MONTHLY

EPIC!

AN EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE FOR

PRELIMS + MAINS

PREPARATION

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The Journey of a Thousand Miles begins with the first Step

Dear Forumites,

You have in your hands (or your screen – depending on whether you have a hard copy or soft copy) the second edition of the Epic! Magazine – a single Magazine that provides you segregated, but comprehensive coverage of Prelims & Mains Examination for Civil Services Examination.

Based on your feedback, we are now providing clickable links in the index. So now you can directly click on the links from the index and directly go to the article.

From this issue onwards, we will be ensuring that coverage is expanded to include 7PM Articles and new concepts – primarily mains relevant keywords and concepts such as online diplomacy, Health Impact Fund etc.

Some of you have reached out to us asking if CSE 2020 candidates can adopt the magazine, given that legacy / old issues of the magazine do not exist. For meeting these expectations, we shall be coming up with Epic Yearly Round up before Mains 2020 to provide a consolidated magazine to cover yearlong news.

If you feel we can do something to help you prepare better, do write to us at feedback@forumias.academy

We read every email, even if we cannot reply to all of them.

Wishing you Success,
Always,
ForumIAS Academy

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SHOWCASE ARTICLE

India-China Border Dispute and the Age of Expansionism

In News: India and China are engaged in a confrontation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Eastern Ladakh and Sikkim. Two hotspots along the LAC (in Ladakh and Sikkim) are threatening to turn into military flashpoints. Further, China's troop build-up and incursive attempts—in Ladakh's Galwan areas seem threatening in the context of Chinese President asking his country's army to raise its battle-readiness shortly after Beijing upped its defence budget by 6.6% this year to $178.16 billion.

India-China Border

The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
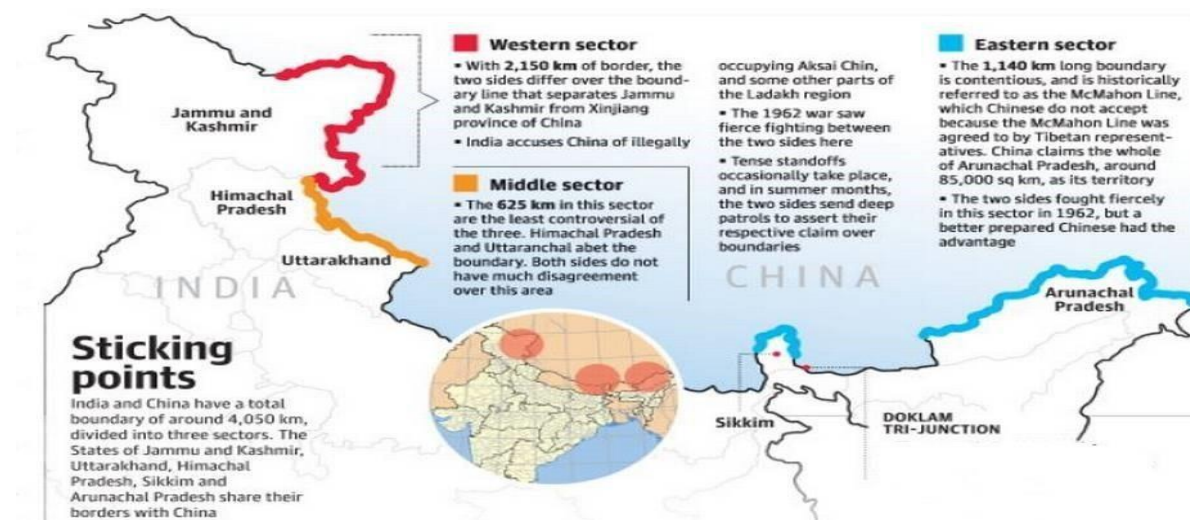
But the border is not fully demarcated and the LAC is neither clarified nor confirmed by the two countries. India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.

The middle sector is the least disputed, while the western sector witnesses the highest transgressions between the two sides. This has led to different perceptions of the LAC and soldiers from either side try to patrol the area up to their perception of the LAC

Difference between delineation and demarcation:

LAC is neither delineated nor demarcated.

"In my opinion, delimitation means the laying down – not the laying down on the ground, but the definition on paper, either in words or on a map – of the limits of a country. Delimitation covers all the preliminary processes and procedure involved before a boundary is laid down on the ground. Having done all that, you then come to work on the ground, and then the process ceases to be delimitation and becomes demarcation."

-Captain A. H. McMahon (1896)

Agreements on the Line of Actual control

Four agreements have been signed between India and China for meaningful progress on the boundary issue. But the absence of a definition of the LAC allows new and secret advances on the ground.

Stance on the Eastern and Western Sectors:

- **In Eastern sector**: The Chinese have not accepted the loosely defined McMahon line which follows the principle of watershed.
- **The Western sector**: The LAC is two hypothetical lines based on different military considerations of both sides.

What do the agreements say?

- The 1993 agreement (On the maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)): Before the final solution, the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the LAC between the two sides and No activities of either side shall overstep the LAC.
- Both the 1993 and the 1996 agreement (on confidence-building measures in the military field along the LAC): Both sides will reduce or limit their respective military forces within mutually agreed geographical zones along the LAC.

Why are these agreements considered to be deeply flawed?

- **No bearing on ground reality**: Many of the articles in the agreements have no effect on ground. Such as Article XII of the 1996 agreement talks about the agreement being subject to ratification and shall enter into force on the date of exchange of instruments of ratification. It is not clear if and when that happened.
- **No clarity to recognise the existing lines of deployment of the respective armies as they were in 1993**:
- The agreement does not reflect any attempt to have each side recognising the other's line of deployment of troops. If both armies are to respect the LAC, they should have clarity of line.
- **Rather than the "LAC", they could have used the term "existing deployment" in the 1993 agreement**: In such a case there would have been two existing lines of control on the map — one for the physical deployment of the Chinese troops and the other for the physical deployment of the Indian troops. This would have rendered the areas between the two lines as no man's land.
- **Para 4 in Article II of the 2013 agreement (on border defence cooperation):** It urges both sides to work with each other in combating natural disasters or infectious diseases that may affect or spread to the other side. But in the current crisis, the standoff could have exposed some of the Indian soldiers to a local Chinese mutation of COVID-19.

Reasons for large scale movement by China in Ladakh and Naku la of Sikkim :

1. **Infrastructure building by India** - China is responding to India's efforts to bolster border

infrastructure in Ladakh after the completion of the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road (near the confluence of Shyok and Galwan rivers)

2. *Pre-emptive step* – Chinese army is physically changing the ground position and preventing the Indian troops from undertaking regular patrolling in the area.

3. *Diverting attention from Internal dynamics –* The political pressure from all the countries regarding China's effort to contain COVID has led to a disturbance in internal politics as well. The Hong Kong protests have also questioned the central authority.

4. *Discouraging Investment in India –* Disruption in supply-chain amid the COVID pandemic and the flight of MNCs from China has increased the possibility of these companies moving to India. Such border disruptions usually discourage investors.

5. *India's alignment with the USA:*
   - A few instances could be highlighted to confirm the perception that India tends to side with the U.S. and against China whenever there is a conflict of interest between the two.
   - India is today a member of the Quad (the U.S., Japan, Australia and India) which has a definite anti-China connotation.
   - Further, U.S. President Donald Trump's latest step of redesigning the G-7, including countries such as India (India has conveyed its acceptance), but excluding China, provides China yet another instance of India and China being in opposite camps.

6. *India- China relationship* – Following instances prove that relations between the two countries have been steadily deteriorating:
   - India is against China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI). India also loses no opportunity to declaim against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). China further views India's assertions regarding Gilgit-Baltistan, as an implicit attack on the CPEC, China's flagship programme.
   - Amid COVID crises, India was one of the earliest countries to put curbs and restrictions on the Chinese foreign direct investment.
   - The Indian Home Minister's statement that PoK and Aksai Chin are also part of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019 have been viewed by China of India upping the ante.

Implications of the transgressions

1. *Updating in the Standard Operating Procedure* - The established SOPs and drills have not worked this time and new drills will be required as the situation on the ground has changed.

2. *Unreasonable concessions by India* – Due to increased Chinese pressure, India might resolve the border issue by going soft on China in international institutions like the World Health Assembly.

3. *Wider confrontation or possibility of war* - Faced with the disaster of the Great Leap Forward in the 1960's, and increasing isolation globally, Mao in 1962 chose to strike at India rather than confront Russia or the West. History can repeat itself in 2020 also.

Why an all-out confrontation or nuclear use is not possible between China and India?

- *Undesirable military escalation:* A direct fight with India does not suit Beijing's interests. In-fact carrying out minor military expeditions to inflict small-scale military defeats on India precisely suits the Chinese political and military leadership as they are cost effective, less escalatory and the message gets conveyed.
- *Political constraints:* If India loses territorial areas during a limited war, then there is a possibility of the political establishment regaining territories through non-conventional (all-out war/nuclear weapons) means. The Chinese realise the deterrence of having a nuclear armed neighbour.
- *Tit for tat tactics by India:* There are several places along the several thousand kilometres long LAC where the PLA is militarily weak. The Indian Army can retaliate back along those places.
- *Maritime domain*: China enjoys continental superiority over India but maritime domain is China's weak spot. Further, the maritime space is crucial to Beijing's commercial and energy interest.
- *Economic front:* Beijing's interest does not lie in damaging the $100 billion trade with India with its military adventurism.

Does India need a new China Policy ?

Previous Indian governments have followed the approach of Quiet diplomacy coupled with strong military posture to deal with Chinese incursions. However, they have also been criticized for allowing the adversary a way out.

Depsang incursion 2013:
- The Indian government had privately conveyed to China that an upcoming visit by China's Premier would be off if the stand-off didn't end.
- The key to arriving at a successful outcome was keeping public rhetoric calm and steady and displaying strength and giving the adversary a way out.

Chunar stand-off 2014:
- India quietly but forcefully stopped the Chinese road-building and deployed 2,500 soldiers which outnumbered the People's Liberation Army (PLA). As a result, PLA withdrew.
- Both sides disengaged and followed a moratorium on patrolling into contested areas for months.

Doklam crisis 2017:
- Indian troops crossed over into Bhutan to stop a Chinese road construction on territory India sees as Bhutanese and accused China of unilaterally altering the India-Bhutan-China trijunction.
- Restoring status quo: Beijing demanded an unconditional withdrawal. Both sides disengaged without divulging the terms. It later emerged that the deal struck resulted in India withdrawing first and then China stopped construction.

India's current China policy is seen by many as a failure due to the following reasons:

1. *No focus on realpolitik* - It is based on persistent political fantasies like India's vision of Asian unity rather than practical ground situation where China only promotes its own national interests.

- For Instance - While India never stopped arguing with the West in the 1970's, China developed a sustained engagement with the US, Europe and Japan. This was for better economic cooperation which can help China rise as a global power.

2. *No learning from past mistakes* – India had consistently misread China's interests and ambitions which started with its occupation of Tibet, border infrastructural projects in Aksai Chin and now in the South China sea. India should shed its idealistic virtues of foreign policy in its dealings with China.

3. *Shifting the blame on West* – There is a general belief that the US and the West are at the source of India's problems with China. The belief is that they are using India as a pawn for their interest in the region which is not liked by China.

Rabindranath Tagore	• Aimed to develop shared Asian spiritual civilisation with China. • Chinese blamed him to thwart their attempts of modernisation.
JawaharLal Nehru	• Aimed to defeat imperalism in Asia with the help of China but failed as Congress denied to join China in defeating Japanese Imperalism. • Supported China when West isolated it which was followed by war of 1962.
PV Narsimha Rao	• Political Cooperation with China and Russia to build multipolar world in Post Cold war era. • China went on to become unipolar in Asia and Bipolar in World.

Table 1 - Timeline of failed Indian attempts to build Asian and anti-Western solidarity with China:

Suggested solutions to devise new Policy:

1. *Enhancing internal political coherence* – All the political parties and other stakeholders need to have one voice for issues of national importance which would send strong signals to outsiders regarding our national interest and domestic compulsions to achieve the same.

2. *Accelerating economic modernisation* – India needs to develop its manufacturing sector to reduce the trade deficit with China as we have become heavily dependent on them for import of raw material as well as final goods in sectors like pharmaceuticals, chemicals and electronics.

3. *Expanding India's national power* – India needs to exercise strategic autonomy while framing its relation with other powers. This implies that for our national interest we need to align with the West even if that is not liked by China.

4. *Push for building border infrastructure and governance*-In the mid-1950s the government piloted a project to build the Indian Frontier Administrative Services (IFAS) for overseeing NEFA and other areas along the India-China frontier and work towards its development. Though India's border infrastructure is now catching up with the

infrastructure of China, its base was made during the brief period the IFAS existed before it was wound up in 1968.

- o **_Revisiting the IFAS idea_**: Especially as areas along the frontier continue to complain of neglect and a lack of focus from the Centre.

5. **_Outreach and treaties-_**India signed treaties with Nepal and Bhutan which built unique relationships with them. Over time, the treaties have outlived their utility.

- o **_Renegotiation of treaties_**: China has been able to make inroads into Nepal but not with Bhutan as the government renegotiated its Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship of 1949 with the India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty in 2007 dropping an article that had committed Bhutan "to be guided" by India on its external affairs policy. Same has not done with Kathmandu.

6. **_The Tibet issue-_**Though India has sheltered the Dalai Lama and lakhs of his followers since 1959, there is a need to look into the future of its relationship with the Tibetan refugee community in India as well as with its future leadership.

- o **_Future of political leadership of Tibetan_**: After the current Dalai Lama which has the loyalty of Tibetans worldwide currently, China will try to force its own choice on the community given that it is home to so many Tibetans. India must chart a more prominent role in this discourse.

Way Forward: The current crisis is occurring at multiple locations along the LAC which suggests a high degree of Chinese premeditation and approval for its military's activities from the very top. Thus, India must be proactive to resist any Chinese transgressions and at the same time utilize its diplomatic skills to tone down the tensions. Recently India and China held a high-level military talk and agreed to peacefully resolve the current border issue in accordance with the bilateral pacts as well as the agreements reached between the leadership of the two countries.

GENERAL STUDIES 1

Domestic Violence: The Shadow Pandemic
Indian Society : Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues.

In News: The UN Women has termed the rising domestic violence crisis as "shadow pandemic".
Domestic violence: According to WHO, intimate partner violence or domestic violence is one of the most common forms of violence against women and includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviours by an intimate partner. It also includes child or elder abuse.
Different Factors that perpetuate Domestic Violence:
The issue of domestic violence is rooted in a patriarchal society. Often referred to as "intimate terrorism", domestic violence is an expression of the very desire to gain and maintain power and control over women. The different factors that perpetuate domestic violence are as follows:

Cultural	Political
- Gender-Specific Socialization - Expectations of roles within relationships - Belief in the inherent superiority of males - Notion of family as private sphere and under male control - Customs of marriage (bride price, dowry) - Acceptability of violence as means to resolve conflict	- Underrepresentation of women in power, politics, media - Risk of challenge to religious laws
Economic	**Legal**
- Women's economic dependence on men - Limited access to cash and credit - Discriminatory property rights, inheritance laws - Gender bias in employment and education	- Legal apathy and inherent patriarchy in legal system. - No law for marital rape - Low legal literacy among women

Domestic violence in India- A brief Overview

- According to the global estimates published by the World Health Organization (WHO), India has the highest intimate partner violence (37.7%) in the WHO South-East Asia region.
- As per the National Family Health Survey IV conducted in 2015–2016, 31.1% of married women aged 15-49 years experienced spousal violence at least once in their lives.
- Domestic Violence During Covid-19 Pandemic: As per the mid-April data by NCW, there was an almost 100% increase in domestic violence during the lockdown.

Steps taken by Indian Government to prevent domestic violence

1. **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:**
   - It is a civil law that provides protection from domestic violence to women and children in a shared household. It recognizes domestic violence as a human rights violation.
   - Domestic violence cases can be filed against both male and female relatives of the husband or the male partner.
   - Under the provisions of the Act, women can seek protection against domestic violence, financial compensation, the right to live in their shared household, and they can get maintenance from their abuser in case they are living apart.

2. **Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code**: It is a criminal law, which applies to husbands or relatives of husbands who are cruel towards the wife/mother in the family.

3. **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** It is a criminal law aimed at prohibiting the practice of giving or receiving dowry.

4. **One Stop Centres (Sakhi Centres)**: They are centres established by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) to support women affected by violence of any sort. They provide a range of services including medical, legal, psychological and counselling support to the victims.

5. **Universalisation of Women Helpline Scheme (181):** It provides 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by the violence, both in private and public spaces.

6. **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS – Dial 112):** It is a project under the Nirbhaya Fund. It aims to prevent crime especially against women and children.

Case Study: Why has domestic violence increased during the pandemic lockdown?
- Tension and strain created by security, health, and financial worries
- Confinement and lack of access to alcohol leading to interpersonal violence and abuse.
- Domestic labour becomes taxing during a lockdown if not distributed equally. The woman is expected to bear the load and violence increase if she fails to do so.
- Lack of institutional support, inability to complain during lockdown aggravates the problem.

Steps taken to address rising domestic violence during lockdown
- National Commission for Women (NCW) launched a **WhatsApp number** – 7217735372 to report domestic violence during lockdown
- **'Suppress Corona, not your voice':** It is an initiative launched by the Uttar Pradesh government. Under the initiative, a female police officer visits the house to register the complaint and warn the perpetrator.
- **"Red dot" initiative by non-profit WEFT (Women's Entrepreneurs for Transformation):** Under this, domestic violence victims are asked to draw a red dot on their palm to seek help and alert their neighbours and authorities

Issues and Challenges with Prevention and Justice for Domestic Violence:

1. **Limitation of Domestic Violence Act:** The biggest limitation of the DV Act is the civil character which does not allow criminal punishment for men who engage in domestic violence.

2. **Reluctance to Reporting:** India lacks mandatory reporting mechanisms such as routine screening and reporting by hospitals when women visit with suspicious injuries.

Supreme Court Judgements:
- In 2016, Supreme Court struck down the word "adult male" from Section 2(q) of the DV Act and ruled that not only men, but women can also be prosecuted under the Act.
- In 2017, Supreme Court banned immediate arrest unless "visible signs of injuries are present" in case of dowry harassment under Section 498A to prevent women from misusing this law.

3. **Apathy of Legal system:** Due to patriarchal practices prevalent within legal institutions, domestic violence is often treated as a private family matter and women are denied justice.

4. **Low Conviction Rate:** According to the NCRB Report 2017, in cases pertaining to dowry deaths, the conviction rate was only 41.1%.

5. **No viable solution to women:** The DV Act does not provide permanent relief for women and only provides interim solutions such as Protection Orders. Further, it provides for shelter homes, medical facilities and legal aid which remains largely inadequate.

6. **Societal attitude:** Societal attitude often justifies domestic violence. For example, 52% women and 42% men surveyed in the NHFS-4, believed that it is justified for a man to beat his wife.

Way Forward:

1. **Strengthen institutional mechanisms for help-seeking:** Institutional mechanisms for reporting domestic violence must be strengthened. For example: Special training should be imparted to police forces to handle domestic violence cases.

2. **Change in Societal attitude:**
   a. The government should initiate campaigns to sensitize about gender biases and domestic violence.
   b. Value education of male children in schools should be initiated.
   c. Media outreach can be used to alert to the facts and the dangers of domestic violence and encouraging positive steps like sharing care-responsibilities at home.

3. **Financial Empowerment of women:** Proactive measures are required for financial empowerment of women. To ensure financial independence, post COVID-19 strategies should include dedicated funding and support for micro, small and medium sized businesses and the informal sector, which are predominantly led by women.

4. **Healthcare Support:** Domestic Violence should be treated as a public health issue. Special Care should be provided to women seeking medical help following an episode of violence.

5. **Strengthening Social Support System:** It is important to create safe spaces where women feel comfortable to seek help and discuss domestic violence issues.

6. **Self-defence:** women can be trained in basic self-defence skills to respond to the violence on an immediate basis.

Parivartan

It is a programme implemented in 2006 by Northwest District of the Delhi Police. It focussed on reducing crime against women in the district, increasing the reporting of violence, improving the behaviour of men toward women in both domestic and public spaces, and increasing awareness among women.

Conclusion: The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 seeks to "eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women in the public and private spheres, and to undertake reforms to give them the same rights to economic resources and access to property by 2030".

India needs to address the issue of domestic violence through policy and societal changes for fulfilment of its commitment towards gender equity.

Drug Abuse in India: A Socio-Medical Threat

Indian Society : poverty and developmental issues

In News: The Covid-19 pandemic may leave people vulnerable to the use and the trafficking of illicit drugs.

Magnitude of Drug Abuse in India:

- According to NCRB figures, 63,137 cases of drug smuggling and drug abuse were registered across India in 2018. The highest number of cases of drug abuse - 11,708 - were registered in Maharashtra.
- According to National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) report "Magnitude of Substance Use in India", at the national level, about 14.6% of the people the ages of 10 and 75 are current users of alcohol and there are about 8.5 lakh people who inject drugs (PWID).
- According to a study by the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights on Substance Abuse by Children, 100% of the children in conflict with the law were drug abusers in 2015.

According to World Drug Report 2020 released by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):

- Around 269 million people used drugs in 2018, up 30% from 2009, with adolescents and young adults accounting for the largest share of users.
- Nearly 35.6 million people suffer from drug use disorders globally however, only one out of eight people who need drug-related treatment receive it.

Causes of Drug Abuse in India

- *Geographic Location*: A major factor making India vulnerable to drug trafficking and consequent drug abuse is its geographical location- it lies in close proximity to the major opium producing regions of South West and South East Asia known as the 'Golden Crescent' and the 'Golden Triangle', respectively.

A DEVIOUS ROUTE
> Heroin is smuggled into India from Pakistan; from Delhi, it's shipped to Europe and the US
> Methaqualone is mostly carried by concealing it in cavities in registered baggage
> Golden Triangle is an opium producing zone that includes Myanmar, Thailand and Laos
> Golden Crescent is used to describe an area of opium trade that covers Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan

- *Easy and Cheap Availability*: Cheap and easy availability due to cross-border smuggling. According to UNODC World Drug Report 2016, the retail prices of cannabis are the lowest in India.
- *Social factors contributing to drug abuse*: An unstable home environment; poor relationship with family members, high rates of unemployment, illiteracy, depression, stress and peer pressure are risk factors contributing to drug abuse.
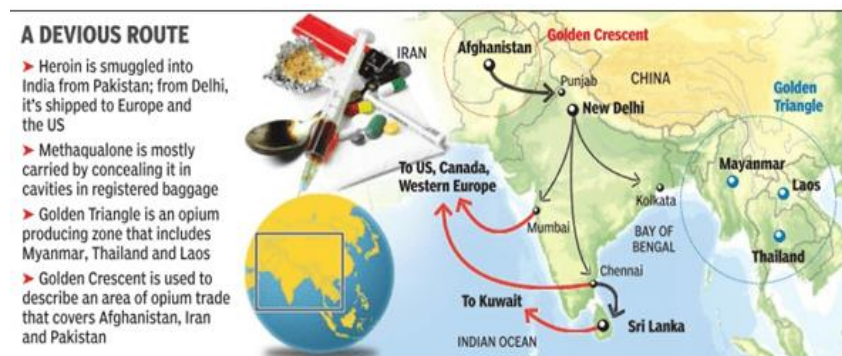
Covid-19 Impact on Drug abuse:

Threat to the vulnerable and marginalised: The socio-economic crisis due to the pandemic might disproportionately affect the vulnerable and marginalised groups, youth, women and the poor. Socially and economically disadvantaged are more likely to develop drug use disorders but receive no treatment for the same.

Drug Trafficking: According to the UN, Covid-19 has prompted traffickers to find new routes and methods. Illicit activities via the so-called 'darknet' and shipments of drugs by mail, may increase.

Alternative drugs and addiction: The Covid-19 pandemic has led to shortages of highly addictive opioid and therapeutics for pain management. This may lead people to seek out more readily available substances, including alcohol, sedatives or intravenous injections of drugs.

- *Role of media:* Glorification of drug abuse in media such as in series and movies- largely influences adolescents.
- *Psychological factors:* Curiosity, social rebelliousness, early initiation, Low self-esteem (Anomie), Poor stress management and childhood loss or trauma contribute to drug abuse.

Measures taken by Government to curb Drug Abuse:

- *Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:* It restricts cultivation, production, sale, purchase, possession, use, consumption, import, and export of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Narcotics Control Bureau: It is the nodal drug law enforcement and intelligence agency of India. It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs, established under the NDPS Act,1985.

- *National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR), 2018-2025:* It aims to reduce the adverse consequences of drug abuse in India through a) education, b) de-addiction and c) rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families.
- *Central Sector Scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse:* Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to eligible Non-Governmental Organizations for running Integrated Rehabilitation Centres for Addicts.
- *Nasha Mukt Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21):* focuses on 272 most affected districts. The plan aims to launch a three-pronged attack combining efforts of the Narcotics Control Bureau, Outreach/Awareness by Social Justice and Treatment through the Health Department.
- *National drug abuse survey:* It is conducted by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment with National drug dependence treatment centre of AIIMS to measure trends of drug abuse in India

According to *Article 47 of the Constitution,* the state is duty bound to prevent the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs which are injurious to health

Issues and Challenges:

- **Harsh and disproportionate penalties:** Provisions of NDPS Act such as the criminalization of drug use, punishment for possession of drugs for personal use and the death penalty are more severe than those provided by the UN drug control conventions.
- **Rehabilitation:** De-addiction centres are not fully equipped and health workers are not properly trained. Often the addicts are treated as prisoners.
- **Legal loopholes:** Poor implementation of the NDPS Act, widespread corruption leads to unabated drug abuse in India.
- **Societal attitude:** Post rehabilitation acceptance in society is a major issue.
- **Poor availability of Credible Data:** Unreliability and non-accurate data provided by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and Narcotics Control bureau leads to inefficient policymaking.

Suggested Reforms to Combat the Menace of Drug Abuse:

- **Enhancing avenues of treatment:** India needs massive investments in enhancing the avenues for treatment. Further people who use drugs should be able to access evidence-based treatment services without the threat of criminal prosecution and imprisonment.
- **Counselling and Rehabilitation:** There should be more counselling and rehabilitation centres. Further, these centres should be equipped with trained health workers to ensure sustained de-addiction of addicts.
- **Principles to drug policy formulation:** The government should apply harm reduction principles to drug policy formulation. Example: In Portugal, overdose and drug related HIV infections got reduced after the decriminalisation of drug use.
- **Addressing Drug Trafficking:** The Anti-Narcotic Squads and Drug Enforcement Agencies should be more vigilant in controlling drug trafficking and transnational organised crime networks. There should be a strict multi-pronged strategy integrating demand reduction, harm reduction & supply reduction

- *International cooperation*: International cooperation is required to increase access to controlled drugs for medical purposes and prevent diversion and abuse.
- *Awareness and Prevention:* Since children and young adults are most vulnerable to drug abuse, measures should be taken to aware children on myths surrounding alcohol and other drug use, which leads to the glamorization of these substances. For example: In Sri Lanka, a drug abuse preventive unit has been established in the Ministry of Education. The Ministry runs programmes targeting both children and teachers.
- *Role of Media:* Mass media should play an important role in spreading awareness about menace of drug abuse and not glorifying drug abuse.

India is signatory to three UN Conventions regarding drugs:
- Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961,
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971,
- Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988

Conclusion: Drug abuse is a menace to the society putting thousands of lives at risk every year. It is high time the government takes coordinated actions to achieve the goal of a "drug free society".

GENERAL STUDIES 2

ADR and online mediation: Justice for All in Digital India
Syllabus: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government

In News: Analysing the importance of ADR and online mediation in the times of COVID-19.
Effects of COVID-19 on courts:
The courts were shut down for all except the most urgent matters to reduce the risk of infection of litigants and judges.
Issue in design of courts: Our judicial system is simply not designed for contactless operations as most court processes—the submission of pleadings, the payment of court fees, the conduct of arguments—require person-to-person interaction.
Present conditions of the Judiciary:
- *Pending cases:* There are more than 3.5 crore pending cases in courts of which 87.54 per cent of the total pendency of cases is in the district courts. (As of November 2019).
- *Complex procedure:* The judicial system is complex with strict application of procedural laws like the Civil Procedure Code which takes a lot of time.
- *Delay in justice:* There is a massive backlog which results in delay in judgements.

ADR (Alternate Dispute Resolution)
It is a process to settle or bring the disputes between the parties to a friendly result without the institution of Judiciary. This method enables the parties to reach at result with co-operation outside courts.
Constitutional provisions for ADR:
- The preamble is based on the idea of justice.

- The fundamental rights given in Article 14 and 21 under the Constitution of India deals with equality before law and right to life and personal liberty respectively. These require the state to provide speedy justice to ensure welfare.
- Article 39A of the Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) aims to achieve justice for all and free legal aid to every individual.
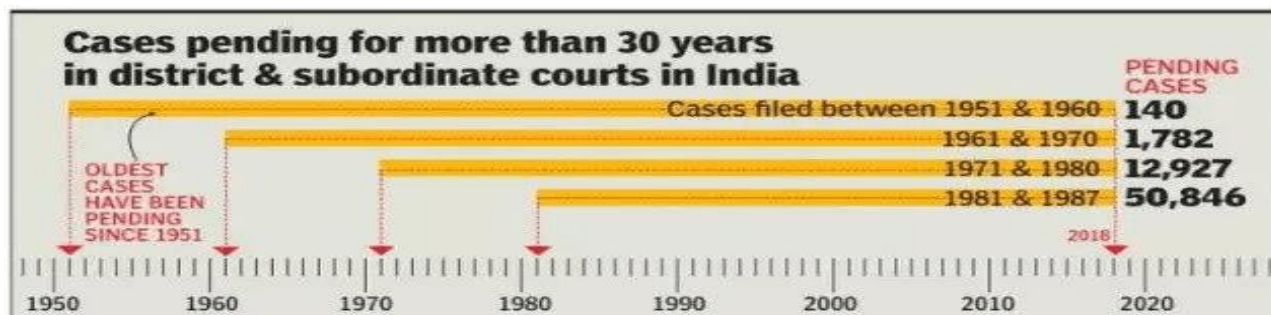
How ADR happens in India:
- The Legal Services Authorities Act was passed in 1987.The Lok Adalat is a statutory body under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The award (decision) made by the Lok Adalats is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is final and binding on all parties.
- NALSA has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 whose aim is to provide free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society and to organize Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes.
- The new Arbitration and Conciliation Act was enacted in 1996.

Types of ADR:
- *Arbitration:* Different parties decide an adjudication procedure via an agreement before engaging in any business or administrative transaction. In case of any dispute during the transaction, the arbitrator adjudicates the conflict, and his/her decision is binding.
- *Conciliation:* An impartial third party called conciliator assists the parties in their disputes in reaching a mutually fair settlement to the dispute.
- *Mediation:* It is a non-binding process that employs a neutral/impartial party to facilitate negotiation between the parties to a dispute to reach a mutually accepted resolution. The mediator does not decide the dispute but helps the parties communicate so they can try to settle the dispute themselves.
- *Lok Adalat (People's Court):* Here disputes which are pending in a court or which are at pre-litigation stage are settled amicably. It is a statutory body under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. This system is based on Gandhian principles.

Advantages of Alternative Dispute Resolution
- *Cost effective:* They try to solve disputes before litigation periods.
- *Fast method:* It tries to solve disputes without going into the formal system of Judiciary. Statistics compiled by the Law ministry show more than 50 lakh cases have been disposed off every year on an average in the last three years by these courts.
- *No complex procedure:* As they have procedural flexibility and speedy trial of the disputes. For example-There is no strict application of procedural laws like the Civil Procedure Code and the Evidence Act while assessing the claim by Lok Adalat.

Case study:
- As of December 2019, around 30,000 cases in total had been referred to mediation centres since their establishment in Gujarat and less than 7 per cent of the over 4.5 lakh civil cases pending in Gujarat as of then.
- Even of the cases referred, less than 5000 had been successfully settled, leading to a success rate of around 16 per cent, which is dismal compared to a success rate of 80 per cent in the US, as found by studies.
- **Efficient:** It reduces the hostility between the disputed parties as it tries to find a solution in a co-operative manner.
- **No technicalities involved:** It is an informal way where parties can give their views without worrying about any technical matters.
- **Inherent flexibility and adaptability:** It focuses on uncovering interests and taking suggestions from the parties themselves for practical solutions to end the dispute.

Online mediation:

It refers to a non-adjudicative method of mediation where parties to a dispute do not have to be present at the same location and use digital technology.

Advantages:
- **Convenient:**
  o It enables the mediator and the parties to assemble on their computer screens.
  o Discussion can be guided by allowing parties and lawyers the opportunity to put forth their views.
  o When separate meetings are required, the mediator can easily move the other party and their lawyer to another virtual room.
- **Cost -effective and an efficient use of time:**
  o Parties do not have to bear costs, do not have to travel, do not have to wait long hours and do not have to undergo adjournments and multiple visits to the mediation center.
  o Easy to get people from different locations to one platform: It has done away with difficulties of distances where parties are in different countries.
- **Giving the participant a little cocoon of safety:** As it creates a grainy barrier of two screens and an intermediate world of Internet. It will certainly be of benefit in cases where emotions run high and face-to-face confrontation may increase the conflict. Such as in matrimonial cases and in family business disputes.

Weaknesses:
- Missing the directness and complete contact: It is possible only in face-to-face meetings in the courtroom.
- Compromise of confidentiality: As hearings could be recorded. Service providers must be vigilant and there should be rules to penalize participants for breach.
- Technical glitches: There can be issues with screen clarity and interrupted feed.
- Exclusion of underprivileged: Critics argue that online communication will exclude the underprivileged who cannot afford access to the Internet or do not have the capacity or assistance to use it.

- *Confidentiality*: Their proceedings are private.

Can they replace courts?

All issues cannot be resolved:

- Amendments were brought to the Civil Procedure Code in 1999 and Section 89 was introduced to ease the burden of courts.
- While disputes related to trade, easement rights, tenancy, labour matters and matrimonial disputes can be referred to ADR but those related to fraud, disputes related to religious places and election related suits cannot be referred.
- *No legal precedents*: It focusses on informal procedure.
- *Diminished party autonomy*: It cannot be said that the parties remain in absolute control of the proceedings.
- *Needs consent of both the parties*: The resolution through ADR cannot be forced on the parties concerned
- *Forced injustice*: Here voluntary efforts intended to bring about settlement of disputes between the parties are made through conciliatory and persuasive efforts. Many times, victims are forced to settle at lower compensation like in Lok Adalats.
- *Stalling*: The party may use this method as a stall to reach the judgement.
- It may act against the poor as they have limited bargaining power.

Way Forward

- *Relevance*: With rapid changes, disputes are now inevitably ending up in courts. The dissatisfied people look up for early solutions to problems and move forward. ADR systems have become relevant now as they provide effective legal remedy to disputes.
- *Need for online Dispute resolution*: While courts are becoming digitized through the efforts of the judiciary, more effective, scalable, and collaborative mechanisms of containment and resolution are urgently needed like ODR.

Decoding the New Jammu and Kashmir Domicile Rules

Syllabus: *Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.*

In News: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had issued the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020 which defines Domicile Criteria for UT of J&K.

Key provisions of Article 370:

- It was a temporary provision granting special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir.
- It specifies that:
  - except for Defence, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Communications the Indian Parliament needs the State Government's concurrence for applying all other laws.
  - The residuary powers belong to the Legislature of the State.

o No preventive detention law made in India extends to Jammu & Kashmir.

Why was Article 35A introduced?

- To determine Permanent residents of the state:
  - o Article 35A of the Indian Constitution empowered Jammu and Kashmir legislature to define the state's permanent residents and their special rights and privileges.
  - o It provides them(a) special rights and privileges in public sector jobs (b) acquisition of property in the State and (c)scholarships as well as public aid and welfare.
- Restrictions for non-permanent residents: The law prohibited non-permanent residents from settling permanently in the state, acquiring immovable property, government jobs, scholarships and aid.

Overall history:

- The law was inserted in the Constitution through a Presidential order of 1954.
- In August 2019, Article 370 and 35A were scrapped.
- In March 2020, the concept of "permanent resident of the State" was discontinued in J&K.

Issues with 35A:

- **Discriminatory in nature**: It discriminates on the basis of class, gender and place of origin. For example- there are question marks over permanent resident status for children of women marrying outsiders.
- **Less scope for PPP (Public- Private Partnership)**: Private sector investment suffers because of permanent resident status.
- **Against Parliamentary democracy**: Article 35-A was passed through a Presidential order rather than taking a legislative route.

Why was Article 370 scrapped?

- **Separatism:** The special status does not allow the state to fully integrate with India. The violence and insurgencies had raised in the last few decades.

What is the new J & K domicile rule?

- Under the new rules, a person has to fulfil the following conditions to be deemed to be a domicile of the Union Territory (UT) of J&K:
- The person has resided in J&K for 15 years or has studied in the state for seven years and appeared in either the Class 10 or the Class 12 examination in J&K (or)
- The person is registered as a migrant by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) in the UT of J&K (or)
- They are children of Central Government Officials, Officials of PSUs and among others who have served in J&K for a total period of ten years (or)
- The children of residents of J&K who reside outside the Union Territory in connection with employment or business but whose parents fulfil any of the above conditions will also be entitled to domicile status

- *Internationalisation of Kashmir issue:* Jammu & Kashmir has appeared like a foreign policy issue instead of a domestic one due to its status in our Constitution. There exists an unnecessary chasm between citizens of Kashmir and the rest of India.

Positives:

- *Ensure equal opportunity for all:* Refugees from Pakistan, sanitary workers resettled from other parts of India and Gorkhas who arrived as soldiers before Independence were not given permanent resident status leading to a denial of opportunities to them in education, employment and politics.
- *Safeguards the rights of the vulnerable:* The new domicile rules will give employment and educational rights to the marginalised.
- *Promotes private participation:* With non-natives being welcomed in the union territory through these rules, there will be a surge in investment in the state. This holds true for Jammu which already has a vibrant economy and peaceful environment as compared to Kashmir.
- *Restart recruitment process:* The recruitment process for over 80,000 posts were halted on August 9 when the Centre revoked J&K's special status. It has resumed in the Union Territory for all domiciles, including eligible non-locals and Pakistani refugees as per the new, amended domicile laws.

Concerns over new Domicile Rules:

- *Constitutional:* The amended domicile law was made in exercise of power under the J&K Reorganization Act 2019 that has been challenged in several petitions before the Supreme Court of India. Therefore, there is a possibility of the rules becoming ultra vires.
- *Changing demography:* According to main political parties in J&K, the new domicile rule will change the demography of J&K by allowing immigrants.
- *Cultural homogenisation:* Another fear is of Dogra culture facing extinction. Jammu's Hindu belt has been the most cosmopolitan part of J&K. Its greatest strength has been the ability to assimilate many cultures and the influx of people from other parts of the State due to economic reasons and conflict. But that appears to have reached a saturation point.
- *Promotes divisive politics:* Parties across the political spectrum have criticized these rules which will prepare the ground for more divisive politics and mobilization of local people on lines of hatred against non-natives.
- *Radicalization:* This can prove detrimental to the local youth who then would be easy targets of radicalization for militants.
- *Domination by outsiders:* There are concerns that there could be dispossession of land and a shrinking of economic opportunities for local people. Jammu's high potential for prospective settlers engenders fears of a large-scale scavenger hunt for business opportunities, land purchase and jobs by outsiders.
- *Change in administrative set-up:* The domicile rule makes all local government jobs available to non-natives, including those in police and administration, which means they will now be able to serve in all such positions. As a result, the immediate implication of

this change will most likely be reflected by the administrative set-up, which has so far been dominated by J&K natives.

- **Immoral action:** As per main political parties the order is grossly inappropriate and unethical as when the entire mankind, including the people of J&K, are in complete lockdown engaged in a battle of survival against Coronavirus, the Centre has found this opportune time to push in the measures.

Conclusion:

- The new rules pave for better integration of the region with India where people to people ties will enhance the socio-economic aspects of Union Territory.
- Bringing all stakeholders: All political parties should be brought together on a common front to bring peace in the region.

Fiscal Federalism: A Structure under Strain

Syllabus: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

In News: Analysing the working of fiscal federalism in India during the time of COVID-19.

What is fiscal federalism: It is the financial relations between units of governments in a federal government system.

Constitutional provisions:

- **Seventh Schedule:** The Seventh Schedule distributes and assigns subjects to the Union and states with defined powers. For example-Parliament has exclusive powers to make laws regarding matters given in the Union List.
- **Article 268 to 272:** It deals with financial powers of centre and states.
- **Grants:** Article 275 deals with grants from the Union to certain States.
- **Finance commission:** Under Article 280 of the Constitution, the Finance Commission is appointed by the President of India every five years or earlier. The Finance Commission focuses on the vertical (division of revenues between centre and states) and the horizontal distribution (between states to ensure regional equity) of financial resources.

Changes in relations between union and state government in recent past:

- **More devolution to states:** The Fourteenth Finance Commission recommended to increase the share of states to 42 per cent of the divisible pool to states during 20015-16 to 2019-20 against 32 per cent suggested by the previous commission.
- **Introduction of GST:** States sacrificed their fiscal powers to the promise of 'economic efficiency' and 'tax buoyancy' in GST.

15th Finance Commission

- It was constituted by the President of India under the chairmanship of NK Singh.

- The term of the commission was originally set to end in October 2019 but was extended to November 30, 2019.
- Its recommendations will cover a period of five years from April 2021 to March 2026.
- Its Terms of Reference (ToR) is to use the 2011 data for determining devolution of taxes, duties and grants-in-aid.
- The terms of reference for the 14th Finance Commission were to use the 1971 Census data.

Terms of Reference of 15th Finance Commission
- Review the current status of finance, deficit, debt levels, and cash balances and fiscal discipline efforts of the Union and the States.
- Put forward a tax-devolution formula after examining the impact of 42% vertical devolution (as recommended by 14th FC) on the Union's fiscal situation.
- The Commission has been asked to consider New India – 2022 Vision and government's commitment to compensate states' loss due to GST.
- Examine whether revenue deficit grants be provided at all.
- Recommend performance-based incentives to the states depending on various parameters such as efforts made in the expansion of GST tax-net, efforts made in achieving replacement level of population growth i.e. Total Fertility Rate 2.1 or lower, promoting digital economy, behavioral changes towards open defecation etc.
- Review the present arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives, with reference to the funds constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and make appropriate recommendations thereon.

Issues FC has to deal with amid pandemic:
- *Increased debt to GDP ratio*– Factoring in the additional borrowings, the debt-to-GDP ratio may well be over 80 per cent this year. The fiscal consolidation roadmap will have to be reworked and as per its terms of reference, the Finance Commission will layout the new path to be followed by both centre and states.
- *State borrowings*– Recently, the Centre eased the states' budget constraint, allowing them to borrow more this year, conditional upon them implementing reforms in line with the Centre's priorities. the Finance Commission, in line with its terms of reference, has to keep in view the Centre's stance and recommend imposing conditions on additional borrowing and formalize this arrangement.
- *GST compensation cess*– The GST council is yet to clearly spell out its views on the extension of the compensation cess to offset losses of the states beyond the five-year period. At a time when the Centre is struggling to fulfil its promise of assuring states their GST revenues, will the Commission argue in favour of extending the compensation period, as states desire is another major challenge.
- *Tax devolution to states*– The fiscal multiplier of central government capital spending is greater than that by the states. Also, centralization of political power may well lead to

demands for centralization of resources. Thus, the centre would want a reduced share of tax devolution.

Issues in Indian Fiscal federalism:

- *Vertical Imbalances:*
  - o It arises because the tax systems are designed in a manner that yields much greater tax revenues to the Central government when compared to the State or provincial governments.
  - o More responsibilities: The Constitution mandates relatively greater responsibilities to the State governments. For example- after the advent of Goods and Services Tax (GST), the share of States in the public expenditure is 60% while it is 40% for the Centre to perform their constitutionally mandated duties.
- *Horizontal imbalances:*
  - o It arises due to states attaining different level of incomes due to differential growth rates and different development status in terms of social or infrastructure capital.
  - o Traditionally, Finance Commissions have dealt with these imbalances in a stellar manner.
- *Issues in GST:*
  - o States dependence on Centre: GST forced the States to surrender their powers to raise resources independently through local State taxes and made them dependent at the mercy of the Centre for most of their financial needs.
  - o Problem in raising Additional Resources: Before GST, States were free to charge sales taxes as legislated by their State legislatures. Now states have problems in raising additional resources.

Fiscal federalism in the times of pandemic

- State's dwindling resources: Unilateral policies by the centre on the subjects reserved for the state left the states struggling with resources. Such policies included prohibiting sale of alcohol, withholding of GST compensation, denial of State disaster funds from the benefit of CSR contributions to the suspension of MPLADS.
- Lockdown without prior notice: There was no prior consultation with states before the lockdown was imposed on March 24th. It caused serious supply chain breakdown and importantly migrant workers chaos for states.
- Struggling for fiscal space: The announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the Rs 20-lakh crore Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-reliant India Campaign) package left many scrambling with the fiscal maths.
- Increasing dependency on Centre: The dependency of states on the Centre for revenues has increased, with the share of the revenue from own sources declining from 55% in 2014-15 to 50.5% in 2020-21.

- Bearing the brunt of the pandemic: Under GST, States are legally entitled to their share of tax revenues collected in their State. But they are now reliant on the Centre to release these funds to them periodically.

Way Forward

To sum up, for a large federal country, India's ability to fight Covid-19 pandemic largely rests on how well it manages its Centre-state relation. When compared with other large federal countries such as the US, the country has done very well to minimize the frictions and provide a sense of direction to the states. However, tackling Covid-19 as seen from the experience of other countries would require a differential and agile response across states and the Centre has at best to play the role of a mentor in providing leadership and resource support.

Hindi as Official Language in Our Linguistic Democracy
Syllabus: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

In News: The Punjab and Haryana High Court issued a notice to the Haryana government on a petition challenging the Haryana Official Language (Amendment) Act, 2020 which makes the use of Hindi language mandatory in all lower courts across the state.

Constitutional provision related to use of Hindi Language

- *Official language:* Article 343 of the Constitution prescribes Hindi written in Devanagari script as the official language of the government along with English.
- *Article 351* enables the Union Government to issue a directive for the development of the Hindi language
- *Article 348(1):* It provides that all proceedings in the Supreme Court and in every High court shall be in English Language until Parliament by law otherwise provides.
- *Article 348(2):* It says that Governor of the State may with the previous consent of the President authorize the use of the Hindi language or any other official language of the state in the proceedings of the High Court
  - However, the decrees, judgments or orders passed by such High Courts must continue to be in English only (until Parliament otherwise provides).
- *No official recognition on Hindi as a National language:*
  - Views of Judiciary: In 2010, the Gujarat High Court dismissed a PIL seeking direction for mandatory printing of details - price, ingredients and date of manufacturing of goods in Hindi on the ground that it was the national language.

> *Status of Hindi Language:*
> According to the 2001 Census, 52 crore out of 121 crore people identified Hindi as their language. Hindi is the language of less than 44 % Indians.
> Hindi as Mother Tongue: About 32 crore people declared Hindi as their mother tongue.

- o The court stated that "Normally, in India, a majority of the people have accepted Hindi as a national language and many people speak Hindi and write in Devanagari script but there is nothing on record to suggest that any provision has been made or order issued declaring Hindi as a national language of the country".

Three language formula: It dates back to 1968.

Hindi Speaking states: Students should learn a modern Indian language along with Hindi and English.

Non-Hindi speaking states: Students should learn Hindi along with the regional language and English.

Arguments by the Haryana state government:

- **To make judicial process more inclusive:** The government says that the decision was made to use Hindi in courts to help the citizens of Haryana understand the judicial process in their own language and allow them to express themselves before courts easily.
- **To enable access to Justice:** It is argued that many times the witnesses don't know what has been recorded in his or her statement in the court if the same is recorded in English.

History of Haryana:

Haryana was separated from the erstwhile state of Punjab in 1966 on linguistic basis as Hindi is the predominantly spoken language in the area. In 1969, Hindi was declared the official language of Haryana.

- **Practical necessity:** Different regional languages are rapidly replacing English as a medium of instructions and official work in the states. Hindi is the predominantly spoken language in the state of Haryana.
- **Fulfilling Constitutional directions:** Article 351 empowers the Union Government to issue a directive for the development of the Hindi language.
- **Confirms to the existing rules in other states**
  - o Example1- Uttar Pradesh had introduced such a system many years back
  - o Example2- Punjab had amended the law to introduce Punjabi in all civil courts and criminal courts

Arguments Against the move:

- **Advances the interest of Hindi speaking population:** The use of Hindi as sole language would result in unreasonable classification between lawyers who are fluent in Hindi and those who are not. Currently, English is widely used by advocates and the subordinate judiciary in lower courts in justice administration work.
- **Violation of Fundamental right:** The amendment is a violation of the fundamental right to equality, freedom to practice a profession of choice, dignity and livelihood.
- **Irrational:** The Imposition of Hindi in courts and making it the only possible way to get justice is irrational.
- **Lacks All India appeal:** Section 30 of the Advocates Act, 1961 gives the right to practice all over India and using only Hindi would hamper it.
- **Impractical:** Most of the law colleges teach in English medium and Hindi version of the legal terminologies may not be known to the students.

Way Forward

- Promote in place of imposing: Hindi should be promoted but using it as the sole language in courts would hamper the functioning of courts.
- Deliberation: There should be consultation with all the stakeholders including lawyers.

Mental Health Crisis in India- Time to Act

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

In News: Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide has put the spotlight on mental health and wellness in India.

Mental health: The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his/her own potential and can cope with the normal stresses of life. Good mental health enables an individual to work productively and make a contribution to her/his community.

Status of Mental Health in India

- As per Global Burden of Disease Study 1990-2016, published in Lancet, India accounts for 37% of global suicide deaths amongst women and 24% amongst men in the world.
- According to National Mental Health Survey (2015-16):
  - Nearly 13% of India's population suffer from minor to major mental disorders
  - 150 million people across India are in need of mental health care interventions.
  - One in every 20 people in India suffers from depression

India's Policy Approach towards Mental Health

- **National Mental Health Programme (NMHP), 1982:** The programme was launched for detection, management and treatment of mental illness.
- **National Mental Health Policy, 2014:** The policy aims to promote mental health, prevent mental illness, enable recovery from mental illness, address stigmatization, and ensure socio-economic inclusion of mentally ill people.
- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017:** The Act acknowledges mental illness as a disability.
- **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017**: It replaced the Mental Health Act of 1987. It seeks to ensure rights of the person with mental illness to receive care and to live a life with dignity. It provides for:
- **Rights of Persons with Mental Illness**:
  - Right to Access to Healthcare
  - Right to live with dignity
  - Right to Confidentiality about the status of mental health of a person.
- **Advance Directive**: Right of a person to make an advance directive that states how he/she wants to be treated for the illness and who his/her nominated representative.

- **Establishment of Authorities**: Setting up of a Central Mental Health Authority and State Mental Health Authority in every State. It calls for mandatory registration of every mental health institute and mental health practitioners with the Authority.
- **Decriminalization of Suicide**: Previously, suicide was a punishable offence under IPC Section 309. The Act decriminalizes suicide.

Mental Health Action Plan 2013 – 2020:
- The 66th World Health Assembly adopted the WHO's Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 in May 2013.
- The action plan recognizes the essential role of mental health in achieving health for all people.
- It is based on a life course approach, aims to achieve equity through universal health coverage and stresses on the importance of prevention.

Issues and Challenges with Mental Healthcare in India

1. **Poor mental healthcare resources**: Mental healthcare resources in India are inadequate with poor infrastructure and abysmally low number of healthcare professionals. There are 0.30 psychiatrists (compared to China's 1.7), 0.17 nurses, and 0.05 psychologists per 1,00,000 mentally ill patients.

2. **Healthcare Infrastructural gap**: There are only 43 government-run mental hospitals across all of India to provide services to more than 70 million people living with mental disorders. Further, Mental health care services are concentrated mainly in urban areas and are also expensive due to less availability of doctors and other infrastructures.

3. **Economic Burden**: Economic burden associated with mental health is two-fold: Direct which includes long-term treatment cost and indirect which includes inability of the patient and caregiver to work, social isolation, psychological stress.

4. **Treatment Gap**: Lack of access to mental healthcare facilities, social stigma and the economic burden leads to a huge treatment gap. According to the National Mental Health survey, the treatment gap for all mental health disorders is more than 60%

5. **Human Rights violation**: Poor infrastructure such as closed structures, a lack of maintenance, unclean toilets and sleeping areas etc in mental health institutions violate the basic human right to a life with dignity. An example is that of the Erwadi tragedy where in 2001, 28 patients chained at a home (in Erwadi village, Tamil Nadu) for mentally-ill, died after a fire broke out.

6. **Flawed Policy approach**: The Mental Health Act neglects the prevention and promotion of mental well-being and recognizes mental illness as a clinical issue which can only be treated by medicines and clinical procedures.

7. **Low levels of awareness and stigma around Mental Health**: Lack of awareness and illiteracy fuels social stigma around mental health in India which largely hinders the access to treatment and social inclusion of people with mental illness.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on mental health

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown a far-reaching impact on the mental wellbeing of people across the world.

The mental health status of first-line medical staff has been deteriorating. A study in China has shown healthcare workers suffering from symptoms of depression, anxiety, insomnia and distress.

- Stringent social distancing norms, lockdowns, increase in gender-based violence have contributed to widespread emotional distress and increased risk for psychiatric illness.
- large and growing financial losses, unemployment, inadequate resources for medical response, lack of necessities and starvation have led to depression, anxiety and suicides in extreme cases.
- Quarantine and home confinement of people affected with Covid-19 have led to stress, depression, fear, and stigma- all contributing to a deterioration of mental wellbeing.

What should India do to solve its Mental Health crisis?

1. **Address infrastructure gaps**: The budget allocated for mental health in India is 0.05% of the total healthcare budget. This amount is inadequate to ensure adequate access to mental healthcare at par with physical health problems.
2. **Suicide Prevention Policy**: Countries like China have been able to significantly reduce suicides after implementing a suicide prevention policy.
3. **Mental Health under insurance ambit**: The government should ensure insurance covers for mental illness to reduce the economic burden.
4. **Post-Treatment rehabilitation:** There is need for proper rehabilitation of the mentally ill persons post his/her treatment which is currently not present.
5. **Telepsychiatry:** Digitally-mediated therapy and telepsychiatry should be promoted. For example, NIMHANS runs a successful telepsychiatry intervention in Karnataka.
6. **Expansion of mental health literacy**: Mass awareness campaigns are essential to generate understanding of mental disorders as illnesses, help seeking and the importance of acceptance by the family and the community.
7. **Leveraging Technology:** Technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning and chatbots should be used for increasing awareness, decreasing stigma and inducing help-seeking behaviour
8. **Early Interventions:**
- There is a need to create living conditions and environment that support healthy mental health. It is important to develop a society that respects and protects basic, civil, political, and cultural rights

Best Practice- Thiruvananthapuram Model

- Since 1999, Thiruvananthapuram District has integrated mental health services into primary care.
- Trained medical officers diagnose and treat mental disorders as part of their general primary care functions.
- Further, a multidisciplinary district mental health team provides direct management of complex cases and in-service training and support of primary care workers.

- It is important to aim at child development by early childhood interventions like preschool psychosocial activities, nutritional and psycho-social help
- To reduce the burden of mental disorders in women, there is a need to ensure socio-economic empowerment and safety of women.

Civil Society Initiatives to promote Mental Health and wellbeing in India
- ***Atmiyata Project:*** It is a community led project in rural India by Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy. It aims to improve community awareness and facilitate access to both mental health and social care.
- ***The Live, Love, Laugh Foundation (TLLLF):*** started by actor Deepika Padukone, it partnered with Association of People with Disability (APD) to enhance rural mental healthcare in Davangere district, Karnataka. It has also taken up different other projects such as 'You are not Alone' (a school awareness programme), and 'Dobara Pucho' (a public awareness programme on mental health).
- ***RAAH App:*** It is a mobile application launched by National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS). It provides free information to the public on mental health care professionals and mental healthcare centres.

Conclusion: Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and addiction are the highest contributors to productivity loss. The ever-increasing mental health crisis should be considered as a public health crisis and dealt at war footing with appropriate policy interventions, sensitization and early-life interventions.

The Current School Education System and the Way Forward
Syllabus: *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

In News: The World Bank has approved a $500 million Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS) project.

Issues with current school education system
- ***Under Funded Education:*** As per 'Economic Survey of India 2018-19', India has spent only 3 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product on education in the previous fiscal year. On an average, India spends only 4% of the GDP on education whereas some developing countries spend more on education. For example, South Africa's expenditure on education is 6.1% of its GDP. Total money allocated to school education reduced from Rs 38,600 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 37,100 crore in 2018-19.
- ***Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Retention in School:*** The GER in 2016-17 for Grades 1-5 was at 95.1%. However, the GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.7%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 51.3%, respectively. This indicates that a significant proportion of enrolled students begin to drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8.
- ***Access to Education:*** The RTE Act provides for free and compulsory education to all children from the age of six to 14 years. Despite advances in expanding access to education, participation rates are still not universal, particularly in rural regions and

among lower castes and other disadvantaged groups. The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) 2017-2018 report stated that India has not been able to provide even the basic elementary education to all children.

- *Rote learning*: K. Kasturirangan Committee observed that the current education system solely focuses on rote learning of facts and procedures. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2018, only 16% of children in Class 1 in rural areas can read the text at the prescribed level, while almost 40% cannot even recognize letters.
- *Outdated and Incoherent curriculum*: The curriculum in school education remains outdated and largely theoretical. Further, it does not focus on the interconnectedness of the natural world with our everyday lives. This hampers the learning process of students.
- *Marks based evaluation system*: Marks play the most important role in deciding the future of children and this often comes down upon students as a burdening factor and often leads to students underperforming.
- *Quality of Teachers*: The school education system faces issues of low teacher to student ratio and quality of teachers. Teachers are often unequipped with modern pedagogical methods of teaching.
- *Infrastructural Issues*: establishing primary schools in every habitation across India has helped increase access to education. However, it has led to the development of very small schools which makes it operationally complex to deploy teachers and critical physical resources. The lack of proper physical infrastructure and human resources in schools is a major hindrance in imparting quality education.

STARS Project: as a possible solution?

It aims to improve the quality and governance of school education in six Indian states viz. Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan. The STARS

Project has the following objectives:

- Improve learning assessment systems;
- Strengthen classroom instruction and remediation;
- Facilitate school-to-work transition; and
- Strengthen governance and decentralized management.

Reform Initiatives under the Project:

- Direct focus on the delivery of education services at the state, district and sub -district levels by providing customized local-level solutions towards school improvement.
- Address demands from stakeholders, especially parents, for greater accountability and inclusion by producing better data to assess the quality of learning
- Focus on teachers to achieve better learning outcomes among learners
- Investing in India's human capital needs by enhancing foundational learning for children in classes 1 to 3

Why is the STARS *approach to build state capacity flawed?*

- ***Ignores Capacity issues***: Major vacancies across the education system from District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), district and block education offices, to teachers in schools, remain unaddressed.
- ***No clarity on devolution of funds***: It ignores that decentralising decision-making requires the devolution of funds and real decision-making power.
- ***Overreliance on technology***: Collaboration across different levels within the administration, is entirely ignored. Instead, the project puts over-importance on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) which does not address most of the systemic or governance challenges
- ***Including non-state players***: It promotes outsourcing basic governance functions by "expanding private initiatives" and "reducing government tasks". However, this will not make education more relevant to local needs rather will shift problems to a new entity.

Suggested Reforms:

- ***Solutions for effective governance***
    - ***Adequate physical, financial and human resources***: An overburdened bureaucracy with vacancies and without basic equipment cannot be expected to be effective.
    - ***Innovative financing***: Educational crowdfunding is the process of raising funds online through a large number of people for any education-based project
    - ***Decentralization of decision-making***: Administrative or governance reforms must give greater discretion to the front-line bureaucracy to address local issues and innovate if required. Further, there needs to be trust within the administration among peers and across different levels within the administration.
- ***Curriculum***: School education curriculum should focus on practical, analytical and logical learning rather than marks-based rot learning. Further, the curriculum load in each subject should be reduced to its essential core content.
- ***Create an optimal learning environment***: An increased focus on foundational literacy and numeracy, which forms the base for higher education.
- ***Evaluation system***: The focus of evaluation should be classroom participation by a student, projects, communication and leadership skills and extra-curricular activities.
- ***Teacher's Training***: The recommendations of National educational Policy 2019 should be followed-
    - The practice of 'para-teachers' (unqualified, contract teachers) should be stopped across the country by 2022. Rather move towards an incentive-based pay structure, with possibility of permanent job based on performance.
    - All teachers should be able to move into either educational administration or teacher education after a minimum number of years of teaching experience.
    - Merit-based scholarships to be instituted to undertake the four-year integrated B.Ed. program.

Covid-19 Impact on Education

Online education is a boon in pandemic when social distancing is the new norm and schools, colleges are closed.

Advantages	*Disadvantages*
• Reduced cost in terms of school infrastructure, students travel to school, and buying reading or reference materials. • Multiple learning options and interactive learning, personalized learning options with advent of deep data analytics, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning • Builds confidence in a child as it provides a certain level of anonymity • Help solve the problem of a disproportionate student to teacher ratio. • Provide equal learning opportunities to students in Tier II and III cities as well as rural areas where skilled teachers might be unavailable	• Online student feedback is limited • Social Isolation and lack of communication skills development • Lack of self-motivation among students • Lack of Time management among students • Cheating prevention during online assessments is complicated • Destroys diversity, inclusivity and dissent • Not suitable for all courses – Courses that traditionally need a laboratory or practical component • Huge digital divide in the country in terms of bandwidth and reliable connectivity, as well as unequal socio-access. According to the 2017-'18 National Sample Survey report on education, only 24% of Indian households have an internet facility.

PPP in Healthcare: An Approach for Aarogya Bharat

Syllabus: *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

In News: Analyzing the need to bring in structural changes in the health sector and rejuvenate private partnerships in the backdrop of COVID-19.

Need for private sector in healthcare:

- ***Lack of adequate public health care*:** This has two dimensions:
  - ***Inadequate human resource*:**
    - India has a doctor-to-population ratio of 1:1,445 whereas World health Organization recommends a ratio of 1:1000
    - There is an uneven distribution of health workers in the private and public health sector with more than 80% of doctors and 70% of nurses and midwives being employed in the private sector.
  - ***Quality of Public Health services*:** Hospital beds and specialized facilities are less by the public sector and the middle class often resort to private hospitals for health services. Further the incidents like deaths of children in Gorakhpur's BRD Medical College in 2018 due to lack of oxygen and deaths in Kota due to shortage of beds etc. raised question marks on the quality of services.

- *Lack of adequate investment in public health:* India spends only 1.3% of its gross domestic product (GDP), compared to 3% in China and 8.3% in the United States.
- *Wide coverage:* The private sector provides approximately 70% of the healthcare services in India.
- *Readily available Infrastructure:* Private sector's share in hospitals and hospital beds is estimated at 74% and 40%, respectively
- *Government apathy:* A grave impact of the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) and similar plans on public health is that India's ruling elite do not have an incentive to improve the system as they would never use it.
- *Rural-urban divide:* The majority of private healthcare professionals happen to be concentrated in urban areas where consumers have higher paying power which leaves rural areas underserved.
- *Lack of accountability:* Public doctors feel less responsibility to treat their patients effectively than do doctors in private clinics.

Will the private sector act as a boon or a bane?

Advantages:

- *Service available on-demand:* The private sector is more flexible in the needs of the patients. For example-waiting time is longer in public hospitals as compared to private hospitals.
- *Aided with latest technology:* Private hospitals have the most modern equipment and the equipment lasts longer too. Public hospitals have good equipment but due to the extreme use, they can get damaged more often than those in a private hospital.
- *Fill the voids:* Doctor-Patient ratio is less in public hospitals leading to less attention, more workload, exhaustion, frequent strikes etc. for example recent Doctor strikes in Bangalore
- *Immune from politicisation:* The decision making is quick as it doesn't have many bureaucratic hurdles.

Disadvantages:

- *High Cost and Inaccessible:* Private healthcare often charges high and is not affordable by a large portion of India's population.
- Further, the dominance and dependence on private healthcare leads to high out-of-pocket expenditure on health. WHO's health financing profile for 2017 shows that 67.78% of total health expenditure in India was out of pocket while the world average is just 18.2%
- *Malpractices:* Private players in healthcare often engage in malpractices by selling substandard and counterfeit medicines, prescribing unnecessary drugs and tests, requiring unnecessary hospital admissions and manipulating the length of stay.
- *Low accountability:* There is limited accountability of private players to government regulatory authorities.
- *Inequalities:* Private health care facilities give priorities to the rich class as compared to public hospitals which offer equal treatment to all.

- *Disregards Rural population:* Private healthcare facilities have limited penetration especially in rural regions which lack hospitals.

Global model:

Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) model:

- In this model the private sector is held responsible for providing infrastructure including well equipped hospitals whereas the other core health services are to be rendered by the public sector.
- Focus on lack of professionals: In other cases, Governments have favoured the PPP model whereby the responsibility of full-service delivery is shouldered by the private sector.
- Many OECD countries have adopted this method to reduce the gap between demand for and supply of health services.

Health Impact Funds (HIF):

- *Need:* As alternative to existing Intellectual Property system to reward innovation.
- In the HIF framework, after patenting, medicines are sold at cost price i.e. only manufacturing and distribution costs are included without profits.
- Innovators are awarded annually based on public health outcomes for a set number of years (say 10 years).
- These rewards are funded by governments and development institutions through contributions to funds.
- For affluent countries which do not contribute to this fund, existing framework based on profits can continue.

Way forward

- *Increase in Healthcare spending:* The National Health Policy 2017 proposes raising public health expenditure to 2.5% of the GDP in a time-bound manner. Health-care spending by the government must be appropriate, based on evidence, and transparent and accountable.
- *Enabling startups:* Government should develop a robust ecosystem where hospitals actively engage with health-care start-ups by providing access to testbeds, communicating their needs effectively and adopting promising innovations
- *Regulating Private Sector:* Private hospitals and institutions should be regulated. Costing and auditing of care and procedures need to be done by independent bodies.
- *Incentivise participation:* Private hospitals with the required potential should be given requisite incentives and subsidies to serve the people.

Police reforms: an Achilles' heel of progressive India

Syllabus: *Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability.*

In News: Analysing the need for police reforms in the backdrop of violence during enforcement of lockdown and custodial death by the police.

Constitutional Provisions of Police:

- **Schedule 7:** Police is an exclusive subject under the State List.
  - The centre is also allowed to maintain its own police forces to assist the states with ensuring law and order
- **Source of power:**
  - The present Indian police system is largely based on the Police act of 1861.
  - It is also governed by the Indian Penal Code, 1862, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 and the Criminal Procedure Code of 1973.
  - After independence some states came out with their own police acts, for example Bombay Police Act, 1951, Kerala police act 1960, Delhi police act 1978.

Need for Reforms:

An overburdened force	• **Less strength:** The sanctioned strength of the police across states was around 2.8 million in 2017 (the year with the latest available data) but only 1.9 million police officers were employed (a 30% vacancy rate). • India has 144 police officers for 100,000 citizens. This is far short of the United Nation's prescribed norm of 220 policemen for 100,000 citizens. • **Backlog:** This led to a huge backlog of cases. • **Delayed justice:** Backlog of cases with the police along with the judicial pendency has resulted in a delayed justice delivery system.
Police accountability	• **Complaints against police:** Complaints of unwarranted arrests, unlawful searches, torture and custodial rapes. • **Political interference:** This interfered with professional decision-making by the police as noted by the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007).
Constabulary related issues	• **Lack of qualification:** The Padmanabhaiah Committee and the Second ARC had noted that the entry level qualifications and training of constables do not qualify them for their role. • **No incentives:** The promotion opportunities and working conditions of constables are also poor.

Crime investigation	• **Nature of crimes:** They are becoming more complex (e.g. emergence of various kinds of organized crimes, economic fraud). • **Conviction rate:** They have remained fairly low. In 2015, the conviction rate for crimes recorded under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 was 47%. • **Poor quality of investigation:** It was observed out by the Law Commission because the state police officers often neglect this responsibility as they are understaffed and overburdened with various kinds of tasks. • **Lack of training:** In essential skills (forensic laws, cybercrimes etc) and the expertise required to conduct professional investigations.
Police infrastructure	• **Need:** Modern policing requires strong communication support, state-of-the-art weapons and a high degree of mobility. • **Outdated:** The CAG has found that weaponry of several state police forces is outdated and the acquisition process of weapons slow, causing a shortage in arms and ammunition.
Police-public relations	• **Lack of trust:** According to a 2018 survey by the Lokniti team at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), less than 25% of Indians expressed trust in the police. • People view the police as corrupt, inefficient, politically partisan and unresponsive.
Ethical dilemma faced by Police	**Stern and effective maintenance of order without violating human rights:** When police take heavy handed action to control crime it is termed as inhuman. On the other hand, if it goes soft for effective management of law and order they are termed as inefficient.

Expert Bodies for Police Reforms:

Various expert bodies have examined issues with police organisation and functioning over the last few decades.

National Police Commission (NPC)	1977-81	It produced 8 reports suggesting major reforms across a range of police issues.
Ribeiro Committee	1998	Established by the Supreme Court to review the lack of action taken to implement NPC recommendations and to re-frame a new police act.
Malimath Committee	2001-03	Suggested changes to the IPC and outlined ways of improving judicial proceedings.

Police Act Drafting Committee	2005	Drafted a new model Police Act to replace the 1861 Police Act.
Supreme Court Directives (Prakash Singh & Ors vs Union of India)	2006	
Second Administrative Reforms	2007	Noted that police-public relations were unsatisfactory and suggested a range of reforms to change this
Supreme Court Directives	2018	New directives on police reforms and reviewed states progress in the implementation of the 2006 directives.

Community Policing Model: To address the challenge of public-police distrust.
- It is policing in active consultation, cooperation and partnership with the community at large.
- Community policing requires the police to work with the community for prevention and detection of crime, maintenance of public order, and resolving local conflicts, with the objective of providing a better quality of life and sense of security.
- It may include patrolling by the police for non-emergency interactions with the public, actively soliciting requests for service not involving criminal matters, community-based crime prevention and creating mechanisms for grassroots feedback from the community.

Caution about expanding community policing efforts:
- Community Policing should not lead to vigilantism and mob justice.
- For example, the experiment of 'Salwa Judum', which involved arming local tribal youth to fight Naxals in Chhattisgarh should be kept in mind. In 'Nalini Sundar & Ors vs State of Chhattisgarh' (2011), the Supreme Court rightly ordered ceasing of the programme and held it to be violative of Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

Suggested reforms and Way Forward: A to-do list of police reforms.
- In November 2014, the Honorable PM unveiled his vision for SMART Police – police which should be Strict and Sensitive, Modern and Mobile, Alert and Accountable, Reliable and Responsible, Techno-savvy and Trained.
- To build a SMART police force, India needs reforms broadly on some fronts:
- o *Capacity addition and boosting the police infrastructure*:
  - o *Reform the 'Thana'*: Improving the working conditions of thana-level constables should be a priority.

- o **Reform the criminal justice system:** The police training should focus on improving the investigation skills and the number of investigating officers should increase. This will result in improving the conviction rates.
- o **Legislative and administrative reforms to rationalize the constitution of police forces:**
  - o **Free the police from political interference:** Make the postings and transfers of police officers in a state free from overbearing control of the executive. The police officers should be given longer tenures.
  - o **Training and Capacity Building of policemen:** Training the police forces should be a continuous process along with the evolving nature of the crime space.
- o **Scaling up technology: Upgrade technology and research in policing**
  - o Records can be stored in digital form for better crime management.
  - o Reforming the Bureau of Police Research and Development by making it a more inclusive institution. For instance, expertise of social science experts should be utilized for better research on criminology.
  - o New technologies can be leveraged to carry out several policing functions, such as: Use of drones for patrolling, use of facial recognition technology to secure critical places (schools, heritage monuments etc.).
- o **Improving the perception of police: Through community policing**
  - o It requires the police to work with the community for prevention and detection of crime, maintenance of public order, and resolving local conflicts to provide a better quality of life and sense of security.
  - o Various states have undertaken community policing initiatives, such as:
    - Kerala - 'Janamaithri Suraksha Project',
    - Rajasthan - 'Joint Patrolling Committees',
    - Tamil Nadu - 'Friends of Police',
    - Maharashtra - 'Mohalla Committees'.
- **Ethical behavior of leaders:** If an Inspector General of Police or Director General of Police encourages violence discreetly, the message goes down the ranks leading to the torture of innocent citizens. This is what the leadership should not practice and they need to set the right precedent.
- Reforming an institution is a long process and needs to be done gradually in a phased manner. One-time reforms followed by public pressure are short -lived and need to be avoided.

NAM in 21st Century: Relevant or Redundant?
Syllabus:Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

In News: The video address of Indian Prime Minister to a Non-Aligned Nations Summit, in May 2020, on promoting global cooperation in combating the coronavirus has generated a lot of attraction.

Achievements/Success of NAM

Political Agenda- Anti-racialism and anti-colonialism:

- Constant pressure from NAM countries, expedited the decolonization process. For example, Namibia became independent in 1990., Mozambique in 1975, Zimbabwe in 1980 and South Africa in May 1992.

Economic Agenda–NIEO:

- NAM advocated the creation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) based on greater economic cooperation and justice.
- The first UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held in 1964 was largely a result of the efforts of the Non-Aligned countries.
- NAM countries also promoted trade among the member's states. The poor economic countries of NAM cooperated with the richer members like Cuba, Brazil, India, etc. This resulted in enhancing trade within the global south and reducing their dependence on the North.

About NAM:

- The Non-Aligned Movement was formed during the Cold War as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought to remain independent or neutral.
- The basic concept for the group originated in 1955 during discussions that took place at the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference held in Indonesia.
- The first NAM Summit Conference took place in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September 1961.

Principles and Objectives of Non-alignment movement

In line with the Bandung principles, deliberation amongst the members of the initial 25 countries led to the formulation of principles and goals of NAM. The following are the aims of the nonaligned movement:

- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- Mutual non-aggression.
- Mutual non-interference in domestic affairs.
- Equality and mutual benefit.
- Peaceful co-existence.

Nuclear Agenda:

- India presented the Rajiv Gandhi action plan to UNGA, which included a binding commitment by all nations to eliminating nuclear weapons, universal disarmament, and tangible goal-based verification.
- The movement has always condemned the arms race and called for immediate nuclear disarmament. This international pressure indirectly led to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), which was an arms limitation treaty between the US and USSR during the cold war.

- Due to non-aligned pressure, the creation of a nuclear-free zone treaty was successful, at least in the Pacific and later in Africa and Southeast Asia.

Other Achievements:

- NAM succeeded in legitimizing the interventionist trade policy that the developing countries want to pursue. Ex- the need to protect domestic industries through dumping duties, special WTO provisions etc.
- NAM was effectively used for UN Reform, where India blocked an effort by the U.S. and others to add Germany and Japan as permanent members and close the doors for further expansion.
- It was successful in pursuing the IMF to establish a system of compensatory finance which helps the developing countries to overcome the balance of payment crisis.

Changing World Order and NAM

- End of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 proved to be a watershed in the evolution of NAM. The world witnessed a brief period of unilateralism where the United States emerged as a global policeman.
- The world since 2000 has moved away from unipolar and towards a multipolar world. The rise of China has challenged the hegemony of the US. There has also been a rise of powers like India, Brazil, Germany and a decline in the superpower United States.
- Given the context of changing world order mentioned above questions have been raised on the relevance of NAM in the 21st century. The prevalent narrative was that NAM had lost its relevance. But ministers of many countries opposed this narrative. Many countries realized the need for an effective partnership to counter the geopolitical and geo-economics challenges.

Relevance of NAM to the world

- *Institutional reforms:* Support within U.N.O: Total strength of NAM i.e. 120 members are equal members of the UNGA. They can coordinate and dictate the contours of the must needed reforms in the UN.
- *An integral part of foreign policy:* Many developing countries like India still follow NA policy reworded as strategic autonomy. The policy helps in avoiding neo-colonization and neo-imperialism, which continues to remain a valid threat for all small and developing countries.
- *Checking big power ambitions:* NAM countries can stand as a unifying force against the traditional foreign policy of great power and strictly restrict imperialism, nationalism and universalism.
- *Basis of 'South-South' cooperation:* NAM still raises issues that are of major concern for the Global South. It can initiate debates around economic, political and social development to achieve desired results for the developing nations. The movement has collaborated with other organizations of the developing world – primarily the Group of 77(G-77).

- *Voice of developing nations*: NAM has been growing in size since inception. This acts as a force multiplier and gives its members a platform to put their views on international issues. Ex- climate change, SDG
- *Culture diversity and human rights*: NAM has been active in securing the sovereign rights of every nation. It has also been assertive in securing the human rights of the colonized people. It can act as a bridge between the political and ideological differences existing in the international environment.

E-Diplomacy in the time of COVID-19- Advantages and Challenges posed

Nations have shifted to online mediums with video conference calls due to the dangers posed by COVID-19. It has compelled the traditionally glad-handing, backslapping and tourism-promoting art of summit diplomacy to online summits.

Advantages of E-summits	Disadvantages of E-Summits
1. Physically safer for leaders. 2. Time saving. 3. Low economic costs on events with less spent on physical journeys.	1. Skepticism: Without all the protocols and structured dialogues of summits, it is doubtful if major breakthroughs or deals requiring direct intervention of leaders can happen. 2. Less productive: In terms of deliverables, especially where crucial sticking points such as India-China issues on borders. 3. Broader political goals: Online summits may not satisfy the broader political goals and bigger objectives that heads of state carry with them.

Cyber Security Challenge to E-Diplomacy:
- *Hacking*: It is riskier and could be subject to hacking of classified content.
- *Discussion of important issues*: It is arguable whether new ideas or proposals which require geostrategic alignments can be discussed in e-summits.

India's efforts at E-Diplomacy:

Apart from NAM, India's multilateral 'e-diplomacy' since the COVID-19 outbreak includes:
- The PM convened the SAARC leaders' video conference.
- Joined the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit via video link.
- Bilateral Summit with Australia which involved the exchange of multiple agreements such as the two countries upgrading their relations to a 'comprehensive strategic partnership'.

- *Global Commons*: NAM supported the concept of sustainable development. NAM can be used as a platform to make consensus on global issues like climate change, migration, and global terrorism.

Relevance of NAM to India

- NAM is still the biggest platform of developing countries outside UNGA. The NAM refreshingly provides a unique approach to disarmament and economic development.
- Though India is now in the club of neo-elites G-20 and BRICS yet India shows many characteristics with developing countries.
- India is home to the largest number of poor and malnourished children and NAM provides a platform for South-South cooperation for addressing issues of human development.
- India has lost the leadership of developing countries to China and NAM provides a platform to regain its leadership position.
- India is aiming for a permanent seat in the UNSC for which support of 120 NAM countries is important. NAM can also help in building India's soft power.
- India has the potential to provide leadership, direction, resources, and leadership to NAM.
- *Balanced diplomacy*: India is also the only country that can act as a moderator in NAM which remains divided between pro-US and pro-Russia factions. India can use NAM as a platform for South-South as well as North-South cooperation.

Way Forward:

The most important role for NAM today lies in framing a concrete economic agenda for a just and fair international order. NAM as a platform allows India to effectively practise its strategic autonomy in the multipolar world order. Non-alignment movement is as important to India, as India is important to the Non-alignment movement. India should use its newly acquired economic, political and strategic clout to provide for the resources, leadership and direction to NAM.

Reforming G7: Democratic opportunity for an Outdated Group

Syllabus:Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

In News: The US President postponed the next G7 summit scheduled in Washington DC.

What is G7?

- The G-7 or 'Group of Seven' are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- *Emergence:* It is an intergovernmental organization that was formed in 1975 by the top economies of the time as an informal forum
- *Purpose:* To discuss and sometimes act to help resolve global problems such as oil shortages, terrorism etc. with a special focus on economic issues

- After the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed embargo against Canada, Japan, the Netherlands and the US which led to the quadrupling of oil prices. The OPEC actions shocked the economies around the world.

The limitations of G7:

- *Failure to address global challenges*: The G7 failed to address the economic crisis of 2007-08 which led to the rise of the G20. in fact, the G20 has provided a degree of confidence by promoting open markets and stimulus.
- *Non-binding decisions*: The G-7 does not have a formal constitution or a fixed headquarters. The decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are non-binding.
- *Failure in dealing with contemporary issues*: It failed in dealing with issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, the challenge of Daesh.
  - *Failure to reach a consensus*: Though, it had announced its members would phase out all fossil fuels and subsidies but has not announced any plan of action to do so. Though, the G7 account for 59% of historic global CO_2 emissions ("from 1850 to 2010") and their coal -fired plants emit "twice more CO_2 than those of the entire African continent".
  - *In terms of terrorism*: ISIS has thousands of fighters from G7 countries.
- *Not representing modern-day geopolitical realities*: G7 no longer properly represents the current world.
  - *Share in global GDP*:
    - When constituted, the G7 countries accounted for close to two-thirds of global GDP.
    - But, according to the 2017 report of the accountancy firm, PwC- "The World in 2050", they now account for less than a third of global GDP on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis and less than half on market exchange rates (MER) basis.

Should India join the grouping?

- An opportunity for the proven and legitimate democracies to come together in a world where authoritarianism is rising.
- It would be a single stop for India's diplomacy to the most important countries in the West.
- It would help to put pressure on China which is having the issue of unfair trade practices with the larger West.
- It would help to inch towards the permanent seat at UNSC.
- G7 too suffers from internal divisions since Trump began to question the NATO alliance.
- It may complicate our relationship with the Global South with which we share our economic interest. Plus, India's interest at WTO may get impacted if the West puts pressures on India via G7.

- o **Emerging economies**:
  - The seven largest emerging economies (E7, or "Emerging 7") comprising Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia and Turkey account for over a third of global GDP on PPP terms and over a quarter on MER basis.
  - India's economy is already the third largest in the world in PPP terms.
- o **Future of economies**:
  - By 2050, the PwC Report predicts, six of the seven of the world's best performing economies will be China, India, the US, Indonesia, Brazil and Russia.
  - It projects that India's GDP will increase to $17 trillion in 2030 and $42 trillion in 2050 in PPP terms, in second place after China.

With changed economic circumstances, there are talks of expansion of G7.

Expansion of G7:

- **Alternative**: The US asked for a G10 or G11 instead with the inclusion of India, South Korea, Australia and possibly Russia or including the Five Eyes countries (an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US).
- **Future of China**: The US is involved in a crisis with China over COVID-19. India has attended several G7 summits earlier as a special invitee for its outreach sessions and in the future its role is expected to rise.

Need for a new institution and Way Forward:

The COVID-19 once again shows the limitations of G7 in handling core world issues. So, there is a need for a new institution to tackle world issues. With the world in disorder, a new mechanism will have value only if it focuses on key global issues.

- **The world is in a state of disorder**: The global economy has stalled over the COVID-19. Nations need ability and resilience to cope with the current crisis with the revival of multilateralism. Existing international institutions have proven themselves unequal to world issues.
- **Need for new mechanism**: It would be ideal to include in it the seven future leading economies. Such as the 2005 ad hoc experiment by the UK PM in bringing together the G7 and the BRICS countries.
- **Observing international law**: The new mechanism should focus more on it and prevent the retreat from liberal values on which public goods are established.
- **Immediate Challenge**:
  - o Global public health and the revival of growth and trade in a sustainable way.
  - o To ensure effective implementation of the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention and the prevention of any possible cheating by its state parties by the possible creation of new microorganisms or viruses by using recombinant technologies.

UNSC Reforms: Chasing an Illusion

Syllabus:Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

In News: India won the election for the non-permanent seat in the powerful Security Council of the UN.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC): The United Nations Charter established six main organs of the United Nations including the UNSC.

Composition of UNSC: mentioned in the infographic

Functions and Powers:

- To maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations.
- The only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.
- Determines the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and recommends what action should be taken.
- Power to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression.
- It has the power to suspend economic and diplomatic relations between countries, impose sanctions and can authorize collective military action.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL

China, France, Russia, USA, UK — Africa — Asia — Latin America & Caribbean — W Europe — E Europe

🟥 Permanent members - 5 seats
🟩 Elected members - 10 seats

SOURCE: UN
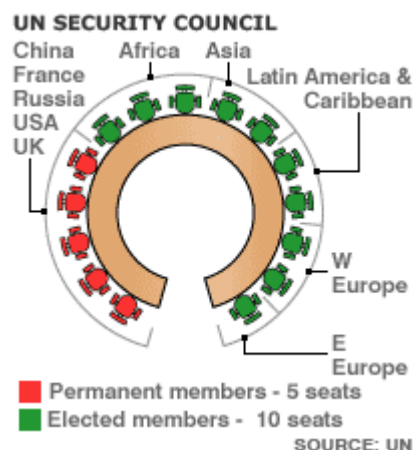
Why are reforms needed in UNSC?

- **Outdated Composition:** The current 5 permanent members represent the post-world war 2 world. The UN began with 50 members but today it has more than 190. The African Group wants its 54 nations to be involved in decisions concerning not only international peace and security but its own very continent.
- **Lack of democratic representation:** The UNSC does not represent the regions like South America, Africa etc. in the permanent membership. Council must adapt to new political realities with increased representation to boost its legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions. Such as Africa demands no less than two permanent seats to redress the historical injustice of not being represented in the permanent category.
- **Aggregation of powers:** The UN represents the larger world. However, the use of veto power for vested interest by five permanent members has led to concentration of power
- **Rise of new global power:** The big powers of post-world war 2 era were given places in permanent membership for proper functioning. Improper sentence formation. G4 nations (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan) are legitimate candidates for permanent membership in the top UN body on account of the "geopolitical realities" of the 21st century. G4 nations are important economies and emerging world powers.

- **Misuse of Veto power:** This power is given to permanent members where one country's objection takes over the opinion of a majority of countries and prevents possible UN response to a crisis. For example-action on Masood Azhar was vetoed many times by China.
- **Lack of transparency:** The meetings of permanent members are held privately like a private club presenting resolutions to the UNSC without formal consultation.
- **Wide mandate of the council:** The UN has enormous powers like to put sanctions, taking military actions which opens the way to abuse, double-standards, and outright intervention, in the interests of dominant powers.
- **Council's working methods:** Countries like Cuba spotlighted the organ's growing tendency to assume functions outside its purview and usurping the role of other organs.

Obstruction to Reforms:

- *Bringing all permanent members together*: All permanent members of the UNSC are not ready to share their powers.
- **Difficult criteria to fulfil:** Any reform of the Security Council would require the agreement of at least two-thirds of UN member states in a vote in the General Assembly

India sought the support of member countries by highlighting its commitment to the achievement of N.O.R.M.S: a New Orientation for a Reformed Multilateral System
Key priorities for India:

- *New Opportunities for progress* – A rapidly shifting global security landscape, persistence of traditional security challenges, and emergence of new and complicated challenges, all demand a coherent, pragmatic, nimble and effective platform for collaboration to ensure sustainable peace.
- *An Effective response to international terrorism* – India will push for the India-led Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism to tackle the challenge of terrorism.
- *Reforming the multilateral system*– There is widespread concern at the inadequacy of the existing multilateral institutions to deliver results or meet new challenges. Thus, there is a need to promote greater cooperation in multilateral institutions.
- *A comprehensive approach to international peace and security* – Streamlining UN Peacekeeping is an overdue task. We must ensure greater clarity, direction, and professionalism in UN Peacekeeping Operations.
- *Promoting technology with a human touch as a driver of solutions* – India aims to promote use of technological advancement for the good of all including the under-developed nations who lack such resources to fight challenges like climate change.

India's approach in the next two year will be guided by "Five S's", as set out by the Prime Minister:
• Samman (Respect),
• Samvad (Dialogue),
• Sahyog (Cooperation), and
• Shanti (Peace), to create conditions for universal
• Samriddhi (Prosperity)

and must be ratified by two-thirds of Member States. All of the permanent members of the UNSC (which have veto rights) must also agree.

- *Lack of Consensus on certain critical issues*: Regional rivalries have curtailed effective reforms. For example- In response to G4, an informal "coffee club", comprising 40-odd member states was formed. They are mostly middle-sized states who oppose bigger regional powers grabbing permanent seats such as Pakistan against India.
- *Issue of Veto power*: The permanent members have rejected the demands to give veto power to new permanent members in case of expansion. Some members like the US want expansion without veto. Many members have called for abolishing the permanent membership's use of veto power to overrule the adoption of draft resolutions.

India's credential to be a permanent member of the Security Council:

- **Criteria:** India qualifies to be a permanent member by any objective criteria such as population, territorial size, GDP, economic potential, civilizational legacy, cultural diversity, political system. With 1.4 billion people representing one-sixth population of the world, India should be a permanent member as its absence affects the credibility of UNSC.
- **Performance:** India's performance as a non-permanent member in 2011-12 has also strengthened its bid for a permanent seat. Also, its performance in the past and on-going contributions to the activities of the UN – especially to UN peacekeeping operations are well appreciated.
- **Leadership:** India has remained the leader of the third world as seen in its association in NAM.
- **Relationship with the UN system:** India has been a founding member of the UN and still remains an important member. India was offered the seat in the past by the US and Soviet Union.
- **Backing**: India has been backed by some of the important members such as Germany, Russia etc. India getting 184 out of 192 votes at UNSC non-permanent membership voting shows India's acceptance by other countries.

Way Forward:

- To meet emerging challenges of today's increasingly complex international security and peace architecture, the UNSC must adapt, reform and expand its membership to include underrepresented regions, particularly Africa
- India's entry as a permanent member is important not only for India but also for the whole world for better distribution of powers.

GENERAL STUDIES 3

Data driven Government: Crossing the River by Feeling the Stones

Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

In News: The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the unsatisfactory state of India's data collection and processing system.

Current situation:

- *Need a robust and efficient policy delivery mechanism:* For large-scale developmental efforts in countries.
- *Current decision making:* In India, it is often based on surveys and consultations that are released with a considerable lag. For e.g., the population census comes out once in ten years.
- *Rapid advancement in technology:* It has led to an explosive growth in the volume of data produced.
- *Data is the new oil:* Data is now being touted as one of the most valuable resources. The public services and governance systems in India can better harness the value of this data with access to high-value data sources.

Use smarter analytics to save time, money and energy

Governments manage three main categories of resources: people, physical assets, and money.

- *People*
  - Human capital is generally the biggest and most critical resource that an agency has to manage. Data analytics can help agencies decide how to deploy staff for maximum effectiveness. For instance, Pennsylvania's Bureau of Child Support Enforcement uses a "payment score calculator" to advise caseworker outreach to noncustodial parents.
- *Equipment and physical assets*
  - The second major category of resources includes physical assets, from weapons systems to field offices. Modern analytic tools support more objective decisions for allocating these assets. For example, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) uses a data-driven approach to choose new international office locations.
- *Money*
  - The third critical resource government employs to achieve its mission is funding, such as grants, loans, and guarantees. How should government agencies decide which organizations should receive a grant? One agency using data to manage money is the United States Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), whose enterprise data store helps forecast the effect of its investments on outcomes.

Importance of data driven policymaking:

- *Need for evidence-based policymaking:* Five-year plans in the past have stressed the need for frequent and robust data collection processes in various contexts ranging from health to natural calamities to agriculture.

- *Optimal Use:* Easy access to government data will encourage more extensive use of a valuable public resource for the benefit of the community.
- *Avoiding duplication:* By sharing data the need for separate bodies to collect the same data will be avoided resulting in significant cost savings.
- *Better Decision making:* Ready access to quality information will help in better decision making, evidence-based policy and better targeting of welfare programmes.
- *Accountability in public services:* Sharing non-sensitive government data with the public will ensure accountability in public services.

Govt Initiatives: Cases of the use of data for governance in India:

- *National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP):* It was launched in 2012 and the objective of the policy was to increase the accessibility and easier sharing of non-sensitive data amongst the registered users and their availability for scientific, economic and social developmental purposes.
- *Open Government Data (OGD) initiative:* It was launched in 2012 and allows citizens to access a range of government data in machine-readable form in one place. The portal allows union ministries and departments to publish datasets, documents, services, tools and applications collected by them for public use.
- *Project Insight:* It uses big data analytics to match information from social media sites and other sources to deduce mismatches between spending pattern and income declaration.
- *MCA21 database:* 4.25 lakh shell companies have been struck off, and the numbers getting added each year is reducing. More companies are now becoming compliant, and the levels in terms of filings has crossed 80%.

Constraints in data driven policymaking:

- *Over-reliance on data collection through surveys:*
  o These are released at a considerable lag which diminishes their usefulness in policymaking.
  o There is a dearth of availability of real-time operational/administrative data.
  o One challenge in this regard is that considerable numbers of stakeholders are involved in enabling data collection systems that are premised on a "bottom-to-top" approach.
- *Problem with the usability of data that is currently generated:*
  o Large volumes of data collected by different government agencies and departments are not shared, even among the departments.
  o The data shared is often not available in machine-readable format or cannot be integrated with data from other sources to help develop multi-dimensional insights
  o Enabling adoption of the latest technology at the grassroots level would involve substantial investment along with skill development of local functionaries.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) fiasco: Last year, the official release of the PLFS report which showed the worst unemployment rate in 45 years was delayed.

- o Furthermore, planning will be required to integrate different technologies so that ground level data can be aggregated.
- *Lack of awareness regarding currently available data sources.*

Suggested reforms:

- The government should share unreleased Census and socio-economic data, publicly funded research data, and scientific data to foster data-driven research and innovation

Gathering data	• Digitize existing paper-based data • Initiate digital data collection at source
Storing data	• Initiate real-time storage for select data • Reduce time lag between collection and data entry
Processing data	• Build capacities of govt. bodies to analyse data • Involve private sector in analysis and insight generation
Disseminating data	• Create scheme dashboards • Open district-level dashboard to the public • Open data from third party studies to the public

- While making data a public good, the government must consider the privacy implications and inherent fairness of data being used.
- *Data Protection bill*: It should become an act after careful deliberation of all the complexities.

Issues during COVID-19

- To tackle it, digital tools like AarogyaSetu are being deployed to perform tasks like contact tracing, hotspot recognition.
- These tools involve surveillance which raises questions of civil liberties like privacy, right to movement.

Legal framework to tackle following:

- Data – proportionality, security, safeguards
- Which data need to be collected and what are the objectives of collecting data?
- Proportionality of data i.e. only data which is needed to achieve the objective must be collected and nothing more
- Consent of individuals while collecting of data
- Deletion of data when the objective is met

Way forward

As the Economic Survey 2018-19 suggested, since data of societal interest is generated by the people, it should be "of the people, by the people, for the people". Thus, the data collection procedure can be streamlined through the following processes:

- Both administrative and survey data needs to be collected in digital formats across various sectors in real time to move from paper-based to digitally-driven operations.

- Availability of data at a more granular level – village/block/district should be ensured.
- NITI Aayog is already engaged in developing a National Data Analytics Portal which is envisioned as a central repository for real-time data across different sectors for all states/UTs.
- The issue of confidentiality will need to be ensured while dealing with citizen level data.
- The NITI Aayog strategy document has further recommended that tertiary big data collected by private third parties should be used.

Rural Development: An Urgent Priority amid an Unprecedented Pandemic
Syllabus: *Inclusive growth and issues arising from it*

In News: The miseries of the migrant labourers during COVID-19 has brought into focus the urgent need to shift to a new paradigm of economic development for rural areas.
Background:
- *Reverse migration:* Despite the best effort of both the central and state governments, the mass movement of nearly 10 million migrant workers in poor conditions could not be stopped.

Reverse Migration: It refers to the situation when labourers, workers and people start migrating back to their native place in the backdrop of non-availability of livelihood and job opportunities

- *Rural population more vulnerable to Pandemic:*
  o *Limited restoration of public transport:* This gave more push to migration of rural people from urban towns to their native villages.
  o *Lack of healthcare services:* Indian rural areas are marked with poor health infrastructure, lack of healthcare personnel, poor incentives to ASHA's and non-affordability of medicines and require tests.
- *Lack of credible data:* The lack of authentic data on the number of migrant workers, their living and working conditions and perpetual uncertainty in their livelihood prospects have been brought into sharp focus with the coronavirus pandemic.

Need for Rural-centric development model:
- *To reduce poverty:* A large population of the country lives below the poverty line, of which a major proportion resides in the villages. Hence to reduce poverty, raising per capita income in rural areas should be the focal point.
- *Increase employment opportunities:* In a survey of urban migrant workers, 84% reported casual work and 11 % stated agriculture as their primary source of livelihood in their villages. This indicates that there is a need to create jobs in rural areas far beyond just augmentation of agriculture.
- *To make agriculture remunerative:* Creation and promotion of food processing industries, cottage-based industries and forest-based industries would create opportunities for raising farmer's income.
- *To reduce distress migration:* Current estimates of the total number of migrant workers range from 72 million to 110 million. Self-reliant villages will reduce push factors such as

famines, floods, droughts, water-crisis, starvation and hunger that leads to distress migration.

- **Reduce rural-urban divide:** Approximately 70% of the Indian population lives in villages but still a large population has to move to urban areas for work as there are limited opportunities in rural areas.
- **Welfare of vulnerable sections:** Majority of the vulnerable sections such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes reside in villages. Self-reliant villages will help them improve their socio-economic indicators such as maternal mortality rate, literacy rate, etc.
- **Climate change mitigation and adaptation:** Climate change has the potential to create havoc in rural areas by declining agricultural productivity, water crisis, desertification, inundation of coastal lands, frequent floods and recurrent droughts, etc. Self-reliant villages would make the farmers capable of adapting to climate change.
- **Utilise Crisis as an opportunity to overhaul policy framework:**
  - The food crisis of the 1960s led to self-reliance in agriculture
  - The fiscal crisis of the late 1980s led to the economic reforms of the 1990s.

Models of Self-Reliant Villages:
Gandhiji's Village Swaraj Model
- Model of self-reliant villages is the basis of a free democracy.
- The idea of village swaraj is that a village is a complete republic, independent of its neighbors for its own vital wants.
- His was not a model of a closed economy and a village economy perpetuating itself at the lower levels of income, but one in which local populations could be employed locally but with rising incomes and higher productivity

A.P.J Abdul Kalam's Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) Model
- His vision was to develop rural India through a cluster development system where 50-100 villages with common competencies and/or mutual markets could be horizontally or vertically integrated as PURA complexes.
- These villages would be linked through "four connectivity's" — physical, electronic, knowledge and economic.
- The goal was to provide income and quality of life opportunities to all within PURA complex.
- While some rural-rural migration would be acceptable, rural to urban migration would be minimised.
- He envisioned 7,000 PURA complexes at the cost of Rupees 130 crore per unit built through public-private partnerships.

Nanaji Deshmukh
- Nanaji Deshmukh called for self-reliant villages based on a model of Integral Humanism.
- In his work across 500 villages in India, especially in the Chitrakoot area (Madhya Pradesh), the successful implementation of the model called not just for zero unemployment and no one below the poverty line but also zero internal legal disputes and no widow being denied remarriage.

Measures to Create Self-Reliant Villages:

- **Strengthening Gram Panchayats:** The Legislatures must devolve funds, functions and functionaries to Gram Panchayats to make them self-reliant. The bottom-up development process will bring inclusivity and diversity in the development process of India.
- **Use of technology:** Internet and artificial intelligence could be leveraged to facilitate sustainable agriculture. Large-scale and real-time data collected from farming practices and collated with global price and production numbers can be used to offer more profitable choices to our farmers.
- **Promotion to industries**: Labour intensive and environmentally sustainable industries like food-processing industry, cottage-based industries, textile industry, etc. should be promoted to create employment opportunities.
- **Public-private participation**: Rural knowledge platform could be created through active collaboration between the public and private sector. Private sector will bring investments and technology in rural areas.
- **Human Capacity development**: Skill mapping of returning migrant labours will help in developing their capacity further as per the global standards in their respective fields. There is a need to create a fresh curriculum in engineering, medical colleges and business schools to train the young workforce of rural India to operate in villages.
- **Issuance of Aatmanirbhar village bonds**: To finance this ambitious re-engineering of our development model, Atmanirbhar Village bonds could be issued to raise resources. Part of the mandated priority sector lending by scheduled commercial banks could be used to finance these bonds.

Is the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan capable of addressing the concerns ?

- **No one size fits all:** Experts argue that such supply-side interventions will not benefit Northern and Eastern states where industrial development and startups are low.
- **Invest more on Citizen centric reforms:** Expansion of the public distribution system and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee.
- **Distort Resource allocation**: Sector-specific sops distort resource allocation and make the task of tax simplification difficult.
- **Emphasis on supply-side**: It focuses on structural reforms and not demand.
- **Passing of tax cuts to consumers:** The multiplier effects of tax sops are doubtful and inferior to those of government expenditure.
- **Expansionary Fiscal policy:** There is a clear correlation between a continued lockdown and urban production shortfalls, suggesting inelastic supply curves in urban India now. The government should have focused more on fiscal expenditure on rural India.
- **Double farmer's income:** Reform to the Essential Commodities Act, APMCs and contract farming would directly impact prosperity (45 percent of our agricultural labour force generates only 14 percent of GDP).

- *Credit rating issue*: It is interpreted not as actions by external rating agencies but an internal assessment of the credits (revenue) and debits (expenditure) of government accounts. By around October or November, there will be pressure on Union and state government revenues. There will be enhanced expenditure because of emergency health-related measures, health infrastructure and demand-driven (MGNREGA, housing) expenses.
- *No sops for troubled sectors*: There haven't been sector-specific tax sops for troubled sectors like hospitality, travel, tourism, telecom and aviation.
- *Debt Management issue*: If nominal GDP growth in 2021-22 is also low and the government rates of borrowing are what they are today, there will be a serious debt management issue.
- *The unfinished agenda*: It includes:
    - Civil service reform (the steel frame has become a steel cage)
    - Urban reform (having 100 cities with more than a million people rather than 52)
    - Education reform (our current regulator confuses university buildings with building universities)
    - Skill reform (our apprentice regulations are holding back employers and universities).
    - Labour reform (our capital is handicapped without labour and labour is handicapped without capital).

Way Forward

To achieve self-reliant villages, there are numerous such as lack of funds, ineffective multi-level planning, lack of trust in the private sector, distressed financial sector etc. The rural-urban divide thus should be seen as a continuum rather than as a dichotomy. The continuum approach will bring urban facilities in rural areas and thus mitigate distress migration.

Universal Basic Income: The Need of the Hour
Syllabus: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it

In News: Universal Basic Income (UBI) has been debated as a solution to the economic distress caused by COVID-19.

Economic distress caused by Covid-19

- *Decelerated Economic growth*: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected the global growth at -4.9% in 2020, the worst since the Great Depression. India is projected to grow only at 1.9%.
- *Affected Livelihood of poor*: In India, 90% of the workforce is in the informal sector without guaranteed minimum wages or social security. This has impacted livelihood security.
- *Rise in Unemployment*: According to CMIE, the unemployment rate in India has risen to 27.11% due to the lockdown.

Economists have argued the measure of universal basic income to alleviate economic distress and revitalize the economy.

Universal Basic Income:

UBI is a minimum income (direct cash transfers) guaranteed by the state to every individual every month. It is premised on the belief that every person should have a right to a basic income to cover their needs, just by virtue of being citizens.

Characteristics of UBI:

- Periodic (being paid at regular intervals, not lump sum).
- Cash payment (not in kind or vouchers, leaving it on the recipient to spend it as they like).
- Individual (not to households or families).
- Universal (for all).
- Unconditional (irrespective of income or prospects of job).
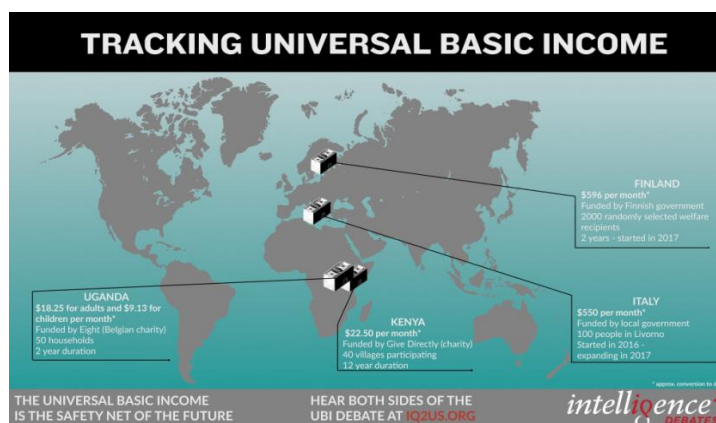
UBI In Other Countries

Arguments in favor of UBI in India	Arguments Against UBI In India
Poverty Reduction: the 2016–17 Economic survey argued that an annual bank transfer of Rs. 7620 (to everyone except the top 25% of India's income pyramid) would reduce national poverty from 22% to 0.5%.	**Financially unviable:** Government must provide some basic essential services like education, health etc. in all circumstances and provisioning money for funding UBI, while providing these basic services may not be financially viable. According to Economic Survey 2016-17, even a quasi UBI would cost the Indian government around 4.5% of GDP (2019 prices).
Promotes right to decent work: UBI will create flexibility in labour markets by allowing for individuals to have partial or calibrated engagements with the labor market without fear of losing benefits.	**Reduces the incentive to work:** A free cash transfer to working individuals would reduce the need and incentive to work as it would take care of their basic needs
Insurance against shocks: Poor households often face shocks such as bad health, crop losses, natural disasters use personal savings to cope from these shocks. UBI provides	**Exposure to market risks (cash vs. food):** Unlike food subsidies that are not subject to fluctuating market prices, a cash transfer's

insurance against these shocks. The Covid-19 pandemic and consequent economic crisis is a classic example of shock which highlights the importance of UBI.	purchasing power may severely be curtailed by market fluctuations.
Eliminates irrational subsidies by better targeting: The existing are riddled with misallocation, leakages and exclusion of the poor. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) suggested that if subsidies were eliminated, the government could provide all Indians with ₹2,600 (in 2011-12 prices) every month.	

Alternatives to Universal Basic Income:

- **Quasi-Basic Income schemes**- as suggested by Economic Survey (2016-17): This would leave out 25% of the richest population in India.
- **Quasi-universal basic rural income (QUBRI):** It seeks to target only poorer people in the rural areas and does not cover the masses of urban poor working for low and uncertain wages.
- **UBI for women only**: UBI only for women will help in women empowerment and have multiplier effects on the household.
- **Rationalization of subsidies, better targeting and operational efficiency:** In absence of UBI, it is of utmost necessary to successfully implement the social welfare schemes to increase the standard of living of the citizens.

Achieving UBI

- **Fair taxation:** To achieve the successful UBI, Countries need to work together, exchanging data across borders, to stop people and corporations from evading taxes. The government should not be deprived of its justiciable funds to construct a better state.
- **Reducing subsidies:** India can reduce such subsidies which hinder the path of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals – especially climate-change targets. This would generate financial resources not just for UBI but also to support affected fossil-fuel companies.

Case Study: SEWA Project in Delhi, 2011
As part of a United Nations Development Program–Government of Delhi partnership, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the state government carried out a randomized controlled trial where a group of 100 households in New Delhi were given 1,000 rupees per month. The experiment observed an increase in expenditures on nutritious non-cereal items like pulses, fish, eggs, and meat.

Conclusion: Our high economic complexity has not translated into economic prosperity because of regulatory issues. On the other hand, the rising likelihood of social unrest, conflict, unmanageable mass migration and the proliferation of extremist groups that capitalize and ferment on social disappointment. It is against this background that we seriously need to consider implementing a well-designed UBI.

Reforms in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955
Syllabus: *Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices*

In News: The Cabinet has approved three separate ordinances to push agriculture marketing and commodities trade reforms in the country.

What is the Essential Commodities Act, 1955?
- **Objective:** The Act ensures the easy availability of essential commodities to consumers at fair prices. It empowers the government to regulate and control the production, distribution, supply and sale of the commodities declared as 'essential' by the Act. The Act aims to stop hoarding and black marketing of foodstuffs by imposing stock limits.
- **List of items**: drugs; fertilizers, whether inorganic, organic or mixed; foodstuffs, including edible oils; hank yarn made wholly from cotton; petroleum and petroleum products; raw jute and jute textiles; seeds of food-crops and seeds of fruits and vegetables, seeds of cattle fodder, jute seed, cotton seed; face masks; and hand sanitizers.
- **Implementation:** The State Governments are the implementing agencies.
- **Definition of 'essential'**: There is no specific definition of essential commodities in Act. The act states that an "essential commodity" means a commodity specified in the "Schedule" of this Act. The Act gives powers to the central government to add or remove a commodity in the "Schedule" in public interest. The Centre, if it is satisfied that it is necessary to do so in public interest, can notify an item as essential, in consultation with state governments.

What are the amendments? The ordinance has deregulated commodities such as cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes by removing them from the schedule of the Act. It has introduced a new subsection (1A) in Section 3 to provide a mechanism for the "regulation" of agricultural foodstuffs, namely cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, potato, and supplies under extraordinary circumstances (extraordinary price rise, war, famine, and natural calamity of a severe nature).

Reasons for the amendment:
- **Removing obsolete laws:** It was legislated at a time when the country was facing scarcity of foodstuffs due to persistent abysmal levels of food grain production and was dependent on the imports to meet the food security of the nation. It was enacted to stop the hoarding and black marketing of foodstuffs. However, India has transformed into a food surplus country now.

Other ordinances:

Besides the ordinance to amend the Essential Commodities Act, following two ordinances were moved:

Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance,2020:

- **Aim:** To open up agricultural marketing outside the notified Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) for farmers and also remove barriers to inter-State trade.
- **Significance:** It will open more choices for the farmer, reduce marketing costs for the farmers and help them in getting better prices. It is also expected to pave the way for creating One India, One Agriculture Market in the country.

Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance,2020:

- **Aim:** To facilitate contract farming where a private buyer contracts to purchase a crop at a certain price at the beginning of a season, transferring the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the corporate sponsor.
- It also provides an effective dispute resolution mechanism with clear timelines for redressal.
- **Significance:** It enables the farmer to access modern technology and better inputs. It will reduce the cost of marketing and improve income of farmers and will help in attracting private investment.

- **Failed to achieve intended benefits:** The Economic Survey had pointed out that the Act failed to differentiate between hoarding and Storage. Thus, in the long run it disincentivized development of storage infrastructure, thereby leading to increased volatility in prices following production/ consumption shocks — the opposite of what it is intended for.
- **Promote private entrepreneurship:** The amendment would deregulate the commodities such as cereals, edible oils, oilseeds, pulses, onions and potatoes. Thus, it will help to lessen the fears of private investors of excessive regulatory interference in their business operations during ordinary circumstances.
- **Promote farmer-centric policies:** The Act has always been considered as pro-consumer and looked at controlling prices from the general public perspective of controlling food inflation. However, it resulted in restricted income and poor price realization for farmers.
- **Attract foreign investments:** Government's constant maneuvering with supply-side management created an unstable environment for foreign investors. This move can thus be expected to bring in foreign investment into the sector.

Case Study: In September 2019, the Centre invoked the ECA Act's provisions to impose stock limits on onions after heavy rains wiped out a quarter of the kharif crop and led to a sustained spike in prices. Although the restrictions on both retail and wholesale traders were meant to prevent hoarding and enhance supply in the market, the Survey showed that there was actually an increase in price volatility and a widening wedge between wholesale and retail prices. This is due to the fact that ECA act fails to differentiate between hoarding and Storage.

Way Forward

Indian agriculture today suffers from domestic investment in processing as well as backend procurement, grading, warehousing, cold storage and transport infrastructure. These problems can only be solved by increasing farmers' household income. The amendments to the Essential Commodities Act can hence be expected to be a step in the right direction, providing gains to individual producers who sell in tonnes/quintals.

Food Security in India: Hunger Amid Abundance

Syllabus: Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security

In News: The economic and social distress caused due to Covid-19 pandemic has reignited the debate around food security in India and specifically the possibility of cash transfers as an alternative to food distribution via PDS.

Understanding the concept of food security: Food security, as defined by the World Food Summit (WFS) exists when all people at all times have **physical, social and economic** access to **sufficient, safe and nutritious** food which meets the dietary needs.

Four Dimensions of Food Security

FOOD SECURITY DIMENSION	DEFINITION
ACCESS	The economic and physical ability to procure safe and nutritious food.
AVAILABILITY	The supply of safe and nutritious food, determined by domestic production, stock levels, and net trade.
STABILIZATION	Constancy of the other three dimensions over time.
UTILIZATION	The ability of the human body to consume and utilize nutrition from food.

Food Security in India- A brief overview

- *Per Capita Food Availability*: The Economic Survey 2018 annual report states that the net availability of food grains is 487 grams per person per day, which translates to a per capita calorie intake of 2445kcal (2011-12) – one of the lowest in the world.
- *Economic access determined by poverty*: 25.7 and 13.7% of the population were poor in rural and urban India, respectively, in 2011-12, which curtails food access and contributes to poverty.
- *Hunger*: India was ranked 102nd out of 117 countries in Global Hunger Index 2019. With a score of 30.3, India suffers from a level of hunger that is serious.
- *Malnutrition*: According to NHFS-4, 38% of children below 5 years are stunted, 21% are wasted and 36% are underweight.

India's Approach to food security

First Generation Approach to Food Security:

- Traditionally, India's approach to food security was based on the 'availability' dimension of food security- looking at only the quantitative aspect. Policies and programmes were designed to ensure "self-sufficiency" in food grains.

- The Green revolution launched in the mid-1960s positively impacted the macro-level food security, but failed to ensure access to food which resulted in hunger and malnutrition.

Second Generation Approach to Food Security:
- Since the 1980's there has been an increasing acknowledgement that physical and financial access to food had a determining role in achieving food security in the country. The approach shifted from food production to access to food and from charity to a rights-based approach.
- The enactment of National Food Security Act, 2013 marked a shift in the right to food as a legal right rather than a general entitlement.

Swaraj Abhiyan Vs. Union of India, 2016: The SC observed right to food as a constitutional right and not merely a statutory right

Issues and Challenges with Achieving Food Security in India
1. *Issues with National Food Security At, 2013*
    a. The NSFA does not guarantee the universal right to food: Targeted approach restricts the right to food to only 75% of rural and 50% of urban population in India
    b. The Act would not apply in times of "war, flood, drought, fire, cyclone or earthquake". This a highly problematic clause given that food becomes utmost necessary during these circumstances
    c. The Act focuses primarily on the distribution of rice and wheat and fails to address the 'utilization' dimension of food security. Given that a major reason for micronutrient deficiency in India is because of a cereal-based diet; the NSFA does not address the issue of malnutrition and nutritional deficiency adequately.
    d. The Act does not address the 'stability' dimension of food security- excludes the impact of climate change on Indian agriculture and measures to overcome it.
2. *Public health and sanitation:* Poor sanitary conditions caused by open-defecation and other issues contribute to malnutrition. Lack of a comprehensive framework to address such issues undermines food security efforts.
3. *Issues with PDS:* Inclusion and exclusion errors in PDS, large leakages of food grains, inadequate distribution of food, food adulterations in distributed food are major issues in food security.
4. *Implementation of Nutritional Programmes:* Unmonitored, improper implementation of nutritional programmes and lack of accountability remains a major challenge in achieving food security.
5. *Environmental Degradation:* Agricultural production is under stress from environmental degradation, desertification, climate change, and an increasing conversion of land for non-agricultural activities. According to scientists, climate change induced fluctuating weather patterns will reduce production for most crops including maize and rice.

6. **Agrarian Crisis**: Agrarian crisis arising out of systemic policy failures and perpetuated by environmental degradation is a major challenge to achieve food security

7. **Covid-19 Pandemic**: The United Nations World Food Program has estimated 265 million people to face acute food shortage after the COVID-19 crisis. India faces the threat of food security despite holding 58.4 million tonnes of food grain in addition to 3 million tonnes of pulses.

Which is better for ensuring food security under the National Food Security Act – Cash transfer or in- kind (food distribution via PDS)?

Arguments for In-Kind distribution of Food via PDS

- **Farm income ensured–** Since food for distribution under PDS is procured from farmers under Minimum Support Price, in-kind food distribution to citizens ensure assured farm income for farmers.

- **No transaction cost for individuals** – Government procures, stores and distributes food which makes transaction cost for individual almost negligible. Whereas cash transfer would involve going to the bank, getting an operational account, then going to market etc which adds to transaction cost of individuals.

- **No inflationary pressure** – In-kind distribution does not create inflation in the market which is done by cash transfer.

- **No misuse of cash** – Individual's may always not act in their best interest and getting cash would mean it can be misused by householders given the social situations. Example – In a patriarchal society, man exercises more power over women and children in terms of resource use. So, it can be used for alcohol or drug abuse rather than getting food.

- **Food availability in pandemics** – In current lockdown, when markets have remained closed for more than a month, fair prices shops have proved to be a boon in ensuring food availability for vulnerable sections.

Arguments in favour of cash transfer

- **PDS has inherent issues** – Corruption, leakage of grain in the open market, exclusion-inclusion errors have been pointed out by Shanta Kumar Committee in the current PDS system. Thus, transfer will be a permanent solution for such unethical acts.

- **Cash gives autonomy** – Cash transfers gives more autonomy to individuals who can buy food based on their need and nutritional requirement, unlike the current regime in which only cereals and coarse grains are provided based on quantity prescribed under NFSA.

- **Reduced fiscal burden** –Government's fiscal burden has the highest share from food subsidy which involves procurement, storage (excessive storage also) and distribution cost. Cash transfers will reduce the fiscal burden which then can be utilized for improving rural markets, strengthening infrastructure and for other capital expenditures.

Suggested Reforms:

1. **Sustainable agriculture**:
   a. Agriculture that sustainably increases productivity, resilience, reduces GHGs and enhances achievement of national food security should be promoted

b. Climate-smart practices including soil and nutrient management, water harvesting and use, pest and disease control, resilient ecosystems, use of genetic resources should be promoted

c. Programmes and policies in India should enable farmers to adopt climate-smart practices that could generate economic rural growth and ensure food security

2. *Indirect Interventions*: There is a need for increased emphasis on indirect interventions for example access to water, sanitation and hygiene.

3. *Revamping PDS*:
   a. It is important to improve the targeting efficiency of the TPDS to assess if there are poor people being left out.
   b. The quality and diversity of food grains supplied through the PDS should also be improved
   c. For better storage and avoid wastages, the FCI should opt for greater containerisation and silos for storage.
   d. To reduce the high leakages from the PDS, the government should speed up end-to-end computerisation and adopt technology-driven solutions.

4. *Right-based access to food*: India should fulfil its commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) which recognize Right to adequate Food. Policies must deliver universal, rights-based nutrition services, which overcome disparities across gender, communities and geographical regions.

5. *Addressing Micronutrient Deficiency*: Fortification of food, biofortification of plants/crops are essential to combat micronutrient deficiency.

6. *Enhancing Livelihood Security*: Given the vicious cycle between poverty and food insecurity, the government must aim at enhancing the livelihood security of people by properly implementing employment guarantee schemes and promoting the rural non-farm sector.

Conclusion: The major strength of the Indian food security system has been in achieving self-sufficiency in the production of cereals and public distribution systems. However, it is high time that India focuses on a 'third-generation' approach towards food security given India's increased vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

Vocal about Local: Brand Bharat
Syllabus: *Effects of liberalization on the economy*

In News: Indian Prime Minister announced Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and called upon Indians to be "vocal for local".

 What is "Vocal for Local"?
- "Vocal for local" means not just using domestically made products but also to promote them. The concept dates back to the era of the Swadeshi movement which started in 1905 as part of the Indian independence movement.

- Post-independence, India followed a socialist pattern of development, import substitution policy to create a base of domestic industries. However, this led to protectionism and lack of competition.
- The LPG reforms of India initiated in 1991 aimed to reform the economy to a market-driven socialist economy and to expand the role of private and foreign investment.
- The present call for "Vocal for Local" should not be misunderstood as synonymous to import substitution. It is a call for making India self-reliant and leveraging the potential which different sectors already hold.

Why do we need "Vocal for Local"?

1. **Economic Recovery post Covid-19-** A boost to domestic industries and service sector would help the Indian economy recover from the Covid-19 pandemic induced financial crisis. Further, it will help combat any future supply chain shocks due to unforeseen events.
2. **Self-Reliance:** India's dependence on imported goods have been detrimental for different sectors. For example, the heavy dependence on imported solar cells and modules, mainly from China undermines the solar power sector.
3. **Fiscal Benefits:** India's trade deficit stood at USD 15.36 billion in May 2019. Promotion of domestic industries would Increase competence in exports and would help narrow down the trade deficit.
4. **Implication in foreign policy:** Being self- reliant holds importance for strategic autonomy of India. It will help India move its economic engagement from multi-alignment to pointed-alignment with a set of countries that are critical to India's economic and strategic interests.
5. **Employment:** Enhanced focus on local manufacturing, local markets and local supply-chains would boost employment opportunities and reap the benefits of demographic dividend.
6. **Premature deindustrialisation:** India shifted directly from agriculture to service-based economy bypassing the industrial sector. The boost to local manufacturing would help address premature deindustrialization.

The Potential in India for "Vocal for Local"

1. **Demographic Dividend:** Since 2018, India's working-age population (people between 15 and 64 years of age) has grown larger than the dependent population (children aged 14 or below and people above 65 years of age). This demographic dividend will last till 2055 and India can reap the benefits and boost the economy by providing entrepreneur skills and job opportunities to the youth.
2. **Potential Sectors:**
    a. The Textile industry has competitive advantage as India is the largest producer of cotton, accounting for 25% of the global output. It is also the second largest producer of man-made fibres — polyester and viscose.
    b. **Pharmaceutical Industry:** India is the third largest producer of finished drugs in the world and the industry had $40 billion in revenues in 2018-19

c. **_Dairy Sector:_** India is the world's largest producer and consumer of milk accounting for nearly 19 per cent of the world milk production.

d. **_IT Sector:_** India has formidable strengths in brainpower dominated sectors like IT and ITES, BPOs.

e. **_Automobile:_** India's automobile industry registered a growth of 14.8% between 2017 and 18 and hold huge potential owing to high demand.

3. **_Emerging Sectors_**: India has immense potential in sectors like Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). For example: There has been a rise in homegrown brands like Yogabar in the healthy food category which was earlier dominated by imported brands.

4. **_Indigenous Knowledge:_** India holds huge potential indigenous such as AYUSH medicine, Yoga which can cater both to International and domestic consumers.

   - India is also a country rich in tribal culture- tribal textiles, jewellery, paintings, pottery, cane and bamboo and natural and food products- which can be branded and promoted in the global market.

5. **_Entrepreneurship:_** The Start-Ups in India are booming and have a huge potential to tap domestic and international markets. Niti Aayog has launched Digital India Atma Nirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge for Indian tech entrepreneurs and start-ups to build an app ecosystem in the country.

Issues associated with getting local

- **_Few sectors are heavily dependent on imports:_** For example, according to the Confederation of Indian Industry around 88% of the components used by the mobile handsets industry are imported from countries like China. Over 60% of India's medical devices are imported as well.

- **_Against globalisation:_** Production of all goods in the domestic market is against the principle of competitive advantage and thus goes against the spirit of globalisation.

- **_The WTO Factor_**: Negotiations at the WTO would be critical for India. At the Special Virtual Meeting of the General Council of the WTO on COVID-19 Trade-Related Measures, India already rejected demands for permanent tariff liberalization and implementing binding commitments on e-commerce.

- **_Striking a balance:_** Striking a balance between two contradictory policies- attract foreign investors by leveraging the availability of cheap labour and access to domestic and international markets and simultaneously trying to protect nascent domestic industries is a major challenge.

- **_Lack of R&D:_** India's R&D to GDP ratio is less than 1%. Investment in R&D is essential for the need for high-end technology to produce goods at a cheaper rate.

- **_Weak Financial sector:_** To promote entrepreneurship, financial systems need to be robust so that credit at a lower interest rate can be provided. However, the high NPA's in banks have led to a slowdown in credit growth.

- **_Poor performance of states and local bodies:_** To promote local goods based on each district's competitive advantage, need is to promote fiscal federalism and empowerment of local bodies.

- **Lack of awareness:** Awareness about the available local products in local markets is poor. Only big corporations reap the benefit with their well-researched, high-profile, targeted marketing and cross-media campaigns.
- **Lack of skilled workforce:** The proportion of formally skilled workers in India is extremely low, at 4.69% of the total workforce, compared to 24% in China, 52% in the US, 68% in the UK, 75% in Germany, 80% in Japan and 96% in South Korea.
- **Creates inefficiency:** Lack of competition from the rest of the world can make the entire industrial sector inefficient, leading to less than desired output and job creation.

Suggested Reforms

- **Administrative and Legal Reforms:** To make "Vocal for Local" mission a reality India needs Aatmanirbhar mission 2.0 with focus on administrative and legal reforms in lines with the idea of minimum government and maximum governance.
- **Diversification:** Vocal for Local should not be limited to reviving dying traditions or creating micro-enterprises. India needs to focus on emerging sectors like robotics, telemedicine, contactless hospitality, FMCG and organic ingredients.
- **Marketing:** Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, along with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade should innovate and invest in marketing and promotion of products.
- **Focus on Clusters:** To reap economies of scale, the government should setup clusters with infrastructure facilities for manufacturing of products.
- **Data driven approach:** To enable small, local entrepreneurs to get data on potential products that can be produced locally, the government needs to put micro level trade and consumption data in the public domain.
- **Protect and not Protectionism:** India needs to promote local production of goods along with better participation in the global supply chain to focus on export-led growth and promote forces of globalisation.

Best Practice: Uttar Pradesh's One District One Product Programme

- It was established by Department of MSME and Export Production in Uttar Pradesh.
- It helped industries access credit support, markets and a business case which makes them financially viable.
- It also added incremental value to many products by GI-tagging which enabled access to export markets and also contributed to brand equity of the place.

Conclusion: India has the capacity to refocus on the right choice. It only has to agree on the vision and focus on the right local.

Civil Aviation: Pandemic on Land, Silence in the Skies
Syllabus: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc

In News: After a two-month shutdown due to COVID-19, domestic flights were allowed to resume operations in a staggered manner from May 25.

Civil Aviation before Covid-19

The Civil Aviation Sector in India is a fast-growing industry and has recorded considerable growth in the last 30 years.

- *Market size*: India's passenger traffic stood at 341.05 million in FY20. Further, International Air Transport Association (IATA), has projected that India would overtake the UK to become the third largest air passenger market (both domestic and international) by 2025.
- *Investment*: According to the data released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), FDI inflow in India's air transport sector (including air freight) reached US$ 2.75 billion between April 2000 and March 2020

Effect of COVID-19:

- *Closing of airlines*: Countries closed their airports to tackle the pandemic except for necessary services.
- *Critical sector for economy*: It is important for transportation sector, particularly for cargos and passengers and also provides employment. The shutdown of the air transport due to the pandemic, thus has affected this critical sector of the economy.
- *Economic loss*: According to Crisil, the Aviation Sector in India is expected to face Rs 25,000 Crore Loss due to COVID-19 Crisis.
- Globally too, the effect was so severe that the world's second oldest airline (Avianca) has already filed for bankruptcy protection.

In such a scenario, countries are making all possible attempts to protect their airline companies. Travel and aviation sectors contribute significantly to the GDP of most countries and it is critical to ensure the economic safety and prosperity of these sectors.

Any effective reform intended to come out of the present situation is subject to the challenges of whether passengers can fly without the anxiety of pandemic and if the reforms are qualitatively and quantitatively good enough to achieve their intended purposes.

Pandemic and Civil Aviation

Issues faced by the aviation industry due to COVID-19: Travel restrictions, grounded fleets, benched staff, schedule uncertainties, ticket liabilities, restricted entries and cash burn.

Efforts of Civil aviation during COVID-19:

- *Mission Lifeline Udan*: It covered more than 5.4 lakh kilometres through 584 flights, carrying critical medical related cargo loads of over 935 tonnes to the farthest parts of the country and abroad.
- *Vande Bharat Mission*: It evacuated more than 40,000 stranded and distressed Indian citizens from different parts of the world.
- *Re-commencement of domestic aviation operations*: This decision was taken in the spirit of cooperative federalism. All the sensitivities of the states were tried to be accommodated.

In India, several reforms announced for Aviation sector under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan:

- *Efficient use of airspace*: As only 60 per cent of Indian airspace is freely available, restrictions will be eased so that flying takes less time. This is expected to result in an annual saving of around Rs 1,000 crore for airlines and saving of time by consumers.

- *Rationalization of tax regimes*: For aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), the Aircraft component repair and airframe maintenance are expected to increase from Rs 800 crore to Rs 2,000 crores in three years.

- *Improving aviation infrastructure*: Development of more airports under the PPP model without the government having to pump in additional funds has also been announced. The proposed structure for airport development will ensure upfront payments and a steady revenue stream over a pre-determined period for the government.

- *Cost saving*: To develop India as an aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) hub, it is expected that aircraft engine manufacturers will set up shops in India and airframe maintenance and component repair business should go up. On an overall basis, this should result in saving costs and creating liquidity for airline companies.

- *Convergence*: Convergence between civil MROs and the defense sector will create economies of scale and long-term benefits.

Challenges before the Aviation sector:

- *Confidence building in passengers*: Aviation industry is said to be the carrier of the virus from Wuhan and hence people will have low confidence for travelling in the corona times.

- *Expensive air travel*: The challenge will be to ensure that air travel does not become so expensive that it nullifies the benefits arising due to more airspace and air routes being available. The airlines are not running to their full capacities.

- *Development of airports*: It is often marred by completion delays due to the time taken for governmental approvals.

- *Running with full capacity*: They are not running in full capacity. There are talks of leaving some seats empty but in that case distance will matter.

- *Balancing task*: The consumer should find it lucrative and practical to fly and the airlines should be able to retain savings to cater to their respective economic health.

- *High operating cost*:
  o Aviation companies were not able to generate any revenues due to travel ban but they had to pay the parking charges, landing charges etc.
  o **High cost of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF):** It accounts for about 35-50% of airlines' total costs.
  o Indian airlines spend at least 40-50% more on ATF prices as compared to several of their contemporaries across the world.

- *Delay in capacity expansion*: If the operating cost will not reduce then airlines will be conservative about increasing capacity, especially on routes which have low demand.

- *Low cash reserve*: As they were grounded for two months and due to low passengers due to travel ban in countries and even in certain cities.

- **Extra cost:** The pandemic is far from over and aviation companies have to spend extra on sanitization of planes.

Way Forward

In the present context, the aviation sector requires booster shots as the subject reforms will take considerable time to generate notable benefits to the sector. Further reforms that will deal with their present situation on an immediate basis such as lowering of ATF rate, airports charges etc. are the need of the hour.

Cyber Security in India: Crime and War in the Borderless World
Syllabus: Basics of cyber security

In News: With increasing cybercrimes, the Indian government had announced that a new Cyber Security Policy, 2020, will be brought out. It will aim to ensure a safe, secure, resilient, trusted and vibrant cyberspace for India's prosperity.

Cyber Security Scenario in India

- India ranks 3rd in terms of the highest number of internet users in the world after USA and China, the number has grown 6-fold between 2012-2017 with a compound annual growth rate of 44%. (NITI Aayog)
- As per a report by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), more than 53,000 cyber security incidents took place in India in 2017

Indian IT Act, 2000	• Section 65 - Tampering with computer source code • Section 66 - Hacking & computer offences • Section 43 – Tampering of electronic records
Indian Copyright Act	• States any person who knowingly makes use of an illegal copy of computer program shall be punishable. • Computer programs have copyright protection, but no patent protection.
Indian Penal Code	• Section 406 - Punishment for criminal breach of trust • Section 420 - Cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property
Indian Contract Act, 1872	Offers following remedies in case of breach of contract: • Damages • Specific performance of the contract

Why is there a need to review the National Cyber Security Policy, 2013?

- **Advent of revolutionary technologies:** Technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, internet-enabled devices and big data have complicated the cyber-attack ecosystem.
- **Increasing incidences of cyber-attacks:** There has been a significant increase in incidents relating to hacking, injecting malware through spam mails and other forms of exploiting vulnerabilities. There was an almost 56% rise in malicious traffic on the internet during the lockdown effective period.

National Cyber Security Policy, 2013: The policy provides the vision and strategic direction to protect the national cyberspace. The main objectives include:
- Creation of Secure Cyber Ecosystem
- Compliance to Global Security Standards
- Strengthening the Regulatory Framework
- Enhance the protection and resilience of Nation's critical information
- prevention, investigation and prosecution of cybercrime

- *Social transformation and inclusive growth:* In the light of the growth of IT sector in the country, ambitious plans for the rapid social transformation and inclusive growth and given India's prominent role in the global IT sector, creation of a suitable cyber security eco-system in the country, in tune with a globally networked environment is necessary.
- *Border disputes with neighboring nations:* The border stand-off has further increased worries about enhanced cyber-attacks from China and its close allies. Recently, Australia expressed concerns over Chinese cyber-attacks. The Chinese are in the process of developing technology to penetrate the internet through satellite channels.
- *Success of Digital India Programme:* With increasing internet penetration and smart phones, the vulnerabilities associated with cyber-attacks increases and may dampen the progress of Digital India Programme. Example: In September 2016, Indian banks faced a similar massive data breach, when 3.2 million debit cards got compromised after fraudsters exploited a vulnerability at Hitachi Payment Systems.

Initiatives taken by the Central Government to Deal with Cyber Crime:
- *Cyber Crime Prevention against women and children Scheme:* It seeks to have an effective mechanism to handle cybercrimes against women and children in the country.
- *Cyber Crime reporting portal:* It enables complainants to report complaints pertaining to Child Pornography or sexually explicit content.
- *Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre(I4C):* It handles issues related to cybercrime in the country in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
- *Cyber Dost:* It aims to spread awareness about cybercrimes and normal precautions to be taken for prevention.
- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In): It is an office within the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. It is the nodal agency to deal with cyber security threats like hacking and phishing.
- *National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIPC) Of India* – It intends to ensure critical infrastructure protection and critical ICT infrastructure protection in India.
- *Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative:* It aims to spread awareness about cybercrime and build capacity for safety measures for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) and frontline IT staff across all government departments.

1. **Right to Privacy:** Right to Privacy being a fundamental right (K.S Puttaswamy Case), it is the responsibility of the government to safeguard the privacy of an individual from various cyber-attacks.
2. **Lack of Cyber Security tools:** India is dependent highly on other countries for both hardware and software cyber security tools.
3. **Absence of Active Cyber Defense:** India lacks Active Cyber Defense unlike EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or USAs' Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data (CLOUD) Act.

The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on Cyber Security is as follows:

- *Increased Demand:* The demands placed on the digital infrastructure have increased manifold as due to the Covid-19 pandemic, businesses have moved the majority of their activity to the digital world
- *Increased security risk from remote working/learning:* With many employees working from home and students learning virtually, use of enterprise virtual private network (VPN) server has increased. An organisation's unpreparedness may result in security misconfiguration in VPNs. This can expose sensitive information on the internet and also expose the devices to Denial of Service (DoS) attacks.
- *Delays in cyber-attack detection and response:* Functioning of security teams have been impaired by the pandemic which has made detection and response to malicious activities difficult.
- *Influx of cyber criminals:* The Covid-19 pandemic might lead to increase in cyber criminals due to rising unemployment and addressing the issue remains a challenge.
- *Cyber Harassment:* The Covid-19 pandemic and consequent increase in use of the digital space has increased cyber-bullying, harassment.

Suggested Reforms:

1. *Technology:* Threat detection and response capabilities must include advanced capabilities supported by next-generation technologies like big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning. Further, indigenization of cyber security tools is essential.
2. *Human resource:* Immediate attention has to be given to human resource development which would increase the number of experts who can effectively manage the cyber security of the country
3. *R&D:* Investments should be made on R&D to develop more innovative technologies to address increasing cyber security threats
4. *Policy and Governance:* It is important to bring a robust policy on cyber security. Focus should not only be on conventional or defensive security but on offensive security to proactively deal with cyber security threats.
5. *Strengthening Cyber Security Setup:* The National Cyber Coordination Centre urgently needs a significant upgrade in all aspects, including technology and manpower. The role of the national cyber security coordinator may also need to be reviewed regarding his effectiveness in comprehensively coordinating cyber security issues.

6. *International cooperation*: India should have a strategic partnership with trusted democracies for secure cyberspace. It can also accelerate is diplomatic efforts for a binding international treaty on the rules of cyberspace.

7. *Cross-sector collaboration*: In order to meet this threat, stakeholders from across sectors and industries – public and private; civilian and military; domestic and international – need to come together for a holistic discussion on the challenges and solutions of the budding cybercrimes and cyberwars.

Defence Reforms and Swiss Cheese Model

Syllabus: *Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.*

In News: Analysing the Indian Defence system with Swiss cheese model

Swiss cheese model

- Swiss cheese model is associated with accident investigation in an organisation or a system.
- A system consists of multiple domains or layers. These layers are visualised in the model as slices of Swiss cheese, with the holes in them being the imperfections.
- Generally, holes in cheese slices are ignored unless all holes in each slice align and let an accident pass through it.
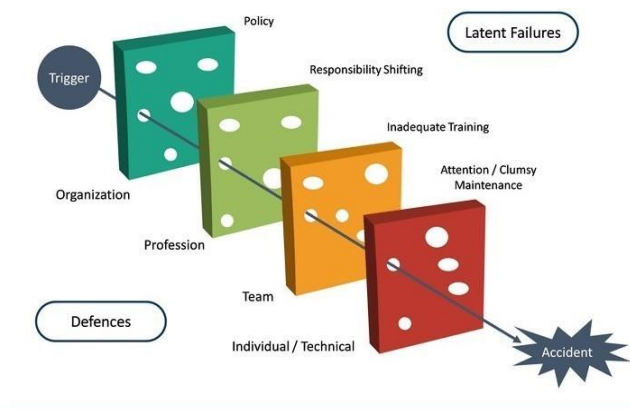
Swiss cheese Model and defence system: An analogy

- *Administering Swiss cheese model to Indian Défense* - In Defence System, the Swiss cheese slice works the reverse way.
  - o Slices: the major constituents in a nation's war-making potential,
  - o Holes: pathways through which the domains interact.
  - o Objective: At the structural level, there are only three slices with holes in each. These must align to ensure that a nation's defence posture is in tune with its political objectives; any mismatch may turn out to be detrimental to the national interest.
- *Slices in Indian Defence system –* Three slices in Indian Defence system:
  - o Slice 1: Policy Apparatus comprising the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and Ministry of Defence (MoD).
  - o Slice2: The defence research and development (R&D) establishment and domestic manufacturing industry.
  - o Slice3: The three services – Army, Navy and Air Force.

Opportunity cost owing to non-alignment of 3 slices:

India has been forced into four major wars since independence. Different results in these wars exposed the inadequacies in the military establishments. Hence, the system required an overhaul. But with the advent of smart munitions, cyber warfare, networking capabilities and the rising cost of equipment, the concept of parallel warfare has entered the defence discourse. Among the major defence reforms, the three primary ones would be:

- **Technological-capability accretion:** The increasingly threatening posture of the country's two adversaries, terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, ongoing incidents along the northern border with China pose great challenges to Indian defence forces in neighbourhood. Such a security environment demands that capability accretion of the three services proceed unhindered.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited can, at best, produce just eight Tejas fighters per year presently. The Army has had to import rifles due to the failure of the Defence Research and Development Organisation to produce them. And the Navy has earnest hopes that the hull designs that its internal R&D makes get the vital innards for going to war.

- **Indigenous Defence Manufacturing:** Indigenous defence manufacturing, ideally should be playing the primary role to meet India's needs. But the Make in India-Defence, expected to spearhead domestic defence manufacturing, has failed to take-off.
- Creating theatre commands

A *theatre command* is a military structure wherein all the assets of the army, air force and navy in a particular theatre of war are under the operational control of a three-star general.

There is a need to redesign the existing military commands into theatre commands and establish new joint commands that will combine the resources and assets of the three defence forces, based on threats at India's borders with its neighbours. The setting up of the DMA and the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) to achieve synergy are the most fundamental changes

Way Forward - The political, civil and military leadership needs to ensure that the holes in their Swiss cheese continue to stay aligned which also involves shunning publicity and building capability first for an enhanced defence system.

GENERAL STUDIES 4

Leadership and Leaders: A Reflection
Syllabus:Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems

In News: The fight against Covid-19 has made people look up to their leaders to find a solution to the pandemic. This has raised the question; which attributes of a person makes him/her a good leader since not all leaders have showcased desirable leadership values.

Leader Vs Leadership

A leader is a person who directs and motivates a group of people to work together to attain common goals. A leader is responsible for the management of conduct and collaboration within a team. Ethical leadership is leadership that is directed by respect for ethical beliefs and values and for the dignity and rights of others.

Leaders having leadership qualities: History has many examples of such leaders who have inspired people through their values and actions. Example – Mahatma Gandhi had the support of masses in all his movements against the British Empire.

Covid-19 situation – The strong leaders having leadership qualities have tackled pandemic with the following approach:

Figure – Leadership qualities exhibited in pandemic

We can cite the example of the leadership approach and practices of New Zealand government, led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Zealand was one of the first countries to announce self-Isolation measures and complete lockdown.

The prime minister urged people to

'Unite against Covid-19', the message was to create an atmosphere of empathy and solidarity. Continuously she engaged with the public through press conferences, social media etc. to spread Information about the status of the pandemic.
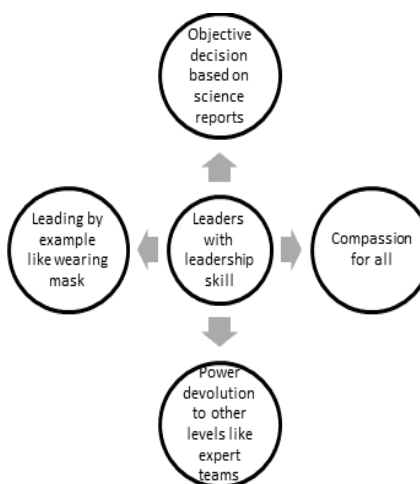
- **Not all leaders have leadership qualities**: Consider, Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990), who came to power on the back of a US-supported coup and he left behind a legacy of human rights abuse. Same is true with leaders who have acquired power and position because of dynastic rule.

Ex: Response to COVID-19 – In some countries the response to the pandemic has been unilateral, arbitrary, whimsical, chaotic and non-scientific. In some cases, the leaders have provided undue primacy to the economy and business over individual lives. The role of Donald Trump, the President of the USA and Mr. Jair Bolsonaro, the president of Brazil is highly controversial as today The USA and Brazil are the worst affected by COVID-19. Moreover, they have used the crisis to appropriate additional power and deepen social divides.

- **Not all those who have leadership qualities are leaders**: There are many in the society who have the potential to become leaders, but the structure of society is such that it prevents new leaders from rising up the ladder. For Example, communist nations have single party rule with power concentrated in a single leader and it prevents others from exercising their leadership skills.

Ethical leadership requires following values

- **Honesty and integrity:** Leaders succeed when they stick to their values and core beliefs. The Non-cooperation movement was withdrawn by the father of the nation because of the Chauri Chaura incident as he felt the creed of non-violence had been compromised with.
- **Confidence:** To be an effective leader, one should have the confidence to ensure that others follow his/her commands. If the leader is unsure about his/her decisions and qualities, then the fellow subordinates will never follow the leader. However, overconfidence is not desirable.
- **Inspire others:** The critical task for a leader is to persuade others to follow him/her. It can be possible when the leader inspires fellow followers by setting a good example. Mahatma Gandhi himself started wearing Khadi and lived like a poor villager to motivate others.
- **Commitment and Passion**: If the leader is not committed to the task, it would be difficult to motivate the other team members to achieve the goal. If they feel that the leader is not fully committed to the task or lacks passion, then it would difficult to motivate fellow team-members to achieve the goal.
- **Good Communicator:** A leader needs to clarify the goals to the team members. Good communication skill is required to allay any confusion and to motivate others. For example, the first black American president Mr. Barack Obama is regarded as one of the influential speakers of our time.
- **Decision Making Capabilities:** A leader must not be instinctive. His decision should not be influenced by emotions. A leader needs to take the right decision at the right time.
- **Accountability:** A leader needs to take a decision after thinking it through and be responsible to face the consequence of the decision. We can remember the example of former prime minister Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri. When he was the railway and transport minister, he sent his resignation twice to Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru after train accidents.

- **Delegation and Empowerment:** It is important to empower the subordinates by delegating works to them. It will empower the members. Micro-managing the whole team is time consuming, difficult and creates a feeling of resentment among team members.
- **Empathy:** Understanding the problems of team members and feeling their pain is the first step to become an effective leader. It creates an environment of trust among the team members.
- We can cite the example of Mr. Ratan Tata who went all out to care for each and every employee of the Taj hotel, after the Mumbai attack of 2008 (aka 26/11 attack), to help them recoup from the shock.
- **Resilience:** A leader needs to be unnerved even in the moment of failure.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional intelligence of the leader helps him/her to manage emotions effectively, to have Better social awareness and enables effective conflict resolution
- **Transparency:** transparency refers to not hiding information from team members, give them realistic goals and required knowledge.
- **Vision and Purpose:** Good leaders always have a vision and purpose. They not only visualize the future themselves but also share their vision with their followers. When their followers see the big picture, they see where they are heading. A great leader goes above and beyond and explains why they are moving in the direction they are moving and shares the strategy and action plan to achieve that goal.

Ethics of Nepotism: All that Glitters is not Gold
Syllabus: ethics – in private and public relationships.

In News: The unexpected suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, has created a public outrage regarding the prevalence of nepotism in Bollywood.

What is Nepotism: It is the practice of those with power showing favouritism towards friends or family, usually by way of giving them a job or benefits. Nepotism is often classified as the relative nepotism and the friend nepotism

Advantages of Nepotism
- There is more mutual trust among family members or friends. In the realism of politics, often political leaders prefer to keep their family and relatives close.
- In hiring friends or relative in an organization can create a friendly and pleasant working environment.
- It becomes easier to assign just the right tasks to each person, based on their individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Transfer of property, Family business or property rights becomes easier when the successor/relative is part of the organisation.

Disadvantages

- *Against Constitutionalism:* The Constitution of India guarantees Equality of Opportunity (Article 14), Nepotism/Favouritism violates the constitutional promise as it devoid a capable person from rightful opportunity.
- *Against Professionalism:* Familial disputes or altercations may disturb the professional environment of an organization.
- *Increased psychological pressure:* Professional problems may disturb the personal life of the individual
- *Affects productivity:* Hiring or promoting a friend or family member may discourage other employees/workers of the organization. This would affect the corporate productivity and efficiency.
- Often a friend or family members take advantage of their status, knowing that it is more difficult to fire someone who is a friend or family member.

Case study of Nepotism in India
Bollywood:
- Conventional culture network within the industry is leading way for the absence of social diversity. Hindi films are written, directed, technically assisted and produced by a set of family group or club members. Even the film critics, reviewers or reporters belong to the same social background. This has prohibited the democratization of film industry as people from subaltern class have been excluded from film-making process.
  After the suicide of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, there are allegations that certain powerful elites decide the flow of the industry's economy and also distribute the privileges without much concern for professional ethics
- A study published by journal 'Mint' claims that the median share of insiders cast as male leads by the top production houses over the past five years is as high as 40%. For female leads, the median share is relatively lower at 27%
- The prominent actors who debuted during 1960-1980, 17 per cent used their family connections to enter the industry. For those who debuted after 2000, this figure increased to almost 40 per cent. For female actors, the rate lies close to that for males, around 35 per cent

Politics:
- A study found that almost all of the Members of Parliament, in the current Loksabha, under the age of 30, are from families with a political background.
- Many of the political party appoints the relative of the party leader as the political heir. A study published by IndiaSpend finds that, around 130 MPs who won in the Lok Sabha elections 2014 had some kind of political lineage.

Business:
- 15 of the top 20 business groups in India are family-owned. They collectively manage over ₹26 lakh crores of assets.

Nepotism is often left out of ethical codes because it does not seem all that unethical. Not all the time nepotism is giving negative effect in our life or within the workplace, in several instances it is observed that Nepotism can provide success in work.

However, nepotism in local government such as panchayat, municipalities, government departments etc. is undesirable and destroys the fabric of democracy. This can jeopardize the public faith in the government. Lack of trust in the government encourages practices such as tax evasion, disregard for law etc.

Way Forward:

To check Nepotism in Government: The State Law in Missouri prohibits Nepotism. Missouri is a state in the Midwestern part of the United States of America. Section 7 of the constitution of Missouri reads as, 'Any public officer or employee in this state who by virtue of his office or employment names or appoints to public office or employment any relative within the fourth degree, by consanguinity or affinity, shall thereby forfeit his office or employment'.

For Organization/Business: While there is an advantage is in having relatives or friends in the workplace but it is equally important to provide fair treatment to all employees based on their work, capability and merit. The management should be responsible to maintain an equal, fair and competitive working environment.

POLITY

K. K. Venugopal reappointed Attorney General for one year

News: President of India has reappointed Senior Advocate K.K. Venugopal as Attorney General for India for one year.

Facts:

- *Attorney General:* Article 76 of the Indian Constitution deals with the position of Attorney General of India.
- *Appointment:* Attorney General (AG) is appointed by the President. He must be a person who is qualified to be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court.
- *Removal:* The Constitution hasn't explicitly fixed the term of office of the AG as well as it does not contain the procedure and grounds for his removal. Hence, he holds office during the pleasure of the President.
- *Remuneration:* The remuneration of AG is not fixed by the constitution. He receives such remuneration as determined by the President.
- *Duties:*
  - To advice the Government of India on the legal matters.
  - To perform other legal duties which are referred or assigned to him by the President.
  - To discharge the functions conferred on him by the Constitution or any other law.
- *Rights:*
  - He has the right of audience in all courts in the Territory of India.
  - He has the right to speak and to take part in the proceedings of both the Houses of Parliament or their joint sitting and any committee of the Parliament of which he may be named a member but without a right to vote.
  - He enjoys all immunities and privileges available to the Member of Parliament.
  - He is not considered as a government servant and he can practise privately too as he is not debarred from private legal practice.

Governing Council Meeting of National Productivity Council (NPC)

News: The 49th Governing Council Meeting of National Productivity Council (NPC) was held through video conferencing.

Facts:

- *National Productivity Council (NPC):* It is an autonomous body established in 1958 under Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- *Aim:* To promote innovation-led productivity in a sustained manner in all spheres of national economy.
- *President:* Union Minister for Commerce and Industry is the President and Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT) is its Chairman

- **Significance**: It is a constituent of the Tokyo-based Asian Productivity Organization (APO) of which the Government of India is a founding member.

Additional Facts:

APO: It is an intergovernmental organization established in 1961 to increase productivity in the Asia-Pacific region through mutual cooperation.

Secrecy of ballot is the cornerstone of free and fair elections, says Supreme Court

News: The Supreme Court in its recent judgement has held that secrecy of ballot is the cornerstone of free and fair elections.

Facts:

- *Background*:
- The judgment came on an appeal against the Allahabad High Court decision setting aside the voting of a no-confidence motion in a Zila panchayat in Uttar Pradesh in 2018.
- A no-confidence motion or vote of no-confidence or a no-trust vote can be sought to express that there is no longer confidence in the government.
- Allahabad High court had found that some of the panchayat members had violated the rule of secrecy of the ballot.
- *Key Highlights of the Judgement*:
  - *Secrecy of ballots*: It is an important part of constitutional democracy and the law must protect the right of voters to the secrecy of the ballot.
  - Section 94 of Representation of People Act which upholds the privilege of the voter to maintain confidentiality about her choice of vote.
  - *Exception*: A voter can voluntarily waive the privilege of non-disclosure. Hence, the privilege ends when the voter decides to waive it and decides voluntarily to disclose their vote.

Additional Facts:

- *Secrecy of Ballot*: It is also known as Australian ballot. It is a voting method in which a voter's choices in an election or a referendum are anonymous forestalling attempts to influence the voter by intimidation, blackmailing and potential vote buying.

PM CARES Fund Not A 'Public Authority' Under RTI Act

News: Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has refused to provide information about the PM CARES Fund stating that the fund is not a 'public authority' under Section 2(h) of the Right to Information Act, 2005.

Facts:

- *Public authority under RTI*: As per Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, "public authority" means any authority or body or institution of self-government established or constituted—
  - by or under the Constitution;
  - by any other law made by Parliament/State Legislature.

- by notification issued or order made by the appropriate Government, and includes any—
- body owned, controlled or substantially financed;
- non-Government organisation substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate Government.

Additional Facts:

Right to Information Act, 2005:

- RTI Act provides for timely disclosure of information by citizens from both central and State Public Authorities. It seeks to empower citizens and promote accountability and transparency.
  - Under the Act, Public Authorities are required to make disclosures on various aspects of their structure and functioning. This includes:
  - disclosure on their organisation
  - functions and structure
  - powers and duties of its officers and employees and
  - Financial information.

POLICY

NITI Aayog Launches Behaviour Change Campaign

News: NITI Aayog has launched a behavior change campaign called 'Navigating the New Normal'.

Facts:

- The campaign has been launched in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Centre for Social and Behavioural Change (CSBC), Ashoka University and the Ministries of Health and Women and child development.
- *Aim:* To develop an appropriate COVID safe behavior in the country such as by making people adapt to wearing masks as a part of their daily routine.
- *Features:* The campaign has two parts:
- *Covid-safe behavioural norms:* It is a web portal containing resources informed by behavioural science and the use of nudge and social norms theory, related to Covid-safe behavioural norms during the ongoing Unlock phase, and
- *Wearing of Masks:* The second is a media campaign focused on the wearing of masks.

Additional Facts on Nudge and Social Norms Theory: The theory says that people rather than being forced can be encouraged and influenced to pursue or desist from certain actions through nudges (encouragement or intervention).

The Nudge theory got international spotlight when Richard Thaler bagged the Economics Nobel Prize in 2017 for his work on Behavioural economics.

Model village scheme hit by lack of interest, funds: Ministry study

News: The Ministry of Rural Development has observed that the Model Village Scheme (Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY)) has not been able to achieve the desired objectives and failed to make a significant impact.

Facts:

- **Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana(SAGY)**: It was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2014.

Holistic development through SAGY
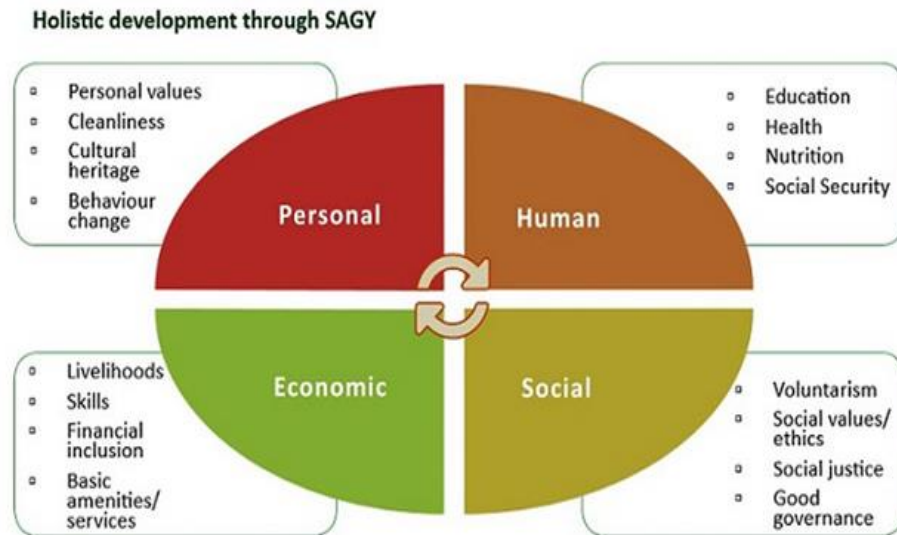
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- **Aim:** Under the Scheme, Members of Parliament (MPs) are responsible for developing the socio-economic and physical infrastructure of three villages each by 2019 and a total of eight villages each by 2024.
- **Key Features:**
  - o MPs have to select a gram panchayat (other than their own village or that of their spouse) to be developed as an Adarsh Gram(Model Village).
  - o Lok Sabha MP has to choose from within his/her constituency
  - o Rajya Sabha MP has to choose from the rural area of a district of his/her choice in the State from which he/she is elected
  - o Nominated MPs have to choose a Gram Panchayat from the rural area of any district in the country.
- **Funding:** No new funds are allocated for the scheme. Resources may be raised through existing schemes, MPLADS, CSR funds, gram panchayat's own revenue.

COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Programme

News: Government of India and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has signed a $750 million "COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Programme".

Facts:

- **Aim:** To assist India to strengthen its response to the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on poor and vulnerable households.

- *Programme Beneficiaries*: Families below the poverty line, farmers, healthcare workers, women, widows, people with disabilities, senior citizens, construction workers and vulnerable groups.
- *Funding*: It is financed under the COVID-19 Crisis Recovery Facility of the AIIB and co-financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- *Implementation:* It will be executed by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

Additional Facts: Crisis Recover Facility: It has been set up by AIIB to provide financing to both public and private sector entities within its members facing serious adverse impacts as a result of Coronavirus pandemic.

Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan to boost livelihood opportunities in rural India

News: The Government of India has decided to launch a massive rural public works scheme named 'Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan'.

Facts:

- *Aim:* To empower and provide livelihood opportunities to the returnee migrant workers and rural citizens.
- *Coverage*: It will be implemented across 116 districts in the six States namely Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Odisha.
- *Features*: The campaign will run for 125 days. It will involve 25 different types of works to provide employment to the migrant workers on one hand and create infrastructure in the rural regions of the country on the other hand.
- *Implementation:* It will be operationalised through the Common Service Centres and Krishi Vigyan Kendras.
- *Ministries Involved:* It will be a coordinated effort between 12 different Ministries/Departments, namely Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Road Transport & Highways, Mines, Drinking Water & Sanitation, Environment, Railways, Petroleum & Natural Gas, New & Renewable Energy, Border Roads, Telecom and Agriculture.

Union Minister launches Sahakar Mitra Scheme

News: Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has launched Sahakar Mitra: Scheme on Internship Programme for young professionals.

Facts:

- Sahakar Mitra Scheme is an initiative of National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).
- *Aim:* To help cooperative institutions access new and innovative ideas of young professionals while the interns will gain experience of working in the field to be self-reliant.
- *Eligibility*: Professional graduates in disciplines such as Agriculture and allied areas, IT etc and also who are pursuing or have completed their MBA degrees in Agri-business, Cooperation, Finance, International Trade etc will also be eligible.

Additional Facts:

- **NCDC:** It is an apex statutory institution established by an Act of Parliament in 1963 under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- **Yuva Sahakar scheme:** It is implemented by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) to encourage young entrepreneurs into start-ups in the cooperative sector by providing them with cheaper loans.

Electronics incentive schemes launched

News: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has launched three Electronics incentive schemes.

Facts:

- *Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS):*
  - *Aim:* To help offset the disability for domestic manufacturing of electronic components and semiconductors to strengthen the electronics manufacturing ecosystem in the country.
  - Under this, the government will provide a financial incentive of 25% on capital expenditure for a list of products that constitute the supply chain of electronic products such as electronic components, semiconductor, specialized sub-assemblies.
- *Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme:*
  - *Aim:* To develop world class electronics manufacturing infrastructure by providing support for setting up of Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs) and Common Facility Centres (CFCs).
- *Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI):*
  - *Aim:* To offer production linked incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in mobile phone manufacturing and specified electronic components.
  - Under this, the government will provide an incentive of 4% to 6% on goods manufactured in India and covered under target segments to eligible companies for five years.

Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) campaign launched for 1.5 crore dairy farmers

News: Government of India will provide Kisan Credit Card (KCC) to 1.5 crore dairy farmers belonging to Milk Unions and Milk producing Companies within the next two months under a special drive.

Facts:

- The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was launched by the Government of India in 1998.
  - *Objective:* To provide adequate and timely credit support from the banking system to the farmers for their cultivation and other needs as indicated below:
  - To meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops;

- o Post-harvest expenses and Produce marketing loan;
- o Consumption requirements of farmer household;
- o Working capital for maintenance of farm assets and activities allied to agriculture;
- o Investment credit requirement for agriculture and allied activities.
- *Implementation:* It is being implemented by Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks and Cooperatives.
- *Coverage:* Small farmers, marginal farmers, sharecroppers, oral lessee and tenant farmers, Self Help Groups (SHGs) or Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) are eligible for availing benefits under the scheme.

Government launches PM SVANIDHI scheme to provide affordable loan to street vendors

News: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has announced a scheme for street vendors named PM Street Vendors Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi).

Facts:

- **PM SVAN*idhi*:** It is a special micro-credit facility scheme to enable more than 50 lakh urban/peri-urban & rural street vendors to restart their livelihoods affected due to the lockdown.
- *Features of the Scheme:*
  - o Under this, each of the street vendors will be given a credit loan of Rs 10,000 which they can return as monthly installments within a year.
  - o Those who repay their loans on time will get 7% annual interest as subsidy which will be transferred in their bank accounts.
- *Duration:* The scheme will be applicable till March 2022.
- *Coverage:* The scheme is applicable to vendors, hawkers, thelewale, rehri wala among others. Street vendors belonging to the surrounding peri-urban/rural areas are also included.

Pointly for Policy

1. *Sanskritik Sadbhav Mandap:* It is a community centre which is being established by the Ministry of Minority affairs under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karykram (PMJVK). It will be utilized for various socio-economic-cultural activities, skill development training, coaching, relief activities during a disaster

2. *SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support) Initiative*: It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of External Affairs. It aims to create a database of Indian citizens returning from overseas under the Vande Bharat Mission based on their skill-sets and experience to tap into and fulfil demand of Indian and foreign companies.

3. *Solar Risk Mitigation Initiative (SRMI):* World Bank has operationalized SRMI for 22 African countries. The initiative aims to support countries in developing sustainable solar programs that will attract private investments and so reduce reliance on public finances.

4. *Nature Index 2020*: Released by Nature Research, it is based on the institution's or country's share of articles published in the 82 prestigious scientific journals. India has been ranked 12th

5. *Arogyapath:* Launched by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), it is a national healthcare supply chain portal that aims to provide real-time availability of critical healthcare supplies to manufacturers, suppliers and customers to effectively deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. **SATYABHAMA (*Science and Technology Yojana for Atma Nirbhar Bharat in Mining Advancement*) Portal:** It seeks to promote research and development in the mining and minerals sector by providing online submission of project proposals along with monitoring of the same and utilization of funds. It has been designed, developed and will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), Mines Informatics Division

7. *Decarbonising Transport in India:* It is a project to be launched by NITI Aayog in collaboration with International Transport Forum (ITF). It is a five-year project that will help India develop a pathway towards a low-carbon transport system through the development of modelling tools and policy scenarios. The project is a part of the Decarbonising Transport in Emerging Economies (DTEE).

8. *Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana*: It has been recently launched in Rajasthan. It is an initiative of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for empowerment of the potter's community in the remotest of locations in the country.

9. *'eBloodServices'*: It aims to allow people to access safe blood easily especially during COVID-19 pandemic. It has been developed by the E-Raktkosh team of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) under the Digital India scheme.

10. **'YUKTI 2.0' (*Young India Combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation*) Portal:** Launched by Ministry of Human Resources, it is an online portal that aims to bring together technologies from students, faculties and start-ups from higher education institutions so that they can be showcased to the investor community such as businessmen, farmers and industrialists.

11. *The Urban Learning Internship Programme (TULIP):* Launched by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the All India Council for Technical Education under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), It is a dedicated programme offering internships to fresh graduates in all urban local bodies (ULBs) and smart cities across the country in the domain of urban governance.

12. **Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings initiative:** It has been launched by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) in partnership with the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) MAITREE program. It aims to address the challenges of retrofitting existing buildings and air conditioning systems so that they are both healthy and energy efficient.

13. *Khelo India Community Coach Development programme*: Launched by Ministry of Youth Affairs and sports, it is a 25 day programme to equip physical education teachers and community coaches with the right set of knowledge and skills to help children of all ages to take up a variety of fitness-related activities and conduct age-appropriate fitness tests.

At RIC Meet, India Talks of Need to Respect Legitimate Interest of Partners

News: Indian Foreign minister has attended the virtual foreign minister level meeting of the trilateral group of Russia-India-China (RIC).

Facts:

- *Russia-India-China (RIC)*: It is a strategic grouping that was founded in the late 1990s under the leadership of Yevgeny Primakov, a Russian politician as a counterbalance to the Western alliance.
- *Aim*: To end its subservient foreign policy guided by the USA and renew old ties with India and foster the newly discovered friendship with China.
- *Significance*: Together, the RIC countries occupy over 19% of the global landmass and contribute to over 33% of global GDP.
- All the three countries are nuclear powers and the two countries namely Russia and China are permanent members of the UN Security Council, while India aspires to be one.

China to join UN arms trade treaty, 'enhance' world peace

News: China has decided to join the United Nations (UN) Arms Trade Treaty.

Facts:

- *History*: The UN Arms Trade Treaty entered into force in 2014.
- *Objective*: To regulate the international trade in conventional arms (from small arms to battle tanks, combat aircraft and warships).
- *What does the treaty do?*
    - It requires member countries to keep records of international transfers of weapons and to prohibit cross-border shipments that can be used in human rights violations or attacks on civilians.
    - It establishes common standards for the international trade of conventional weapons and seeks to reduce the illicit arms trade.
- *What it doesn't?*
    - The treaty does not regulate the domestic sale or use of weapons in any country. It also recognizes the legitimacy of the arms trade to enable states to provide for their own security.
- *Present status*: 105 states have ratified the treaty and a further 32 states have signed but not ratified it.
    - India has not signed the treaty as it has said that it has strong and effective national export controls on military hardware to ensure they don't fall into the wrong hands.

India, Australia upgrade strategic talks to Minister level, as with US, Japan

News: Indian and Australia have held their first ever virtual leaders summit.

Facts:

- *Key Takeaways*:
- *Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)*: Elevated the 2009 bilateral Strategic Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP).
- *2+2 Dialogue*: Upgraded the existing 2+2 dialogue between their Foreign and Defence Secretaries to the Ministerial level.
    o This will bring Australia on par with the 2+2 ministerial level dialogues India already has with the US and Japan, the other members of the Quad grouping.
- *Mutual Logistics Support arrangement*: Signed the Mutual Logistics Support agreement (MLSA) which will facilitate reciprocal access to military logistics facilities, allow more complex joint military exercise and improve interoperability between the security forces.
    o India has such agreements with the US, France, Singapore and South Korea.
- *Declaration on the Indo-Pacific region*: Reached an understanding on enhancing cooperation between their navies and strengthening maritime domain awareness in the Indo-Pacific region.
- *Other Agreements*: Several other agreements were signed such as:
    o Framework arrangement on cyber and cyber-enabled critical technology cooperation
    o Memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in mining and processing of critical and strategic minerals among others.

Pointly for International Relations

1. *Kholongchu Hydroelectric Project*: It is a run-of-the-river project located on the lower course of the Kholongchu River in Trashiyangtse district in eastern Bhutan. Recently, the Concession Agreement was signed between the Royal Government of Bhutan and Kholongchu Hydro Energy Limited

2. *Cairns Group*: Cairns Group has launched a "COVID-19 Initiative: Protecting Global Food Security Through Open Trade" to support the global agricultural and food system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cairns Group is a coalition of 19 agricultural exporting countries and one observer country. India is not a member.

3. *Inter-parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC)*: It is an international cross-party group of legislators working towards reform on how democratic countries approach China. Participating Countries are U.S, Germany, U.K, Japan, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Norway as well as members of the European parliament.

4. *Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI)*: At the Virtual Global Vaccine Summit, India has pledged 15 Million US Dollars to GAVI. GAVI is a global Vaccine Alliance created in 2000 by bringing together public and private sectors with the shared goal of creating equal access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

5. *Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)*: India has joined GPAI as a founding member. It is an international and multi-stakeholder initiative to guide the responsible development and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) grounded in human rights, inclusion,

diversity, innovation and economic growth. The other member countries are USA, UK, EU, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore.

ECONOMY

Government launches 7.15% floating rate bonds

News: The Government has notified the new Floating Rate Savings Bonds, 2020 (Taxable)Scheme in place of 7.75 percent Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018 Scheme which ceased for subscription.

Facts:

Item	Details
Scheme name	Floating Rate Savings Bonds, 2020 (Taxable)
Issuance	To be issued by Reserve Bank India on behalf of the Government of India.
Eligibility for investment	Open to investment by individuals (including Joint Holdings) and Hindu Undivided Families.NRIs are not eligible for making investments in these Bonds.
Minimum and Maximum Limit	There will be no maximum limit for investment in the bonds. The minimum investment starts from Rs 1,000 and in multiples of Rs 1,000, thereof.
Tenure of the Bonds	The bonds shall be repayable on the expiration of seven years from the date of issue. Premature redemption shall be allowed for specified categories of senior citizens
Interest Rate(Floating)	The interest rate of the bond would be reset half yearly starting with Jan 1st, 2021 and thereafter every July 1st and Jan 1st. The coupon rate for the first coupon period payable on January 1, 2021 is fixed at 7.15%.
Tax Treatment	Interest on the Bonds will be taxable under the Income-tax Act, 1961as amended from time to time and as applicable according to the relevant tax status of the Bonds holder.
Tradability /Advances	The Bonds shall not be tradable in the secondary market and shall not be eligible as collateral for loans from banks, financial Institutions and Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) etc.

Urban, multi-State cooperative banks to come under RBI supervision

News: The Central government has approved an Ordinance to bring all urban and multi-state co-operative banks under the direct supervision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Facts:

- *Aim:* To empower more security to depositors and to prevent instances of fraud and serious financial irregularities such as the major scam at Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank in 2019.
- *How were they regulated earlier?* Till now, the Urban co-operative banks came under dual regulation of the RBI and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.
- *Significance*: It will empower the RBI to regulate all urban and multi-state co-operative banks on the lines of commercial banks.
- *Concerns*: The rural co-operative banks will continue to remain under the dual regulation.

Additional Facts:

- *Co-operative Banks*: These are financial entities established on a co-operative basis and belonging to their members. This means that the customers of a co-operative bank are also its owners.
- *Regulation*: Co-operative Banks are registered under the States Cooperative Societies Act. They also come under the regulatory ambit of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under two laws: Banking Regulations Act, 1949 and the Banking Laws (Co-operative Societies) Act,1955.

India retains position as the third largest economy in PPP

News: The World Bank has released the new Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs) for reference year 2017 under its International Comparison Program (ICP).

Facts:

- *International Comparison Program (ICP):* It is the largest worldwide data-collection initiative managed by the World Bank under the guidance of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC).
- *Objective:*
  - To produce purchasing power parities (PPPs) and comparable price level indexes (PLIs) for participating economies.
  - Convert volume and per capita measures of gross domestic product (GDP) and its expenditure components into a common currency using PPPs.
- *India and ICP:* India has participated in almost all ICP rounds since its inception in 1970. It has also been a co-Chair of the ICP Governing Board along with Statistics Austria for the ICP 2017 cycle.
- *Key Takeaways:*
  - India has retained its position as the third-largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) behind the US and China.
  - India accounts for 6.7% of the world's total of $119,547 billion of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in terms of PPP compared to 16.4 % in the case of China and 16.3 % for the US.

- o The PPPs of Indian Rupee per US$ at Gross Domestic Product (GDP) level is now 20.65 in 2017 from 15.55 in 2011. The Exchange Rate of US Dollar to Indian Rupee is now 65.12 from 46.67 during the same period.
- o In the Asia-Pacific Region, India retained its regional position as the second largest economy accounted for 20.83 % in terms of PPPs where China was first at 50.76% and Indonesia at 7.49% was third.

Additional Facts: PPP: It is the rate at which the currency of one country would have to be converted into that of another country to buy the same amount of goods and services in each country.

Government launches another funding scheme to help the distressed MSME sector

News: Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has launched Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinated Debt (CGSSD) which is also called "Distressed Assets Fund–Sub-ordinate Debt for MSMEs".

Facts:
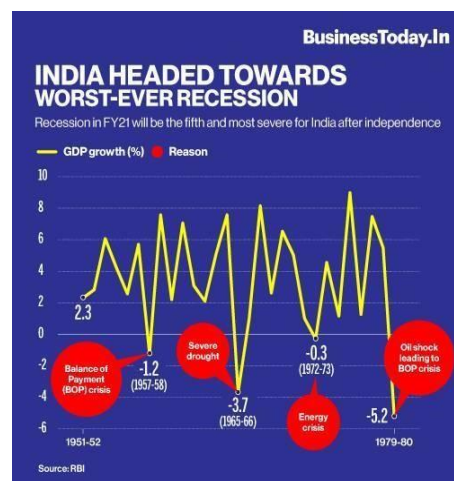
- *Aim:* To extend support to the promoters of the operational MSMEs which are stressed and have become NPA as on 30th April, 2020.
- *Guarantee:* It provides a guarantee cover worth Rs. 20,000 crores to the promoters who can take debt from the banks to further invest in their stressed MSMEs as equity.
- *Features of the Scheme:*
  - o Promoter(s) of the MSMEs will be given credit equal to 15% of their stake (equity plus debt) or Rs. 75 lakh whichever is lower.
  - o Promoter(s) in turn will infuse this amount in the MSME unit as equity and thereby enhance the liquidity and maintain the debt-equity ratio.
  - o 90% guarantee coverage for this sub-debt will be given under the scheme and 10% would come from the concerned promoters.
- *Duration*: There will be a moratorium of 7 years on payment of principal whereas maximum tenure for repayment will be 10 years.
- *Implementation:* The scheme will be operationalized through the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for MSEs (CGTMSE).

India stares at 5th recession: How is it different from the past downturns?

News: India is staring at the 5th recession which will be different from previous recessions and will come with a fresh set of challenges.

Facts:

- *Recession:* It is generally defined as a fall in the overall economic activity for two consecutive quarters (six months) accompanied by a decline in income, sales and employment.

BusinessToday.In

INDIA HEADED TOWARDS WORST-EVER RECESSION

Recession in FY21 will be the fifth and most severe for India after independence

GDP growth (%)   Reason

- *Previous Recessions*: According to Reserve Bank of India, since independence India has witnessed four recessions:
    o 1958 - Caused due to Balance of Payment(BoP) crisis
    o 1966 - Caused due to Drought
    o 1973 - Caused due to Energy Crisis
    o 1980 - Caused due to Oil Shock leading to BoP crisis
- *Current Recession:* The current recession staring at India is due to the coronavirus induced Lockdown which has affected the economic activity.

Reserve Bank proposes to shore up bank boards

News: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a discussion paper on 'Governance in Commercial Banks'. The discussion paper aims to create a clearly definable separation between the board and the management of a bank.

Facts:

- *Guidelines Coverage:* The guidelines are applicable to private, foreign and public sector banks.
- It will come into effect within six months after being placed on the RBI's website or April 1, 2021, whichever is later.
- *Key Guidelines issued:*
- *Board Members* should not be a member of any other bank's board or the RBI and should not be either a Member of Parliament or State Legislature or Municipality or other local bodies.
- *Board of directors* of a bank should not be less than six and not more than 15 with a majority being independent directors. The Chairman of the Board should be an independent director.
- *Board* shall meet at least six times a year and at least once every 60 days.
- *Approval of RBI:* Appointment, reappointment and termination of whole-time directors (WTDs) and chief executive officers (CEO) should be with the previous approval of RBI.
- *Age Limit:* The upper age limit for CEO and WTDs of banks is suggested at 70 years which is a norm for private banks at present.
- *Reappointment:* The person can be re-appointed only after three years, the period in which there should be no association with the bank in any capacity.

The importance of India's rising forex reserves amid Covid economic crisis

News: India's foreign exchange reserves are rising and are slated to hit the $500 billion mark as forex reserves jumped by $12.4 billion to reach an all-time high of $493.48 billion in the month of May 2020.

Facts:

- *Forex Reserves:* They are external assets in the form of gold, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and foreign currency assets(capital inflows to capital markets, FDI and external

commercial borrowings) accumulated by India and controlled by the Reserve Bank of India.

- *Purpose*:
  - To support and maintain confidence in the policies for monetary and exchange rate management
  - To limit external vulnerability by maintaining foreign currency liquidity to absorb shocks during times of crisis or when access to borrowing is curtailed.

Figure 4: India's Foreign Exchange Reserves ($ Billion)
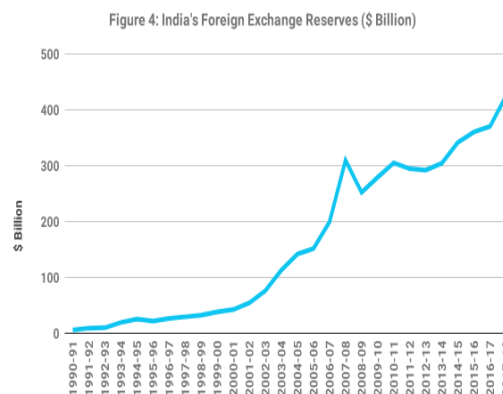
- **Reason for rise in Forex Reserves:**
  - Rise in investment in foreign portfolio investors (FPI) in Indian stocks and foreign direct investments (FDIs).
  - Fall in crude oil prices has brought down the oil import bill saving the precious foreign exchange.
  - Overseas remittances and foreign travels have fallen steeply – down 61% in April from $12.87 billion.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) – Annual Report

News: National Statistical Office (NSO) has released the Periodic Labour Force Survey(PLFS) for July 2018 to June 2019.

Facts:

- *Unemployment Rate (UR):* It is defined as the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.
  - It has reduced to 5.8% during 2018-19 from 6.1% during the same period of 2017-18. Under this, the urban unemployment rate reduced to 7.7% in 2018-19 from 7.8% and in rural India to 5% from 5.3%.
- *Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)*: It is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.
  - It has increased to 37.5% during 2018-19 from 36.9% of 2017-18.
- *Female Labour Force Participation Rate*: It is the share of working-age women who report either being employed or being available for work.
  - It has also improved to 18.6% in 2018-19 from 17.5% the year before.
- *Worker Population Ratio (WPR):* It is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population.
  - It has increased to 35.3% as against 34.7% in 2017-18.

Additional Facts:
- *Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS):* It is India's first computer-based survey launched by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2017.
- *Objectives:*
  - to estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the Current Weekly Status (CWS).
  - to estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both usual status and CWS in both rural and urban areas annually.
- *Activity Status- Usual Status:* It is determined on the basis of the activities pursued by the person during the specified reference period. When the activity status is determined on the basis of the reference period of the last 365 days preceding the date of survey, it is known as the usual activity status of the person.
- *Activity Status- Current Weekly Status (CWS):* It is determined on the basis of a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey.

Union Cabinet approves change in definition of MSMEs

News: Union Cabinet has announced policy changes for the MSME sector as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package.

Facts:
- *Upward revision of MSME Definition:* This will help in attracting investments and creating more jobs in the MSME sector:

Category	Old Capital	Old Turnover	New Capital	New Turnover
Micro	25 Lakh	10 Lakh	1 Crore	5 Crore
Small	5 Crore	2 Crore	10 Crore	50 Crore
Medium	10 crore	5 Crore	50 Crore	250 Crore

- *Note:* The turnover limits for micro, small or medium enterprises will not include the profits made from exports.
- *Distressed Asset Fund:* A distress fund of Rs 20,000 crores has been set up. Under this, an MSME can avail a loan of maximum Rs 75 lakh or 15% of their total investment.
- The Centre will provide a guarantee coverage of up to 85% for loans up to Rs 5 lakh and 75% for those above Rs 5 lakhs to enable MSMEs to raise funds from financial institutions.
- *Fund of Funds for MSMEs:* A Fund of Funds worth Rs 50,000 crore for MSMEs has been set up in which the central government will be an anchor investor to encourage private sector investments in the sector.

Pointly for Economy

1. *Skills Build Reignite Platform:* It is an online platform that aims to provide job seekers and entrepreneurs with access to free online coursework and mentoring support designed to help them reinvent their careers and businesses. It has been launched by Directorate General of

Training (DGT) under the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in partnership with IBM.

2. *Payment Infrastructure Development Fund:* It is a 500-crore fund created by RBI to encourage the deployment of Points of Sale (PoS) infrastructure both physical and digital modes in smaller cities, towns and north eastern states.

3. *Real-Time Electricity Market (RTM):* Launched by Indian Energy Exchange, it is an organized market platform to enable the buyers and sellers pan-India to meet their energy requirement closer to real-time of operation.

4. *RBI panel to review ownership of private banks:* RBI has constituted a five-member Internal Working committee to review ownership guidelines and corporate structure for 'Indian Private Sector Banks'. It is headed by P K Mohanty.

5. *Indian Gas Exchange (IGX):* It is India's first online natural gas trading platform that will enable market participants to trade in standardised gas contracts. It is owned and operated by the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX).

SOCIAL

Nasha Mukt Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21)

News: Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the Nasha Mukt Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21).

Facts:

- The Nasha Mukt Bharat Annual Action Plan for 2020-21 would focus on 272 most affected districts.
- The plan aims to launch a three-pronged attack combining efforts of the Narcotics Control Bureau, Outreach/Awareness by Social Justice and Treatment through the Health Department.
- *The Action Plan has the following components:*
    o Awareness generation programmes
    o Focus on Higher Educational institutions
    o University Campuses and Schools
    o Community outreach and identification of dependent population;
    o Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital settings and

Additional Facts:

- *National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR), 2018-2025:*
- The plan was drafted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- It aims to reduce the adverse consequences of drug abuse in India through a) education, b) de-addiction and c) rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families.
- A steering committee under the chairmanship of the secretary, Social Justice Ministry monitors the implementation of the Action Plan.
- *Narcotics Control Bureau:* It is the nodal drug law enforcement and intelligence agency of India. It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was established in 1986 under the NDPS Act.1985. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

Annual TB Report 2020

News: Union Minister for Health released the annual Tuberculosis (TB) Report 2020.

Facts:

Key Highlights:

- **TB Cases:** Over 24 lakh TB patients have been notified in 2019. This amounts to a 14% increase in TB notification as compared to 2018.
- **TB Deaths:** The report shows 79,144 deaths due to tuberculosis were reported in 2019 which is much lower than the WHO estimate of 4.4 lakh fatalities.
- Missing cases: There has been a reduction in the number of missing cases to 2.9 lakh cases in 2019 as against more than 10 lakhs in 2017.
- **HIV associated TB Deaths:** India accounts for 9% of all HIV-associated tuberculosis (TB) deaths in the world, the second-highest number globally.
- **Treatment:** Expansion of treatment services has resulted in a 12% improvement in the treatment success rate of notified patients. For 2019, it was 81% compared to 69% in 2018.
- **States:** Over half of the total TB cases were notified from five states — Uttar Pradesh (20%), Maharashtra (9%), Madhya Pradesh (8%) Rajasthan (7%) and Bihar (7%).
- **Ranking of States:** The Central TB Division (CTD) has introduced a quarterly ranking on TB elimination efforts by all the states and UTs:
  - Larger states with more than 50 lakh population: Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh were awarded as best performing States.
  - Smaller states with less than 50 lakh population: Tripura and Nagaland were awarded.
  - Union Territories: Dadara and Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu were chosen as the best performers.

Additional Facts:

- **Tuberculosis (TB):** It is an infectious airborne bacterial disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis.
- **Nikshay Poshan Yojana:** It is a direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme to provide nutritional support to TB patients.
- **National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB Elimination (2017-2025):** It is a framework to provide guidance for the activities of various stakeholders to reduce the burden of TB mortality and morbidity. It aims to work towards the elimination of TB in India by 2025.

Pointly for Social

1. **Global Status Report on Preventing Violence Against Children 2020:** It is a first of its kind report charting progress in 155 countries against the "INSPIRE" framework- a set of seven strategies for preventing and responding to violence against children. The report has been published by WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children and the End Violence Partnership.

2. **Tala-Maddale**: It is an ancient form of performance dialogue or debate performance in Southern India in the Karavali and Malnad regions of Karnataka and Kerala. It has gone digital in times of COVID-19 pandemic. It is a variant of Yakshagana- music is common for both, however, Talamaddale consists of only spoken words without any dance, costumes or stage conventions.

3. **Raja Parba**: It is a three-day unique festival in Odisha celebrating the onset of monsoon and the earth's womanhood. It is believed that during this time the Mother Earth or Bhudevi undergoes menstruation.

4. **Anthropause**: Researchers will study the term anthropause. It refers specifically to a period of considerable global slowdown of modern human activities notably travel due to the Covid-19 induced lockdown.

5. **Megalithic Culture**: The excavations at Kodumanal village (Tamil Nadu) have thrown light on burial rituals and the concept of an afterlife in megalithic culture. Megalithic Culture is a large prehistoric stone culture that lasted from the Neolithic Stone Age to the early Historical Period (2500 BC to AD 200) across the world.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Navy Inducts Indigenously Developed Torpedo Decoy System

News: Indian Navy has inducted an Indigenously developed Advanced Torpedo Decoy System named Maareech.

Facts:

- **Maareech Advanced Torpedo Defence System (ATDS)**: It is a torpedo detection and countermeasure system to be used by the Indian Navy.
- **Developed by:** It has been designed and developed indigenously by the DRDO labs - Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) and Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL).
- **Significance:** It is capable of detecting, locating and neutralizing incoming torpedoes and to apply countermeasures to protect naval platforms against torpedo attack.
- **How does it work?** The ATDS first detects and diverts the torpedo attack on ships from under the water. By diverting torpedoes' original course, it forces it to lose its energy hence preventing it from being effective on the target.

Pointly for Internal Security

1. **Operation Desert Chase:** Operation Desert Chase was the name of the Anti-espionage operation started by Military Intelligence (MI) in early 2019. It successfully culminated in 2020 with the arrest of two civil defence employees that they had been passing on sensitive information to Pakistan's spy agency ISI.

2. **Airborne Rescue Pod for Isolated Transportation (ARPIT):** It has been indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by Indian Airforce. It is a rescue pod that will be used for evacuation of critical patients with infectious diseases including COVID-19 from high altitude areas, isolated and remote places.
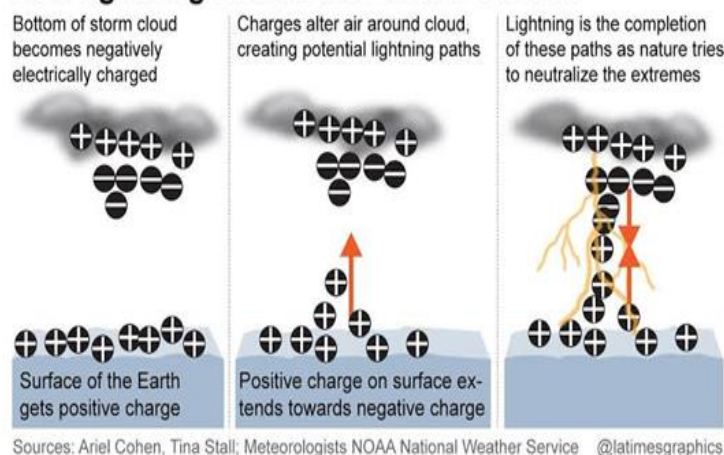
South America witnessed extreme lightning strikes in 2018, 2019: WMO

News: The World Meteorological Organization(WMO) has released its findings on lightning strikes which had happened around the world.

Facts:

- *Key Takeaways*:
- **Brazil** recorded the longest lightning strike that travelled a distance of 709 kilometers in 2018.
- **Argentina** recorded a lightning strike that lasted continuously for 16.73 seconds in 2019.
- **India**: Uttar Pradesh recorded the maximum number of deaths due to lightning in India. It was followed by Bihar.
- *Lightning*: It is a very rapid and massive discharge of electricity in the atmosphere, some of which is directed towards the Earth. These discharges are generated in giant moisture-bearing clouds that are 10-12 km tall.
- *How is it formed?*
  - Air generally acts as an insulator between the positive and negative charges in the cloud and between the cloud and the ground.
  - But when the opposite charges build up enough, this insulating capacity of the air breaks down and there is a rapid discharge of electricity that we know as lightning.
- *Effects of Lightning*:
  - *Direct strike*: Victims may sustain a direct strike, which is often fatal.
  - *Contact injury*: This occurs when lightning strikes an object, such as a car or metal pole that the victim is touching.
  - *Ground current*: This occurs when lightning strikes

How lightning strikes the Earth's surface

Bottom of storm cloud becomes negatively electrically charged

Charges alter air around cloud, creating potential lightning paths

Lightning is the completion of these paths as nature tries to neutralize the extremes

Surface of the Earth gets positive charge

Positive charge on surface extends towards negative charge

Sources: Ariel Cohen, Tina Stall; Meteorologists NOAA National Weather Service   @latimesgraphics

the ground near a victim and the ground current passes from the strike point through the ground and into the victim among others.

Ancient algae play a role in building a healthy marine ecosystem: Study

News: A study of a microscopic ancient marine algae (Coccolithophores) has found that there is a decrease in the concentration of oceanic calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$) in the southern Indian ocean.

Facts:

- **Coccolithophores:** They are single-celled algae living in the upper layers of the world's oceans.
- **Significance:**
  - They play a key role in marine ecosystems as they calcify marine phytoplankton that produce upto 40% of ocean calcium carbonate and are responsible for 20% of the global net marine primary productivity.
  - They also play an important role in the carbon cycle because they remove CO_2 from the atmosphere.
- **Threats:** The coccolithophores are reducing due to an increase in the presence of diatom algae which occurs after sea ice breakdown with climate change and ocean acidification and increases the silicate concentration in the waters of the Southern Ocean.

One-fifth of Earth's ocean floor is now mapped

News: The mapping of nearly one-fifth of the world's ocean floor has been finished under the Seabed 2030 Project.

Facts:

- **Seabed 2030 Project:** It is a collaborative project between the Nippon Foundation of Japan and the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO).
- The project was launched at the United Nations (UN) Ocean Conference in 2017 and is aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.
- **Aim:** To bring together all available bathymetric data to produce the definitive map of the world ocean floor by 2030 and make it available to all.
- Bathymetry is the measurement of the shape and depth of the ocean floor.
- **Significance:**
  - Knowing the depth and shape of the seafloor (bathymetry) is fundamental for understanding ocean circulation, tides, tsunami forecasting, fishing resources among others.
  - The maps would also ensure a better understanding of climate change since floor features canyons and underwater volcanoes which influences the weather and climate.

Additional Facts:

- **Nippon Foundation:** It is a non-profit philanthropic organisation in Japan which is active around the world.
- **GEBCO:** It is an international group of mapping experts developing a range of bathymetric data sets and data products. It operates under the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

## Odisha starts project to conserve Bhitarkanika fishing cats

News: Odisha Government has started a two-year conservation project for Fishing Cats in Bhitarkanika National Park.

Facts:

- *Fishing Cat:* They are a medium-sized wildcat found in South and Southeast Asia.
- *Habitat:* In India, fishing cats are mainly found in the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans, on the foothills of the Himalayas along the Ganga and Brahmaputra river valleys and in the Western Ghats.
- *Significance:* In 2012, the West Bengal government officially declared the Fishing Cat as the State Animal.
- *IUCN Red List:* Vulnerable.
- *CITES:* Appendix II
- *Indian Wildlife Protection Act,1972:* Schedule I
- *Threat:* Habitat Destruction, Hunting, Poaching among others.
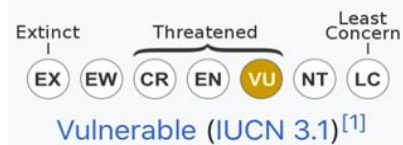
Cabinet approves establishment of Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund

News: Cabinet has approved the setting up of Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) worth Rs 15,000 crores.

Facts:

- *Aim:* To facilitate incentivization of investments in the establishment of infrastructure in the animal husbandry sector.
- *Beneficiaries:* Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), MSMEs, Section 8 Companies, Private Companies and individual entrepreneurs with a minimum 10% margin money contribution by them. The balance 90% would be the loan component to be made available by scheduled banks.
- *Interest Subventions:* The government will provide 4% interest subvention to eligible beneficiaries from the Aspirational Districts and 3% for beneficiaries from other Districts.
- *Duration:* There will be a 2 years moratorium period for repayment of loan with 6 years repayment period thereafter.

Climate report predicts hotter, rainier days

News: The first ever "Assessment of Climate Change over the Indian Region" report has been published by the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

Facts:

- The report is based on the climate forecasting model developed at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

Key Highlights:

- *Average* surface air temperatures over India could rise by up to 4.4 degrees Celsius by 2100 as compared to the period between 1976 and 2005.
- *Frequencies* of future warm days and warm nights are projected to increase by 55% and 70% respectively relative to the reference period of 1976-2005.
- Summer heat waves over India are also projected to be three to four times higher by the end of the 21st century.
- *Temperatures* of the warmest day and the coldest night of the year have risen by around 0.63°C and 0.4°C in the recent 30-year period (1986-2015).
- These temperatures are projected to rise by some 4.7°C and 5.5°C respectively by 2100.
- *Increase* in the frequency of droughts, floods and cyclones in the past few decades.
- Rise in intensity of tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean (NIO) by the end of the 21st century.
- *Sea surface temperature* over the Indian Ocean has risen by 1°C in the 64 years between 1951 and 2015 compared to the global average sea surface warming of 0.7°C.
- By the end of the century, sea level is expected to rise by 30cm as compared to its level in the last two to three decades.
- *Summer monsoon precipitation* (June to September) over India has also declined by around 6% from 1951 to 2015 with notable decreases over the Indo-Gangetic Plains and the Western Ghats.

The pangolin: can the protection upgrade by China curb its trafficking?

News: China has accorded the pangolin the highest level of protection and removed the scales of the Pangolin from its list of approved traditional medicines.

Facts:

- *Pangolin*: They are scaly anteater mammals of the order Pholidota. They have large, protective keratin scales covering their skin and they are the only known mammals with this feature.
- *Habitat*: Out of the eight species of pangolin, the Indian Pangolin and the Chinese Pangolin are found in India:
  - *Indian Pangolin*: It is widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East. The species is also found in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
  - *Chinese Pangolin:* It is found in Himalayan foothills in Eastern Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India, North-East Bangladesh, through Southern China and Taiwan.
- *IUCN Conservation Status*:
  - Indian pangolin – Endangered
  - Chinese pangolin – Critically Endangered

- **Threats**: a) Hunted for its meat across the northeastern States and in central India.and b) Smuggled for scales especially in China as it is believed that scales possess magic or charms and have medicinal properties.

Lonar Lake Turned Pink Overnight In Maharashtra

News: Maharashtra's Lonar lake has changed its colour to pink prompting scientists to investigate the possible cause.

Facts:

- **Lonar Lake:** It is a notified National Geo Heritage Monument located at Lonar, Maharashtra.
- **Formation:** The lake is believed to have been formed when a meteorite crashed into Earth around 50,000 years ago.
- The lake sits inside the Deccan Plateau—a massive plain of volcanic basalt rock created by eruptions some 65 million years ago.
- **Uniqueness:** The water of the lake is both saline and alkaline in nature, which makes it one-of-its-kind not only in India but also in the world.
- **Significance:** The lake is mentioned in ancient scripts like the Skanda Purana, the Padma Purana and the Ain-i-Akbari.

Vamsadhara Water Dispute

News: Andhra Pradesh is planning to build the Neradi bridge across the Vamsadhara river which will be possible only after Odisha's consent.

Facts:

- **Vamsadhara river Dispute:** It is between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
- **Vamsadhara river or Bansadhara river:** It is an east-flowing river which originates in Odisha and joins the Bay of Bengal in Andhra Pradesh. It lies between Rushikulya and Godavari.
- **Vansadhara Water Dispute Tribunal (VWDT):** It was set up in 2010 to look into the dispute between the two states.

LONG-STANDING CONFLICTS

Tribunals have been set up to mediate in eight inter-state water disputes across India.

DISPUTE	STATES INVOLVED
Ravi and Beas water dispute	Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan
Vansadhara river water dispute	Odisha and Andhra Pradesh
Mahadayi/Mandovi river dispute	Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra
Krishna river water dispute tribunal	Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh
Cauvery water dispute	Tamil Nadu and Karnataka
Indirasagar (Polavaram) project (Andhra Pradesh)	Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Chhattisgarh
Babhali barrage issue	Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra
Mullaiperiyar dam issue	Kerala and Tamil Nadu

Source: Mint research

India continues to lose forest land to non-forestry projects

News: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has released the Annual Report 2019-20.

Facts:

Key Observations:

- *Diversion of forest land:* The diversion of forest land for other purposes continued throughout India as total 11,467 hectares of forest lands were diverted in 22 states.
- More than a third of the diversion was in Odisha followed by Telangana and Jharkhand. The largest area of forest land was diverted for irrigation and mining projects.
- **Forest Villages:** There was no conversion of forest villages to revenue villages in 2019 as stipulated under the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
  - Forest villages were villages set up by the British Indian government to settle workers inside forests and procure resources like timber more efficiently. There are around 2,500 forest villages across the country.
- **Biosphere Reserves:** Out of 18 Biosphere Reserves designated nationally, so far 11 have been included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO.
- **Tigers in India**: India has achieved the target set by the St Petersburg declaration on tiger conservation (to double the number of wild tigers). As per the 4th cycle results, tiger estimate is 2967 vis-a-vis the estimate of 1411 in 2006.

29% rise in Asiatic lion numbers, says Gujarat

News: According to the Gujarat forest department, the Asiatic Lion population in Gir national park has increased by 29% in the past five years — from 523 in 2015 to 674 in 2020.

Facts:

- *Characteristics:* Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions. The most striking morphological character is a longitudinal fold of skin running along the belly of Asiatic Lions.
- *Habitat:* At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.
- *IUCN Status*: Endangered
- *Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:* Schedule-I
- *Threats:* **a)** Poaching and Habitat Fragmentation **b)** vulnerability to diseases **c)** death from linear infrastructure such as road, rail and electric fences and **d)** man-animal conflict.

The number of Asiatic lions in Gir forest in Gujarat has increased by nearly 30% between 2015 and 2020, the highest rise between two census years

LION POPULATION

| 1990 | 1995 | 2001 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 |
| 284 | 304 | 327 | 359 | 411 | 523 | 674 |

- *Initiatives:* Asiatic lion conservation project was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to protect and conserve the Asiatic Lion. It is a 3 year-long conservation project. It focuses on disease management, habitat improvement, creating a wildlife crime cell among others.
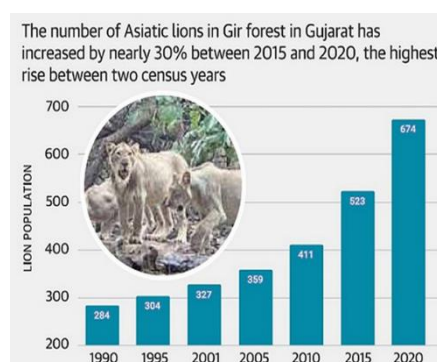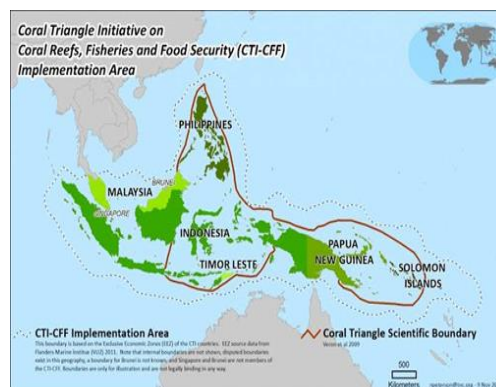
Additional Facts:

- *Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary:* The Gir National park was established in 1965. It is situated in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. It is part of the Kathiawar-Gir dry deciduous forests Ecoregion.

Coral Triangle Day

News: The Coral Triangle Day 2020 was observed on 9th June 2020

Facts:

- The Coral Triangle Day is an annual event started by Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) since 2012 in conjunction with the World Oceans Day on June 8.
- *Aim:* To celebrate and raise awareness of the ocean conservation and protection especially of the Coral Triangle.

Additional Facts:

- *Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI):* It is a multilateral partnership of six countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste).
- *Coral Triangle:* It is a vast ocean expense that geographically spreads across 6 countries in Asia and the Pacific: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste.
- *Significance:* It is considered as one of the 3 mega ecological complexes on Earth together with Congo Basin and the Amazon Rainforest.The region contains 76% of all known coral species, 37% of all known coral reef fish species and 53% of the world's coral reefs.

Union Minister launches Nagar Van Scheme

News: On the occasion of World Environment Day, Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change has launched Nagar van (City Forest) scheme.

Facts:

- *Aim:* To increase forest cover in urban areas by developing 200 Urban Forests across the country in the next five years.
- *Implementation:* It will be implemented with people's participation and collaboration between the Forest Department, Municipal bodies, NGOs and corporates.
- *Funding:* It will be funded in part by the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act (CAMPA), 2016 funds.

Additional Facts:

Warje Urban Forest or Smriti Van: It is a Public-Private partnership project of Pune that has been successful in converting 16.8 hectares of barren Warje hill into green forests.

Urban Forest: It is a forest or a collection of trees that grow within a city, town or a suburb. In a wider sense, it may include any kind of woody plant vegetation growing in and around human settlements.

What is the ongoing sixth mass extinction?

News: According to researchers at the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS), the ongoing sixth mass extinction may be one of the most serious environmental threats to the persistence of civilisation.

Facts:

- *Mass extinction:* It refers to a substantial increase in the degree of extinction or when the Earth loses more than three-quarters of its species in a geologically short period of time.

- *Earlier Extinctions*: There have been five mass extinctions that have taken place in the last 450 million years. These have led to the destruction of 70%-95% of the species of plants, animals and microorganisms that existed earlier.

- These extinctions were caused by catastrophic alterations to the environment such as massive volcanic eruptions, Depletion of oceanic oxygen, Collision with an asteroid among others.

- *Sixth Extinction:* The sixth mass extinction which is ongoing is referred to as the **Anthropocene extinction or Holocene extinction.**

- The research has claimed that this extinction is human-caused and is more immediate than climate destruction. The rate of extinction of species is also estimated at 100 to 1,000 times higher than natural background rates.

India's first dolphin observatory coming up in Bihar

News: Bihar government is setting up India's first Dolphin observatory in the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS).

Facts:

- *Gangetic river dolphin:* It is India's national aquatic animal found in parts of the Ganges, Meghna and Brahmaputra river systems in India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

- They are locally known as Susu which refers to the noise the dolphin is said to make when it breathes.

- **Significance:** They can be an indicator of the health of the freshwater ecosystem as they can only live in freshwater.
- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**: Schedule I
- **CITES**: Appendix I
- **Threats:** Declining water level, Climate Change, Poaching and increase in pollution level.

Additional Facts:

Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS): It is located in Bhagalpur District of Bihar. It was designated as a protected area for the Gangetic dolphins in 1991.

Advisory deal with the import live exotic animals

News: The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has issued an advisory to streamline and formalize the process of importing live exotic animals.

Facts:

- **Exotic Animals**: According to the advisory, exotic animals are those that are mentioned under the Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), but not under the schedules of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- **Key features of the advisory**:
  - It has provisions for import and disclosure of exotic animals and their progeny already in India.
  - A person trying to import a live exotic animal will have to apply for grant of a license to the DGFT.
  - The importer will also have to attach a No Objection Certificate (NOC) of the chief wildlife warden of the state concerned.

Additional Facts:

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora): It is an international agreement between governments. It aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

Pointly for Environment

1. **IFLOWS-Mumbai:** It is an Integrated Flood Warning system to enhance the resilience of Mumbai by providing early warning for flooding specially during high rainfall events and cyclones. It has been developed by the Ministry of Earth Sciences. Chennai is the first city in India to have such a warning system.
2. **Prevention of Human and Animal Mortality on Highways:** It is a UNDP national awareness campaign which seeks to generate awareness and education for the masses towards eliminating mortality on the roads.
3. **World Environment Day:** It is observed every year on 5th June. It was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 on the first day of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. The 2020 theme was Celebrate Biodiversity.

4. *BS-6 four-wheel vehicles*: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has made it mandatory for the Bharat Stage (BS) VI Vehicles to carry a one cm green sticker providing registration details

5. *Waste Exchange Platform for industrial waste*: Andhra Pradesh (AP) government has launched India's first online Waste Exchange Platform for industrial waste. It seeks to ensure safe disposal of toxic wastes with the help of monitoring, scrutinizing and auditing of the waste.

6. *Ithai barrage*: Manipur has urged the Central Government to consider the decommissioning of the Ithai barrage. The barrage was constructed in 1983 at the confluence of Imphal River and Tuitha River, south of Loktak Lake as part of Loktak Hydroelectric project.

7. *World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought*: It is observed every year on 17th June. The theme for 2020 was Food. Feed. Fiber. - the links between consumption and land

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

India's first COVID-19 vaccine candidate COVAXIN gets DCGI approval

News: India's first COVID-19 vaccine candidate COVAXIN has received the approval of Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for phase I and II of human clinical trials.

Facts:

- **COVAXIN:** It is an inactivated vaccine created from a strain of the infectious SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- *Developed by:* It has been developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV).

Additional Facts:

- **DGCI:** It is a department of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization(CDSCO) responsible for approval of licences of specified categories of drugs such as blood and blood products, IV fluids and vaccines in India. It comes under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

Government opens up space sector and assets to private sector to 'enhance' capacity

News: Union Government has approved the setting up of a new body named the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE).

Facts:

- **IN-SPACE:** It has been setup for providing a level playing field for private companies to use Indian space infrastructure.
- It will have its own chairman and board who will function autonomously and parallel to Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

Additional Facts:

- *New Space India Ltd (NSIL):* It was set up in 2019 under administrative control of the Department of Space (DOS).
- *Objective:* To enable Indian industries to take up high technology space related activities and is also responsible for promotion and commercial exploitation of the products and services emanating from the Indian space programme.

What is NASA's Gateway lunar orbiting outpost?

News: NASA has finalised the contract for the initial crew module called habitation and logistics (HALO) support for Gateway lunar orbiting outpost.

Facts:

- *HALO:* It refers to the pressurised living quarters where astronauts will spend their time while visiting the Gateway lunar orbiting outpost.
- *Gateway Lunar Orbit outpost:* It is a small spaceship that will orbit around the Moon meant for astronaut missions to the Moon and later for expeditions to Mars.
- *Purpose:* It will act as a temporary office for astronauts by providing living quarters for astronauts, a lab for science and research, ports for visiting spacecraft among others.
- The unique feature of the Gateway is that it can be moved to other orbits around the Moon to conduct more research.
- *Developed by:* It is led by NASA in collaboration with commercial and international partners: Canada (CSA), Europe (ESA), and Japan (JAXA).
- *Significance:* It is expected to play a major role in NASA's Artemis program after 2024.

Additional Facts: Artemis program: It is a NASA's mission that aims to send the first woman and the next man to the Moon by 2024.

Bose-Einstein Quantum "Fifth State Of Matter" Seen For 1st Time In Space

News: Scientists at NASA have observed Bose-Einstein Condensate (BEC) in for the first time in space offering unprecedented insight that could help solve some of the quantum universe's most intractable conundrums.

Facts:

- *Bose-Einstein Condensate (BEC):* It is the fifth state of matter whose existence was predicted by Albert Einstein and Indian mathematician Satyendra Nath Bose in the early 1920s.
- Gases, liquids, solids and plasmas are the other four matters.
- *How are they formed:* They are formed when atoms of certain elements are cooled to near absolute zero (0 Kelvin/-273.15 Celsius).
- At this point, atoms become a single entity with quantum properties wherein each particle also functions as a wave of matter.
- *Features:* They are extremely fragile and slightest interaction with the external world warms them past their condensation threshold.This makes their study nearly impossible

on Earth where gravity interferes with magnetic fields required to hold them in place for observation.

- **Significance**: Scientists believe BECs contain vital clues to mysterious phenomena such as dark energy — the unknown energy thought to be behind the Universe's accelerating expansion.

India and Japan Join Hands For - 'Lunar Polar Exploration' mission

News: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) will be launching a joint lunar mission called the Lunar Polar Exploration(LPE).

Facts:

- **Launch Year**: 2023
- **Aim**: To send a lunar rover and lander to explore the south pole region of the Moon.
- **Objective**: To obtain data on the quantity and forms of water resources present in order to determine the feasibility of utilizing such resources for sustainable space exploration activities in the future.
- Under the mission, JAXA would be building the overall landing module and the rover while ISRO would develop the lander system.

Russia oil leak: What is permafrost, and why does its thawing pose risk to the world?

News: The principal reason that led to the 20,000-tonne oil leak at an Arctic region power plant in Russia is being recognised is the sinking of ground surface due to permafrost thaw.

Facts:

- **Permafrost**: It is a ground that remains completely frozen at 0 degrees Celsius or below for at least two years. It is defined solely based on temperature and duration.
- **Where are they found?** Permafrost is most common in regions with high mountains and in Earth's higher latitudes—near the North and South Poles.
- **What is Permafrost made of?** It is made of a combination of soil, rocks and sand that are held together by ice.The soil and ice in permafrost stay frozen all year long.
- A layer of soil on top of permafrost does not stay frozen all year. This layer called the active layer, thaws during the warm summer months and freezes again in the fall.
- **How Climate Change is affecting Permafrost?** As Earth's climate warms, the permafrost is thawing. That means the ice inside the permafrost melts, leaving behind water and soil.
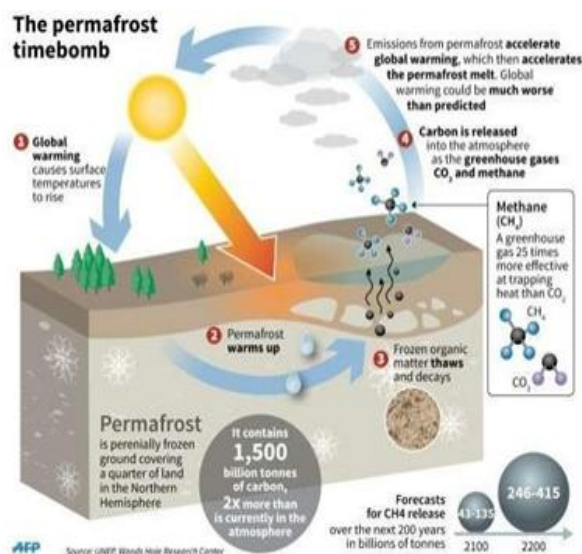
- *Effects of Thawing Permafrost:*
  - Ground becomes unstable which leads to landslides, floods, infrastructure damage and a threat to the survival of indigenous people & animals.
  - Release of greenhouse gases by decomposition of organic leftover under permafrost.
  - Release of ancient bacteria and viruses into the atmosphere.

IT Minister Launches National AI Portal of India

News: Union Minister for Electronics and IT has launched India's National Artificial Intelligence(AI) Portal called www.ai.gov.in and National Program for the youth called "Responsible AI for Youth".

Facts:

- *National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Portal:*
- *Bodies Involved:* It has been jointly developed by the Ministry of Electronics and IT and IT Industry.
- The National e-Governance Division of Ministry of Electronics and IT and NASSCOM from the IT industry will jointly run this portal.
- *Purpose:* To work as a one stop platform for AI related developments in India, sharing of resources such as articles, investment funds in AI, resources, companies and educational institutions related to AI in India.
- *Responsible AI for Youth Programme:*
- *Objective:* To empower the youth to become Artificial Intelligence (AI) ready and help reduce the skill gap while enabling youth to create meaningful social impact solutions.
- *Bodies involved:* It has been created by the National e-Governance Division, Ministry of Electronics & IT in collaboration with Intel India with support from the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of HRD.
- *Coverage:* The Programme is open to students of classes 8 - 12 from Central and State government-run schools (including KVS, NVS, JNV) from across the country.

DRDO develops Ultra Swachh for disinfection of PPEs, electronic items, fabrics

News: Defense Research and Development Organization(DRDO) has developed a disinfection unit named Ultra Swachh.

Facts:

- *Purpose:* To disinfect a wide range of materials, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), electronics items, fabrics and others.
- *Bodies Involved:* Developed by Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences, laboratory of DRDO with industry partner Gel Craft Health Care Private Ltd.
- *Working:* It uses an advanced oxidative process consisting of multiple barrier disruption approaches using Ozonated Space Technology for disinfection.

- It is double layered with specialised Ozone sealant technology assuring trapping of ozone for the necessary disinfection cycle.It also has a catalytic converter to ensure environment friendly exhaust i.e. only oxygen and water.
- **Types:** It comes in two variants namely Ozonated Space and Trinetra Technology. Trinetra technology is the combination of Ozonated space and radical dispenser.

Pointly for Science and Technology

1. **Dexamethasone:** Scientists in the UK have claimed that dexamethasone reduced deaths by up to one third in severely ill hospitalized patients. It is a generic steroid widely used in other diseases to reduce inflammation.
2. **Annual Solar Eclipse:** India witnessed an annular solar eclipse on 21th June, 2020. An annular solar eclipse occurs when the moon is farthest from the Earth because of which, it looks smaller and does not block the entire view of the Sun creating a ring of fire effect
3. **Covid -19 Indian National Supermodel:** Department of Science and Technology (DST) has begun work on the creation of a Covid -19 Indian National Supermodel. It seeks to forecast the spread of coronavirus and also monitor the future transmission of infection with the aim to assist governments in enhancing disease surveillance measures.
4. **Proxima Centauri b:** Scientists have confirmed the existence of Proxima Centauri b as an Earth-sized planet. It orbits in the habitable zone of the star Proxima Centauri.
5. **Joint Science Communication Forum:** It has been constituted by Department of Science & Technology. It seeks to facilitate interaction, cooperation and coordination amongst various public sector science communication institutions and agencies

MISCELLANEOUS

COVID-19 widened educational divide: UNESCO report

News: UNESCO has released a report titled "Global Education Monitoring Report 2020".

Facts:

- *Theme:* "Inclusion and education: All means all".

Additional Facts:

- *SDG 4:* It aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.
- *Incheon declaration:* It is a declaration on education adopted at the World Education Forum in Incheon, South Korea in 2015.
- *Qingdao Declaration:* It provides the UN Member States with policy recommendations for using ICT to address educational challenges and to ensure equitable education and lifelong opportunities for all.
- *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):* It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) based in Paris,France.India has been a member of the UNESCO since its inception in 1946.

- *Aim:* To monitor progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on education as well as other education-related points in the SDG Agenda.

World Investment Report

News: The World Investment Report 2020 has been released by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Facts:

The World Investment Report has been published annually since 1991. It covers the latest trends in foreign direct investment around the world.

Key Takeaways:

- *India* was the world's 9th largest recipient of foreign direct investments (FDI) in 2019 with $51 billion in foreign investment.
- In 2018, India was the world's 12th largest recipient with $42 billion foreign investment.
- *Global FDI flows* are forecast to decrease by up to 40% in 2020 from their 2019 value of $1.54 trillion. This would bring FDI below $1 trillion for the first time since 2005.

Additional Facts:

- *UNCTAD:* It is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland
- *Reports:* a) The Trade and Development Report b) Technology and Innovation Report c) Digital Economy Report among others.

World Competitiveness Index 2020

News: World Competitiveness Index 2020 has been released by the Institute for Management Development (IMD).

Facts:

- World Competitiveness Index is an annual report published since 1989.
- *Parameters:* It ranks 63 countries using 235 indicators grouped under four factors: economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency and infrastructure.
- *Key Takeaways:*
    - *Top Rankers:* Singapore has topped the index followed by Denmark and Switzerland.
    - *India:* It has been ranked at 43rd in the index. In 2019 also, it was ranked at 43rd.
    - *BRICS Countries:* India is ranked second after China (20th) followed by Russia (50th), Brazil (56th) and South Africa (59th).

Economy to contract by 3.2% this fiscal, says World Bank

News: The World Bank has released the Global Economic Prospects (GEP) June 2020 report.

Facts:

- Global Economic Prospects is a World Bank Group flagship report that is issued twice a year, in January and June.

- *Aim:* To examine global economic developments and prospects with a special focus on emerging markets and developing economies.
- *Key Takeaways:*
  - *Global Economy:* The COVID-19 pandemic will shrink the global economy by 5.2% in 2020-21 representing the deepest recession since World War Two and a dramatic rise in extreme poverty.
  - *Indian Economy:* It is expected to contract by 3.2% (so growth is -3.2%) in FY 2020-21 due to impact of Coronavirus pandemic and restrictions on activity.However, it will make a modest recovery to 3.1% growth in the next fiscal year.

Additional Facts: Other reports released by World Bank:
- Ease of Doing Business Report
- Human Capital Index(HCI)
- World Development Report(WDR)
- Logistics Performance Index (LPI).

Nearly 80 mln displaced globally by 2019-end, half of them children: UNHCR

News: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees(UNHCR) has released the Global Trends Report.

Facts:

Key Takeaways:

- *Five countries* account for two-thirds of people displaced across borders: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar.
- Around 80 million people were displaced at the end of 2019. Conflict, Persecution, Violence, Human rights violations were the main reasons behind the displacements.
- Forced displacement has almost doubled since 2010 (41 million then vs 79.5 million now).
- More than eight of every 10 refugees (85 per cent) are in developing countries generally a country neighbouring the one they fled.

Additional Facts:
- UNHCR: It was created in 1950. It is headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland.
- Purpose: To protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people and assists in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country.

Indonesia's Mount Merapi erupts twice

News: Mount Merapi in Indonesia has erupted twice on 21st June, 2020.

Facts:

- *Mount Merapi:* It is an active stratovolcano located on the border between Central Java
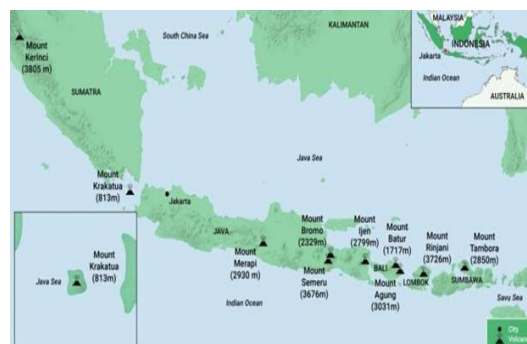
and Yogyakarta provinces, Indonesia. It is the most active volcano in Indonesia and has erupted regularly since 1548.

Yemeni separatists seize island of Socotra from Saudi-backed government

News: Yemen separatists have seized control of Socotra Island deposing its governor and driving out forces of the Saudi-backed government.

Facts:

- **Socotra Island:** It is part of the North Indian Ocean located between the Guardafui Channel and the Arabian Sea.
- The island is officially part of Yemen and sits at the mouth of the Gulf of Aden.
- In 2008, it was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Pointly for Miscellaneous

1. **Challenger Deep:** Kathy Sullivan has become the first woman to reach a Challenger Deep. It is the deepest known point in the Earth's oceans with a depth of around 10,984m. It is located in the Western Pacific Ocean at the southern end of the Mariana Trench near the Mariana Islands group.

2. **Money Laundering and the Illegal Wildlife Trade Report:** It has been released by Financial Action Task Force (FATF). It aims to provide guidance to countries on measures they can take to combat money laundering from the illegal wildlife trade.

3. **The Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report:** It has been released by International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IREA), the United Nations Statistics Division, World Bank and the World Health Organization. According to the report, in 2018, India was among the top three countries with largest the deficits regarding access to electricity.

4. *World Refugee Day:* It is observed every year on June 20th by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The 2020 theme was "Every Action Counts".