTERNAL DEBT

**External Debt to GDP Ratio:** The ratio of the external debt stock to GDP is derived by scaling the total outstanding debt stock (in rupees) at the end of the financial year by the GDP (in rupees at current market prices) during the financial year.

**Debt Service Ratio:** The Proportion of total debt service payments (*i.e., principal repayment plus interest payment*) to the total export earnings of the country in a financial year. A country needs to have low level of Debt Service ratio which indicates that the export earnings would be sufficient to repay back the external debt. **For most countries, it is between 0 to 20%.**

### PRESENT STATUS OF EXTERNAL DEBT IN INDIA

- **Cumulative External Debt:** At end-June of 2019, India's external debt was placed at US\$ 557.4 billion (19.8% of the GDP), recording an increase of US\$ 14.1 billion over its level at end-March 2019. This increase is primarily on account of an increase in commercial borrowings, non-resident deposits, and short-term trade credit.
- **Highest Component:** Commercial borrowings remained the largest component of external debt, with a share of 38.4 per cent, followed by non-resident deposits and short-term trade credit.
- **Composition of Debt:** The Non-Sovereign Debt (Non-Government Debt) is much higher at 16% of the GDP as compared to Sovereign Debt (Government Debt) which stood at 3.8% of the GDP.
- **Duration of External Debt:** The share of short-term debt (with original maturity of up to one year) in total external debt declined to 19 per cent at end-June 2019 from 20.0 per cent at end-March 2019. The remaining debt was accounted by the long-term debt.
- **Denomination of Debt:** US dollar denominated debt continued to be the largest component of India's external debt, with a share of 51.5 per cent at end-June 2019, followed by the Indian rupee, yen, SDR and the euro.
- **Debt Service Ratio:** The Debt service (principal repayments plus interest payments) declined to 5.8 per cent at end-June 2019 as compared with 6.4 per cent at end-March 2019.

## SMALL FINANCE BANKS- ON-TAP LICENSING

#BANKING

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

Business Standard

### IN NEWS

*The RBI has recently announced new guidelines for the On-Tap Licensing for Small Finance Banks so as to boost the Banking and Payments ecosystem in India.*

**What is On-Tap Licensing?** An 'on-tap' facility would mean the RBI would accept applications and grant license for Small Finance Banks (SFBs) throughout the year. The policy allows aspirants to apply for small finance bank license at any time, subject to the fulfilment of the conditions laid down by the RBI.

**What are Small Finance Banks?** The Small Finance Banks (SFBs) are the differentiated banks which have been set up to further the objective of financial inclusion by primarily undertaking basic banking activities of acceptance of deposits and lending to un-served and underserved sections without any restriction in the area of operations. **Scope of activities:-**

- ✓ Accept deposits and extend loans
- ✓ Undertake non-risk financial services activities such as distribution of mutual fund units, insurance products, pension products, etc. with the prior approval of the RBI
- ✓ Open at least 25 per cent of its banking outlets in unbanked rural centers
- ✓ Sell Forex to Customers
- ✓ No restriction in the area of operations of small finance banks

**How are Small finance banks different from the Payment banks?** Both Payment Banks and Small Finance Banks are the differentiated banks which have been set up to promote financial inclusion. While Small Finance Banks can undertake both deposit and lending activity, the Payment banks cannot lend loans. Further, the Payment Banks cannot accept deposits more than Rs 1 lakh. The Payment Banks need to invest 75 per cent of their deposits in government securities with maturity up to one year, and the balance 25 per cent with the commercial banks.

### RBI'S GUIDELINES ON SMALL FINANCE BANKS

#### Eligible promoters:

- ✓ Resident individuals/professionals (Indian citizens) having at least 10 years of experience in banking and finance at a senior level;
- ✓ Companies and Societies having successful track record of running their businesses for at least a period of five years
- ✓ Existing Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs), Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), and Local Area Banks (LABs) in the private sector

**'Fit and Proper' criteria:** RBI would assess the 'fit and proper' status of the applicants on the basis of their past record of sound credentials and integrity; financial soundness and successful track record of professional experience or of running their businesses.

**Capital requirement:** The minimum equity capital for small finance banks shall be Rs.200 crore.

**Prudential norms:** The small finance bank will be subject to all prudential norms and regulations of RBI as applicable to existing commercial banks including requirement of maintenance of Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR).

**Priority sector Lending Requirements:** The **SFBs would be required to extend 75% of their loans** for the priority sectors.

**Dominance of Small value Loans:** In order to ensure that the bank extends loans primarily to small borrowers, at least 50 per cent of its loan portfolio should constitute loans and advances of up to Rs.25 lakh.

## REDUCTION IN MERCHANT DISCOUNT RATES

#BANKING

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*The National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) has recently reduced the Merchant discount rates (MDR) so as to boost the digital payments in India.*

**Merchant Discount Rates (MDR):** The Merchants are required to set up digital payment infrastructure such as Point of Sale (PoS) machines to accept credit/debit cards from the customers. They are also required to open merchant account with the Bank to avail digital payments. As the banks provide these services, the merchants are required to fee pay to the bank on accepting payments through credit card/debit card. This is referred to as **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)**. It is expressed in terms of percentage of the transaction amount.

**Recent Decision of the NPCI:** Presently, the MDR is capped at 0.90% for transactions above Rs 2,000, with a ceiling of Rs 1,000 per transaction. The NPCI has now decided to reduce the MDR for the transactions above Rs 2000 to 0.60% of the transaction with maximum fee capped at Rs 150 per transaction.

Further, the card based QR transactions (Bharat QR) MDR has also been reduced to 0.5% with a maximum cap of Rs 150 per transaction. The new MDR rates will come into effect from 20th October 2019.

#### ABOUT NATIONAL PAYMENT CORPORATION OF INDIA (NPCI)

- NPCI was incorporated in **2008** as an umbrella organization for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India. It is an initiative of RBI and Indian Banks Association (IBA) under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 for creating a robust payment and settlement infrastructure in the country.
- It has introduced various retail payment products such as RuPay card, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM), BHIM Aadhaar, National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) and Bharat BillPay. NPCI also launched UPI 2.0 to offer a more secure and comprehensive services to consumers and merchants.

## FPI INVESTMENT LIMIT IN GOVERNMENT BONDS

#CAPITAL MARKET

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

#### IN NEWS

*The Central Government has recently proposed to enhance the FPI Limits in the Government Bonds so as to promote greater foreign inflows into India and strengthen the debt market.*

#### ABOUT FOREIGN PORTFOLIO INVESTMENT (FPI)

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) are both forms of foreign investment into India. FDI is form of foreign investment wherein the foreign companies set up their business operations in India, while in case of FPI, a foreign entity either buys the shares, bonds and other financial instruments issued in India.
- Hence, while FDI is accompanied by both ownership and management while FPI is accompanied only by ownership (if it buys the shares).
- According to the existing regulation by the SEBI, **investment of up to 10% or less in the shares of the company would be considered as FPI while investment of more than 10% would be considered as FDI.**

#### WHAT IS A GOVERNMENT SECURITY (G-SEC)?

- A Government Security (G-Sec) is a tradeable instrument **issued by the Central Government or the State Governments**. It acknowledges the Government's debt obligation. Such securities are **short term (usually called treasury bills**, with original maturities of less than one year) or **long term (usually called Government bonds** or dated securities with original maturity of one year or more).
- In India, the Central Government issues both, treasury bills and bonds or dated securities while the State Governments issue only bonds or dated securities, which are called the **State Development Loans (SDLs)**. G-Secs carry practically no risk of default and, hence, are **called risk-free gilt-edged instruments**.

**Current FPI Investment Limits:** Under the powers vested with the RBI under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, the RBI has imposed the FPI investment limits on Government Securities, State Development Loans and Corporate Bonds as shown below:

Type of Bonds	Investment Limit
Central Government securities (G-secs)	6%
State Development Loans (SDLs)	2%

Corporate bonds	9%
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**Note:** The Investment limit is defined in terms of % of the total outstanding stock of the different types of Bonds.

## AADHAAR ENABLED PAYMENT SERVICES

#BANKING



### IN NEWS

The government has recently announced the rollout of Aadhaar Enabled Payment System Services by India Post Payments Bank (IPPB).

### ABOUT AADHAAR ENABLED PAYMENT SERVICES

It is a payment system that has been developed by National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI). It enables various transactions to be carried on PoS (MicroATM) through the Business correspondent of any bank using the Aadhaar authentication. The only inputs required for a customer to do a transaction under this scenario are:-

- IIN (Identifying the Bank to which the customer is associated)
- Aadhaar Number
- Fingerprint captured during their enrollment

People do not have to mention their bank account details to carry out these transactions. With the help of this payment system, people can send funds from one bank account to another simply through their Aadhaar numbers.

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

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

### BENEFITS

- No need for the people to carry their debit cards
- Biometric authentication using fingerprint provides greater security.
- Interoperable across Banks
- Encourages financial inclusion in the rural and unbanked areas

## STRATEGIC DISINVESTMENT AND GOLDEN SHARE

#CAPITAL MARKET



### IN NEWS

Government is planning to undertake strategic disinvestment of few Maharatna and Navratna Companies. The Government is also trying to introduce the "Golden Share Concept" in the disinvestment of PSUs.

### WHAT IS DISINVESTMENT?

- Disinvestment refers to the mechanism in which the Government loses a part of its ownership of the PSUs through the sale of shares. The Disinvestment as a policy was adopted by the Government post 1991 LPG Reforms.
- The **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management** under the Ministry of Finance acts as the nodal agency for the Disinvestment in India.

### WHAT IS STRATEGIC DISINVESTMENT?

According to the Department of Disinvestment, in the strategic sale of a company, the transaction has two elements:

- Transfer of a block of shares to a Strategic Partner; and
- Transfer of management control to the Strategic Partner

The strategic sale takes place when more than 51% of shares go to the private sector strategic partner. At the same time, it is not necessary that more than 51% of the total equity goes



to the Strategic Partner for the transfer of management to take place. In other words, strategic sale can take place even if the private sector partner gets less than 51% shares.

According to the strategic sale guidelines issued by DIPAM, after the transaction, the Strategic Partner may hold less percentage of shares than the Government but the control of management would be with partner. For instance, if in a PSU the shareholding of Government is 51% and the balance is dispersed in public holdings, then Government may go in for a 25% strategic sale and pass on management control, though the Government would post-transfer have a larger share holding (26%) than the Strategic Partner (25%). But the necessary condition is that the control of the firms should be with the strategic partner.

**CONCEPT OF GOLDEN SHARE**

- The Golden Share is the share which **enables the entity owning the golden share to veto the decisions of the other shareholders.** The Golden shareholder can veto the decision even when he/she does not own the majority shares. In case of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), the Government can exercise veto power (if it has Golden Share) even when it holds less than 51% ownership.
- The concept was implemented by the UK government in the early 80s when it had privatised many state-owned companies. At that time, the rationale of Golden Share was introduced to prevent a takeover of the newly privatized companies and ensure that Government has a major say in the matters of such companies.
- Similarly, the Brazilian government holds a golden share in aircraft manufacturer Embraer, giving it the veto power over strategic decisions involving military programmes and any change in its controlling interest.

**BSE STARTUP PLATFORM**

#CAPITAL MARKET



**IN NEWS**

*Earlier, in December 2018, BSE had become the first stock exchange in India to get the approval from SEBI to launch its*

*Startups platform. Recently, two start-up companies got listed on the BSE Startups Platform.*

**Details:** The BSE has launched its start-up listing platform in December 2018 to facilitate funding for deserving start-ups by enabling them to raise capital from the market. It would help the entrepreneurs to raise equity capital for growth and expansion of Startups in a cost effective manner. It would also provide opportunities for the investors to identify and invest in good companies at an early stage.

**CRITERIA FOR THE LISTING ON THE PLATFORM**

- The companies seeking listing on the BSE start-ups platform should be in the business of IT, ITES, bio-technology and life sciences, 3D printing, space technology, e-commerce, genetic engineering and other high-technologies.
- The start-up should be registered with MSME or have a minimum paid-up capital of ₹1 crore. The company should have been operational for a minimum of two years before the date of filing. It should have a positive net worth among other financial criteria. The post issue paid-up capital of the company shall not be more than ₹25 crores.

**SOVEREIGN GOLD BONDS**

#CAPITAL MARKET



**IN NEWS**

*The Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs) – Series-IV.*

**ABOUT SOVEREIGN GOLD BONDS**

- SGBs are government securities denominated in grams of gold. They are substitutes for holding physical gold. Investors have to pay the issue price in cash and the bonds will be redeemed in cash on maturity. The Bond is issued by Reserve Bank on behalf of Government of India.
- The quantity of gold for which the investor pays is protected, since he receives the on-going market price at the time of redemption.
- The SGB offers a superior alternative to holding gold in physical form. The risks and costs of storage are eliminated. Investors are assured of the market value of

gold at the time of maturity and periodical interest. SGB is free from issues like making charges and purity in the case of gold in jewellery form.

- The Bonds are **issued in denominations of one gram of gold and in multiples thereof. Minimum investment in the Bond shall be one gram with a maximum limit of subscription of 4 kg for individuals.**
- The Bonds bear interest at the rate of 2.50 per cent (fixed rate) per annum on the amount of initial investment. Interest will be credited semi-annually to the bank account of the investor and the last interest will be payable on maturity along with the principal.

## MUDRA LOANS

#MSMES

PRIMARY SOURCE

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*The finance ministry has recently asked Public Sector Banks (PSBs) to undertake the review of their Mudra loans with an aim to launch a revamped version of the scheme. This is done on account of recent fears that the MUDRA Loans could lead to increase in the NPA problem of the Banking Sector.*

### WHAT IS MUDRA?

- The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) is a scheme launched by the Union Government in 2015 for **providing loans up to Rs. 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.** Under PMMY, all banks are required to lend to non-farm sector income generating activities below Rs.10 lakhs.
- These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY. For implementing the scheme, government has set up a new institution named, MUDRA (Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd.), for development and refinancing activities relating to micro units. MUDRA provides refinance to all banks seeking refinancing of small business loans given under PMMY. Please note that MUDRA also acts as a regulator for all the MFIs.

### PROBLEMS WITH THE MUDRA LOANS

- **Abandoning Due-Diligence:** The banks have the culture of meeting targets by rushing through due process. Credit targets are sometimes achieved by abandoning appropriate due diligence.
- **Repayment Challenge:** The MUDRA Loans are unsecured i.e. it does not require collateral and in most of the cases, the asset which is being purchased through loans itself acts as collateral. The business of MSMEs is still quite susceptible to volatility making them more risky. The banks focus more on recovering larger loans rather than small loans. For example, bank staff may choose to go after one loan with outstanding of Rs 10 lakh, rather than 10 loans of Rs 1,00,000 each.

## TAXATION

## RECENT DECISIONS OF THE GST COUNCIL

#GST

PRIMARY SOURCE

pib

SECONDARY SOURCE

mint

SECONDARY SOURCE

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*In its 37th Meeting, the GST Council has announced a number of changes in the GST regime. In this regard, let us look at the important highlights of the announcement.*

### ABOUT GST COUNCIL

- It is a constitutional body for making **recommendations to the Union and State Government** on issues related to Goods and Service Tax. The GST Council is chaired by the Union Finance Minister and other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.
- Every decision of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall be taken by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the weighted votes of the members present and voting, in accordance with the following principles, namely: —
- The vote of the Central Government shall have a weightage of one third of the total votes cast, and the

votes of all the State Governments taken together shall have a weightage of two-thirds of the total votes cast.

**REDUCTION IN GST RATES**

Some of the Industries such as Automobile and Biscuit Manufacturing were demanding cuts in the GST tax rates so as to boost the consumption expenditure. However, the GST Council decided to keep the GST rates for these industries unchanged. Some important changes in the GST rates are as highlighted below:

**HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM**

To reduce the rate of GST on hotel accommodation service as below: -

Transaction Value per day	GST Rate
Rs 1000 and less	Nil
Rs 1001 to Rs 7500	12%
More than Rs 7500	18%

The GST on the outside catering has been reduced from 18% to 5% without the Input Tax Credit.

**JOB WORK SERVICE**

Reduce rate of GST from 5% to 1.5% on supply of job work services in relation to diamonds.

Reduce rate of GST from 18% to 12% on supply of machine job work such as in engineering industry.

**WAREHOUSING**

The payment of the GST on storage and warehousing of certain agricultural products has been exempted.

**IMPORTANT POLICY MEASURES ANNOUNCED**

- The GST Council has done away with the requirement of filing annual GST returns for the taxpayers up to Rs 2 crore turnover in order to reduce the compliance burden.
- The GST Council has given "In principle" approval to link Aadhaar with registration of taxpayers under GST and examine the possibility of making Aadhaar mandatory for claiming refunds.

- Suitable amendments in CGST Act, UTGST Act, and the corresponding SGST Acts in view of creation of UTs of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
- New GST return system to be introduced from April, 2020 (earlier proposed from October, 2019) in order to give ample opportunity to taxpayers as well as the system to adapt to the new system.

**EQUALISATION LEVY**

#TAXATION



**IN NEWS**

*The tax receipts through the imposition of Equalisation Levy have increased by 59% in 2018-19 as compared to the previous financial year. The surge in tax collections suggests that Indian entities paid digital platforms such as Facebook and Google at least Rs 15,500 crore to place advertisements.*

**ABOUT EQUALISATION LEVY**

India has introduced an equalisation levy of 6% to tax digital economy transactions in the Union Budget 2016. This would be applicable to the income accruing to a foreign E-commerce company which is not a resident of India.

Any person or entity in India which makes a payment exceeding Rs 1 lakh in a financial year to a non-resident technology company (such as Google) for some B2B (Business to Business) transactions needs to withhold 6% of the gross amount to be paid as equalisation levy.

The two conditions to be met to be liable to equalisation levy:

- The payment should be made to a non-resident service provider;
- The payment should be made only for Business to Business (B2B) transactions.

The annual payment made to one service provider exceeds Rs. 1,00,000 in one financial year.

# RBI REPORT ON STATE FINANCES

#BUDGETING

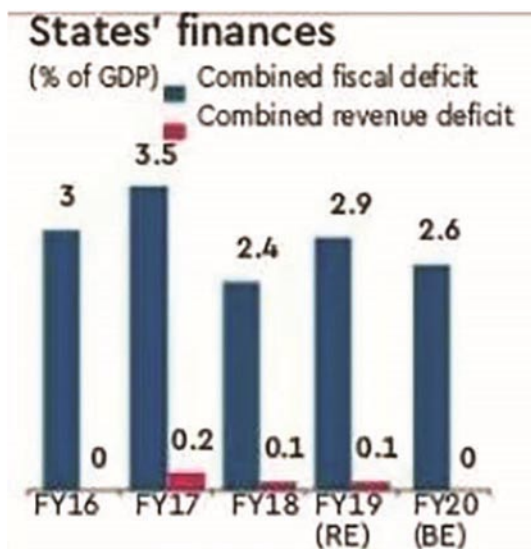
PRIMARY SOURCE: FINANCIAL EXPRESS  
 SECONDARY SOURCE: Business Standard

**IN NEWS**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently released the report titled "State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2019-20". It is an annual publication that provides information, analysis and an assessment of the finances of state governments.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT ARE AS GIVEN BELOW:**

1. The States' gross fiscal deficit (GFD) has remained within the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM) threshold of 3 per cent of **gross domestic product (GDP)** during 2017-18 and 2018-19. The consolidated state GFD was 2.9% of the GDP in 2018-19 and 2.4% of the GDP in 2017-18. The combined GFD is projected to be 2.6% of the GDP in 2019-20.



2. However, the decrease in the fiscal deficit is mainly on account of **cut down in the capital expenditure by the states**. This raises concern because the states account for almost two-thirds of the total capital expenditure in India. Hence, decline in the expenditure on the creation of capital assets by the states does not bode well for the Indian Economy. Since the Economy is facing the slowdown, there is a need for stepping up government expenditure on the creation of capital assets which can in turn spur private sector investment as well as higher demand in the Indian Economy.

3. There has been increase in the overall revenue expenditure by the states mainly on account of interest payments as well as payment of salaries and pensions of the Government officials.

4. The Outstanding debts of states have risen over the last five years to 25 per cent of GDP, posing medium term challenges to its sustainability. The **NK Singh panel** on fiscal responsibility had suggested the overall **public debt-to-GDP ratio of 60% by 2022-23 — 40% for the Centre and 20% for the states**.

5. The States must focus on revenue generation so as to reduce their debt liability and enhance the capital expenditure. It has to raise the user charges on the various services they provide and also focus on the technological measures to improve the tax collection efficiency.

**Way Forward:** It is important for states to pursue their capital expenditure plans as budgeted in 2019-20, considering that states account for two thirds of general government capital expenditure with implications for overall economic activity and welfare.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE/  
INSTITUTIONSBOOSTER DOSE FOR  
EXPORTS

#INTERNATIONAL TRADE



## IN NEWS

The Union Finance Minister has recently announced a third set of government decisions to revive the economy, including a Rs 50,000 crore export incentive scheme and a Rs 10,000 crore special window to provide last mile funding for unfinished housing projects. This follows two previous mega announcements designed to encourage private sector investment and bring stability into the banking system through merger of Public Sector Banks (PSBs).

The third measure announced by the Finance Minister seeks to provide fillip to the exports which had contracted by 6% according to the latest government data.

## EXPORT PACKAGE

**Announcement of new Export Promotion Scheme:** The Government is set to introduce new export promotion scheme Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product (RoDTEP) to replace existing Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS). The **previous MEIS and the new RoDTEP** are designed to incentivise exporters by giving them rewards to offset the duties they pay to export their products.

For instance, the rewards under MEIS scheme are given in the **form of Duty Credit Scrips to the exporters**. The value of the Scrip depends on the product and the country to which the goods are exported. These scrips can be used by the exporters to pay various taxes/duties to the Government. These duty scrips can also be used by the exporters in the open market.

The finance ministry has declared that the incentives available to the exporters under RoDTEP would be much

higher than the existing MEIS. The revenue foregone under the new scheme is projected at up to Rs 50,000 crore per year. The RoDTEP scheme will be monitored by the Ministry of Finance and comes into effect from January 1, 2020.

**Announcement of new Export Credit Insurance Scheme:** The Government has launched a new export credit insurance scheme known as "NIRVIK" to be implemented by **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC)**. Under this scheme, the ECGC would provide insurance cover to the banks which give loans to the exporter of the Goods and Services.

This becomes important because the exporters of the Goods and Services face significant risk such as failure of the buyer to make payment, delays in the payment, failure of the buyer to purchase goods etc. Hence, due to higher inherent risks, the exporters may find it difficult to avail loans from the Banks.

Under such circumstances, the NIRVIK scheme seeks to provide higher insurance cover of up to 90% of the principal and interest to the banks so as to incentivise them to provide more loans to the exporters to meet their capital requirements. The new scheme would lead to reduction in the rates of interest on the export credit due to reduction in the risk on account of insurance availed by the banks. It would also promote credit creation in the export and labour intensive sectors such as MSMEs.

**Note:** The Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) is a fully government-owned company that was established in 1957 to promote exports by providing credit insurance services. The ECGC provides Export Credit Insurance to Banks (ECIB) to protect the banks from losses on account of export credit at the Pre and Post-Shipment stage.

REVISED PRIORITY SECTOR LENDING (PSL) NORMS  
FOR EXPORT CREDIT:

- **Present PSL Norms:** The RBI has come out with the Priority sector lending (PSL) norms under which the Scheduled Banks are required to provide at least 40% of the loans towards the priority sectors such as Agriculture, MSMEs, Export Credit, Education, Housing, Social Infrastructure, Renewable energy etc. The RBI has also

stipulated targets for certain sectors- Agriculture (18%), Micro enterprises (7.5%), Loans to weaker sections (10%) etc. The Present target of the export credit has been stipulated at 2% of the total loans. However, loans for export cannot exceed Rs 25 crore per borrower and it can be provided to only those units having turnover of up to Rs 100 crore.

- **Revised PSL Norms on Export Credit:** The present target of 2% PSL to export credit has remained unchanged. However, the RBI has enhanced the sanctioned limit from Rs 25 crore per borrower to Rs 40 crore per borrower. Further, it has also done away with the existing criteria of 'units having turnover of up to Rs 100 crore' for availing loans under Priority sector Lending norms.
- **Effective monitoring of Export Financing by Department of Commerce:** The data on Export Finance is regularly published by RBI. The Export Finance will be actively monitored by an Inter-Ministerial Working Group in Department of Commerce through a dashboard.
- **Leverage technology to reduce "Time to Export or Turn-around time":** An action plan to reduce Time to export/turn-around time in airports and ports benchmarked to international standards will be implemented by Dec 2019. Actual turnaround times will be published in real time for each port and airport to push them to improve performance. An Inter-Ministerial Group will be made accountable for this.
- **Special FTA Utilisation Mission:** India has signed a large number of Free trade agreements (FTAs) with other countries under which Indian exporters could export goods without attracting customs duty in such countries. However, Indian exporters have so far failed to capitalise on this opportunity due to lack of awareness.

In this regard, the Government is set to launch Special FTA Utilisation Mission to enhance awareness levels among the Indian exporters, especially among the MSMEs.

- **Affordable testing and certification infrastructure:** Affordable testing and certification infrastructure will be adequately expanded and developed in PPP mode to enable exporters to get all internationally accepted tests and certification done within India. This will reduce costs of adoption of standards and certification for Indian exporters to meet national standards of FTA partners

### MEASURES TO BOOST HOUSING SECTOR

**Special Fund for affordable and middle income Housing:** A Special Fund to provide last mile funding for housing projects

which are non- NPA . The objective is to focus on construction of unfinished housing units. The Special Fund would have contribution from the Government ( Rs 10000 crores) and an equivalent amount from the private sector investors.

### ANALYSIS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MEASURES TO BOOST EXPORTS

- There is a need for an in-depth assessment as to whether export promotion schemes are justified. This is needed for two reasons: **One**, export incentives have been in place for a very long time, but India's export performance has remained an area of concern.
- **Two**, the revenues of the central government are under considerable stress, and, therefore, the benefits of the revenue foregone on export incentives need greater scrutiny now.
- Market access barriers have shifted from the conventional instrument of tariffs to standards compliance, and this has hurt Indian exporters. The inability of domestic producers to meet the exacting standards in international markets is a well-established fact. Hence, the Government of India also needs to boost the export competitiveness of the Indian Goods.

## WTO DISPUTE OVER INDIA'S IMPOSITION OF CUSTOMS DUTY ON ICT PRODUCTS

#WTO



### IN NEWS

*The US has sought establishment of a dispute panel by the World Trade Organization's (WTO) in a case against India's import duties on certain ICT products, including mobile phones.*

*Earlier, the US had sought bilateral consultations with India over this issue. As both the countries failed to resolve the dispute through the consultation process, the US has sought*

*setting up of the dispute panel. Several countries including the European Union, Singapore, Canada, China, Taiwan and Thailand have sought to join in the dispute as they have claimed significant trade interest in the ICT products over which India has imposed import duties.*

*These countries have argued that the imposition of higher tariffs on the ICT products by India is against the violation of its commitments under the Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1). In this regard, let us understand about this trade issue in detail.*

### **HOW DOES THE DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISM UNDER THE WTO WORKS?**

A dispute in the WTO arises when one country adopts a trade policy measure which other fellow-WTO members consider to be breaking the WTO agreements. A third group of countries can also become a party to the dispute and declare that they have an interest in the case.

Settling disputes is the responsibility of the Dispute Settlement Body which consists of all WTO members. The Dispute Settlement Body has the sole authority to establish "panels" of experts to consider the case, and to accept or reject the panels' findings or the results of an appeal.

- **First stage:** consultation (up to 60 days). Before taking any other actions the countries in dispute have to talk to each other to see if they can settle their differences by themselves.
- **Second stage:** If consultations fail, the complaining country can ask for a panel to be appointed. The panel's final report should normally be given to the parties to the dispute within six months.

Officially, the panel is helping the Dispute Settlement Body make rulings or recommendations. The report becomes the Dispute Settlement Body's ruling or recommendation unless a consensus rejects it. This entire process should be completed within 1 year.

- **Appeal Stage:** Either side can appeal a panel's ruling. Each appeal is heard by three members of a permanent seven-member Appellate Body set up by the Dispute Settlement Body and broadly representing the range of WTO membership. Members of the Appellate Body have four-year terms. They have to be individuals with recognized standing in the field of law and international trade, not affiliated with any government. The appeal can uphold, modify or reverse the panel's legal findings and conclusions. The Dispute Settlement Body has

to accept or reject the appeals report and rejection is only possible by consensus.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT (ITA-1)**

- The Information Technology Agreement (ITA) is a **plurilateral agreement under the WTO which came into force in 1997**. It presently covers 81 WTO member countries which account for approximately 97 per cent of world trade in information technology products.
- The aim of the treaty is to eliminate all taxes and tariffs on information technology products. Unlike other WTO agreements, the coverage of the IT products under this agreement is fixed.
- Every member country signing this agreement is required to eliminate tariffs on IT products listed in the Annex A and Annex B of the IT Agreement.
- Some of the IT products covered in this agreement include computers laptops, mobile phones, set up boxes, semiconductors, telecommunication equipment and parts etc.
- India is a signatory to ITA-1 and hence it has eliminated customs duties on 217 IT products over a period of time.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT (ITA-2)**

- In 2015, some of the member countries agreed to expand the products covered by the Information Technology Agreement by eliminating tariffs on an additional list of 201 products. This was done on account of new advances in the field of information technology.
- The new accord covers new generation semi-conductors, semi-conductor manufacturing equipment, optical lenses, GPS navigation equipment, and medical equipment such as magnetic resonance imaging products and ultra-sonic scanning apparatus.
- However, it is to be noted that **India has not signed ITA-2** since it would have an adverse impact on domestic manufacturing due to cheaper imports.

### **WHAT'S THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY ALL ABOUT?**

- **India's View point:** The elimination of customs duties on IT products under the ITA-1 has adversely affected the domestic manufacturing of IT components in India. In order to boost domestic manufacturing of certain IT products, customs duties on certain products was increased to around 20% in Union Budget 2018-19.

India has stated that the IT goods in question do not fall under the ITA-1. It has argued that IT and telecom

technologies have evolved with new applications and equipment which were neither existent nor even conceived at the time of signing the ITA-I in December 1996. Therefore, the new IT products including the latest Apple phones and other IT products do not strictly fall under the scope of ITA-I agreement.

- **View Points of WTO Member Countries:** The WTO member countries have raised concerns with respect to imposition of customs duty on IT products by India. These countries have alleged that duties imposed on IT products were against India's obligations under ITA-1 of keeping them at zero per cent.

## WTO CASE ON DOMESTIC CONTENT REQUIREMENT

#WTO



### IN NEWS

*Recently, a WTO dispute resolution panel has ruled in favour of India in a case against the U.S. saying that America's domestic content requirements and subsidies provided by eight of its states in the renewable energy sector are violative of global trade norms. In this regard, this article discusses the rationale adopted by the WTO panel to rule in favour of India.*

**What was the issue between USA and India?** Certain states in the U.S. provided tax incentives to local producers on producing solar energy by using locally manufactured solar module cells. Such tax incentives were not available to the producers when they used imported solar cell modules. The US imports almost 44% of the India's overall exports of solar module cells. Hence, imposition of domestic content requirement in USA would have adversely impacted Indian exports. Accordingly, in September 2016, India dragged the U.S. to WTO's dispute settlement mechanism over America's domestic content requirements.

**What do the Global Trade Norms state on Domestic Content requirements?** Article III of the WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) requires that

countries should not provide less favourable treatment to 'like products' originating from other nations. For instance, a solar photovoltaic cell manufactured in the U.S. should be liable to the same amount of tax as one made anywhere else in the world.

The "Like Product" is distinguished based upon the product's end use, composition, substitutability, consumer preferences etc.

**What was the argument of the US Government?** The U.S. conceded that the import from India was a 'like product'. However, it highlighted that the positive incentives given by the states in US would have no impact on the import of solar module cells from India.

**What was the decision of the WTO dispute Resolution Panel?** The WTO panel highlighted that positive incentives provided by the states in USA does not create a level playing field between the solar module cells manufactured in India and those manufactured in USA. The domestic content requirement discriminates against the imported Indian Solar Module cells. Accordingly, the WTO dispute panel ruled in favour of India.

**Way forward:** There are various other disputes pending between the countries at the WTO involving the export promotion scheme brought in by India and the imposition of excess customs duty on steel and aluminium by the U.S. Both USA and India must try to sort out these issues amicably at the earliest so as to strengthen their bilateral cooperation.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ATTACK ON SAUDI OIL FIELDS

#INTERNATIONAL TRADE



### IN NEWS

*Recently, the Yemen based Shia Houthi rebels backed by Iran attacked two major oil fields in Saudi Arabia- Abqaiq and*



*Khurais. Abqaiq is considered to be the world's largest petroleum processing plant. The recent attack is set to reduce the Saudi Arabia's oil production by almost 50% and can reduce global oil supply by more than 6%. In this regard, let us understand as to how the attacks would impact the Indian Economy.*

### DETAILS

- **Energy Security:** India imports almost 80% of its crude oil requirements and is considered to be among the top 3 importers globally. Saudi Arabia is India's second largest supplier of crude oil after Iraq and hence the recent disruption can potentially affect India's energy Security.
- **Volatile Global Oil Market:** Presently, India is trying to make up the loss of supply from Iran after the US imposed sanctions. Other major oil suppliers such as Venezuela, Libya, Nigeria etc have also faced disruption in their oil production. Hence, the recent attacks are set to further lead to volatile global oil market leading to more pressure on the India.
- **Increase in the Crude Oil Prices:** The recent disruption in the crude oil supply would lead to increase in their prices by around \$3- \$5. India is expected to import 1.6 billion barrels of crude oil in the current financial year. An increase in oil prices by just one dollar means an increase of \$1.6 billion in the import bill. That would be around Rs 11, 500 crores at the current exchange rate. This can adversely impact the government's finances.
- **Depreciation in Rupee:** The increase in the import bill would lead to increase in the Current Account Deficit and Rupee depreciation.
- **Prolonged Economic Slowdown:** The Indian Economy is presently facing slowdown due to decline in the consumption expenditure. The increase in the crude oil prices would further depress the demand in the economy particularly for the critical sectors such as Automobiles. This can further worsen the present economic slowdown in India.

## DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR ISSUANCE OF ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN

#INTERNATIONAL TRADE



### IN NEWS

*The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry has recently launched the Common Digital Platform for Issuance of electronic Certificates of Origin (CoO).*

### ABOUT CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN

India has 15 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)/ Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with various partner countries under which Indian exporters avail reduced import tariffs in the destination country. In order to avail this benefit, the Indian exporters must provide a preferential CoO.

At present preferential Certificate of Origin is issued from the various notified agencies around the country through manual processes. A new common digital platform for issuance of electronic preferential CoOs has been conceptualized to address various challenges in the current process.

**Issuance of electronic Certificates of Origin (CoO):** A Common Digital Platform has been launched for Issuance of electronic Certificates of Origin (CoO). This platform will be a single access point for all exporters, for all FTAs/PTAs and for all agencies concerned. The authorities of partner countries will be able to verify the authenticity of certificates from the website. Further, it provides administrative access to Department of Commerce for reporting and monitoring purposes

### BENEFITS OF THE DIGITAL PLATFORM

- Reduces red-tapism and the issuance process becomes paperless and transparent.
- Facilitates real time tracking of products
- Reduces transaction cost and time for the exporters

## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES/ PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES

# LINKING OF MGNREGA WAGES TO INFLATION INDEX

#GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

PRIMARY  
SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*The Government is planning to link the MGNREGA Wages to an updated inflation Index. This is being proposed by the Government to counter the present economic slowdown and boost the rural demand in the economy through an upward revision in the MGNREGA wages.*

### ABOUT MGNREGA

- The Parliament has formulated MGNREGA Act, 2005 to provide at least 100 days of wage employment to people willing to work as manual casual labour. The objective of the programme is to create employment opportunities in the rural areas and prevent distress migration. It also seeks to create durable assets to improve livelihood resource base of the rural poor.
- The Act provides that the Central Government could notify wage rates and till such time as the Central Government notified a wage rate, minimum wages for agricultural labour notified by the State would be paid to NREGA workers. The Central Government started notifying wages under MGNREGA from the financial year 2008-09.
- The **MGNREGA Wages were linked to Consumer Price Index- Agricultural Labour (CPI-AL)** and notified at the start of every financial year.

### INFLATION INDICES IN INDIA

**Consumer Price Index - Agricultural Labour (CPI-AL)** and **Consumer Price Index - Rural Labour (CPI-RL)** are both computed and compiled by the Labour Bureau under Ministry of Labour and Employment. The Base year of these

two indices is **1986-87**. The CPI-AL covers the households of agricultural labourers and the CPI-RL covers the households of rural labourers (including agricultural labourers).

**Consumer Price Index (CPI):** It is compiled and computed by National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Its base year is 2012. The CPI has mainly 3 distinct components: CPI-Rural, CPI-Urban and CPI-Combined.

### PROBLEMS WITH LINKING MGNREGA WAGES TO CPI-AL

- The **Mahendra Dev Committee** appointed by the Rural Development Ministry on the appropriate inflation Index for linking MGNREGA Wages had recommended that CPI-AL is not correct choice for linking MGNREGA wages. It had recommended that it should be replaced by CPI-Rural.
- **Changes in the Consumption Basket:** The Inflation index is calculated based upon the increase in the prices of the goods included in the consumption basket for calculating Index. The Consumption basket of CPI-AL has not been updated for more than 3 decades. Prices of some of the items included in the consumption basket are not even available for data collection. In addition, new items of consumption have entered the consumption basket for the target groups. Hence, linking MGNREGA Wages to outdated CPI-AL may not capture the changes in the consumption pattern of the people.
- **Higher Weightage to Food Items:** The CPI-AL gives a weightage of around 40% to the food category. However, the rural workers spend a much smaller percentage of their money on subsidised food and increasingly larger percentage on health, education and transportation costs.
- **Coverage of Households: MGNREGA is applicable to all rural households** and not just agricultural labour households. Hence, an index such as CPI-Rural that reflects the rural consumption basket and prices should be the relevant index for revising the wage rates under the MGNREGA.

**What's the Government's Proposal?** Both Labour Bureau and National Statistical Office have begun work on updating CPI-AL and CPI-Rural respectively to reflect the demands of an inflation index for linking MGNREGA works. The Government's plans to link the MGNREGA wages either to CPI-AL or CPI-Rural, whichever is higher in a particular state.

## PM UJJWALA YOJANA- SUCCESS, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

#ENERGY



### IN NEWS

*The Government has achieved its target of providing 8 crore LPG connections to the poor under the PM Ujjwala Yojana. One of the notable achievements is that this target was met seven months ahead of the schedule - March 2020. The success of this scheme can be evident in the fact that LPG coverage in India has increased to 95% from 55% in 2014. However, providing connections is just one part of the push towards cleaner and reliable cooking fuels.*

*There are certain challenges and issues that need to be addressed in the implementation of this scheme so as to bring transformative changes in the lives of the people. In this regard, let us understand as to how the scheme can be improved upon so as to ensure energy security in India.*

**PM Ujjwala Yojana:** It aims to provide deposit free LPG connections to poor households. Under the scheme, an adult woman member of a below poverty line family identified through the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) is given a **deposit-free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs 1,600 per connection by the Centre.**

Eligible households are identified in consultation with state governments and Union territories. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

### CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

- **Higher Refilling cost:** On an average, the families with Ujjwala connections are opting for four subsidised cylinders in a year, this is lower than the seven subsidised cylinders that non-Ujjwala connections go for in the same time period. The lower usage of the LPG connections by the poor households can be attributed to higher refilling cost which is forcing them to use the LPG cylinders sparingly.
- **Flawed Mind set of the People:** Most people believe that food cooked on a chulha was healthier and tastier. In contrast, rotis cooked on gas cause indigestion. They also believe cooking with solid fuels was healthy for the women too as the fumes causes tears and purifies the eyes.

### HOW TO ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS?

- **Higher Subsidy amount to Poor Households:** Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), the households are divided into two categories- **Priority Households** and **Antyodaya households (poorest of the poor)**. The Antyodaya households are provided higher amount of food grains at highly subsidised prices as compared to priority households. This enables them to buy adequate amount of food grains at lower prices. There is a need to adopt this model in PM Ujjwala Yojana as well wherein the Antyodaya households could be provided the LPG cylinders free of cost.
- **Integrating behavioural economics into Ujjwala Yojana:** There is a need to adopt **Nudge theory** to encourage regular and continuous usage of the LPG cylinders by the poor households. The Government has to launch a campaign communicating that solid fuels harm respiratory health. Similarly, advertisements that food cooked on gas can be as tasty and healthy as food cooked on a chulha would be helpful. Further, current Ujjwala messaging, which focuses on the benefits of clean fuels for women builds up a perception in the society that only women must cook leading to gender stereotyping. Advertisements showing that gas is so good that even men can cook with it will challenge both misinformation on LPG and gender inequalities in household tasks.

# NATIONAL ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAM

#LIVESTOCK



## IN NEWS

*The Prime Minister recently launched the National Animal Disease Control Programme for the benefit of livestock rearing farmers.*

## ABOUT NATIONAL ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAMME (NADCP)

- This **programme seeks** to control and eradicate the Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis amongst the livestock in the country.
- The **programme aims** to vaccinate over 500 million livestock against FMD, and some 36 million female bovine calves annually against brucellosis.
- The NADCP aims to control these two diseases by 2025, and to eradicate them by 2030.

## ABOUT FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD)

- It is a highly infectious viral disease affecting the livestock. Transmission occurs through direct and indirect contact with the infected animals. Airborne transmission has also been reported. FMD is generally not fatal in adult animals but leaves them severely weakened, and results in a drastically reduced production of milk .
- The economic loss due to FMD is tremendous due to death of young animals, marked reduction in milk yield, abortion in advance stage of pregnancy and reduced working ability of drought animals, decline in quality of meat, reduction in fertility and poor quality of semen in breeding bull etc. The diseases also restrict the possible export of livestock and livestock products in the overseas.

## ABOUT BRUCELLOSIS

- Brucellosis is a **contagious disease of livestock** with significant economic impact. The disease is caused by

various bacteria of the family Brucella, which tend to infect cattle, swine, sheep and goats, camels, equines, and dogs.

- It may also infect other ruminants, some marine mammals and humans. Brucellosis causes early abortions in animals, and prevents the addition of new calves to the animal population.

# SPECIAL MARKET INTERVENTION SCHEME

#AGRICULTURE



## IN NEWS

*The Central Government has recently introduced Special Market Intervention Price Scheme (MISP) in the Jammu and Kashmir for the benefit of apple growers.*

## DETAILS

- Under MISP, 2 lakhs Metric Tonnes of apples will be procured at remunerative prices from Kashmir growers. The scheme is expected to enhance the income of the growers in Kashmir Valley by about Rs 2000 Cr. The scheme assumes significance because this is the first time that such a scheme has been introduced in Kashmir valley.
- Under the scheme, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Government of India and the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) will procure apple in J&K from the growers/aggregators so as to ensure remunerative prices for the apple crop.
- For fixing the price of the apple based on its variety and grade, Government will constitute a State Level Price Fixation Committee. The period of procurement would be from September 1, 2019 to March 1, 2020 i.e. six months. The fund requirement for the scheme has been estimated as Rs 8000 Cr.

**Why this scheme assumes significance?** Kashmir produced around 20 lakhs metric tonnes of apple in 2018, contributing almost 73% to the total apple production in the country. The same production trends is set to continue this year as well.

However, Kashmir is finding it difficult to export the apples to the other regions of the country due to strong resistance of the militants and lack of availability of enough trucks.

**About Market Intervention Scheme (MIS):** The Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) is an ad-hoc scheme under which are included horticultural commodities and other agricultural commodities which are perishable in nature and which are not covered under the **minimum price support scheme**. In

order to protect the growers of these horticultural/agricultural commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop during the peak arrival period when prices fall to very low level, Government implements M.I.S. for a particular commodity on the request of a State Government concerned. Losses suffered are shared on 50:50 basis between Central Government and the State.

## INDUSTRIAL POLICY

# SLOWDOWN IN THE AUTOMOBILE SECTOR

#INDUSTRY



### IN NEWS

*The automobile industry in India has been facing a slowdown. The current sales of vehicles has dropped to 19 year low and Industries have been announcing production holidays to cut down their production and clear their existing inventories. The Automobile Industry contributes around 7% to India's GDP, 49% of the manufacturing output and provides direct and indirect employment to around 37 Million people. Further, it has forward-backward linkages with other critical Industries as well. Hence, the slowdown in the automobile industry can in turn adversely affect the Indian Economy. In this regard, let us understand the reasons for the present slowdown in the automobile sector.*

### HOW IS THE PRESENT SLOWDOWN IN THE AUTOMOBILE SECTOR DIFFERENT?

The Automobile sector usually goes through the cycle of ups and downs. However, the present slowdown in the automobile sector is both cyclical as well as structural.

The downturn is all-encompassing and includes every segment of the auto industry, beginning from two-wheelers to passenger cars, light commercial vehicles and heavy

commercial vehicles, and even tractors. The usual cyclical downturn in the automobile Industry has been accompanied by adverse impacts of government's proactive policies such as push for electric vehicles, introduction of BS-VI norms etc.

### REASONS FOR THE SLOWDOWN IN AUTOMOBILE SECTOR

- **NPA Problem:** The Banks are considered to be major financiers for buying of automobiles. The increase in the NPAs of the Banks has led to poor credit creation leading to decline in demand for the automobiles. Further, it is to be noted that monetary policy transmission has remained quite inefficient and customers have been unable to take advantage of the reduction in repo rates by the RBI.
- **Crisis in the NBFC Sector:** According to some estimates, about 60 per cent of commercial vehicle sales and 70 per cent of two-wheeler sales are financed by NBFCs. However, the NBFCs are presently facing the liquidity crunch on account of Asset-Liability Mismatch (ALM) leading to poor credit creation and lower demand for automobiles.
- **Increase in Axle Load Capacity:** In August 2018, the government increased the axle load limit for all trucks. This move resulted in the increase in the load carrying capacity of the trucks by 20-25 per cent. This enabled the existing truck operators to carry more load on the existing fleet of the trucks and hence reduced the demand for the new trucks.
- **Government's proposal for introduction of BS- VI Norms:** The Government is set to introduce BS VI norms in April 2020 and hence it is stated that the customers may be reluctant to buy the existing BS IV vehicles and instead wait for the introduction of new vehicles.

- **Higher Insurance Costs:** Following the Supreme Court directive in July 2018, IRDAI made long term third party insurance mandatory for cars and two-wheelers. The third Party insurance comes into picture when the policyholder's vehicle has caused damage to a third party and is legally liable to compensate them for death or damages caused. It is being stated that such a new policy guideline has led to increase in insurance premium for the vehicle buyers and consequently lower demand for the automobiles.
- **India's push for Electric vehicles:** Recently, the NITI Aayog had mooted the idea to ban all three-wheelers with combustion engines by 2023 and two-wheelers up to 150cc engine capacity by 2025 to promote electric vehicles. Due to this EV roadmap, customers have fears that any vehicle that they purchase could potentially become obsolete in the next decade and hence there has been decline in the demand for automobiles.
- **Increase in the Input Costs:** The recent draft notification issued by the Ministry of Road Transport has proposed hike in the vehicle registration fees by almost 10-20 times depending upon the vehicle category. Further, the automobile Industry presently attracts a GST rate of 28% which is considered to be quite higher.
- **Increase in Ride sharing services:** India has seen rapid increase in the ride sharing services such as Ola, Uber etc. These apps make travel more convenient without the hassle of driving through traffic and avoiding the maintenance cost of owning a vehicle. These features of the ride sharing services are quite attractive for the millennials in the metropolitan cities and hence the demand for the automobiles has reduced in such cities.

**Reform measures announced by the Government:** The Government has declared that it will lift the ban on purchase of new vehicles for replacing all old vehicles by Departments. Government will consider various measures including scrappage policy.

BS IV vehicles purchased till 31st March 2020 would remain operational for entire period of registration. Earlier, the Government had proposed the revision of one time registration fees for the vehicles. This has now been deferred till June 2020.

**Way Forward:** Considering the importance of Automobile Sector in the Indian Manufacturing landscape, the continued slowdown in this crucial sector may lead India towards

Vicious cycle of higher unemployment, lower demand, lower investment rates and reduced GDP growth rate. Already, the present slowdown in the Automobile sector has led to loss of around 3.5 lakh jobs in the last three months. Hence, the Government has to take proactive measures to counter the cyclical downturn and address the present structural problems.

## FDI IN COAL MINING-SIGNIFANCE AND IMPORTANCE

#COAL MINING

PRIMARY SOURCE | Economic & Political WEEKLY

### IN NEWS

*The Central Government recently announced that it would permit 100% FDI under automatic route in coal mining as well as for creating associated processing infrastructure such as coal washery, crushing, coal handling, and separation. The new policy regime governing the coal mining industry is of considerable significance due to several reasons. In this regard, let us understand the new FDI Policy and its implications.*

### BACKGROUND

- Coal Mining was **nationalized in 1973** and **Coal India Limited (CIL)** enjoyed the virtual monopoly over the coal mining. The Government allocated the coal blocks to the private sector entities, however, the coal extracted had to be used only for captive power generation by the industries such as power, Iron and steel, cement etc. to meet their electricity needs. These private sector entities were not allowed to sell the coal in the open market.
- This had in turn led to monopoly and inefficiencies in the coal mining. For instance, inspite of having the world's fourth largest coal reserves, India is a net importer of coal.
- In order to address this problem, in 2018, the Government decided to open up coal mining to the private sector for the sale of coal in the market. Accordingly, the Government issued guidelines for the auctioning of the coal mines for the sale of coal.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW POLICY**

- **Boost Coal Mining:** India has one of the largest reserves of coal, amounting to 286 billion tonnes. Coal mining in India is an important industry that supplies the coal to Iron and Steel Industries, Power plants, and cement industries. However, India has been importing coal to meet its growing energy requirements, as domestic production by Coal India Ltd (CIL) has been unable to keep up with the demand for coal and also meet its production targets.
- **Meet the Coal Needs of Power Plants:** Owing to insufficient supplies of coal, power plants in India have been operating below their installed capacity, necessitating imports to meet demand.
- **Reduce Current Account Deficit:** Imports of coal has been made at a cost higher than the prices of domestic coal. In 2018-19, India imported 235 million tonnes of coal. The rising imports and higher prices in turn have had an adverse impact on the current account deficit. With the implementation of the liberalised policy enabling the entry of foreign coal mining companies, it is expected that domestic production would be augmented.
- **Technological advancement in Coal Mining:** The new policy is also expected to bring into India newer and efficient exploration technologies and methods for mining coal, especially high-end technology for underground mining used by global miners, which would help in lowering costs.
- **Promote Competition:** The new policy would also enable the opening up of the industry to competition, which until now had been the monopoly of Coal India Limited. Such a policy would promote competition between the companies and lead to greater operational efficiencies.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** The foreign firms usually avoid sectors in which they face regulatory barriers in terms of land acquisition, environmental clearances etc. The entry of new companies in coal mining would necessitate fast-tracking of approval processes in a time-bound manner to reduce uncertainties regarding regulations and clearances in order to avoid risks to production. Hence, the new policy would be accompanied by the implementation of related policies such as those for auction and allocation of coal blocks, environment and forest clearances, land allocation, and so on.

Private investments in captive coal mines have been minimal due to risks to production. Entrants to the industry would have to acquire and develop new coal mines. This would lead to the need for a certain gestation period before the commencement of commercial operations that would also require large financial outlays. Additionally, bidding and environmental clearances, inadequate infrastructure, and issues regarding land availability would take time before 100% FDI in mining by new firms commences. Constraints on profitability could also discourage new entrants and investments.

**WAY FORWARD**

The new FDI policy in the coal mining is indeed a welcome step. However, from the perspective of sustainable development of natural resources there is a risk of creating imbalance in the environment and ecology that would be caused due to indiscriminate mining. The Government has to ensure that it has to promote sustainable mining and ensure that the mining firms abide by environmental laws and regulations as well as health and safety norms for workers in mines.

**BIOTECH SECTOR-  
PROSPECTS AND  
CHALLENGES**

#INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

**IN NEWS**

*The Biotechnology sector is one of the sunrise sectors in India. The Indian biotech industry holds about 2 per cent share of the global biotech industry. The biotechnology industry in India, comprising about 800 companies is valued at US\$ 12 billion in 2018. The development of biotechnology in India can address some of the most pressing problems of our times such as cleaning of rivers, producing lifesaving drugs, addressing the malnutrition in the children and women etc.*

*However, the growth in biotechnology sector is not as rapid and phenomenal as the IT sector since it faces a number of challenges and concerns.*

**VARIOUS INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO PROMOTE BIOTECH SECTOR**

India's first biotech firm "Biocon" was set up in 1978 followed by the setting up of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in 1981. In order to boost the biotechnology sector in India, the Government set up Department of Biotechnology in 1986.

- **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC):** The Government has set up BIRAC to impart bioentrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and skills required for converting innovative ideas into successful ventures.
- **National Biotechnology Development Strategy (2015-20):** It aims at establishing an ecosystem for the development of new biotech products by creating a strong infrastructure for R&D and commercialization.
- **SEED (Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development) Fund:** Launched by BIRAC for providing financial equity based support to startups and enterprises through bio-incubators for scaling enterprises.
- **Bengaluru-Boston Biotech Gateway to India:** A range of institutes in Boston (Harvard/MIT) and Bengaluru will be able to connect to share ideas and mentor the entrepreneurs.
- **ATAL JAANUSANDHAN BIOTECH MISSION - UNDERTAKING NATIONALLY RELEVANT TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION (UNATI):** It is expected to transform Health, Agriculture and Energy sectors during the next 5 years.
- **NATIONAL BIOPHARMA MISSION:** Industry-Academia Collaboration for Accelerating Discovery Research to Early Development for Biopharmaceuticals. Implemented by BIRAC.

**CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES**

**Quality of Research and Development:** Even though the amount of money spent in biotechnology research has increased by leaps and bounds, the quality of research has continued to remain poor because of the following reasons:

- Presently, there is lack of emphasis on applied research leading to poor outcomes of R&D in the field of biotechnology.
- The R&D expenditure is dominated by Public Sector whereas the Private sector expenditure has continued to remain lower.

- Poor Scientific infrastructure such as high quality labs in the majority of the institutions has hindered the development of R&D ecosystem in India. Most of the high quality research output has come from handful of institutions with better scientific infrastructure.
- The number and quality of articles published in the scientific journals can indicate the growth of R&D in various sectors. In case of biotech, even though the number of articles published has increased, the quality of articles has remained poor.

**Quality of Human Resources:** Unlike the IT Sector, the Biotechnology sector in India has failed to create sufficient amount of employment opportunities. This is inspite of having large English speaking workforce, low wages and large institutional base.

Most of the jobs in biotech sector are filled by experienced and skilled scientists leaving the demand for young and inexperienced ones low. Further, the biotech sector requires a disciplined work culture and documentation practice due to regulatory and intellectual property filing requirement. This has in turn failed the biotech sector from attracting young talent. It is to be noted that China has been able to attract a large number of youths towards the biotech sector by creating a conducive ecosystem. It has built a large number of high quality labs supported by more number of skilled human resources trained in regimental work culture and documentation.

**HOW TO BOOST THE BIOTECH SECTOR IN INDIA?**

- India needs to learn from Boston and Silicon Valley in USA which have emerged as hotbeds in the field of Biotechnology. Apart from availability of funds, infrastructure and skilled workforce, the presence of top notch research institutions and universities in the vicinity make these two places attractive locations for biotech startup companies.
- The Government has to realise that the culture of innovation cannot be improved without focussing on research and development in the universities. The R&D within the Indian Universities can be improved in the following manner:
- Allow scientists from universities to incubate start-up companies in their labs. This ensures that the technology is incubated, refined and tested for years in the academic labs before it is released in the market.



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- Allow scientists to take unpaid leave to join Industry for a fixed period. Appoint researchers from Industry to be appointed as Faculties in the Universities. Both these steps would improve Industry-Academia collaboration.

**Way forward:** As stated before, the Biotechnology sector can well solve some of the most pressing problems of our society.

It would be a mistake on our part to look at this sector only through the lens of employment creation.

Moving forward, the need for AI and Big Data in the field of Biology would enable India to leverage its strength in IT and provide greater thrust to the biotech sector.

## AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SECTORS

# OILSEEDS- PRODUCTION, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

#AGRICULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

SECONDARY SOURCE pib

### IN NEWS

*The Oilseed crops are considered to be the second most important agricultural crops next only to cereals. The self-sufficiency in oilseeds attained through "Yellow Revolution" during early 1990's, could not be sustained beyond a short period. Despite being the fifth largest oilseed crop producing country in the world, India is also one of the largest importers of vegetable oils.*

*The demand-supply gap in the edible oils has necessitated huge imports accounting for 60 per cent of the country's requirement. Against this backdrop, the Finance Minister has stated in the Union Budget that there is a need to boost the production of Oilseeds in India.*

**Sources of vegetable oil:** Nine oilseeds are the primary source of vegetable oils in the country - Soybean, Groundnut, Rape seed and Mustard, Sunflower, Safflower, Sesame, Niger, Castor, linseed. Among these, soybean (34%), groundnut (27%), rapeseed & mustard (27%) contributes to more than 88% of total oilseeds production.

Andhra Pradesh & Gujarat (Groundnut), Haryana(Mustard), Karnataka(Groundnut), M.P(Soybean), Maharashtra(Soybean), Rajasthan (Mustard & Soybean), Tamil Nadu(Ground nut), U.P(Mustard), West Bengal(Mustard) contribute more than 95% of total oilseed production in the country.

In addition to nine oilseeds, vegetable oil is also being harnessed from secondary sources like cottonseed, rice bran, coconut, Tree Borne Oilseeds (TBOs) and Oil Palm.

### Present status of Oilseeds and Vegetable Oil Production in India:

In 2017-18, the Oil seeds were cultivated over an area of 26 million hectares leading to the production of around 30 million tonnes. Almost 70% of the oilseeds are cultivated in rainfed areas. The vegetable oil production is around 7 million tonnes from about 30 million tonnes of oilseeds . Due to demand-supply mismatch, India has emerged as the largest importer of vegetable oils in the world followed by China & USA. Of imported edible oils , share of palm oil is about 60% followed by soybean oil and sunflower.

India imports almost 60% of its vegetable oil requirements which accounts for around \$11 billion (about Rs 77,000 crores).

### GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES TO BOOST PRODUCTION OF OILSEEDS

- **National Food Security Mission (NFSM)-Oilseeds & Oil Palm:** It aims to augment the availability of vegetable oils and to reduce the import of edible oils by increasing the production and productivity of oilseeds from an average production of 30 million tonnes and productivity of 1122 kg/ha during 12th plan period to 36 million tonnes and 1290 kg/ha, respectively by end of 2019-20. Under this

scheme, financial assistance is provided to farmers through State Government for various interventions like Production and distribution of quality seeds of new varieties, Demonstration of improved technologies, Distribution of bio-pesticides, weedicides, micronutrients, gypsum, lime, bio-fertilizer, Farm machinery & implements etc.

- **Increase in the import duties on Vegetable Oils:** The Government has increased the customs duty on the imported crude and refined vegetables so as to incentivise the farmers to increase the production of the oilseeds.
- **Increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP):** The Government has been increasing the MSP of the Oilseeds to encourage the farmers to grow more oilseeds.

#### STRATEGY TO PROMOTE CULTIVATION OF OILSEEDS

- **Import Duty Structure:** The difference between import duty on the crude and refined oil is quite lower wherein the import duty on refined vegetable oil is 10% lower than that of crude vegetable oil. If the import duty between crude & refined oil is not very high, more of refined oil would be imported into India affecting domestic refineries as well as the farmers. Thus, it is necessary to raise the duty differential between the crude and refined oil and it must be maintained at 20%.
- **Increasing production of Oilseeds:** Adoption of high yielding varieties of seeds; Adoption of soil and moisture conservation techniques in rainfed areas; promoting balanced Utilisation of fertilisers; Promotion of intercropping of Oilseeds with other crops; Promote contract farming by oil industry and exporters etc.
- **Encourage Cooperatives and Oil Federations:** The oilseed farmers have to be organised into Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Self-help groups (SHGs), Cooperatives etc and link such collective organisations to oil processing Industries.
- **Discourage Excessive consumption of vegetable Oils:** The excessive consumption of vegetable oil is not good for health. As per nutritional requirement, 12-13 kg per person per annum is sufficient, while an average Indian consumes more than 18 kg per person per annum. The excessive consumption habits can be normalized by educating the consumers through electronic & print media, mobile apps, advertisements etc.

## KRISHI KISAN APP FOR FARMERS

# AGRITECH

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

SECONDARY SOURCE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

#### IN NEWS

*The Ministry of Agriculture has launched two new mobile apps for the benefit of farmers- 'CHC Farm Machinery and Krishi Kisan App for Geo Tagging'.*

#### CUSTOM HIRING CENTERS (CHC) FARM MACHINERY APP

- Custom Hiring Centers/ Farm Machinery banks and Hi-tech hubs have been established under the various Schemes like Sub –Mission on Agricultural Mechanization, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and Crop Residue Management Schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers welfare to provide Agricultural Machinery on rental basis to the Farmers, especially small & marginal farmers who cannot afford to buy the high value machinery and equipments.
- The Multi-lingual Mobile App CHC Farm Machinery is already available to custom service providers for registration. This app connects the farmers with Custom Hiring Service Centres in their area. Through this app, farmers, especially small and marginal farmers, will have easy access to high value and technical agricultural equipments which will facilitate optimum use of all types of inputs using these farming machines. This will not only increase the income of the farmers, but it will also take mechanization to maximum farm holdings in a short time frame.

#### KRISHI KISAN APP FOR GEO-TAGGING

Krishi Kisan App will provide farmers the information of best demonstration of high-yielding crops and seeds in their nearby area. Any farmer with high quality of crops can utilise this platform to demonstrate best practices of cultivation to other farmers so that this will help other farmers also to adopt these methods. The App will also help in geo-tagging and geo-fencing of crop and give weather forecast message to farmers.

# BAN ON EXPORT OF ONIONS

# AGRI-TRADE

PRIMARY SOURCE | pib

SECONDARY SOURCE | BusinessLine

## IN NEWS

*The Union government has decided to ban the export of onions with immediate effect. It has also imposed stock holding limits on both retail and wholesale trade to increase domestic supply of the onions and check its hoarding.*

## RATIONALE OF THE GOVERNMENT DECISION

- The retail onion prices have skyrocketed to the range of Rs 60-80/kg in Delhi and some other parts of the country from around Rs 20-30/kg in mid-August. The increase in the onion prices has been mainly on account of the supply side disruption caused due to floods in some of the onion growing states such as Maharashtra.
- It is to be noted that earlier on September 13<sup>th</sup> 2019, the Government had decided to impose Minimum Export Price

(MEP) on the onion so as to discourage the export of onions to other countries and ensure greater availability of onion in the domestic market. The Government has now decided to completely ban the export of the Onion.

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MOVE

- The restriction on the onion exports from India would deprive the Indian farmers from getting higher prices which they would have otherwise earned if it allowed to export. India has emerged as the largest exporter of Onions in the world, having exported about 2.4 million tonnes in 2018-19 out of total production of around 25 million tonnes. Such abrupt restrictions imposed by the Indian Government makes India an unreliable exporter for the other countries and hence would discourage the other countries from importing Onion from India in the long run. This would go against the interest of the farmers.
- Further, recently a CM's Panel led by Devendra Fadnavis had highlighted that the restrictions such as Essential Commodities Act, should not be imposed in agriculture. The Panel was of the opinion that such restrictions go against the interests of the farmers.

## IMPORTANT INDICES IN NEWS

# WORLD TRAVEL AND TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS INDEX

#TOURISM

PRIMARY SOURCE | FINANCIAL EXPRESS

## IN NEWS

*According to the latest World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, India has improved its position by 6 places to rank at 34th position.*

## ABOUT THE INDEX

- This Index is published biennially by the World Economic Forum. It benchmarks the Travel and Tourism competitiveness of 140 economies and measures "the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the Travel & Tourism (T&T) sector in a country.
- By allowing cross-country comparison and benchmarking countries' progress on the drivers of T&T competitiveness, it informs policies and investment decisions related to T&T business and industry development
- It is comprised of four sub-indexes, 14 pillars and 90 individual indicators. The Sub indexes considered by this report include- Enabling Environment, Policies related to

Travel and Tourism, Infrastructure, Natural and Cultural resources.

# WORLD DIGITAL COMPETITIVENESS RANKING 2019

#DIGITAL INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

## IN NEWS

According to the latest World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2019 (WDCR), India has improved its ranking by 4 places from 48th to 44th.

## ABOUT THE WORLD DIGITAL COMPETITIVENESS RANKING 2019 (WDCR)

- It is compiled and published by the Switzerland-based International Institute for Management and Development (IMD)'s World Competitiveness Center (WCC). The 2019 report is the third edition of the World Digital Competitiveness Ranking.
- It seeks to measure the capacity and readiness of 63 economies to adopt and explore digital technologies as a key driver for economic transformation in business, government and wider society.
- To evaluate an economy, WDCR examines three factors:
  - **Knowledge** - the capacity to understand and learn the new technologies
  - **Technology** - the competence to develop new digital innovations
  - **Future readiness** - the preparedness for the coming developments
- This year, two new variables related to robotics were introduced in the calculation of the WDCR: "industrial robot" to measure the total number of robots in operation, and "robots in education and R&D" worldwide. The data is provided by the International Federation of Robotics.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

- The United States held on to the number one spot with all top five economies in the ranking unchanged: USA, Singapore, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland.
- India improved its ranking by 4 places mainly due to positive results in talent, training and education as well as the enhancement of technological infrastructure.

# LEADS INDEX

#LOGISTICS

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

## IN NEWS

According to the Latest Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) Index 2019 Report, Gujarat has topped among the 22 states in India, followed by Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. Among the hilly eastern states, Tripura is the top performer and among Union Territories (UTs) Chandigarh was selected as the best performing UT.

## ABOUT LEADS INDEX

- This Index is developed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to establish the **baseline of performance of the states/UTs in the logistics sector**.
- It is calculated based on **eight parameters** such as infrastructure, services, timeliness, track and trace, competitiveness of pricing, safety of cargo, operating environment and regulatory process. LEADS is loosely based on World Bank's biannual Logistics Performance Index (LPI) which ranks the countries in terms of efficacy of the Logistics sector.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE INDEX

- Logistics is the fuel that powers a country's International Trade. Logistics involve a series of activities and services- transportation, handling and storage, cold storage etc. These activities are carried out through a coordinated effort of multiple stakeholders in the chain.
- The Logistics sector has been often cited as the reason for India's poor trade competitiveness. Indian Logistics costs are said to be among the highest in the world accounting for almost 13% of the GDP. This is much higher as compared to 5-8% in other economies.



2. It enables the entity owning the share to veto the decision of other shareholders.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q4. Which among the following International agencies publishes the "World Digital Competitiveness" report?**

- (a) World Economic Forum  
(b) UNCTAD  
(c) World Bank  
(d) International Institute for Management and Development (IMD)

**Q5. With reference to Equalisation levy, consider the following statements:**

1. It is tax which is applicable on both Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Customer (B2C) transactions in the digital economy.  
2. The tax would be applicable only when the payment is made to non-resident service provider.

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

## DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** The Government should focus on the weaker sectors not only to improve their well-being but also to get out of the present economic slowdown. In this regard, discuss various concerns and challenges with India's growth model and what measures should India undertake to promote inclusive and sustainable growth in India.
- Q2.** The Merger of the Public Sector Banks in India should be accompanied by carrying out structural reforms in the Banking Sector. Comment

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

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# SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

# GS PAPER I & GS PAPER III (MAIN)

## SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY INDEX (SEQI) 2019

# EDUCATION

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

NITI Aayog

### IN NEWS

*NITI Aayog has recently released the School Education Quality Index (SEQI) 2019 report which evaluates performance of states and union territories in the school education sector and understand how different states are progressing in school education.*

### SEQI 2019

- **Categorisation:** The report has **categorised the states as small and large states** for ease of comparability. The Union Territories are categorised separately.
- **Basis:** This report is based on 2015-16 and 2016-17 data of Unified District Information on School Education, the National Achievement Survey of Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- **Method:** States have been ranked on two broad categories of **outcome** and **governance**. Overall, there are 30 indicators to measure the overall effectiveness, quality and efficiency of the Indian school education system.
- West Bengal did not participate.
- SEQI **aims to drive policy reforms** that will improve the quality of school education. It will **institutionalize a focus on enhancing education outcomes** by driving improvements in learning levels, access, equity, infrastructure and governance processes.

### FINDINGS IN THE REPORT

- Between 2015-16 and 16-17, almost all larger states have shown improvements
- **Top performers:** Kerala followed by Rajasthan and Karnataka have emerged as top performers among large states in overall category.
- **Worst:** Uttar Pradesh figured at the bottom of the ranking.
- Among the **small States**, Manipur (68.8 per cent) emerged as the top performer while Arunachal Pradesh (24.6 per cent) came last in the category
- **Delhi emerged as one of the best in the governance category** with regard to school education.

### IMPACT OF SEQI

- **Outcome-based:** While current measures of school education like Performance Graded Index (compiled by MHRD) emphasises more on input and infrastructure, SEQI emphasis more on outcomes with nearly 50% of the weightage on learning outcomes. This will encourage states to adopt outcome-based, result-oriented policies.
- **Spirit of competitive federalism:** Since school education is subject in the concurrent list, ranking fosters the principle of competitive federalism.
- **Benchmark for incentives:** The index can act as a benchmark for disbursing performance-linked grants to states
- **Best-practices:** Knowledge-sharing of best-practices of high-ranking states.

**Some Concerns** - Large gap between states in terms of learning outcomes, access, infrastructure. While the variation in equity parameter is low, it is consistently low at 60% in most states highlighting the gap across caste lines, class, region, gender etc.



# ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION (AISHE)

#EDUCATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

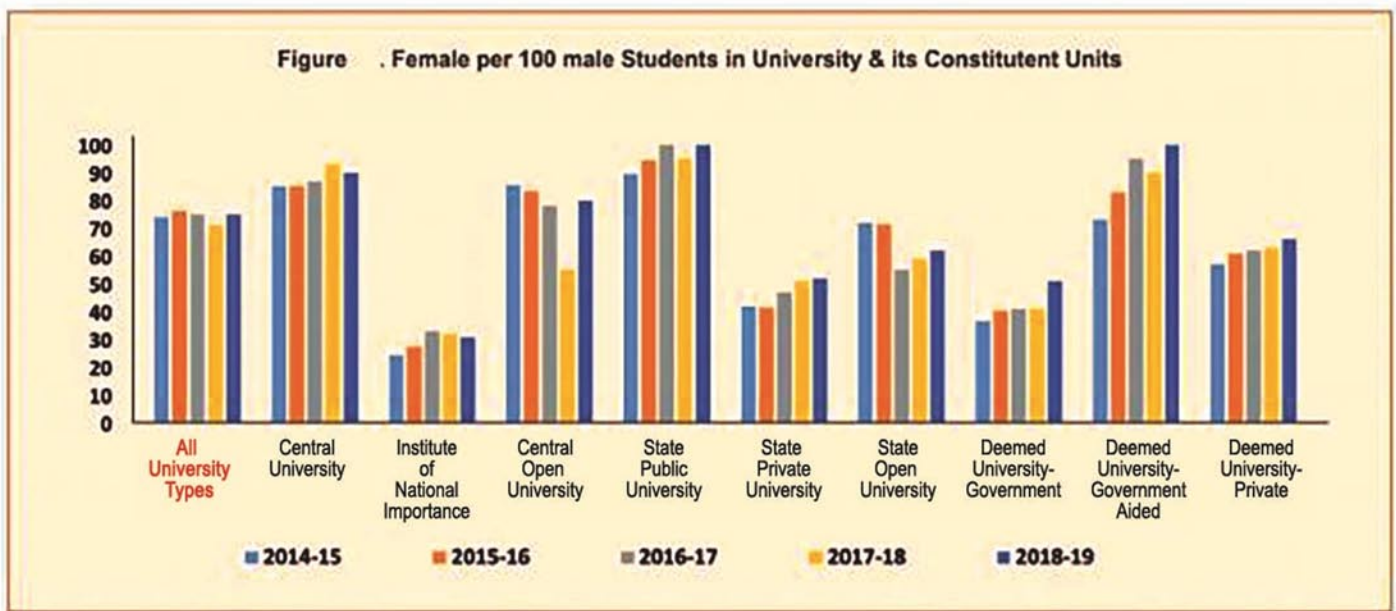
SECONDARY SOURCE THE TIMES OF INDIA

## IN NEWS

The Ministry of Human Resource Development released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2018-19. The report, among other things, found that gender gap has been narrowing significantly in India in higher education.

## AISHE

- The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) was established by the Ministry of Human Resource Development for conducting an **annual web-based survey**, thereby portraying the status of higher education in the country.
- The survey is **conducted for all educational institutions in India** on many categories like teachers, student enrolment, programmes, examination results, education finance, and infrastructure.
- This survey is used **to make informed policy decisions** and research for the development of education sector.
- The **main objectives is to identify all the institutions of higher learning** in the country and to collect data from all the higher education institutions on various aspects of higher education.



## KEY FINDINGS OF AISHE 2018-19 REPORT

1. The **gross enrolment ratio (GER) has increased marginally** from 25.8 in 2017-18 to 26.3 in 2018-19. In absolute terms, enrolment increased from 3.66 crore to 3.74 crore students in the same period, out of which nearly 51.4% are male and the remaining 48.6% are female.
2. **GER for SCs and STs has also shown a growth**, reaching 23.0 and 17.2 respectively.
3. The **top six states in terms of total student enrolment** —Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Karnataka — account for 54% of the total enrolment in India. Female enrolment was noted to be close to 50 % of all enrolments in these states.
4. SC, ST, Muslim and OBC students' enrolment was at 14.9%, 5.5 %, 5.2 % and 36.3 % respectively of the total enrolment.
5. **Increase in preference of professional programmes** like management, law, computer applications, pharmacology and medicine.

6. Meanwhile, enrolment numbers continue to **decline** for the fifth consecutive year **for engineering and technology, bachelor in arts.**
7. Though the gender ratio is tilted on the male side in most courses, but **female enrolment is higher at M Phil, postgraduate and certificate levels.** However, female scholars number just 24% in 127 institutions of national importance
8. **Women fare poorly in overall enrolment in technical education** (BE/ BTech) with the bulk of the institutions of importance offering professional technical courses.
9. **Wide disparities exist with respect to the spread of educational institutions** across States in the country. *For example*, while Karnataka has a rich spread of educational institutions with 53 colleges catering to every lakh people of its eligible population, Bihar languishes at the bottom of the higher education table with only 7 colleges for every lakh of eligible population.
10. The higher **education infrastructure in the country is heavily skewed** in favour of less than 10% districts, which have over 30% of all colleges in the country. Significantly, most of these districts are either in south or western part of the country.
11. On the other hand, there are 153 districts which do not have even 10 colleges each.
12. Not a single district from the country's east or northeast has made it to the list of top 10 districts.

- The survey was conducted by **Nutrition International** in collaboration with AIIMS and the Indian Coalition for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD).
- The survey was conducted as per the recommendations of the **National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme (NIDDCP)** to carry out prevalence surveys every five years in all States and Union Territories,.
- The survey tested the iodine content in samples of cooking salt from households to estimate the coverage of iodized salt.
- The study also examined the urinary iodine concentration in samples from pregnant, lactating and non-pregnant, non-lactating women of reproductive age (15-49 years) to estimate the iodine status among them.
- These three categories of women were taken as a proxy for the population.
- The survey found national average for household coverage is 76.3%.

► **Key findings of the National Survey**

1. **Overall coverage: 76.3% of Indian households** consume adequately iodised salt
2. The survey revealed that **13 States** have already **achieved Universal Salt Iodisation** or have 90% of households with access to adequately iodized salt.
3. **Best performers:** Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland are front-runner with more than 99 per cent of households having access to adequately iodised salt.
4. **Worst performers** were Tamil Nadu Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Jharkhand. This is despite the fact that Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu are the second and third largest producers of salt respectively.
5. **Producers:** Gujarat produces 71% of salt in the country, followed by Rajasthan at 17% and Tamil Nadu at 11%. The rest of the country accounts for a mere 1% of salt produced.
6. **Gap:** The most probable reason for low and variable use of iodized salt can be lack of awareness and knowledge about the importance of iodization as public education about the risks of iodine deficiency and importance of iodized salt may be insufficient.

## INDIA IODINE SURVEY

# HEALTH # NUTRITION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE THE TIMES OF INDIA

**IN NEWS**

*According to a national survey to measure the coverage of iodized salt, Tamil Nadu has the lowest consumption of iodized salt despite being the third biggest producer of salt in the country.*

**ABOUT THE SURVEY**

7. Though availability of salt is not an issue, cultural beliefs, dietary habits and taste preferences may lead to preferential use of non-iodized salt.

According to **WHO guidelines**, a daily iodine **intake of 150 microgram** is required to prevent iodine deficiency disorders and this can be achieved by using adequately iodised salt, i.e. salt containing a minimum of 15 parts per million (ppm).

Iodine is a **vital micronutrient** needed regularly in small quantities. **Deficiency of iodine can result in** a range of disabilities and disorders such as goitre, hypothyroidism, cretinism, abortion, still-birth, mental retardation and psychomotor defects. Children born in iodine-deficient areas may have up to 13.5 IQ points less than those born in iodine-sufficient areas.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- The death rate attributable to **malnutrition in under-5 children in India has dropped by two-thirds** from 1990 to 2017.
- Malnutrition is, however, **still the underlying risk factor for 68% of the deaths** in under-five children in India.
- The **Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALY) rate** attributable to malnutrition in children varies among the states, highest in Uttar Pradesh and lowest in Kerala. Other states with a high burden are Bihar, Assam and Rajasthan followed by Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Nagaland and Tripura.

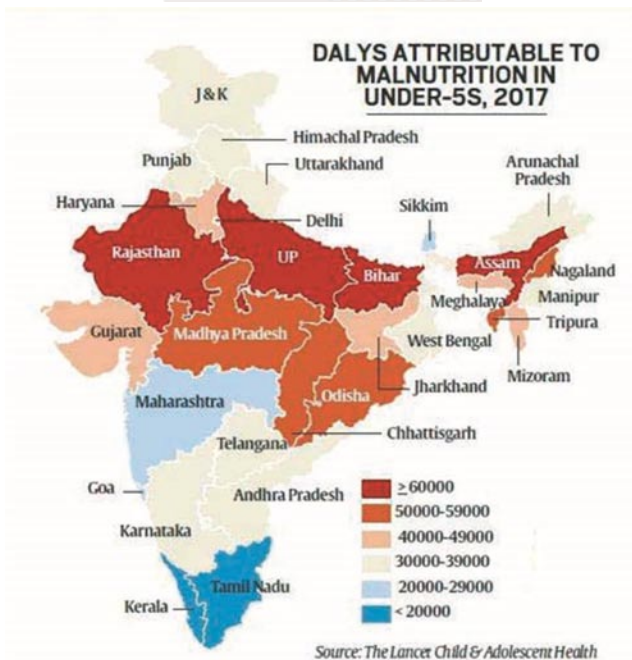
**Note:** The **Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALY)** is a **measure of overall disease burden**, expressed as the number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death. It was developed in the 1990s as a way of comparing the overall health and life expectancy of different countries.

- The proportion of **under-5 deaths attributable to malnutrition**, which is 68.2% across India, ranges between a high of 72.7% in Bihar and a low of 50.8% in Kerala. Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh are states with a high proportion of deaths, while Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Mizoram and Goa have the lowest proportions of such deaths.
- Among the malnutrition indicators, **low birth weight is the largest contributor to child deaths in India**, followed by child growth failure which includes stunting, underweight, and wasting.

# MALNUTRITION IN INDIA

# HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*



**IN NEWS**

A report in the *Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* gives comprehensive estimates of disease burden due to child and maternal malnutrition and the trends of its indicators in every state of India from 1990 to 2017.

**PROPORTION OF TOTAL DEATHS IN UNDER-5 ATTRIBUTABLE TO MALNUTRITION AND ITS COMPONENTS, 2017**

	BOYS	GIRLS	BOTH
Child & maternal malnutrition	69.1%	67.3%	68.2%
Low birth weight & short gestation	49.4%	42.7%	46.1%
Stunting, wasting, underweight	19.1%	23.7%	21.4%
Vitamin A deficiency	4.97%	5.62%	5.29%
Zinc deficiency	0.35%	0.48%	0.42%

## POSHAN ABHIYAAN

# HEALTH # NUTRITION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*As per a new study published in Lancet, India is unlikely to meet its target under National Nutrition Mission or Poshan Abhiyaan. The report is a joint initiative of Indian Council of Medical Research, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.*

### POSHAN ABHIYAAN

- Poshan Abhiyaan, the **world's largest nutrition programme**, expected to benefit 10 crore people, was launched in 2018 with a desire to **ensure attainment of malnutrition free India by 2022**.
- It is India's **flagship programme** to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers by leveraging technology and a targeted approach and convergence.
- It **aims to reduce** stunting, underweight, and low birth weight, each by 2% per year; and **anaemia** among young children, adolescents and women each by 3% per year until 2022.
- **Convergence:** It converges various programmes like Anganwadi Services, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG), Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), National Health Mission (NHM), Swachh-Bharat Mission, Public Distribution System (PDS), etc.
- **Components:** It will comprise **mapping** of various Schemes, **ICT based Real Time Monitoring system**, **incentivizing States/UTs** for meeting the targets, **incentivizing Anganwadi Workers (AWWs)** for using IT based tools, eliminating registers used by AWWs, introducing measurement of height of children at the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), Social Audits, setting-up Nutrition Resource Centres, involving masses through Jan Andolan for their participation on nutrition through various activities, among others.

### FINDING OF THE LANCET STUDY

- India is unlikely to meet targets set under the ambitious Poshan Abhiyaan or National Nutrition Mission (NNM), if there is no progress made to improve the rate of decline observed between 1990 and 2017.
- **Likelihood of missing the targets:** The study points out that India will miss its target for stunting levels of 25% by 9.6%; underweight target of 22.7% by 4.8%; desired low birth level of 11.4% by 8.9%; anaemia level among women of 39.4% by 13.8%; and anaemia level among children of 44.7% by 11.7%.
- Additional efforts over the last two years in the Poshan Abhiyan as well as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan have hastened improvement, however the gaps shown in the study highlight how much more of these efforts are needed in different States to reach the targets set by the government.
- According to the **National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-2016)**, 38.4% of children under the age of five are stunted; 35.7% are underweight; 18% of children were born underweight (less than 2.5 kg); and 58% of children between the age of 6-59 months and 53% of women in the age of 14-49 years have anaemia.

## EAT RIGHT INDIA MOVEMENT

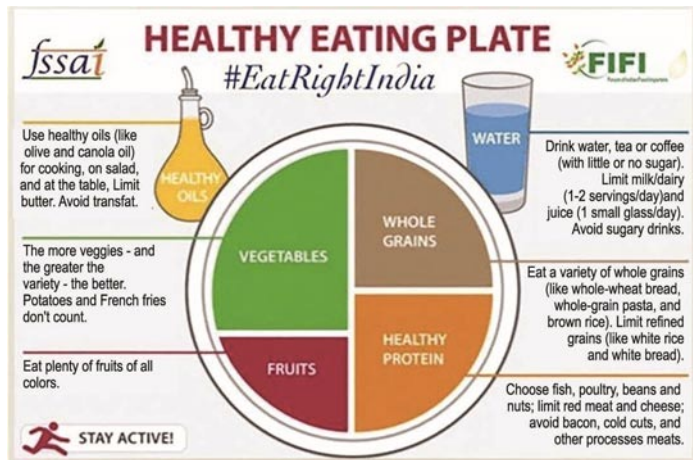
# HEALTH #NUTRITION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*The government has launched a mass media campaign on the Eat Right India movement which is aligned with the government's flagship public health programmes such as POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anemia Mukh Bharat, Ayushman Bharat Yojana and Swachh Bharat Mission.*

**EAT RIGHT INDIA MOVEMENT**



- The Eat Right India movement with the slogan '**Sahi Bhojan, Behtar Jeevan**' is a crucial **preventive healthcare measure to nudge** social and behavioural change through a mix of regulatory measures and soft interventions for ensuring awareness and capacity building of food businesses and citizens in country.
- India is passing through an **epidemiological shift** from communicable to non-communicable diseases, and the burden of diet-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity is rising rapidly. Hence the country is in **need of a movement on preventive health** for all and Eat Right India takes a holistic approach to food habits that promote health and sustainability.
- The Movement has been **launched with the support of stakeholders** such as the World Health Organization (WHO), along with Ministers and delegates from South East Asian countries.
- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has also put in place robust regulatory measures under three major pillars: **Eat Safe, Eat Healthy and Eat Sustainably** for the programme.
- FSSAI has **prescribed a limit for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) at 25% in cooking oil** to avoid the harmful effects of reused cooking oil.

**Note:** During use, frying fats undergo chemical deterioration. This leads to the formation of compounds that are more polar than the triacylglycerols of the fat. Collectively these are called total polar material (TPM), and the mass concentration of TPM is used as an indicator of the quality of frying fats.

- The Health Ministry also launched the new **Eat Right India logo** that represents a healthy plate, an **online eat right quiz** and **online course for frontline health workers**.

**EMERGING THREATS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

# HEALTH



**IN NEWS**

UNICEF's Executive Director, in an open letter marking 30 years since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has highlighted major growing and future challenges facing children.

**UNICEF**

- **Originally known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund**, it was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in countries that had been devastated by World War II.
- **In 1950, UNICEF's mandate was extended to address the long-term needs of children and women** in developing countries everywhere.
- **In 1953 it became a permanent part of the United Nations System**, and the words "international" and "emergency" were dropped from the organization's name, though it retained the original acronym UNICEF.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LETTER**

- The letter outlines **eight growing challenges** for the world's children including *prolonged conflicts, pollution and the climate crisis, a decline in mental health, mass migration and population movements, statelessness and online misinformation*.
- It further stated that our climate is changing beyond recognition. Inequality is deepening. Technology is transforming how we perceive the world. And more families are migrating than ever before. Childhood has

changed, and we need to change our approaches along with it.

- The letter also expresses concern that the majority of children will grow up as natives of a digital environment saturated with online misinformation. For example, so-called 'deep fake' technology uses artificial intelligence techniques to create convincing fakes of audio and video content, relatively easily.
- The letter warns that an online environment where truth can become indistinguishable from fiction has the potential to totally undermine trust in institutions and information sources.

## SILICOSIS

# HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*Miners of Ganj Basoda district in Madhya Pradesh suffering from silicosis have decided to organise themselves to press for adequate compensation and appeal to the government for right treatment, instead of being treated for tuberculosis.*

### SILICOSIS

- Silicosis is a **lung disease** caused by **breathing in tiny bits of silica**, a mineral that is part of sand, rock, and mineral ores such as quartz. It mostly affects workers exposed to silica dust in occupations such as mining, glass manufacturing, and foundry work.
- **Impact:** Exposure to large amounts of free silica may not be noticed because silica is odourless, non-irritant and does not cause any immediate health effects, but long-term exposure to crystalline silica-containing dust is associated with **pneumoconiosis, and progressive massive fibrosis of the lung (PMF), lung cancer, pulmonary tuberculosis, and other lung diseases and airways diseases.**
- **Risk and prevalence:** In India, more than 10 million workers are at risk of silicosis. It is prevalent in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Pondicherry, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal among the workers of construction and mining.

- **Challenges:** Silicosis is **an incurable condition** with its potential to cause permanent physical disability. As there is no effective specific treatment of silicosis, the only way to protect workers' health is control of exposure to silica-containing dusts and to detect cases early through monitoring of currently and formerly exposed workers along with proper management to reduce disability.

### PROVISIONS

- **Factory Act of India (1948)** mandates a well ventilated working environment, provisions for protection from dust, reduction of overcrowding and provision of basic occupational health care.
- The **main challenge of eliminating silicosis in India is in the informal, unregulated sectors of industry** which do not fall under the control of the Factory Act of India.
- The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) also emphasized for regulation** of working environment, protective equipment to workers with proper health education.

## RURAL SANITATION STRATEGY

# HEALTH # SANITATION

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*The Jal Shakti Ministry has released the Rural Sanitation Strategy (2019-2029), which lays the roadmap for ODF Plus (ODF Plus envisages that everyone uses a toilet and every village has access to solid and liquid waste management). The framework for the rural sanitation programme has been sent to the Union Cabinet for approval.*

*This ODF Plus plan has been prepared by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) in consultation with state governments and other stakeholders, and it lays down a framework to guide local governments, policy makers, implementers and other relevant stakeholders in their planning for ODF Plus.*

### DETAILS ABOUT THE STRATEGY

The **main thrust of the strategy is to sustain the gains** which have been made in making India Open Defecation free in order to prevent any slip backs and to continue to nudge people towards a behavioural change. The strategy **will continue with construction and maintenance of toilets** for rural households will, however will now go a step further and focus on waste water and solid waste treatment at the village and panchayat level.

Though the government has achieved a 100 per cent coverage of all rural households in construction of toilets from 38 per cent when it began in 2014, however the plan will retain the financial provision for the construction of toilets in order to cover any households that might have been missed and to accommodate new houses which will be constructed in future.

1. Now, **safe management of solid and liquid waste will be the next target.**
2. In next 10 years, focus will be on **four main areas** - *biodegradable and organic waste* (kitchen and green waste), *plastics, greywater management and black water or faecal sludge management.*
3. The government's plans also **involve sanitation coverage of public spaces**, which will involve construction of community toilets as well as community sanitary complexes in gram panchayats to cover the needs of the floating population and large congregations in gram panchayats such as melas/tourist places/religious places.
4. The strategy also speaks about **potential collaborations with development partners**, civil society and inter-government partnerships, and also highlights innovative models for sanitation financing.
5. **Gram panchayats will be made the centre of activity and operations** and will play a key role in ensuring the operation and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure.
6. **Composting biowaste** will be encouraged at the household level and the community level.
7. At the **district level, model bio-gas plants** will be initiated with funding support from the government
8. **Segregation of waste at the source in villages** will be a major push of the strategy, especially in relation to handling plastic waste.

9. Gram panchayats will be responsible for collection of plastic waste at household levels and will also be responsible for its storage and transportation to a material recovery facility at the block level
10. Faecal sludge management is a key component of ODF sustainability activities, for which existing rural and urban sewage treatment plants will be employed.
11. Trenching will be promoted in remote villages and faecal sludge treatment plants will be set up for clusters of villages.

## ERADICATION OF MALARIA

# HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*

### IN NEWS

*A report in 'The Lancet' concludes that it is possible to eradicate malaria as early as 2050 or within a generation through right strategies and sufficient funding.*

### DETAILS

- Since 2000, **global malaria incidence and death rates declined** by 36% and 60%, respectively. Today, more than half of the world's countries are malaria-free.
- However, Malaria **cases are rising in 55 countries** in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- **Highest incidence rates:** Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo accounts for 36 % of global cases.
- Analyses indicate that socioeconomic and environmental trends, together with improved coverage of malaria interventions, will help to eradicate malaria as early as 2050.
- To achieve eradication by 2050, the report identifies 3 ways to accelerate the decline in malaria cases,
  1. The world must improve implementation of malaria control programmes.
  2. The world must develop and roll out innovative new tools to overcome the biological challenges to eradication.

- 3. Malaria-endemic countries and donors must provide the financial investment needed.

## TB INDIA REPORT 2019

# HEALTH



### IN NEWS

*In an effort to reach out to every tuberculosis (TB) patient in the country, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched 'TB Harega, Desh Jeetega' campaign in New Delhi. Along with the campaign government also launched 'National TB Prevalence Survey', the country's largest-ever conducted TB prevalence survey and also released the TB India Report 2019.*

*The government initiatives are in line with country's intended target of becoming TB-free India before 2025. The global target to eliminate TB worldwide is 2030.*

### TB HAREGA DESH JEETEGA' CAMPAIGN

- The campaign will work on **3 pillars**- *Clinical approach, Public health component and Active community participation.*
- The **supporting aspect of campaign includes**- *patient support, private sector engagement, political and administrative commitment at all levels.*
- The government will **ensure that all patients, at private/public hospitals, receive free-of-cost and high-quality TB care.**

### FINDINGS OF TB INDIA REPORT 2019

- The report **showed a 16% increase in the number of cases in 2018** as compared to the previous year.
- The report said 21.5 lakh TB cases were notified to the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) in 2018; **India accounted for a quarter of the Global TB burden** with an estimated 27 lakh new cases in the year.

- Of the total notifications, 25% (5.4 lakh) cases were from the private sector; a 40% increase over last year.
- Among the notified, treatment was initiated for about 19.1 lakh cases (90%) across both public and private sectors. The majority of the affected individuals (89%) were in the age group 15-69
- TB is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality among people living with HIV. The mortality in this group is very high, and 11,000 people with HIV die every year due to TB. Nearly 25% of all deaths among people living with HIV are estimated to be due to TB. The report said people living with HIV are at 21 times higher risk of developing TB
- India is the **third highest HIV-burden country** in the world, with an adult prevalence of 0.22%.

### SOME TB CONTROL PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

1. **Nikshay**: an online tuberculosis reporting system for medical practitioners and clinical establishments was set up.
2. **Standards for TB Care in India (STCI)** is an initiative to introduce uniform standards for TB care in all sectors.
3. **Anti-TB drug Bedaquiline** was introduced in 2016 under Conditional Access Programme (CAP) to improve outcomes of drug resistant TB treatment
4. In 2018, Indian government launched **Joint Effort for Elimination of Tuberculosis (JEET)**, to increase the reporting of TB cases by the private sector.
5. **Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program** is the state-run tuberculosis control initiative of the Government of India. RNTCP incorporates the principles of directly observed treatment-short course (**DOTS**).
6. **National level committee** had been formed that included membership from 17 ministries and also, department of post and department of financial services have supported expansion of TB services across the country.



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### MCQS

**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

- Highest incidence rates of Malaria are in Ghana and Niger.
- Global eradication of malaria is estimated to be achieved by 2050.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

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

**Q2. Consider the following statements:**

- India accounts for third of the Global TB burden.
- Mortality due to TB is highest among HIV infected people.
- Nikshay is an online tuberculosis reporting system for medical practitioners and clinical establishments.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only              (b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 2 only              (d) All of the above

**Q3. Consider the following statements:**

- ODF Plus envisages that everyone uses a toilet and every village has access to solid and liquid waste management.
- In Rural Sanitation Strategy (2019-2029), the focus areas will be biodegradable and organic waste (kitchen and green waste), plastics, greywater management and black water or faecal sludge management.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

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

**Q4. Consider the following statements:**

- According to WHO guidelines, a daily iodine intake of 150 microgram is required to prevent iodine deficiency disorders.
- Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland are the worst performers in the consumption of iodised salt.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

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

**Q5. Consider the following statements:**

- Silicosis is an incurable condition with its potential to cause permanent physical disability.
- Silica may not be noticed because silica is odourless, non-irritant and does not cause any immediate health effects.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

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

### DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Highlight the role of district administration, panchayats, NGOs and community in achieving the targets of Rural Sanitation Strategy.
- Highlight the major efforts taken for the eradication of TB in India by the year 2015.

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

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# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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

## MAPPING DISEASE BURDEN IN INDIA

#DISEASE

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

The Indian  
EXPRESS

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

[nhm.gov.in](http://nhm.gov.in)

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

[mohfw.gov.in](http://mohfw.gov.in)

### IN NEWS

Recently, India has embarked on a large-scale plan to screen all children for leprosy and tuberculosis. An estimated 25 crore children below the age of 18 will be screened for the two infectious diseases, and if a person is suspected to have either of the two, s/he will be sent to a higher centre for confirmation. The existing Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) infrastructure will be used for the screening.

**Leprosy:** It is a chronic infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*. It usually affects the skin and peripheral nerves, but has a wide range of clinical manifestations. The disease is **characterised by a long incubation period** that is generally 5-7 years. It is a **leading cause of permanent physical disability**. Timely diagnosis and treatment of cases, before nerve damage has occurred, is the most effective way of preventing disability due to leprosy.

**TB:** It is caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, is one of the most common communicable diseases in India, its transmission fuelled by unhygienic, crowded living conditions. It is said that most Indians carry the bacterium and the infection flares up when their immunity levels are low, like when they are malnourished or suffering from conditions like AIDS in which the body's immune system is compromised.

- Both diseases are infectious and India has a substantial burden — its tuberculosis burden is the highest in the world.
- For TB, **India's malnutrition burden** is an additional risk factor.
- India **eliminated leprosy in 2005** — WHO defines elimination as an incidence rate of **less than one case per 10,000 population**.
- All states except **Chhattisgarh** and **the Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli** have eliminated leprosy. However, 1.15 lakh to 1.2 lakh new leprosy cases are still detected every year.
- For tuberculosis, the global **Sustainable Development Goal target** is to end the disease by 2030. However, India has advanced its mandate to eradicate TB by 2025.

### RELATED INFORMATION: RASHTRIYA BAL SWASTHYA KARYAKRAM (RBSK)

- Launched in **2013** under the **National Health Mission**, RBSK is focused on preventing disease and disability in children.
- It is an important initiative aiming at **early identification** and **early intervention** for children from birth to 18 years to cover **4 'D's viz. Defects at birth, Deficiencies, Diseases, Development delays including disability**.
- Under the programme, the **0-6 years age group** will be specifically managed **at District Early Intervention Centre (DEIC)** level while for 6-18 years age group, management of conditions will be done through existing public health facilities.
- Once the child is screened and referred from any of these points of identification, it would be ensured that the necessary treatment/intervention is delivered at zero cost to the family.
- Until now, **neither leprosy nor TB** were a part of the programme.

## TB DIAGNOSIS KITS

#DISEASES #TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*To address the TB diagnostic challenges, a multi-institutional team has developed three cost-effective kits that improve the sensitivity of smear microscopy, enable transport of sputum samples at ambient temperature without using bio-safe containers, and extract DNA for diagnosing drug-resistant TB. Hence the three kits developed are- TB Detect, TB Concentration & Transport, and TB DNA Extraction.*

- The TB Detect kit is **for diagnosis** using LED fluorescence microscopy.
- The TB Concentration & Transport, and the TB DNA Extraction kits together are for **detection of drug-resistance**.
- The TB concentration & transport kit now makes it easy and simple to transport samples — transport it in sealed covers at ambient temperature.

## ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IN E. COLI

#ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE #DISEASES

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE DownToEarth

### IN NEWS

*The researchers from Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune have taken steps to study how resistance to the antibiotic rifampicin evolves in E. coli under two conditions — first, when the antibiotic is present in low or high concentrations, and second, when there is steady or pulsed supply of antibiotics. Also, according to a recent study Cholera bacteria have become highly drug-resistant.*

### HOW DOES ANTI-BIOTIC RESISTANCE DEVELOP?

- Bacteria develop drug resistance both when they are within the body and outside.

- The **intake of drugs stopped mid-way** could lead to the development of drug resistance.
- **Low doses of such drugs available intermittently in the environment** can also cause drug resistance to evolve in the bacteria.
- According to studies, the process of the development of drug resistance is rapid. E.Coli can evolve resistance to rifampicin within a few generations of drug exposure.
- When E.Coli is exposed to low concentration of anti-biotics it form **biofilm**. These are dangerous as biofilms are themselves a major challenge for hospitals.
- They found that biofilm formation was mediated by the activation of particular gene called the **fim operon promoter**. Activation of the gene allowed the expression of a type of fimbriae — thread-like structures that help a bacterium attach itself to another bacterium. These are important in the formation of biofilms.

### ANTI-BIOTIC RESISTANCE IN INDIA

- The misuse and overuse of antibiotics is rampant in India, resulting in super bugs that are resistant to all known types of drugs. The major cause of the increase in anti-biotic resistance are **unnecessary prescription of drugs, lack of awareness among patients, by excessive usage on livestock and by poor sanitation**.
- Poor sanitation, corruption and low public health spending have a bigger role in pushing up drug-resistant infections in low- and middle-income countries.
- In the story of co-evolution and natural selection, bacteria have evolved to resist the threat posed by these drugs. Antibiotic resistance is a worldwide problem. But experts fear that India's excessive antibiotic usage is now leading to a powerful never-before-seen mutation within bacteria.

**What needs to be done?** Providing sanitation, clean water and good governance, increasing public health expenditure and better regulating the private health sector are all necessary to reduce antimicrobial resistance.

## CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES (CVD)

#DISEASE



### IN NEWS

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) continues to be the leading cause of death across the world, but there are significant variations between rich and poor nations. CVDs are caused by disorders of the heart and blood vessels, and includes coronary heart disease (heart attacks), cerebrovascular disease (stroke), raised blood pressure (hypertension), peripheral artery disease, rheumatic heart disease, congenital heart disease and heart failure.

- In low income countries, including India, death from cardiac disease was three times that of cancer.
- According to research **indoor or household air pollution** has been identified as a key cause of CVD.
- The high mortality in poorer countries is not due to a higher burden of risk factors, but likely other factors including lower quality and less health care.
- While in **High income countries** death from cancer is twice that of CVD.
- In another study, researchers have established indoor air pollution as an **emerging source** of risk for cardiovascular disease.

### COMMON MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CVD

- These are physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol and other habit-forming substances.
- The prevalence of heart disease and stroke has increased by over 50% from 1990 to 2016 in India. The contribution of these diseases to total deaths and disease burden in the country has almost doubled in the past 25 years. Heart disease now is the leading individual cause of disease burden in India, and stroke is the fifth leading cause.

## CONGO FEVER

#DISEASE



### IN NEWS

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) had confirmed that few persons have been tested positive for Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF), or Congo fever, in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

### ABOUT CONGO FEVER

- It is a widespread disease caused by a **tick-borne virus** (Nairovirus) of the Bunyaviridae family.
- The CCHF **virus causes** severe viral haemorrhagic fever outbreaks, with a case fatality rate of 10–40%.
- CCHF infection **spreads by ticks** found on animals, mainly sheep, cattle, buffalo and goats.
- The **hosts** of the CCHF virus include a wide range of wild and domestic animals such as cattle, sheep and goats.
- The CCHF virus is **transmitted to people** either by tick bites or through contact with infected animal blood or tissues during and immediately after slaughter
- **Human-to-human transmission** can occur resulting from close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected persons.
- The disease is **endemic** in Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East and Asian countries.
- Onset of **symptoms** is sudden, with fever, myalgia, (muscle ache), dizziness, neck pain and stiffness, backache, headache, sore eyes and photophobia (sensitivity to light).
- The **antiviral drug** ribavirin has been used to treat CCHF infection with apparent benefit.

### CONTROL OF CONGO FEVER

- Health-care workers caring for patients with suspected or confirmed CCHF, or handling specimens from them must be cautious.
- Seek to eliminate or control tick infestations on animals or in stables and barns.
- In the absence of a vaccine, the only way to reduce infection in people is by raising awareness of the risk factors.

## CONTROLLING HEPATITIS

### B

#DISEASE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE nhp.gov.in

#### IN NEWS

Recently, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand became the first four countries in the World Health Organization's Southeast Asia region to have successfully controlled hepatitis B. The virus is said to be controlled when the disease prevalence is reduced to less than 1% among children less than five years of age. In India, according to the Health Ministry, as on February 2019, an estimated 40 million people in India were infected with hepatitis B.

#### HEPATITIS B INFECTION

- Hepatitis is a term used to describe inflammation (swelling) of the liver.
- It can be caused due to viral infection or when liver is exposed to harmful substances such as alcohol.
- The disease may occur with limited or no symptoms, but often leads to jaundice, anorexia (poor appetite) and malaise.
- Hepatitis is of 2 types: acute and chronic.
- Hepatitis B infection at a young age turns chronic, causing over 1,00,000 premature deaths annually from liver cirrhosis or liver cancer.
- The most common types of hepatitis are:
  - Hepatitis A- It is the most common type of viral hepatitis. It is generally seen in the areas where sanitation and sewage disposal are poor.
  - Hepatitis B - caused by the hepatitis B virus. It is common in India and other parts of the world, such as China, Central and Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
  - Hepatitis C- It is particularly concentrated in the blood, so it is usually transmitted through blood-to-blood contact.
- One of the major reason of prevalence of this disease is the low coverage of birth dose vaccination.

## AVIAN INFLUENZA (H5N1)

#DISEASES

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS SECONDARY SOURCE World Health Organisations

#### IN NEWS

The OIE-World Organisation for Animal Health has recently declared India free from Avian Influenza virus H5N1. However, the status will last only till another outbreak is reported. Avian Influenza was first reported from Hongkong in 1997. Since then, there have been many outbreaks across the world. India too has had multiple outbreaks since 2005. This declaration is important not just from the poultry industry standpoint, but also because humans can contact the disease from animals.

#### HOW H5N1 AFFECTS HUMANS?

- H5N1 is a type of influenza virus that causes a highly infectious, severe respiratory disease in birds called **avian influenza (or "bird flu")**. Human cases of H5N1 avian influenza occur occasionally, but it is difficult to transmit the infection from person to person. When people do become infected, the mortality rate is about 60%.
- **Spread:** Almost all cases of H5N1 infection in people have been associated with close contact with infected live or dead birds, or H5N1-contaminated environments. The virus does not infect humans easily, and spread from person to person appears to be unusual. There is no evidence that the disease can be spread to people through properly prepared and thoroughly cooked food.
- The **symptoms** of H5N1 infection may include fever (often high fever, > 38°C) and malaise, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches. Other early symptoms may include abdominal pain, chest pain and diarrhoea. The infection may progress quickly to severe respiratory illness (for example, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pneumonia, Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome) and neurologic changes (altered mental status or seizures).
- **Treatment:** In most cases, avian influenza in humans develops into a serious disease that should be treated promptly in the hospital and may require intensive care, where available. The antiviral medicine oseltamivir can reduce the severity of illness and prevent death, and should be used in all cases.

# VAPING DEVICES

#TECHNOLOGY #DISEASES

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

The Indian  
EXPRESS

SECONDARY  
SOURCE

THE HINDU

## Up in smoke

Wednesday's move follows an advisory by the government in 2018 to all States to consider banning e-cigarettes

▪ e-cigarettes are brought from China and other countries and are not manufactured in India. They are also available online

▪ WHO too urged member countries to take appropriate steps. It does not endorse e-cigarettes as cessation aids

▪ 16 States & one Union Territory have already banned them. The Indian Council of Medical Research, in a recent paper, had recommended a complete ban on them



▪ They are marketed as being safer than conventional cigarettes but this is false. Available literature suggests that they may act as gateway products to induce non-smokers to nicotine-use

### IN NEWS

*The growing use of battery-powered e-cigarettes — the activity known as vaping — has provoked one of the most robust debates among public-health specialists in years. Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved ban on e-cigarettes.*

**Vaping:** It's a **way to ingest nicotine**, the addictive alkaloid present in tobacco, without the smoke and tar that comes from burning tobacco. The vaping device contains a **battery** that heats a liquid spiked with nicotine, producing a vapor the user inhales. Vaping refills come in tasty flavours such as mango and cream.

- Contrary to the belief that using e-cigarettes can help smokers wean themselves off traditional cigarettes and onto a habit less risky for their health, now it appears that vaping is making more and more people sick.
- A **mysterious lung disease** that has been linked to inhaling vapor has killed six people and injured hundreds of more people across the U.S. this summer.
- According to reports, the consumption of these forms of cigarettes have shown negative health impacts.
- **Common concerns:** Attracting new young people into a nicotine habit. There isn't enough long-term data to make

a definitive conclusion that vaping is a safer choice than lighting up. E-cigarette aerosols can **damage tissue** and cause disease, including cancer. The **effects on humans of nicotine** are not well-studied, although adolescents appear to be particularly vulnerable to it.

### PENALTIES IMPOSED RECENTLY

- Any production, manufacturing, import, export, transport, sale (including online sale), distribution or advertisement (including online advertisement) of e-cigarettes shall be a cognisable offence punishable with imprisonment of up to one year, or fine up to ₹1 lakh, or both for the first offence; and imprisonment of up to three years and fine up to ₹5 lakh for a subsequent offence.
- **Storage of electronic-cigarettes** shall also be punishable with imprisonment of up to 6 months or a fine of up to ₹50,000 or both.

# QUANTUM SUPREMACY

#TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*Google had claimed to have achieved 'quantum supremacy'. In a line, it means that researchers at Google had solved a really difficult problem in seconds with the help of quantum computers which a supercomputer could not.*

### WHAT ARE QUANTUM COMPUTERS?

- Quantum computers work differently from the classical computers. By exploiting the principles of quantum mechanics, they can easily tackle computational problems that may be tough for the classical computer as the size of the numbers and number of inputs involved grows bigger.
- Quantum computers do not look like desktops or laptops that we associate the word 'computer' with. Instead (and there are only a handful of them) they resemble the air-conditioned server rooms of many offices or the stacks of central processing units from desktops of yore that are connected by ungainly tangled wires and heaped in freezing rooms.
- **Conventional computers process information in 'bits' or 1s and 0s**, following classical physics under which our

computers can process a '1' or a '0' at a time. The world's most powerful super computer today can juggle 148,000 trillion operations in a second and requires about 9000 IBM CPUs connected in a particular combination to achieve this feat.

- **Quantum computers compute in 'qubits'** (or quantum bits). They **exploit the properties of quantum mechanics**, the science that governs how matter behaves on the atomic scale. **In this scheme of things, processors can be a 1 and a 0 simultaneously**, a state called **quantum superposition**. While this accelerates the speed of computation, a machine with less than a 100 qubits can solve problems with a lot of data that are even theoretically beyond the capabilities of the most powerful supercomputers. Because of quantum superposition, a quantum computer — if it works to plan — can mimic several classical computers working in parallel.
- The ideas governing quantum computers have been around since the 1990s but actual machines have been around since 2011, most notably built by Canadian company D-Wave Systems.

#### BENEFITS

- The speed and capability of classical supercomputers are limited by energy requirements. Along with these they also need more physical space. That translates into reduced processors and reduced energy.
- A quantum computer can solve problem rapidly because it can attack complex problems that are beyond the scope of a classical computer. The basic **advantage is speed** as it is able to **simulate several classical computers working in parallel**. Several encryption systems used in banking and security applications are premised on computers being unable to handle mathematical problems that are computationally demanding beyond a limit. Quantum computers, in theory, can surpass those limits.

#### IS INDIA WORKING ON QUANTUM COMPUTING?

- There are no quantum computers in India yet. In 2018, the Department of Science & Technology unveiled a programme called **Quantum-Enabled Science & Technology (QuEST)** and committed to investing ₹80 crore over the next three years to accelerate research.
- The plan is to have a quantum computer built in India within the next decade.

## FINGERPRINT OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE

#SPACE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE

NASA

#### IN NEWS

*On the basis of decade of observations of the Earth's atmosphere taken by the SCISAT satellite, **astronomers at Canada's McGill University have made a "fingerprint" for the Earth, which could be used to identify a potentially life sustaining planet beyond the solar system. SCISAT satellite aims to help scientists understand the depletion of the Earth's ozone layer by looking at particles in the atmosphere as sunlight passes through them.***

*Using the information obtained from satellite scientist have constructed a transit spectrum of Earth — a **detail on the fingerprint-like unique composition of our planet's atmosphere.** A very promising solar system that might hold Earth-like planets is the TRAPPIST-1*

**Bio-signatures leading to fingerprint:** It is something (such as a chemical compound, isotope, or cellular component) that indicates or suggests **the presence of a biological process indicative of life.** The fingerprint includes the simultaneous occurrence of both ozone and methane, which happens only when there is an organic source of these compounds on the planet.

#### WHAT IS TRAPPIST-1?

- It is **solar system**, which is 40 light years away, houses seven planets, three or four of which are in the goldilocks zone. The goldilocks zone is the place around a star where the temperature is just right, and is not too hot and not too cold, allowing liquid water to exist on the planet.
- TRAPPIST-1 is a nearby red dwarf star, which makes its planets excellent targets for transit spectroscopy.
- They are mostly made of rock.
- They are likely older than our solar system.
- The farthest one could be icy.

# ASTEROID IMPACT DEFLECTION ASSESSMENT (AIDA) MISSION

#SPACE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY  
SOURCEThe Indian  
EXPRESSSECONDARY  
SOURCE

NASA

**IN NEWS**

Scientists have developed AIDA, a mission to test their expertise to avoid asteroid hit, that is widely acknowledged as one of the causes that may lead to extinction of the earth.

**WHAT ARE ASTEROIDS?**

- These are small, rocky objects that orbit the sun. There are lots of asteroids in our solar system. Most of them live in the main asteroid belt—a region between the orbits of **Mars and Jupiter**.
- Asteroids are **left** over from the formation of our solar system.
- **Utility:** Since asteroids formed at the same time as other objects in our solar system, these space rocks can give scientists lots of information about the history of planets and the sun.
- In 2016, NASA launched the **OSIRIS-REx** spacecraft to study an asteroid near Earth named Benu.

**ASTEROID IMPACT DEFLECTION ASSESSMENT (AIDA)  
MISSION**

- It is an ambitious double-spacecraft mission to deflect an asteroid in space, to prove the technique as a viable method of planetary defence. The mission includes **NASA** and the **European Space Agency (ESA)**.
- The target of the mission is the smaller of two bodies in the “double Didymos asteroids” that are in orbit between Earth and Mars. **Didymos is a near-Earth asteroid system.**
- The project aims to **deflect the orbit of the smaller body** through an impact by one spacecraft. Then a second spacecraft will survey the crash site and gather the maximum possible data on the effect of this collision

**TOOLS OF THE MISSION**

- In order to execute the mission NASA is building the **Double Asteroid Impact Test (DART)** spacecraft for launch in summer 2021.
- It is planned to collide with the target in September **2022**.
- Flying along with DART will be an Italian-made miniature **CubeSat**, called **LICIACube**, to record the moment of impact.
- ESA's contribution is a mission called **Hera**, which will perform a close-up survey of the post-impact asteroid, acquiring measurements such as the asteroid's mass and detailed crater shape.
- Hera will also deploy a pair of CubeSats for close-up asteroid surveys and the very first radar probe of an asteroid
- All this would allow researchers to model the **efficiency of the collision**.

## EXOPLANET K2-18B

#SPACE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY  
SOURCEThe Indian  
EXPRESSSECONDARY  
SOURCE

NASA

**IN NEWS**

Astronomers have for the first time discovered water in the atmosphere of an exoplanet K2-18b with Earth-like temperatures that could support life. K2-18b, which is eight times the mass of Earth, is now the only planet orbiting a star outside the Solar System, or ‘exoplanet’, known to have both water and temperatures that could be potentially habitable. The planet orbits the cool dwarf star K2-18, which is about 110 light years from Earth in the Leo constellation.

**About the discovery:** The discovery is the first successful atmospheric detection for an exoplanet orbiting in its star's ‘**habitable zone**’, at a distance where water can exist in liquid form. The team used archive data from 2016 and 2017 captured by the ESA/NASA Hubble Space Telescope. The results revealed the **molecular signature of water vapour**, also indicating the presence of hydrogen and helium in the planet's atmosphere.

Further, NASA's TESS mission is expected to detect hundreds more super-Earths in the coming years. The next generation of space telescopes, including the James Webb Space



Telescope, will be able to characterize exoplanet atmospheres in more detail.

**MORE ABOUT K2-18B**

- It is an **exoplanet eight times** the mass of Earth orbits a star. It was discovered in 2015 by NASA's Kepler spacecraft.
- K2-18b is now the **only planet orbiting a star** outside the Solar System **known to have** both water and temperatures that could be potentially habitable.
- K2-18b is not 'Earth 2.0' as it is significantly heavier and has a different atmospheric composition.
- The surface gravity on this planet would be significantly higher than on our planet.

## CHANDRAYAAN-2

#SPACE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS  
SECONDARY SOURCE ISRO

**IN NEWS**

*The Indian mission could not successfully land its lander Vikram. A success would have made India the fourth country to place a spacecraft on moon after the then USSR, the U.S. and China. Also, India would have been the first country to reach close to the lunar south pole. The orbiter was precisely placed in its orbit and its precise launch and mission management have ensured a long life of almost seven years instead of the planned one year.*

**ABOUT THE MISSION**

- The mission was designed to expand the lunar scientific knowledge through detailed study of topography, seismography, mineral identification and distribution, surface chemical composition, thermo-physical characteristics of top soil and composition of the tenuous lunar atmosphere, leading to a new understanding of the origin and evolution of the Moon.
- The mission comprised an **orbiter, a lander and rover**.
- The Orbiter **placed in its intended orbit** around the Moon will enrich our understanding of the moon's evolution and mapping of the minerals and water

molecules in Polar regions, using its eight state-of-the-art scientific instruments.

- The Orbiter camera is the highest resolution camera (0.3 m) in any lunar mission so far and will provide **high resolution images** which will be immensely useful to the global scientific community.

**WHY ARE WE GOING TO THE MOON?**

1. The Moon is the **closest cosmic body** at which space discovery can be attempted and documented.
2. It is also a promising test bed to demonstrate technologies required for deep-space missions.
3. Chandrayaan-2 aims for **enhancing our understanding of the Moon**, stimulate the advancement of technology.
4. Moon provides the best linkage to Earth's early history. It offers an undisturbed historical record of the inner Solar system environment.
5. The Lunar South pole is especially interesting because of the lunar surface area that remains in shadow is much larger than that at the North Pole.
6. There could be a possibility of presence of water in permanently shadowed areas around it.
7. In addition, South Pole region has craters that are cold traps and contain a fossil record of the early Solar System.

## GAGANYAAN MISSION

#SPACE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE ISRO

**IN NEWS**

*The Gaganyaan programme is an indigenous mission that would take Indian astronauts to space. The mission will be a turning point in India's space journey.*

**ABOUT THE MISSION**

- Gaganyaan is an Indian crewed orbital spacecraft that is intended to send 3 astronauts to space for a minimum of seven days by **2022**. It will be for the **first time that India** will launch its manned mission to space, making the country fourth in line to have sent a human to space.

- The spacecraft, which is being developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), consists of a **service module** and a **crew module**, collectively known as the **Orbital Module**.
- Isro's **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV Mk III**, the three-stage heavy-lift launch vehicle, will be used to launch Gaganyaan.

- The mission **will enable ISRO to** achieve higher levels of reliability in launch and satellite technology.
- The spacecraft will be placed in a **low earth orbit** of 300-400 km.
- India has signed agreements with **Russia** and **France** for cooperation on the Gaganyaan mission.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### MCQS

**Q1. Consider the following statements related to Gaganyaan Mission :-**

1. Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV Mk III, the three-stage heavy-lift launch vehicle, will be used to launch the mission.
2. If successful, it will be for the first time that India will launch its manned mission to space, making the country fourth in line to have sent a human to space.

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

**Q2. Consider the following statements related to bio-signatures:**

1. The fingerprint includes the simultaneous occurrence of both ozone and helium.
2. Observations of the Earth's atmosphere taken by the SCISAT satellite helped in developing a "fingerprint" for the Earth, which could be used to identify a potentially life sustaining planet beyond the solar system

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q3. Consider the following statements related to TRAPPIST-1:**

1. It is solar system, which is 40 light years away and houses seven planets, three or four of which are in the goldilocks zone.
2. It is nearby red dwarf star, which makes its planets excellent targets for transit spectroscopy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q4. Consider the following statements about Congo Fever:**

1. It is a widespread disease caused by a tick-borne virus Nairovirus of the Bunyaviridae family.
2. The hosts of the CCHF virus include a wide range of wild and domestic animals such as cattle, sheep and goats.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q5. Consider the following statements related Asteroid Impact Deflection Assessment (AIDA) Mission:**



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# GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

# GS PAPER (PRELIMS) AND GS PAPER I & III (MAIN)

## SINGLE USE PLASTIC

# POLLUTION

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE | United Nations Environment Programme

### IN NEWS

*India has imposed a nationwide ban on plastic bags, cups and straws on Oct. 2nd, in its most sweeping measure yet to stamp out single-use plastics from cities and villages that rank among the world's most polluted. In this background let us understand various aspects of the single use plastics issue.*

### THE AGE OF PLASTICS -WHY WE NEED TO CHANGE?

Since the 1950s, the production of plastic has outpaced that of almost every other material. Much of the plastic we produce is designed to be thrown away after being used only once. As a result, plastic packaging accounts for about half of the plastic waste in the world. Most of this waste is generated in Asia, while America, Japan and the European Union are the world's largest producers of plastic packaging waste per capita.

Only **nine per cent of the nine billion tonnes of plastic the world has ever produced has been recycled**. Most ends up in landfills, dumps or in the environment. If current consumption patterns and waste management practices continue, then by 2050 there will be around 12 billion tonnes of plastic litter in landfills and the environment.

Most plastics do not biodegrade. Instead, they slowly break down into smaller fragments known as micro-plastics. Studies suggest that plastic bags and containers made of expanded **polystyrene foam** (commonly referred to as "**Styrofoam**") can take up to thousands of years to decompose, contaminating soil and water.

The most common single-use plastics found in the environment are, in order of magnitude, cigarette butts, plastic drinking bottles, plastic bottle caps, food wrappers, plastic grocery bags, plastic lids, straws and stirrers, other types of plastic bags, and foam take-away containers.

### IMPACT OF PLASTIC WASTE

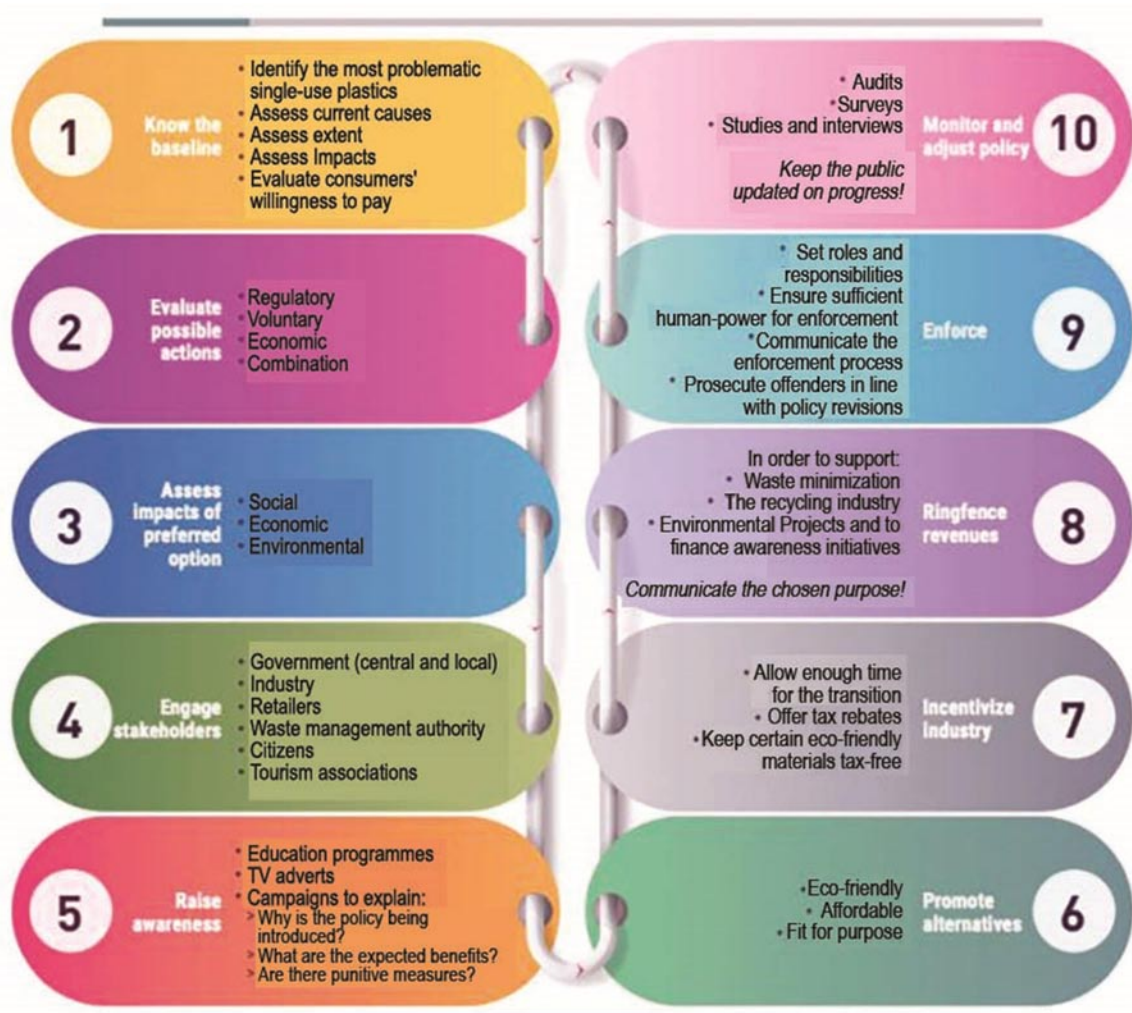
- **Plastic bags can block waterways** and exacerbate natural disasters.
- By **clogging sewers** and providing breeding grounds for mosquitoes and pests, plastic bags can increase the transmission of vector-borne diseases like malaria.
- High concentrations of plastic materials, particularly plastic bags, have been found blocking the airways and stomachs of hundreds of species.
- Plastic bags are often ingested by turtles and dolphins who mistake them for food.
- There is evidence that the toxic chemicals added during the manufacture of plastic transfer to animal tissue, eventually entering the human food chain.
- **Styrofoam products, which contain carcinogenic chemicals like styrene and benzene**, are highly toxic if ingested, damaging the nervous systems, lungs and

reproductive organs. The toxins in Styrofoam containers can leach into food and drinks.

- Disposing of plastic waste by burning it in open-air pits releases **harmful gases like furan and dioxin**.
- The **economic damage** caused by plastic waste is vast. Plastic litter in the Asia-Pacific region alone costs its tourism, fishing and shipping industries \$1.3 billion per

► **UNEP 10 step roadmap for the governments**

year. In Europe, cleaning plastic waste from coasts and beaches costs about €630 million per year. Studies suggest that the total economic damage to the world’s marine ecosystem caused by plastic amounts to at least \$13 billion every year



- 1. Target the most problematic single-use plastics** by conducting a baseline assessment to identify the most problematic single use plastics, as well as the current causes, extent and impacts of their mismanagement.
- 2. Consider the best actions to tackle the problem** (e.g. through regulatory, economic, awareness, voluntary actions), given the country's socio-economic standing and considering their appropriateness in addressing the specific problems identified.

- 3. Assess the potential** social, economic and environmental impacts (positive and negative) of the preferred short-listed instruments/actions. *How will the poor be affected? What impact will the preferred course of action have on different sectors and industries?*
- 4. Identify and engage key stakeholder groups** – retailers, consumers, industry representatives, local government, manufacturers, civil society, environmental groups, tourism associations – to ensure broad buy-in. Evidence-

based studies are also necessary to defeat opposition from the plastics industry.

5. **Raise public awareness** about the harm caused by single-used plastics. Clearly explain the decision and any punitive measures that will follow.
6. **Promote alternatives.** Before the ban or levy comes into force, assess the availability of alternatives. Ensure that the preconditions for their uptake in the market are in place. **Provide economic incentives** to encourage the uptake of eco-friendly and fit-for-purpose alternatives that do not cause more harm. Support can include tax rebates, research and development funds, technology incubation, public-private partnerships, and support to projects that recycle single-use items and turn waste into a resource that can be used again. **Reduce or abolish taxes on the import of materials used to make alternatives.**
7. **Provide incentives to industry** by introducing tax rebates or other conditions to support its transition. Governments will face resistance from the plastics industry, including importers and distributors of plastic packaging. Give them time to adapt.
8. **Use revenues** collected from taxes or levies on single-use plastics to maximize the public good. Support

environmental projects or boost local recycling with the funds. Create jobs in the plastic recycling sector with seed funding.

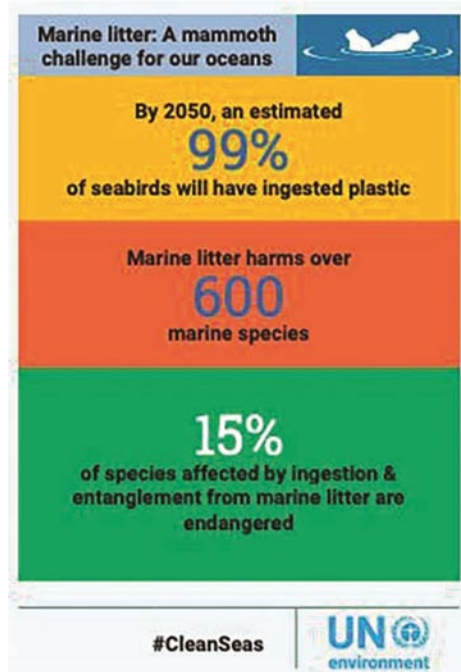
9. **Enforce** the measure chosen effectively, by making sure that there is clear allocation of roles and responsibilities.

10. **Monitor and adjust** the chosen measure if necessary and update the public on progress.

**BIODEGRADABLE PLASTICS: ISSUES**

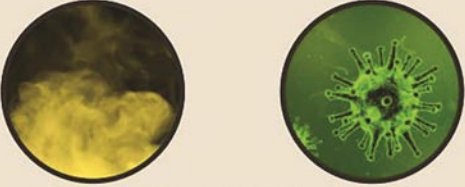
- In an effort to reduce plastic pollution, many governments have outlawed conventional plastic bags, allowing only the use and production of “biodegradable” bags.
- Often “biodegradable” plastic items (including single-use plastic bags and containers) break down completely only if exposed to prolonged high temperatures above 50°C (122°F).
- Such conditions are met in incineration plants, but very rarely in the environment.
- Therefore, even bioplastics derived from renewable sources (such as corn starch, cassava roots, or sugarcane<sup>33</sup>) or from bacterial fermentation of sugar or lipids (PHA<sup>34</sup>) do not automatically degrade in the environment and especially not in the ocean

**SOME INFOGRAPHICS**



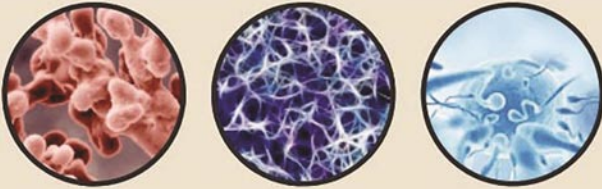
**Negative impact of Styrofoam on our health**

Many of our food containers are made of foamed plastic or Styrofoam. These items contain styrene and benzene, which are

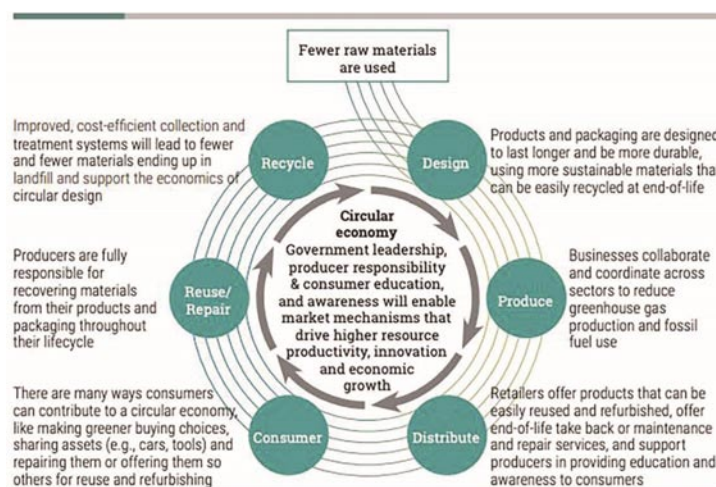


Toxic and Carcinogenic

They adversely impact our



Respiratory system      Nervous system      Reproductive system



## OUTCOME OF COP14

#ENVIRONMENT # CONSERVATION

**PRIMARY SOURCE** THE HINDU **SECONDARY SOURCE** DownToEarth

**SECONDARY SOURCE** UNCCD

### IN NEWS

With reference to the COP14 conducted on the theme to "Restore land, sustain future" hosted by India, and covered in September FOCUS, let us now understand about the outcome of the conference.

#### ► Main points of Delhi declaration are:

- 1. Achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030.** The participating countries agreed that land degradation is a major economic, social and environmental problem, and welcomed strengthening of the adoption of voluntary "land degradation neutrality" targets that include restoration of degraded land by 2030. (*Neutrality is defined by the UN as ensuring that enough land is available across the world to ensure a sustainable future.*)
- 2. A statement of Consensus:** While the New Delhi Declaration is a statement of consensus, the 35 decisions are legally binding on each the 197 signatories. Activities

would be carried out over the next two years and monitored by India, which has the presidency of COP till 2021.

- 3. Clear link between land restoration, biodiversity and climate change:** All countries recognized that desertification undermines health, development and prosperity in all regions, and were deeply concerned that the impacts would be felt most keenly by vulnerable people.
- 4. People First Approach:** We need to manage land restoration, so communities are not deprived of land rights. We need to put **people first**—women, children, health of people and create conditions of peace and prosperity.
- 5. Participation of Civil Society:** Participating countries were convinced that participation from civil society organizations, local governments and the private sector would be crucial to achieving the objectives of UNCCD. The document laid special emphasis on **community-driven transformative projects that are gender-sensitive** at local, national and regional levels to drive implementation.

### PROBLEM OF LAND DEGRADATION IN INDIA

India is facing a growing crisis of land degradation. Nearly **30% of her land area has been degraded** through

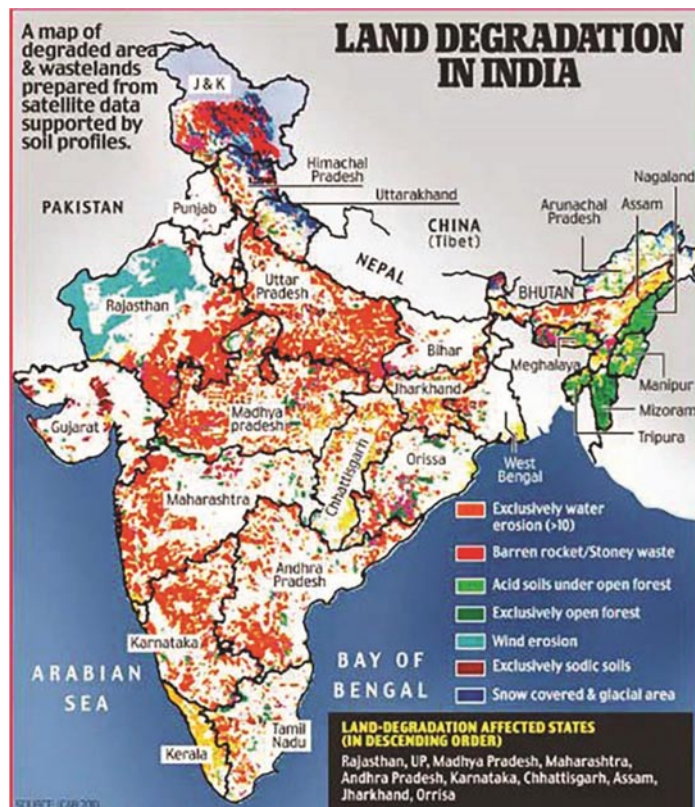
deforestation, over cultivation, soil erosion and depletion of wetlands. According to an estimate nearly **2.5% of India's GDP** is being wasted away every year due to land loss.

For countries like India that are highly vulnerable to climate change, land degradation is a critical issue. Degraded land loses its capacity to absorb carbon-dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), a greenhouse gas (GHG) that is the biggest factor in worsening global warming.

Over 600 million people risk the impact of climate change in India and if land degradation is not addressed, the problem could get more acute. The country is home to 18% of the world's population with only 2.4% of its land.

According to 'Special Report on Climate Change and Land', the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in order to stop land degradation, countries need to halt land-use change, work on forest conservation and step up land restoration. Some of the findings in the report have significant implications for India where forests and wetlands (mangroves, marshes and swamps) cover 23% and 5% of the country's geographical area, respectively, but are getting depleted fast.

**WHY INDIA SHOULD WORRY?**



Here are some findings about land and climate change from the latest IPCC report that have particular implications for India:

- **Overuse of chemical fertilizers:** About 23% of GHG emissions from human activities come from the overuse of chemical fertilisers, soil erosion, deforestation and change in land use, as mentioned earlier. Managing these resources is important as they are fast depleting.
- **India is losing its forest cover:** Forests are one of the most important solutions to climate change. India has lost 1.6 million hectare of forest cover over 18 years to 2018.
- **Construction in eco-sensitive zones:** Over 500 projects in India's protected areas and eco-sensitive zones were cleared by the National Board of Wildlife between June 2014 and May 2018.
- **Steep target for India:** To fight climate change the Indian government has pledged to get **33% of its geographical area under forest cover by 2022**, compared to the existing 24%. This would require the government to increase the forest cover by nearly 2% every year till 2022. Forest cover in India, however, increased only by 1% over two years to 2017.
- **Food Security:** Up to 60% of land in India is under cultivation contributing 14% to its GDP. It is one of the most vulnerable sectors in the country to be affected by increasing extreme weather events caused by global warming. Most affected are the small and marginal farmers owning less than two hectares of land, who make-up about 80% of the total farmers in India.
- **Wetlands:** Wetlands are critical in the fight against global warming, the IPCC report said, because they conserve "high-carbon ecosystems" that quickly absorb a high amount of carbon. Reclamation of degraded soils, afforestation and reforestation need "more time" to make similar impact. India's wetlands cover around 152,600 sq km, nearly 5% of the country's geographic area. But deforestation, climate change, water drainage, land encroachment and urban development are depleting these wetlands--every year, 2-3% of their total area is being lost across the country.
- **Water Scarcity:** The dryland population vulnerable to water stress and drought intensity is projected to reach 178 million under the most ideal conditions of 1.5 deg-C warming by 2050. The stressed population will increase to



220 million at 2 deg-C, and 270 million at 3 deg-C warming, said the IPCC report on land.

## SPECIAL CLIMATE SUMMIT AT UNGA

#CLIMATE CHANGE

PRIMARY  
SOURCE

The Indian  
EXPRESS

### IN NEWS

*UN Secretary General António Guterres convened a special Climate Action Summit, at the start of the annual General Assembly session, in a bid to nudge countries to do more to fight climate change.*

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SUMMIT

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres convened the 2019 Climate Action Summit to raise the global level of ambition to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and to galvanize action that can limit climate change to 2°C and even 1.5°C as science now asks.

The Secretary-General has called on all leaders to come up with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020, in line with **reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent** over the next decade, and **to net zero emissions by 2050**.

The Summit will serve as a public platform for leaders – Member States, as well as finance, business, civil society and local leaders from public and private sectors – who are ready to:

- **mobilize and raise political ambition** that will result in enhanced and irreversible commitments to action in national climate plans to significantly cut emissions; strengthen climate resilience; and making public and private finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development;
- **galvanize bottom-up action** from cities, regions, civil society, but also private sector;
- **contribute to the multi-stakeholder coalitions** that will develop ambitious solutions in the action areas of the Summit: global transition to renewable energy; sustainable and resilient infrastructures and cities; sustainable

agriculture and management of forests and oceans; resilience and adaptation to climate impacts; and alignment of public and private finance with a net zero economy.

### KEY THEMES AND ACTION AREAS AT THE SUMMIT

**Nine action portfolios** are recognized as having high potential to curb greenhouse gas emissions and increased global action on adaptation and resilience.

1. **Finance:** making public and private finance flows fully consistent with the decarbonisation of all priority sectors and advance resilience;
2. **Energy Transition:** accelerating the shift away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy, as well as making significant gains in energy efficiency;
3. **Industry Transition:** transforming industries such as oil and gas, steel, cement, chemicals, aviation, shipping and information technology;
4. **Nature-Based Solutions:** reducing emissions, increasing sink capacity and enhancing resilience within and across forestry, agriculture, ocean and food systems, including through biodiversity conservation, leveraging supply chains and technology;
5. **Infrastructure, cities and local action:** spurring bottom-up action and advancing mitigation and resilience commitments at local levels, with a focus on new commitments on low-emission buildings, mass transport and urban infrastructure; and resilience for the urban poor;
6. **Resilience and Adaptation:** advancing global efforts to address and manage the impacts and risks of climate change, particularly in those communities and nations most vulnerable.
7. **Youth and mobilization:** Promoting youth and public mobilization and propose solutions to the social and political challenges that are impeding ambitious climate action.
8. **The social transition:** Ensuring that all climate plans include concrete steps to ensure that transition fair and just and that people have access to the tangible benefits of climate action, including in health and in decent jobs;.
9. **Mitigation ambition:** Raising the stakes for the largest emitters to present commitments to significantly cut emissions in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions

by 45 per cent over the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050.

**HOW DOES THE SUMMIT RELATE TO OTHER GLOBAL CLIMATE EVENTS?**

- The Climate Action Summit is not part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process designed to oversee implementation of the Paris Agreement, nor is it an alternative to the UNFCCC.
- Rather, the Summit is being convened to fully support that process by **providing a much-needed shot in the arm to implementation efforts**, an effort that was fully endorsed by countries at previous conferences since COP21 in Paris, France, in 2015.
- By spurring increased levels of action and ambition, it is hoped that countries **will submit far more ambitious national plans at COP25 in 2019 and COP26 in 2020** to ensure that climate change is limited to well under 2°C, or better, 1.5°C.

**DIFFERENTIAL GLOBAL CARBON TAX**

# GLOBAL WARMING

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

**IN NEWS**

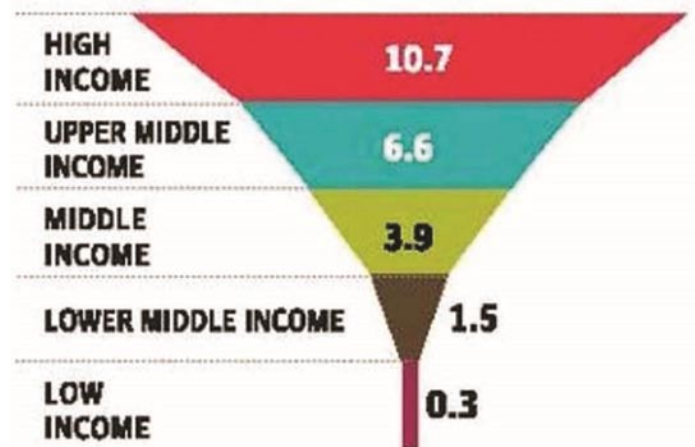
*Climate change is a global problem, and a global problem needs a global solution. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report says total global emissions will need to fall by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050, if we want to be in the fight against global warming. In this background let us look at the arguments that have been forwarded for imposition of differential Global carbon tax.*

**GLOBAL CARBON TAX**

- For a successful energy transition to greener renewable sources, countries have to spend around **1.5% of their GDP**.
- The authors have proposed that the global energy transition should be financed through a system of the **global carbon tax**.

- Since the total global carbon emissions are 36.1 billion metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, this amounts to a global carbon tax of \$46.1 per metric tonne.

**The relationship between level of income and emissions at the global level**



**HOW TO FINANCE THIS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?**

- The climate injustice funnel shows how the income level of countries and their level of emission is inversely related.
- Those on the top of the funnel, apart from funding their own energy transition, should also partially support the transition for the countries which are at the bottom of the funnel, which basically means high income countries should share the financial burden of low income countries for the energy transition and this will be done via a Global Carbon Tax.

**DIFFERENTIAL BURDEN**

- Historically, the **global south has contributed less to the problem of climate change** as their per capita carbon emission were and are even today much smaller compared to global north.

**Note:** The Global South is an emerging term used by the World Bank to refer to countries located in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and considered to have

low and middle income (less developed) compared to the Global North.

- All countries irrespective of their contributions have to join hands to mitigate this problem.
- However, the burden sharing has to be just and proportionate, thus there is a need for Just Energy Transition which is based on a sense of global justice in terms of climatic fallouts and the respective contributions of the countries.
- It will also help the resource-poor developing countries to make the energy transition without having to worry about the finances unduly.

**How to correct injustice?** The first priority is to **fundamentally change the energy infrastructure (from conventional to renewable)** which requires massive investments for the green energy programme across the world.

**HOW SHOULD THE TAX BE FIXED?**

- The countries which emit more than the global per capita average, should pay for their own transition and should also fund a part of the energy transition of those who are below this average.
- Currently, the global average of carbon emissions is 4.97 metric tonne per capita.
- All the countries with emissions above this level (68 in all) should pay to finance energy transition for beneficiary" countries (135 in number), which are emitting below this level.
- Moreover, the proportion of the amount which is to be paid or received should be based on their distance from the global average and should be controlled by their population size.
- Once we subtract the carbon compensation amount from each of these countries, we get the effective carbon tax for that country.
- The two top payer countries in terms of absolute amounts of transfers are the U.S. and China since their emissions are higher than the global average.

In terms of compensated countries, India comes at the top due to its population size and its distance from the global emissions average (India has per capita emissions of 1.73 metric tonne).

**ROBINHOOD TAX**

- The other countries in the beneficiary list should be all countries from the global South, but this list also has a few developed countries like France, Sweden, and Switzerland.
- This shows that this policy is just, as merely developed countries are not being asked to shoulder the burden. Countries like France etc. are developed, however since their per capita emissions are low, they are the beneficiaries of this globally-just policy.
- All nations to climb down the emissions ladder without necessarily having to give up on their standard of living. It's a global green Robin Hood tax.

**IPCC: SPECIAL REPORT ON THE OCEAN AND CRYOSPHERE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE**

# CLIMATE CHANGE



**IN NEWS**

*The report provides new evidence for the benefits of limiting global warming to the lowest possible level – in line with the goal that governments set themselves in the 2015 Paris Agreement. Urgently reducing greenhouse gas emissions limits the scale of ocean and cryosphere changes. Ecosystems and the livelihoods that depend on them can be preserved.*

**ABOUT IPCC REPORTS**

- The IPCC Special Report is a **key scientific input for world leaders** gathering in forthcoming climate and environment negotiations, such as the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference (COP25) in Chile** in December.
- The ocean and the cryosphere – the frozen parts of the planet – play a critical role for life on Earth. A total of 670 million people in high mountain regions and 680 million people in low-lying coastal zones depend directly on these

systems. Four million people live permanently in the Arctic region, and small island developing states are home to 65 million people.

### MAJOR CHANGES IN HIGH MOUNTAINS AFFECTING DOWNSTREAM COMMUNITIES

- Smaller glaciers found for example in Europe, eastern Africa, the tropical Andes and Indonesia are projected to lose more than 80% of their current ice mass by 2100 under high emission scenarios.
- People in mountain regions are increasingly exposed to hazards and changes in water availability,
- Glaciers, snow, ice and permafrost are declining and will continue to do so. This is projected to increase hazards for people, for example through landslides, avalanches, rockfalls and floods.
- As mountain glaciers retreat, they are also altering water availability and quality downstream, with implications for many sectors such as agriculture and hydropower.
- Integrated water management and transboundary cooperation provides opportunities to address impacts of these changes in water resources.

### MELTING ICE, RISING SEAS

- While sea level has risen globally by around 15 cm during the 20th century, it is currently rising more than twice as fast – 3.6 mm per year – and accelerating.
- Sea level will continue to rise for centuries. It could reach around 30-60 cm by 2100 even if greenhouse gas emissions are sharply reduced and global warming is limited to well below 2°C, but around 60-110 cm if greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase strongly.

### MORE FREQUENT EXTREME SEA LEVEL EVENTS

- Sea level rise will increase the frequency of extreme sea level events, which occur for example during high tides and intense storms. Indications are that with any degree of additional warming, events that occurred once per century in the past will occur every year by mid-century in many regions, increasing risks for many low-lying coastal cities and small islands.
- Increases in tropical cyclone winds and rainfall are exacerbating extreme sea level events and coastal hazards.

- Hazards will be further intensified by an increase in the average intensity, magnitude of storm surge and precipitation rates of tropical cyclones, especially if greenhouse gas emissions remain high.

### CHANGING OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS

- Warming and changes in ocean chemistry are already disrupting species throughout the ocean food web, with impacts on marine ecosystems and people that depend on them
- Ocean warming reduces mixing between water layers and, as a consequence, the supply of oxygen and nutrients for marine life.
- **Marine heatwaves have doubled** in frequency since 1982 and are increasing in intensity. They are projected to further increase in frequency, duration, extent and intensity.
- Their frequency will be 20 times higher at 2°C warming, compared to pre-industrial levels. They would occur 50 times more often if emissions continue to increase strongly.
- The ocean has taken up between 20 to 30% of human-induced carbon dioxide emissions since the 1980s, causing **ocean acidification**. Continued carbon uptake by the ocean by 2100 will exacerbate ocean acidification.
- Ocean warming and acidification, loss of oxygen and changes in nutrient supplies, are already affecting the distribution and abundance of marine life in coastal areas, in the open ocean and at the sea floor
- Shifts in the **distribution of fish populations have reduced the global catch potential**. In the future, some regions, notably tropical oceans, will see further decreases, but there will be increases in others, such as the Arctic. Communities that depend highly on seafood may face risks to nutritional health and food security.

### DECLINING ARCTIC SEA ICE, THAWING PERMAFROST

- Permafrost ground that has been frozen for many years is warming and thawing and widespread permafrost thaw is projected to occur in the 21st century.
- Even if global warming is limited to well below 2°C, around 25% of the near-surface (3-4 meter depth) permafrost will thaw by 2100. If greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase strongly, there is a potential that around 70% near surface permafrost could be lost.

- Arctic and boreal permafrost hold large amounts of organic carbon, almost twice the carbon in the atmosphere, and have the potential to significantly increase the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere if they thaw.
- Wildfires are disturbing ecosystems in most tundra and boreal as well as mountain regions.

#### KNOWLEDGE FOR URGENT ACTION

The report finds that strongly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting and restoring ecosystems, and carefully managing the use of natural resources would make it possible to preserve the ocean and cryosphere as a source of opportunities that support adaptation to future changes, limit risks to livelihoods and offer multiple additional societal benefits.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGETS

# ENVIRONMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

#### IN NEWS

*India's renewable energy target will be increased to 450 GW, the Prime Minister said at the United Nations Climate Action Summit. India would spend approximately \$50 billion "in the next few years" on the Jal Jeevan Mission to conserve water, harvest rainwater and develop water resources.*

#### ABOUT PRESENT RENEWABLE TARGETS

- The earliest guideline for a national renewable energy target was outlined in the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in 2008.**
- It recommended a 15% renewable penetration in energy terms by 2020. This was followed by the 2015 announcement of a national capacity target of 175 GW by 2022. It includes 100 GW from solar, 60 GW from wind, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro-power.
- The 175 GW target was further noted as part of India's **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) submission** to the UNFCCC, though not as part of the official pledge, but as part of the various mitigation

strategies. The INDC aims to reduce the emissions intensity of the country's GDP by 33% to 35% by 2030 from the 2005 level, and to achieve about 40% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030.

- Renewable energy and energy efficiency are also an important part of India's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during 2016- 2030.

#### PM ANNOUNCED TWO INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES.

- **First**, a platform with Sweden and other countries, for governments and the private sector to work together to develop low carbon pathways for industry.
- **Second**, a Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. This initiative was approved by the Union Cabinet last month and Rs. 480 crores have been allocated for technical assistance and projects. The U.K., Australia and island nations such as Fiji and the Maldives will be part of this coalition.
- PM Called for a comprehensive approach which covers everything from education to values, and from lifestyle to developmental philosophy

## LIGHTNING

#DISASTER MANAGEMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

#### IN NEWS

*For the first time, a report has mapped lightning strikes across the country, and the lives they have claimed. It has been prepared by Climate Resilient Observing Systems Promotion Council (CROPC), a non-profit organisation that works closely with India Meteorological Department (IMD).*

#### WHAT CAUSES LIGHTNING?

- Lightning is a very rapid and massive discharge of electricity in the atmosphere. Some of it is directed towards the Earth. It is a **result of the difference in electrical charge between the top and bottom of a cloud.** The lightning-generating clouds are typically about **10-12 km in height, with their base about 1-2 km from the Earth's surface.** The **temperatures at the top range from -35°C to -45°C.**

- As water vapour moves upwards in the cloud, it condenses into water due to decreasing temperatures. A huge amount of heat is generated in the process, pushing the water molecules further up. As they move to temperatures below zero, droplets change into small ice crystals.
- As they continue upwards, they gather mass, until they become so heavy that they start descending. It leads to a system where smaller ice crystals move upwards while larger ones come down.
- The **resulting collisions trigger release of electrons**, in a process very similar to the generation of electric sparks. The moving free electrons cause more collisions and more electrons; a chain reaction is formed.
- The process results in a situation in which the top layer of the cloud gets positively charged while the middle layer is negatively charged. The electrical potential difference between the two layers is huge, of the order of billions of volts. In little time, a huge current, of the order of lakhs to millions of amperes, starts to flow between the layers. It produces heat, leading to the heating of the air column between the two layers of cloud. It is because of this heat that the air column looks red during lightning. The heated air column expands and produces shock waves that result in thunder sounds.

#### **WHAT CAUSES LIGHTNING?**

- The Earth is a **good conductor of electricity**. While electrically neutral, it is relatively positively charged compared to the middle layer of the cloud. As a result, an estimated 20-25 per cent of the current flow gets directed towards the Earth. It is this current flow that results in damage to life and property.
- Lightning has a greater probability of striking raised objects on the ground, such as trees or buildings. Once they are sufficiently near the ground, about 80-100 m from the surface, they even tend to redirect their course to hit the taller objects. This is because travelling through air, which is a bad conductor of electricity, the electrons try to find a better conductor and also the shortest route to the relatively positively charged Earth's surface.
- Thousands of thunderstorms occur over India every year. One thunderstorm can involve more than 100 lightning strikes.

#### **IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN LIGHTNING AND CLIMATE CHANGE?**

- Areas prone to heatwaves were also prone to lightning.
- Pollution increases aerosols in the atmosphere, which in turn increases lightning.
- There have been at least two or three instances of lightning strikes without rainfall, killing persons in Jharkhand.

#### **FINDINGS OF THE REPORT**

- UP accounted for 224 of these deaths, followed by Bihar (170), Odisha (129) and Jharkhand (118).
- It counted 65.55 lakh lightning strikes in India during the four-month period, of which 23.53 lakh (36 per cent) happened to be cloud-to-ground lightning, the kind that reaches the Earth.
- The other 41.04 lakh (64 per cent) were in-cloud lightning, which remains confined to the clouds in which it was formed.
- Odisha recorded over 9 lakh incidents of lightning (both kinds), the maximum for any state but fewer deaths than Uttar Pradesh, which had 3.2 lakh incidents.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF THE FINDINGS**

- The report is part of an effort to create a database that can help develop an early warning system for lightning, spread awareness, and prevent deaths.
- Between 2,000 and 2,500 people are estimated as killed every year in lightning strikes in the country.
- It is possible to predict, 30-40 minutes in advance, when a lightning strike heads towards Earth. The prediction is made possible through study and monitoring of the in-cloud lightning strikes. Timely dissemination of this information can save several lives.
- After carrying out a pilot project in 16 states, the IMD has begun providing lightning forecasts and warnings through mobile text messages from this year. However, this is not yet available in all regions, and there isn't enough awareness as yet on the kinds of action that need to be taken after an alert.

#### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF STATE GOVERNMENTS?**

- IMD-installed sensors across India give alerts.
- State governments take the data and start an emergency response system and relay the information to the district level.

- Location-based SMS services is available, but this is not done in many states, resulting in high casualties. States like Odisha, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh are doing this systematically.

## CLEAN MEAT

#BIODIVERSITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*Food security, as defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. However, our food system is facing monumental challenge as feeding about 10 billion people by 2050 with our current agricultural practices is almost impossible. The food system puts undue pressure on our resources. Further the inefficient meat industry is adding woes to it.*

### PROBLEMS OF MEAT INDUSTRY

- We feed grains to cows, goats and chickens and then eat the animals. So, in essence, for every 9 calories of food fed to a chicken we get 1 calorie back.
- Over-supply of the water, fuel, pesticides, and fertilizer are required for industrialized animal production.
- The meat industry wastes a tremendous amount of water too — about one-third of the world's water consumption is for producing animal products.
- Antibiotics are used in livestock and poultry feed. The World Health Organization has said that antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development today.
- It also generates humane issue as animals which are crammed into farms, face extreme cruelty during their lives and are inhumanely slaughtered.
- Food habit is linked to income rise. As our incomes rise, meat consumption will increase and the pressure on our resources will augment. Despite the increased meat production, we will continue to be a food-insecure nation.

### PLANT BASED CLEAN MEAT

**Clean meat:** Clean meat is a term coined by the Good Food Institute representing meat products made using **cellular agriculture and tissue engineering techniques** in a lab from a small sample of cells taken from an animal.

**Plant based meat:** They are made using plant and other non-animal products to look, taste and feel like meat products. Plant-based meats are made to resemble meat products in texture, flavour, and appearance. The primary ingredients in plant-based meat substitutes are typically soybeans (and other legumes), wheat gluten, lentils, and tofu and a variety of nuts. **Benefits:**

- Diet of too much red meat comes at a cost, including increased risk of colorectal cancer, heart disease, cardiovascular disease, obesity and high cholesterol levels.
- Processed meat, in particular, is higher in sodium, which has been linked to an increased risk of coronary heart disease and type-2 diabetes. Plant based meat/ clean meat is healthier.
- They are more environmental friendly as water, fuel, pesticides, and fertilizer are less required.
- It is also healthier as it is free of antibiotics.
- It can alleviate the climate impact of the meat industry, augment farmers' incomes, combat malnutrition and spare the lives of billions of animals.

Globally, the Netherlands, the U.S., Israel, Japan and Singapore are developing both plant- based and clean meat.

**Significance for India:** India's population can benefit from making plant-based and clean meat available. India is uniquely poised to be a leader in this sector as crops such as millets, ragi, pulses and chickpeas which grow here are ideal raw ingredients for plant-based meats.

## GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

#CONSERVATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*Noting the high mortality rate of the Great Indian Bustard, the NGT has directed the Centre to prepare a time-bound action*

plan within two months for protection of the birds. It is the State bird of Rajasthan.

### GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

It is **characterised by** Black crown on the forehead contrasting with the pale neck and head. The body is brownish and the wings are marked with black, brown and grey.

### THREAT TO THIS SPECIES INCLUDE

- Occasional **poaching** outside Protected Areas,
- **Collisions** with high tension electric wires, fast moving vehicles and free-ranging dogs in villages.
- **Habitat loss** due to widespread agricultural expansion, infrastructural development such as irrigation, roads, electric poles, as well as mining and industrialization.

### CONSERVATION STATUS

- Listed in **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**
- Listed in **CMS**(Convention on migratory species) Convention
- Listed in **Appendix I of CITES**.
- Listed as **Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List** and the **National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016)**.
- It is identified as one of the species for the recovery programme under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

### ABOUT RECOVERY PROGRAMME

- It is one of the components of centrally sponsored scheme - Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH) which provides assistance to the State/UT governments for activities aimed at wildlife conservation. The other two components:

- Support to Protected Areas (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves except tiger reserves)
- Protection of Wildlife Outside Protected Areas

## PANGOLIN

#CONSERVATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*Pangolin is one of the most smuggled animals. Recently a smuggling racket was busted in Kolkata. In this background, let us understand some important facts related to Pangolin.*

### PANGOLIN

- Pangolin is **only scaly mammal on the planet**. Pangolins has large, overlapping scales on its body which act as armour. It can also curl itself into ball as self-defence against predators.
- Pangolins is an **insectivore**, feeding on ants and termites, digging them out of mounds and logs using its long claws. It is **nocturnal** and rests in deep burrows during the day.
- According to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), it is also the most illegally traded vertebrate within its class (Mammalia).
- There are eight species and they are only found in **Africa and Asia**, of which two are known from India namely **Indian Pangolin (Manis crassicaudata)** and **Chinese Pangolin (Manis pentadactyla)**.
- In India, it is a protected animal under **Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** meaning that no trade is permitted.
- Asian pangolins IUCN Red list status:
  - Chinese pangolin (Manis pentadactyla) – Critically Endangered;
  - Sunda pangolin (Manis javanica) – Critically Endangered ;
  - Indian pangolin (Manis crassicaudata) – Endangered
  - Philippine pangolin (Manis culionensis) – Endangered

### THREATS TO PANGOLINS

- Their **meat** is deemed a delicacy among several communities and is also consumed because of its alleged medicinal properties.
- Pangolin scales are widely used in **traditional oriental medicines** as an aphrodisiac and to cure ailments ranging from asthma and psoriasis to cancer. However, the medical efficacy of the scales remains unproved.
- Their scales are also made into **rings or charms**.
- Their skins are used to manufacture **leather goods** like boots and shoes.



## NILGIRI TAHR

#CONSERVATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

According to official estimates the population of endangered nilgiri tahr has increased by 27% in last three years due to conservation efforts.

### NILGIRI TAHR

- The Nilgiri tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) is locally known as the **Nilgiri ibex or simply ibex**.
- It is **endemic to the Nilgiri Hills** and the southern portion of the Western Ghats in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- It is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.
- **Eravikulam National Park in Kerala** is home to the largest population.
- It is listed in IUCN red list under the **endangered category**
- It is protected in **schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act 1972**.

## CRYODRAKON BOREAS

#BIODIVERSITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*Paleontologists have identified a new species, named it **Cryodrakon boreas**, and declared that it could be one of the largest flying animals.*

With a wingspan of over 10 metres, it is believed to have flown over the heads of dinosaurs. The reptile lived over 77 million years ago in what is western Canada today. *C. boreas* was carnivorous and probably fed on lizards, small mammals and even baby dinosaurs.

Despite a likely capacity to cross large bodies of water, the location of fossil remains and the animal's features point to an inland habitat.

## VULTURE CONSERVATION IN INDIA

#CONSERVATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*The number of vultures have declined from 40 million in 1980s to only a few thousand in 2009. The Government of India has come out with National Action Plan for Vulture Conservation in 2006. In this background, let us look at the vulture conservation efforts undertaken in India.*

### NINE SPECIES OF VULTURES ARE FOUND IN INDIA

1. **Indian Vulture** (Long - *Gyps indicus* (Schedule 1, Wildlife Conservation Act) (IUCN Status: Critically Endangered)
2. **White Rumped Vulture** - *Gyps bengalensis* (Schedule 1, Wildlife Conservation Act) (IUCN Status - Critically Endangered)
3. **Slender Billed Vulture** - *Gyps tenuirostris* (Schedule 1, Wildlife Conservation Act)
4. **Cinereous Vulture** (IUCN Status: Near Threatened)
5. **Bearded Vulture** (IUCN Status: Near Threatened)
6. **Red-headed Vulture** (IUCN Status: Critically Endangered)
7. **Griffon Vulture** (IUCN Status: Least Concern)
8. **Egyptian Vulture** (IUCN Status: Endangered)
9. **Eurasian Griffon Vulture** (IUCN Status: Least Concern)

### REASON FOR DECLINE OF VULTURE POPULATION

- The major reason behind the decline of vulture population was the **drug Diclofenac**, found in the carcass of cattle the vultures fed on. This drug was banned in 2008 for use in veterinary. It was used to treat cattle of inflammation. The vultures die due to rapid kidney failure.
- Vultures are slow breeding
- Habitat loss
- Loss of prey base

### VULTURE CONSERVATION BREEDING CENTRES (VCBC)

- There was more than 99% decline in vulture population in India. This prompted the establishment of the **first Vulture Conservation Centre in Pinjore, Haryana**.
- There are currently 9 Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centres in India. Out of the 9, three are directly administered by **Bombay Natural History Society**.
- The total number of vultures in these VCBCs is more than 700. Three species of vultures bred in these VCBCs are **White backed Vulture; Long-billed Vulture; Slender-billed Vulture**.

#### OBJECTIVES OF VCBC

- VCBCs not only look after the vultures and breed them in captivity but also to release them into the wild.
- Produce a few hundred pairs of each of the three species of endangered vultures.
- Two captive Himalayan Griffon vultures were released in June, 2016 from Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre, Pinjore a part of Asia's first vulture re- introduction program.
- Declaration of Vulture Safe Zones

**What else needs to be done?** Diclofenac is only one of over a dozen drugs known as **non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs** (NSAIDs) available in India. We know that one, called **meloxicam**, is non-toxic to vultures. But we also know that four others(aceclofenac, carprofen, flunixin, ketoprofen and nimesulide) are toxic. And their threat is arguably far greater than diclofenac, because they are all still legal. So, banning them require consideration.

## NEW GINGER SPECIES

#BIODIVERSITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

#### IN NEWS

*Scientists from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have discovered two new species of Zingiber, commonly referred to as ginger, from Nagaland. These are Zingiber perenense has been discovered from the Peren district of Nagaland and Zingiber dimapurensis was found in the Dimapur district of the State.*

#### CHARACTERISTICS

- Zingiber dimapurensis is taller in size, with leafy shoots measuring 90-120 cm high, whereas the leafy shoots of Zingiber perenense reach up to 70 cm in height.
- For Zingiber dimapurensis, the lip of the flower (modified corolla) is white in colour, with dense dark- purplish red blotches.
- Its pollen is a creamy-white and ovato-ellipsoidal, whereas the fruit is an oblong 4.5 cm-5.5 cm long capsule.
- In the case of Zingiber perenense, which was discovered about 50 km from where the other species was found, the lip of the flower is white with purplish-red streaks throughout, and the pollen is ellipsoidal.

## ENDOSULFAN

#POLLUTION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

#### IN NEWS

*The representative of the victims of use of Endosulphan poisoning in the Kasargod District of Kerala are staging a protest in Thiruvananthapuram. The Supreme Court has ordered the state to pay Rs 5 lakh compensation to each of the victim.*

#### WHAT IS ENDOSULPHAN?

- Endosulfan is an **organochlorine insecticide**, introduced in the 1950s as a pesticide, and is commonly known by its trade name **Thiodan**. It is being phased out globally due to its acute toxicity.
- **Stockholm Convention (2011) started global ban** on the manufacture and its use sighting ill- effects on human health and environment.
- It is also included under **Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent**.
- So far, more than 80 countries have banned the use of the chemical in the agriculture

**Ban on Endosulphan in India:** The Supreme Court has banned the manufacture, storage and sale of Endosulphan in 2011. However, the state of Kerala banned it in 2001.

**Ill-effects of Endosulphan:** Endosulphan has numerous negative health effects on human health. It may cause endocrine disruption, cancer, reproduction and development deformity.

# DEOCHA PACHAMI COAL MINE

#LOCATION #RESOURCE

## IN NEWS

The Chief Minister of West Bengal has stated that the work on the Deocha Pachami coal mine would start only after completing the rehabilitation of the people living in the region.

## DEOCHA PACHAMI COAL MINE

- Deocha Pachami Coal Mine is situated in Birbhum district of West Bengal.

- It is considered to be the Asia's largest and the world's second-largest coal block, with an estimated reserve of 2.1 billion tonnes.
- In January 2016, the Deocha Pachami Coal Fields in Birbhum district was inaugurated with the promise of jobs for one lakh people with a proposed investment of Rs. 22,000 crores. Almost 5% of the project land is covered with forests and the development of the project may lead to the displacement of people, 40% of whom are tribals.

Hence, the West Bengal State government has stated that the exploration and mining in these blocks would start only when the people living in the region are rehabilitated.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### MCQS

#### 1. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Great Indian Bustard?

- It is found in desert National Park
- It is listed as critically endangered under IUCN Red list.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

#### 2. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Nilgiri Tahr ?

- It is the State animal of Tamil Nadu
- Periyar National park in Kerala has the highest population of this animal.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- 1 only
- 2 only

- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

#### 3. Consider the following statements about Pangolins?

- It is protected under Schedule II of the Wildlife protection act 1972.
- They are only found in Africa and Asia.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

#### 4. Deocha Pachami coal block which is the Asia's second largest coal block is located in which of the following?

- Bihar

- b) Jharkhand  
c) Chhattisgarh  
d) West Bengal
5. **Endosulfan has been in news recently in the context of which of the following?**
- a) It is used as a pesticide in cotton crops  
b) It is the leading cause of deaths of vultures in India  
c) It is an insecticide which adversely affects Human endocrine system  
d) None of the above

## DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** How land degradation impacts climate change? Highlight the importance of outcomes of the COP 14 of UNCCD (Delhi declaration) in arresting the problem of land degradation.
- Q2.** What is the impact of plastic waste on environment? Highlight the roadmap for the governments suggested by UNEP for controlling plastic pollution.

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

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# HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

# GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER I (MAIN)

## HARAPPAN PEOPLE

#ANCIENT INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*A recent study on the Indus Valley Civilization from the skeletal remains of Rakhigarhi has revealed the origins of Harappan people. The Rakhigarhi study was reported in a paper titled "An Ancient Harappan Genome Lacks Ancestry from Steppe Pastoralists or Iranian farmers". In this respect, let us understand the key features of this study.*

### ► KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESEARCH

1. Throwing fresh light on the Indus Valley Civilisation, a **study of DNA from skeletal remains** excavated from the Harappan cemetery at Rakhigarhi argues that the **hunter-gatherers of South Asia**, who then became a settled people, have an **independent origin**.
2. As per the study, the theory of the Harappans having Steppe pastoral or ancient Iranian farmer ancestry thus stands refuted.
3. The finding also **negates** the hypothesis about **mass migration during Harappan times from outside South Asia**.
4. They **do not contain genome** from either the Steppe region or ancient Iranian farmers.
5. The study, finds that the same **hunter-gatherer communities developed into agricultural communities and formed the Harappan civilisation**.
6. The genetic continuity from hunter gatherer to modern times is visible in the DNA results.
7. The researchers also suggest that there was a **movement of people from east to west** as the Harappan people's

presence is evident at sites like Gonur in Turkmenistan and Sahr-i-Sokhta in Iran.

8. The researchers also pointed out that as the Harappans traded with Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Persian Gulf and almost all across South Asia, there was bound to be movement of people resulting in a mixed genetic history.
9. They highlighted that **India had a heterogeneous population right from the beginning of settled life** and also gave a hint that settled life and domestication went from South Asia to West Asia.

### RELATED INFORMATION: ORIGINS OF FARMING

- The study also talks about the origins of farming. It suggests that in Europe, ancient-DNA studies have shown that agriculture tended to spread through an influx of people with ancestry in Anatolia, in modern day Turkey.
- The new study shows a similar dynamic in Iran and Turan (southern Central Asia), where the researchers found that Anatolian-related ancestry and farming arrived around the same time.
- In South Asia, however, the story appears quite different. Not only did the researchers find an absence of Anatolian-related ancestry, they saw that Iranian-related ancestry in South Asians comes from a lineage that separated from ancient Iranian farmers and hunter-gatherers before those groups split from each other, nearly 9,000 years ago.

### CONCLUSIONS

- The researchers, concluded that **farming in South Asia was not due to the movement of people from the farming cultures of the west**.
- They found **no trace of the Anatolian-related ancestry** that is a hallmark of the spread of farming to the west, but the Iranian-related ancestry they detected in South Asians comes from a lineage that separated from ancient Iranian farmers and hunter-gatherers before those groups split from each other.

- Prior to the arrival of steppe pastoralists bringing their Indo-European languages about 4,000 years ago, no evidence of large-scale movements of people into South Asia have been found.

## EXCAVATIONS AT KANNUR

#ANCIENT INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India-Upinder Singh

### IN NEWS

Recently, the State Archaeological Department has unearthed some artefacts in the Kannur district of Kerala. In this respect, let us understand the key highlights of this discovery.

### ► KEY FINDINGS OF THE EXCAVATION

- Unearthed a **Megalithic era iron sword, a chisel and a few decorated potteries** from a rock-cut cave at Pothuvachery in Kannur district.
- The 105-cm sword, around 2,500 years old, was found during a scientific clearance at the historical site. However, the sword was not a rare one as previously, a sword was discovered from a similar rock-cut cave from a site at Kuruvattur in Kozhikode.
- The recovery of the implements revealed the **technological advancement of the Megalithic people\***.
- Excavations also led to the discovery of a cave leading to the **Manikkiyil temple road** in Mavilayi village, Kannur district.
- The materials would be shifted to the **Pazhassi Raja Archaeological Museum** at East Hill in Kozhikode.

### RELATED INFORMATION: MEGALITHIC PERIOD\*

- The word Megalith means '**big stone**'. It includes different kinds of monuments that have one thing in common- they are made of large, roughly dressed slabs of stone.
- In the Indian subcontinent such monuments have been found in the **far south, Deccan plateau, Vindhyan and Arvalli ranges and the North West.**

- The term megalithic culture refers to the cultural remains found in the megaliths and from habitation sites associated with them.
- Megaliths reflect certain **burial styles** whose origins can be traced to a neo-chalcolithic context.
- **Pit burials** and **urn burials** are found in the **South Indian Neolithic-chalcolithic sites** and two burials marked by stones are found at Watgal.
- Some types of burials found in the megalithic culture include **orthstats, cists, dolmenoid cist, pit circles, menhirs etc.**

## EXCAVATIONS AT KEELADI

#ANCIENT INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

### IN NEWS

The recent results of the radiocarbon dating of the excavations at Keeladi (Tamil Nadu) have pushed back their dates to even more. In this respect, let us understand about the key findings of the excavations and the significance of their date.

### ► KEY FINDINGS OF THE EXCAVATION

- The deposits included **fifty-six Tamil-Brahmi inscribed potsherds, pottery specimens** from Keeladi suggests that containers and cooking vessels were shaped out of locally available raw materials.
- The excavations made recovery of **spindle whorls, sharply pinpointed bone tip tools used for design creations, hanging stones of the yarn, terracotta spheres, copper needle and earthen vessels to hold liquid.**
- These items clearly attest to the various stages of weaving industry from spinning, yarning, looming and weaving and later for dyeing.
- Skeletal fragments of species such as **cow/ox (Bos indicus), buffalo (Bubalus bubalis), sheep (Ovis aries), goat (Capra hircus), nilgai (Boselaphus tragocamelus), blackbuck (Antelope cervicapra), wild boar (Sus scrofa) and peacock (Pavo cristatus)** have been identified.

### DATES OF THESE FINDINGS

- The report titled, '**Keeladi-An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai**', was published by the **Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department** (TNAD) based on the excavations done in this site.
- The report spells the site as Keeladi as against the erstwhile widely used Keezhadi.
- The cultural deposits unearthed during excavations at Keeladi in Sivaganga district could be dated to a period between **6th century BCE and 1st century CE** which is a major turning point in the cultural historiography of the ancient Sangam Age
- The new findings in the report place Keeladi artefacts about 300 years earlier than previously believed — 3rd century BCE.
- One of the six samples collected at the depth of 353 cm and sent for carbon dating test in the U.S. goes back to **580 BCE**.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DATE

- The results from the fourth round of excavations suggest that the "**second urbanisation (the first being Indus Valley Civilization) of Vaigai plains happened in Tamil Nadu around 6th century BCE** as it happened in Gangetic plains."
- These recent scientific dates obtained for Keeladi findings push back the date of Tamil-Brahmi script to another century, i.e., 6th century BCE which clearly ascertains that the locals attained literacy or learned the art of writing as early as 6th century BCE.
- The animal remains suggests that the society in Keeladi had used animals predominantly for agricultural purposes.

## PURANA QILA

#ART AND CULTURE #MEDIEVAL INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE

egyankosh.ac.in

### IN NEWS

*Purana Qila is one of the most cherished monuments of Delhi. Recently, heritage by laws pertaining to this monument have*

*also been laid down. In this respect, let us understand the key features of this monument.*

### CONSTITUENTS OF THE QILA

- Purana Qila was built by the Sur ruler **Sher Shah**.
- According to Hindu literature the fort marks the site of **Indraprastha**, the magnificent capital of the **Pandavas**.
- The construction was carried out under Sher Shah Suri between **1538 to 1545**.
- It was intended to be the **sixth city** of Delhi.
- Today, only **two isolated gateways** survive. Its northern gate is known as the **Talaqi Darwaza** also translated by some scholars as the **Forbidden Gate**.
- The Qila also hosts a mosque inside it known as the **Qilsi Kuhna Masjid** which was built about **1542** inside the Purana Qila citadel.

### ARCHITECTURE OF PURANA QILA

- In the architectural scheme of this mosque, the facade of the prayer hall is **divided into five arched bays**, the central one larger than the others, each with an open archway recessed within it.
- The facade is richly carved in **black and white marble and red sandstone**.
- One notable feature in this building is the shape of the arches - there is a slight drop, or flatness, in the curve towards the crown.
- It is indicative of the last stage before the development of the **"Tudor" arch** of the Mughals.

### ABOUT TALAQI DARWAZA

- The gate has a panel showing a man fighting a lion, considered unusual in a Moghul-era monument.
- Perhaps the panel commemorates the fight Sher Shah had when, as a young man he killed a 'Sher'.
- Since then Farid Khan came to be known as Sher Afghan.
- The marble panels are more than the tale of Sher Shah and his fight with the king of beasts.
- Such depictions were a common feature in ancient Babylon. The lion, besides man, is among the four living creatures (one 'full of eyes in front and behind') that are believed to surround the highest seat of heaven.

- This is part of the Semitic story of creation and the panel of the Talaqi Darwaza may well have been inspired by it, though Sher Shah killed a tiger, not a lion.

## HISTORY OF KASHMIR

# MEDIEVAL INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

SECONDARY SOURCE

britannica.com

### IN NEWS

*In the light of the recent development concerning Jammu and Kashmir's special status, many people have been drawn towards the history of this region. In this respect, let us delve into the important aspects pertaining to this state's history.*

### RELIGIOUS FAITHS THAT INHABITED THE LAND

- According to legend, an ascetic named **Kashyapa** reclaimed the land now comprising Kashmir from a vast lake. That land came to be known as **Kashyapamar** and, later, Kashmir.
- **Buddhism** was introduced by the Mauryan emperor **Ashoka** in the 3rd century BCE, and from the **9th to the 12th century CE the region appears to have achieved considerable prominence as a centre of Hindu culture.**
- A succession of Hindu dynasties ruled Kashmir until **1346**, when it came under **Muslim rule.**
- The Muslim period lasted nearly five centuries, ending when **Kashmir was annexed to the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab in 1819** and then to the **Dogra kingdom of Jammu in 1846.**

### LITERARY SOURCES DEALING WITH THE HISTORY OF THE LAND

- Before Kalhana's Rajatarangini, some important works which dealt with the history of Kashmir include **Nripavali by Kshemendra, Parthivavali by Helaraja, and Nilamatapurana.**
- According to the **Nilamata Purana**, the oldest mythological scripture documenting the history of the land, the first king of Kashmir, Gonanda, was a contemporary of the Kauravas and Pandavas. He and Yudhishtir were coronated at the same time. It also

mentions that Gonanda was a relative of Jarasandha, the king of Magadha.

- Moving away from the puranas, Kashmir has influenced Indian history even as almost every branch of knowledge flourished in the region, enriching Kashmiri culture.
- **The Naga, the Kush, the Kapisha tribes** had inhabited this land which has been a melting pot of many religious streams.
- **Rajatarangini, "River of Kings"** is a historical chronicle of early India, written in Sanskrit verse by the Kashmiri Brahman **Kalhana in 1148.** It is justifiably considered to be the best and most authentic work of its kind.
- It covers the entire span of history in the Kashmir region from the earliest times to the date of its composition.
- Kalhana used with commendable familiarity the local *rajakathas* (royal chronicles) and previous works on Kashmir.
- He displayed surprisingly advanced technical expertise for the time in his concern for unconventional sources.
- He looked up a variety of epigraphic sources relating to royal eulogies, construction of temples, and land grants; he studied coins, monumental remains, family records, and local traditions.

## FIROZABAD

# MEDIEVAL INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

SECONDARY SOURCE

Old NCERT (Medieval India)

### IN NEWS

*The Feroz Shah Kotla stadium is to be renamed after the late former finance minister Arun Jaitley. In this respect, let us understand the historicity of this site.*

### ABOUT FIROZABAD

- **Firoz Shah Tughlaq (1351- 1388)** established four new towns: **Firuzabad, Fatehabad, Jaunpur, and Hissar.**
- In the 14th Century, "Firoz Shah Tughlaq decided to build a new palace by the banks of the Jumna, where he could feel the cool breezes from the mountains and the river. So, he built **Firoz Shah Kotla** and **called it Firozabad.**
- Next to this monument lies the famous Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium.



**ABOUT FIROZ SHAH**

- He was the successor of **Muhammad Bin Tughlaq**.
- His reign was overall peaceful and of quiet development.
- He made the **iqtas for noble hereditary** and also extended the hereditary principle to the army.
- The soldiers were paid via **land assignments**.
- He prohibited the practice of Muslim women going out worship at the graves of saints.
- He made **Jaziya a separate tax**.
- Many books on music, medicine and mathematics were translated from Sanskrit to Persian under his reign.
- He set up a large **department of public works** which looked after his building programme. He also repaired and dug many numbers of canals.

**KEMPEGOWDA STATUE**

#MEDIEVAL INDIA #ART AND CULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

SECONDARY SOURCE

THE TIMES OF INDIA

**IN NEWS**

*Chief Minister of Karnataka plans to construct a 101-foot-tall Kempegowda bronze statue at the Bengaluru airport at the cost of Rs 100 crore. This move is widely seen as an attempt by the ruling government to gain leverage with the Vokkaliga community. In this respect, let us understand the key aspects of this historical personality and the Vokkaliga community.*

**KEMPEGOWDA: LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Kempegowda or **Nada Prabhu Kempegowda** is the **founding father of Bengaluru**. He is said to have marked with **towers the four corners** of a Bengaluru he imagined.
- Kempegowda I was also known as **Hiriya "the elder"**.
- He realized the strategic significance of the site of the future Bengaluru and applied to obtain permission of **King Achyuta Deva Raya to shift his capital there from Yelahanka**.
- Kempegowda I succeeded in building the fort and establishing the first form of a protected, named town, (as opposed to a locale that had although existed earlier

...serving many purposes such as trading post, temple location, transit zone etc.)

- As a token of appreciation for his zeal, King Achyuta Deva Raya granted him the twelve `hobli's, namely old Bengaluru, Varthuru, Yelahanka, Beguru, Halasuru, Tengeri (Kengeri), Talagattapura, Jigani, Kanneli, Kumbalagodu, Banavara and Hesaraghatta.
- It was at this time that the **Kote Venkataramanswamy temple** in the Fort was built, and the **Basaveshwara temple at Basavanagudi, and the Gavigangadhareswara temple in Gavipuram** were built or enhanced.
- He is also credited with the construction of the **Sampangi tank, the Kempambudhi and the Dharmambudhi tanks**, continuing the natural inter-linking of water bodies in the zone, in an early form of sustainable water management.
- He is said to have established a `tankasale' (mint) and issued coins called **Virabhadra Varaha**, bearing the image of **Baire Deva**.

**ABOUT VOKKALIGA COMMUNITY**

- Kempegowda is a political icon for the dominant agricultural Vokkaliga community in **south Karnataka**.
- This community with notable political power and dominance in the southern parts of the Indian state of Karnataka.
- They are designated as an Other Backward Class in India's reservation system.
- Vokkaliga Sangha started an **anti-brahmin movement in 1905 in Mysore**.

**THE BENGAL FAMINE OF 1943**

# MODERN INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

**IN NEWS**

*The Bengal Famine of 1943 took half as many lives as the holocaust did. Studies in the past records suggest that the famine was politically driven rather than being a result of food*

*shortage. In this respect, let us understand the key aspects of this famine.*

#### PROBLEM OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IN INDIA

- India hardly acknowledges, the British as being accountable for the greatest tragedy that befell the country in the 20th century under their watch through the Bengal famine, which was at its worst during 1943.
- The estimated death toll was between 2 to 3 million. However, it continues to be perceived as a tragic occurrence and not an atrocity.
- The Bengal famine was gruesome. Everyday thousands of emaciated dead had to be removed from the streets of Calcutta by police and government-funded corpse disposal organisations.
- As more of the starving poured into the city from the devastated countryside, the best the Chief Minister of Bengal, Khawaja Nazimuddin, could come up with was to write to the Governor that he proposed to have them removed from the city by force.
- Unlike Jallianwala Bagh, the Bengal famine doesn't have a Remembrance Day or a noteworthy memorial.

#### REASONS FOR THE FAMINE

- **The Earl of Huntington** observed, in a parliamentary debate in the House of Lords on October 20, 1943, that while loss of the Burma rice and the cyclone of 1942 were strong "contributory factors" to the famine, the fact remained that "these losses were largely made good by the exceptional crop in Northern India in the spring of 1943".
- Official records from that period available in the India Office Records section of the British Library also establish that the **famine was not the outcome of a lack of food grain**. Rather, **political machinations, greed, hoarding and bureaucratic bungling on a massive scale** stymied effort to procure and transport grain from where it was available — Punjab and the United Provinces — to starving Bengal in quick time.
- Even the Viceroy, **Lord Linlithgow**, acknowledged this in his letter of September 27, 1943 to the Governor of Punjab Sir Bertrand Glancy.
- He demanded that Glancy act decisively to procure and move grain, charging "that the Punjab ministers and the Punjab cultivators are engaged in blackmailing the starving peasants of Bengal so as to make inordinate profits at a

time when they have already made very substantial profits indeed".

- Even as the famine began to abate in 1944, the Intelligence Bureau was alerting government of the possibility of its recurrence, if adequate measures were not taken "to prevent hoarding, enforce the orders relating to the maximum prices of foodstuffs and introduce rationing in the larger towns".
- It is in this respect, that **Prime Minister Winston Churchill** can be reasonably considered to be solely responsible for the occurrence of the famine while ignoring the fact that enough food was available within India to have prevented its occurrence.

## VALIVADE COMMEMORATIVE PILLAR

# MODERN INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

#### IN NEWS

*Recently, a commemorative pillar has been put up in Valivade, where WW-II refugees arrived from Germany and Russia. In this respect, let us understand about this pillar and its significance.*

#### COMMEMORATIVE PILLAR: VALIVADE

- A **commemorative pillar** in memory of the Polish families and individuals who lived in Valivade between 1942 and 1948 is unveiled in **Valivade, Kolhapur district**.
- The memorial is sought to strengthen Indo-Polish ties.
- A permanent museum dedicated to the memory of the 5,000 Polish people will also be constructed.

#### POLAND AND WWII

- Poland was caught between **Adolf Hitler's Germany** and **Josef Stalin's Russia** during the Second World War.
- Poland was dismembered by the **1939 Nazi-Soviet Union pact or 'the Devil's Alliance'**, with the cream of Poland's officer corps, which included several members of the country's intelligentsia, massacred by the NKVD or the Soviet secret police in the Katyn Forest in 1940.

#### MIGRATION TO INDIA

- As a result, a stream of refugees made their way to Valivade village in Kolhapur district near Pune. Here, they

tasted freedom after having endured the living hell of Soviet camps following their deportation by the dreaded NKVD.

- At a time when the world was torn apart by war, Europe was ravaged and parts of India were in the grip of a terrible famine, the **Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur** adopted these Polish families on humanitarian grounds.
- The Polish made their journey to India through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan from the Soviet camps in Siberia and the Urals.
- They first reached Jamnagar in Gujarat, where the ruler, Jam Saheb Digvijayasinghji Jadeja, in a noble gesture, took the refugees under his wing. From there, some of the migrants proceeded to Kolhapur.
- With the cooperation and affection of the citizens of Kolhapur, Valivade soon transformed into a 'mini Poland', with its own church, schools and even a cinema.

## DAMARAM: MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

# ART AND CULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*Damaram is an ancient instrument which was played in historical temples. The instrument is still used making it a proof enough of the fact that the tradition is kept alive despite modernisation. In this respect, let us understand the key aspects of this instrument.*



### COMPOSITION OF THE INSTRUMENT

- Damaram, made of **wood**, is a set of drums, conical in shape, resembling flower pots.
- It belongs to the category of **Avanaddha Vadyas**.
- One face of the instrument is covered with cow hide while the other, with that of the goat.
- Two sticks, made from **Arali kuchi**, are used for playing this instrument.
- One stick is straight while the other is a bit curved.

### OCCASIONS ON WHICH DAMARAM IS PLAYED

- At the **Varadaraja Swami temple, Kanchipuram**, the performance of Damaram is a must on two occasions — **Thatha Desikan satrumurai**, a one-day ritual, and **Manavalamamuni satrumurai**, which is performed for 10 days.
- During these utsavams, the Damaram is played during **Tirumanjanam**.
- During the **Tha Desikan satrumurai**, 10 artistes sit in the mandapam and perform till the Lord returns to the temple after the procession.
- During **Manavalamamuni satrumurai** two performers play the instrument.
- These days Damaram is played during the **Panguni utsavam at the Varadar temple**, both in the morning and evening and at the tirukalyana utsavam of the deity with Malaya Nachiyar.
- At the Sriperumbudur Adi Kesava Perumal temple, Damaram is played along with Thiruchinnam during the **Vishwarupa Darisanam** in the morning and along with mridangam, talam and tiruchinnam for the thiruvadanam that forms part of the evening rituals.
- We found out that Damaram is played at the **Nitya Kalyana Perumal temple, Mahabalipuram**, also. After the sarva vadyam, the nagaswaram and thavil performers stay back in the temple mandapam while the Damaram artistes go out of the temple to perform.

### ACCOMPANYING INSTRUMENTS

- This rare instrument is played with other instruments such as nagara, dhol, nagaswaram and thavil on occasions such as the Panchaparuvu Purapadu that takes place every month during amavasya (new moon), pournami, ekadasi, Tamil masapirapu and Perumal tirunakshatram.

- At the Kanchi Kamakshi Amman temple during the Vidayatri utsavam, Damaram is played along with instruments such as tiruchinnam, mukhavina, nagaswaram, thavil, mridangam and Brahma talam.

## KAMMANDLU QUILT

# ART AND CULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*The Kammandlu quilt of Andhra Pradesh is on the brink of extinction due to lack of raw material. In this respect, let us understand about this handicraft and the current scenario of its makers.*

### ABOUT KAMMANDLU QUILT

- **Parla, a village in Andhra Pradesh** was once renowned for weaving kammandlu which is a **quilt made of sheep's wool**. However, due to lack of raw material, this art is on the brink of extinction.
- There are two kinds of quilts — '**kammadi**' and '**jadi**'.
- While 'jadi' is used as a blanket, 'kammadi' is a shawl that's ceremonial as well as for protection against the weather.
- The kammadi is also used during religious celebrations. Demand for it goes up after Deepavali when a lot of indigenous festivals in Telangana State and Rayalaseema are celebrated.
- This quilt also has another name in Telangana: '**gongali**'.
- In the last few decades, the 'gongali' was popularised by the Telangana balladeer Gaddar, who still wears it during his performances.

### REASONS FOR DECLINE

- The quilts can be made only from the wool of black sheep, whose numbers have also fallen over the years as shepherds prefer rearing **red sheep**.
- The reason is that red sheep mature faster than black sheep.
- Wool from red sheep is of inferior quality and not preferred for quilt weaving.

- The best quality of wool would be the fabric made out of the first shear of a black sheep, since it is the softest wool available.
- Apart from the lack of adequate raw materials, drought-like conditions in the district too have driven shepherds away.

## ATHI VARDAR FESTIVAL

# ART AND CULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*Recently, the festival dedicated to Lord Athi Vardar was celebrated. The festival is unique as it is celebrated once in forty years. In this respect, let us understand some key aspects of this festival.*

### ATHI VARDAR FESTIVAL: KEY FEATURES

- As a part of this festival, **Lord Athi Varadar** rises from the tank of the famed **Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram, once in 40 years**.
- The temple tank is known as **Ananthasaras** and from here Lord Athivaradhar emerges to remain with his devotees for 48 days.
- The last time he came out was on **July 2, 1979, and earlier on July 12, 1939**.
- When he emerges, he brings with him strength and prosperity, which dispels darkness — within and without.
- Three days before the event, the priests enter the pond, remove the **nagabasams (serpents)** and bring the idol out.
- After cleaning, the idol is placed for worship for 48 days and then put back inside the tub under water, with the clamps back in their place.
- Before placing the idol in the tank, organic preservatives are applied to it, so that the salt content in water does not corrode the image.
- The idol is kept in the **Vasantha Mandapam** right on the main entrance of the temple and although regular aradhana rituals are not performed, the offerings of the devotees are accepted.

**ABOUT THE IDOL AND MYTHOLOGY**

- Athivaradhar is actually a nine-feet long idol, made out of the **divine fig tree**, botanically identified as *Ficus Racemosa Linn* falling under the *Moraceae* family.
- According to legend, Goddess Saraswathi had a misunderstanding with her husband Brahma and in a fit of anger took away his divine wand to retrieve which he performed the Aswamedha yagna in the Athi forest (Fig forest), now Kanchipuram.
- Aided by the Asuras, the demons, Sarawati runs as the Vegavathi river and tries to interrupt the Yagna, when Vishnu emerges from the holy fire as Athivaradhar.
- Saraswati is pacified and the yagna continues.
- Viswakarma carves out a body for Athivaradar using a fig tree and He then agrees to stay in Kanchipuram atop the Elephant Hill.

**TUENSANG, NAGALAND**

# ART AND CULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU SECONDARY SOURCE [tuensang.nic.in](http://tuensang.nic.in)

**IN NEWS**

*Tuensang had a long troubled and isolated history. Today, it forms a part of the state of Nagaland with four major tribes living in it. In this respect, let us learn some details about district and its history.*

**TRIBES AND THEIR SUBSISTENCE METHODS**

- Four major tribes — **Chang, Sangtam, Khiamniungan and Yimchunger** — live in Tuensang, the largest and eastern-most district of the Nagaland State, on the Myanmar border.
- The tribal people sustain through their **organic way of living with minimal wastage of resources.**
- The society in Tuensang is divided into villages with headmen who gathers every member of each house to stand together in times of need or danger.
- The practice of Slash-and-burn agriculture is prevalent.

**RELATED INFORMATION: HISTORY OF TUENSANG**

- The area comprising the present District of Tuensang remained totally unadministered in the pre-independence days.

- The British had declared it as an Excluded Area. The people had almost no contact with the outside world.
- Head hunting and other primitive practices were common.
- In 1948, for the first time, an administrative centre was established at Tuensang and in 1945, the area (including the present Mon, Longleng and Kiphire Districts) was brought under the **North East Frontier Agency (NEFA)** as the Tuensang Frontier Division.
- In 1957, the Tuensang Frontier Division was merged with the Naga Hills District of Assam to form an administrative unit called the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA).
- The administration of NHTA was the responsibility of the Governor of Assam under the control of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.
- There were only three districts at that time in Nagaland--Kohima, Mokokchung and Tuensang.
- As a result of the 16-point agreement signed between the Naga People's Convention and the Government of India, NHTA became a full-fledged State of Nagaland on 1st December 1963.
- It was the 16th State of the India Union. Special provisions were, however, made for the then Tuensang District in view of its relative backwardness, under which the District would have a Regional Council for a period of Ten years with the Deputy Commissioner as Chairman.
- The Regional Council also nominated tribal representatives to be the members of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly.
- There was a separate Ministry for Tuensang affairs from among the nominated members of the area.
- It was only in 1973, at the end of the ten-year period that the Regional Council was abolished and the people of Tuensang district began to participate in the elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly along with the rest of the state.
- Later, the three Districts of Nagaland were reorganized into seven District whereby Tuensang was bifurcated into two Districts – Tuensang and Mon. Tuensang was further divided in 2004, when Longleng and Kiphire two of its Sub-Division were made full-fledged districts.

## WHISTLING VILLAGES OF MEGHALAYA

# ART AND CULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

Recently, a mistake was made by a Rajya Sabha member who classified only one village of Meghalaya as a whistling village instead of the entire cluster. In this respect, let us understand the meaning of whistling villages and their significance.

### WHAT ARE WHISTLING VILLAGES?

- The UN body states that whistled language is a **method of communication** that uses whistling to simulate and articulate words.
- Many villages in **Meghalaya** practice the tradition of giving each child a unique tune instead of a name. They are thus called as 'whistling villages.'

### THE CONTROVERSY

- Recently, a Rajya Sabha member urged the government for inclusion of **Kongthong village** in the **UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage**.
- The village is known for preserving its practice of giving each child a unique tune — called **jingrwai iawbei** in the **Khasi language** instead of a name.
- However, other villages around Kongthong have a similar practice of mothers composing a tune for her child until they attain a certain age to be called by "normal" names.

### PLACES WHERE THE TRADITION IS FOLLOWED

- **Khat-ar** is an area belonging to 12 clans of the Khasi community and **Shnong** means village.
- The area comes under the **Sohra Hima (a kingdom-like traditional administrative unit)** headed by a **syiem or chieftain**.
- **Sohra** is the local name for **Cherrapunjee** in East Khasi Hills district.
- Out of the 53 villages in the Khat-ar Shnong area, 23 communicate through whistling and calling each other by a tune.

- Villages such as Mawshuit, Khrang, Mawmang, Mawsawmah and Warbah have had the same tradition as Kongthong.

## ARANMULA SNAKEBOAT RACE

# ART AND CULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

The Aranmula snake boat race was recently conducted in Kerala. In this respect, let us delve into the important aspects pertaining to this tradition.

### ABOUT ARANMULA SNAKE BOAT RACE

- The Aranmula Boat Race is the oldest river boat fiesta in **Kerala**.
- It is held during **Onam (August–September)** at **Aranmula**, near a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Krishna and Arjuna. It lasts for two days.
- The **snake boats (pallyodams)** move in pairs to the rhythm of full-throated singing and shouting watched by an exciting crowd.
- Thousands of people gather on the banks of the **River Pampa** to watch the snake boat races.

### ORIGINS AND MYTHOLOGY

- Legend has it that the boat race of Aranmula had its origin in the devotion of a Brahmin to **Lord Parthasarathy**.
- A Brahmin landlord in the nearby village of Kattoor made a vow to feed one Brahmin on every Thiruvonam (Onam) day in the Malayalam month of Chingom.
- Happy with his devotion, Lord Krishna, in a vision, asked him to take the feast to the Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple from the next year.
- The Brahmin was so overjoyed that he arranged a mass Onam feast for the devotees at the Aranmula temple from the very next year.
- The Brahmin family of Kattoor used to take the articles for the feast in a country craft.

- Once the vessel was ambushed by criminals and the villagers, in their boats, came to its rescue.
- Thereafter, the villagers, in their specially-made boats, started escorting the vessel every year.

## MARAYUR JAGGERY

# ART AND CULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*The Marayur jaggery has recently got its GI tag. In this respect, let us understand about this item.*

### RUN UP TO GI TAG

- It has been a long-term demand of farmers in **Marayur and Kanthallur grama panchayats**, where jaggery is produced without adding any chemicals.
- Though the Marayur jaggery has always been known for its **high quality, fake jaggery with a salty taste** was being marketed as Marayur jaggery.
- It was the persistent efforts made by the **Intellectual Property Rights cell, Kerala Agriculture University**, from August 2016 that resulted in the jaggery receiving the GI tag.
- **The Marayur Agriculture Producer Company (Mapco), Marayur Hills Agricultural Development Society (Mahads), and Marayur Sharkara Samiti (MSS) are the agencies promoting Marayur jaggery under NABARD.**

### IMPACT OF THE TAG

- The tag would help get **more acceptance in the international market** for the product.

- The GI tag would aid in initiating **legal action against fake jaggery** being sold as Marayur jaggery.
- The tag would help in making it safe for consumption while rejuvenating the traditional way of production and ensuring a safe market in future.
- The dark brown Marayur jaggery is handmade at household units in Marayur and Kanthallur.
- It has high sweetness with **less saltiness, high content of iron and less sodium**. The produce is free of impurities and the sugar cane fields are free of chemical pesticides and fertilisers.
- The GI (geographical indication) tag has started working for Marayur jaggery, as the commodity is fetching a record price of ₹70 a kg in Marayur. The price has been ruling for over a week and is unlikely to fall in the coming days, market sources said.

### RELATED INFORMATION: GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION TAG

- A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.
- A geographical indication right enables those who have the right to use the indication to prevent its use by a third party whose product does not conform to the applicable standards.
- **India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15th September 2003.**
- **Darjeeling Tea** was the first Indian product to get the geographical indication tag in 2004.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

## MCQS

**Q1. Consider the following statements:**

1. Kammadi and Jadi quilts are a popular handicraft of Tamil Nadu.
2. These quilts are made from the wool of red sheep.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Q2. The famous Talaqi Darwaza in Delhi, also known as the Forbidden gate was built by which ruler?**

- (a) Humayun
- (b) Sher Shah Suri
- (c) Firoz Shah Tughlaq
- (d) Allaudin Khilji

**Q3. The Vokkaliga community started a movement in 1905 in Mysore. The reason of starting this movement was**

- (a) Partition of Bengal
- (b) British occupation in their territory
- (c) Anti-Brahmin agitations

- (d) Famine in their area

**Q4. With respect to whistling villages, which of the following statements is/are correct?**

1. Konthing village is known for preserving its practice of giving each child a unique tune.
2. This unique tune is known as jingrwai iawbei.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Q5. Consider the following statements related to Firoz Shah Tughlaq:**

1. He founded the city of Jaunpur.
2. He set up a department of public works and dug a number of canals to improve irrigation.

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

## DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** *The Bengal famine of 1943, was politically driven rather than being an outcome of grain shortage. Discuss.*
- Q2.** *On the basis of literary sources, Kashmir can be called as a land of many religions symbolising syncretism. Comment.*

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



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# SECURITY

# GS PAPER III (MAIN)

## DEFENCE MANUFACTURING HUB

# SECURITY #INDUSTRY

PRIMARY SOURCE | pib

### IN NEWS

*The Government of India is working to make India's Defence Industry a \$26 billion industry by 2025 with an anticipated investment of \$10 billion in aerospace and Defence goods and services by 2025. Defence Sector has been identified as one of the prominent sectors under 'Make in India' Initiative to realise \$5 trillion economy by 2024.*

### BENEFITS

- **Need to reduce dependency on arms imports:** India is currently the world's second largest arms importer behind Saudi Arabia.
- **Strategic independence:** Defence equipments are of strategic importance to maintain our strategic freedom. Sometimes due to unavailability of critical inputs into complex defence systems entire platform can be rendered useless. Also, during the times of war, suppliers may turn away from supplying defence equipments to us. Hence, there is a need to have a robust domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem in the country.
- This will **provide employment** to about 2-3 million people
- India already has a big Defence industrial base with Defence Public Sector Units, Ordnance Factories, dedicated R&D labs and many other establishments. There are about 70 license holding private companies.
- Presence of strong IT industry
- High defence expenditure which is spent on domestic procurement can lead to investment and modernization of other related industries.

### STEPS TAKEN

Several steps have been taken under the Make in India initiative to make India a major Defence manufacturing hub and net Defence exporter such as:-

- Reforms in the Defence Procurement Procedure
- ✓ New 'Make' procedure has been introduced in the Defence Procurement Procedure;
- ✓ Defence Procurement Procedure was revised in 2016 to stimulate the growth of Defence industry. A new category 'Buy (Indian-IDDM (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)) was introduced to promote indigenous design and development of Defence equipments.
- ✓ Defence Offset policy has been streamlined
- ✓ Strategic Partnership Model has been introduced in Defence Procurement Procedure to ensure that private sector manufacturers are able to invest in big ticket items like Fighter Aircraft, Helicopters, Submarines and armoured vehicles. This will help Indian private companies to evolve into global giants in coming years.
- **Simplification of procedures** for Defence Exports has resulted in export of Rs 10,745 crore in 2018-19, which is nearly seven times the export achieved in 2016-17 and target of \$5 billion for exports has been set till 2024.
- **Simplified industry licensing process**
- **FDI Reforms** in the Defence Sector: FDI in defence sector up to 49% is permitted under Automatic route. However, if a company is bringing in modern technology or for other reasons 100% FDI can be permitted in the defence sector.
- **Government owned trial and testing facility** has been provided to private sector
- **Two Defence Industrial corridors** have been launched in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh

- In recent times, most of the capital procurement approvals by **the Defence Acquisition Council** given under indigenous development and production.
- **Innovation for Defence Excellence (IDEX)** has been launched to promote innovation and technology development.

Further, steps are being taken to defence manufacturing sector self-reliant such as:

- A new Transfer of Technology (ToT) policy is under process that will pave the path of transferring DRDO developed technologies to the industry.
- A new policy of the use of DRDO patents by the industry is under consideration to promote and motivate Defence industry for innovation.
- Further suggestions include:

1. Further liberalization of Defence FDI policy
2. Clarity should be provided over the long term demand of the Indian Defence forces.
3. Exports of defence products from India should be liberalized.
4. Collaboration should be encouraged between Indian Defence Public and Private sector companies and global defence giants.

## PRIVATE SECURITY AGENCY LICENSING PORTAL

# SECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE hindustantimes

SECONDARY SOURCE mha.gov.in

### IN NEWS

*The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) launched a government web portal to help private security agencies get the licence. Private Security Agency Licensing Portal will help private agencies in police verification of security guards, expand their business across the country apart from providing other facilities.*

### IMPORTANCE

- Private Security Agency Sector is of vital importance for the safe and secure business environment and achieve the vision of \$5 trillion economy by providing employment as well as guarding vital corporations and financial hubs in the country.
- Private security sector **is a sector with huge potential** and there is a need increase trustworthiness of the sector by increasing the number of agencies with licenses.
- The new online portal would be useful in **ensuring transparency in licensing in this sector** and would give a boost to the credibility. It would give a pan-India profile to the online licensing process.
- As majority of police stations across the country are connected online, the **online police verification of security guards would become very easy** by accessing the criminal records online from across the country. Private security, government should start awareness campaigns to make people aware in encouraging only licensing holder agencies in the sector.
- **Retired paramilitary and military personnel represent the untapped potential of the sector** and agencies should try to recruit people who have undergone at least NCC training. This would ensure basic discipline in the employees. This assumes importance because private security personnel are the first line of responders against criminals in the society. Thus, there is a need to impart Indian Penal Code related knowledge to them during their training itself. Private security personnel must maintain regular contact with the nearest police station and act as a connector between police and public.
- Private Security Agencies should ensure the welfare of their security guards. Provisions for social security due to them legally should be given to them. Concerted effort are needed by all stakeholders in this direction.

In short, Private Security Agency Licensing Portal:-

- ✓ Will lead to good governance and it is an example of Digital India.
- ✓ The portal will bring transparency and efficiency in the sector.
- ✓ It is a step towards ensuring 'Ease of living' for citizens.

- ✓ The Private Security Agency sector is one of the highest employment generators.

## APACHE HELICOPTERS

# SECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE ECONOMIC TIMES

SECONDARY SOURCE THE DIPLOMAT

### IN NEWS

*Indian Air Force formally inducted the AH-64E APACHE ATTACK Helicopters into its inventory providing a significant boost to India's combat capabilities at a time of complex security challenges.*

*IAF had signed a contract with Boeing and United States Government in 2015 for 22 Apache AH-64Es. The first 8 of these attack helicopters have been delivered on schedule, and the last of the choppers is to be delivered by March 2020.*

### FEATURES

- They have **stealth capabilities**.
- They have the ability to operate at much higher altitudes than the aging Russian attack helicopters. Russian Mi-35 Helicopters could not operate in the Kargil conflict at the heights that the IAF wanted it to be used in support of the Army. The primary task of an attack helicopter gunship is in support of mechanized armoured formations, yet the adaptability of the inventory to be used elsewhere is also important.
- The Apache **does not have any cargo role**, is in comparison, smaller and more nimble.
- It has the ability to shoot fire and forget anti-tank missiles, air to air missiles, rockets and other munitions.
- It also has **modern electronic warfare capabilities** to provide versatility in network centric aerial warfare.
- It will be armed with air to air 4 Stinger missiles, air to ground 16 Hellfire missiles, 76 rockets and 1200 rounds of 30 mm caliber gun.
- The helicopter carries the fire control Longbow radar, which has 360-degree coverage, and a nose-mounted sensor suite for target acquisition and night-vision systems.

- The weapons and radar systems in the helicopter will enhance the capability of the IAF in providing integrated combat aviation cover to the Army strike corps. These tandem seating helicopters are day/night, all weather capable, and have high agility and survivability against battle damage. These are easily maintainable even in field conditions, and are capable of prolonged operations in tropical and desert regions.

## LCA TEJAS

# SECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE ECONOMIC TIMES

### IN NEWS

*For the first time, India's indigenously-built naval variant of Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas made a successful "arrested landing" in Goa. The arrested landing was performed on the Shore Based Test Facility (SBTF) in Goa.*

*LCA Tejas is an indigenous Light Combat Aircraft; is 4.5 generation fighter aircraft with light weigh;, is a multirole fighter. It has already achieved final operation clearance in February 2019.*

### NAVAL VARIANT OF LIGHT COMBAT AIRCRAFT (LCA) TEJAS

- The naval version has stronger landing gears to absorb forces exerted by the ski jump ramp during take-off, allowing it to be airborne from a much shorter runway on the carrier deck. This allows the naval variant to be airborne within 200 m and land within 100 m as against 1000 m required for normal runways.
- Special flight control law mode allows hands free take off, relieving the pilot workload, as the aircraft leaps from the ramp and automatically puts the aircraft in an ascending trajectory.
- Indian Navy is currently operating Mig-29K fighters from INS Vikramaditya. They will also fly from the first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant once it enters service.
- The successful landing test will:
  - ✓ pave the way for this indigenous platform to undertake aircraft carrier landing demonstration on board INS Vikramaditya.

- ✓ put India on the world map as a nation with the capability to design a deck landing aircraft.

## ASTRA MISSILE

# SECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*DRDO successfully flight tested the Beyond Visual Range Air to Air Missile (BVRAAM) Astra from Su-30 MKI platform..*

- ASTRA BVRAAM has range of more than 100 kms with modern guidance and navigation techniques. The missile has midcourse guidance and Radar missile seeker based terminal guidance to achieve target destruction with pin point accuracy.
- After the trials ASTRA missile system will be inducted into the INDIAN AIR FORCE, which will certainly be a force multiplier considering its accuracy and effectiveness in neutralizing aerial threats.

## BRAHMOS SUPERSONIC CRUISE MISSILES

# SECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

### IN NEWS

*BRAHMOS supersonic cruise missile featuring Indian propulsion system, airframe, power supply and other major indigenous components, was successfully test fired from ITR, Chandipur in Odisha.*

- BRAHMOS is a two-stage missile with a **solid propellant booster engine as its first stage** which brings it to supersonic speed and then gets separated. The **liquid ramjet or the second stage** then takes the missile closer to 3 Mach speed in cruise phase. Stealth technology and guidance system with advanced embedded software provides the missile with special features.
- The missile has **flight range of up to 290-km with supersonic speed** all through the flight, leading to

shorter flight time, consequently ensuring lower dispersion of targets, quicker engagement time and non-interception by any known weapon system in the world.

- It operates on '**Fire and Forget Principle**', adopting varieties of flights on its way to the target. Its destructive power is enhanced due to large kinetic energy on impact. Its cruising altitude could be up to 15 km and terminal altitude is as low as 10 meters. It carries a conventional warhead weighing 200 to 300 kgs.
- The missile has identical configuration for land, sea and sub-sea platforms and uses a Transport Launch Canister (TLC) for transportation, storage and launch.
- It is a joint venture between the Russian and India.

## MILITARY EXERCISES

# SECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

**MAITREE 2019:** It is a joint military training exercise between **Indian Army and Royal Thailand Army**. Contingents of both armies shared their expertise and experiences in counter terrorism operations and enhanced interoperability. The scope of the exercise encompassed joint training in various facets of counter terrorism operations in urban and jungle environments.

**KAZIND 2019:** It is a joint military exercise between **India and Kazakhstan**. Soldiers from both countries shared their experience gained during conduct of various counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in the mountainous terrain.

**TSEINTR 2019:** Exercise TSEINTR 2019 is part of the annual series of large scale exercises that form part of the Russian Armed Forces' annual training cycle. The series rotates through the four main Russian operational strategic commands. Russia holds a major military exercise every year at one of its four military Commands i.e **Vostok (East), Zapad (West), TSEINTR (Centre) and Kavkas (South)**. These annual exercises have slowly began taking an international character, with Belarus participating in ZAPAD-2017 and China and Mongolia participating in VOSTOK-2018. This year, invitations for participation have been extended to nine other countries. This year's Exercise TSEINTR 2019 was conducted by Central Military

Commission of Russia. Apart from host Russia, military contingents from China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan also took part in this mega event. The exercise aimed at evolving drills of the participating armies and practicing them in the fight against the scourge of international terrorism thereby ensuring military security in the strategic central Asian region.

**SITMEX (Singapore India Thailand Maritime Exercise):** It is a maiden trilateral naval exercise between India Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and Royal Thai Navy (RTN) in the Andaman Sea and Port Blair.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### MCQS

**Q.1) Consider the following pairs:**

1. Kazind: India and Kyrgyzstan defence exercise
  2. Maitree: India and Mongolia defence exercise
- Which of the pairs given above is are correctly matched?

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

**Q.2) Patriot Defence System, recently in news has been developed by:**

- (a) USA
- (b) Israel
- (c) France
- (d) Britain

**Q.3) Consider the following statements:**

1. ASTRA is a Beyond Visual Range Air to Air Missile.

2. Naval Version of Tejas has arrested landing capability.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q.4) Consider the following statements:**

1. BRAHMOS is a two-stage missile with a solid propellant booster engine as its first stage.
2. BRAHMOS has flight range of up to 390-km with supersonic speed.

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

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

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# MISCELLANEOUS

## 2019 IAAF WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

# ATHLETICS #GLOBAL TOURNAMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE [www.iaaf.org](http://www.iaaf.org)



2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships is the seventeenth edition of the biennial, global athletics competition organized by the **International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF)**. It is the first edition of the competition under its rebranded name, having previously been known as the World Championships in Athletics.

The host city is **Doha, capital of Qatar**. The event mascot is "**Falah**", an anthropomorphic falcon dressed in athletic gear in the maroon colour of the flag of Qatar.

**Background:** The World Championships were **started in 1976** in response to the International Olympic Committee dropping the men's 50 km walk from the Olympic athletics programme for the 1976 Montreal Olympics. The IAAF chose to host its own world championship event instead, a month and a half after the Olympics. It was the first World Championships that the IAAF had hosted separate from the

Olympic Games (traditionally the main championship for the sport). A second limited event was held in 1980, and a major expansion in 1983 is considered the official start of the event. It was then held every four years until 1991, when it switched to a two-year cycle.

**International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF):** It is the international governing body for the sport of athletics. It was founded in 1912 as the International Amateur Athletic Federation in Stockholm, Sweden. Since October 1993, it has been headquartered in **Monaco**.

## QUIZ TIME

# GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

PRIMARY SOURCE YOUNG WORLD QUIZ



- Q1.** What two-word term is being used for the persistent, large-scale cyclone located near the poles that is being touted as the big cause for the unprecedented cold conditions in the US?
- Q2.** Which three European countries are called the 'Baltic states'?
- Q3.** In which State is the Bankapura Peacock Sanctuary?
- Q4.** According to new data, what makes up more than two-thirds of the known universe?

- Q5.** Which type of cloud gets its name from Latin meaning a ringlet or curling lock of hair?
- Q6.** Which was the first planet discovered with a telescope?
- Q7.** Which is the second most abundant element in the observable universe?
- Q8.** Which is the largest landlocked country in the world?
- Q9.** Melissophobia is a fear of which insect?
- Q10.** Pd is the chemical symbol for which element?

**Answers:** 1. Polar Vortex; 2. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; 3. Karnataka; 4. Dark Energy; 5. Cirrus; 6. Uranus; 7. Helium; 8. Kazakhstan; 9. Bees; 10. Palladium

## WHAT DID YOU ASK AT SCHOOL TODAY?

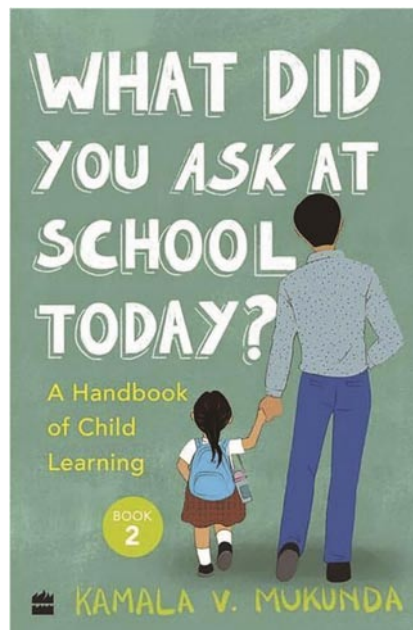
# BOOKS TO READ AND CHERISH

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

*A teacher who creates an environment where a child feels free to ask questions has already accomplished half the task.*

**In short:** The first thing about the book is that it is not about how to teach a child, **but about how a child learns.** From the title itself, it centres the child in the parent's question: What did you ask at school today?

It is not sure how many teachers and how many classrooms really welcome questions from children. It **takes a lot to create a school culture in which a child feels empowered enough to ask.**



It is the curious child who asks a question; the child who is not afraid of being embarrassed before her/his peers; the child who knows that their question will be heard with respect. A child who feels the urge to ask questions is one who wants to know the answer.

To meet (the challenges of) life, our children need a somewhat different education than we are currently giving them. They need questioning minds, independent and critical thinking, the desire to learn and understand and a capacity for self-regulation, and we have to nurture these in them.

## INVICTUS

# POEM TO INSPIRE #INDIVIDUAL ETHICS

PRIMARY SOURCE William Ernest Henley

*We are the master of our destiny. We are responsible for our own happiness. This famous inspirational poem charges us to accept responsibility for our lives no matter our circumstances. Invictus in Latin means unconquered.*

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

**PART TWO**

**ETHICS, INTEGRITY  
& APTITUDE**

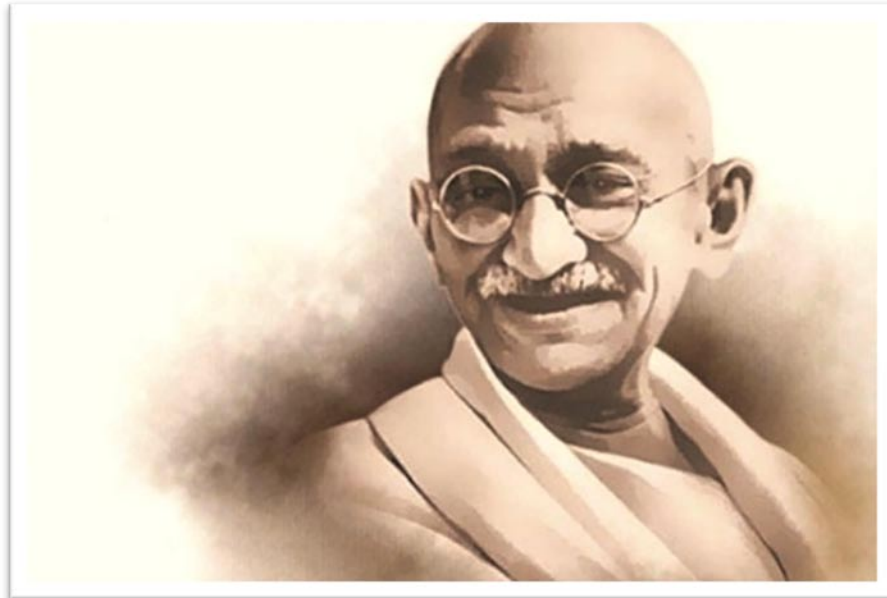
**Coverage from varied sources**



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# 150<sup>th</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY AND INCREASING RELEVANCE OF M.K. GANDHI

#ETHICS #INTEGRITY #APTITUDE



*Gandhian school of thought is a major theme of study worldwide and now when the world is thinking, debating, discussing and trying to adopt methods of sustainable living to bring harmony with all the existence, the relevance and teaching of M.K. Gandhi is gaining paramount importance.*

*HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED- WHAT IS THE ANSWER/SOLUTION FOR: CRONY CAPITALISM, CRIMINALISATION OF POLITICS, ENVIRONMENT DEGRADATION, DECLINE IN INDIVIDUAL & COLLECTIVE MORALITY, SOCIAL INJUSTICE, INFINITE GREED etc.? DOES GANDHIAN THOUGHT PROVIDES REMEDY?*

*On the basis of above, let us explore some of the Gandhian thoughts and methods but before that let us also see some of the past UPSC questions signifying the importance of Gandhi in every aspect of life.*

## ► UPSC QUESTIONS

**Q.** Discuss Mahatma Gandhi's concept of seven sins.  
*(Hint: Seven Deadly Sins- Wealth without work; Pleasure without conscience; Science without humanity; Knowledge*

*without character; Politics without principle; Commerce without morality; Worship without sacrifice.)*

- Q.** "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong". Mahatma Gandhi.
- Q.** "There is enough on this earth for every one's need but for no one's greed." Mahatma Gandhi.
- Q.** Be the change that you wish to see in the world.

*Now discover the answers to common dilemmas from the various facets of M.K. GANDHI presented in the beautifully curated articles given below. So, by reading them, try to figure out the possible solutions.*

## ► ARTICLE 1: GANDHI FOR THE CURRENT TIMES CURATED FROM: THE HINDU

The Mahatma's approach to politics in terms of 'resistance' and 'protest' beyond a conception of domination over others provides a potential antidote to the contemporary crisis of democracy.

For many, Gandhi is only a name and an image in India today but we all need to be reminded that Gandhi has been more appreciated, read and practised seriously outside India than among the last two generations of Indians. Moreover, he remains a towering figure who seems as fascinating as he was when he was assassinated. The impact of his philosophy of non-violence inspired leaders of the 20th century such as Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Václav Havel.

**His universal appeal:** Gandhi's success as a universal gadfly goes far beyond his national stature as the founding father of modern India. As such, his universal message could be measured by his **immense impact on all forms of dissent against unjust regimes** — this includes India — in the past half-century. As such, Gandhi has become a part of the moral conscience of humanity. His name and achievements symbolise a sense of revolt against injustice. That is to say, a proper appreciation of Gandhi's relevance can only be made against the backdrop of his civic philosophy of dissent. Also, let us not forget that Gandhi's critique of modern civilisation in *Hind Swaraj* is one of the greatest Socratic gestures of intellectual self-examination in the history of modern political thought. It is all the more necessary to point out that Gandhi's critical attitude toward modern civilisation is an effort in **asking the right questions at the right time** about whole inherited ideas on thought and action. The Gandhian audacity of asking questions on what the western world presents as universal truths is, therefore, tied to a specific historical context in which this self-examination finds its meaning. As such, it happens that Gandhi is a non-professional philosopher who asks philosophical questions and helps us to understand the implications of how these ideas can change the world. In other words, he is a public gadfly who does not conform himself to any orthodoxy, western or Indian.

Such an attitude of mind is represented by Gandhi's Socratic revolution: **self-examination accompanied by a self-transformation of society**. Gandhi's legacy also exemplifies another Socratic aspect which is absent among most of the political leaders today: **courage**. He believed that when fighting injustice, the actor must not only have the courage of his/her opinions but also be ready to give his/her life for the cause. As writer George Woodcock says, "The idea of perishing for a cause, for other men, for a village even, occurs more frequently in his [Gandhi's] writings as time goes on. He had always held that satyagraha implied the willingness to

accept not only suffering but also death for the sake of a principle." Gandhi's dedication to justice in the face of death is an example of his courageous attitude of mind as a Socratic gadfly. Further, one can find in Gandhi a readiness to raise the matter of self-suffering as public policy. He felt an increasing loneliness in the role of the super-satyagrahi which he had assumed. **Loneliness is one of the fundamental features** of a Socratic gadfly, who is always **expected to take a position independent of those in power and sometimes in direct opposition to the opinions of the larger society**. As a matter of fact, Gandhi's moral power, like Socrates's irony, masks an autonomous individual who is often lonely because of his attentiveness to the moral disquiet within him. Gandhi's nobility of spirit in the face of populism is a timely reminder of how imaginatively the act of dissent can become a way of questioning, changing the world as well as oneself.

**A vision by creating possibilities:** When confronted by mobs or public authority, Gandhi did not adopt a policy of self-censorship. He had no fear of the power of the state or of a tyrannical crowd. It is this state of mind which we can find as the underlying motto of Gandhi's political and intellectual life. Gandhi had no tragic sense of politics, but he knew which battles to fight and which ones to let go. In the manner of Socrates, he was aware of the fact that philosophy and the city need each other and benefit each other, even if there is a distinction between the concerned and critical gadfly and those playing a role to preserve a corrupted power. That is why, for both Socrates and Gandhi, the process of dialogue and ceaseless questioning is considered as the most dissenting and productive thinking of gadflies in the public space. As such, Gandhi was able to define a new vision of independent India — not by a nostalgic return to the past, but by creating the possibilities of a critical public culture in India.

The **idea of struggling for truth and resisting evil**, after all, provides us with one of the most brilliant examples of Gandhian critical thinking and public questioning. Questioning in this context is the non-violent process of speaking up against power while withstanding tyranny and silencing. In other words, Gandhi's main concern is not with ahimsa as kindness and gentleness. He is talking of non-violence as a brave act of dissent. "My non-violence is not merely kindness to all living creatures," wrote Gandhi in his journal *Harijan*. "Ahimsa is the highest ideal. It is meant for the brave, never for the cowardly. To benefit by others' killing and delude oneself into the belief that one is being very

religious and non-violent is sheer self-deception." As a matter of fact, taking into consideration Gandhi's life, Satyagraha rests on a philosophical belief that non-violence is a struggle against wickedness and hypocrisy. Moreover, it is the highest form of moral intervention against falsehood and injustice in the public space.

**Leadership as a true form:** Therefore, more than just being a historical moment, questions which were addressed by Mahatma Gandhi to his contemporaries find their full relevance in our times of political populism and moral hypocrisy. Though Gandhi propounded no Platonic or Machiavellian theories of political leadership, **he personified a moral and dialogical leadership behaviour** widely acknowledged as a true form of interconnectedness and service to others. Undoubtedly, this is the true lesson of Gandhi's political life, where moral conviction and sense of duty to others go hand-in-hand. He strived to live a life in politics which promoted moral values that transcended self-interest and political arrogance. This idea of transformative leadership as an ethic of freedom is a distinctive feature of Gandhi's political philosophy.

As such, in Gandhi's ideal of democracy many of his core beliefs and arguments such as moral growth of the individual, the primacy of the spiritual in non-violent action and the interdependence of all departments of life came together.

**But how did Gandhi expect these principles to work in everyday life?** He had come to the conclusion that democracy, like any other aspect of social and political life, would not function in the framework of a meaningless civilisation with no sense of ethics and spirituality. In other words, his idea of democracy is understood as a means to fulfil one's civic duty as an individual participating in a community and as an end to be attained through moral and political resistance to all forms of centralisation of power.

This is where Gandhi's conception of democracy becomes relevant to us and significant to contemporary democratic theory. Needless to say, Gandhi's approach to politics in terms of "resistance" and "protest" beyond a conception of domination over others provides a potential antidote to the contemporary crisis of democracy. With this in mind, Gandhi can be said to be oriented towards reinventing politics as a capacity for **self-realisation and self-transformation of society**.

Thus it becomes relevant for students to revisit him as an invaluable thinker and moral guide amid the great political

problems and the cultural confusions of India and the world in which we live.

**KEY THINGS TO PONDER FOR CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

- ✓ Philosophy of non-violence as a brave act of dissent
- ✓ Dissent through process of dialogue and ceaseless questioning
- ✓ Critical thinking and Public questioning
- ✓ Moral conscience of humanity
- ✓ To take a position independent of those in power and sometimes in direct opposition to the opinions of the larger society.
- ✓ Revolt against injustice.
- ✓ Self-examination accompanied by a self-transformation of society
- ✓ Courage to suffer for the moral cause
- ✓ New vision of independent India — not by a nostalgic return to the past, but by creating the possibilities of a critical public culture in India
- ✓ Moral and dialogical leadership behaviour, avoidance of self-censorship
- ✓ Moral conviction and sense of duty to others go hand-in-hand

**▶ ARTICLE 2: EMPATHY, PLURALISM AND SELF-ASSESSMENT**

CURATED FROM: THE HINDU

Gandhi knew well that one cannot be a friend of Truth without living on the edge. So on the occasion of 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary, once again the ideas of non-violent resistance and self-transformation are brought before the public arena. But more than ever, this is an opportunity to evaluate the theoretical and practical status of M.K. Gandhi in India and in the world.

It is practically impossible to live in India and not to see or hear references to Gandhi. Gandhi is by far the most recognisable Indian put on currency notes. He is also honoured all over the country with statues erected in the middle of town squares and his pictures posted on the walls of business offices and shops, even restaurants. But this does not mean necessarily that Gandhi is well read and

understood by all Indians. A quick look at everyday Indian politics and the debates in the press and elsewhere shows that the spirit of Gandhi is no more fully present in his native country. Though his name is pronounced by all politicians and managers, when it comes to his teachings, young, middle class technologists, corporate lawyers and businessmen in India consider Gandhi an old-fashioned figure with his preference for an austere, simple lifestyle.

Despite being misread and misunderstood, Gandhi's legacy lives on over 70 years after his death. Today, for many non-Indians, the name "Gandhi" is synonymous with non-violence and civil resistance. As such, Mahatma Gandhi continues to be studied and taken seriously by all those around the world, (including Indians) who are engaged in the struggle for freedom and democratisation. Over the last seven decades, political and spiritual leaders and civil activists, from Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama through to Aung San Suu Kyi, from young militants of Otpor in Serbia to the freedom fighters of Tahrir Square in Egypt, have increasingly incorporated the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence in their protest repertoires, realising the ways in which it challenges the ruling elite's power and domination.

More interestingly, there has been a new interest in Gandhi among political theorists in the West. For the past seven decades, very few theorists considered Gandhi's seminal work, *Hind Swaraj*, as a major work in modern political thought next to Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Hobbes's *Leviathan* and Mill's *On Liberty*. But a new interest in Gandhi the political philosopher is emerging among the comparative political theorists. Actually, his relevance to contemporary debates becomes even more pertinent by analysing his philosophical and political contributions in a comparative perspective. Moreover, it reveals the multidimensional aspect of Gandhian thought while providing a sharp contrast between his approach to ethics, pluralism and autonomy and many challenges of our contemporary world, including lack of empathy, legitimised violence and exclusion.

As such, what the comparative analysis of the Gandhian thought reveals to us is that unlike many contemporary liberal political thinkers, who put rights before duties, empathy and cross-cultural understanding are the 'hallmarks of the Gandhian view of everyday politics. The heart of Gandhi's **ethics of empathy is to look within oneself, change oneself and then change the world.** That is to say, at a more fundamental level, for Gandhi, cultures and nations

are not isolated entities, because they all play a special role in the making of human history'. Therefore, 'Gandhi rarely speaks in terms of linear world history. His goal for every culture (including his own) is the same as his goal for every individual: to experiment with Truth. This is a way to open up the world to a harmonic exchange and a transformative dialogue among cultures'.

At a more philosophical level, in Gandhi's view, **every culture should learn from others.** As a result, politics for Gandhi is a matter of non-violent organisation of society with the aim of becoming more mature and more truthful. At the same time, Gandhi is always concerned with cooperation among nations in terms of mutual understanding, empathic friendship and non-violent partnership.

Last but not least, Gandhi is a **thinker and a practitioner** who is constantly experimenting with modes of comparative and cross-border cultural constellations. As he affirms, "I do not want my house to be walled in on sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any." This statement of Gandhi has a particular relevance to the cultural situation in our globalised world. Gandhi's 'house' can be understood as a metaphor for an autonomous and democratically self-organised system within a decentralised community of 'houses' where communication between equally respected and equally valid cultures can take place. In other words, this capacity to engage constructively with conflicting values is an essential component of practical wisdom and empathic pluralism of Gandhian non-violence.

It also involves a belief in the fact that an understanding of moral views is possible among all people of all cultures because they all participate in the same quest for Truth. This is why Gandhi affirms, "Temples or mosques or churches... I make no distinction between these abodes of God. They are what faith has made them. They are an answer to man's craving somehow to reach the Unseen." Consequently, the Gandhian non-violent approach to plurality is a way of bridging differences and developing inter-cultural awareness and understanding among individuals and nations. As a result, Gandhi suggests a view of civilisation deeply rooted in an ethics of non-violence. However, his ontological and political demands for an ethical approach to human affairs are not of an utopian nature, but more of a dialogical sensibility. Maybe that is why Gandhi's response to the

phenomenology of violence is not the exclusion of certain historical self-consciousness but a mutual recognition among subjects of history. As a matter of fact, the pluralistic and inter-cultural recognition in the Gandhian vision of democracy can determine our sense of who we are and the value accorded to the common world we live in. That is, for Gandhi, one's sense of freedom is never a matter of simple self-introspection. Rather, understanding oneself as an autonomous self-consciousness requires the recognition of the otherness of the other. For Gandhi, recognition is the mechanism by which our democratic existence, as self-transformative beings, is generated.

**Importance of dialogue:** The point here is that in Gandhi's political philosophy, the experience of freedom derives from the diverse modes of participation in common concerns and community-engendering values spelt out in terms of a dialogue with the otherness of the other. Actually, Gandhi's message would be that dialogue with the other would save the self from its own tyranny. In short, what all this means is that with Gandhi, human conscience finally returns to earth, to the here and now, after centuries of temptation looking for salvation in eschatological constructions.

Gandhi knew well that one cannot be a friend of Truth without living on the edge. For him, therefore, thinking and living became one. But, thanks to his comparative and dialogical attitude, he always thought differently and lived marginally. His opening up to the world went hand in hand with his act of being free. While listening to his inner voice, he also had an acute sense of the world. Gandhi preferred to walk with others, even on a tightrope, rather than walking alone on a rigid, inflexible and impenetrable ground. This is his legacy, which is needed now more than ever.

**KEY THINGS TO PONDER FOR CONTEMPORARY**

**WORLD**

- ✓ Non-violence and civil resistance
- ✓ Ethics, pluralism and autonomy.
- ✓ To look within oneself, change oneself and then change the world
- ✓ Every culture should learn from others
- ✓ Cooperation among nations in terms of mutual understanding, empathic friendship and non-violent partnership
- ✓ Ethics of non-violence

- ✓ One cannot be a friend of Truth without living on the edge: to walk with others, even on a tightrope, rather than walking alone on a rigid, inflexible and impenetrable ground

**► ARTICLE 3: REAL SWARAJ**  
**CURATED FROM: THE HINDU**

A century ago, an agenda was spelt out for India — it is as valid today as it was then.

One hundred years ago, Mohandas K. Gandhi was in Ahmedabad. And — no surprise here — he addressed a meeting of residents in that city. One would imagine the meeting was about the Great War that was coming to an end or the battle for Swaraj which was just beginning under his leadership. But no, it was about — and again no surprise — something entirely different.

Three necessities It was about securing three basic necessities which he spelt out as: **“Air, water and grains.”** He spoke in Gujarati and his key sentence was: Hava pani ane anaj e khorakna mukhya tattvo chhe (air, water and grains are essential to human nourishment). If Swaraj, he said, means self-rule, then securing these three khorak means securing Swaraj. Explaining himself with typical concision, **Gandhi said: “Air is free to all but if it is polluted it harms our health... Next comes water... From now on we must take up the effort to secure water. Councillors are servants of the people and we have a right to question them.”** On the subject of grains, he spoke with action, not just words. In a parallel initiative on the same day, he got the Gujarat Sabha, of which he was president, to write to the Bombay government to exempt in some cases and postpone in some others land revenue assessment due to the failure of crops in Kheda district.

**Air, water and grains were the triple khorak of a people in Swaraj.** This was the essence of his address.

On this, if we were to take, with great difficulty in Delhi and less so elsewhere, a deep breath and look ahead on where we stand on Gandhi's first khorak point, namely, clean air, or on atmospheric pollution, we would we find:-

**First**, that India today is among the world's largest carbon emitters, following China, the U.S. and the European Union, is hurting itself by the global rise in extreme climate events and water and food crises.

**Second**, that having ratified the non-binding Paris Agreement on climate change, India has undertaken a huge moral responsibility in terms of reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35% by 2030 from 2005 levels, changing over from coal-based generation to renewable energy sources and, increasing the annual target of forest cover.

**Third**, and the most stark, with the U.S. pulling out of the treaty, the financial aid for the follow-up expected from developing countries is in jeopardy. This makes default and deficits in follow-up a distinct possibility. We need to ask and need to know how equipped we are to meet our commitment to the Paris Agreement. The outlook, as we enter 2019, for India's commitment to the Paris treaty is fraught.

**Running dry:** The scene on the second khorak, water, is even more worrisome. For millennia India has lived from monsoon to monsoon. But now, the relentless thirst of 1.3 billion Indians for water — domestic, agricultural, industrial, 'construction' — has turned our land into one giant groundwater sieve. Technically renewable, our groundwater as a resource is hopelessly overdrawn. Per capita availability of water in India dropped from 6,042 cubic metres in 1947 to about 1,545 cubic metres in 2011. Today the figure should be much lower, and by 2030, India's water scarcity will have reached alarming proportions.

Are we — the peoplehood of India — who form the stakeholders in our water resources really aware of this?

We are not. The rock-hard fact is that the National Water Mission's efforts notwithstanding, we are dangerously water deficient and deplorably water iniquitous. Water-profligacy by a few contrasts with the water-inadequacy of the many. And water, or the lack of it, is the cruellest of these. Scarce water is also about unsafe water, and it is estimated that 21% of communicable diseases in India are caused by poor and un-overseen water supply. A significant percentage of our waste water, it has been estimated, is discharged raw into rivers, lakes. Will this new year, 2018, see someone, anyone, from government or our polity scream a warning about our water peril? Most unlikely.

Gandhi's **third khorak — grain — is in dire distress**. Behind the dispossession caused by the real estate mafia and corporates, the corrosive impact of cash-cropping and shrinking of timely credit lines is a deepening gloom over output costs and minimum support prices (MSPs), of which farmer suicides are chilling testimony. The five reports of the National Commission on Farmers that M.S. Swaminathan

chaired consolidated his warnings and his recommendations. It has been deeply disturbing to hear him urge implementation of his recommendation on the MSP. In a plangent comment powerfully reminiscent of Gandhi, he has said, "The future will belong to nations with grains, not guns." P. Sainath has been speaking of the agrarian crisis with unflagging zeal. Aruna Roy's Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan and Yogendra Yadav's Swaraj Abhiyan have done likewise. The Kisan Sabha has remained an inspiration for the cause and the energy brought to the farmers' agitation in Maharashtra by Yashwant Sinha's espousal of their demands has been salutary. And yet, looking into just the twelve months ahead of us, I cannot see any helpline to India's lifeline, agriculture.

While these three essential khorak essential for India to 'simply live', as Mr. Sainath has put it, struggling for breath, what are we getting instead, and on a priority? Three other khorak: the hava of intolerance, the pani of polarisation and the anaj of uniformity. And why? Because these distract, they divert attention from the real life-and-death crises. Intolerance and Polarisation winds are growing strong. And as for uniformity, the India of many-grained people, all secure in their plurality, is now being dispossessed by an India which believes in codes being uniform rather than civil. To stand in line, sit in postures, speak in chants, sing in tune is to be uniformly patriotic. To make Muslims self-conscious at Eid, Christians nervous at Christmas is to be systematically patriotic.

The right to question: Gandhi spoke of Swaraj's three basic khorak. But he also gave a fourth khorak for **Swaraj**. And that lay in his words, "**we have a right to question.**" This fourth khorak extended to political rights, social and economic rights. And very specifically, it led to the Kheda peasants satyagraha.

**KEY THINGS TO PONDER FOR CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

- ✓ Air, water and grains are the triple khorak of a people in Swaraj
- ✓ The fourth khorak for Swaraj is the right to question. This extends to political rights, social and economic rights.
- ✓ Are all these 'four' challenged in the contemporary times?

## ▶ ARTICLE 4: SANGHARSH AND NIRMAN

CURATED FROM: THE HINDU

2019 is the 150th birth anniversary year of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and any meaningful homage to Gandhi would call into question the very fundamentals of today's political and economic power, and point a sharply critical gaze at the rampant abuse of religion and nationalism. His legacy is crucial for the majority of the world's population, marginalised by capitalism, statism, patriarchy and other structures of oppression. As it is for the rest of nature, so badly abused by humanity.

And so we must turn for hope to the many movements of **sangharsh (resistance)** and **nirman (construction)** throughout the world. These movements realise that the injustices they are facing, and the choices they must make, are not bound by the divides that ideologues play games with.

Let's take sangharsh. At any given time in India, there are dozens of sites where Adivasis, farmers, fisherpersons, pastoralists and others are refusing to part with their land or forest or water to make way for so-called development projects. One thousand farmers have filed objections to their lands being taken up by the bullet train. News that is both inspiring and depressing keeps coming from Latin America, of indigenous people standing up for their territorial rights against mining and oil extraction, and all too frequently paying the price when state or corporate forces kill their leaders. Nationwide rallies were organised by the National Alliance of People's Movements and the Ekta Parishad. They involved movements for land and forest rights, communal harmony, workers' security and other causes that are not so easy to place in any ideological camp.

The same goes for **nirman, or the construction of alternatives**. Across the world there are incredible examples of sustainable and holistic agriculture, community-led water/energy/food sovereignty, worker takeover of production facilities, resource/knowledge commons, local governance, community health and alternative learning, inter-community peace-building, reassertion of cultural diversity, gender and sexual pluralism, and much else.

It is in many of these alternative movements that we find inspiration for building on the legacies of Gandhi, Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, Rosa Luxemburg and various luminaries) and, equally important, on the many indigenous

and Adivasi, Dalit, peasant and other 'folk' revolutionaries through history. There are many examples that dot the Indian landscape: the few thousand Dalit women farmers who have achieved *anna swaraj* (food sovereignty) in Telangana while also transforming their gender and caste status; the several dozen Gond Adivasi villages in Gadchiroli that have formed a Maha Gram Sabha to stop mining, and work on their own vision of governance and livelihood security; a Dalit sarpanch near Chennai who utilised Gandhian principles in his attempt to transform the village he lives in. Similarly, there are others across the world: a thousand people have experimented with anarchic community life in the 'freetown' of Christiania in Copenhagen for four decades; indigenous peoples in Peru, Canada and Australia have gained territorial autonomy; small peasants in Africa and Latin America have sustained or gone back to organic farming; fisherpersons in the South Pacific have their own network of sustainably managed marine sites.

What is of significance in many resistance and alternative movements is the **exploration of autonomy, self-reliance, people's governance of politics and the economy, freedom with responsibility for the freedom of others, and respect for the rest of nature**. While these movements do often call for policy interventions from a more accountable state, there is also an underlying antipathy to the centralised state. Private property is also challenged. In 2013, the Gond village Mendha-Lekha in Maharashtra converted all its agricultural land into the commons. Note that commons here does not mean state-owned, a distorted form of 'communism' that has prevailed in orthodox Leftist state regimes.

Finally, we would do well to honour the legacy by identifying such common ground and building on the struggles and creativity of 'ordinary' people in communities across the world.

#### KEY THINGS TO PONDER FOR CONTEMPORARY WORLD

- ✓ Sangharsh (resistance): Exploration of autonomy, self-reliance, people's governance of politics and the economy, freedom with responsibility for the freedom of others, and respect for the rest of nature
- ✓ Nirman (construction of alternatives): Sustainable and holistic agriculture, community-led water/energy/food sovereignty, worker takeover of production facilities, resource/knowledge commons, local governance,

community health and alternative learning, inter-community peace-building, reassertion of cultural diversity, gender and sexual pluralism etc.

- ✓ Ecological resilience and wisdom
- ✓ Equal respect to other species

### **CONCLUSION: WHAT MADE M.K. GANDHI GREAT?**

Gandhi himself was what he was, a **great moral leader** and a **giver of remedies for the maladies** of the human condition, because he drew inspiration from a variety of sources. His philosophy is indebted to four great spiritual and moral traditions: **Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Christianity**. Gandhian philosophy is constituted as much by the Bhagavad Gita as it is by the Sermon on the Mount. And he drew

inspiration as much from Tolstoy and John Ruskin as much as he drew inspiration from Vivekananda and other spiritual leaders in India. Gandhi's truth led inexorably in the direction of **toleration**.

And it is precisely toleration that we need in today's world where dissent is suppressed through annihilation. This lesson, the religious right, indeed fundamentalists of every hue, need to learn. **We do not tolerate others because we alone know the truth, we tolerate because we do not know enough. Confidence that we know the truth leads to violence, doubt that we know enough leads to non-violence. We come to terms with history by learning from it, not by erasing it.**



# CASE STUDIES FOR PRACTICE

## MAINS GS PAPER IV

*Here, we are sharing case studies for self- practice. These case studies are drawn from various aspects of professional and personal experiences, and are helpful for General Studies- Paper IV. Do practice them!*

**CASE 1:** You are a young, aspiring and sincere employee in a Government office working as an assistant, to the director of your department. Since you've joined recently, you need to learn and progress. Luckily your superior is very kind and ready to train you for your job. He is a very intelligent and well-informed person having knowledge of various departments. In short, you respect your boss and are looking forward to learn a lot from him.

Since you've good tuning with the boss, he started depending on you. One day due to ill health he invited you at his place for finishing some urgent work. You reached his house and you heard shouting noises before you could ring the bell. You waited for a while. After entering, boss greeted you and explained the work. But you were constantly disturbed by the crying of a woman. At last, you inquired with the boss but his answer did not satisfy you. Next day, you were compelled to inquire further in the office and found out that his behavior is very had at home with his wife. He also beat up his wife.

His wife is not well educated and is a simple woman in comparison to her husband. You see that though your boss is a nice person in the office, he is engaged in domestic violence at home. In such a situation, you are left with the following options. Analyse each option with its consequences.

- a) Just ignore thinking about it because it is their personal matter.
- b) Report the case to the appropriate authority.
- c) Your own innovative approach towards the situation.

**CASE 2:** Now-a-days, there is an increasing thrust on economic development all around the globe. At the same time, there is also an increasing concern about

environmental degradation caused by development. Many a time, we face a direct conflict between developmental activity and environmental quality. It is neither feasible to stop or curtail the development process, nor it is advisable to keep degrading the environment, as it threatens our very survival.

- Q. Discuss some feasible strategies which could be adopted to eliminate this conflict and which could lead to sustainable development.

**CASE 3:** You have recently been appointed as the District Collector of an impoverished district, which has been witnessing drought for the last couple of years. Corruption at lower levels of bureaucracy has further aggravated the situation. The district also faces the problem of diminishing resources of drinking water. Despite, the gravity of the problem, the response from the central and the state government is lackadaisical. Moreover, the media coverage of the problem is also dismal. To make matters worse, the younger members of the community are migrating in search of work to the urban areas without much success, leaving the elders, women, and children behind to fend for themselves.

- a) As the District Collector what would be your priorities for solving the problem?
- b) How would you tackle the situation?
- c) What long term measures would you take to prevent the future recurrence of the problem?

**PART THREE**

**ESSAYS**

*of*

**THE MONTH**

**Selected essays from Rau's GSI students**

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# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IS THE PANACEA FOR THE GROWTH AND SECURITY OF THE NATION

# SCIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

SRAVANI

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*Disclaimer: The viewpoints in the topic are strictly personal of the writer above. The role of Rau's IAS Study Circle is to present the write-up in its original form, hence the study circle neither endorses nor rejects any viewpoint in the submission. The purpose is only to showcase the manner of writing.*

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A farmer is looking at the sky anticipating rainfall. Her routine is sowing seeds before the rainy season, hoping for timely rains, less pests and a good harvest. Without science and use of technology, her farming output and profits are susceptible to vagaries of nature and uncertainties. The use of scientific methods on the other hand, enables her in informed decision making and makes farming profitable leading to better incomes and growth.

Numerous applications like above, make use of science and technology in enabling economic growth of the nation. Not only growth, but it plays a major role in ensuring security of the nation from both internal and external threats. 'It is hence argued that science and technology is the panacea – a one stop solution for the growth and security of the nation.

Since ancient times, the prosperity of a civilization depended upon the advancements in Science. Even before the establishment of civilizations, the progress of mankind from Palaeolithic cultures was made possible by discoveries such as use of fire, wheel, tool implements in agriculture and metallurgy. The under-developed settlements with low

scientific advancements were forced to give way to developed ones. Societies that encouraged scientific thought i.e. rational thinking and logic experienced material prosperity. A strong naval fleet, weaponry was the major reason which helped colonial nations to subjugate Asian and African territories.

Even in modern times, the countries with better technologies have had better economic growth. Countries such as China with heavy investments in Science are reaping benefits now. In the Indian context, focus on science and technology gained impetus post-independence. The initial decades saw the establishment of research organizations such as ISRO, DRDO, IISc and institutes such as IITs. The applications of the technologies developed by these institutions in various fields led to growth. However, only economic growth is not sufficient and we recognized the need for inclusive growth. On one end, it is argued that the unintended consequence of growth, using scientific advancements, is the rise of inequalities. For example, Green Revolution increased productivity of food grains on one hand and led to further inequalities between large and small farmers on the other. This argument however, cannot undermine the benefits of technology. The imperative hence is to make use of technology to enable not just growth, but inclusive growth and sustainable development. The role of science cannot be undermined in achieving this.

Science helps in making the vulnerable sections of the society, both a participant and beneficiary of growth. It can be applied to achieve development in various sectors – such as agriculture, manufacturing and services.

In **agriculture**, it enables use of better inputs, increase productivity and achieve better farm incomes. Soil Health Card Scheme, for instance, gives the necessary information to farmers on certain soil parameters. By applying this knowledge of required amount of fertilizers, the crops better suited for a particular soil, farmers can reduce input costs and improve resource use efficiency.

It is expected that agricultural mechanization may lead to increase in farmers' incomes by 25-30%, according to the National Committee on Doubling Farm Incomes. Along with it, focusing on gender sensitive machinery will help women farmers to use equipment such as tractors. Since 45% of Indian workforce is dependent on agriculture, better incomes in agriculture will lead to inclusive growth.

In **manufacturing and industrial sectors**, companies and countries that are able to invest in latest technologies get more profits. In India, unorganized sector and informal workforce accounts for more than 90% of the population. Unequal access to and use of technology by small scale industries affect their quality, profitability and hence employment generation capability. Hence, government initiatives such as creation of Special Economic Zones, Make in India, Atal Innovation Mission have focus on encouraging recent technological innovations. Science forms the basis to achieve the goal of generating 100 million jobs in manufacturing sector by 2030 (Baba Kalyani Committee Recommendations).

In **services sector**, India was able to make rapid strides as it was successful in adapting latest developments in IT and ITES sectors. Further emphasis on developing sectors such as financial services, health care, and hospitality by using Artificial Intelligence Big Data Analytics will boost growth.

At **Governance level**, use of technology enables transparency and reduces corruption, as noted by 2nd ARC report. Good Governance is an important pillar of inclusive growth.

**Inclusive growth** aims at poverty reduction, access to essential services to all, gender empowerment, employment opportunities, social security, benefits and equitable development. Science and technology helps in achieving this objective of 'Sab ka Saath, Sab ka Vikaas'. Technology helps in better targeting government subsidies and reducing leakages

(JAM Trinity). It enables access to education in the form of MooC – Massive Online Open Courses even at remotest locations. It enables employment beyond physical boundaries. It can be used as a great leveler to reduce inequality of opportunities.

However, Science by itself cannot lead to the achievement of these objectives. Government has to play a major role in enabling access to technology for all. Otherwise, it might end up further increasing the technological divide between the people.

Along with growth, Science has a major role to play in **security** of the nation. Threats to security can be internal or external. Sometimes, the source of the threats can also be traced back to scientific and technological developments. The use of internet on one hand revolutionized virtual communication and on the other, resulted in Cyber Security threats.

Internal Security of the nation can be strengthened by using technology. Police are making use of technology for effective crime control and patrolling. The '**SHE**' app of Cyberabad Police is one such example of using technology to maintain law and order.

Intelligence agencies rely hugely on Satellite Communication to gather information against possible threats.

The development of missiles, nuclear technology as a deterrence by India is to ensure security from external threats. However, new challenges are emerging every day. Developments of chemical weapons (such as Agent Orange in Vietnam War), Biological weapons by other countries or radical groups are posing new challenges to security.

Use of technology by terrorist groups to radicalize youth in the form of Cyber terrorism is increasing. The omnipotence of technology is also increasing the vulnerability of the nation. Wars are waged no longer in the battlefields away from the civilian settlements. Technology is being used to cause political instability, manipulation of voter behavior, spreading fake news threatening the security of the nation. The digitization also made data and privacy more vulnerable to attacks. However, these challenges do not imply that one needs to shy away from the use of technology. The

challenges posed by science and technology can be solved by science and technology only.

As it is said, 'Science is double-edged sword'. Its role in promoting human development and ensuring security is based on how we use it. Science and Technology coupled with wisdom on how to use it is the panacea for the growth and security of the nation.

It is worthwhile to remember the words of the father of our nation in this context – 'Science without Morality is a Sin.' Morality should be the guiding principle on which science is used.

# BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN OTHERS

# ETHICS

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*Disclaimer: The viewpoints in the topic are strictly personal of the writer above. The role of Rau's IAS Study Circle is to present the write-up in its original form, hence the study circle neither endorses nor rejects any viewpoint in the submission. The purpose is only to showcase the manner of writing. Therefore, it is the sole responsibility of the reader to use his/her intellect to check the veracity of viewpoints.*

spreads to encompass others in the world. The source of 'what one wants to see' outside is within the individual himself. This understanding is emphasized by religious thinkers and philosophers since ancient times. Buddha insisted that path to enlightenment or sorrow free world is by conquering inner desires. In Jainism, the supreme master is Jina – the one who conquered his self.

The philosophical significance lies in the fact how inner 'locus of control' is emphasized rather than external sources. The one, who seeks his wants – happiness, respect, fulfillment outside himself and in others may be prone to disappointment.

This internal and external focus is what modern business leaders such as Stephen R Covey of Influence. Circle of Concern is comprised of our needs, wants, worries etc. where our control is minimal. Circle of influence refers to issues where we exercise control. At the centre, lies our self. i.e. the easiest (or rather difficult) one to change and influence is our self.

Focusing on 'Change' in others is a form of expectations. At individual level, we might want our family to be more understanding, life partner to be more supportive, friends to stand by us in personal lives. However, before such expectations, Gandhiji guides us to be a more understanding family member, a supportive spouse and a good friend ourselves first.



A woman came along with her son to meet Gandhiji. She had a complaint. Her son was eating lot of sweets. Afraid he might spoil his health, she wanted Gandhiji to ask her son to stop eating sweets. As the boy respects Gandhiji a lot, she was sure that he would heed Gandhiji's advice.

Gandhiji asked her to come back after a week. After 7 days, he told the boy to stop eating sweets. Perplexed, the woman asked Gandhiji why he made her to wait a week, to give this simple advice. Gandhiji replied, "It took me one week to stop my habit of eating sweets. How can I ask your son to do something without me doing it? I now stopped eating sweets and hence can advise your son to do the same." The boy never touched a sweet after that.

Simple, yet profound is this message of Gandhiji – 'Be the Change you want to see in others.' This is a high moral principle which needs to be upheld by individuals and nations alike. It emphasizes how change starts from within and then

The expectation is that 'others' will reciprocate the same towards us. Another corollary of this signifies that 'one cannot blame external circumstances for immoral and unethical actions'. At work place, one cannot say 'I am being unethical because everyone else is.' This shows escapism and justifications of wrong doings by blaming external factors. In increasing corruption and moral turpitude, this statement will serve as a beacon. Before blaming colleagues, higher officials, it will force an individual to maintain her uprightness. Once this happens, he/she will set an example for others to follow.

At civic level, this philosophy forces us to do our civic duties responsibly. Whether it is paying taxes on time, maintaining cleanliness, protecting public property, it starts at individual level.

'Treat your neighbour as you treat yourself' was emphasized by Jesus Christ. This serves as a self-introspection tool to analyze our behaviours, thoughts and actions. It will motivate us to lead by example.

Saint Shankaracharya was once walking in a street. A Chandala (as the outcasts were called at those times) stopped him in his way. Shankaracharya was visibly upset and shouted at him to give way. He told the man who looked drunk to move away, as he was an untouchable. The Chandala questioned back, "Are you not touching the same land I walk on, the same wind we breathe? You, Shankara are advocating advaita (i.e. non-duality and unity of all), and yet differentiating between you and me?"

"How do you expect others to believe in non-duality, Shankara, when you yourself are differentiating among people?" Shankaracharya realizes his mistake and falls at the feet of so called Chandala. How can we expect others to follow us or change for better, if we don't initiate it ourselves?

Great leaders, hence are those, who led by example along with strong conviction to stand by virtues. They stood fast to their values even at testing times to 'be' what they asked others to 'do'. Socrates, chose to give away his life rather than conveniently break law or escape from prison. Jean of Arc stood steadfast with her conviction even when facing death trial. This inner strength comes from making oneself - the source or origin of change.

This understanding can be extended not just to fellow citizens or humans but to nature as well. We cannot expect nature to be benevolent and providing us with our needs always, if we are not benevolent towards nature. To protect environment or to combat climate change, actions should start from self rather than blaming others. This holds particularly true for developed nations such as USA - refusing to acknowledge climate change and take remedial steps.

It holds equally true for developing nations arguing that they cannot focus on environment conservation at present as it is the outcome of acts of developed nations. A global issue like climate change cannot be tackled by shifting blame but by accepting responsibility to change existing environment degradation practices by all.

Equally important is the combating of problems such as terrorism, human right violations across countries. 'Be the Change' here signifies, that at all levels - individual, national, regional and global, focus is on developing tolerance and discouraging terrorist activities. For example, a country engaging in State sponsored terrorism at other places cannot ensure safety for its citizens at home. How can one expect peace while advocating war in other regions?

The recent geo-politics signify the validity of this principle much more than before. Recent instances of rising trade - protectionism xenophobic tendencies seek to put 'fault' out there. By focusing on 'others - migrants taking our jobs that country has policies against us,' one tends to shift focus to external factors rather than emphasizing on internal reforms.

The rise of 'ultra-nationalism' and 'we vs them' tendencies are posing a threat to rule based world order. Rising incidences of hate crimes, fundamentalist organizations, radical outfits across the world are an example how one forces 'others' to change. This leads to increased violence and threats to global order and world peace.

In this simple, yet profound philosophy is the solution. Instead of blaming others, when we introspect; instead of forcing others to change, when we change from within; it helps us to reflect upon our values, actions and became a better human being. This will lead to a better society and a better world. For a leader is not, the one who knows the way and shows the way but who also goes the way.

# PROMOTING SPEEDY, COST EFFECTIVE AND EQUITY IN JUSTICE TO ALL

# JUSTICE AND GOVERNANCE

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Rehman, an agricultural labourer in Assam has been facing severe financial crisis as he has not been able to get work due to continuous engagement of NRC (National Register of Citizen) process. What was started by the government as a process to help citizens to get their rights and privileges now stands as a hindrance to both? The SC mentioned process has caused hardships to locals. The documents which got his brothers and other family members a slot in the list weren't enough to prove his citizenship. The lengthy process continues, eating up the available resources and seriously tampering the justice angle.

"Justice" as a principle not only finds mention in the preamble of our constitution but also in Article 39A (DPSP) imposing upon the duty that state shall provide justice to all in cost effective way. Fundamental Right Article 14, equality before law and Article 22(1) equal opportunity are also some of the articles reaffirming our needs.

The third pillar of democracy – JUDICIARY was made independent and in a hierarchical structure to ensure that it remains a powerful organ and reaches every level of society. With changing times, National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), Lok Adalats, Gram Nyayalayas were also added in the span to help improve the justice delivery. But what was substantially missed and which has rendered our judicial process and delivery in effective is the reform particularly

core police and judicial reforms. Also, reforms in criminal investigation and reforms in prison.

Indian judiciary is over burdened with cases ranging from a plethora of backgrounds. With limited capacity of judges and unfilled vacancies in the lower courts the problem gets more serious. Already lodged cases are not disposed and new cases continue coming up thereby causing a serious problem. Police system also over burdened with duties such as local policing, crime investigation and maintenance of law and order often misses out on the very aim for establishment – justice delivery aid. 2<sup>nd</sup> ARC observes that over 65% of jail population is comprised of under trials because of slow disposal of cases. What is even more worrisome is that sometimes accused spend more years in prison than the legal punishment would have imposed.

Firstly, speedy disposal of cases cannot take place without efficient police system which undertakes task of investigating thereby forming base of the case. For this, purpose fundamental changes like empowering the police with cutting edge functionaries supplemented by improvement over forensic sciences is necessary. Strong forensic division is necessary to prevent delay in reports and thereby preventing piling up of cases. High level task force committee can also be set up to point out non-core functions of police which can be out sourced in a phased manner. Also, training of the police is utmost important as they would enhance their skills and will help in speedy justice.

On the part of the judiciary, it is necessary that recommendation of 229th Law Commission report of formation of cassation benches is seriously looked into. Not only increasing the number of judges but also removing the non-important cases to reach the Supreme Court would be

effective. As a measure to decongest the court certain cases should be delegated by forming commercial court for matters relating to it. Further, Criminal Judicial Magistrates Court should be created for criminal cases. A cap on number of appeals should be made. Further, merger of Tribunals would help in speedy disposal of cases. Moreover, effective use of existing machinery like video conferencing facilities should be effectively utilized. NITI Aayog in its India @ 75 year report has called upon to reform forensics and ballistics by outsourcing to accredited laboratories. Further it talks about bringing attitudinal change by inculcating respect for rule of law at schools and by introduction of incentive and action based models. This will help in creating a law abiding society.

Article 39A is a directive for the government to help citizens get free legal aid specially the poor and weaker sections of the society. But the real life situations portray a completely opposite picture. Many cases in the NRC Issue, Assam have revealed that poor section of citizen have not applied for challenging the order of non-inclusion simply because of lack of funds. If so, this shall cause a serious damage to our justice delivery system. Similarly, what we see as overcrowding in prisons due to locking up of people who have committed minor offences is due to lack of finances. These people often coming from disadvantaged background keep on serving due to their inability to pay bail or afford legal fee.

In order to establish a cost effective justice delivery system which is need of the hour, a number of steps should be taken simultaneously. Despite having the best laws and machinery like NALSA and Gram Nyayalayas they suffer from lack of funds and infrastructure. Central government's decision to meet non-recurring expenditure of Gram Nyayalayas is welcomed but needs a speedy implementation and at a wider base. Further, Bar Council should be effective in allocating lawyers to aid disadvantaged group. Non-availability of notary and stamp vender possess another problem which should be addressed. Further, due to lack of literacy and complex formulation of laws many citizens do not know about their rights. Bar Council lawyers should play important role along with Ministry of how to propagate the rights citizen have and the means to achieve them. Quality lawyers should be appointed for the disadvantaged group and it should be ensured that they are not over-burdened which would again force us to land in a vicious cycle of delay and increases in

cost. Mapping of the worst affected sections and crimes involved can supplement in not only better allocation of resources but also in preventing such acts.

The term equity mentioned in the statement deserves to be given special emphasis. Often than not idea of equality is emphasized which means giving equal opportunities to all. As compared to it, equity means giving just and fair treatment in a society like ours where the world's richest and poorest live together. Government is duly bound to ensure that discrimination due to disparity doesn't take place.

The basic premise of ensuring equity should start from the root of formation of case by police. A close nexus between police and politics, police and corporates is not infamous. Police should be used as a service not force and should come in aid of powerless instead of aligning with powerful. Strong measures of the police machinery are acquired. According to one school of thought police should be accountable to the law and law alone. This would give police the required autonomy of function in a fair and impartial manner. Balance between Accountability, Autonomy and Authority should be looked into.

Supreme Court has been regarded as a voice of the poor and the history of the court also shows some landmark judgements propagating and standing up in support of those being oppressed by majority and powerful. A step further in terms of granting witness protection should be done. There have been enough cases where the witnesses are silenced even before they reach court or even if they do reach there, they often land up being killed or tortured by those commanding power. Cases would be speedily and fairly solved if protection is given to them.

Thereby it is evident that speedy trial and cost effectiveness act as aid to one another while equity would mean to further cement the justice delivery. By ensuring speedy disposal, nowhere should the quality of trial be sacrificed. For long term sustainability, regular upgradation would be required by bringing in effective and timely police, judicial and prison reforms. "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, Man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."



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# WISDOM FINDS TRUTH

# ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND APTITUDE

SNIGDHA GAUTAM

(RAU'S DELHI STUDENT, BATCH M-5)

***Disclaimer: The viewpoints in the topic are strictly personal of the writer above. The role of Rau's IAS Study Circle is to present the write-up in its original form, hence the study circle neither endorses nor rejects any viewpoint in the submission. The purpose is only to showcase the manner of writing.***

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Wisdom and truth have a very deep and delightful relationship. Something similar to that of a seed and fruit. The way a 'seed' becomes the foundation formation for growth of a tree to ultimately bear 'fruits', 'wisdom' is that intrinsic value of human life which builds the character of a person and allows them to discover the 'truth'.

Wisdom can be understood as the state of being wise, knowledgeable and insight into right and wrong, in the simplest terms. Truth can be understood as the actual state of matter, the reality. Wisdom is nothing but the ability to decipher the difference between right and wrong by uncovering the reality i.e. truth. The factors like knowledge, learning, values, experience, education etc. make way for the wisdom. It makes a person strong minded towards the journey of attaining better vision to be able to see things in the new light, in the light of knowledge and brightness of reality.

Wisdom can be seen to have the various qualities in the context of truth such as sincerity. A person with wisdom would know that sooner or later they will have to face their decisions, so they would work in a way which is not deceitful or dishonest and is truthful. Other quality can be foresight, wisdom gives the ability to understand the present and know that being prudent is the way to make best use of life and its opportunities. There are several other qualities as well, like persistence, control, flexibility, discipline, patience, humility

etc. and each of these can be seen to allow the journey towards acceptance, acceptance of inevitability of truth and reality being uncovered.

This interplay of qualities can be seen in daily life examples like in a child parent relationship. Where, when a child does any wrong, it is the parent who guides the child with his/her wisdom towards unravelling the reality. Something that always existed but could only be seen by the child when guided by the wisdom of parents.

The relationship can also be traced from the past with the help of learning from the great social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. 'Sati' was one of the derogatory and most shameful practice towards women. It was accepted by the society until wisdom of Raja Rammohan Roy found truth, truth that every person had right to live with dignity by it male/female. Similarly, practice of untouchability was overshadowed by the truth of equality under the wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Wisdom and Truth also find their presence in legal justice system of society where the laws are made with an objective to allow police and judges to apply their wisdom based on the evidences or prime facie case facts to uncover the truth to punish the accused/wrong doer.

The advancements in science and technology is another example of this relationship. It is the wisdom of the scientist which helps the world learn about new aspects in various fields and discover the truth. For example, till the time there was no wisdom, it was believed that Earth is the shape of square and travelling larger distances would mean falling of the Earth.

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Thus, the inter relation between wisdom and truth can be seen in each and every field/aspect where the knowledge allowed and made way for wisdom which in turn uncovered the reality and gave the ideologies in existence a new meaning or direction.

Absence of wisdom will disintegrate the humanity on various levels starting from rotting of roots of the society. It would make way for corruption, deceit, manipulation and exploitation in the society. Just the same way in the time of pre-independence, No flaw was seen in the British Administration before some wise members of society started raising their voice against it. Even if the people before that could see and feel the oppression they had started to accept it as their fate in the absence of knowledge that they did not have to be oppressed thinking it to be the God's will or their fate. Wisdom was needed for them to understand 'Fate lies in the hands of a person.

Absence of wisdom thus is clear harms the very fibre of society but it is also important to understand that absence of wisdom gives birth to asinine practices and lack of ethics in a sort of a chain like process, (i.e. a domino effect) of downfall of the economy. The economy of the society is hurt because of sheep herd mentality in absence of knowledge and wisdom to use that knowledge.

Thus, clearly wisdom and truth do not just form a very potent relationship with respect to social, administrative, societal, technological aspects but also with economic aspects. Wisdom in the presence of knowledge guides one to the brightness. Wisdom serves the purpose of sunlight which by default is the best disinfectant. It allows one to not only possess knowledge but also the ability to use it will and for the food of the society by uncovering the truth.

Truth is not only found in wisdom it is the end result of wisdom and purpose of human life. Every short and long term journey in life of human begins to had some truth which he/she attains by acquiring wisdom towards it. For example, when one wakes up in the morning, he/she might have some targets in mind, which he/she shall only be able to realise in true sense, if he/she possess wisdom for it. Therefore, it is clear that wisdom is the means to achieve the end, truth.

Truth is treasure on the end of one of the bifurcated roads, only wisdom can guide towards the appropriate choice of the road head.

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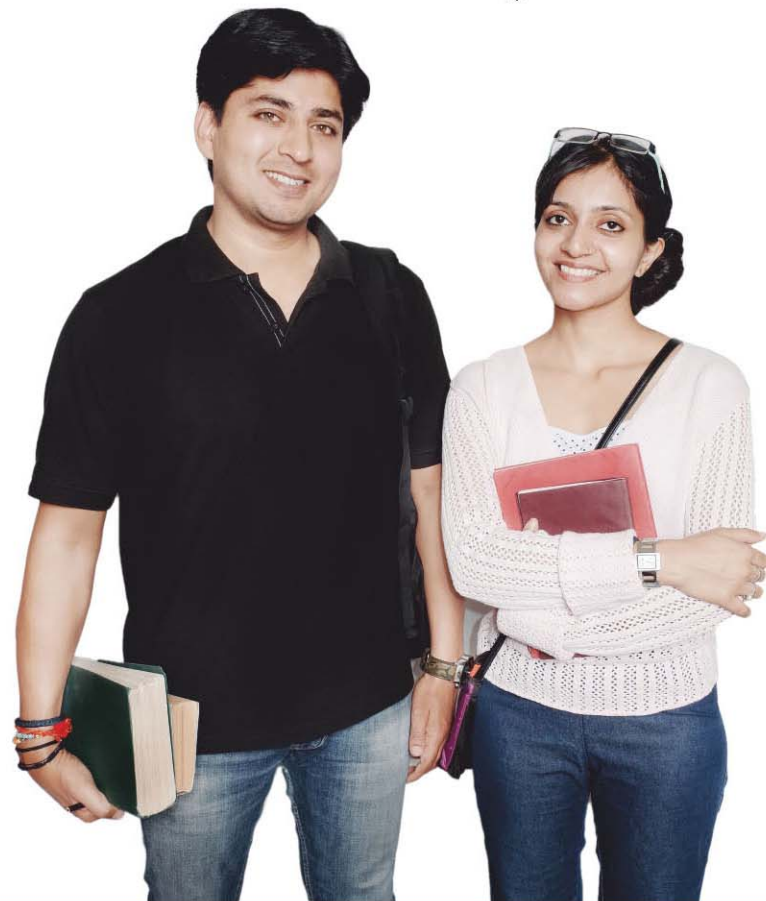
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