

PERFECT 7

FORTNIGHTLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

April 2022 / Issue -2

ipcc
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON
climate change



- Triangle of India, Russia, and China: Cooperation and Tension.
- The Criminal Procedure (Identity) Bill, 2022.
- Cyber attacks on Cryptocurrencies.
- IPCC report on climate change.
- Relevance of Non-Alignment Movement in the present world order.
- Time to reassess India's Tech Regulations.
- India Releases Arctic Policy Focusing On Energy Security, Climate Change, Mineral Wealth.



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3.	July, 2022	10/07/2022	17/07/2022	Last Sunday of every month
4.	August, 2022	14/08/2022	21/08/2022	Last Sunday of every month
5.	September., 2022	11/09/2022	18/09/2022	Last Sunday of every month
6.	October, 2022	09/10/2022	16/10/2022	Last Sunday of every month
7.	November, 2022	13/11/2022	20/11/2022	Last Sunday of every month
8.	December, 2022	11/12/2022	18/12/2022	Last Sunday of every month
9.	January, 2023	08/01/2023	15/01/2023	Last Sunday of every month
10.	February, 2023	12/02/2023	19/02/2023	Last Sunday of every month
11.	March, 2023	12/03/2023	19/03/2023	Last Sunday of every month
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 These allotted dates are tentative and subject to change under special circumstances.

Director's Message



Mr. Vinay Kumar Singh

The guiding philosophy of the institute, throughout, has been creation of knowledge base. Dhyeya IAS inculcates human values and professional ethics in the students, which help them make decisions that are good not only for them, but also for the society, for the nation, and for the world as a whole. To fulfil its mission in new and powerful ways, each student is motivated to strive towards achieving excellence in every endeavor. It is done by making continuous improvements in curricula and pedagogical tools.

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Vinay Kumar Singh
CEO and Founder



Mr. Q H Khan

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Our brand of education has broad horizons as we believe in exposure. Our students are encouraged to widen their knowledge base and study beyond the confinements of the syllabus. We aim to lend a gentle guiding hand to make our students recognize their inner potential and grow on their own accord into stalwarts of tomorrow's society.

Yours very truly,



Q H Khan
Managing Director

PREFACE



Current Affairs has an important role in the examinations conducted by Union Public Service Commission and State Public Service Commissions. It is necessary for the candidate to have knowledge of relevant information on issues of national and international importance. Perfect 7 Magazine is being presented fortnightly in front of the students to fulfill this requirement. Preparation of civil services exam is only completed when candidates have holistic knowledge and analysis of the dynamic nature of the current affairs. 'Perfect7' keeps this vision and approach and understands the multidimensional need of students at the content level, so this magazine has presented the current affairs with relevant issues of general studies. Keeping in mind the mains exam, current articles on 7 burning issues, Ethics Case Studies, Biographies of important personalities, coverage of most useful topics of various sections of General Studies and the most important current affairs issues are being covered for Preliminary Examination in which emphasis is being given on environmental, ecology, art and culture, science and technology, economy issues. A short section on Terminology will also be part of Perfect 7 Magazine.

Brain boosters with 7 themes based graphics are being presented in a concise form to enhance the conceptual understanding of the students. Apart from this, updated information on Global Initiatives, Global Institutions, Structure of Organizations, Functioning, Important Reports, and Indices will be included in this magazine, which is asked prominently in the Civil Services Examination. To give emphasis on facts and analysis, keeping in view the trends of new nature of questions in Preliminary and Main Examination of Civil Services, an inclusive magazine is being provided to the students so that they can give the right direction to their preparation by understanding the new requirements of Civil Services Examination. We hope that Perfect 7 in its new form will prove to be very useful. Your suggestions are always welcome.

Vinay Kumar Singh
Editor
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PERFECT 7

FORTNIGHTLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Monthly
News Paper



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7 IMPORTANT ISSUES



Triangle of India, Russia, and China: Cooperation and Tension

Context

Recently India was visited by the Foreign Minister of Russia. It should be noted that before this visit, the Foreign Minister of Russia has also visited China. So it is clear that Russia is trying to strengthen RIC's platform in times of crisis.

Introduction

During the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the Foreign Minister of Russia, Mr. Sergei Lavrov, has made an official visit to India from 31 March - to 1 April 2022. During this, he met Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar and the Indian Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. It should be noted that before this, the Foreign Minister of China had also visited India. The Russian Foreign Minister held talks with the Indian counterpart on many issues such as the Afghanistan crisis, Ukraine crisis, Rupee-Rubel transaction, enduring friendship with India, and a balanced world. After meeting the Indian Prime Minister, he also talked about the disputes between China and India.

It may be noted that before visiting India, the Foreign Minister of Russia also visited China where he had gone to attend the Foreign Ministers' talks on the Afghanistan crisis. Thus it is being speculated that Russia is trying to strengthen the RIC in times of crisis.

RIC: An Introduction

The RIC (Russia India China) triangle was conceptualized by the Russian Foreign Minister Primakov in

1998. The main purpose of this triangle, brought in the post-cold war period, was to convert the unipolar world into a multipolar world. However, it could not be called wholly anti-American because all three countries considered their relationship with the United States to be an essential element of their global ambitions. However, this triangle was challenging American dominance. These three countries established cooperation in trade, agriculture, disaster management, health, natural gas, fuel, etc. Along with this, people-to-people connectivity and cultural exchange were also discussed in this triangle.

Key reasons behind the establishment of RIC

Russia's side:

- After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the influence of NATO began to increase in the neighboring countries of Russia (which were earlier parts of the Soviet Union). Many countries of Eastern Europe joined NATO, while the influence of NATO was also visible in Ukraine and Georgia. The coming of democracy in place of one-party governments in these countries was seen by Russia as a growing influence of American ideology. The biggest reason for the recent Russo-Ukraine war is being attributed to Ukraine's attempt to join NATO.

- Russia was weakening in the countries of its predecessor region (Soviet Union) and it needed new allies to increase its power and

counterbalance America.

China's side:

- After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, America's foreign policy became China-centric. The autonomy of Taiwan, Tibet was supported by the US, which China considered an attack on its sovereignty. To reduce China's power in the Asia Pacific region, America was deploying more than 60% of its military force here.
- Simultaneously, it was trying to reduce the influence of China in the South China Sea. Along with this, China believes that the movements in Hong Kong have the support of Western countries. Therefore, China also needed new allies.

India's side:

- Since the beginning, financial aid is being given by the US to Pakistan, which was being used by Pakistan in the form of direct war against India and aid to terrorism.
- Sanctions were imposed on India by the US even after the Pokhran nuclear explosion in 1998. America also put pressure on other countries on the issues of the environment and the World Trade Organization, which India opposed.

Thus the RIC was formed as a result of the common interests of the three countries.

Points of Cooperation in RIC:- Historical association

- India and Russia are each other's traditional allies. Similarly, India and China have also been allies in

historical times. There is also mutual coordination between Russia and China which makes RIC strong.

Common Objective

- All these three countries are in favor of a multipolar world. At present, we are seeing a decrease in American dominance on the global stage, to which these three countries have an important contribution. All three countries are in favor of a balanced world. These three countries are also allies of each other on the issue of the environment.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization:-

- India is in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is governed by Russia and China. Although this organization also includes four other Central Asian countries. Shanghai Cooperation Organization is also known as Asian NATO. Along with this, if there is a free trade agreement in these, then it can come forward as the world's largest market.
- This is a very important area from the strategic point of view. This region connects Asia and Europe. Pakistan's membership of the SCO and the possible accession of Iran (as a member state) increased the importance of the SCO to India. Somewhere the informal Russia-China nexus is being tested in the organization that Russia handles political-security issues in the region and China provides economic aid. India needs to shape the Russia-China dynamic in the region.

BRICS

- BRICS organization also provides a common platform for these three countries. Where apart from these three there are important countries like Brazil and South Africa. At present, BRICS is the organization with

the fastest economic growth. Which provides a platform for these three countries.

Cooperation of the three countries:-

- Russia is an extremely important partner for India's energy security and defense strengthening. Russia's natural resources can strengthen India's energy security.
- Mutual trade between India and China (before the recent border tensions) was increasing continuously. The markets of these countries will prove useful for schemes like Make in India.

Tensions in RIC

- At present, India is shifting away from Eurasian politics to focus on the Indo-Pacific region. India's attention is shifting from RIC to Quad (India, America, Australia, and Japan).
- There have been many issues like the Pakistan-China alliance, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Doklam border dispute, and recent border dispute which are creating tension between India and China. Along with this, China's aggressive policy is weakening RIC.
- Currently the US is looking at India as a counterbalance to China. Along with this, defense agreements are also being made in India and America, due to which India is ending its dependence on Russia for defense equipment.
- China is making efforts to encircle India by reducing India's influence in India's neighborhood. In this context, China made strategic agreements with Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka.

Way Forward

- Recently Russia has said that India can play the role of mediator in the Ukraine crisis. Along with this, China is also ready for talks with India



to end the Afghanistan crisis. Russia has indicated the role of the RIC in resolving the India-China border dispute. In such a situation, in the near future, the role of RIC may increase in place of US mediation in resolving regional issues.

- RIC countries are currently nuclear weapons-rich countries. As the confidence of other countries in the UNSC is decreasing, in such a situation these three countries can replace the UNSC in the new global order.

Conclusion

India, Russia, and China have the potential to build a new world order. But China will have to give up its aggression, at the same time, the RIC will have to establish its global relevance by playing an important role in mitigating the current Ukraine crisis.

NOTES

Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill

The Criminal Procedure (Identity) Bill, 2022

Context

Recently, the Criminal Procedure (Identity) Bill has been introduced in the Lok Sabha. This bill replaces the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920.

Introduction

The rigor of the criminal justice system has become a topic of discussion in present-day Indian society. Along with this, the changing nature of crime and the identification of criminals is a big problem. The Criminal Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Government of India to address the problem of identification of criminals. The Bill authorizes the collection of certain identifiable information about specified persons, such as criminals, to investigate a crime. Along with this, this bill increases the limit of information and specified persons (whose information can be taken).

Key provisions of the bill

Following are the main provisions of this bill -

What information can be obtained:- The Prisoners' Identification Act - 1920 authorized information on photographs, fingerprints, and footprints of criminals and other persons but this bill provided for palm impressions, iris and retina scans, behavioral features such as signatures and handwriting, other physical and biological samples. Authorizes the state to collect information such as blood, semen, hair samples, and swabs and their analysis.

Which persons can be informed?

- In the Identification of Prisoners Act 1920, information related to the following persons can be taken-
 - o Punished Person:- A person convicted of such an offense in which there is a provision of rigorous imprisonment for a minimum period of one year.
 - o Bailable persons:- Persons who have been ordered to deposit security under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC) for good conduct or keeping the peace.
 - o Detained Persons: A person detained for an offense punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a minimum period of one year.
- The proposed bill expands the threshold of "individuals" to include all criminals, those arrested and those detained under preventive detention laws.
- However, the detained persons shall not be compelled to provide their biological samples, unless they have committed an offense against a woman or child, or shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than seven years for the offense charged against them. Have provision.

Provisions relating to Identification Details

- The details will be preserved in digital or electronic form for 75 years from the date of submission.
- However in certain circumstances such as (if the person's crime is not proven, the person is released without trial, the person has been acquitted by the court) the person's details

will be destroyed. However, these particulars can also be preserved if there is a written order from the Magistrate, and for a good reason.

- Opposing to, or refusing to give details shall be deemed to be an offense under the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

Authorized authority to collect Identification Details

- According to the Prisoners' Identification Act - 1920, the following authorities were authorized to take details-
 - o In charge of a police station
 - o Discretion under CrPC
 - o Officers not less than the rank of Sub-Inspector
- The Bill also empowers a prison officer (not below the rank of head warden), or a police officer (in charge of a police station, or at least the rank of a head constable) to take details.
- The Bill also provides that the Magistrate may direct any person to furnish his particulars for investigation or proceedings under CrPC. Here magistrate means metropolitan magistrate, judicial magistrate of the first class, or executive magistrate (in some contexts).

Right to Protection of Identification Details

- The Bill empowers the NCRB to submit details of persons covered by the Bill to the State Governments, Union Territory Administrations, or law enforcement agencies.
- NCRB reserves the right to store,

destroy, and process all relevant records.

Power to make rules

- Recognition of Prisoners Act 1920, empowered the State Government to make any rules related to this. But this also gives power to the central government. Therefore, now the Central Government and the State Government can make rules concerning the methods of submission of details and the procedures adopted by NCRB.

Arguments against the provisions of the Bill

- This bill is weakening federalism. Law and order are subject to the state list, but this bill also empowers the central government to make rules, which will increase the interference of the center in the affairs of the states.
- Cybercrime is at its peak at present. Keeping the data of individuals in electronic form can increase the chances of hacking. Due to this, the data of criminals can go into the wrong hands, which can again contribute to increasing crime.
- This bill gives effect to the power of the state over the privacy of the individual, which is itself a violation of Article 21.
- This bill is promoting centralization concerning the identity of prisoners, which is against the principle of democracy.
- The Act of 1920 was made for the suppression of the national movement by the imperialist power. There is no need for such laws in a democratic setup.

Arguments in favor of the provisions of the Bill

- In present times there has been vast changes in crime and criminals.



To save society from the chaotic elements, there is a need for law according to the new criminal tendencies. Hence this Bill is relevant.

- This law is being made by the Parliament, which is the highest law-making body to fulfill the aspirations of the Indian people. So we can understand this law as the demand of the time.
- Many laws of India are centuries old and have become almost irrelevant in the present time but still the criminal justice system runs according to the same laws, as a result of which question marks have started on the criminal justice system. To reform the criminal justice system, it is extremely necessary to introduce such laws.

Way Forward

- Before introducing such laws, the government should pass its personal data protection bill so that concerns related to personal privacy are reduced.
- It is necessary that the government should strengthen its data protection infrastructure so that problems like hacking are minimized.
- In such laws which include elements of the state list, the central government should work with the states so that the federal system can run smoothly.

Conclusion

Although this bill has not been converted into an Act yet and there are possibilities for an amendment to it. But it is true that to improve the criminal justice system, the old laws have to be amended and the criminal laws have to be coordinated. It is necessary that the government, in consultation with all the stakeholders, formulate a law in this regard.

NOTES

Cyber attacks on Cryptocurrencies

Context

Cryptocurrency is a type of virtual currency based on blockchain technology. It was considered “completely safe from cyber attacks” till now. But from some time Cryptocurrency is also being attacked by cyber attacks.

Introduction

Cryptocurrency is a specific type of virtual currency. This currency is decentralized and protected by cryptographic encryption technology. Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Ripple are some notable examples of cryptocurrencies. It is a secure method of online payment. It replaces the centralized banking system. The identity of the user using it remains confidential. The system is based on Blockchain technology. Being a decentralized and advanced technology, cryptocurrencies were considered completely safe from cyber attacks. But in recent years the security of this system has also become important due to the increasing frequency of hacking and cyber attacks against crypto exchanges and individuals using it.

Some examples of cyber attacks on Cryptocurrencies

- It has recently been revealed that owners of cryptocurrency hardware wallets are being targeted by a phishing scam spread through “Mailchimp” email delivery services. Trezor, the creator of the crypto wallet, announced on social media that its customers were being sent to Mailchimp. Fake data breach notifications are being sent through

newsletters operated by Trezor says that other cryptocurrency firms can also be targeted through a phishing attack.

- In March 2022, blockchain platform “One Ring Finance” reported that cyber attackers stole \$1.4 million from the company through a “flash loan attack”.
- In February 2022, decentralized finance (Defi) platform “Flurry Finance” reported that approximately \$295,000 was stolen by hackers.
- In December 2021, cryptocurrency trading platform Bitmart reported that approximately \$150 million worth of funds had been stolen by hackers.

About Cyber attack

Cyber attack refers to unauthorized access to your Internet, network-based digital devices, and information. Cybercrime refers to criminal activity involving the Internet, computers, or any other inter-connected infrastructure. It covers crimes like credit card fraud, illegal downloading, industrial espionage, child pornography, cyber terrorism, virus distribution, and spam.

Different types of cyber attacks Cyber Stalking -

Cyberstalking refers to “chasing”. Cyberstalkers often take advantage of the anonymity of the Internet and gain unauthorized access to people’s activities without their knowledge. Cyberstalking harms a person psychologically hence it is sometimes called psycho scientific terrorism. About 90% of stalkers are men and

about 80% of women are victims of this type of harassment.

Intellectual property theft

Intellectual property is defined as an innovative research method, model, and formula of economic value. Intellectual property is protected with patents and trademarks and copyrights on videos and music. The Internet is often used to facilitate the theft of intellectual property.

E-mail bombing

In this method attacker send a large number of e-mails to the targeted person. A large volume of e-mails fills the recipient’s inbox on the server or in some cases the server fails to receive such a large amount of data and stops working. Its attack fills the recipient’s inbox with a large number of unwanted mail and the target person is unable to receive further important e-mails.

Phishing

This is a type of fraudulent attempt to steal personal and financial information through email. In this, the criminal sends e-mails that come from well-known and trusted domain addresses. The email asks for your financial information such as bank name, credit card number, Aadhaar number, account number, or password. It’s common for phishing attempts to have e-mails coming from sites and companies that don’t even have a bank account.

Identity theft

Identity theft is a type of fraud in

which a person pretends to be someone else and commits a crime under someone else's name. Criminals can use the stolen personal and financial information to access your bank accounts, open new accounts, transfer bank balances, or make purchases.

Spoofing

It refers to a technique in which there is unauthorized access to a computer whereby the perpetrator sends a message to a networked computer with an IP address. To conduct IP spoofing, a hacker first tries to find a trusted host IP address.

Virus

A computer virus requires another medium to propagate. In other words, a computer virus is only effective when it associates itself with a malicious program or executable files. The virus leaves its infection when we run or execute these auxiliary files. The existence of a virus in your system does not harm the computer until its associated executable file or program is run.

Worm

Both the terms worm and virus are used interchangeably but there is a major difference as the worm does not require auxiliary attached files whereas the virus requires attached files.

Trojan horse

Trojan horse at first glance appears as useful software but it harms the computer and its software. Some Trojans create backdoors for malicious users to remotely control your computer which can lead to the theft of confidential and personal information.

DoS and DDoS

A denial-of-service attack attempts to make a computer server or net-

work resource unavailable to its authorized users, usually using a temporary interruption or suspension of services. Distributed Denial of Service refers to the spread of malicious software to more than one infected system at the same time. These infected systems, collectively called attacks, control the target system from afar.

Pornography

Pornography refers to printed or video material such as books, magazines, photographs, and video clips that contain descriptions or performances of sexual activity or activity intended to encourage sexual arousal.

Why cyber security is important

- Cyber security is important because many types of data are collected by the government, military, corporate, financial, and medical institutions, and that data is kept safe in their systems, computers, and other devices. Not only from data theft. Personal life is affected but institutional capacity is also negatively affected.
- With the help of cyber security, a lot of data is kept safe so that the data remains out of reach of anyone else. As the data grows, so does the need for good and effective cyber security products and services.
- With the help of cyber security, we can avoid cyber attacks, data theft, threats from thieves, and ransomware.

India's stand on cyber attacks on cryptocurrencies

- At present, India is trying to regulate cryptocurrency. According to an estimate, more than 100 million Indians have invested more than \$10 million in cryptocurrency. It is not only an opportunity to increase tax revenue but it can also control tax evasion, being decentralized, it is



used to hoard black money, increase criminal activities, finance terrorism. These problems can be mitigated by bringing transparency to transactions through taxation.

- It is to be noted that while India is trying to impose a tax on cryptocurrencies, India must also protect its cryptocurrency taxpayers.
- At present India has Cyber Security Policy 2013 and IT Act but these are not sufficiently efficient to prevent cyber attacks on cryptocurrencies.

National Cyber Security Policy 2013: as a Security Mechanism against Cyber Attacks

Before 2013, there was no cyber security policy in India. The National Cyber Security Policy was brought out by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology in 2013. It aims to protect public and private infrastructure from cyber attacks. This policy is to protect information (such as web users), and financial and banking systems.

Conclusion

The cryptocurrency will certainly become a permanent part of the transaction in some time. In this situation, it will be the responsibility of the Government of India to protect cryptocurrencies from cyber security as well as tax cryptocurrencies by ensuring a clear, constructive, and friendly regulatory environment for cryptocurrencies. In such a situation, the government must strengthen its cyber security system.

IPCC report on climate change

Context

Recently the second part of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been released. This report deals with the impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities of climate change and mitigation options.

Introduction

Recently the second report of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was released. It may be noted that the first report was released in 2021. After assessing both reports, UN chief Antonio Guterres reacted to the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), stressing that if governments of all countries do not re-assess their energy policies, the world will be “unpopulated”. ‘, and will no longer be habitable for humans.

Highlights of the recent report In the context of climate change:

- The report states that more than 45% of the global population lives in areas most vulnerable to climate change.
- It has been identified in the report that along with climate change, many serious disasters will be faced. However, these disasters will result from the aggregation of climate and non-climatic risks.
- The report also states that a temporary increase in global warming may lead to some additional serious effects, some of which will be irreversible.
- The report suggests that the so-

cio-economic development of the ecosystem and the people are closely related. It will further affect the disadvantaged section and there will be regional variation, for example, due to climate change, malaria and other waterborne and vector-borne diseases will increase in tropical regions of Asia.

- The report states that respiratory, diabetes, infectious diseases, and infant mortality are likely to increase with the increase in temperature.
- India has been identified as a vulnerable hotspot in the report. As a result of climate change, India is facing the risks of climate disasters such as floods, sea-level rise, and heatwaves. danger.

In terms of adaptation and mitigation

- The report noted that there is a significant gap between the commitment to adaptation and the efforts required to do so. For this to be effective, ambitious reductions in greenhouse gases have to be made.
- The report also pointed out that in addition to technological and economic changes, there is also a need to change the structures of society for mitigating climate risk and for inclusive, equitable, and just development. Therefore, it is clear that now instead of small and marginal reforms, we have to move towards big and difficult reforms.

Important points of the first part of the IPCC 6th Assessment Report

The sixth report of the IPCC, released in August 2021, was titled Climate

Change 2021 : The Physical Science Basis. This report primarily addresses the following findings.

- It has been told in the report that the average temperature of the Earth’s surface will exceed the target of 1.5 degrees centigrade set for the next 20 years i.e. by 2040. If emissions continue to grow at this pace, the world will be able to achieve the global warming target of 2 degrees centigrade set for this century a long time ago.
- It should be noted that in this report the IPCC has made it clear that the goal of global warming at 1.5 degrees centigrade has now become unavoidable.
- The report said that 2400 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide have been emitted by humans since 1800. And the world has already exhausted 86% of its carbon budget.
- The report said that as a result of global warming, the sea level has increased 3 times compared to 1900 -1971 and Arctic ice has reached its lowest level in the last 1000 years.
- The report clarified that this thermal increase will also lead to excessive rainfall and an increase in drought. This thermal increase will also weaken the carbon sink and cause extreme heat to rise while winters are shorter.
- The number of snow lines and glaciers will decrease in the Himalayan region.
- The report states that the timing of monsoon rainfall over the Indian subcontinent is expected to change and sea surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean will increase by 1 to 2

degrees centigrade due to increased global warming. This will increase the frequency of cyclonic storms. Surely this is a big problem and efforts will have to be made to solve it, otherwise, there will be a crisis for humanity.

What can be done?

Climate change has become a big problem and efforts should be made to stop it.

Global efforts to stop climate change United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention (UNFCCC)

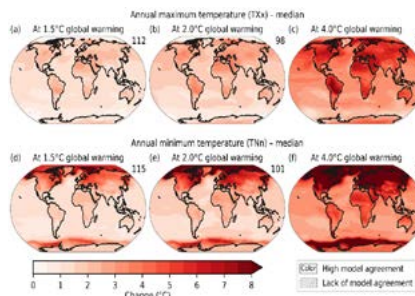
- The United Nations Climate Change Framework Convention (UNFCCC) is an international agreement. This framework seeks to control the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Its concept was brought under the 1992 Earth Summit. In the context of this, the much-discussed Kyoto Agreement was signed in 1997 and the target was set by the developed countries (countries included in Annex-1) to control greenhouse gases. Under the Kyoto Protocol, 40 industrialized countries have been placed in a separate list, Annex I.

Net-zero

- Net-zero refers to bringing all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (such as from fossil-fueled vehicles and factories) as close to zero as possible. At the recent Glasgow conference, many countries have expressed their commitment to “Net Zero” and talked about achieving its goal by 2050.

India's efforts

- Recently India has given “Panchamrita Principles” at Glasgow Conference. These five commitments are as follows-
 - To take India's non-fossil fuel energy capacity to 500 gigawatts (GW) by 2030.



- To meet 50% of India's energy needs through renewable energy by 2030.
- To reduce the carbon intensity of India's economy by more than 45% by 2030.
- To cut its net estimated carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes from now to 2030.
- To achieve the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.

- Along with this, India is the founder of International Solar Energy. Whose goal is to promote solar energy all over the world.
- India is continuously moving towards renewable energy sources.
- The National Action Plan on Climate Change was launched by India in the year 2008. Under which 8 missions have been established for the mitigation of climate change.

Way ahead

Since the start of climate change efforts in 1992, there has been no widespread success so far. Commitment and action towards commitment are becoming a major problem. Given the recent problem of climate change, there is a need to work in some other areas which are described below.

- Developed countries will have to transfer technology and finance to developing countries so that they can adapt to climate times and their socio-economic development can take place.

- Developed countries have to accept their responsibility for climate change.
- Along with the government, the general public will also have to participate in this because it will have the most impact on the general public.
- Simultaneously, by adopting other advanced climate practices of tree plantation, and water conservation, one has to move towards a secure future.

Conclusion

The IPCC report is a reliable tool for the measurement of climate indicators. Keeping in mind the warnings mentioned in this report, it is necessary to take action in this regard. Along with this, let us also tell that the third part of this IPCC report is likely to be published soon.

NOTES



NON AL

Relevance of Non-Alignment Movement in the present world order

Context

With the Russo-Ukraine war, the world is once again moving toward the Cold War era. In this situation, the relevance of the principle of non-alignment introduced by India increases.

Introduction

After Russia attacks Ukraine and sanctions were imposed on Russia by Western countries, especially America, the whole world is once again moving towards the era of the cold war. Although this war is taking place in Russia and Ukraine, due to globalization, it is affecting the whole world. Many countries in the world are involuntarily suffering the consequences of this war, many of which are still in the developing stage. It should be noted that by avoiding the dilemma of this bipolarity during the Cold War, the Non-Aligned Movement had given a new path to the whole world.

What is non-alignment

- After the Second World War the world was gradually divided into two main factions. One faction was led by the capitalist country America while the other faction was led by the communist country Soviet Union. The rivalry between these two factions is known from the era of the Cold War. The Cold War period started after World War II and lasted until the dissolution of the Soviet Union (the year 1990–91).
- In the 1940s–50s (mainly after World War II), many countries on the global stage were liberated from the

slavery of colonialism. It should be noted that India was also included in this category. There was a competition between America and the Soviet Union that more and more countries should be included in their respective factions. But the new countries that became independent from colonialism did not want to join any group, they felt that if they joined any group, then they could get trapped again in which military conflict. This will make no sense to the freedom they have recently got.

- To overcome this problem, in 1961 the first conference of the Non-Aligned Movement was organized in Belgrade. India was the main leader of the Non-Aligned Movement.
- It should be noted that at present the 'Non-Aligned Movement' is the largest political coordination and consultation forum after the United Nations Organization (UNO) at the global level.
- It can be said that non-alignment was mainly a by-product of "bipolarity". We have been a country that once again, on a global scale, bipolarity is maturing. In this situation, non-alignment is again becoming relevant.

Increasing bipolarity in the present world

- At present, the world is once again moving towards the bipolarity of the Cold War. In the present time, where the Western countries under the leadership of America are struggling to maintain their supremacy, on the other hand, the aggression of Russia

and China is increasing which is increasing the tension between these two factions.

- After 1991 the world had become unipolar. America used to participate in all global decisions, but for some time America is withdrawing from its global leadership role. Due to the withdrawal of important treaties like the Paris climate treaty, the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the withdrawal of the army from Afghanistan, and Ukraine not supporting the war against Russia, America is losing its relevance as a global leader. Countries like Japan and South Korea are demanding a clear commitment from the US.
- America is being unable to stop China from growing. Despite the aggression shown by China in the South China Sea, Taiwan, etc., and the violation of international laws, the US-led group is unable to stop China. Along with this, it is also important that many European countries like Germany, France, and Italy (traditionally considered to be of the American bloc) are not explicitly opposing China for commercial gains.
- Reforms are being expected by many countries in global organizations such as United Nations Organization, United Nations Security Council, etc. But America and other countries which are in a position of advantage in these institutions are hindering these reforms. As a result, many countries of the world want to reform the current world order.
- Russia seeks to maintain its regional autonomy and is trying to prevent the expansion of NATO's reach



in Ukraine. Due to this reason the Russo-Ukraine war started.

- While on the one hand, the US is trying to counterbalance China through new organizations like Quad (in collaboration with Japan, Australia, and India), AUKUS (the USA, Australia, and the UK), on the other hand, the increasing proximity of Russia and China (RIC, BRICS, SCO), the world is once again moving towards bipolarity.

Is non-alignment relevant in present times?

Arguments Against Non-Alignment

- The world was divided into two poles based on power when the Non-Aligned Movement was started, but the changes in the current global politics have made the world multi-polar. Along with this, the spread of globalization has made the nations dependent on each other. Due to multi-polarity and interdependence, the dipoles are weakening.
- There is not only widespread disagreement among the member countries of the NAM on many global and regional issues, but many members have joined many regional and competitive factions, abandoning the core values of the Non-Aligned Movement. At present, many members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union, and ASEAN, have become part of SAARC's smaller groups.
- The Non-Aligned Movement is

not even making serious efforts to address the problems of the present. The group doesn't seem to have any agenda on terrorism, climate change, or refugee problems.

- The member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement have also failed to resolve their differences, which has reduced the attractiveness of the organization among the member countries. For example the Iraq-Iran war, the differences between India and China
- The countries leading the non-aligned movement have compromised the principles of non-alignment on several occasions. For example nuclear test by India, the US military agreement, the Quad (India, US, Japan, and Australia) agreement, etc.

Arguments in favor of Non-alignment

- Many countries like India are paying attention to their national interests by staying non-aligned. For example, India is also a member of the US-led Quad, while it is also a member of the Russian-led RIC, SCO.
- Recently trade has started between India and Russia in Rupee-Rubel and Russia is giving oil to India at 27% less price. Although India has been warned in this regard by America, India did not pay heed to it. It is a sign of non-alignment.
- Apart from India, and China, many countries in Europe are trying to end the Russo-Ukraine war. In this context, China has also advised Ukraine and Russia to establish the Panchsheel doctrine. This means that China is not blindly imitating Russia and the European countries in America. which showed non-alignment.

India and Non-Alignment 2.0

- Non-alignment 2.0 emphasizes

special relations with the superpowers as well as neighboring countries, emphasizing strategic positioning and autonomy. This policy emphasizes correlating India's domestic policies and foreign policy. The main objective of this policy was to secure national interests through foreign policy.

- India's foreign policy in the future will be governed by three main objectives-
 - o India will not limit its national interests by ideology and objectives.
 - o India will achieve its development goals while earning maximum strategic autonomy.
 - o Will try to build an egalitarian world order.
- Recognizing the relevance of non-alignment in Non-Alignment-II, it has been said that strategic autonomy is the basic foundation of non-aligned foreign policy.

Conclusion

Non-alignment is relevant even in the present times, although now the Non-Aligned Movement will have to increase its role. Non-aligned members should play the role of mediators in global wars and make a major contribution to the establishment of fair justice. Although some say that the importance of non-alignment as a movement may be lost, as non-alignment was initially portrayed as an anti-imperialist, anti-colonial movement, its importance as an independent foreign policy will always be there.



Time to reassess India's Tech Regulations

Why in News?

India being a tech-adept nation, need to design suitable laws and regulations as per the need of emerging tech developments.

Background:

- The emergence of new technologies has digitalised markets, societies and nations.
- Once perceived as a strength, this proliferation of technology is now also a vulnerability.
- It has made tech-governance more political and social, and less about the traditional modes of regulation such as permissions, standards and tariffs.
- India is among the most technology adept nations, a function of its people's comfort with IT products and services as well as its late-mover advantage.
- It must now engage with a spectrum of evolving needs around law and regulation.
- This is necessary to accelerate population-scale opportunities and address widespread risks.

Issues:

- Three sets of issues emerge here – understanding the nature of technology-linked risks; assessing the challenges to governance; and being imaginative in embracing new modes of regulation.
- Risks, themselves are creations of enhanced democratic access.
- For example, in roughly two decades India has added over a billion mobile phone subscribers, with over 50% of them now using smart-

phones, which is not only transformational but also unprecedented.

- Improved access is credited with enabling financial inclusion, efficiency in education and healthcare, and fostering local e-commerce as well as global trade.
- However, a large user base is also a double-edged sword.
- As a result, corrective interventions need to be nimble and at digital velocity and population scale.
- Legacy regulation is simply ineffective, best illustrated by problems plaguing social media platforms.
- A 2021 study found a high rate of social media misinformation in India, and attributed this in part to the country's higher Internet penetration rate, driven by smart phones.
- Between June-July 2021 alone, Facebook received 1,504 user complaints in India – with a significant proportion of these related to bullying, harassment or sexually inappropriate content.
- Concerns are also emerging across other digital ecosystems, such as online gambling and crypto-assets.
- Hence, the mobile phone is now not only a communication device, but a crime scene and also an unsafe personal space.
- Moreover, several state-level laws regulate or entirely prohibit betting and gambling.
- However, research suggests India is among the top five countries in terms of income potential from online gambling, and that the domestic online casino market may grow by 22 per cent each year.
- People from several states,

such as Maharashtra, Telangana and Karnataka, are among the most frequent visitors to online gambling websites.

- The market for illegal betting and gambling in India is highly lucrative, with some estimating its value at USD 150 billion.
- Offshore gambling websites often channel black money, engage in illicit transactions and launder wealth through financial intermediaries.
- Their operators are invariably based outside India, which makes it difficult to enforce the writ of the state.
- Recent investigations by bodies like the Enforcement Directorate have revealed instances of locals being hired to open bank accounts and trade through various online wallets, revealing gaps in due diligence mechanisms.
- Scramble for gold on the Internet has transferred control of vast swathes of cyberspace to a very small and select group : Big Tech. This perverse power is, perhaps, the single biggest challenge that nations and peoples will have to grapple with

India's upcoming Tech Regulations:

India has three big technology regulations in the works. These include:

- A Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill that is akin to the European General Data Privacy Regulation and will set the stage for how big technology firms operate in the country;
- A National Cybersecurity Strategy with 80 deliverables that provide for data security and may also have an impact on the country's telecom

sector; and

- A cryptocurrency bill that regulates the future of digital currencies in the country.

Only recently in February 2021, new IT rules 2021 were notified.

Way Forward:

For the digital economy to flourish, it is important to evolve approaches that help resolve systemic and structural risks.

- It is time to reassess what is good, what is bad and what is ugly in this new digital landscape.

- For Example, Online gaming and online gambling must not be conflated.

- Similarly blockchain and sensible DeFi must not be clubbed with predatory crypto-gaming.

- After all, if we don't embrace disruptive technology markets through sensible regulation, others will.

- To use a real-world analogy, since the 1990s, many countries including India have consistently distributed condoms and undertook safety campaigns among sex-workers without legalising prostitution or made available safe syringes to drug users without legalising the act.

- A failure to capitalise may see India lose key avenues for economic growth and investment. India risk environment will then be shaped by external jurisdictions, some inimical to the country.

- For instance, there are approximately 15 million crypto-asset investors in India, with total holdings of INR 400 billion.

- However, the regulatory and policy uncertainty has compelled crypto-asset entrepreneurs and exchanges to look to operate in more favourable markets.

- Exchanges such as Cryptokart, Koinex and ZebPay have exited the Indian market.

- In late 2021, many crypto-asset



founders in India were considering moving their businesses to either the UAE or Singapore.

- By banning cryptocurrencies altogether, nations such as China have missed the bus.

- India must leverage its position as the world's third-fastest growing technology hub and seize the opportunity created by Beijing's command and control ethos that is antithetical to innovation.

- For governments and regulators, the role is no longer one of a gate-keeper that has the ability to prevent or permit activities online; it is becoming more of an ecosystem shaper and reducer of public bads.

- By taxing cryptocurrency assets but not recognising these as legal tender, India has shown some welcome flexibility.

- Government would do well to retain this nimbleness and become a co-curator of relatively safe tech platforms, services and products of the future that respond to Indian jurisdiction rather than off-shore the production of risks along with the rewards.

Conclusion:

Tech regulation at population scale is akin to writing a new constitution for a digital nation.

What we need today is new thinking

and a new imagination of the digital world as not merely a virtual extension of the real, but an entirely different paradigm.

There needs to be a clear-eyed understanding of what is legal, what is illegal and what may be illegal and yet requires regulations to serve and protect users and citizens.

NOTES



India Releases Arctic Policy Focusing On Energy Security, Climate Change, Mineral Wealth

Why in News?

The Government released India's Arctic policy, which aims to strengthen national capabilities and competencies in science and exploration, climate and environmental protection, use of mineral wealth and maritime and economic cooperation with the Arctic region.

Background

- India's association with Arctic is over 100 years old, having been one of the original High Contracting Parties to the Svalbard (formerly Spitsbergen) Treaty in February 1920. Even today, the Treaty provides the right of visa-free access and conduct of economic and commercial activities to the citizens of India in Svalbard.
- Indian research station 'Himadri' at Ny-Ålesund was dedicated to the nation in 2008, making India the only developing country apart from China to have an Arctic research base.

Svalbard Treaty

- The Svalbard Treaty (originally the Spitsbergen Treaty) recognises the sovereignty of Norway over the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, at the time called Spitsbergen.
- The treaty was signed on 9 February 1920 and submitted for registration in the League of Nations Treaty Series on 21 October 1920.
- There were 14 original High Contracting Parties: Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom (including the dominions of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Af-

rica, India), and the United States. Of the original signatories, Japan was the last to ratify the treaty on 2 April 1925, and the treaty came into force on 14 August 1925.

Key Features

- The focus of the policy is to increase India's participation in the Arctic Council and improve understanding of the complex governance structures in the region, which is quite relevant to geopolitics.
- India's Arctic policy will play an essential role in preparing the country for a future where humankind's biggest challenges, such as climate change, can be addressed through collective will and effort.
- Implementing policy will involve multiple stakeholders, including academia, the research community, business and industry.
- Studying linkages between polar regions and the Himalayas, deepen cooperation between India and countries of the Arctic region under various Arctic forums, and drawing expertise from scientific and traditional knowledge are other key agenda of the policy.
- Besides enhancing understanding of the impact of climate change in the Arctic on India's climate, economic, and energy security; the policy will also help in better analysis, prediction, and coordinated policymaking on the implications of ice melting in the Arctic on India's economic, military and strategic interests related to global shipping routes, energy security, and exploitation of mineral wealth.

- The country's Arctic policy titled 'India and the Arctic: building a partnership for sustainable development' - lays down six pillars:

1. Strengthening India's scientific research and cooperation,
2. Climate and environmental protection,
3. Economic and human development,
4. Transportation and connectivity,
5. Governance and international cooperation,
6. National capacity building in the Arctic region

Do you know?

- India is among the 13 nations that are observers in the Arctic Council, which include France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, China, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.
- India has, so far, successfully conducted 13 expeditions to the Arctic.
- The council is a high-level inter-governmental forum that addresses issues faced by the Arctic governments and the indigenous people of the region.
- The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research in Goa, an autonomous institute under the Ministry Of Earth Sciences, is the nodal institution for India's Polar research programme, which includes Arctic studies.

Gaps in India's Approach

1.Lack of an Articulated Policy:

- Even though the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of the Govern-

-ment of India has listed India's interests in the Arctic to be "scientific, environmental, commercial as well as strategic" till recently India was one among the four of the 13 Observer nations of the Arctic Council that did not have a nationally articulated Arctic Policy.

2. Scientific Orientation:

- India needs to go beyond the purely scientific approach in the Arctic. In keeping with its growing stature and consequent say in world affairs, India ought to be better equipped to understand the dynamics of the Arctic geopolitics and governance.

3. Inadequate Funding:

- Presently, India's polar research, for Antarctic, Arctic, Southern Ocean and Himalayas, is budgeted under the umbrella Polar Science and Cryosphere (PACER) programme of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- The total financial allocation (BE) under the PACER programme for the financial years 2018–19, 2019–20 and 2020–21 was Rs 365 crores.
- Considering that India's Antarctic Programme is about five times bigger than its Arctic programme, it is estimated that allocations for the Arctic are nearing Rs 10–15 crores per year.

4. Polar Research Vessel (PRV):

- The lack of a dedicated PRV is considered to be a serious impediment in the growth of India's polar activities. On 29 October 2014, India's Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, had approved the acquisition of a PRV at a cost of Rs 1,051.13 crore within 34 months. The vessel is yet to see the light of the day.

Does India's Arctic Policy Address the Gaps?

1. Scientific Orientation:

India's Arctic Policy has gone beyond the hitherto purely scientific approach. While the primary focus is still scientific, the six pillars address

all the aspects of Arctic relevant to India, including climate change and environment, economic and human resources and geopolitical and strategic aspects.

This would likely make India's engagement with the Arctic more broad-based and enable a holistic approach.

2. Funding:

The Policy declares that its implementation will be based on allocation of requisite resources. With the enhancement of a multidisciplinary approach to the Arctic, it is hoped that budgetary support to India's scientific Arctic endeavours will be substantially augmented.

3. Polar Research Vessel:

The intent articulated in the Arctic Policy of acquiring a dedicated ice-class Polar Research Vessel will hasten the process and provide impetus to India's Arctic Programme.

4. Whole-of-Government Focus:

The objectives outlined in India's Arctic Policy are to be implemented through an Action Plan and a governance and review mechanism consisting of an inter-ministerial Empowered Arctic Policy Group (EAPG). The Policy further states that implementation will be based on timelines and prioritisation of activities, involving all stakeholders including academia, research community, business and industry. This mechanism is likely to enable better analysis, prediction and co-

-ordinated approach in the Government of India, lend policy coherence to the region and will result in better realisation of India's strategic, military and economic interests.

5. Awareness and Capacity:

In India's engagement with the Arctic, the Policy declares to develop a robust human, institutional and financial base in keeping with the philosophy of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. The Policy also seeks to expand the capacity and awareness of Arctic-related scientific research in the country, and widen the pool of experts in sectors such as mineral, oil and gas exploration, blue-bio economy and tourism relevant to the Arctic. It is hoped that India's Arctic Policy will promote a larger pool of experts in the government as well as academia and lead to better awareness of the Arctic in India.

Conclusion

- India's Arctic Policy is deftly dovetailed, enmeshed and in synergy with the broader policy framework of the Government of India.
- Most importantly, in keeping with India's civilisational ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is but one family, India's Arctic Policy is inclusive and participative wherein India offers its readiness to "play its part and contribute to the global good".





SHORT ISSUES

Assam Meghalaya border dispute is moving towards a solution

Context

The boundary agreement signed by the central government in January has been finalized to resolve the long-standing Assam-Meghalaya border dispute. After the mediation of the Central Government, it is believed that the border dispute of both will end.

Border disputes: at a glance

- It is worth noting that Meghalaya was given the status of a separate state from Assam in 1972. At the same time, Meghalaya challenged the Assam Reorganization Act, 1971.
- These two regions share a border of 884.9 km with each other. And there is a border dispute between these two at 12 places.
- The disputed areas include the areas of Upper Tarabari, Gajang Reserve Forest, Hashim, Langpih, Borduar, Boklapara, Nongwa, Matmoor, Khanapara-Pilangkata, Deshdemoria Block I and Block II, Khanduli and Retachera.
- A committee was formed in 1985 under the chairmanship of retired Chief Justice of India YV Chandrachud to resolve this border dispute. But the states did not agree on the demarcation made by this committee.
- Their dispute deepened over time and there were many violent incidents in these two states regarding this border dispute. This dispute could not be resolved even after the intervention of the Central Government.
- In 2010, four villagers of the Khasi community were killed and 12 were

injured in an alleged firing by Assam Police personnel at Langpih in West Khasi Hills district, bordering Assam's Kamrup district. After this incident, the Center left the border dispute between these two states.

Border dispute resolution

- According to experts, at present there is a BJP government at the Center and in Assam and there is a government of the National People's Party in Meghalaya, which is an ally of the BJP, so it is being considered the best time to settle the border dispute.
- According to sources, it has been received that the report related to this border dispute has been submitted by both the Chief Ministers to the Union Home Minister.
- According to this report, out of the total 36.79 square kilometers of disputed land, Assam will keep about half of the disputed land i.e. 18.51 square kilometers, and will give the remaining 18.28 square kilometers of land to Meghalaya.

Importance of resolving border disputes

- The Northeast is a very strategic region. Here the separatist forces inspired by Naxalism and external states are strong. In this situation, resolving the border dispute will increase the confidence of the people in the government and the Constitution of India, which will weaken these separatist forces.
- These border disputes result in heavy violence. There is heavy violence in Assam due to border

disputes, NRC, refugee crisis, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to resolve the border dispute for the peaceful life and development of the people of Assam.

- Most of the states in India have been formed on a linguistic basis, but the northeastern states have been formed as a result of geographical and cultural differences. In this situation, the border dispute will not only reduce the political tension but also increase cultural harmony.

Conclusion

Resolving such border disputes will not only increase people's confidence in the government and the Constitution but also increase the bond between the people of the Northeast and the mainland. This association will play an important role in establishing a strong democracy by establishing national unity.

NOTES

2**Death Penalty Reformation****Why in News?**

Recently a bench headed by Justice UU Lalit was formed to comprehensively examine procedures in death penalty cases to ensure that judges who have to choose between life imprisonment & death sentence have prior detailed sentencing information.

Issues Regarding Death Penalty Sentence

- While death penalty has been held to be constitutional, the manner in which it has been administered has triggered accusations of arbitrariness & unfairness.
- The Bacchan Singh vs State of Punjab 1980 case which established the “rarest of the rare” framework has failed to set a benchmark as judges have attributed it multiple & inconsistent meanings.
- The main reason for the failure of the rarest of the rare framework is very sparse or incomplete information about the accused is brought before the judges.
- According to Project 39A's Death Penalty India Report 2016- A vast majority of death row prisoners are economically vulnerable & very often receive poor legal representation. As a result they have less access to proper mitigation information for their defence.
- The 262nd Law Commission report expressed that one of the main concerns has been the crime centric approach to sentencing, which is often in violation of the Bacchan Singh Case mandate that factors both the crime & the accused.
- There has been no real guidance on how the judges must go about assigning weight to aggravating & mitigating factors & how they

should approach weighing one factor against another.

- Not individual centric: In the process of determining punishment the judge must take into account individual circumstances of the accused.
- There should be very high degree of fairness in a system that is interested in subjecting individuals to the experience of death row & ultimately taking lives through the instrument of law.
- Punishment under the law should be “rehabilitative rather than retributive”. The accused should also be given a chance to redeem his deeds.
- Ineffective Deterrence: There has been no evidential proof or study found that proved the positive correlation between death sentence & deterrence against future crimes.
- Execution of the Innocent: In case of the failure or mistake of the criminal justice system the innocent may get wrongly punished, with no alternative left for recovery or rehabilitation.
- Most of the developed countries have abolished death sentence as a crime.

Arguments in favour of Death Penalty-

Retribution Principle-Real justice requires punishment in proportion to the severity of crime committed.

Deterrence principle-It is often argued that executing convicted murderers will deter future murderers from committing a crime.

No scope for tampering the criminal justice system-The convicts may have less chance of influencing the witness or misusing the loop holes of the criminal justice system in order to escape sentence.

Way forward-

Justice would be an incomplete idea if the criminal law is incapable of considering an individual in all their complexity & various factors that contributed to a set of decisions & actions in their lives.

**NOTES**

Context

At present Sri Lanka is suffering from a “Balance of Payment Crisis”. Sri Lanka’s foreign exchange reserves are continuously falling.

Introduction

At present, Sri Lanka is facing its biggest economic crisis. Sri Lanka’s foreign exchange reserves are continuously depleting and this country is facing a balance of payments crisis. Sri Lanka’s crisis is believed to have arisen as a result of historical imbalances in the economic structure, long terms loans of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and wrong policies of the ruling authorities.

The Key causes of Sri Lanka’s economic crisis

IMF loan

- The budget deficit of Sri Lanka was greatly increased as a result of the ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka. Although the war ended in 2009, Sri Lanka did not get time for economic recovery by then due to the global recession in 2008. In 2009, Sri Lanka was forced to take a loan of \$ 2.6 billion from the IMF to get out of the economic crisis.
- Even after this, the authorities did not pay attention to the economic crisis of Sri Lanka and in 2016 once again Sri Lanka had to take a loan of \$ 1.5 billion from the IMF. Very difficult conditions were placed on this loan, due to which Sri Lanka’s economic crisis increased.

External factors

- Following the April 2019 Easter

bombings at various churches in Colombo, Sri Lanka saw a sharp drop in tourist arrivals.

- Sri Lanka took loans from China for many projects, as a result of which Sri Lanka got trapped in the debt trap of China.

Corona pandemic

- The corona epidemic affected many countries of the world. As a result of Corona, exports of tea, rubber, spices, and clothing were damaged and tourism also declined. This negatively affected the supply of external exchange in Sri Lanka.

Policy Paralysis

- In the year 2021, the government completely banned all fertilizer imports and announced overnight making Sri Lanka a 100% organic farming country. This affected agriculture and caused a food crisis.
- Gotabaya Rajapaksa’s government, which came to power in 2019, implemented welfare state schemes such as low tax rates and wide concessions for farmers in its election campaigns, which affected the exchequer.

Due to the above reasons, an economic emergency has been imposed in Sri Lanka and a situation of sovereignty crisis is being created over the country.

India’s effort to improve the situation in Sri Lanka

- Over \$1.4 billion in relief has been provided by India since the beginning of the year 2022. It also has facilities like currency swap and line of credit.
- India has also recently provided

a \$1 billion short-term concessional loan to Sri Lanka.

- When the situation becomes normal in India, it is being considered to improve the economy by investing there.

Conclusion

India will have to play its role in getting Sri Lanka out of this crisis. With the help of Sri Lanka, India can stop China in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, it is imperative to understand that if anti-India forces are affected in Sri Lanka, they will challenge India’s regional prominence. A weak Sri Lanka is not in India’s interest. Therefore, India has to play an active role in this direction.

NOTES

2

India Nepal Relations: At a glance**Context**

Recently the Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba has visited India. This visit is considered important in the current global conditions.

Introduction

From 1st April to 3rd April, Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba Ji visited India. During this, he met External Affairs Minister Shri S. Jaishankar and Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. During this visit, Kashi Vishwanath was also visited by the Prime Minister of Nepal. This visit is very important amidst the current global situation and India-China border tension.

Key facts about this tour

- During this visit, the Indian Prime Minister congratulated Nepal on the progress made in the power sector. And the Prime Minister of Nepal has appreciated India for its cooperation with Nepal.
- Joint development of power generation projects in Nepal by both countries, development of cross-border transmission infrastructure, bi-directional electricity with fair access to electricity markets in both countries based on mutual benefit, market demand, and domestic regulations applicable to each. There is agreement on institutional cooperation in trade, coordinated operation of the national grid, latest operational information and technology, and information sharing.
- India and Nepal have talked about cooperation on BBIN, renewable energy generation, energy partnership on hydropower, and climate change commitments.

- Through these collaborations, the two countries' economies have been talked about to help generate employment, increase export earnings and contribute to the further development of industrial and financial capabilities.

- The Prime Minister of Nepal has invited Indian entrepreneurs to invest in Nepal.

- The Prime Minister of Nepal has also talked about moving forward on the Pancheshwar multipurpose project.

- The two Prime Ministers agreed to prioritize the accelerated pace of projects and initiatives based on this joint approach. They agreed to continue to support each other's national development and prosperity guided by mutual respect and equality.

Importance of tour

- India and Nepal are historical allies. There is a bread-daughter relationship between India and Nepal, so both the countries will be positively affected by each other's progress.

- In the current global situation where international law is becoming irrelevant (Russia-Ukraine war), Nepal is looking to India to avoid China's imperialism.

- In the present times where the world is moving towards bipolarity, in such a situation, India needs allies for non-alignment. Nepal can be an important ally for this.

- This visit will reduce the influence of China in Nepal which is a good sign for India. To stop China's policy of encircling India by entering India's neighborhood, India should keep making such developmental agreements.

India Nepal Relations

- Nepal is one such neighboring country of India with which we have good socio-cultural and economic relations.

- The border between the two countries is more than 1850 km long, with 5 states India, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, and Sikkim.

- The "India-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty" of 1950 provides the basis for the strong ties between the two countries.

- The effect of this treaty can also be seen in defense and foreign affairs and Nepal also gets the facility to buy arms from India.

- The movement between the two countries was not only for a livelihood, but they also have cultural and family ties ("Roti-daughter relationship").

- Nepal not only uses Kolkata port for its trade but also benefits from huge investment by India.

- Political relations between the two have also been fine. But at present, the intervention by China has soured it.

- There is tension between the two countries over the Sugauli Treaty and the Lipulekh Pass, which efforts should be made to end it.

NOTES

ENVIRONMENT

1

Ozone and Climate Change

Context

Recently a new research has shown that ozone in the lower atmosphere is increasing the temperature of sea water (especially the South Ocean) more than before. Study shows ozone is not only a pollutant, but may also play an important role in climate change

Introduction

Recently, under the leadership of Dr. Michael Hegling, a research was done at the University of Redding related to climate change and the heating of sea water. The research found that ozone can weaken one of the Earth's most important cooling systems. And it is creating more significant greenhouse gases than ever before.

Key findings of research

- It has been found in the study that changes in ozone (decreased stratosphere and increase in troposphere) in the second half of the 20th century are responsible for one third of the warming of Antarctic sea water.
- Deeper and faster warming in the South Pole Ocean will also affect the mitigation of global warming as the South Pole Ocean is an important carbon sink. Its warming is a significant contributor to ozone growth in the troposphere.
- Ozone is one of the main components of smog and is an important pollutant. This study suggests that tropospheric ozone may also play an important role in driving climate change in the coming years.
- Until now it was believed that tro-

pospheric ozone is harmful to the environment and is a major pollutant, but this study shows that it sends extra heat from the atmosphere like oceans

- The findings are a setback for policymakers who view air pollution and global warming separately.
- The study reported that 60% of the warming caused by increased ozone in the troposphere was in the South Pole Ocean. It was a surprise, however, that pollution from tropospheric ozone growth primarily affects the Northern Hemisphere.
- This research has seen changes in ozone from 1955 to 2000, so we can say that the situation is more difficult.

About ozone

- Ozone is mainly found in the Earth's atmosphere from 15 to 50 km.
- The width of the ozone layer is measured in Dobson units. It exists in the stratosphere and troposphere.
- Ozone is produced by the interaction between oxygen molecules in the stratosphere and UV radiation from the Sun. And in the troposphere, it is formed due to chemical reactions between pollutants such as vehicular exhaust fumes and other emissions.
- Stratospheric ozone is better for the earth because it blocks ultraviolet rays coming from the sun from reaching the earth's surface, while tropospheric ozone acts as a pollutant.
- Chlorofluorocarbons and gases emitted from ACs and refrigerators deplete ozone and form ozone holes.

The Montreal Protocol has been introduced to prevent the depletion of the ozone layer.

Montreal Protocol

- It is a global protocol to address ozone depletion.
- The signing of this treaty started from this 16 September 1987 and this treaty came into effect on 1 January 1989.
- So far there have been 7 amendments in it.
- It is designed for the phasing out of substances (CFCs, HCFCs) which are responsible for ozone depletion.
- The Montreal Protocol is the most successful of the international agreements to date. It has been ratified by 196 states.

NOTES

2

Microplastics in human Blood

Why in News?

Recently, according to a study done by researchers from the Netherlands 17 out of 22 human blood samples were found to contain plastic.

What are Microplastics?

Microplastics are tiny bits of various types of plastic found in the oceans, environment & now human blood. The name is used to differentiate them from "Macroplastics" such as bottles & bags made of plastic.

Various Definitions-

There is no universal agreement on the size of the particle which can be defined as microplastic.

The U.S NOAA(National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) & the European Chemical Agency define microplastic as less than 5mm in length.

But for the following study the researchers have set an upper limit on the size of the particle at 0.0007mm or 700 nanometres for research purposes.

What were the plastics that the study looked for?

The study looked at the most commonly used plastic polymers.

These were the following-

1). Polyethylene Tetrathalate(PET): commonly used in plastic carry bags.

2). Polymers of Styrene: used in food packaging

3). Polymethyl Methylacrylate(PMMA): belongs to a group of materials called engineering plastics. It is a transparent thermoplastic. It is also known as acrylic, acrylic glass. This plastic is often used in sheet form as a lightweight or shatter-resistant alternative to glass. It can also be used as a casting resin, in inks and coatings, and for many other purposes.

4). Poly Propylene(PP): also known as polypropene, is a thermoplastic polymer used in a wide variety of applications like in clothing & medical industries.

What are the key results of this study?

The study found that 77% of the tested people(17 out of 22) carried various amounts of microplastics.

- In 50% of the samples PET parti-

cles were detected.

- In 36% of the samples polystyrene particles were detected.
- In 23% of the samples polyethylene particles were detected.
- In 5% of the samples polymethyl methylacrylate was detected.

According to the study each donor had 1.6 microgram plastic particles per milli litre of blood.

Does microplastics in blood have health impacts?

- It is not yet clear if these microplastics can cross over from the blood stream to deposit in organs & cause diseases.
- Researcher have found out human placenta was permeable to tiny particles of polystyrene(50,80 & 24 nanometres bead).
- Experiments on rats when its lungs were exposed to polystyrene led to translocation of the nanoparticles to placental & fetal tissue.
- Oral administration of microplastics in rats led to accumulation of these in liver, kidney & gut.

SCIENCE AND TECH

1

Nasa's Artemis Programme

Why in News?

Recently, the National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA) tested its Artemis I moon mission at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida USA.

Objectives of the mission-

- To land humans on the moon by 2024
- It plans to land the common citizen on the moon.
- NASA with this mission aims to

contribute to scientific discovery & economic benefits & inspire a new generation of explorers.

- NASA will establish an Artemis Base Camp on the surface & a gateway in the Lunar orbit to aid exploration.

tion by robots & astronauts.

- This gateway will enable NASA's sustainable lunar mission & will serve as the multi-purpose outpost orbiting the moon.
- It also plans to land the first woman & first person of color on the moon.

Features of the Artemis Mission-

- Artemis stands for "Acceleration, Reconnection, Turbulence and Electrodynamics of the Moon's Interaction with the Sun".
- Is Nasa's First deep space exploration system
- It is an uncrewed space mission.
- It has been named after the Greek Goddess of Moon 'Artemis' who is the twin sister of Greek God Apollo.

The Space Launch System (SLS)

1. The Space Launch System (SLS)- The world's most powerful rocket is being utilised in this mission.
2. It will travel 2,80,000 miles from

the earth in the upcoming weeks.

3. SLS rocket system has been designed for space missions beyond the low earth orbit i.e., it can carry crew or cargo to the moon & beyond. The Orion spacecraft is going to remain in space without docking to a space station longer than any ship for astronauts has ever done. The Crawler Transporter 2 vehicle is being used for transportation.

Other space agencies involved in the project-

Canadian Space Agency (will provide advanced robotics) & European Space Agency (ESA) will provide the International Habitat & the ESPIRIT module for communication purposes & the Japan Aerospace Exploration plans to contribute habitation components & logistics resupply. The propulsion system used is the Interim Cryogenic Propulsion Stage (ICPS) which is a liquid oxygen/liquid hydrogen-based propulsion system.

Future Missions-

- 1) The Learning of 'the Artemis program' will be used to send the first astronauts to Mars.
- 2) In second flight under this program will have a crew on board.
- 3) Human explorations to space farther into the solar system will be explored using this experience.
- 4) The Artemis 3 crew will visit the Moon's South Pole. No one has ever been there. At the Moon, astronauts will:
 - Search for the Moon's water and use it.
 - Study the Moon to discover its mysteries.
 - Learn how to live and work on the surface of another celestial body.
 - Test the technologies we need before sending astronauts on missions to Mars, which can take up to three years roundtrip.

2

Hybrid human-machine framework for building smart AI

Context

Recent research has claimed that smart and accurate artificial intelligence requires a hybrid human-machine approach.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence has permeated many aspects of our lives with algorithms used in various fields ranging from chatbots to automatic vehicle control to answer questions. According to a recent study conducted by University of California researchers, it has been found that with the help of a hybrid human-machine approach, artificial intelligence can be made more accurate and smart. In a study published this month in the Proceedings of the National Acade-

my of Sciences, researchers report that they present a new mathematical model that can improve performance by combining human and algorithmic predictions and confidence scores.

Key Points of Research

- In this research, emphasis is being given to developing artificial intelligence by the hybridization of man and machine. The main basis of this research is that man and machine are each other's strengths and weaknesses. Both depend on each other for necessary information for decision-making.
- In this context, the researchers conducted an image classification experiment. In this experiment, hu-

man participants and computer algorithms were used separately to correctly recognize distorted images of animals and objects of daily use (chairs, bottles, bicycles, trucks). The human participants exercised confidence in recognizing each image while the machine classifier generated a continuous score. So it was clear that the results showed a large difference in trust between humans and AI algorithms in images.

- In some special cases where human participants were confident while the AI algorithm was somewhat confused.
- While in many other classes the AI algorithm was able to confidently assign a label to the object shown, while the human participants were

uncertain.

- Thus both of them lacked confidence and prediction. But when the two were combined using a Bayesian model, the hybrid model outperformed both of them.
- This research will end the critique of artificial intelligence as “one size fits for all” and will leave room for new thinking. This work provides a new direction in demonstrating the potential of combining human and machine predictions.

What is artificial intelligence

- Artificial intelligence mainly refers to developing an understanding of

machines.

- Experts believe that artificial intelligence will play a big role in the fourth industrial revolution.
- With the use of artificial intelligence, India can progress in the fields of agriculture, digital governance, education, technology, army, health, etc.
- India has huge potential for the development of artificial intelligence due to its extensive database.
- Use of artificial intelligence will also be helpful in India’s goal of reaching a 5 trillion economy.
- Although artificial intelligence is associated with some challenges

such as privacy violations, technological and digital backwardness, increasing unemployment and inequality, etc.

Conclusion

At present, the use of technology is increasing. The use of artificial intelligence is increasing in all fields like agriculture, governance, military, etc. Ethical dilemmas are also associated with artificial intelligence. Human-machine hybrid combinations can eliminate such dilemmas and combine precision, capability, and creativity.

ECONOMY

1 Merger of HDFC Twins

1. The Deal:-

Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd. and India’s largest private sector bank HDFC Bank announced a mega merger. The amalgamation is expected to better tap the rising demand for credit.

2. Terms:-

The respective boards have approved the amalgamation. The terms of the share swap are such that shareholders of HDFC Ltd. will receive 42 shares of HDFC Bank for every 25 shares they hold in HDFC Ltd. Post-merger HDFC Ltd. will no longer be a separate mortgage lender, it will get folded into the bank. With its acquisition of the mortgage lender, it also acquires all its subsidiaries, which includes a general insurance company, a life insurance company, and an asset management company.

3. About Customers & Employees

HDFC Ltd.’s customers will become the bank’s customers as well. The employees of HDFC Bank will be absorbed and all the employees will be retained.

4. Circumstances for merger

The competition in the housing finance space has increased. The larger ones are LIC Housing Finance, PNB Housing, Bank of Baroda Housing, SBI too has a housing business. So, it makes sense that HDFC Ltd. and HDFC Bank are under the same roof because when lending from a banking perspective, it makes it easier as cost of funds come down as your balance sheet size grows. When raising capital, cost of capital also comes down. For HDFC Bank, it’s about getting access to a large base of customers for cross-selling purposes.

For HDFC Ltd., or the mortgage lending business, it’s primarily about the lower cost of capital.

5. NPA’s

For HDFC Bank, bad loans are not a major pressure point because it has been a conservative lender compared to competitors. It has always shied away from big ticket lending to corporates. Most of their lending is to retail borrowers. For HDFC Ltd., there might have been some pressure on home loans during the pandemic but based on what they have disclosed so far, it is not a major pressure point either. Also, the merger with the bank sort of helps alleviate any upcoming pressure.

6. Change in lending pattern

Infrastructure lending has been a serious problem in India. Government

is making it clear that there is need for funding the infrastructure segment. We will have to wait and see whether the merged entity has the expertise to lend to infrastructure projects, which is a risky proposition. They do have a large volume of funds, and if they see specific op-

portunities with good entrepreneurs and good government projects, they may go for it.

7. What will be the impact of this deal?

It's possible that more NBFCs may seek merger with banks. Already the

number of banks are coming down. HDFC Bank's merger with HDFC Ltd. may be a precursor to what is going to happen in the state-run banking space, where the government has said it is going to reduce the number of public sector banks.

2 GST collections @ record high

India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections hit a record ₹1,42,095 crore in March, surpassing the January high of ₹1,40,986 crore and lifting the Centre's projected gross tax revenues for 2021-22 significantly above the government's revised estimates.

Comparison

The March GST revenues, for transactions undertaken in February, were 15% higher than a year earlier and 46% higher than in March 2020. Revenues from import of goods were 25% higher and the revenues from domestic transactions, including import of services, were 11% higher than a year earlier.

Monthly collections averaged ₹1.38 lakh crore in the last quarter of 2021-22, compared with ₹1.3 lakh crore in the preceding period.

Trends from states

Though revenues from domestic transactions and import of services grew 11% from March 2021 levels, the trends were mixed among major States. Revenues rose 26% in Odisha, 19% in Maharashtra, 17% in Haryana and 12% in Gujarat. West Bengal's GST collections grew just 2%, while they rose 6% in Uttar Pradesh.

Among the southern States, Andhra Pradesh's GST revenues increased by 18%, followed by 14% growth in Kerala, 11% in Karnataka and just 6% in

Tamil Nadu. Telangana's increased by a mere 2%.

Prediction

ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar reckoned that GST revenues would rise further in April, on improved economic activity and yearend adjustments, adding that the March figure was in line with the rebound in e-way bill generation. "Higher GST collections, in addition to customs duty revenues driven by the rebound in gold imports in February, combined with direct taxes, are likely to have pushed up the Government of India's gross tax revenues well above the revised estimates for the year," Ms. Nayar said, positing that actual collections would have likely 'overshot' the ₹27.6 lakh crore revised estimate by a tidy ₹2.25 lakh crore.

Finance Ministry statement

The Finance Ministry said the record monthly receipts indicated that a faster recovery was underway in business activity, citing the fact that the number of e-way bills generated in February exceeded January's 6.88 crore figure by three lakh despite a 'shorter month'. The average was significantly lower in the first and second quarters, at ₹1.1 lakh crore and ₹1.15 lakh crore, respectively. The ministry said that 'anti-evasion activities against fake billers' had also helped lift collections. The record

GST collections have also been aided by the strong sales activity of corporates in March, as they race to close the financial year with high growth.

NOTES

1. India ranked 93rd on V-Dem Institute's Liberal Democracy Index

Sweden's V-Dem Institute has released its latest report titled Democracy Report 2022 Autocratization Changing Nature. Sweden tops the Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) while Denmark, Norway, Costa Rica and New Zealand are in the top five. India has been ranked 100th in the Electoral Democracy Index and 102nd in the Deliberative Component Index. In the report, countries are classified into four types of government based on their scores in the V-Dem's Liberal Democracy Index (LDI). According to the report, 15 countries are witnessing a new wave of democratization while autocracy was found in 32 countries. According to this report, India has been classified as an 'Electoral Autocracy'. India's liberal democracy level in 2020 has been recorded as 0.34. The level of democracy at the world level has come down to the level of 1989. At present, there are 89 democracies and 90 autocracy countries in the world.



2. Union Cabinet approves setting up of National Land Monetization Corporation

The Union Cabinet has approved the formation of the National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC) to handle surplus land monetization. Monetization of surplus land and building assets of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and other government agencies will be done by NLMC. It will be a 100% Government-owned corporation with an initial authorized capital of Rs 5,000 crore and a paid-up capital of Rs 150 crore. Experts believe that this will enable the government to generate revenue by monetizing unused and underutilized assets. NLMC will also own, manage and monetise the surplus land and building assets of the closed CPSEs as well as the surplus non-core land assets of the Government-owned CPSEs.

Cabinet nods for National Land Monetization Bill



3. Andhra Pradesh ranks first in the 2021 Skoch State of Governance Rankings

India's think tank Skoch has released an annual report titled State of Governance Ranking 2021. Andhra Pradesh has also been ranked top in this report in police and security, agriculture, district administration and rural development. For the second time in a row, Andhra Pradesh retained the first position in governance. Earlier, Andhra Pradesh was ranked second in 2018 and fourth in 2019. West Bengal and Odisha have been ranked second and third respectively while Gujarat and Maharashtra have been ranked fourth and fifth respectively. Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Himachal were declared "performer" states in the ranking. Bihar, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan have been placed in the "catching up" category. Skoch gives the ranking after evaluating the various projects implemented by the states.



4. First 'Industrial Park' to be 100% owned by women opens in Hyderabad

Telangana Minister KT Rama Rao inaugurated India's first 100% women-owned 'Industrial Park' in Hyderabad. This 50-acre industrial park has been established with an investment of Rs 250 crore. It has been set up by the FICCI Women's Organization (FLO) in collaboration with the Government of Telangana. It started its operations with 25 women-owned and operated units from 16 diverse green category industries. This is the first project of its kind at the national level with the participation of Chapter Members and National Members of the FLO. The state government will also give an additional 10% subsidy to women entrepreneurs. The industrial park exclusively for women was conceptualized in 2013.



5. Bangladesh's Rizwana Hasan selected for the US International Woman of Courage Award for 2022

Bangladesh's environmental lawyer Rizwana Hassan has been selected for the US International Woman of Courage Award. She is one of 12 women who will be honoured by the US State Department for their exceptional courage and leadership. Rizwana will be honoured by US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken in a virtual ceremony on March 14. Rizwana Hasan is also the chief executive of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association. She has fought many cases against deforestation, pollution, irregular ship breaking and illegal land development. Prior to this, she received the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2012 for her work against environmental degradation and climate change.

International Woman of Courage Award:-

It was established in 2007 by the US State Department. It is given to women who have shown exceptional courage, strength and leadership to bring about change in their communities.

6. EQUIP Platform launched by World Health Organization and UNICEF

Recently the EQUIP platform has been launched by the World Health Organization and UNICEF, which aims to provide psychological help and support to the victims of mental health problems.

The WHO says that every \$1 invested in mental health will provide \$4 in return. The WHO says that about 1 billion people in the world suffer from mental disorders and 75 percent of the population of low-income countries do not get treatment for it.

The World Health Organization and UNICEF say that mental health services are available in developed and middle-income economies, but in many countries of the world like Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Yemen the situation is very bad.

Aiming for these things, the World Health Organization and UNICEF have developed the EQUIP platform, whose full form is Ensuring Quality in

Psychological Support.



7. India topped the medal tally of ISSF World Cup 2022

India topped the medal tally in the ISSF World Cup 2022 with 4 gold, 2 silver and one bronze. Norway finished second with six medals – three gold, one silver and two bronze, and France third with three gold medals. Rhythm Sangwan and Anish Bhanwala won gold medals in the 25m rapid fire pistol mixed team tournament, while in the women's 25m pistol team event, India beat Singapore 17-13 in the final. ISSF World Cup 2022 was held in Cairo. The ISSF World Cup was started by the International Shooting Sport Federation in 1986.



8. India partially independent in the Freedom House report

India's score this year is 66 out of 100 in the annual report released by US-based NGO Freedom House. India's score was 67 in 2021 and 71 in 2020. A score of 71 is classified as independent in the report. This year's report is titled "Freedom in the World 2022 - The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule". The report claimed that the discriminatory policies of the government and the increase in persecution affected India's Muslim population. This year the score of Pakistan and Sri Lanka is 37 and 55 points respectively. The countries with the lowest independence points are Sudan, Somalia, Syria and Saudi Arabia. Sudan has a score of one out of 100.

9. 6 gold medals for India in ASBC Asian Youth and Junior Boxing Championships

Six Indian junior boxers led by Vini (50kg), Yakshika (52kg) and Vidhi won gold medals at the 2022 ASBC Asian Youth and Junior Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan.

The Indian team has won a total of 39 medals in continental events, 21 in junior and 18 in the youth category which includes both men's and women's categories.

India had won 39 medals including 14 gold in the 2021 edition of the competition held in Dubai. 352 boxers from 21 countries including India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan participated in the competition.

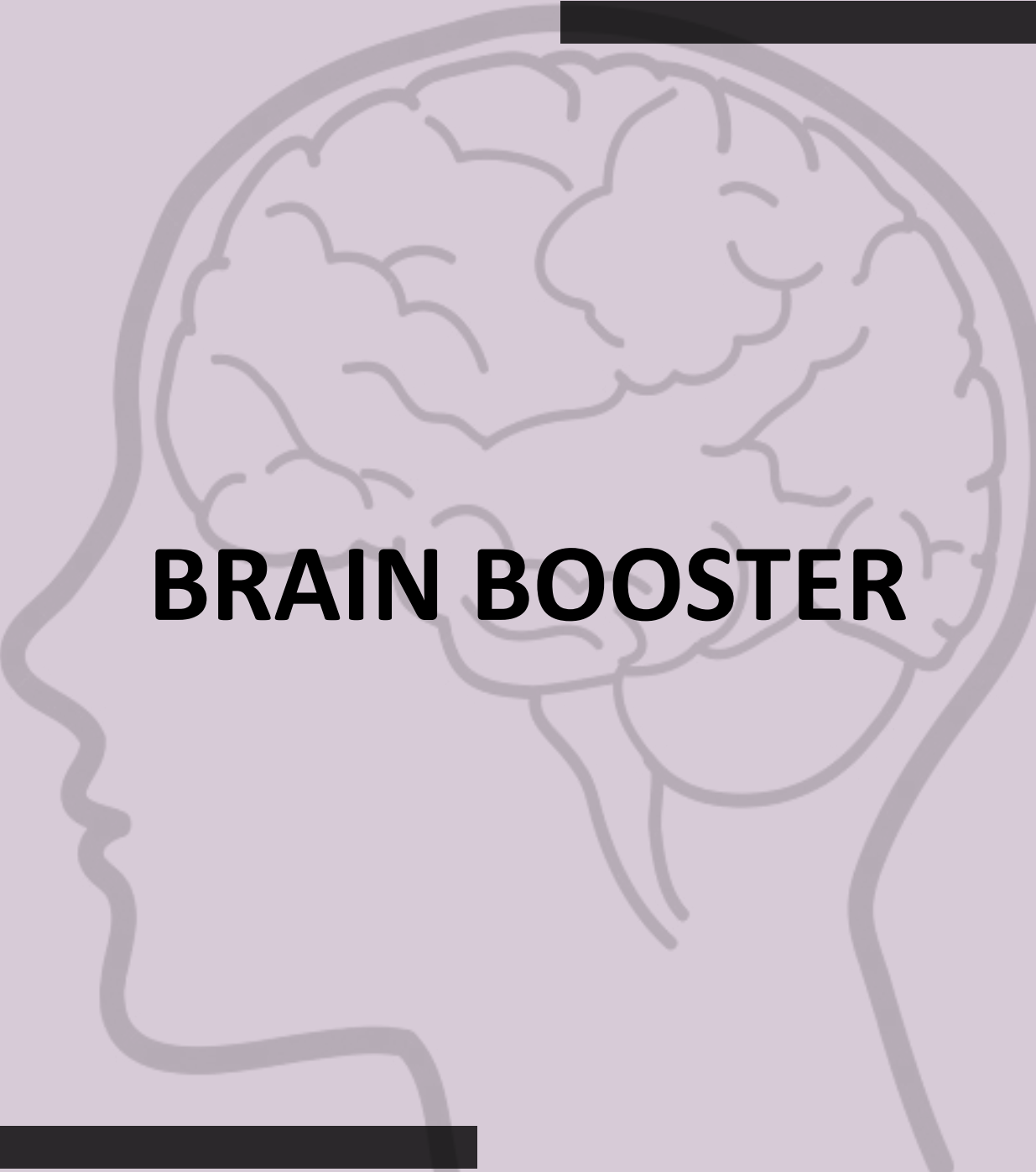


10. India's exports of agricultural and processed food products increase by 23%

The export of India's products has increased from 15 thousand 974 million US dollars in April-January 2020-21 to 19 thousand 709 million US dollars in April-January 2021-22. Rice exports also grew by 13 percent, wheat by 387 percent, other cereals by 66 percent, meat, dairy and poultry products by 13 percent as compared to the same period last year. The export of fruits and vegetables during April-January 2021-22 reached USD 1207 million. There has been an increase of 16 percent in the export of fruits and vegetables. The export of coarse cereals and other processed food items grew by 14 percent during April-January 2021-22. The increase in export of agricultural and processed food products is the result of various initiatives taken by APEDA. APEDA has also promoted the export of Geographical Indication (GI) registered agricultural and processed food products from India.

Current Affairs at a Glance

- The Financial Action Task Force placed the UAE on the “Grey List”.
- Labor Ministry launched ‘Donate-a-Pension’ program for the future of workers in the unorganized sector.
- The government started the Kanya Shiksha Pravesha Utsav campaign in collaboration with UNICEF.
- Biography of Indian singer Usha Uthup released at Oxford Bookstore.
- Due to the Ukraine-Russia war, Russia has become the most sanctioned country in the world. At present, a total of 5,530 sanctions have been imposed on Russia. Out of which 2778 restrictions have been imposed after the declaration of war.
- Microsoft will set up its largest data centre in Hyderabad, India.
- ‘Kaushalya Matritva Yojana’ was launched to provide financial assistance to women in Chhattisgarh.
- Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Textiles will organize the “Jharokha” program to promote Indian handicrafts and art and culture in mutual cooperation.
- Aarushi Verma will represent India in the 2041 Climate Force Antarctica campaign.
- The government of Karnataka launched the “Women@Work” program to provide employment to women.
- Debashish Panda will be the new chairman of IRDAI.
- Two day International Conference on Unani Medicine concluded in Srinagar.
- Ajay Bhushan Pandey was appointed as the new head of NFRA (National Financial Reporting Authority).
- Caitlin Novak was elected the first female President of Hungary.
- International Human Space Flight Day is observed every year on 12 April.
- Ecuador became the first country to give legal rights to wild animals.
- The first Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award will be given to PM Narendra Modi.
- Shehbaz Sharif has taken oath as the 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan.
- Dr Manoj Soni has been appointed as the new Chairman of UPSC



BRAIN BOOSTER

1. Why In news

On February 23, Rajasthan government announced the restoration of old pension scheme for the government employees, who joined the service on or after January 1, 2004. The announcement meant that the National Pension System (NPS) would be discontinued in the State. Chhattisgarh also announced following Rajasthan regarding pension scheme

2. About old pension scheme

- Old pension scheme is also known as Defined Pension Benefit Schemes.
- The scheme assures lifelong income, postretirement.
- Usually the assured amount is equivalent to 50% of the last drawn salary.
- The Government bears the expenditure incurred on the pension.
- The scheme was discontinued in 2004.

3. About National Pension System (NPS)

- The Vajpayee led Union government under took the decision in 2003 to discontinue the old pension scheme and introduced the NPS.
- The scheme is applicable to all new recruits joining the Central Government service (except armed forces) from April 1, 2004.
- On introduction of NPS, the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972 was amended.
- It is a scheme, where employees contribute to their pension corpus from their salaries, with matching contribution from the government.
- The funds are invested in earmarked investment schemes through Pension Fund Managers.
- At retirement, they can withdraw 60% of the corpus, which is Tax-free and the remaining 40% is invested in annuities, which is taxed.
- It can have two components — Tier I and II.

4. Changes introduced in 2019

- In 2019, the Finance Ministry said that Central government employees have the option of selecting the Pension Funds (PFs) and Investment Pattern in their Tier I account.
- The default pension fund managers are the LIC Pension Fund Limited, SBI Pension Funds Pvt. Limited and UTI Retirement Solutions Limited in a predefined proportion.

5. Regulatory authority to manage the funds of government employees that are linked to the market

- The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is the regulator for NPS.
- PFRDA was set up through the PFRDA Act in 2013 to promote old age income security by developing pension funds to protect the interest of subscribers to schemes of pension funds.

6. About subscriber base

- As on February 28, there were 22.74 lakh Central government employees and 55.44 lakh State government employees enrolled under the NPS.

7. Latest directive from the government

- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) informed Parliament on March 24 that there is no proposal to reintroduce the old pension scheme for Central government civil employees under consideration of the Government of India.
- Union Minister Jitendra Singh said that the returns being market-linked is a basic design feature of the NPS.
- Pension being a long-term product also enables the investments to grow with decent returns, despite short term volatility.
- The prudential guidelines stipulated by the PFRDA, the skills of the professional Fund Managers chosen through a rigorous process, and choice of asset allocation across various asset classes (Equity, Corporate Bond, Government Securities) enable the subscriber's accumulations to grow over the long term, riding over the short term volatility.

Pension Schemes

8. Impacted government employees of Rajasthan and Chattisgarh

- According to Rajasthan Karmachari Samyukta Mahasangh president, the move would benefit over 4 lakh employees.
- In Chattisgarh, the move will benefit over three lakh employees, who joined service after January 1, 2004.
- Tier II is a voluntary savings account that offers flexibility in terms of withdrawal, and one can withdraw at any point of time, unlike Tier I account.
- Private individuals can opt for the scheme.

1. Why in News:

India added a record 10 Gigawatt (GW) of solar energy to its cumulative installed capacity in 2021. It is the highest 12-month capacity addition, recording nearly a 200% year-on-year growth.

2. About solar capacity

- India has 50 GW of cumulative installed solar capacity, as on 28 February 2022.
- India is expected to generate 300GW from solar power by 2030.
- India ranks at fifth place in solar power deployment.
- It contributes nearly 6.5% to the global cumulative capacity of 709.68 GW.
- India is highly dependent on ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) systems (42 GW). 6.48 GW is generated from roof top solar (RTS) & 1.48 GW from off-grid solar PV.

3. Challenges with roof-top solar installations

- The large-scale solar PV focus fails to exploit the many benefits of decentralised renewable energy (DRE) options, including reduction in transmission and distribution (T&D) losses.
- Limited financing for residential consumers and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who want to install RTS.
- Lukewarm responses from electricity distribution companies (DISCOMS) to supporting net metering.

4. Benefits with roof-top solar installations

- It can be installed at the point of consumption, significantly reducing the need for large capital-intensive transmission infrastructure.
- Aggregating roof spaces could also help reduce overall costs of RTS installations and enable developing economies of scale.

5. Challenges to India's solar power capacity addition

- Although a significant growth in the installed solar capacity has taken place but the contribution of solar energy to the country's power generation has not grown at the same pace.
- The utility-scale solar PV sector faces challenges like land costs, high Transmission & Distribution losses and other inefficiencies, and grid integration challenges.
- Conflicts with local communities and biodiversity protection norms.

- India has achieved record low tariffs for solar power generation in the utility-scale segment but this has not translated into cheaper power for end-consumers.

6. India's domestic solar module manufacturing capacity

- Domestic manufacturing capacities in the solar sector do not match up to the present potential demand for solar power in the country.
- According to Crisil as on March 31, 2021, India had 3 GW capacity for solar cell production and 8 GW for solar panel production capacity.
- India has no capacity for manufacturing solar wafers and polysilicon.
- In 2021-22, India imported nearly \$76.62 billion worth solar cells and modules from China alone.
- Low manufacturing capacities, coupled with cheaper imports from China have rendered Indian products uncompetitive in the domestic market.
- India needs to embrace circular economy model for solar systems.
- By the end of 2030, India will likely produce nearly 34,600 metric tonnes of solar PV waste.
- The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) estimates that the global value of recoverable materials from solar PV waste could exceed \$15 billion.
- India could look at developing appropriate guidelines around Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which means holding manufacturers accountable for the entire life cycle of solar PV products and creating standards for waste recycling.
- This could give domestic manufacturers a competitive edge and go a long way in addressing waste management and supply side constraints

7. Key takeaways from India's solar story

- India has shown tremendous strength in overcoming barriers to achieve the 50 GW milestone in Feb 2022.
- India's solar journey will continue to provide important lessons to other developing countries, trying to switch to clean energy.
- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) established by India and France at COP21 in 2015, has created a global platform.
- ISA can bring countries together to facilitate collaboration on issues such as mobilising investments, capacity building, program support and advocacy and analytics on solar energy.

- Technology sharing and finance could also become important aspects of ISA in the future, allowing a meaningful cooperation between countries in the solar energy sector.

India's solar capacity



India-Australia trade agreement



1. Why In news

The Supreme Court has recently quashed the Tamil Nadu Special Reservation Act of 2021, or the Vanniyar quota law, on the ground that it was not based on updated quantifiable data.

2. Features of Tamil Nadu Special Reservation Act of 2021

- The Act had envisaged the distribution of the 20% quota for Most Backward Classes (MBC) and De-notified Communities (DNCs) in education and public employment.
- By assigning 10.5% to Vanniyars or the Vanniyakula Kshatriya community, 7% for 25 MBCs and 68 DNCs, and 2.5% for the remaining 22 MBCs.

Issues with the Act-

- A Bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao and B.R. Gavai held that the allotment of 10.5% reservation to a single community from within the total MBC quota of 20% in the State, leaving only 9.5% to 115 other communities in the MBC category, was without "substantial basis".
- Vanniyar quota subcategorization had created the impression of special treatment for the Vanniyars among the MBCs.
- The 10.5% quota is disproportionate to the respective Vanniyar population among the MBCs.
- The 10.5% internal reservation within the 20% overall MBC quota seemed unfair to other communities.
- The Supreme court pointed out that no latest data analysis had been done regarding the relative backwardness and representation of other communities in the MBCs and DNCs.
- While caste can be the starting point for internal reservation but it cannot be regarded as the sole basis,

The Vanniyars

- The Vanniyar, also spelt Vanniya, formerly known as the "Palli", are a Dravidian community or jati found in the northern part of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.
- From the 19th century, peasant castes typically classified under the Shudra category, such as Vanniyars have made mythical claims that their ancestor was born from the flames of a fire sacrifice.

- Certain Merchant and Artisan castes have fire born myths as well. Many Lower castes use a process of Sanskritisation to get upward mobility by creating such fire myths.
- Vanniyars, historically considered a lower caste, have been trying to gain upward mobility since the 19th century to move away from lower status using these Agnikula myths.

Sub categorization in OBCs committee

OBCs are granted 27% reservation in jobs and education under the central government. In September last year, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court reopened the legal debate on the sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for reservations. The debate arises out of the perception that only a few affluent communities among the over 2,600 included in the Central List of OBCs have secured a major part of this 27% reservation. The argument for sub-categorisation — or creating categories within OBCs for reservation — is that it would ensure "equitable distribution" of representation among all OBC communities. To examine this, the Rohini Commission was constituted on October 2, 2017. Before the Rohini Commission was set up, the Centre had granted constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)

Way Forward

Tamil Nadu's parties must take a re-look at their position against the implementation of the creamy layer rule in the reservation, as otherwise there will always be demand for internal reservation from communities that feel left out. The decision for subcategorization in quotas should be taken by the state governments responsibly by carrying an outcaste census or data analysis

VANNIYAR QUOTA ISSUE

it is incumbent on the State government to justify the reasonableness of the decision.

- Some critics have pointed out that the act is politically motivated.

of the concerned community, examining their current socio, political & economical status. The decision in this regard should not be politically motivated.

1. Why in News:

Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal stated that the Startup India portal had more than 65,000 startups registered. Of these, 40 attained the 'unicorn' status in the last twelve months, bringing the total as of date to 90. He noted that India now ranked third among global startup eco-systems.

The findings of "The good, the bad and the ugly of Startup India" a review of India's Entrepreneurship policy has been discussed.

2. Startup India Initiative

Launched on 16th January, 2016, the Startup India Initiative has rolled out several programs with the objective of supporting entrepreneurs, building a robust startup ecosystem and transforming India into a country of job creators instead of job seekers. These programs are managed by a dedicated Startup India Team, which reports to the Department for Industrial Policy and Promotion (DPIIT).

3. Issues with the Initiative

- Entrepreneurship continues to be "highly concentrated" in three megacities, namely, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi NCR. Such concentration can lead to increased economic inequality and hinder emergence of entrepreneurs from other regional clusters.
- The Startup India Action Plan document has no mention of the words 'caste', 'tribe', 'marginalised', 'indigenous' or 'social group'. This contradicts the initiative's very notion of making entrepreneurship in India inclusive.
- The under-representation could be due to multiple factors such as caste-based economic exclusion, the urban and rural divide, lack of access to quality education and limited social networks.
- Of the 65,000 startups registered

4. Status of SC & ST Communities

- With reference to government data from 2013, the paper concluded that SC and ST share in ownership of agricultural establishments including farming, livestock, fishery and forestry were higher in comparison to non-agricultural establishments. They were based majorly in rural areas in comparison to urban areas.
- Most of them operated without any hired workers, indicating that a significant number of these enterprises were necessity-based under

takings not creating any significant job opportunities.

- The evidence thus suggests the need for targeted measures to promote technology and innovation-driven entrepreneurship among SC and ST communities.

5. Women in the industry

- In February, the Minister of State for Commerce & Industry Som Prakash had informed that of 62,000 startups registered with the DPIIT, 46% of them had at least one woman director.
- RBI's pilot survey had earlier stated that 5.9% of participating startups in its survey had a female founder in comparison to 55.5% of the opposite gender. The remaining 38.6% had both male and female co-founders.
- 10% of the fund in the Fund of Funds operated by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has been reserved for women-led startups.
- Further, all the alternate investment funds where the SIDBI takes equity have been mandated to contribute 20% in business which are women led, women influenced and women employment or women consumption centric.
- Capacity building programmes and the dedicated webpage for women on the portal.
- However, women are still under-represented in the startup ecosystem.

6. Way Forward

Start-up India is consistent with the PM's call for innovation when he launched Digital India. The Start-up India Action plan is a good start to this, but will need continued support and evolution to make this a true, deep revolution for the youth of India.

STARTUP INDIA INITIATIVE



1. Why in News:

- Sri Lanka is gearing up to host the Fifth Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit.
- This year is the silver jubilee year for the summit.
- It is being held in virtual/hybrid mode.
- Sri Lanka is the current BIMSTEC chair

2. What is BIMSTEC?

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was founded in 1997. It is a 7 member body which includes the littoral states of India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and the land-locked states of Nepal and Bhutan, has identified 14 pillars for special focus. These are trade and investment, transport and communication, energy, tourism, technology, fisheries, agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter terrorism and transnational crime, environment and disaster management, people-to-people contact, cultural cooperation and climate change.

4. India's role

- The unique ecology of BIMSTEC is witnessing enriched political support and commitment from India.
- India has made the Bay of Bengal integral to India's 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies which can accelerate the process of regional integration. BIMSTEC matters for India and the region.
- A Bay of Bengal Maritime Dialogue (BOBMD) organised recently by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the Pathfinder Foundation

brought together government officials, maritime experts, and representatives of prominent think tanks from member countries.

5. Challenges facing BIMSTEC

- The emergence of a dead zone with zero oxygen where no fish survive.
- Leaching of plastic from rivers as well as the Indian Ocean.
- Destruction of natural protection against floods such as mangroves; sea erosion; growing population pressure and industrial growth in the coastal areas and consequently, huge quantities of untreated waste flow.
- Security threats such as terrorism, piracy and tensions between countries caused by the arrests of fishermen who cross maritime boundaries are additional problems. It also needs to be kept in mind that the problem of fishermen crossing into the territorial waters of neighbouring countries affect India and Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and Myanmar (also Pakistan on the west coast).
- Most BIMSTEC countries have premier institutions and excellent scientists but their interaction with the West is far more than within the region.

Quest for a stronger BIMSTEC

3. New areas of importance

BIMSTEC has huge potential as a natural platform for development & cooperation in a rapidly changing geopolitical scenarios and can leverage its unique position as a pivot in the Indo-Pacific region.

There has been progress in BIMSTEC cooperation in several areas that include security, counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing, cybersecurity and coastal security, transport connectivity and tourism.

There is a greater appreciation of BIMSTEC's potential due to geographical contiguity, abundant natural and human resources, and rich historical linkages and a cultural her-

itage for promoting deeper cooperation in the region.

The Bay of Bengal has the potential to become the epicentre of the Indo-Pacific idea — a place where the strategic interests of the major powers of East and South Asia intersect. Political support and strong commitment from all member countries are crucial in making BIMSTEC a dynamic and effective regional organisation.

BIMSTEC serves as a bridge between two major high-growth centres of Asia — South and Southeast Asia.

Connectivity is essential to develop a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Bay of Bengal region.

6. Way Forward

The blue economy potential of the Bay of Bengal is huge. There are many opportunities to develop maritime trade, shipping, aquaculture and tourism. However, tapping these opportunities requires coordinated and concerted action by governments, scientists and other experts.

Participants called for stepped up efforts in areas such as environmental protection, scientific research, curtailing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, as well as the development of standard operating procedures that could govern interaction between fishing vessels of one country with maritime law enforcement agencies of another.

1. Why In news

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), AFSPA is being removed from 15 police station areas in seven districts of Nagaland; 15 police station areas in six districts of Manipur; and 23 districts entirely and one district partially in Assam.

2. What is AFSPA?

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), 1958 is an act of the Parliament of India that grants special powers to the Indian Armed Forces to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".

According to the Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976 once declared 'disturbed', the area has to maintain the status quo for a minimum of 6 months.

AFSPA allows civilian authorities to call on the armed forces to come to the assistance of civil powers. Once a state or a part of the state is declared "disturbed" under this law the armed forces can make preventive arrests, search premises without a warrant & even shoot & kill civilians. Legal action against those abusing these powers requires prior approval of the central government, which acts as immunity from prosecution.

3. Areas under its influence

One such act passed on 11 September 1958 was applicable to the Naga Hills, then part of Assam. In the following decades it spread, one by one, to the other Seven Sister States in India's northeast (at present, it is in force in the States of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur {excluding Imphal Municipal Council Area}, Changlang, Longding and Tirap districts of Arunachal Pradesh, and areas falling within the jurisdiction of the eight police stations of districts in Arunachal Pradesh bordering the State of Assam. Another one passed in 1983 and was applicable to Punjab and Chandigarh was withdrawn in 1997, roughly 14 years

4. Issues with the Act

- AFSPA has often been criticized as a "draconian Act" for the unbridled power it gives to the armed forces and the impunity that security personnel enjoy for their actions taken under the law.
- Under AFSPA, the "armed forces" may shoot to kill or destroy a building on mere suspicion.
- A non-commissioned officer or anyone of equivalent rank and above may use force based on opinion and suspicion, to arrest without warrant, or to kill.

- He can fire at anyone carrying anything that may be used as a weapon, with only "such due warning as he may consider necessary".
- Once AFSPA is implemented, "no prosecution shall be instituted except with the prior sanction of the central government, in respect of anything done or purported to be done" under this Act.
- Counter insurgency campaigns against the Nagas proved to be counterproductive, as the sufferings brought by the forced displacements during village regroupings only broadened the support of the rebels.
- Extra-Judicial Killings: AFSPA's use has extended well beyond the actual conduct of counterinsurgency operations. Multiple states & non-state armed actors have operated under its shadows.
- Violates the democratic process & the principle of cooperative federalism.

5. Way Forward

- The Jeevan Reddy Committee formed in 2004 had recommended a complete repeal of the law.
- The Second Administrative Reforms Commission, headed by Veerappa Moily, endorsed these recommendations.
- In 2016, the Supreme Court ruling on a petition filed by the Extra Judicial Execution Victims Families Association (EEVFAM), held that
 - o Due process needs to be followed in civilian complaints reported from areas under the AFSPA
 - o The Act doesn't provide blanket immunity to army personnel in anti-insurgency operations.
 - o The apex court also ruled that over 1,500 cases of alleged fake encounters in Manipur, over the last 20 years, "must be investigated".
- SC further observed that the continuance of the Act in any region for

AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act)

extended periods symbolises, " a failure of the civil administration and the armed forces".

- The "disturbed area" designation should be reviewed after every 6 months.
- This measure should be temporary only to restore normalcy.

after it came to force. An act passed in 1990 was applied to Jammu and Kashmir and has been in force since.



MCQs Based on Environment and Ecology

Q1. Consider the following statements?

1. The Biological Diversity Act 2002 was born out of India's attempt to realise the objectives enshrined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1992.
2. UNFCCC recognizes the sovereign rights of states to use their own Biological Resources.
3. The Act aims at the conservation of biological resources and associated knowledge as well as facilitating access to them in a sustainable manner and through a just process.
4. For purposes of implementing the objectives of the Act it establishes the National Biodiversity Authority in Delhi.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding National Green Tribunal (NGT)?

1. The National Green Tribunal has been established on 18.10.2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010.
2. NGT is established for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
3. NGT is a specialized body equipped with the necessary expertise to handle environmental disputes involving multi-disciplinary issues.
4. NGT will be bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall not be guided by principles of natural justice.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Environment (Protection) Act, 1986?

1. The Environment (Protection) Act was enacted in 1986 with the objective of providing for the protection and improvement of the environment.
2. It empowers the Central Government to establish authorities [under section 3 (3)] charged with

the mandate of preventing environmental pollution in all its forms and to tackle specific environmental problems that are peculiar to different parts of the country.

3. The Act was last amended in 2012.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q4. The power conferred by the Environment Protection Act are followed under the following heads:

1. Coastal Regulation Zone
2. Eco-marks Scheme
3. Hazardous Substances Management
4. 2-T Oil

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q5. In determining the primary criteria for a product for ECOMARK the following are taken

1. Production process including source of raw material
2. Likely impact on the environment
3. Utilization of "Waste" and recycled materials
4. Biodegradability

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q6. The general criteria that a product should fulfil for being awarded ECOMARK are:

1. That they have substantially more potential for pollution than other comparable products in production, usage and disposal.
2. That they can't be recycled.
3. That they make significant contribution to saving non-renewable resources, including non renewable energy sources and natural resources, compared with comparable products.
4. That the product must contribute to a reduction of the adverse primary criteria which has the highest environmental impact associated with the use of the product, and which will be specifically set for each of the product categories.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q7. Consider the following statements:

1. The government notification for the criteria for labelling Cosmetics as Environment Friendly Products was issued under ECOMARK Scheme.
2. In India use of lead based hair dyes is not permitted.
3. In India use of halogenated organic solvents in nail polish is not permitted.
4. All the cosmetics formulations in India should comply with the requirement that the heavy metals calculated as lead (Pb) and Arsenic (Ars) shall not exceed 10 and 1 ppm, respectively.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q8. Consider the following statements regarding Forest Conservation Act 1980?

1. The Forest Conservation Act 1980 was enacted to help conserve the country's forests.
2. It strictly restricts and regulates the de-reservation of forests or use of forest land for non-forest purposes without the prior approval of Central Government.
3. To this end the Act lays down the pre-requisites for the diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q9. Consider the following statements regarding Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act?

1. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act was enacted in 1960 to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals and to amend the laws relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals.
2. Before the enactment of this Act, the Animal Board of India was formed for the promotion of animal welfare.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

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

Q10. Ecosystem services are grouped into which of the following categories:

1. provisioning 2. regulating
3. interacting 4. supporting
5. cultural

Select the correct answer using the code given

below:

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

Q11. Blue carbon is

- (a) The carbon captured by the world's oceans and coastal ecosystems
(b) The carbon captured by terrestrial forest ecosystems
(c) Carbon emitted by earth due to climate change
(d) All of the above

Q12. Consider the following animals:

1. Pygmy Hog
2. Andaman White-toothed Shrew
3. Kondana Rat
4. Hawksbill Turtle

Which of the above are mammals?

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

Answers

- | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. | (a) | 9. | (a) |
| 2. | (b) | 10. | (c) |
| 3. | (b) | 11. | (a) |
| 4. | (d) | 12. | (c) |
| 5. | (d) | | |
| 6. | (c) | | |
| 7. | (d) | | |
| 8. | (d) | | |

MCQs Based on Current Affairs

Q1. Consider the following statements Regarding Sri Lanka.

1. The Palk Strait is located between India and Sri Lanka.
2. Sri Lanka and India are allies in SAARC (SAARC), BIMSTEC and IORA.
3. India is instrumental in the economic crisis of Sri Lanka due to the provision of SAARC.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are true? Select the correct option using the code reason.

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

Answer - a

Q2. Consider the following states of India

1. Jharkhand
2. Meghalaya
3. Telangana
4. Gujarat

Arrange these states in order of establishment time

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| a) 1-2-3-4 | b) 4-2-1-3 |
| c) 3-1-4-2 | d) 4-3-2-1 |

Answer - b

Q3. Which of the following statements explain “artificial intelligence”

- a) Techniques that develop an understanding of machines
- b) Hybrid technology created by a combination of individuals and humans
- c) That dimension of intelligence that gives information about artificial objects such as machines.
- d) a robot commanded by a person

Answer - a

Q4. Regarding India and Nepal, consider the following statements

1. Nepal shares a border with 4 states of India.
- There is no border dispute between India and Nepal. Which of the following statements is/are not true? Select the correct option using the code

- | | |
|------------|--------------------|
| a) only 1 | b) only 2 |
| c) 1 and 2 | d) neither 1 nor 2 |

Answer - c

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding ozone Ozone is found only in the upper layer of the stratosphere in the Earth’s atmosphere.

2. The ozone layer found in the troposphere is beneficial for the Earth’s atmosphere.

3. Montreal Protocol has been adopted to prevent ozone depletion.

Which statement(s) is/are not true? Select the correct option using the code

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

Answer - d

Q6. Regarding Montreal Protocol, consider the following statements.

The signing of this treaty started on 16 September 1987 and this treaty came into effect on 1 January 1989.

2. The Montreal Protocol is the most successful agreement among the international agreements reached to date.

3. It commits the states to preventing ozone depletion.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are true? Select the correct option using the code reason.

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

Answer - d

Q7. Regarding cyber crimes, consider the following statements

1. Phishing is a type of fraudulent attempt that refers to the theft of personal and financial information through email.

2. Trojan horse at first glance appears as useful software but it harms the computer and its software.

3. Cyberstalking refers to “chasing”. It involves unauthorized access to people’s activities without their knowledge.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are true? Select the correct option using the code reason.

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

Answer - d

Q8. Regarding cryptocurrency, consider the following statements

1. This currency is decentralized and protected by cryptographic encryption technology.

2. This currency eliminates the need for third parties.

Which statement(s) is/are true? Select the correct

option using the code

- a) only 1
- b) only 2
- c) 1 and 2
- d) neither 1 nor 2

Answer - c

Q9. Which of the following Acts / Codes / Laws deals with the Criminal Penal Legislation in India.

- 1. Constitution of India
- 2. Indian Penal Code
- 3. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code
- 4. Code of Civil Procedure
- 5. Crime Procedure Code
- 6. Indian Evidence Act

Select the correct option using the code

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

Answer - b

Q10. Regarding non-alignment, consider the following statements

- 1. This movement protected the interests of “new countries that became independent from colonial-ism” during the Cold War.
- 2. Its first conference was held in Belgrade.
- 3. The first Prime Minister of India was a strong supporter of this.

Which statement(s) is/are true? Select the correct option using the code

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

Answer - d

Q11. Consider the following global organizations

- 1. United Nations Organization
- 2. BRICS
- 3. RIC
- 4. Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- 5. NSG

Name the organizations in which India, Russia, and China are all three members?? Give the correct answer by using the code.

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

Answer - a

Q12. Regarding the recently released report by IPCC, consider the following statements

- 1. The report states that more than 45% of the global population lives in areas extremely vulnerable

to climate change.

2. India has been identified as a vulnerable hotspot in the report.

3. According to the report, out of the commitments made for adaptation and mitigation, maximum commitments have been achieved.

Which statement(s) is/are true? Select the correct option using the code

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

Answer - b

Q13. Which state has been ranked first in the Skoch State of Governance Ranking?

- a) Tamil Nadu
- b) Kerala
- c) Andhra Pradesh
- d) Karnataka

Answer- c

Q14. In which city the first ‘Industrial Park’ to be 100% owned by women has been opened?

- a) Mumbai
- b) Hyderabad
- c) Bangalore
- d) Kolkata

Answer-b

Q15. How many medals has India got in the medal tally of ISSF World Cup 2022?

- a) 6 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze
- b) 4 Gold, 3 Silver and 1 Bronze
- c) 3 Gold, 2 Silver and 3 Bronze
- d) 4 Gold, 2 Silver and 1 Bronze

Answer- d

Q16. What is the rank of India in the Liberal Democracy Index of the V-Dem Institute?

- a) 93rd
- b) 94th
- c) 95th
- d) 96th

Answer- a

Q17. With reference to the International Women of Courage Award, consider the following statements:

- 1. It was established in 2007 by the State Department of the South American country Chile.
- 2. It is given to women who have shown exceptional courage, strength and leadership to bring about change in their communities.

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

- a) only 1
- b) only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) none of the above

Answer-b

Case Study

You are a senior officer, posted in ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, UP.

I.C.M.R. has recently reported that 1.6 million people died in India in 2019 due to air pollution. It has worried UP Government about pollution and depleting forest cover in the state.

Government issued directions to the ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change to work out a project to plant 7 crore saplings in a single day and set a new world record.

Ministry has entrusted you responsibility, to study the feasibility of the project and submit a detail report in three days, for consideration of the cabinet.

- (a) Discuss the different issues involved in the case.
- (b) Discuss your recommendations with their merits and demerits.

Ans- In the given case study I am a senior officer. I have to submit a study report on the feasibility of plantation drive to plant 7 crore saplings in a single day. Values like objectivity, accountability, resource management and sensitivity towards nature are involved in the case.

Ethical Issues :

Environment and pollution are very sensitive issues. They are directly related with our health and survival. Governments need to make serious efforts for conservation and protection of nature. Linking such important project with a wish to set world record shows only careless attitude of Government. It shows that government is not serious and want only publicity and focus of media.

Such plantation drives need a lot of preparation and money. Market can not supply such huge amount of saplings in a short time. It can compromise the quality of saplings and nurture opportunities for corruption. In such case we import saplings from neighbour states, which accelerate the cost of project. Plants of other states may not survive in local soil and climate. It may lead to hoarding, black marketing, fraud and other malpractices including price-like. Some time plant nurseries supply branches on the

name of saplings, which dries up after some time. It all lead to wastage of public money and misutilization of resources.

My recommendations :

I will suggest government to conduct plantation drive as an on going process. I will recommend to develop necessary infrastructure in all blocks of all districts of state, to support regular plantation. We can sign a contract with local nurseries to supply saplings at daily basis and run plantation drive as a year long regular exercise, though we can speed up during monsoon with advance preparation. We can contract NGO's or self help groups with

required knowledge and experience for plantation drive and fix their accountability for care of plants. We can develop a procedure to pay only 40% of the total amount at the time of plantation and remaining part in annual instalments of 20% each. We should geotag all saplings and replace dried plants. We can provide incentive and rewards for better performance.

Merits : It will ensure quality of plantation and reduce pollution .

- Provide regular employment to people.
- Reduce financial burden of state.
- Local plants will easily survive.
- It will check corruption.

Demerits : We have to develop necessary infrastructure but it will benefit in long time.

NOTES

Eminent Personality : Dr. B. R. Ambedkar



Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar is considered one of the modern builders of India. His ideas and principles have always been relevant to Indian politics. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, the architect of India's constitution, thinker and social reformer, was born on April 14, 1891, in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh. His father's name was Ramji Maloji Sakpal and mother's name was Bhimabai Ramji Sakpal. He devoted his whole life to the struggle against social evils like untouchability and casteism. In 1927, Ambedkar organized the Mahar Satyagraha. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism along with many of his followers on October 14, 1956. After getting independence, he was also made the first law minister of India.

A few days after independence, on 29 August 1947, the Constituent Assembly constituted the Drafting Committee under the leadership of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar to prepare the draft of the Constitution. Thus Bhimrao Ambedkar was the chairman of the committee that drafted the Indian Constitution. Ramchandra Guha writes in 'India After Gandhi' that Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar wanted to implement the Uniform Civil Code in India.

His ideas and principles have always been relevant to Indian politics. In fact, he was a strong supporter of such a political system, in which the state should give equal political opportunities to all and there should be no discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, race and sex etc. This political philosophy of his emphasizes the relationship between the individual and the society. Dr. Ambedkar was very committed to equality. He believed that the right to

equality should be above religion and caste. Providing equal opportunities for development to every individual should be the first and last moral responsibility of any society. Article 14 to 18 of the Constitution of India provides for the right to equality. Ambedkar had strongly criticized the Varna system, describing it as unscientific, tyrannical and narrow.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's works

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his work titled 'The problem of the rupee: 15 origin and its solution' from 1800 to 1893, examined the development of the Indian currency (rupee) as a medium of exchange and found a suitable monetary system. The problem of selection was also explained.

- Ambedkar gave a clear overview of the Indian agricultural system in his article Small Holdings in India and their Remedies published in 1918.
- Another of his research, The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India, remains relevant even today.
- On April 3, 1927, Ambedkar also started a newspaper named 'Bahishkrit Bharat'.

Hindu code Bill

- Ambedkar introduced the 'Hindu Code Bill' in the Parliament while being the first law minister of independent India and he made extensive provisions in this bill to make a just system for Hindu women.
- However, he resigned from the cabinet after his Hindu Code Bill draft was opposed in Parliament. In this draft, gender equality was talked about in the laws of succession, marriage and economy.

He devoted his whole life to the struggle against social evils like untouchability and casteism. Babasaheb fought for the rights of the poor, down-trodden and downtrodden. He died on 6 December 1956 in Delhi which is celebrated every year as Mahaparinirvana Divas. Ambedkar was awarded the Bharat Ratna posthumously in the year 1990. Ambedkar's social thought shows great potential for the upliftment of the untouchables, down-trodden and oppressed classes. Through his upliftment, he wanted to establish an ideal society in which the elements of equality, liberty and fraternity are the basic principles of society.

Key Terminology of Medieval History

Kotla :- Residential Fort.

Kotwal:- The officer in charge of a city or a fort

Kotwali :- Office of the Kotwal.

Kashak:- Residential Fort.

Kalbakari:- Fake coins.

Kanoon-e-Kadeem:- Old Laws.

Kern: Generation or century.

Town:- Town, suburb.

Kasra:- Rajmahal.

Kasabi:- Taxes on slaughterhouses.

Qazi:- Muslim judge.

Qazi-e-Lashkar:- Qazi or Judge of the army

Qazi-i-Mamalik:- The Qazi of the entire Sultanate.

Qazi-ul-Quzzat :- Main Qazi means Chief Qazi.

Qiyas:- Estimation, estimation.

Qubbutul Islam: The dome of the main city of Islam.

Kurultai:- Assembly of high officials.

Khail:- Horseman or tribe.

Khalisa:- The land under the direct control of the king or the centre which is not given to any zamindar, iqtdar or official. It was commonly called the 'Land of the Sultan'.

Kharif: Winter crop of India.

Khatib:- The director or president of the religious conference.

Khidmati:- Allotment of money, land or land revenue in lieu of service or state service.

Khilat :- The dress given by the Sultan as a mark of respect.

Caliphate :- Rule of Caliph or religious head of Muslims

Khiraj :- land revenue; But sometimes an offer made by a subordinate ruler to the Sultan or the amount payable as a subordinate ruler was also called Khiraj.

Khita:- Land area

Khummar :- The employees who take care of the liquor shops.

Khoot :- A class of village chiefs or chieftains.

Khawaja:- This address was also given as an honour to the owner, businessman or people with special abilities.

Khawaja-Tash:- Companion or colleague officer.

Khawaja-e-Sera :- Hijras posted in the palace or royal harem. They were specially recruited to guard the royal harem.

Gargej:- A structure built for the capture of forts.

Gaz :- Gaz (unit of measurement).

Gaz-i-Sikandari:- Gaz was introduced by Sultan Sikan-dar Lodi for the measurement of land which was later adopted by the Mughals with some modifications.

Gulam :- Slave.

Gumashta :- representative or agent

Ghadi :- 20 minutes time duration.

Charai:- This was the grazing or pasture tax imposed by Alauddin Khilji.

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AN INTRODUCTION



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DhyeyaIAS, one and half decade old institution, was founded by Mr. Vinay Singh and Mr. Q. H. Khan. Ever since its emergence it has unparalleled track record of success. Today, it stands tall among the reputed institutes providing coaching for Civil Services Examination (CSE). The institute has been very successful in making potential aspirants realize their dreams which is evident from the success stories of the previous years.

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Quite a large number of students desirous of building a career for themselves are absolutely less equipped for the fairly tough competitive tests they have to appear in. Several others, who have a brilliant academic career, do not know that competitive exams are vastly different from academic examination and call for a systematic and scientifically planned guidance by a team of experts. Here one single move may invariably put one ahead of many others who lag behind. Dhyeya IAS is manned with qualified & experienced faculties besides especially designed study material that helps the students in achieving the desired goal.

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