

PERFECT

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Need of Strong Defense System in India

Need of Technological Security
& Energy Security of the Economy

Prachanda's New Leadership in
Nepal & Effect on Indo-Nepal Ties

Border Disputes
Between States in
India: Nature & Aspects
of the Disputes

Government's Digital
Strike on Anti-India
Social Media Networks:
Objectives & Dimensions

Need of Integrated
Approach for Water,
Land & Climate Protection

Corruption Affecting the
Socio-Economic System:
Challenges & Solutions

Prelims Special 2023: Polity

Why Perfect-7 Current Affairs Magazine?

1. First of all, Perfect-7 Current Affairs Magazine is published **every 15 days** to keep students up-to-date with current affairs, while other coaching institutes have monthly magazines which aggregate the current affairs of the month. Due to large number of current affairs, students are often unable to read all the articles. Eventually they become dependent on annual and half yearly magazines.
2. Perfect-7 magazine has been created keeping in mind the **UPSC and State PCS centric exams**, whereas the magazines of other coaching institutes include unnecessary and extra material in the name of UPSC and State PCS exams, causing confusion among the students.
3. **Perfect-7 magazine has 7 editorial articles by subject experts on important events during 15 days, 42 articles on important events, 7 brain-boosters in creative style, current affairs, one liner, preliminary and mains exam related questions etc.** are given. Along with this there is also a section on eminent personality which shows the contribution of the historical personality towards the country and society. In this way, no important information and news is missed in the period of 15 days for UPSC and State PCS exams.
4. Along with this, through the **case study section**, students learn about the situations, an officer has to face during his tenure and what could be the possible solution.
5. Perfect-7 Current Affairs Magazine, helps students to prepare well for DhyeyaIAS's most important exam program **PMI (Pre + Mains + Interview)**.
6. In current affairs based classes, preparation is done through Perfect-7 Magazine, which enables quality preparation of the students.
7. Perfect-7 magazine becomes available to students on **10th and 25th of every month**, whereas current affairs magazine provided by other institutes are of the previous month and they create confusion in the minds of students by mentioning the current month of publication.
8. Perfect-7 Magazine contains prelims and mains exam focused mock questions through which students can make their preparation more precise.

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2. Need of Technological Security & Energy Security of the Economy
3. Border Disputes Between States in India: Nature & Aspects of the Disputes
4. Government's Digital Strike on Anti-India Social Media Networks: Objectives & Dimensions
5. Need of Integrated Approach for Water, Land & Climate Protection
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- Rising proactivity to combat money laundering in India: challenges and solutions

Message



Vinay Kumar Singh

**Founder
Dhyeya IAS**

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 to 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 needs of 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 national, international, environment, ecology, art and culture, science and technology, economic issues.

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. Columns have been included in the format of the magazine keeping in mind the factual needs of the candidates, mental development, developing writing technique etc. Along with this, we have been introducing new segments according to the changing needs of the candidates and these initiatives will continue in future also. Hope this issue will prove useful for all of you. Your suggestions are always welcome.

Best wishes.

Technology

Need of Strong Defense System in India

Introduction:

Over the years, the Indian armed forces have undergone significant modernization. Our weapon systems and platforms have improved in a way that is consistent with how serious we perceive the threat to be. This is due to the fact that our neighbours, China and Pakistan, have been posing threats on our borders recently and historically. Given the current state of global geopolitics, India unquestionably needs a robust defence system. The year 2022 concluded well with India successfully completing the night tests of the Agni-5 nuclear-capable ballistic missile and commissioning the INS Mormugao into the Indian Navy.

Need For A Strong Defence System In India:

1. Geo-politics of the Indian ocean:

- India is the largest littoral nation and has a lengthy coastline in the Indian Ocean. These two elements have strengthened India's hegemonic status in the Indian Ocean area.
- India has always been concerned with maintaining peace, finding ways to stop unwanted incursions into the Indian Ocean, and defending the extraction of mineral resources from other nations.
- The nation has military difficulties as a consequence of China's expanding naval aspirations and naval basing there.
- India is being forced to develop a robust nuclear defense system due to the existence of nearby nuclear-armed nations like Pakistan and China. It needs to build nuclear weapons with secondary attack capabilities.
- India must take part in preserving peace and stability in the area due to its increasing reliance on oil and gas resources in Western Asia.

2. Recurring disputes with China:

- 2020-2022 saw military stand-offs between India and China at:
 - » Pangong Tso
 - » Chushul sector
 - » Sikkim
 - » Eastern Ladakh
 - » Recent clash in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh

In the Indian Ocean region:

- Shiyan 1, a Chinese research vessel, was spotted in 2019 close to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- China dispatched a Yuan Wang class research ship into the Indian Ocean in August 2020, amid the ongoing fighting in eastern Ladakh on the Sino-Indian border.
- The Chinese policy of the 'string of pearls'.

3. Cross-border terrorism and boundary dispute with

Pakistan:

- The 3,323 km long Indo-Pakistan Border passes through the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and J&K. The focus and tone of border security have changed as a result of direct access to the borders and technological advancements that allow for the swift transit of information and money.
- Due to Pakistan's terrorist organizations' failure to recognize borders and their effectiveness in establishing legitimacy based on religious or ethnic identity, cross-border terrorism has gotten worse.
- The administration of the border for India has become more challenging as a result of Pakistan's inadequate cooperation.

4. Maritime Security:

- The Global society places a high priority on maritime security due to issues with piracy at sea, illegal immigration, and the smuggling of weapons. Threats from terrorism and environmental disasters are also covered.
- Given that India has a coastline that extends for more than 7,500, marine security is a crucial component of national security.
- Physical hazards in the marine region are no longer as prevalent as they once were due to technological advancements.
- The majority of India's imports and exports have continued to travel across the Indian Ocean. As a result, protecting Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) has become crucial for India in the twenty-first century.

Steps Taken By The Indian Government For Strengthening Indian Defence Sector:

1. F-INSAS system:

- Future Infantry Soldier as a System is referred to as F-INSAS.
- It is an initiative to modernize the infantry with the goal of improving the soldier's operational capacity.
- As part of the effort, soldiers are receiving cutting-edge equipments that are lightweight, all-terrain, weatherproof, economical, and low maintenance, like:
 - » Assault rifle type AK-203.
 - » Hand Grenade with Several Modes.
 - » Both ballistic goggles and helmets.

- These are created exclusively by Indian organizations, such as the DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organization) and the ecosystem of munitions industries.

2. Nipun mines:

- The DRDO refers the Nipun mines as "soft target blast munition," which are anti-personnel mines

that were created and manufactured locally.

- As opposed to anti-tank mines, which are supposed to be used against large vehicles, anti-personnel mines are intended to be used against people.
- The PFM-1 and PFM-1S from Russia are also known as “Butterfly mines” or “Green Parrots.” A very sensitive anti-personnel landmine is the butterfly mine.
- When defending against stragglers and hostile soldiers, these mines are supposed to serve as the initial line of defence.
- They may be used in big quantities and are smaller in size.
- They are stronger and more efficient than the anti-personnel mines they currently have in their arsenal, protecting the troops stationed at the borders.

3. Landing Craft Assault:

- The Landing Craft Assault (LCA) is designed to take the place of the rudimentary boats that are currently being used in the Pangong Tso lake.
- It can operate across water impediments in eastern Ladakh and has a superior launch, speed, and capacity.
- The Indian Navy already has similar ships in service.

4. Agni-V missile tested:

- A cleverly constructed upgraded surface-to-surface ballistic missile known as the Agni-5 was created as part of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).
- Since it is a fire-and-forget missile, an interceptor missile is required to halt it.
- The missile is essential to India's self-defence systems since it can reach targets more than 5000 kilometres away.

5. INS Mormugao:

- It's a stealth-guided missile destroyer model P15B.
- It is the second of the four destroyers of the “Visakhapatnam” class created by the Warship Design Bureau of the Indian Navy.
- It was constructed by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited and has more than 75% indigenous material.
- In addition to a contemporary observation radar that feeds target information to the weapon systems, it is armed with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles.
- The capital budget allocation for domestic vendors for FY 2020–21 was approved at 58%, or Rs 52,000 crore.

6. MSMEs and Start-ups:

- This rise in CAB will benefit improved domestic procurement, which will have a multiplier effect on a variety of industries, including MSMEs and start-ups.

- Over 1200 MSMEs participated in the fourth edition of the Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC), an initiative initiated by the defence ministry, in 2020.

7. Self-sufficient and Make-in-India:

It will also lead to more jobs in the defence industry.

- As a result, it is a positive step toward promoting Make in India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat.
- Light combat helicopters and artillery cannons are on the government's negative list; no one will be able to import them, promoting India's independence.
- Additionally, the SRIJAN site has been made available to support the two activities.

8. Other efforts:

The government has made several efforts to liberalize the defense industry, which includes de-licensing, deregulation, export promotion and promotion of FDI. Of the 191 projects approved in the last three years, 118 have gone to Indian businesses.

- **Investing in the Defense Economy:** If India modernizes its defense industry and reduces the amount of defense imports, it can increase its GDP by 2% to 3%, creating thousands of new jobs.
 - » It is economically beneficial and a ‘win win’ situation which increases the GDP. India will not only become more independent in this sector but can also become a net exporter.
- **Modernization of Ports:** Modernization of port infrastructure is necessary across all boards, not just for shipbuilding.
 - » One such proposal to upgrade port infrastructure is the Sagarmala project.
- **Integration of the entire maritime system:** Providing naval support to neighboring countries is one aspect of the maritime response.
 - » Merchant Marine, Fishing and Commerce potential as well play an important role.
 - » A coordinating organization that helps integrate all these areas is also needed at the highest level.
- **Use of blue economy:** India should expand maritime industrial infrastructure for its national interest and also for the benefit of its smaller neighbors (who have placed their trust on India for their maritime security) and to exploit blue economy.

Conclusion:

To give an opportunity to the private sector to flourish in the industry and to assure them that their efforts or investment in the sector will not be in vain. A certain weapon system in defense production requires high investment cost and if the private sector is able to bear that cost, then the private sector should take the risk. In addition, there is a need for clarity in the government policies introduced as well as adequate support to the PSU sector, especially for the private sector, to promote Make in India in the production of defense weapons required for the future.

Economy

Need of Technological Security & Energy Security of the Economy

The Reserve Bank of India in its December “State of the Economy update, showed how the prospects of the Indian economy look good for 2023. Nevertheless, the country’s economy is vulnerable to increase in oil prices due to external geopolitical crises, and any increase in oil prices may cause rise in inflation, which might have a cascading impact on the whole economy. Along with this, the increasing digital footprint of the country requires a robust technological security to prevent a large scale disruption in economy and protect it from state sponsored cyber-attacks.

Energy security:

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) defines energy security as the uninterrupted availability



of energy at an affordable price.

Need of Energy Security:

- India’s dependency on import of conventional source of energy like oil, coal, LNG, etc., is substantial and this demand will further increase in future. As per IEA, in 2040 oil demand will increase to 8.7 million barrels/day and majority of this will be imported.

TWh	2012	2022	2030	2047
Industry	336	494	703	1366
Residential	175	480	842	1840
Commercial	86	142	238	771
Agriculture	136	245	336	501
Others	29	71	121	233
Total	762	1433	2,239	4712

- With increasing population and urbanisation the demand of energy will increase.

*in TWh, as per Niti Aayog Report On Energy Efficiency And Energy Mix In The Indian Energy

System (2030)*

- **Protection from external shocks-** The prices of crude oil, that are of fluctuating nature, are prone to global shocks. For instance crude oil prices sky rocketed to USD 120/barrel in July 2022 after Russian invasion on Ukraine causing higher inflation in India.
- **Other benefits of energy security-** Energy security is a multidisciplinary field that overlaps with almost every field of study. It has inbuilt dimensions such as sustainability, energy efficiency, mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, accessibility of energy services (energy poverty), etc. This connects energy security with other aspects of developmental processes. Recently, Prime Minister has also called for “Energy Atmanirbharta” by 2040, which is about “energy security”.

Steps for Energy security:

- **Prioritize access to fossil fuels-** Intensifying domestic exploration of fossil fuel to meet shortfalls due to delay in transition to green energy.
- **Nuclear Power-** Focus on converting thorium into uranium and then using it for the generation of nuclear power. India has world’s third-largest reserves of thorium and it can be converted into its usable “fissile” form after series of reactions.
- Strategic petroleum reserves to cover at least 30 days of consumption.
- Upgrading the transmission grid and battery storage systems to scale up renewables and smoothen its supplies.

Focus on non-fossil Fuels:

- **Solar Energy-** About 5,000 trillion kWh per year of energy is incident over India’s land area with most parts receiving 4-7 kWh per sq. m per day. Solar photovoltaic power can effectively be harnessed providing huge scalability in India.
- **Green Hydrogen-** A shift to large-scale use of hydrogen fuel can help bolster India’s geopolitical heft and its energy security.
- **Geothermal Energy-** Recently, India’s state-run explorer ONGC has participated in generating Geo-Thermal energy at Puga Valley. India has around 340 Geothermal projects which have the potential of generating 10,000 MW.

Threats to Energy Security:

- Political instability in several energy-producing countries.
- **Regulatory hassles-** Environment and regulatory

clearances delay the process and lead to overrun costs. For eg- Land Acquisition delays

- **Technological Barriers-** Renewable energy technologies are still evolving in terms of technological maturity and cost-competitiveness.

Government Policies in this Direction:

- Solar Park Scheme and PM-KUSUM to boost production of solar energy.
- PLI Scheme to boost the manufacturing sector for the production of raw materials for renewable energy.
- **Ethanol Blending-** The government of India has advanced the target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol (also called E20) from 2025 to 2030.
- **National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE)** to promote energy efficiency.
- **National Hydrogen mission** to address all aspects of value chain of hydrogen-based mobility.
- NITI Aayog roadmap on methanol economy.
- **FAME scheme** – for faster adoption of electric mobility.
- **Various state government initiatives-** For instance, UP government's new solar policy that provides incentives for solar parks and rooftop residential and non-residential units to generate 22,000 MW of solar energy capacity over next 5 years.

Way Forward:

- The Russian invasion of Ukraine and western countries sanctioning Russia by imposing caps on oil prices to \$60/barrel and Russia responding by banning exports of oil to countries imposing oil price caps, this scenario can create a new oil crisis which India needs to consider to insulate itself from further shocks.
- Moreover, India has set a net zero target by 2070 at the Glasgow summit. This target would be impossible to achieve without securing our energy needs first. Only then we shall be in a position to be called a “strategically autonomic” country in terms of energy security and shall be a step closer to “Energy Atmanirbharta”.

Technological security:

- The 21st century is the age of technological revolution. Here defending countries cyberspace is as important as defending the countries border. Nearly all businesses and access to information are online, and therefore cyber security is a prerequisite for any country.

Technological safety scenario in India:

- India was ranked among the top five countries to

be affected by cybercrime, according to a report by an online security firm named Symantec Corp.

- The increasing rate of cybercrimes - Cybercrime in India has surged (by 500% according to some estimates) amidst India's unprecedented coronavirus lockdown.
- **India is a country that is prone to cyber-** attacks and Google in its report pointed out that India witnessed 18 million cyber-attacks in the first quarter of 2022.
- Half yearly report by CERT-In points out that ransomware incidents grew in 2022 and jumped 51% during the first half of 2022.
- The recent report underlines that cyber-attacks on Indian healthcare facilities are on the rise and the recent cyber-attack on AIIMS Delhi highlights India's vulnerability to cyber-attacks.
- **Trans-national nature of cybercrimes-** 75% of cybercrimes are perpetrated in India by outsiders for instance, a US-based company Recorded Future, released a report saying it had found evidence that “at least seven Indian state load dispatch centres (SLDCs)” and an Indian subsidiary of a multinational logistics company were targeted by a China-linked group that it has codenamed TAG-38.
- Social engineering and phishing attacks are increasing in the country.

Why technological security is important for India:

- **Growing Internet users-** From about 560 million in 2019 to 700 million in 2022-bulk generation of private data.
- **Safeguard Critical Infrastructure-** To ensure “critical infrastructure” systems such as finance, defence, energy, telecommunication, space, transport, etc do not collapse under any situation.
- **E-Governance-** Government services & schemes moving online, for instance, E-office require effective cyber security measures.
- **Cloud vulnerability-** As an increasing number of businesses adopt cloud computing, data security concerns continue to rise.
- **Terrorism-** Cyberspace allows terrorist groups (ISIS, Al Qaeda etc.), organized crime cartels, state/non-state actors, and LWE organizations to merge and collaborate, creating a bigger threat to National Security.

Challenges to technological security in India:

- Limited understanding of cyber security-sophisticated nature of cyber crimes.

- **No National security architecture-** each civilian or armed forces agency has its fire-fighting agencies to counter the cyber-attacks
- Fragmented and unorganised cyber security infrastructure and absence of nodal body for coordination as there are multiple stakeholders.
- **Lack of deterrence-** The Information Technology Act, 2000 does not deter cybercrimes adequately. The majority of cybercrime offences are bailable.
- **There is also under-reporting** of cybercrimes due to loopholes in the legal system, cumbersome processes, and lack of awareness.
- **Digital Illiteracy and lack of awareness-** digital literacy is almost non-existent among more than 80% of India's population.
- Heavy reliance on imported technology.-This directly poses threat to national security. Further, there is no robust certification mechanism for imported equipment to ensure compliance with cyber security safety standards.
- Pessimistic mindset towards Cyber security in the country as companies don't treat cyber security as their strategic agenda but as an addition to their cost. People don't value the secrecy and privacy of their data, for instance, indiscriminate downloading apps, in the process getting cyber security compromised. Further government cyber security strategies are aimed at only defensive and not offensive capabilities.
- Absence of data privacy laws.
- Lack of International Cooperation - India has not signed any cyber-crime-related international convention despite the trans-border nature of cyber-crimes and the majority of data being stored in servers outside the country.

Steps taken by India towards Technological Security:

- Legal framework provided by Information technology Act, 2000 -.
- National Cyber Security Policy, 2013- Under this a 24x7 National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) to develop suitable indigenous security technologies for protecting India's critical Information Infrastructure.
- National Technical Research Organization (NTRO)- a technical intelligence agency that develops technology capabilities and does strategic monitoring of cyberspace.
- National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection centre (NCIIPC) - Designated as the National Nodal Agency in respect of Critical Information Infrastructure protection.
- **Multi-agency National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC)-** cyber-security and e-surveillance agency mandated to scan internet traffic and communication metadata (of government and private service providers) to detect real-time cyber threats.
- **CERT-** In or Computer Emergency Response Team (India) - CERTs are deployed as dedicated bodies for a cyber response.
- **National Cyber Security Coordinator (created by PMO office in 2014)-** For inter-ministerial coordination on cyber security issues.
- **Cyber and Information Security (CIS) Division-** Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs to monitor crimes online, including cyber fraud and hacking, and counter cyber-attacks on critical information infrastructure. The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) and the Cyber Warrior Police Force will be set up under the CIS Division for tracking down online criminals.
- PMGDISHA - Under Digital India Programme to cover 6 crore households in rural areas to make them digitally literate.
- RBI recently issued a deadline for the localisation of all sensitive data belonging to Indian users of various digital payment services.

Way Forward:

- The emergence of the Internet in the late 1980s led to the evolution of cyberspace as a fifth domain of human activity and its protection is key for the internal and external security of India. Therefore, there is a need to-
- End policy paralysis regarding cyber security by announcing a new national cyber security strategy and also enhancing capacity on many fronts including forensics, accurate attribution, and cooperation.
- Increase in capacity enhancement and budgetary allocation of CERT-In, NCIIPC, and sectoral CERTs.
- Proper training and assessment of the persons responsible for the servers and related security measures.
- Involvement of ethical hackers and experts before using any software.
- Bring transparency by informing all stakeholders about breaches and threats.
- International cooperation, for instance, a body like group of governmental experts (GCE) meetings and the US-led counter ransomware initiative (CRI) of 37 countries and the EU.

6 **Governance** **Border Disputes Between States in India: Nature & Aspects of the Disputes**

Context:

Recently, the Legislative Assemblies of Maharashtra and Karnataka have passed a unanimous resolution in support of a legal battle to resolve the border dispute.

Introduction:

In India, there had been a situation of a dispute regarding the division between the states ever since the independence. Even after the State Reorganization Act of 1956 and the changes in the boundaries of the states by the Central Government from time to time, the mutual dispute between the states remains. At present, there are more than 10 state border disputes going on in India. This situation not only gives rise to tension in disputed areas but also hinders the process of nation-building by promoting regionalism. At present, the border dispute between Karnataka and Maharashtra is at its peak, for which the legislature and governments of both states have unanimously passed a resolution for a legal battle.

The border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka:

- The border disputes between Maharashtra and Karnataka are mainly regarding Belagavi (Belgaum), Karwar, and Nipani districts. In the States Reorganization Act of 1956, based on the findings of the Fazal Ali Commission, Belagavi was made a part of the erstwhile Mysore State, now known as Karnataka. This commission did not consider language as the only basis of state division but considered language as an indicator. On this basis, it was claimed by Maharashtra that there are some areas of Belgaum where Marathi is the dominant language, therefore those areas should be a part of Maharashtra.
- Seeing the growing dispute between the two states, in October 1966, the Mahajan Commission was constituted by the Central Government under the leadership of former Chief Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan, to resolve the border disputes in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala. This commission gave a recommendation in favor of Karnataka and said that Belagavi should be a part of Karnataka, but the Maharashtra government refused to accept this decision and filed a case in the Supreme Court in 2004.
- Since then, there have been disputes regarding the area in Maharashtra and Karnataka from time to time. Recently, to solve this matter, the

Union Home Minister met the Chief Ministers of both states and asked them to form a 6-member team consisting of three ministers from each side.

Key reasons for the border dispute between the states in India:

At present, border disputes not only exist between Maharashtra and Karnataka but it is also present between many states like Assam-Arunachal Pradesh, Assam-Mizoram, Haryana-Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh-Himachal Pradesh. The main reasons behind such disputes are as follows -

- **Regionalism:** Regionalism refers to the feeling of widespread unity among the people of a region. It depends on many grounds like geography, religion, politics, language, or economic development. Regional sentiments are still very strong in India due to which border disputes often are often prevalent here.
- **Linguistic diversity:** Division of states on a linguistic basis has remained a major challenge for India since independence. Although the State Reorganization Commission rejected the principle of one state one language, it considered language as a major indicator for partition. Thus, it becomes a major reason for border disputes between the states. Present-day border disputes between Maharashtra and Karnataka are mainly over the Marathi-speaking areas in Belgaum.
- **Political Ambition:** Many regional parties in India keep on raising the issues of regionalism for political gains. This situation also leads to border disputes between the states.
- **Ethnic Diversity:** Ethnic conflict has been one of the main causes of border disputes among most of the states of North East. The demand of Greater Nagalim by Nagaland, Assam Meghalaya dispute, etc. are prime examples of this.
- **Economic interest and historical importance:** Many times economic interest and cultural importance too can cause disputes between the states. For example, after the partition of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, there was a dispute over Hyderabad, both Maharashtra and Karnataka want Belagavi because it is the only place where Mahatma Gandhi presided over the Congress session. The same dispute between Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh is for the Sarchu area, which is located on the Leh-Manali highway. It must be noted that economic reasons were

responsible for the division of Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh.

Effects of border disputes:

Although the Constitution of India does not guarantee the territorial existence of the states thus strengthening the center, the states however play a major role in the governance structure of India, so the border disputes between the states have a wide impact. They are as follows:

- Border disputes not only give rise to tension between the states but also create a situation of anarchy in that particular area. In the dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka, there have been many incidents of violent clashes between the people.
- They undermine the principles of fraternity and unity mentioned in the constitution and sometimes also hinder the process of nation-building.
- Border disputes between states promote regionalism.
- Apart from this, they cause loss of public properties, the mutual emotional distance between the people of the states, and economic loss.
- Looking at the aforementioned effects, we can say that it is necessary to have a proper settlement of the border dispute between the states.

Settlement of border disputes between states:

- **By Parliament:** Article 3 of the Indian Constitution empowers the Parliament to determine the boundaries of the state and create new states. It does not guarantee regional existence. Therefore, the Parliament can bring laws to change the boundaries of the states, for example, through the Bihar -Uttar Pradesh (Change of Boundaries) Act 1968 and the Haryana Uttar Pradesh (Change of Boundaries) Act 1979, the Parliament settled the border dispute between these states. .
- **Judicial Settlement:** Article 131 of the Constitution makes it clear that the Supreme Court shall have the original jurisdiction to settle any dispute between the Government of India and any State or two or more States. The Supreme Court can settle boundary disputes between states using its original jurisdiction.
- **Inter-State Council:** Article 263 of the Constitution gives the President the power to constitute an Inter-State Council for dispute resolution among states. The council increases mutual coordination among the states, through this

also resolves the disputes between the states.

- **Through mutual coordination:** In the mediation of the Central Government, both parties can reach an agreement to settle their disputes. In the mediation of the central government, talks are being held between Assam and Meghalaya to settle the dispute on 12 disputed points. Assam and Arunachal have signed the Namsai Declaration for the settlement of mutual disputes.
- **Through plebiscite:-** People's aspirations are paramount in a democracy. Therefore, the people of the disputed area must decide which state they want to be a part of by holding a plebiscite.



Other Facts

- **Ongoing border disputes between different states in India:**
- Dispute between Orissa and Andhra Pradesh regarding Kotia Gram Panchayat
- Dispute between Assam and Mizoram regarding the border of Cachar, Hailakand, Karimganj districts
- Dispute between Assam and Nagaland for Golaghat, Jorhat, and Sivasagar districts
- Controversy over the Panchkula Parwanoo area in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana
- Dispute over 12 disputed places in Assam and Meghalaya
- Disputes regarding 123 villages in Assam and Arunachal. The dispute over more than 50 villages has been resolved, in this context both states have signed the Namsai Declaration.
- Dispute between Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh regarding the Sarchu area
- Dispute between Kerala and Tamil Nadu
- Dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka over the Belgaum region

Conclusion:

The states occupy an important place in the federalism of India. They divide powers through the center and have the power to legislate on state issues. Although the constitution does not guarantee state existence but enhancing the unity, integrity, and mutual fraternity of the nation, better coordination among the states is very necessary. We can say that the border disputes arising between the states are of very serious concerns and they need to be resolved. In this context, the Centre, the State, and the people must solve these disputes under a comprehensive approach.

Internal Security

Government's Digital Strike on Anti-India Social Media Networks: Objectives & Dimensions

At present, the fast pace at which India is moving forward as a strong emerging market economy and is setting many benchmarks of progress at the national and global level, simultaneously many anti-India and Indian government elements have become active as well and the role of social media networks has also been prominent in this. An attempt has been made to spread anti-government propaganda, misleading information, and prejudices through forums like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube and through this, it has been tried to prove that the Rule of Law is not working properly in India, minority Atrocities are being committed against the community, communal forces are being encouraged in the country, while the policies and programs of the government are not successful.

On similar other grounds, many YouTube channels and Facebook accounts are actively spreading anti-national information against which the Central Government has decided to conduct a digital strike. The Central Government said in the Rajya Sabha that it has taken legal action under the Information Technology Act against 104 YouTube channels as well as 5 Twitter accounts and 6 websites responsible for campaigning against the country and creating confusion and fear in the society. The central government has blocked social media handles and channels spreading fake news under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act.

The Central Government has said that these YouTube channels were claiming false and sensational claims regarding the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, government schemes, Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), farm loan waivers etc. Examples include fake news about the Supreme Court ruling that future elections will be conducted by ballot; The government is giving money to people who have bank accounts, Aadhaar cards and PAN cards; Ban on EVMs etc. YouTube channels have been observed using fake and sensationalized thumbnails with logos of TV channels and images of their news anchors to trick viewers into believing that the news was authentic. Further, these channels were showing ads on their videos and we're monetizing the misinformation on YouTube.

Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 empowers the central government to block any online content and arrest cyber criminals. It is the primary law that deals with matters of

cybercrime and electronic commerce in India. The Government of India had also banned 59 Chinese apps citing this section of the IT Act.

Significance of Section 69A of the Information Technology Act: Section 69A of the Information Technology Act empowers the Central government and the state governments to issue directions "to intercept, monitor or decrypt any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource". The grounds on which the central and state governments can exercise these powers are:

- Defence of India, security of the State in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of India.
- Friendly relations with foreign states.
- To prevent public order or incitement to commit any cognizable offence relating thereto.
- For the investigation of any crime.

The process of blocking internet websites:

- In the last two years, the Central Government has taken action under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act against various suspected anti-national websites. Section 69A enables the Central Government to ask any agency or intermediaries to block access by the public to any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource, for the reasons and grounds mentioned above. Note that the term 'intermediaries' includes providers of telecommunication services, network services, internet services and web hosting, apart from search engines, online payment and auction sites, online marketplaces and cyber cafes.

Action taken against 747 websites and 94 channels in the year 2021:

- On July 21, the Union Information and Broadcasting Minister informed the Indian Parliament in the Rajya Sabha that about 94 YouTube channels and 19 social media accounts were closed in the year 2021-22 for showing anti-national content. Along with this, 747 websites have also been closed. The Information and Broadcasting Minister also mentioned that on July 17, 78 YouTube news channels and their social media accounts were blocked. The action was taken against them on the charges regarding the violation of Section 69A of the IT Act 2000.
- Also, on April 5, the ministry had blocked 22 YouTube channels, 3 Twitter accounts, one

Facebook account and one news website. According to the information, these YouTube channels had a total of 260 crore viewers. Anti-national content was being shown on these too. Whereas on April 25, 16 YouTube channels were banned, 10 of these channels were Indian while 6 were Pakistan-based channels. These channels were blocked under IT Rules 2021. All these channels and accounts were spreading fake news and misinformation on social media on sensitive matters and matters related to India's security, foreign policy, and public order.

Other actions against the factors causing damage to the healthy information system:

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, using the emergency powers under the IT Rules 2021 this year, blocked eight YouTube channels with more than 8.5 million subscribers for spreading disinformation against India. There was also a Pakistani YouTube channel among these 8 channels. In this case, a statement issued by the Central Government said that these channels were making false claims regarding demolition of religious structures by the Centre, the ban on the celebration of religious festivals, and the declaration of religious war in India. The statement further said that such material was found that could create communal disharmony and disturb public order in the country.
- According to the central government, such YouTube channels have also been found, which are accused of spreading fake news about the Indian Army and Jammu and Kashmir. Such information has been considered completely false and sensitive from the point of view of national security and India's friendly relations with foreign states. Action can be taken under

the relevant provisions of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.

- Till now, under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, social media companies as they were intermediaries, were exempted from any liability, which meant that even if there was any objectionable information on these social media platforms, it would still be passed on to the social media. The platforms could have shied away from taking responsibility for it and no action could have been taken against them. But now it is clear from the official guidelines issued that if these companies do not comply with these rules, then their intermediary status can be taken away and they can come under the purview of criminal action under the existing laws of India.
- In this way, the central government has become active in breaking the disinformation system through digital strike and it is rather crucial because it damages the image of India, tarnishes India's reputation at the international level, and anti-India units get an opportunity to create mutual alliances.
- This also harms the good governance efforts of the Central Government. A better fair information based society and economy is indispensable for the progress of the country. Therefore, measures like digital strike on the lines of surgical strike are a means of developing a balanced information system in the country. It is definitely necessary to take strict legal action against such channels which are spreading false information to create panic, incite communal disharmony and disturb public order in India.


GORAKHPUR
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GENERAL STUDIES
 Hindi & English Medium
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 by Ritesh Upadhyay
27 JANUARY
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Environment

Need of Integrated Approach for Water, Land & Climate Protection

Recent meetings of global organizations such as UN Water, UNFCCC's COP 27, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and COP 15 have emphasized the need for an integrated approach to water, land and climate conservation. UN Water's recent GLASS (Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water) report states that if not paid enough heed in time, it will be difficult to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and without achieving the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations, it will be very difficult to make the world that is peaceful, stable, and prosperous.

Releasing the GLASS report, the World Health Organization and UN Water gave the details regarding the status of WASH system i.e. water sanitation and hygiene in more than 120 countries. It states that less than a third of countries have sufficient human resources to meet the mandated water sanitation and hygiene (WASH task) obligations. The United Nations also estimates that by the year 2050, 4 billion people will be severely affected by water scarcity, which will lead to many conflicts over the sharing of water. UN further believes that around the globe currently 31 countries are facing water scarcity crisis and by 2025, 48 countries will face severe water crisis. UN has, therefore, urged the nations to adopt "One Water Approach".

The One Water Approach recognizes the value and importance of all water. The principle of not discriminating against any type of water resource on the basis of its level of conservation, on the basis of source, or origin of water is the core of the One Water Approach. One water approach emphasizes on managing all water resources in an integrated, inclusive, and sustainable manner. In this, various communities, business leaders, policy makers, people associated with academics and other stakeholders have been called upon to work at an integrated level for water conservation.

The United Nations also organizes World Water Day, every year to promote water literacy globally towards the water conservation. It's main objective is for now is to ensure the availability of water and sanitation for all by 2030 by supporting the achievement of "the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6". To raise water awareness to the 2.2 billion people who live without access to safe water, it is imperative that countries around the world work with an integrated approach. With this perspective the main theme of World Water Day 2022, was making the invisible groundwater visible and restoring the disappearing groundwater. This was done keeping in view of the ground water status of 2022, ground water is an invisible resource whose impact is

visible everywhere. Certainly, the International Year of Cooperation in the Water Sector 2013 and the current International Decade of Action on Water for Sustainable Development, from 2018 to 2028, all confirm that water and sanitation measures can contribute to poverty reduction, economic growth and are important for environmental sustainability.

Global challenge of land conservation:

- COP 15 of the UNCCD adopted a global commitment to address the challenge of drought and desertification. In this meeting, 38 important decisions were taken which were related to land degradation, including the issues of tackling land degradation, migration, gender issues and the role of land in dealing with various crises. Further, it was agreed among the member countries that they would set up an Intergovernmental Working Group on Drought for 2022 - 2024 so that a better drought management system could be developed. This is crucial because the latest figures of the United Nations say that up to 40 percent of the land of our planet Earth has been degraded. It will directly affect half of humanity and it will be a threat to about 50 percent of global GDP (or about \$44 trillion). Therefore, the world leaders have decided to accelerate efforts to restore 1 billion hectares of land by 2030. The need to improve land restoration data collection and monitoring systems to meet land restoration commitments is being recognized by some nations as well. In this regard, "Drought in Numbers 2022" has also been released under the leadership of UNCCD to guide countries in their preparedness to deal with drought. It has been released in COP 15 of UNCCD to prepare a blueprint for draft preparedness and draft resilience.
- The Abidjan Call provides a global framework in this matter, with the Abidjan Proclamation calling upon the leaders of COP 15 of the UNCCD to achieve gender equality in land restoration and giving due recognition to the roles of women. COP 15 of the UNCCD also issued the "Land, Life and Legacy Proclamation" in response to the implementation of the findings of the UNCCD's flagship report "Global Land Outlook 2".
- It is noteworthy that the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the UNCCD was held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from 9 to 20 May 2022, with the participation of governments, the private sector. On the other hand, India hosted the 14th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in New Delhi from 2 to 13 September 2019 and was also serving as its

President until now.

- Addressing the opening session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) at the 15th session (COP15) in Ivory Coast of Abidjan, India's Environment Minister said that 'Caring for the land can help in the fight against global warming'. He emphasized on promoting environment-friendly lifestyle. In this meeting, India said that developed countries should take the lead in reducing carbon emissions drastically.
- It is worth mention that on the International Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, attention is being drawn to the importance of this sustainable production and consumption. For this, the slogan 'Food. Feed. Fibre' has been given, which aims to motivate people to stop wasting food, shop in local markets and exchange clothes instead of always buying new clothes.
- Ibrahim Chiau, acting secretary of the UN Office on the Global Compact to Combat Land Desertification (UNCCD), said the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily curtailed some freedoms, including free travel, but people still have the freedom to choose.
- Giving information about the efforts being made to prevent land degradation, the UN chief mentioned the Great Green Wall in the Sahel region, which was started by the African Union in the year 2007. This initiative is planting trees from Senegal to Djibouti to restore land, boost food security, and transform lives and livelihoods.
- Desertification, or land degradation in dry areas, is mainly caused by human activities and changes in climate. It usually affects more than three billion people on a regular basis. Such areas are extremely vulnerable to over-exploitation and inappropriate use.
- This year, on the occasion of World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, attention is being drawn to the importance of sustainable production and consumption. Every year 12 million hectares of productive land in the world becomes barren due to desertification and drought. There is a reduction in the production of food grains equivalent to about 20 million tonnes every year. One-fifth of the total area of the world, which is 20 percent, is desert.

Problem of desertification in India:

- Along with many countries of the world, India is also facing the issues of global warming, climate change as well as human-caused desertification. The extent of soil erosion in India is 96.40 million hectares, which is 29.30 percent of the total geographical area. In India, 70 percent of the geographical area is in the form of dry land, out of which 30 percent of the land is in the process

of soil erosion while 25 percent of the land is in the process of desertification. As per the report of India's leading environmental NGO, the Centre for Science and Environment, in India around 18.7 lakh hectares of land turned into desert between 2003-05 and 2011-13.

- The land areas of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh are undergoing the process of desertification.

Expansion of collective thinking to deal with climate change:

- COP-27 was held in Egypt from 6 to 18 November to discuss issues related to climate change.
- In the Conference, the representatives of all the countries agreed to set up a 'Loss and Damage Fund'. The Sharm el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda also outlined the 30 adaptation outcomes to enhance resilience for the 4 billion people living in the most climate-sensitive communities by 2030. The African Carbon Market Initiative (ACMI) has been launched to develop carbon credit generation and create jobs in Africa.

India becoming active in dealing with climate change:

- Indian PM Narendra Modi announced India's goal of achieving Net Zero emissions by the year 2070 in Glasgow. Within a year, India presented its long-term low-emission development strategy, indicating low-carbon transition pathways in key economic sectors. Responding to the calls to enhance aspirations regarding the 2030 climate goals, India even updated its Nationally Determined Contribution in August 2022.
- Along with this, India has taken new far-reaching steps in the field of renewable energy, e-mobility, ethanol mixed fuel and green hydrogen as an alternative energy source. Further, it is willing to foster stronger international cooperation through action and solution-oriented alliances such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Both these alliances are initiated and funded by India.
- It is a testimony to India's ethos of collective action for the good of the world. India, home to 1.3 billion people, is making formidable efforts in this direction despite the fact that its contribution to cumulative global emissions so far is less than 4 percent and that our annual per capita emissions are about a third of the global average. At the heart of India's vision of a safer planet is a single mantra - Lifestyle for Environment, which was presented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP 26. Further, the Prime Minister launched Mission LiFE on 20 October 2022 in the presence of the UN Secretary-General, H.E. Antonio Guterres.

International

Prachanda's New Leadership in Nepal & Effect on Indo-Nepal Ties

The politics of Nepal has been facing many ups and downs for a long time. Nepal's political, social, and cultural structure has been responsible behind it, however the most influencing factor has been the internal factionalism of Nepal's party politics, which has not only affected Nepal's development, but it had been impacting India-Nepal relations as well. The question of regime change in Nepal has also been judged based on the fact that whether the new leadership of Nepal will strengthen bilateral relations with India or will affect India's interests under Chinese influence. Recently Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Prachanda has won the parliamentary elections in Nepal and he has got a huge majority in the Nepalese Parliament. Out of 275 MPs, Pushpa Kamal got the support of 268 MPs as only 270 MPs were present. Only two MPs voted against Prachanda.

As soon as the new leadership came in Nepal, the ruling coalition government led by Prachanda promised to 'take back' Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh from India. The Common Minimum Program of the ruling coalition was made public recently. The Prachanda-led government is committed to the sovereignty, unity and independence of Nepal. Although the Common Minimum Program is silent on the border separating China and any dispute related to it. It is believed that the new Prime Minister of Nepal, Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Prachanda, who is said to be close to China, has started fuelling anti-India nationalism. In May 2020, India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a road from Dharchula in Uttarakhand to China's border Lipulekh. Nepal claims that the road passed through its territory. Right now this area is under the control of India. In November 2019, India updated its political map after the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir, including Lipulekh and Kalapani. Nepal had raised a strong objection regarding this and in response to this the nation released its new political map.

A serious matter was revealed in a document issued under the new Common Minimum Program issued by the Government of Nepal. This document says that India has encroached on Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura areas and the new government will try its best to take back these areas. The fact that is worth mention is that the areas which Nepal wants to occupy were already claimed by India within its border in its political map of the year 2019 and the year 2020. This even resulted in controversy between Nepal and India that time. Under the Common Minimum Program, the Government of Nepal aims to strengthen territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence.

Last year, Nepal approved the Millennium Challenge Corporation project in collaboration with the US in Parliament despite China's opposition. With this cooperation, Nepal will do development work

in the field of energy and transport with American help, on which China was objecting. China believed that through this America would increase its military presence in Nepal and from there it could also try to destabilize China through Tibet. It remains to be seen how the newly elected Prime Minister Prachanda views the US aid to Nepal linked to the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The Millennium Challenge Corporation is an innovative and independent foreign aid agency of America that helps developing countries fight poverty by providing financial assistance. It has been created by the US Congress in January 2004.

As soon as the new government led by Prachanda was formed, China sent its newly appointed ambassador to Nepal, Chen Song, on a tour of Nepal to strengthen China-Nepal bilateral relations. Chen Song says that with the beginning of a new chapter of China-Nepal strategic relations, China's Belt Road Initiative projects pending in Nepal will be pushed forward again. Prachanda's government needs to think that for the last few years, the ruling party of Nepal has not been seen taking any special interest in BRI projects due to the fear of getting trapped in China's debt trap. Nepal may want to avoid inviting the situation of economic crisis like Sri Lanka, so there is a possibility that Prachanda government will not hold back in accepting the cooperation of western countries, especially America.

China also wants that there should be such a government in Nepal which can make India uncomfortable by raising issues from time to time. Be it border dispute, river water dispute, smuggling of fake currency and cattle, mapping politics on strategically important land areas like Kalapani, Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura or the issue of provoking ethnic communities. However, this does not mean that Nepali governments themselves do not know how to stir up bilateral disputes. This is not the first term of Nepal's Prime Minister as the country's top leader. Prior to this, Prachanda was the Prime Minister from 2008 to 2009 and from 2016 to 2017. It has been a custom in Nepal that whenever one becomes the Prime Minister, his first official visit is to India. However, when Prachanda got the power of Nepal for the first time, he did not take much time to break this custom and he reached China instead of India. Now that Prachanda has once again taken over the power of Nepal, many political experts believe that Prachanda can capitalize on this border dispute in the name of nationalism. The kind of nationalism which is there in India, which saw the dawn of freedom from slavery a few decades ago, that kind of nationalism is not seen in Nepal.

The strength of the Maoist party in Nepal:

- In the year 2008, when the Maoist party emerged as the largest party in Nepal, since then China had started increasing its power in Nepal, It continued

to work to ensure that there was no split within the Maoist party. It is said that even in the year 2013, when the Maoist party was about to split, China had stopped it. China wanted all the communist parties of Nepal to unite and form a front, but it was not possible then. Even during the constitution making, China continuously maintained contact with the big leaders of Nepal. It is said that it was also suggested by China that Nepal should distance itself from the federal structure with regional identity.

- As soon as the work of the constitution was completed, in the year 2015, two communist parties of the country, CPN (Maoist Center) and CPN UML together prepared a front. The current Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli became the head of this alliance. KP Sharma signed a transit and transport agreement with China, which reduced the country's dependence on India for its supply chain. It is noteworthy that in the November 2017 general elections, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's party CPN-UML i.e. Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist and Prachanda's party Communist Party (Maoist) contested together. Oli became the PM in February 2018 and Prachanda and Oli's party merged a few months after coming to power. Nepal Communist Party was formed after the merger. They had a two-thirds majority in Parliament, but this unity between Oli and Prachanda did not last long.

Political journey of Pushpa Kamal Prachanda:

- Pushpa Kamal Dahal had the privilege of becoming the first Prime Minister of democratic Nepal. He has been the Prime Minister of the country twice till 2008-09 and again till 2016-17. In 1975, he joined USAID, then in 1981, Dahal joined the Underground Communist Party of Nepal (4th Conference). After this, his stature in politics increased and in 1989 he became the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal (Mashal). This party later became the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).
- When democracy was restored in 1990, he used to work in secret. When the insurgent campaign to end the monarchy began in Nepal in 1996, Prachanda remained underground during the 10 years of the insurgency. During that time he spent eight years in India as well. Now Pushpa Kamal Dahal has once again become the Prime Minister of Nepal with the help of KP Sharma Oli. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who became the Prime Minister of Nepal for the third time, has also been identified as a rebel leader in Nepal. He not only led the Maoist insurgency in Nepal but also ended the monarchical rule of the Himalayan country and started a democratic system in the country.

Pushpa Kamal Prachanda's thinking towards India:

- After Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda became

the new Prime Minister of Nepal, the evaluation has started that how the approach of the new Prime Minister towards India is going to be. Prachanda and his main supporter KP Sharma Oli's relations with New Delhi have not been any better on regional issues. Prachanda is considered a supporter of China. He had said in the past that there was a need to develop a new understanding with India based on the "changed scenario" in Nepal and after resolving all outstanding issues such as amendment of the 1950 Friendship Treaty and resolution of the Kalapani and Susta border disputes. The 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal forms the basis of the special relationship between the two countries.

Rise of new parties in Nepal's politics:

- Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML), Nepali Congress, CPN (Maoist Centre), Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP), Rashtriya Prajatantra Party, Janata Samaj Party and Janmat Party are recognized as the national parties in Nepal.
- Voters' frustration with aging political leaders and traditional parties in Nepal has encouraged Nepal's youth to join politics. As a result, the Rashtriya Swatantra Party has emerged as the fourth largest party in Nepal, which was registered by the Election Commission only a few months before the elections. Similarly, the Janmat Party, which was registered only two years ago, also emerged as a major political party in the Terai region. In western Nepal, the Civil Liberation Party, whose leaders are still in jail, has also emerged as a force that cannot be ignored.
- The Janmat Party has also emerged as a strong provincial party in Madhes, from the support it receives from its voters, especially the poor and the Madhesi diaspora working in Gulf countries. The leader of this party, CK Raut became quite famous because - at one point of time he also led a separatist movement for a separate Madhes, but later he joined mainstream politics after an agreement with the KP Sharma-led government in March 2019.
- For the last three decades, many political and social upheavals took place in Nepal. Major upheavals such as the Maoist insurgency (1996 – 2006), the end of the 239-year-old monarchy, the transformation of a Hindu state into a democratic republic, the transformation of a unitary form of government into a federal system, the emergence of the Madhesi, and the promulgation of a new constitution in 2015 and holding two elections at the local, provincial and federal levels – one in 2017 and the other in 2022. But what has not changed is the leadership of traditional political parties.



Social Issues

Corruption Affecting the Socio-Economic System: Challenges & Solutions

Context:

A special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court has convicted a former top BSNL official of amassing assets disproportionate to known sources of income (DA), saying grave corruption has seriously obstructed India's efforts to drive economic growth. Despite all the efforts in India, the cases of corruption are increasing continuously. It not only widens the gap between rich and poor but also reduces the efficiency of the government's welfare and development schemes.

What is corruption:

The word Bhrashtaachar (which means corruption in English), is made up of two words, Bhrashta meaning corrupt or immoral and aachar meaning conduct. If seen in public life, then any work that is against one's official duties is corruption. The English equivalent word corruption is derived from a Latin word Corruptus, which means to break or destroy. It is a multidimensional concept which cannot be given a general definition. Corruption has been defined by various institutions as follows.

- According to the K-Santhanam committee – such an act which is done with a view of selfishness or is not done intentionally during the execution of work by a government employee comes under the category of corruption.
- According to the World Bank, corruption is the use of public office for personal gain. Corruption includes bribery, extortion, favouritism, etc.
- According to Transparency International, corruption is the misuse of delegated power for personal gain.
- According to the Prevention of Corruption Committee, 1964, corruption is the improper or selfish use of power and influence attached to a public office or a special position available in public life.
- In relation to public life, the presence of money and misuse of public position is mandatory in corruption, that is, using public power for personal gain in such a way that breaks the law or deviates from the norms of the society is corruption. Corruption is the deliberate neglect of prescribed duties for personal gain either directly or indirectly. It indicates a failure of ethics. It is the irony of the system that it is the human being who sets high standards for himself in society while on the other hand using

the shortcomings of society to his advantage. Surprisingly, corruption is recognized in the society in wanted or unwanted forms. The field of corruption has become very wide, this problem is not only prevalent in India but has become an issue worldwide. In developed nations, corruption is rampant in trade and purchase, whereas in India, from railway ticket reservation to cinema hall ticket, from children's primary schools to government admission, and from government hospital beds to gas cylinders, corruption is rampant everywhere, that is, in other countries, there is corruption for illegal things, whereas in India bribe is given even for legal and necessary things.

Types of corruption:

In the international context, the World Bank has classified corruption into 6 types on the area and objectives, while in the Indian context, the Central Vigilance Commission has given 27 types of corruption. According to the World Bank, the following are the types of corruption

- Political corruption
- Administrative corruption.
- Public corruption
- Massive corruption
- Petty corruption
- Personal corruption

Reasons for corruption:

Social Reasons:

- **Effect of consumerist culture-** Today the consumerist culture has spread in the society. The desire to get more and more money has turned people towards corruption.
- **Limited resources and more population-** Due to limited resources and more population, there is a tendency among people to collect more and more resources.
- **Downfall of moral values-** Due to the downfall of moral values of the society, getting money in any way has become a value today.
- **Social Acceptance-** Money earned from corruption has got social acceptance, today's society respects them instead of boycotting them.
- **Lack of public awareness-** Lack of awareness among people about their rights compels them to pay bribe in government offices.

Economic Factors:

- Under economic factors, low pay scale, inflation,

strict business laws, and leader business alliance can be considered. The working salary of government employees does not meet their needs, due to which they are oriented towards earning money in an unethical way.

Other factors:

Political reasons:

- Lack of political will
- Substantial loopholes in the electoral system
- Criminalization of politics
- Lack of transparency

Administrative reasons:

- Acceptance of corruption in administration
- Discretionary powers of administrators
- Lack of transparency
- Complex bureaucratic system

Legal reasons:

- Lack of strict laws
- Complex judicial process
- Lack of effective implementation of laws

Corruption in India:

- Corruption in India has been a major topic of discussion and agitation. Since a decade after independence, there was a debate on this in the Indian Parliament. On December 21, 1963, in a debate in Parliament on the soul of corruption in India, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia had said, 'The relationship between the throne and business have become more tainted, corrupt, and unscrupulous in India than anywhere else in the history of the world. Corruption is rampant in India from government ration shops to big ministries. Although no major case of political corruption has come to the fore since 2014, many cases of disproportionate assets of government employees have come to light. If we throw light on the report of Transparency International, then India's year-wise ranking is as follows:



Effect of corruption:

- According to the World Bank, in recent years, several studies have presented powerful

empirical evidence on the economic and social costs of corruption. They have shown how corruption hinders investment (both domestic and foreign), reduces growth, restricts trade, distorts the size and composition of government expenditure, weakens the financial system, and strengthens the underground economy. Most importantly, a strong correlation has been demonstrated between corruption and rising levels of poverty and income inequality. The experience of transitional countries strongly supports these conclusions. For example, fiscal distortions caused by corruption reduce the quality of government services, which has serious consequences, especially for the poor. The negative effects of corruption on investment and growth equally increase poverty and reduce the tax base, further reducing the quality of public services.

- According to the United Nations - corruption affects all areas of society. Stopping corruption spurs progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, helps protect our planet, creates jobs, helps achieve gender equality, and broadens access to essential services like health care and education.



Other Facts

Some major corruption cases in India

- Bofors scam - Rs 64 crore
- Urea scam - Rs 133 crore
- Fodder scam - Rs 950 crore
- Share market scam - Rs 4000 crore
- Satyam scam - Rs 7000 crore
- Stamp paper scam - 43,000 crore rupees
- Commonwealth Games scam - 70,000 crore
- 2G spectrum scam - Rs 1.67 lakh crore
- Grain scam - Rs 2 lakh crore
- Coal block allocation scam - Rs 12 lakh crore

Social impact of corruption:

- Decrease in public welfare
- Growing social discontent
- Rise in inequality
- Lack of social justice
- Effect of corruption on the economic system:
- Development process affected
- Increase economic inequality
- Increase in public expenditure and loss of

revenue

- Domestic and foreign investments affected

Efforts towards prevention of corruption:

'International Anti-Corruption Day' is celebrated on 9th December only to spread awareness among the people against corruption all over the world. The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution on October 31, 2003, announcing the celebration of 'International Anti-Corruption Day'. Following are the major steps to deal with corruption:

- Conflict of interest management
- Controlling political funding
- Strengthen electoral integrity
- Regulation of lobbying activities
- Dealing with preferential treatment
- Empowering citizens
- Strengthen checks and balances

The Government of India and the State Governments have made many rules and laws to prevent corruption, in which some of the major ones are listed below.

Government efforts and institutions to prevent corruption:

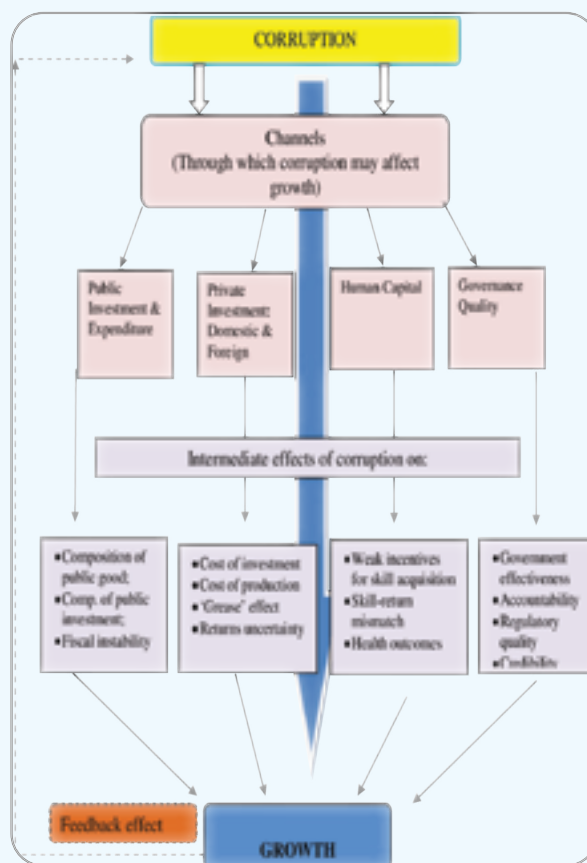
- Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)
- Money Laundering Act, 2002
- Vigilance commission
 - » Central vigilance commission
 - » State Vigilance Commission
- Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014
- Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Amended Act, 2018
- Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013
- Benami Property and Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 2016
- Right to Information Act, 2005
 - » Central information commission
 - » State Information Commission
- Public Service Guarantee Act

In spite of all these rules and regulations, there has not been any significant decrease in the cases of corruption in India, rather it is being recognized as a necessary evil in the society. PK Mishra, Principal Secretary to PM Modi said – stressed the need for innovative measures in the fight against corruption. Direct Benefit Transfer, Jan Dhan Programs like Aadhaar Mobile, (SRD) have been very effective in this direction. Various state governments have also taken some innovative steps in this direction,

which can be an effective step towards eliminating corruption.

Innovative digital initiatives to eliminate corruption:

- e-police
- M.P. Online
- Common Online Entrance Test
- E-Registration & E-Stamp
- D.B.T
- Railway passenger reservation



Way forward:

It is necessary for the whole nation and the world to participate in this war against corruption, because today corruption has not become the problem of any one country but of the whole world. Tax haven countries need to revise their policies because black money of developing countries is becoming their main destination. Therefore, the whole world will have to come on one platform while working in this direction, only then this evil can be rooted out.



National Issue

1 Stay Safe Online Campaign

Why in News:

The 'Stay Safe Online' campaign and the 'G-20 Digital Innovation Alliance' were recently launched by Ashwani Vaishnav, Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology under India's G-20 Presidency. The Stay Safe Online and Digital Innovation Alliance are one of the first programs globally to be launched by any ministry under the chairmanship of the G-20 countries.

About Stay Safe Online Campaign:

- The 'Stay Safe Online Campaign' aims to raise awareness among citizens to stay safe in the online world due to the widespread use of social media platforms and the rapid adoption of digital payments.
- The rapid growth in the number of Internet users in India and the rapidly evolving technology landscape have presented unique challenges.
- The campaign will sensitize citizens of all age groups, especially children, students, women, senior citizens, especially abled teachers, officials of Central/State Governments etc. about cyber risk and the ways to deal with it.
- The campaign will be run in English, Hindi and other local languages to reach out to the widest range of citizens.
- The campaign will involve dissemination of multilingual awareness material in the form of info graphics, cartoon stories, riddles, short videos, major social media platforms etc.
- In addition to this, various promotional and outreach activities will be carried out throughout the year in collaboration with the government and other organizations through print, electronics, social media, etc. to reinforce safe online messages.

About G-20 Digital Innovation Alliance:

- The G-20 Digital Innovation Alliance aims to enable the recognition and adoption of innovative and impactful digital technologies developed by start-ups from G-20 countries as well as invited non-member nations that are involved in agri-tech, health-tech, ed-tech, fin-tech, secured digital infrastructure, and circular economy which can address humanity's needs in the critically important areas.
- It will be held in Bangalore during the Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) meeting which will be a multi-day event.

Way forward:

It is notable that the G-20, comprising 19 countries

and the European Union, was established in September 1999, and is being presided over by India for the first time (in 2023). In the meantime, while ensuring security, sovereignty, and integrity, India should emphasize digital innovation and the digital economy so that the interests of developing countries can be protected.

2 Fundamental Rights Under Article 19, 21 Enforceable Against Private Persons

Why in News:

- In a 4:1 majority, the Constitution Bench of the India Supreme Court in Kaushal Kishor v. State of UP ruled that fundamental rights under Articles 19 and 21 of the Indian Constitution are enforceable against private individuals and entities, other than the state or its instrumentalities.
- The majority judgement held that the government had the responsibility of protecting citizens from both the state and non-state actors.
- The court took this view while ruling that the right of free speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) cannot be curbed by any additional grounds other than those already laid down in Article 19(2).

Significance of the judgement:

- **Evolution of fundamental rights jurisprudence-**
 - » The original thinking of rights enforced only against the State changed over a period of time.
 - » The supreme court highlighted the evolution of enforcement of rights from "State" to "Authorities" to "instrumentalities of State" to "agency of the Government" to "enjoyment of monopoly status conferred by State" to "deep and pervasive control" to the "nature of the duties/functions performed."
- **Expanding the scope of fundamental rights-** The court, extending free speech against private citizens, opens up a range of possibilities in Constitutional law.
- **Enforcing Rights against Private Entities-** This interpretation brings an obligation on the state to ensure that private entities also abide by Constitutional norms.
- **A shift from vertical to the horizontal application of rights-**
 - » The Supreme court while referring to US Supreme Court's ruling in *New York Times vs. Sullivan*, held that shift found in US law from a "purely vertical approach" to a "horizontal approach".
 - » A vertical application of rights would mean it can be enforced only against the state

while a horizontal approach would mean it is enforceable against other citizens.

- » For example, a horizontal application of the right to life would enable a citizen to bring a case against a private entity for causing pollution, which would be a violation of the right to a clean environment.

Dissenting judgement:

- It held that there is a practical difficulty in applying constitutional rights against private individuals and entities.
- The Fundamental Rights under Articles 19 and 21, which have been statutorily recognized will only be horizontally justiciable.
- There is a high likelihood of petitioners filing a connected series of writs under Article 32, thus increasing the workload of case.

Nature of fundamental rights:

- The fundamental rights have an anti-state notion i.e. enforceable against the state. However, some rights also enforced against private like prohibiting enforceability (Article 17), trafficking and bonded labour (Article 23) are explicitly against both the state and other individuals.

Way forward:

The Supreme court has further expanded the scope of fundamental rights and under the light of expanding private footprint in the economy, this judgement would be key in safeguarding the rights of individuals.

3 Triple Test Survey on Reservation

Why in News:

Recently, the Allahabad High Court ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to conduct urban local body elections without OBC reservation, as the requirement of the 'triple test' for the quota was not met. The state government constituted a five-member commission for this.

What is a triple-test survey reservation?

On March 4, 2021, the triple test was underlined by the Supreme Court in the case of *Vikas Kishanrao Gawli vs the State of Maharashtra & Others*. The triple test requires the government to complete three functions to finalize reservations for OBCs in local bodies, which include:

- Setting up a dedicated commission to thoroughly examine the nature and implications of backwardness in local bodies
- Specifying the proportion of reservation required in local bodies in the light of the Commission's recommendations so that overlapping is not violated.
- To ensure that reservation for SC/ST/OBC does not exceed 50 per cent of the total seats.

The process being followed by the State:

- Earlier, based on a rapid survey by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, seats were reserved in proportion to the population of backward-class citizens in each constituency of the municipality. This is the first time that a triple-test survey for OBC reservations has been talked about in the state. It is noteworthy that under the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, the municipality was given constitutional status so that democracy could be decentralised.

Why triple test instead of a rapid survey?

- The Hon'ble Court said that such an exercise cannot be limited to headcount only that has been done through rapid surveys. The court observed that giving reservations only based on population misses out on a very important factor for determining backwardness, and that factor is the political representation of the class or group concerned.
- In this regard, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has remarked that backwardness in the social and economic sense does not necessarily mean political backwardness. While clarifying the difference between the nature of reservation provided under Article-243D, Article-243T, Article-15(4), and 16(4), the Supreme Court in 2010 in *K. Krishna Murthy's* case also said that there is an inherent difference between the nature of benefits to be derived from it. Access to education and employment on the one hand and political representation at the grassroots level on the other is essential.

Way forward:

In October 2017, then President Ram Nath Kovind constituted a five-member committee under the chairmanship of former Delhi High Court Chief Justice G. Rohini to explore the idea of OBC sub-categorization under Article 340 of the Indian Constitution. The government must act constitutionally on the issue of reservation.

4 Delimitation of Constituencies in Assam

Why in News:

In pursuance of the request of the Ministry of Law & Justice, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has initiated the delimitation exercise of Assembly and Parliamentary Constituencies in the State of Assam.

Delimitation Exercise in Assam:

- In Assam, the last delimitation was carried out in 1976, based on the 1971 Census.
- In 2020, the Centre notified a Delimitation Commission for Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Jammu & Kashmir.
- The exercise will be conducted under Section

8A of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) which allows delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland.

- Assam has 14 Lok Sabha, 126 Assembly and 7 Rajya Sabha seats.
- The current Delimitation will be carried out based on the 2001 Census.

What is the Delimitation exercise?

- Delimitation is the act of redrawing the boundaries of an Assembly or Lok Sabha seat to represent changes in the population.
- The main objective is to provide equal representation to equal segments of a population.
- The exercise is conducted periodically to reflect not only an increase in population but changes in its distribution.

Who carries out delimitation?

- It is carried out by an independent Delimitation Commission, appointed by the Government of India under provisions of the Delimitation Commission Act.
- The commission is appointed by the President of India and works in collaboration with ECI.
- Composition-
 - » A retired Supreme Court judge.
 - » The Chief Election Commissioner of India.
 - » Respective State Election Commissioners.
- The Constitution mandates that the Commission's orders are final and cannot be questioned before any court.

Procedure:

- Under Article 82, Parliament is to enact a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Article 170 provides for the States to get divided into territorial constituencies as per the Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Union Government sets up the Delimitation Commission under the Act.
- Terms of reference of the Commission-
 - » Determine the number and boundaries of constituencies
 - » Identify seats reserved for SC & ST
- Till date, four Delimitation Commissions have been set up- i.e. in 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002.
- There was no delimitation after the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Census.
- An amendment by the Parliament froze the number of seats in Lok Sabha and Assemblies until 2026 on the ground that uniform population would be achieved throughout the country by 2026.

Way Forward:

The Delimitation exercise in Assam is a welcome step for incorporating the changes in the State's demography. This ensures political representation for each individual and strengthens democracy.

5

Lakshadweep Bars Entry into 17 Isles citing Threat to National Security

Lakshadweep Administration (D.M.) has prohibited entry into 17 of the total 36 islands citing national security and public safety concerns. This was done under section- 144 of the criminal procedure code (CrPC). To get entry to these 17 uninhabited isles of the union territory, written permission for entry from the sub-divisional magistrate will be required.

The reason behind this restriction:

- As per the administration, these uninhabited islands have temporary structures that are resided by the labourers who harvest coconut.
- The administration believes that there are chances that these labourers can be terrorists who are merely posing as labourers but in reality, they engage in illegal, anti-social, and anti-National activities, such as smuggling, seeking shelter, or hideout for hidden weapons or narcotics.
- By restricting entry to these isles, many activities such as causing fear and terror among the people through terrorism, violence and any possibility of anti- national activities, smuggling, or anti-social activities like attacks on religious and key institutions of the country, that are using these isles as centres can be prevented ensuring public safety.
- Any violator who will not comply with these orders will be subjected to punishment under section 188(disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the IPC which provides for a jail term ranging 1 to 6 months or a fine.

About Lakshadweep:

- The name Lakshadweep in 'Sanskrit' means one lakh islands. It is the smallest union territory of India.
- It is an archipelago of 36 islands in the Arabian sea, located 200 to 440 km away from the Malabar coast.
- Although Malayalam is the primary and widely spoken native language in the territory, the official language is Hindi and English .
- 'Kavaratti' serves as the Capital of this union territory and it comes under the jurisdiction of the Kerala High court .
- Ten of its islands are inhabited presently by approx 68000 (2022) population and majority of the indigenous population here is Muslim.

Conclusion:

Thus it can be seen that these protective measures taken in Lakshadweep will certainly aid in preventing any conspiring activities in the Indian mainland especially in Southern West India. Since Lakshadweep is a centrally administered territory, the alertness of the Government of India is visible.

6

Re-establishment of Village Defence Committees in Jammu and Kashmir

Why in News:

Jammu and Kashmir L.G. Manoj Sinha on January 2nd said 'village defence guard' would be set up in the union territory off Jammu Kashmir. After militants killed 6 people in two days (1st and 2nd January 2023) in the upper dongri village of j&k, the locals demanded that they should be provided with the weapons to take on the attackers.

About VDGs and VDCs:

- VDCs will be established with a changed nomenclature, they will be called village defence guards.
- VDGs or VDCs are group of civilians that are provided with guns and remunerations in case of attacks to handle the situation and safeguard themselves until the arrival of security forces.
- Under the new scheme the persons leading the VDGs will be paid Rs 4500 per month by the government while others will get Rs 4000 each.
- In the VDCs only the special police officer (SPOs) leading the group was provided remunerations of Rs 1500 monthly.
- The SPO's the lowest rank in the J & K police, used to be retired army, paramilitary or police persons.
- The VDGs official said that it will function under the direction of SP/ SSP of the district concerned.

History of VDCs:

- The militancy that began in Kashmir in early 1990 had spread to the adjoining Doda district by mid 1990.
- The demand for arming the civilian population first rows after the massacre of 13 people in Kishtwar in 1993.
- As the killings increased promoting the migration of 'Hindus' from villages to nearby towns, the home ministry in 1995 decided to set up the VDCs so as to stop this exodus. This was coming after Kashmiri pandits were forced to flee the state in the early 1990s.
- The VDCs were most feared armed groups among militants in areas where poor road networks delayed the arrival of security forces. The villagers were well versed with the local topography and averted many militant attacks and helped in their capture and killing.

How did the idea to arm civilians come up:

- Idea was taken from the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak war when the government armed ex-servicemen and able bodied youth in villages

along the border to guard against infiltration of Pakistani spies.

- The scheme saw success with locals guarding their areas at night and even providing information to army troops that led to decimation of Pakistan posts and arrest of Pakistani spies.

Controversies regarding the VDCs:

- Along with the accomplishments, the VDCs faced allegations of human rights violations and other crimes. including murder, rape and extortion etc.

Disarming Of VDCs members:

- After peace returned there were demands from certain quarters to disband VDCs in 2002.
- However over a period of time the number of VDCs members has dropped significantly, many VDCs members have surrendered their weapons in the absence of remuneration

Current Police situation in Jammu Kashmir:

- Official figures placed on the floor of the erstwhile J&k legislative assembly in 2016, around 27924 civilians were serving in 4248 VDCs across the state .
- Further, as per the official figures, a total of 186 militants including 56 foreigners were killed in 98 successful encounters in J&K in 2022.
- The year saw a 37% decline in local youth who joined militancy in this period.
- Of the 100 youth who joined militancy in this period, 17 were arrested and 65 killed in encounters; the hunt is on for the remaining 18, said the police.

Conclusion:

Thus the Central government's approach of 'zero tolerance' towards security can be seen through VDGs that accomplish the twin goal of self-defence as well as solving the issue of national security.

7

Remote Voting

Why in News:

On the issue of remote voting, opposition parties have given mixed signals. While some parties are opposing it and some are supporting it. Remote voting has been proposed by Election Commission of India (ECI) for migrant workers to cast their vote, if their workplace is outside their constituencies.

Need of remote voting:

- Remote voting is proposed by ECI to increase the voter participation in election. The last general election which was held in 2019, about one third of voters could not cast their vote.

- Hearing a petition on the alleged denial of voting opportunities to migrants, the Supreme Court had in 2015 directed the EC to explore options for remote voting.

About current proposal by ECI:

- EC has come up with a prototype Remote Voting Machine (RVM), which is a modified version of the existing Electronic Voting Machine (EVM). The RVM will be able to handle 72 constituencies in a single remote polling booth. The special remote polling booths would be set up in different states when elections are on in the home state of migrants.
- The remote voter will have to pre-register for the facility by applying online or offline with the Returning Officer of the home constituency. The special polling stations would then be set up in the places of current residence of the remote voters. The RVM is a standalone and non-networked system. Instead of a paper ballot sheet, the RVM would have a dynamic ballot display that can change with the selection of

different constituencies.

- The system would have a device similar to the VVPAT so that voters can verify their votes. The units will save the number of votes for each candidate for each of the constituencies, to be tallied on counting day. The results would then be shared with the home RO.

Concerns:

- Implementation of model code of conduct at remote voting stations.
- Voting process security.
- How domestic migrants should be identified.

Conclusion:

For remote voting, Amendments will be needed in Representation of the People Act, 1950 and 1951; Conduct of Election Rules, 1961; and The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. The 'Migrant voter' will need to be defined in terms of period and purpose of absence. The process of Remote voting itself will need to be defined as whether 'remoteness' means outside the Constituency, District or State.

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International Issue

1 Freedom Caucus Group

Why in News:

Recently, members of the Republican Party in the US House of Representatives failed to elect a speaker. Most members of the ultra-conservative, hard-right Freedom Caucus involved refused to vote for Kevin McCarthy for the speakership. This is the first time since 1923 that no candidate from the majority party in the House has won the first vote for the post of Speaker. However, in the re-voting of the 15th round, McCarthy became the speaker by a close (216-212) margin.

About the Freedom Caucus Group:

- The Freedom Caucus comprises roughly 30 members, belonging to the Tea Party movement, known for its fiscally conservative and right-wing populist positions. These include a desire for lower taxes, budget cuts, decentralization of government powers, and opposition to immigration.
- The caucus has also been called nativist, anti-globalist, and white supremacist. The group was founded in January, 2015 and backed Donald Trump for the presidency in 2016.

How is the speaker elected?

- Speaker Nancy Pelosi resigned after the Republican Party won 222 members of the 435-member House of Representatives in the midterm elections of November 2022. The speaker was to be elected to administer the oath to the newly elected members.
- A majority of the total votes cast for the speaker post have to be obtained. So with 435 seats, the speaker must get 218 votes to win. If no candidate reaches that limit, the House continues to vote. The record was set in 1856 when it took 133 ballots and two months to elect the speaker.

Importance of Speaker post:

- In the US, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, second in the line of succession to the presidency after the Vice President, sets the legislative agenda and political tone with the presidency of the House. The speaker usually belongs to the party that controls the house with the majority of the members. However, other people can be elected to the position, including an outsider who is not an elected member. The newly elected speaker McCarthy, 57, has criticized China in his first speech.

Way forward:

After the completion of election of the new speaker, it is now expected that the political instability prevailing in the House will end and America will promote world

brotherhood with its policies. Through this, the faith of many countries in the free and fair democratic system will increase.

2 FAO- Food Price Index

Why in News:

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), global prices for food commodities such as grain and vegetable oils were the highest on record last year even after falling for nine months in a row as the Russia-Ukraine war, drought and other factors drove up inflation and worsened hunger worldwide.

Major Findings of the report:

- The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) averaged 132.4 points in December 2022, down 2.6 points (1.9%) from November, making the ninth consecutive monthly decline and standing 1.3 points (1.0%) below its value a year ago.
- The decline in the index was driven by a steep drop in the international prices of vegetable oils, together with some declines in cereal and meat prices but was offset by a slight increase in sugar and dairy prices.
- For 2022 as a whole, the FFPI averaged 143.7 points, up from 2021 by as much as 18 points, or 14.3 percent.

Impact on poor countries:

- The cereal price index rose 17.9% in 2022 due to factors including market disruptions, higher energy and input costs, adverse weather conditions, and continued strong global food demand.
- The poor countries reduced the volume of shipped goods.
- The increase in sugar price quotations was mostly related to concerns over the impact of adverse weather conditions on crop yields in India, (the World's second-largest sugar producer) and crushing delays in Thailand and Australia.

FAO Food Price Index (FFPI):

- FFPI is a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities.
- It consists of the average of five commodity group price indices weighted by the average export shares of each of the groups.
- Base Year: 2014-16.
- It was introduced in 1996 as a public good to help in monitoring developments in the global agricultural commodity markets.

About FAO:

- It's a specialized agency of the United Nations, leading an effort to defeat hunger.

- World Food Day is celebrated every year on 16th October.
- It is headquartered at Rome, Italy.

Way Forward:

Initiatives such as a grain export channel from Ukraine established by the UN and the prospect of improved supplies in producer countries may help mitigate some of these rising costs.

3 Kuki-Chin Refugees from Bangladesh 'Pushed Back' from Mizoram

Why in News:

Recently, it was alleged that several members of the Kuki-Chin Community were 'pushed back' by the Border Security Force (BSF) in another round of refugee crisis on the Mizoram-Bangladesh border.

Kuki-Chin Refugee crisis:

- Chins of Myanmar, the Mizos of Mizoram and the Kukis of Bangladesh have a common ancestry.
- They are collectively called the Zo people.
- Kuki-Chins are a Christian community from Bangladesh's Chittagong hill tracts (The south-eastern part of Bangladesh) and share close ethnic ties with people in Mizoram.
- They are escaping the crackdown by the military Junta of Myanmar and identity loss in Bangladesh.
- The first tranche of around 300 people came in November 2022 in India.
- The Mizoram government has approved the setting up of temporary shelters and other amenities for the community, following an action by the Bangladesh Rapid Action Battalion against some insurgents belonging to the community.

India's stand on refugees:

- India is not a signatory to the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 protocol.
- India does not recognise refugees, and undocumented migrants are liable to be prosecuted for violating the Foreigners Act.
- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, foreign nationals entering the country without legitimate documents are classified as unlawful immigrants.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

- UNHCR was established in 1951 to help millions of Europeans, who fled or lost their homes.
- UNHCR is a UN agency for refugees.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

Way Forward:

India, despite being a non-signatory to UN Refugee Convention, has been generous towards refugees on a humanitarian basis. India has witnessed refugees from neighbouring countries. Thus, it requires a sustainable policy given the present geo-political and geo-economic developments.

4 India-US Trade Policy Framework

Why in News:

The India-US Trade Policy Forum (TPF), a forum to resolve trade and investment issues between the two countries, will hold its 13th meeting on January 11 in Washington, USA.

India-US Trade Policy Forum (TPF):

- TPF was established in 2005 and the last TPF meeting was held on November 2021 in New Delhi after a four-year hiatus.
- Ministry of Commerce & Industry, GoI and Office of the US Trade Representative are the nodal agencies of TPF.
- TPF serves as a bilateral mechanism to pursue shared trade and investment objectives.
- It seeks to strengthen economic ties and acts as a key pillar in solving the outstanding trade issues between the two countries. Five focus groups of TPF are-
 - » Agriculture.
 - » Investment.
 - » Innovation and Creativity (Intellectual Property Rights).
 - » Services.
 - » Tariff and Non-tariff barriers.
- The focus group strives to overcome the hurdles to bilateral trade and investment between India and the US.

India-US Trade and Economic Relations:

- **Trade-** The bilateral trade between the countries has increased to USD 119.5 billion in 2021-22 from USD 80.5 billion in 2020-21.
- **Foreign Investment-** India received USD 44.61 billion in foreign direct investment from US between April 2000 and June 2022.
- The US was India's largest export destination and the second-largest trading partner in 2020-21.
- India's export to the US in 2020-21 was valued at \$51.62 billion and its imports at \$28.88 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of about \$23 billion for the US.
- The top traded goods include pearls and precious stones, pharmaceuticals, machinery, electronics, clothing, vehicles, chemicals, and fish products.
- India and US have set up a bilateral

Investment Initiative in 2014, with a special focus on facilitating FDI, portfolio investment, capital market development and financing of infrastructure.

Way Forward:

Both India and US are natural partners and have trade complementarities, long-standing strategic and economic relationships, people-to-people contact, and both are vibrant democracies. The outcomes of TPF have been instrumental in further strengthening the multifaceted ties between the two countries.

5 India Surpasses Japan to Become 3rd Largest Auto Market Globally

Why in News:

According to a Nikkei Asia report, India has overtaken Japan in vehicle sales last year to become the world's third-largest auto market. China is at the top of this list, while America is in second place.

Main Points:

- India's total sales of new vehicles stood at around 4.25 million units, based on preliminary results, topping the 4.2 million sold in Japan. While new vehicles that got delivered in India totalled 4.13 million between January and November 2022, according to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers' data. December's sales volume, as reported by Maruti Suzuki, India's largest carmaker, led the total to hit the 4.25 million units mark.
- According to Nikkei Asia, the figure for sales of new vehicles in India may witness an even bigger rise as the country further expects the inclusion of pending fourth-quarter sales data for commercial vehicles, along with year-end results yet to be released by Tata Motors and other automakers.

India's impressive progress:

- The figures are impressive after fluctuations that were witnessed in the Indian auto industry between 2018-2020. In 2019, volume had fallen even below the 4 million unit mark from the about 4.4 million figure of 2018. A lot of this downfall was a result of the credit crunch that had impacted the nonbank sector that year. This was followed by the obvious decline in the year 2020 because of the COVID-19 outbreak when vehicle sales fell even lower than the 3 million unit mark. In 2021, auto sales bounced back to close to 4 million units again. However, the sales figure was hampered because of a shortage of automotive chips.
- In 2022, the automotive chip issue began to ease up, paving way for the sector to come to

normalcy. Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki, and other automakers could see an increase in sales last year. Japan's auto sales hit an all-time high of 7.77 million units in the year 1990. The sales have fallen by almost half ever since. With the Japan dwindling population, there's little chance of sales to rebound significantly in the future or anytime soon. Japan had gotten surpassed by China as the second-largest vehicle market in 2006. China further achieved good growth in the sector and overtook the United States to acquire the top slot for global market size in 2009.

6 The Voice of Global South Summit

Why in News:

India hosted 'The Voice of Global South summit' in virtual mode on 12-13th January 2023. Around 120 countries participated in the summit.

About the Summit:

The 'Voice of Global South Summit' under the theme 'Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose' envisages bringing together countries of the Global South to share their perspectives and priorities on a common platform. The summit had ten sessions and each session witnessed the participation of leaders or ministers from 10-20 countries. The inaugural and concluding sessions were at the head of state or government level and was hosted by the Prime Minister. The theme of the Inaugural Leaders' session was 'Voice of Global South – for Human-Centric Development' and that of the Concluding Leaders' session was 'Unity of Voice -Unity of Purpose'. Eight ministerial sessions on the following themes:

- Finance Ministers' session on 'Financing People-Centric Development'.
- Environment Ministers' session on 'Balancing Growth with Environment Friendly Lifestyles (LiFE)'.
- Foreign Ministers' session on 'Priorities of the Global South – Ensuring a Conducive Environment'.
- Energy Ministers' session on 'Energy Security and Development – Roadmap to Prosperity'.
- Health Ministers' session on 'Cooperation to Build Resilient Healthcare Systems'.
- Education Ministers' session on 'Human Resource Development and Capacity Building'.
- Commerce and Trade Ministers' session on 'Developing Synergies in the Global South – Trade, Technology, Tourism, and Resources'.
- Foreign Ministers' session on 'G-20: Suggestions for India's Presidency'.

Significance of the summit:

G20 Presidency-

- As India assumed the G20 Presidency, the External Affairs Minister of India iterated the country's role as the "voice of the Global South", that is otherwise under-represented in global forums.
- The virtual summit is significant as Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier indicated that the priorities of G20 would be shaped in consultation with developing countries.
- The common problem faced by Global south-As most global south countries face common problems of rising prices, losses due to climate change, radicalisation, terrorism, poverty, etc. the summit will provide a common platform to deliberate on these concerns and to exchange ideas and solutions to unite in voice and purpose in addressing these elements.

What is Global South?

- The term 'Global South' began by loosely referring to those countries that were left out of the industrialisation and including countries of Asia, Africa, and South America.
- It is the opposite of 'Global North' which refers loosely to countries like the US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia, and New Zealand.
- There is an economic division between Global South and Global North which gave rise to South-South cooperation, a collaboration of developing and least-developed countries.

Way forward:

- The initiative inspired by PM Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas' and underpinned by India's philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', would champion India as leader of the global south.
- Further in the current world where the rigid distinction between North and south diminishing the summit along with G20 presidency would allow India to be bridge between North and South.

7

Indo-Franch Relations

Why in News:

During the 36th round of India-France Strategic Dialogue, Indian National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval met with his French counterpart Emmanuel Bonne. The objective of the discussion was to present a forward looking strategic roadmap for the bilateral partnership in the field of defense and security to address contemporary geopolitical trends.

About India France relations:

- The Indo-French strategic partnership has been driven by peace, stability and strategic autonomy by both sides. In fact, France has not only consistently supported India's position on various international issues, but has also established itself as India's second largest defense supplier in 2017-22. Similarly, India has consistently come out to defend and support France on issues ranging from its counter-terrorism policies to its international geopolitical role.
- The Indo-French strategic partnership presents itself as a practical framework of convergence between the major powers of the East and the West. Recognizing the complexity of the international geopolitical landscape, the two states have managed to effectively deepen and broaden their cooperation to address contemporary trends in international affairs. Unlike other European powers that seek to establish themselves in the Indo-Pacific for large-scale economic gain, France's interests are exclusively political-security in nature. France has outlined a strategy for the Indo-Pacific, which seeks to actively strengthen Paris' diplomatic network and strategic partnership in the region.
- Being an Indo-Pacific power and a traditional security provider in the Indian Ocean region, India's growing diplomatic and material capabilities are enhancing its geopolitical position in the region. Therefore, deepening strategic ties with India may open up new diplomatic channels for France to strengthen its position in the Indo-Pacific region, examples of which include India and France's engagement with countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Indonesia and Japan. At the bilateral level, the two countries have also portrayed their maturity by accommodating and respecting each other's sensitivities and actively finding a way forward to further strengthen and deepen their partnership.

Conclusion:

India France Strategic Partnership 2023 will play an important role in providing solutions to the problems faced. Both countries, with significant physical potential and shared interests and concerns, will need to continually develop and steer the potential of their strategic relationship to pragmatically address changes in the security and geopolitical architecture of the Indo-Pacific.



Environmental Issue



1

New Dwarf Boa found in Ecuadorian Amazon

Why in News:

A new species of the dwarf boa has been discovered in the upper Amazon basin, reported a paper published in the journal named, European Journal of Taxonomy.

About Dwarf Boa:

- The snake from the Tropidophiidae family was found in the cloud forest in north-eastern Ecuador and was up to 20 cm long.
- It was named tropidophis cacuangoae after the indigenous farmer's rights activist, Dolores Cacungo.
- It can be identified from other reptiles in the same genus based on its external features and bone structure.
- Its colouring is primarily light brown with darker brown or black blotches- similar to a boa constrictor.
- The species inhabit eastern tropical piedmont and lower evergreen montane forests in the Amazon tropical rainforest biome and is suspected to be an Ecuadorian endemic.
- The two specimens were found within 50 km of each other- Colonso Chalupas National Reserve and Sumak Kawsay Park.
- The species is unusual for having a "vestigial pelvis", which is characteristic of primitive snake.
- Significance of the discovery:
- The vestigial pelvis feature could be evidence that snakes descended from lizards that lost their limbs over millions of years.
- The discovery of T cacungoae demonstrates that small cryptic vertebrates can undergo large periods of time without being detected and formally describe by science.

Way Forward:

It highlights a critical need to accelerate research in remote areas where information gaps remain but is suspected of harbouring high biodiversity and are severely threatened by human impacts.

2

Bomb Cyclone & Its Impact

Why in News:

Recently, heavy snow and rain in the USA and Canada due to bomb cyclones caused widespread property damage and deaths.

About 'Bomb Cyclone' or Bombogenesis:

- Bomb cyclone is defined by how rapidly the pressure drops in the low pressure air mass,

which is by at least 24 millibars in 24 hours. This quickly increases the pressure difference, or gradient, between the two air masses, making the winds stronger. This process of rapid intensification has a name 'bombogenesis'.

- In simple terms, bombogenesis is a storm (area of low pressure) that rapidly intensifies. Most of these storms occur over the ocean. The Storm can be tropical or non-tropical in nature. Bombogenesis is also known by other names like weather bomb or bomb cyclone.

Why in the USA and Canada?

- The western North Atlantic is a favorite region for storms to undergo bombogenesis. This is a region where cold air from North America collides with warm air over the Atlantic Ocean. The warm waters of the Gulf Stream may also provide a boost in a festering storm.

Effects of Bomb Cyclone:

- Bomb cyclones can also bring heavy rain and snow that extend winter over much of the US from Montana to the East Coast during the Christmas holiday. It recently struck cities including Atlanta, Boston, Chicago and New York, with Buffalo being the worst-hit city with winds of up to 70 miles per hour. It has also affected the power problem, road transport and air flights.

How should one prepare for a bomb cyclone?

- The National Weather Service advises traveling for emergencies and stocking up on essentials at home. If traveling by vehicle, one should have a winter survival kit and to stay inside the vehicle in case of being stuck in the snow. When electricity is transmitted by cables above the ground, the power supply can fail in the event of blizzards and heavy snow. Keeping in mind the advice of experts, better preparation for the cyclone should be done so that the damage can be reduced.

3

National Green Hydrogen Mission

Why in News:

Recently, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the National Green Hydrogen Mission to promote sustainable and renewable energy supply, under which the government plans to spend about Rs 19744 crores.

About National Green Hydrogen Mission:

- The National Green Hydrogen Mission 2023 was launched with a target to develop green hydrogen production capacity of at least five million metric tonnes (MMT) and an associated renewable

energy capacity of about 125 gigawatts (GW) by 2030.

- It will be implemented under the overall supervision and guidance of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. The initial outlay for the National Green Hydrogen Mission will be Rs 19,744 crore, while the total investment will be around Rs 8 lakh cr.
- It is expected to create 6 lakh jobs, reduce fossil fuel imports by over Rs 1 lakh cr. and reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by about 50 MMT.

Objective of National Green Hydrogen Mission:

- Creation of export opportunities for Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.
- Decarbonisation of the industrial, mobility and energy sectors.
- Reduced dependence on imported fossil fuels and feedstock.
- Development of indigenous manufacturing capabilities.
- Creation of employment opportunities.
- Development of cutting edge technologies.
- Facilitate demand creation, production, utilization and export of green hydrogen.



About Green Hydrogen:

- Hydrogen is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, non-toxic and highly flammable gaseous substance that is abundantly available in the universe. It is mainly of three types; Green, Grey and Blue hydrogen.
- Green hydrogen is produced through electrolysis using renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind or hydroelectric power. 'Green' depends on how electricity is generated to obtain hydrogen,

which does not emit greenhouse gases when burned.

Current Status of Green Hydrogen Experiments in India:

- Presently India's power grid is mainly coal based. Green hydrogen is currently not commercially viable due to the high technology used and high capital investment. The current cost in India is around Rs 350-400 per kg. It is likely to be viable at a production cost of less than Rs 100 per kg. Based on the success of the pilot projects, gas based DRI units are to be encouraged for large-scale adoption of the process.

Way forward:

The use of hydrogen as a clean fuel source had been talked about since the late 19th century, but a sudden rise in the price of oil in the 1970s led to serious consideration of hydrogen as a replacement for fossil fuels. Rapid research is being done on this in many countries of the world, in which India also needs to increase participation so that our energy dependence can be reduced and the goal of net zero can be achieved by 2070 through renewable energy.

4

Silent Valley Bird Survey

Why in News:

Recently a bird survey was conducted in Silent Valley National Park in Kerala in which a total of 175 species were identified. Of these, 17 new species were recorded. This survey marked the 30th anniversary of the first bird survey in Silent Valley.

Silent Valley National Park:

- Located in the Nilgiri Hills on the border of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Silent Valley National Park is a protected area of 89.52 km² (34.56 sq. mi) that is home to a variety of rare and endangered species.
- It was first discovered in 1847 by a botanist Robert Waite. These include the crimson-backed sunbird, the yellow-brown bulbul, the black bulbul, the Indian white-eye, and the Indian swiftlet.
- It was declared a National Park in the year of 1984.
- It is a rich area of biodiversity which includes the Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary, the new Amarambalam reserve forest, and the Nedumkayam rainforest in Nilambur.
- In 1914, the forest in the Silent Valley area was declared a reserve forest.
- The indigenous tribal groups living within the boundaries of the park include Irulas, Kurumbas, Mudugas and Kattunaikkars, the ethnic heritage of these communities is well preserved.

- A perennial river named Kunthipuzha flows in a north to south direction through the western part of the park and finally joins the Bharathapuzha.

Important points of the survey:

- The 17 new species identified during this period include Brown Wood Owl, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Malabar Woodshrike, White-throated Kingfisher, Indian Nightjar, Jungle Nightjar and Large Cuckooshrike.
- Birds sighted include Nilgiri Laughing Thrush, Nilgiri Flowerpecker, Brown Cheeked Fulvetta, Black and Orange Flycatcher, Gray Headed Canary Flycatcher, Greenish Warbler, Common Chiffchaff, Tytler Leaf Warbler, Shaheen Falcon, Nilgiri Wood Pigeon and Malabar Whistling Thrush.
- A team of 30 birders and forest staff participated in the survey which was conducted in collaboration with the Kerala Natural History Society.

Way forward:

Another bird survey will be conducted in the buffer zone of Silent Valley National Park in future. This survey will provide a more comprehensive understanding of bird populations in the National Park and help with conservation efforts.

5

Sustainable Shrimp Cultivation Provides Hope for Mangrove Restoration in the Sundarbans

Why in News:

In Sundarbans, a new shrimp farming initiative named "SAIME Initiative" offers hope for mangrove restoration.

What is the SAIME Initiative?

- The sustainable Aquaculture In Mangrove Ecosystem(SAIME) initiative was started in 2019. It is a community-based initiative for sustainable shrimp cultivation.
- The initiative was conceived by NGOs- Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS) and Global Nature Fund (GNF), Naturland, Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS).
- Under the initiative, farmers have taken up the cultivation of shrimp at 30 hectares in West Bengal. Additionally, they are restoring mangroves.

What is shrimp cultivation?

- Shrimp farming is an aquaculture business that exists in either a marine or freshwater environment, producing shrimp or prawns for human consumption.
- Shrimp cultivation is practised in about 15,000 to 20,000 hectares of the unique ecosystem in India.

Challenges of Shrimp culture in India:

- Luminescent bacterial infection.
- Availability of quality brood stock.
- Price problems.

About Mangrove:

- A mangrove is a shrub or tree that grows in coastal saline or brackish water.
- There are about 80 different species of mangrove trees. All of these trees grow in areas with low-oxygen soil, where slow-moving waters allow fine sediments to accumulate.
- Mangrove forests stabilize the coastline by reducing erosion caused by storm surges, currents, waves, and tides.

About Sundarbans:

- The Sundarbans forest is about 10,000 sq km across India and Bangladesh 40% of the forest lies in India.
- The forest in India is divided into the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve and 24 Parganas (South) Forest Division. Together with the forest in Bangladesh, it is the only mangrove forest where tigers are found.

Conclusion :

India remains a competitive supplier of value-added shrimp to the world due to its low cost of labor and the scale of economy it has managed to achieve by becoming one of the largest global producers of farmed shrimp. The established capacity of hatcheries, feed mills and processing plants will support future expansion.

6

Study on Asian Elephant

Why in News:

The Asian elephant, which is found throughout India and Southeast Asia, is the largest land mammal on the continent. But a recent study by a multi-disciplinary team of ecologists, conservationists, and scientists has found that the endangered Asian elephant has lost most of its "optimal" habitat due to human settlements, agriculture, etc.

Important points:

- Research has found that when barriers are erected in mountainous areas, gene flow among elephant populations is reduced, leading to inbreeding, reduced genetic diversity, and an increased risk of extinction.
- The Western Ghats mountain range, which includes the NBR, is home to about 6,000 wild elephants, the largest remaining population in the region. However, the Palghat Gap, a relatively flat area that has been transformed by agriculture, is cut off from human settlements and crop cultivation from the rest of the Ghats.

- It has confined elephants to hilly areas, where their habitat is less and dangerous terrain has increased their vulnerability.
- In addition, the study found that the northern and southern elephant populations in the Ghats have moderate levels of genetic variation, indicating limited gene flow between the two regions. The lack of connectivity through corridors has resulted in the fragmentation of the elephant population.

Asian elephants:

- Distribution in 13 countries allows the different subspecies to inhabit a wide range of habitats from grasslands to tropical forests. Their advanced intelligence and complex social structure allow them to adapt to the available resources in a rapidly changing environment.
- There are three subspecies of the Asian elephant.
 - » Sri Lankan Elephant
 - » Indian elephant
 - » Sumatran elephant

Conservation Status of the Asian Elephant:

- The Asian elephant has been listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List since 1986 as elephant populations have declined over the past 60–55 years.
- Project Elephant was launched by the Government of India in 1992 to provide financial and technical support for the conservation of wild elephants in India.
- The protection of elephants is threatened by deforestation, human encroachment, poaching for elephant skin, and tusks. The demand for elephant skin has increased tremendously. It is used in Chinese medicine.

Way forward:

Fencing by a multi-disciplinary team of ecologists, conservationists and scientists could alter the gene flow of Asian elephant populations within protected areas. Management of elephant habitats helps ensure the long-term survival of the species through the removal or prevention of poaching. By creating awareness among people about the importance of conservation, and by providing better healthcare for elephants, elephants, and their habitat can be conserved.

7

Joshimath: Catastrophe in Making

Why in News:

Recently landslides were reported in the areas around Joshimath in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand. To deal with this, the Central Government and the State Government have made plans to rehabilitate and provide financial assistance to the people living there. The situation has worsened since February 2021

when the flood caused by the outburst of a glacial lake severely affected and damaged the region.

Natural Causes:

- Joshimath is situated at an altitude of 1890 meters in the foothills of the Garhwal Himalayas, near which the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers flow. Due to its fragile nature, geological structures and active tectonism, it is prone to landslides and earthquakes (High-Risk Seismic Zone-V). The Himalayas, the world's youngest fold mountains, are highly susceptible to erosion, landslides and earthquakes. In addition, the area around Joshimath town lies on a layer of loose material and highly weathered gneiss rocks which make it highly vulnerable to sinking.

Human Activities:

- Felling of trees for commercial purposes, road construction, urbanization, increasing population, construction of dams and reservoirs destabilize and weaken the topography. Joshimath is the gateway to spiritual and tourist destinations like Badrinath, Hemkund Sahib, Auli etc. The Char-Dham highway project and hydroelectric projects are also being built to improve connectivity and infrastructure. Also a cause for concern is NTPC's Tapovan Vishnugad hydroelectric project, whose tunnel passes through geologically fragile area below Joshimath.

Early warning of constituted committees:

- In 1976, the government-appointed MC Mishra Committee had already warned that Joshimath was sinking and the construction work should be avoided in the area because of its sensitive nature. Furthermore, the "Uttarakhand Disaster 2013" report by National Institute of Disaster Management identified dam construction as one of the reasons for increasing Landslides.
- Landslides and land subsidence are regular features of the Uttarakhand Himalayan ecosystem. Therefore, prevention and mitigation of the disaster is the only way out. Micro-zonation of the area, and after that micro planning of each zone as per their geology should be undertaken. Construction activities and resource exploitation should not go beyond the carrying capacity of the area.

Way Forward:

Nature has its own tolerance level and limits which should be respected at any cost. As has been said by Gandhi Ji that "There is enough on earth for everybody's need, but not enough for everybody's greed". When greed takes priority over need and natural resources are exploited beyond the permitted threshold, Nature brings to the fore catastrophe like Joshimath land subsidence.



Science-Tech



1 108th Indian Science Congress

Why in News:

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 108th Indian Science Congress (ISC) via video conference at R.T.M. in Nagpur University (Maharashtra). Held from January 3rd to January 7th, the theme of this year's ISC was "Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment". The Congress witnessed a wide-ranging discussion on issues of sustainable development, women's empowerment, and the role of science and technology in achieving it.

About Indian Science Congress (ISC):

- ISC is a one-of-its-kind event in the country that brings together the scientific community with students and the general public on a common platform for fresh and innovative ideas on science-related matters organized by the Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA).
- ISCA is an independent body working in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in the Central Government. The first session of the Indian Science Congress was held in 1914 at the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. It was not organized last year, while it was held in Bangalore in 2020 and Punjab in 2019.

Highlights of the 108th Indian Science Congress:

- Addressing the Congress, the PM said that India is now among the top three countries in the world in terms of the number of Ph.D. research works and start-up ecosystems. India is ranked 40th in the Global Innovation Index 2022, as against 81st in 2015.
- Emphasizing the increasing participation of women in scientific research to make India self-reliant, PM Modi said that through this congress not only there should be the empowerment of women, but science should also be empowered by the participation of women. He advocated the maximum use of biotechnology.
- He supported the scientific community's need for a National Hydrogen Mission (which was launched on India's 75th Independence Day). For this, he stressed the need to manufacture important equipment like electrolyzers in India. The objective of the mission is to help meet climate targets (production of 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030) and make India a green hydrogen hub.
- He also acknowledged the role of low-cost satellite launch vehicles in India's fast-growing space sector and pointed out the importance of quantum computing. The Prime Minister said

that there is a need to keep Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR), and Virtual Reality (VR) as a priority.

Way forward:

Today, when technological use is being promoted to fulfil the aspirations of the general public of the world, there is a need to do more work to make its continuous, inclusive, sustainable, and affordable use, so that the issues related to environmental pollution and climate change can be resolved.

2 New Electrolytes Found Can help Better Ammonia Synthesis

Why in News:

A team of Indian scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) Mohali, an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology (DST) has developed a new aqueous electrolyte (NaBF_4) which can help make electrochemical ammonia synthesis more efficient. This will be useful for the industries producing green energy or hydrogen.

Insights into the new development:

- Scientists have introduced a new electrolyte called (NaBF_4) which acts as an N_2 -carrier in the medium.
- It also works as a full-fledged "co-catalyst" along with active material transition metal-doped nanocarbon (MnN_4) to deliver a high-yield of ammonia (NH_3) at absolutely ambient experimental conditions.
- This approach has resulted in an NH_3 production rate that approaches an industrial scale and surpasses many standard catalysts in other electrolyte media.
- The source of NH_3 was thoroughly studied and confirmed to be chiefly from the electrochemical reduction of the purged N_2 gas (make it N_2 saturated electrolyte to convert N_2 to NH_3).

About Sodium Tetrafluoroborate (NaBF_4):

- It is a salt that forms colourless or white water-soluble rhombic crystals.
- It is soluble in water but less soluble in organic solvents.

What is Electrolyte?

- An electrolyte is a substance which forms a solution that conducts electricity when dissolved in a polar solvent.
- Acids, bases, and salts are the most commonly known electrolytes.

Significance of the development:

- The electrochemical ammonia synthesis is largely limited by the poor solubility of nitrogen (N_2) in the aqueous electrolyte environment as well as competitive hydrogen evolution reaction.

- The obstacle faced was that the reduction of N₂ has actually occurred in the aqueous medium.
- In an attempt to solve these issues, the “ambient” conditions are mostly overseen.
- Researchers mostly work on catalyst development, while electrolyte improvisation still remains in infancy.
- According to a recent report, 90.7% of the research works related to Nitrogen reduction reaction (NRR) have focussed on the suitable catalyst development, while only 4.7% have been devoted to work on the electrolytes.

Way Forward:

This work supported by DST SERB brings a user-friendly aqueous electrolyte (NaBF₄) which can encourage researchers to work more on aqueous electrolyte designing towards an even improved NRR performance of the electro catalysts.

3 Government Proposes Policy on Online Gaming; Wagering not Allowed

Why in News:

Recently, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) released Draft rules for Online Gaming as an amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

Proposed Draft Rules:

- Self-regulatory body- It requires that all online gaming companies will have to register with the self-regulatory body.
- The self-regulatory body will comprise a board of directors with five members from diverse fields, including public policy, IT, psychology, and medicine.
- There could be more than one regulatory body and all of them will have to inform the Centre with a detailed report on the registration criteria for the games.
- The gaming firms will be required to undertake additional due diligence, including KYC of users, transparent withdrawal and refund, and a fair distribution of winnings.
- Gaming companies will have to secure a random number generation certificate, typically used by platforms that offer card games to ensure statistically random and unpredictable outputs.
- Prohibition on betting- Online gaming companies will be restricted from placing bets on the results of games.
- Companies will also be required to get a “no bot certificate”.
- Online gaming platforms will have to appoint-
 - » A compliance officer to ensure norms follow-up,
 - » A nodal officer to act as a liaison officer with the government and assist law enforcement

agencies, and

- » A grievance officer to resolve complaints

Need for Regulation:

- The rules are aimed at safeguarding users against potential harm from skill-based games.
- Women make up around 40 to 45% of online gamers in India. Hence, it becomes imperative to maintain the security of the industry.
- It will pave way for comprehensive regulation of online gaming and curtail state-wise regulatory fragmentation.
- The revenue of the online gaming industry is expected to reach \$5 billion in 2025.
- The industry grew at a Compound Annual Growth rate (CAGR) of 38 per cent in India between 2017-20, as opposed to 8% in China and 10% in the USA.
- According to a report by VC firm Sequoia and a management consulting company, the industry is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15% to reach Rs.153 billion in revenue by 2024.

Way forward:

The draft proposal by the Government is a long-standing need which would bring online gaming under uniform central regulation. This will yield into innovations and the industry would evolve to be more accountable and safer to the end consumers.

4 Cyber Threat Predictions Report for 2023

Why in News:

Barracuda Networks, a trusted partner and a leading provider of cloud-first security solutions, revealed threat predictions that would leave the organisations exposed in 2023.

About the Report:

The report highlights that in 2022, geopolitical conflicts further reminded that cyber threats have no borders and just how vulnerable the world is to cyberattacks. As per the report, the top cyber threat trends that organisations need to be ready for in 2023 are-

- **Ransomware-** In 2022, ransomware attacks were witnessed against individuals based on their personal social media profiles. The year witnessed an increased use of wiperware. In 2023, this wiperware emanating from Russia will likely spill over into other countries as geopolitical tensions continue. Thus, organisations will experience an increased frequency of ransomware attacks with new tactics.
- **More zero-day vulnerabilities:** In 2022, there were 21,000 Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVEs) registered. Many of them were classed as ‘critical’, and many were actively exploited by attackers. Organizations need to have a team in

place ready to patch software and remediate it as soon as possible.

- **Web Application Attacks-** Web application attacks, including those targeting vulnerable third-party software libraries, are also expected to be a significant threat in 2023. It is crucial for organizations to secure their web applications and ensure that they are regularly testing and updating them to prevent these types of attacks.
- **Supply chain attacks-** 2022 was the year of the supply chain attack with a large number of high-profile incidents occurring around the world and it has led more attackers to look for the weakest link in attacking companies.
- **Credential theft-** These credentials open the door for remote access, email and corporate web applications storing customer data.
- **The exploitation of Vulnerabilities in IoT-** As the Internet of Things (IoT) continues to grow in popularity, the exploitation of vulnerabilities in these devices is expected to be a significant threat. It is important for organizations to properly secure their IoT devices and ensure that they are regularly updated to prevent against attacks.

Cause of concern for India:

- India was ranked among the top five countries to be affected by cybercrime, according to a report by online security firm Symantec Corp.
- According to CERT-In, 1,267,654 cybercrimes were witnessed in the country between January to November 2022

Way forward:

In 2023 organizations need to be ready to be targeted by every kind of cyber threat, regardless of their size or industry sector. The growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in threat detection will make a significant difference to security. Therefore companies need to invest in 24/7 human-led threat hunting and response and enhance employee security awareness in order to mitigate human risk.

5

IISER Pune: iVOFm Removes Pollutants from Water

Why in News:

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune has custom-designed a unique molecular sponge-like material, iVOFm, which can swiftly clean polluted water by soaking up sinister contaminants. The results were published in the journal, Angewandte Chemie.

About the material- iVOFm:

- The presently used sorbent materials frequently trap the contaminants through an ion exchange method to filter water. However, they have low

kinetics and specificity.

- The Viologen-unit grafted organic framework (iVOFm) employs an amalgamation of electrostatics-driven ion exchange combined with nano-sized macropores and specific binding sites for the targeted pollutants.
- Rapid Diffusion- The inherent cationic nature of iVOFm and macro porosity (cavities > 75 μm) allows fast diffusion of pollutants.
- Unlike normal sorbent, iVOFm is found to be very selective towards toxic pollutants.

Water Contamination:

- Pollutants- Organic pollutants such as organic dyes, antibiotics, pesticides, etc. inorganic pollutants like iodides, and oxo-pollutants like perhenate are carcinogenic in the freshwater source.
- Systematic studies have shown that pollutants can directly endanger people and living things.

Significance of the material:

- It demonstrated incredibly quick capture of all the pollutants both organic & inorganic with a removal rate of more than 93% in 30 seconds.
- Sulfadimethoxine antibiotics may be effectively removed by the developed material.
- Additionally, it can be used repeatedly to purify tainted water.

About the Ion exchange technique:

- It is a water purification technique where dissolved impurity ions in water are replaced by hydrogen and hydroxyl ions, purifying the water.
- It is very similar to Water softeners, as they both can remove magnesium and calcium ions from the water.

Way Forward:

This cationic compound is adaptable for sequestering various pollutants and is a possible solution to the water pollution crisis.

6

Artificial Photosynthesis to make Green Hydrogen

Why in News:

For the first time, researchers from the University of Michigan have used the process of artificial photosynthesis to produce green hydrogen.

What is artificial Photosynthesis?

- We all have been reading about the process of photosynthesis since childhood. It is the process used by green plants to convert light energy into chemical energy. But researchers have used the process of artificial photosynthesis to produce green hydrogen. The technique is known as photocatalysis which consists of a transparent wafer of glass fibre placed in a

semiconducting material. It absorbs sunlight to split water molecules into oxygen and hydrogen ions. The hydrogen produced through this method is green since both the sunlight and water are in abundance and naturally occurring. Conventionally, the green hydrogen is produced by process of electrolysis, where water is split into its constituents using electricity. Both the electricity and electrolyser in this case should be obtained from non-polluting renewable sources.

How efficient is this technology?

- This technology thrives on the use of semiconductor named Indium Gallium Nitride (InGaN) which is highly efficient as compared to current methods of producing hydrogen. It harnesses broad spectrum of sunlight including infrared radiation to split water molecules at a record efficiency of 9% which is ten times better than the available devices. Moreover its small size and affordability makes it an attractive option. It uses concentrated light and may withstand light and heat extremities. It is highly efficient at around 70 degree Celsius, which not only accelerates water splitting reaction but also suppress the tendency of oxygen and hydrogen atoms to recombine into water. In the present scenario of declining water resources all over the world, this device works well on seawater with an efficiency of over 6%.

Potentiality for India:

- In view of recently launched National Green Hydrogen Mission and taking note of India's Panchamrit commitments, this technology could be highly beneficial. Currently, most of the hydrogen produced in India is grey hydrogen which is obtained from the process of methane steam reforming. Even researchers in India, including from the IITs, BARC, and the Central Electrochemical Research Institute among others are making headway in the use of photo catalytic and photo electrochemical (PEC) technologies for water splitting.

Way forward:

In a world racing towards carbon neutrality and circular economy, this technology provides solution for efficient, effective and affordable hydrogen production.

Quantum, Semiconductor, Clean Energy, Advanced Wireless, Biotechnology, Geosciences, Astrophysics and Defence. They also discussed about opening new avenues of cooperation in areas like Critical Minerals, Smart Agriculture, Bio-Economy and 6G.

About these technologies:

- **Artificial Intelligence:** Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the emulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions. The term can also be applied to any machine that exhibits characteristics associated with the human mind, such as learning and problem solving.
- **Cyber security:** Cyber security is the application of techniques, procedures, and controls to protect systems, networks, programs, devices, and data from cyber-attacks. It aims to reduce the risk of cyber-attacks and protect against unauthorized exploitation of systems, networks and technologies.
- **Quantum technology:** Quantum technology is a class of technology that works by using the principles of quantum mechanics (the physics of sub-atomic particles), including quantum entanglement and quantum superposition. Its application include positioning systems, communication technology, electric and magnetic field sensors, gravimetry as well as geophysical areas of research such as civil engineering and seismology.
- **About critical minerals:** A critical mineral is a metallic or non-metallic element that has two characteristics: It is essential for the functioning of our modern technologies, economies or national security and. There is a risk that its supply chains could be disrupted. Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth elements are essential components in many rapidly growing clean energy technologies – from wind turbines and electricity networks to electric vehicles.
- **About smart agriculture:** Smart agriculture refers to the usage of technologies like Internet of Things, sensors, location systems, robots and artificial intelligence on your farm. The ultimate goal is increasing the quality and quantity of the crops while optimizing the human labor used. Technologies used in smart agriculture are: Precision irrigation and precise plant nutrition, Climate management and control in greenhouses, Sensors – for the soil, water, light, moisture, for temperature management, robotics and Analytics and optimization platforms etc.

Conclusion:

The technical cooperation between India and USA will help in the technological development between the two countries and will provide more opportunities to the scientists and people of both the countries.

7

Indo-US Cooperation in Science and Technology

Why in News:

- A high level US delegation of the premier National Science Foundation (NSF) has discussed and proposed deeper cooperation with India in areas like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cyber Security,



Economic Issues



1 Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)

Why in News:

The Prime Minister of India launched the government's Aspirational Block Program (ABP), aimed at improving the performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters. ABP was launched during the concluding session of the second National Conference of Chief Secretaries.

Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP):

- The ABP is launched on the lines of the Aspirational District Program (ADP) which was launched in 2018 and covered 112 districts across the country.
- ABP is aimed at improving the performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters.
- Under ABP, 500 blocks across 31 states and Union Territories have been identified for quarterly ranking based on their performance in sectors such as health, education, and nutrition.
- More than half of these blocks are in 6 states- Uttar Pradesh, (68 blocks), Bihar (61), Madhya Pradesh (42), Jharkhand (34), Odisha (29), and West Bengal (29).
- States and NITI Aayog will work together to establish ranking indicators, with the private sector also able to contribute to the development of these blocks.
- The first ranking is set to be released in April 2022.

About Aspirational District Programme (ADP):

- Launched in 2018, ADP seeks to improve socioeconomic outcomes in districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas.
- It focuses on the strength of each district, identifying low-hanging fruits for immediate improvement and measuring progress by ranking districts on a monthly basis.
- 3C Strategy-
 - » Convergence (of Central & State Schemes)
 - » Collaboration (of Centre, State level 'Prabhari' officers & District Collectors)
 - » Competition (among districts driven by mass movement)
- The ranking of districts is based on 49 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under 5 broad socio-economic themes- Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Infrastructure.

Way Forward:

The Aspirational Block Programme (ABP) would strive to improve the quality of life for citizens in

the most backward blocks of the country through targeted development initiatives. This will enable holistic development in those areas that required added assistance.

2 Decennial Census in India postponed until September

Why in News:

In a communication to all states, the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India conveyed that the date of freezing of administrative boundaries has been extended till June 30.

More on the News:

- The exercise to update the National Population Register (NPR) was scheduled to be carried out across the country in 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- According to norms, Census can be conducted only three months after the freezing of boundary limits of administrative units such as districts, sub-districts, tehsils, talukas, and police stations.
- The boundaries of the administrative units for the ensuing census will now be frozen with effect from July 1, 2023.

About Census:

- Census is the process of collecting, compiling, and disseminating demographic, economic, and social data pertaining to, at a specific time, to all persons in a country or a well-defined part of the country.
- **Nodal Ministry-** The decennial census is done by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Constitutional Status-** Population Census is a subject under the Union List under Article 246 of the Indian Constitution.
- **Legal Status-** The census is conducted under the provisions of the Census Act, 1948.
- **The first non-** Synchronous census in India was conducted in 1872, during the reign of Lord Mayo.
- The first synchronous census in India was conducted in 1881 during the time of Lord Ripon. Since then, it has been undertaken once every ten years.
- **Confidentiality-** The Census Act, 1948 guarantees confidentiality and specifies penalties for non-compliance with the provisions of the Act.

Significance of Census:

- Census provides trends in population characteristics.
- Researchers and Demographers use census data for administration, planning, and policy-making.
- Census is also used for the demarcation of

constituencies and allocation of representation to Parliament, Legislative assemblies of states, and local bodies.

- The Finance Commission recommends grants to the states based on population figures from Census data.

Way Forward:

The Census needs to be conducted in order to capture the changed demography of the country. Proper campaigns should be launched to make people aware of the importance of the Census.

3 SC Ruling on Demonetisation

Why in News:

Recently, the Supreme Court upheld the government's decision to demonetise currency notes of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 by a 4:1 majority.

What are the Rulings of the Verdict?

Majority Ruling:

- The majority held that the Centre's notification dated November 8, 2016, is valid and satisfies the test of proportionality.
- The RBI and the Centre had been in consultation with each other for six months before the November 8 notification issued under Section 26(2) of the RBI Act, 1934.
- The statutory procedure under Section 26(2) of the RBI Act was not violated merely because the Centre had taken the initiative to "advise" the Central Board to consider recommending demonetisation. Further, the Centre's power to demonetise any series of bank notes of any denomination can be used to demonetise the whole series of currencies.
- On a hasty decision, the court said such measures undisputedly are required to be taken with utmost confidentiality and speed. If the news of such a measure is leaked out, it is difficult to imagine how disastrous the consequences would be.
- Demonetisation was done for the "proper purposes" of eliminating fake currency, black money and terror financing.

Minority Ruling:

- **No independent application of mind by RBI-** The Central bank did not apply its mind independently while recommending the cancellation of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes as proposed by the Centre.
- **Interpretation of Section 26(2) of the RBI Act-** the recommendation did not originate from the RBI under Section 26(2) of the RBI Act. A proposal originating from the central government is not akin to a proposal originating from the Central Board of the Bank.
- **Executive order not enough for such a step-** The demonetisation has to be done through

legislation made by parliament rather than through executive notification.

What is the Test of Proportionality?

- The test of proportionality doctrine is used by courts to decide cases where two or more legitimate rights clash.
- To determine whether something can be said to pass the test of proportionality, courts in India typically take a four-pronged approach wherein the legitimacy, suitability, and necessity of a decision or law are examined, in addition to a balancing check on whether said decision or law encroaches on rights to an excessive or arbitrary degree.

The legal process for demonetisation:

- Under section 26(2) of the RBI Act 1934 RBI central board is empowered to make a recommendation to the government of India to withdraw any notes from circulation. This is called "Demonetization" and was done thrice in India after independence.
- After the demonetization of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 notes on 8/11/2016, the Government of India issued Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Ordinance, 2016 to curtail the liability of RBI regarding note exchange and at the same time make it punishable to hold old currency notes beyond a limit of 10-25. In the Budget 2017, the same ordinance was passed by parliament.

Way forward:

Demonetization was an expeditious move to boldly counter the black money and parallel economy (illegal economy, such as money laundering, smuggling, etc.) threat and promote the digitisation of the economy. Further, this move also shows the boldness of the government to tackle these issues which have remained a thorn in the growth success story of this generation.

4 BIS Portal for mapping of Industrial Units and Labs

Why in News:

The 76th Foundation Day of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) was celebrated in New Delhi and various initiatives were launched by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

Initiatives Launched:

- 1. Portal for Mapping of Industrial Units and Laboratories:**
 - This is a centralised platform for information on industrial units and laboratories across the country.
 - This will enable an analysis of test facilities in India and help entrepreneurs in accessing information about testing facilities.
- 2. Standards National Action Plan (SNAP) 2022-27-**
 - It is a document to serve as a strong foundation

for standardization to meet the emerging technologies and concerns of sustainability and climate change.

- SNAP 2022-27 will play an important role in steering the national standardization efforts which could lead to standards becoming a key enabler of India's economic aspirations.
- The implementation of key recommendations and strategies of the document will be pivotal in enriching and strengthening "Quality Culture" in India.

3. Revision Exercise of National Building Code of India (NBC 2016)-

- It is initiated by the BIS, through its concerned technical committee named National Building Code Sectional Committee, to include:
 - » Sustainable city planning norms.
 - » New and sustainable building materials.
 - » Design concepts.
 - » Construction technologies.
 - » Building and plumbing services.

4. Revised National Electrical Code of India 2023-

- It is a comprehensive electrical code prepared by BIS.
- It is a national instrument providing guidelines for regulating the Electrical Installation practices across the country.
- India's first National Electrical Code was formulated in 1985 and revised in 2011.
- The current revision includes the requirements for electrical installation as per the latest International best practices at special locations like Hospitals, Hotels, Swimming Pools, Amusement Parks, multi-storied buildings, etc.

5. Training Courses on the National Building Code of India 2016 and National Electrical Code of India-

- BIS, through its training arm National Institute of Training for Standardization (NITS), has designed training courses on NBC 2016 & NEC 2023 for national capacity building.

6. Standards Clubs in Schools-

- Through this, BIS aims to expose science students of class 9th and above, to the concepts of Quality and Standardization through student-centric activities.
- Till date, 4000 Standards Clubs across India have been established by BIS.
- The target is to create 10,000 clubs by the end of 2022-23.

About Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):

- BIS is a statutory body student-centric the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Act 1986.
- It was created for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

- It works under the ambit of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

Way Forward:

Keeping in mind the motto of 'Zero Effect Zero Defect', these initiatives aim to promote a focus on quality and standardization in the country. They will contribute to the overall development and progress of India.

5

Remote work helped in saving jobs during COVID-19: ILO

Why in News:

As per a report, titled 'Working Time and Work-Life Balance Around the World', published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), short-term work and work-sharing measures or other forms of job retention helped to reduce the volume of work and save jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlights of the Report:

- The report examines the effects that working hours and time schedules have on the performance of businesses and their employees.
- The crisis also created the possibility of increasing the hours of work for new economic bottleneck areas, such as in healthcare or pharmaceuticals.
- Telework contributed to the COVID-19 crisis response by reducing the social contacts of the employees and enabling them to perform work outside the employer's premises.
- The report found that a substantial portion of the global workforce is working either long or short hours when compared to a standard eight-hour day/40-hour working week.
- Great Resignation Phenomenon- it has placed work-life balance at the forefront of social and labour market issues in the post-pandemic world.

Impact:

- The flexible working hours enabled individuals as well as companies, enterprises and industries to collectively reduce work hours.
- It sustained purchasing power and created the possibility of cushioning the effects of the economic crisis.
- Teleworking helped in maintaining organisational operations and preserving jobs.
- It laid the ground for a healthier work-life balance.
- The report also cautioned that the benefits of some flexible arrangements such as spending more time with family may be accompanied by gender imbalances and health risks.

About ILO:

- ILO is the only tripartite specialized UN Agency established in 1919.

- It brings together governments, employers, and workers of 187 member States, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programs to promote decent work for all.
- **Objective-** to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.

Way Forward:

The countries are required to formulate policies necessary to remedy the weaknesses of working-time instruments that became apparent during the pandemic. Work-life balance policies provide significant benefits to enterprises, and such policies are a 'win-win' for both employers and employees.

6 Reserve Bank of India puts on hold NUE licensing

Why in News:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is said to have put on hold licensing of the New Umbrella Entity (NUE) network, a fintech institution planned as a rival to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). Six groupings, which included Facebook, Google, Amazon, Flipkart and others, had applied for NUE licenses.

What is New Umbrella Entity (NUE)?

- As per RBI, NUE is an entity under the Companies Act 2013 that will manage and operate the new payment system in the retail sector such as ATMs, white-label POS, UPI, etc.
- It is a non-profit entity which will manage clearing and settlement systems that could be an alternative to the bank-promoted NPCI.
- Only those entities who that are owned and controlled by Indian citizens with at least three years of experience in the payment segment can become promoters of NUE.
- Foreign companies are allowed to own a maximum of 25%.
- According to RBI guidelines, it will have minimum paid-up capital of Rs 500 crore, with no single promoter group holding over 40% investment in the capital.
- NUE will have to abide by corporate governance norms and the 'fit and proper' criteria for persons to be appointed to the board.
- NUE will end the monopoly of NPCI, which is currently the epicentre of digital payments in the country.

About National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI):

- NPCI was established by the RBI and the Indian Bank's Association in 2008 under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act,

2007.

- It has been incorporated as a "Not for Profit" Company under the provisions of Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013.
- The ten core promoter banks included State Bank of India, PNB, Canara Bank, Bank of Baroda, Union Bank, Bank of India, HDFC, ICICI, Citibank and HSBC.
- NPCI has developed the country's key payment railroads, including UPI, IMPS, and National Financial Switch (NFS), along with Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) that supports Jan Dhan Yojna.

Way Forward:

NUEs were aimed to foster competition and "de-risk" India's burgeoning digital payments ecosystem, where much of the settlement burden has fallen on the non-profit NPCI over recent years. NUEs will complement NPCI in taking India's digital payment success story to new heights.

7 Investor Risk Reduction Access (IRRA) platform

Why in News:

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has asked exchanges to set up an Investor Risk Reduction Access platform. It aims to help investors in case there is a disruption of services caused by systems belonging to trading members

Why is this platform needed?

- With the growing reliance on technology in the securities market, there is an increase in instances of glitches in trading members' systems, some of which result in the disruption of trade services.
- In these cases, investors with open positions are at risk of the non-availability of avenues to close their positions, especially at times when the markets are volatile.
- It is like a contingency service provided by the stock exchanges in the event of disruptions like cyber-attacks etc.

What is an Investor Risk Reduction Access (IRRA) platform?

- The Investor Risk Reduction Access (IRRA) platform will be jointly developed by the stock exchanges to enable investors to square off their position or cancel the pending orders if there is a disruption of services provided by the trading members.
- Trading members, upon facing technical glitches which lead to disruption of trading services, can request for enablement of the IRRA service.
- The stock exchanges have to monitor the

parameters like connectivity, order flow, social media posts, etc. to suo moto initiate the enablement of the service if needed, irrespective of any such request by the trading member.

- Once the service is enabled, all the investors of the Trading members shall be informed by the exchange of the availability of the service through email/SMS and public notice on the exchange's website. Trading members shall also communicate the same by displaying it on their website.
- The stock exchanges have to design a detailed framework for reverse migration from the IRRA system to the trading member's trading system, as and when the trading system is revived successfully and a request is made in this regard.
- The stock exchanges have to carry out credible and periodic testing of the IRRA platform from time to time for smooth functioning of the service.
- The SEBI has asked the stock exchanges and clearing corporations to operationalize the IRRA platform by October 1, 2023.

What are Trading members?

- Trading Member means a stock broker registered with SEBI under the SEBI (Stock Brokers and Sub-Brokers) Regulations, 1992.
- They have rights to trade on their own account

as well as on account of their clients but have no right to clear and settle such trades itself.



About SEBI:

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India was constituted as a non-statutory body on April 12, 1988 through a resolution of the Government of India and was established as a statutory body in the year 1992 under the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
- The basic function of SEBI India is to protect the interests of investors in securities and promote the development of, and regulate the securities market and matters connected with it.



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Miscellaneous Issues

1 Kalasa Banduri Nala Project

Why in News:

Recently, the Water Minister of Karnataka decided to restart the long-pending Kalasa Banduri Nala Project. There has been a dispute between Goa, Maharashtra, and Karnataka over this project, being built on the Mahadayi River as Goa believes that this project may lead to a shortage of drinking water in its northern part.

About Kalasa Banduri Nala Project:

- The Kalasa Banduri Nala Project is to be constructed on the Mahadayi River against its tributaries named Kalasa and Banduri to divert water to the parched districts of Karnataka to meet the drinking water needs of Belagavi, Dharwad, Bagalkot and Gadag districts of Karnataka.
- Although the project was first proposed in the 1980s, it remained on paper due to disputes between Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra, leading to cost overruns. In 2006, when work on this project was started by Karnataka, Goa approached the Supreme Court to form a tribunal for water sharing. The tribunal was constituted by the then UPA government in November, 2010.

Dispute with the decision of the Tribunal:

- In 2018, the tribunal decided on water sharing that 13.42 TMC (of which 5.5 TMC for drinking water and the rest for hydropower) should be given to Karnataka, 1.33 TMC to Maharashtra and 24 TMC to Goa from the Mahadayi river basin.
- Of the 5.5 TMC allocation for drinking water, 3.8 TMC was to be diverted to the Malaprabha basin through the Kalasa and Banduri nalas (canals), this triggered another controversy.

About Mahadayi River:

- The Mahadayi or Mhadei (called Mandvi in Goa) is a west-flowing river that originates in the Bhimgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the Belagavi district of Karnataka. It is mainly a rain fed river. It is joined by several streams before being called Mandvi in Goa, Zuari River being another of the two rivers that flows through Goa. It flows 35 km in Karnataka and 82 km in Goa before joining the Arabian Sea.

About Water Disputes Tribunal:

- Under Article-262 of the Indian Constitution, the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 was brought regarding the river water dispute between the states, under which the tribunal has been constituted by the Central Government from time to time.
- The Sarkaria Commission (1983) had

recommended that the act needed some changes. The Government of India had introduced the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in the Parliament to reduce the increasing disputes between states.

Way forward:

Water is a limited resource and its demand is on continuous increase. The Government of India, State Governments, and other organizations need to maintain a balance on water conservation and its exploitation while also ensuring the common interest so that instead of increasing disputes among states, healthy competition exists among states for achieving their respective development goals.

2 Pre-Historic Rock Art of Ratnagiri

Why in News:

Rock art in India is one of the oldest physical pieces of evidence of early human creativity in the country. The rock art of Ratnagiri is evidence of the continuous existence of human settlements from the Mesolithic to the Early Historic era.

A mega oil refinery proposed in Barsu village of Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district has raised concerns from experts and conservationists as it could damage prehistoric geoglyphs.

What is the pre-historic rock art of Ratnagiri?

- The group of geoglyphs is spread over about 900 km along the Konkan coastline in Maharashtra and Goa. Geoglyphs are a form of prehistoric rock art, created on the surface of laterite plateaus (sada in Marathi).
- It is made by incising, lifting, carving or grinding away a portion of the rock surface. They can be in the form of rock paintings, etchings, cup marks and ring marks. Geoglyphs also show the existence of certain types of fauna.

What is the significance of the prehistoric rock art of Ratnagiri?

- The porous laterite rock, which is the basis for such carvings, is found extensively throughout the region.
- The largest rock engraving or geoglyph in India is at Kasheli in the Ratnagiri district, which consists of a large figure of an elephant with dimensions of 18X13 metres.
- These sites are protected by the State Archaeological Department and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- Ratnagiri district has over 1,500 pieces of such art, also known as "Katal Shilp" spread over 70 sites.
- UNESCO's tentative World Heritage List mentions seven sites with petroglyphs in Ratnagiri district

–Ukshi, Jambhrun, Kasheli, Rundhe Tali, Devihasol, Barsu and Devache Gothane.

Way forward:

The prehistoric sites of Ratnagiri are among the three Indian attractions that may soon become World Heritage Sites. These sites on the UNESCO list date back more than 12,000 years. A committee of experts appointed by the Union Ministry of Science and Technology visited Ratnagiri last month for the conservation of the geoglyph. More than 250 geoglyphs have been identified in the area where the petrochemical refinery will be built. Construction on the site and chemical reactions would cause the rock carvings to be destroyed. This refinery project can be set up somewhere 5-6 km ahead of the petroglyphs in Konkan so that these sites can be preserved for the future.

3 India - Pakistan Share List of Prisoners

Why in News?

Recently India and Pakistan shared the list of prisoners lodged in the respective jails of countries. India's Ministry of External Affairs reiterated its willingness to welcome any humanitarian step. This was done under the Consular Access Agreement which was signed in 2008.

Consular Access Agreement, 2008:

- India and Pakistan agreed to sign an agreement on consular access during the review of the fourth round of Composite Dialogue held after the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Under this agreement, both countries share the list of prisoners and fishermen living in their jails twice a year on January 1 and July 1 respectively.
- India has shared a list of 339 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 95 Pakistani fishermen in Indian custody. Similarly, Pakistan has shared a list of 51 civilian prisoners and 654 fishermen in its custody, who are Indians or believed to be Indians.
- Both countries called upon each other to ensure the safety and well-being of their citizens and fishermen and agreed to release them in an orderly manner.

Nuclear Installations and Facilities Treaty, 1988:

- This treaty was signed on December 31, 1988, while it was ratified on January 27, 1991. According to the provisions of Article-II of this treaty, both countries have to exchange lists of nuclear installations and facilities every year.
- According to this agreement, both countries have to inform each other about nuclear facilities. This practice of exchange of lists has been going on since January 1, 1992.

Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963:

- The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations

is an international treaty that defines consular relations between independent countries.

- Article 36 of the Vienna Convention states that foreign nationals arrested or detained by another country must inform the respective embassy or consulate about the arrest.
- If the detained foreign national demands such a request, the police must fax the notice to the embassy or consulate, which can then verify the person.

Way forward:

India and Pakistan, apart from being important countries in South Asia, are also neighbours, which makes it necessary for both nations to be in regular contact. In the future too, both countries will have to work together for the betterment of their citizens and regional unity and peace.

4 High Powered Committee for Preservation of Language and Culture in Ladakh

Why in News:

After the recent protest in Ladakh, a high-powered committee has been constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs under the chairmanship of Union Minister of State for Home, Nityanand Rai.

Considering the strategic position and importance of Ladakh, the committee will give suggestions for the protection of its unique culture and language.

About the High powered Committee:

- This committee was constituted to discuss measures to protect Ladakh's unique culture and language while promoting inclusive development and employment generation in Ladakh.
- It aims to ensure the empowerment of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs) of Leh and Kargil and secure employment opportunities for its people on its land.
- It is a 17-member committee, that includes the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, MP of Ladakh, Chairman of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh, Chairman of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil, apart from the Chairman. The people there have welcomed the formation of this committee.

About Ladakh Union Territory:

- Before the change in August 2019, Ladakh used to be a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which was governed by a temporary provision under Article-370.
- However, on October 31, 2019, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh respectively. Ladakh is famous for its remote mountainous beauty and rich culture.
- At present, it consists of two districts, Leh and

Kargil, with Leh as its capital. In 2020, there was a standoff between Indian and Chinese armies near Pangong Tso and Galwan Valley located in Eastern Ladakh.

- Ladakh serves as a gateway to Central Asia and China and a powerhouse of natural resources, solar radiation, geothermal resources, and the tourism industry.

Way forward:

Given the escalating standoff between China and Ladakh, the government should work in a coordinated manner to protect the interests of the local people of Ladakh so that prosperity and development can be increased by promoting peace, stability, and development there.

5 Purple Fest 2023: India's First Inclusion Festival

Why in News:

Recently, for the first time in the country, the inclusion festival 'Purple Fest: Celebrating Diversity' was celebrated. It was organized in Goa from 6 to 8 January. This festival is an attempt to connect the disabled with the mainstream of the society. Competitions like All India Open Para Table Tennis Championship, Unified Beach Cricket, Blind Cricket and Purple I-Run Marathon were organized in this fest.

About Purple Festival:

- The Purple Festival of Goa is the first ever inclusive festival towards empowerment of Divyangjan. This festival is an important initiative towards the complete inclusion of all Divyangs in the society. The festival was organized for the first time in Goa in collaboration with the State Commission, Social Welfare and Recreation Society.

Why purple theme?

- The color purple is associated with disability. The color has also been used by organizations and governments for campaigning, donations and fund raising to celebrate the power of people with disabilities.

Programmes organized:

- In this fest, various activities ranging from sports to employment were organized. The fest was divided into various categories including Purple Think Tank, Purple Fun, Purple Experience Zone, Purple Exhibition and Purple Rain. Exciting live performances, sports events, grand exhibitions, immersive experience zones, accessible movie screenings, and discussions on important topics such as inclusive education, tourism, employment and independent living were organized.

Efforts of the central government:

- Today every eighth person in the world has some kind of disability. More than two percent of India's population is disabled. In order to empower the persons with disabilities, the Central Government

along with the State Government has organized many programs on the lines of Purple Fest, which basically aims to empower the Divyangjans. The commitment of the Central Government is to provide good education, safe environment and equal employment opportunities to the disabled. Like Purple Fest, many programs have been organized in India, in which Divya Kala Shakti, Sign Language, T20 Blind Cricket World Cup etc. were prominent. The Central Government has always been striving to create an inclusive society for Persons with Disabilities where Persons with Disabilities can lead a constructive, safe and dignified life, where they get proper support for growth and progress. The Central Government aims at the empowerment of persons with disabilities through educational, economic and social development and, if need be, rehabilitation programmes. In which the Accessible India Campaign is playing an important role. The objective of this campaign is to ensure an enabling and barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities. The objective of the campaign is to provide equal opportunities and self-reliant life to persons with disabilities to participate in all walks of life.

Way Forward:

To ensure social equality and respect for the disabled, a positive change in social thinking through awareness, publicity is necessary. The Central Government has organized many initiatives and programs which have created many opportunities for the differently-abled persons and enabled them to move forward. Purple Fest is necessary to promote self-confidence among Divyangjan as well as to sensitize the society towards their needs and problems. The Purple Fest will prove to be a milestone towards the empowerment of Divyangjan and will go a long way in furthering the agenda of empowerment of Divyangjan.

6 New System to Grade the Performance of Hospitals

Why in News:

The National Health Authority (NHA) has introduced a new system to measure and grade the performance of hospitals under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY). The objective of this new system is to focus on the quality of services provided by the hospitals. Providers will be rewarded as per the quality of treatment provided.

Key Points:

- **'Value Based Care' concept-** Through this initiative, hospitals will be assessed on the basis of value of health care related services instead of the services rendered by the hospitals. Payment is often made based on the volume of services. There is a case-based one-time payment based on the number of services rendered. This new system will usher in

the concept of 'value-based care', where payment will be decided on the basis of outcome.

- **Focus on quality of treatment:** This step will be an attempt to ensure the quality of treatment. This initiative is expected to benefit all relevant stakeholders, from patients to healthcare providers, payers and suppliers. Patients will experience better health outcomes and satisfaction with the services they receive, and providers will be able to achieve better care efficiencies.

Measured on the basis of five performance indicators

1. Beneficiary Satisfaction
2. Hospitalization rate
3. Limit on Out-of-Pocket Expenses
4. Confirmed Complaints
5. Improving health-related quality of life of the admitted patient

About Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri-JAY Yojana (AB PM-JAY)

- AB PM-JAY is an ambitious scheme to ensure quality and affordable healthcare for the poor and the underprivileged. The scheme has empowered all eligible beneficiaries with cashless and paperless healthcare benefits of Rs 5 lakh per year per family. Under Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, so far 4.21 crore patients have been admitted to hospitals and treated, on which Rs 49,468 crore has been spent.

Role of National Health Authority (NHA)

- The objective of the National Health Authority is to implement the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri-JAY scheme at the national level. It is a governing body which is headed by the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

Way Forward:

The healthcare sector in India is improving on various areas. These include affordable treatment, medicines, modern health facilities at the village level, development of human resources, promotion of preventive health care and use of technology to enhance access to healthcare. To ensure better primary health facilities, 1,50,000 Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centers are being set up, out of which about 79,000 centers have already started functioning.

7

Government Action on Recent Terrorist Incidents in Kashmir

Why in News:

Recently, 6 people were victims of targeted killing in two separate terrorist incidents in Rajouri and Jammu. The union home ministry while taking cognizance of the incidents banned TRF and PAFF, the two shadow organisations of 'Lashkar -e- taiba' and 'Jash- e-Mohammed', as terrorist organisations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. Further, the MHA declared four persons as terrorists under the UAPA Act.

Organisations banned:

The Resistance Front (TRF):

- TRF came into existence in 2019 as a proxy organisation of the banned Lashkar-e-taiba.
- According to MHA, TRF is responsible for a series of targeted killings in the Kashmir valley and conducting various terrorist activities such as arms smuggling, drug trafficking and recruiting the youth through dark web and infiltrating terrorist in the valley.

People's Anti Fascist Front (PAFF):

- This organization is active as a representative organisation of the banned terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed since 2019.
- It is known for working with other organizations to execute various terrorist activities and conspiring through social media.

Efforts by Government:

- Creating an international atmosphere against terrorism.
- Banning people who are active in terrorist activities.
- Promoting additional military deployment in sensitive areas.
- Giving government jobs and compensation to the victims.
- Active efforts towards the establishment of VDGs.
- Generating income for the people through development plans in Jammu and Kashmir and bringing the residents into the mainstream. Promoting rural tourism schemes like the 'Udan Yojana' (which is an industrial initiative) and mission Youth.

About Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967:

- The UAPA was originally enacted in 1967 as an anti-terror law and was amended in 2004 and 2008.
- In August 2019, parliament amended some of the provisions provided in the act and approved the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill 2019 to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds.

UAPA Tribunals:

- The UAPA provides for a tribunal under judges of a High court.
- The tribunal shall have the power to regulate its procedure including the place where the court sits. In this way, court can hear disputes regarding any state from other states.
- The tribunal has the powers of a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure-1908 to hold inquiries.

Conclusion:

It is crucial to execute all the work that the governments is taking up at the ground level so that it's gain can be used to protect people from the forces that are anti-national and disrupt the peace and stability of a nation.

NEWS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

1. Rare Himalayan Griffon Vulture

Recently, a rare Himalayan Griffon Vulture has been captured in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur Dehat. Himalayan vultures (*Gyps himalayensis*) are found in the highlands of Central Asia, ranging from Kazakhstan and Afghanistan in the west to western China and Mongolia in the east. They are considered to be the local scavengers of nature. Himalayan vultures are highly revered in Tibetan Buddhist culture. It is classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List. A total of nine species of vultures are found in India. Of these, six species (White-rumped vulture, Indian vulture, Slender-billed vulture, Red-headed vulture, Bearded vulture and Egyptian vulture) are resident species in India, while three (cinereous vulture, griffon vulture and Himalayan vulture) are migratory.



2. Regeneration in Degenerated Human Discs

The recent finding that a protein found in the spinal cord of zebrafish promotes regeneration in degenerated human discs may have potential therapeutic implications. A study by the Agarkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology, has revealed that there is a protein called cellular communication network factor 2A (CCN2A). It induces disc regeneration in aged degenerated discs by promoting cell proliferation and cell survival.

Facts About zebrafish:

The zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) is a tropical freshwater fish native to the Ganges River in eastern India and native to the south-eastern Himalayan region. 70% of human genes are found in it. Zebrafish have been used in scientific research for the prevention of cancer, melanoma, and heart disease.



3. Obscenity Laws in India

Recently, a political leader appealed to the authorities to take action against a social media influencer for "roaming in the streets of Mumbai and exhibiting her body. Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Sections 292, 293 and 294 deal with the offence of obscenity.

Section 292- It says that any content shall be deemed to be obscene if it is lascivious or appeals to the prurient interest, or if its effect tends to deprave and corrupt persons likely to read, see or hear the content. This section prohibits the sale or publication of any obscene pamphlet, book, paper, painting, and other such materials.

Section 293- It criminalises the sale or distribution of obscene objects to anyone who is under the age of 20, or an attempt to do so. It is a bailable offence; the maximum punishment for the first conviction is three years of imprisonment and a fine up to Rs 2,000, and for the second conviction seven years with a fine up to Rs 5,000.

Section 294- It prohibits obscene acts and songs in public spaces. The maximum punishment for the person convicted under this charge is three-month jail and a fine.

Section 67 of the Information Technology Act- It says that anyone who publishes or transmits obscene material in electronic form can be punished.

4. Sagol Kangjei

Recently, Home Minister of India inaugurated a 122-foot-high Sagol Kangjei (Polo) Statue of a polo player at the Ibudhou Marjing complex at Heingang in Imphal East district. Modern polo is said to have originated from Sagol Kangjei, a sport indigenous to Manipur. In this sport players ride horses, specifically the Manipur Ponies, which are referenced in records dating back to the 14th century. The Manipur Pony is one of five recognised equine breeds of India, and has a powerful cultural significance for Manipuri society. The Marjing Polo Complex has been developed as a way to conserve the Manipur Pony. The Manipur Pony features in mythological stories, and is celebrated in oral tradition, ballads, and rituals.



5. Largest Contingent of Women Peacekeepers in UN Mission

The Prime Minister has expressed pride as Indian Army deploys its largest contingent of women peacekeepers in United Nation mission at Abyei, UNISFA.

About United Nations Peacekeeping:

- Peacekeeping has proven to be one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist host countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.
- Peacekeeping has unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy and sustain troops and police from around the globe, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to advance multidimensional mandates.
- UN peacekeepers provide security and the political and peace building support to help countries make the difficult, early transition from conflict to peace.

UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles:

- » Consent of the parties.
- » Impartiality.
- » Non-use of force except in self-defense and defence of the mandate.
- Peacekeeping is flexible and over the past two decades has been deployed in many configurations. There are currently 12 UN peacekeeping operations deployed on three continents. United Nations Peacekeeping Forces have won the the Nobel Peace Prize 1988.



6. India Hosting The Y20 Summit

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports launched the themes of Y20 summit, logo and website in the Curtain raiser event of Y20 Summit India. India is hosting the Y20 summit for the first time. Panel discussions of young achievers will also take place in the second session of the event. Youth 20 (Y20) is an official consultation forum for youth from all G20 member countries to be able to dialogue with each other. For the next 8 months, there will be Pre summits on the five Y20(Youth 20) themes along with various discussions and seminars at different Universities across states in India in a run up to the final Youth-20 Summit. India's key focus is to bring young leaders from all across the globe together and discuss ideas for a better tomorrow and draft an agenda for action. The activities to be undertaken by Y20 during India's presidency will focus on global youth leadership and partnership. India is playing a significant role in finding workable solutions at the international level to ensure holistic well-being embodying the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.



7. Virovore

Recently, researchers claimed that the first known “virovore”- an organism that eats viruses- has been found. Scientists found that a species of Halteria - who are microscopic ciliates that populate freshwater throughout the world - can eat huge numbers of infectious chloroviruses. Both share an aquatic habitat. A virovore is an organism which obtains energy and nutrients from the consumption of viruses. The term technically refers to organisms which primarily or solely consume viruses but currently only includes organisms which derive primary nutritional benefit from the consumption of viruses when no other food sources are available, akin to a form of microbiological omnivore. Virovory is the most recently discovered form of sustenance that a living organism can rely upon for its energy needs. It has been identified as an actual species of protist that feasts on viruses. They're made up of nucleic acids, nitrogen, and phosphorus.



8. Sammed Shikharji: The Jain Pilgrimage Site

Members of the Jain community have been protesting in many parts of the country to overturn Jharkhand government's decision declaring Sammed Shikharji as a tourist spot.

About Sammed Shikharji:

The reason that Sammed Shikharji is so important to the community, and why it does not want the place to turn into an eco-tourism spot, is because it is located on the Parasnath hill in the Giridih district of Jharkhand. It is considered to be the biggest pilgrimage site by both the Digambaras & the Svetambaras. It is believed that it is the place where 20 of the 24 Jain Tirthankara, who are Jain spiritual leaders, along with many other monks attained 'moksha' or salvation after meditating. Parasnath hill is known across the country to be the highest mountain in the state of Jharkhand. The word 'Shikharji' in itself means a 'venerable peak'. Interestingly, the word 'Parasnath' comes from 'Parshvanatha', the 23rd Jain tirthankara who attained moksha here. According to beliefs of the Jain community, Shikharji is ranked with Ashtapad, Girnar, Dilwara Temples of Mount Abu and Shatrunjaya as the 'Svetambara Pancha Tirth' or the five principal pilgrimage shrines. If someone wants to do a pilgrimage of Shikharji, they must start with Palganj on Giridih road, where there is a small shrine dedicated to Parshvanatha. Pilgrims have to cover a long trek of about 27km while doing a circumambulation of Shikharji.



9. International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)

Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) proposed a regulatory framework for index providers. The proposed framework would require index providers to follow the principles of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO). The proposed regulations will include provisions for ensuring eligibility criteria, compliance, disclosure, periodic audit and penalties for non-compliance and mis-disclosure. International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) is a federation of organizations that regulates securities and futures markets around the world. It was established in 1983.



Current Affairs at a Glance

1. The e-NAM, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, has won the Platinum Award in the Digital Empowerment of Citizens Category in Digital India Awards 2022 held in New Delhi.
2. After three consecutive years of growth, India's forex reserves are set to decline by nearly \$70 billion in 2022 amid rising inflation and higher interest rates.
3. The Assam Cabinet approved the construction of elephant underpasses in seven jumbo corridors along the boundary of Deepor Beel, a bird sanctuary and a Ramsar Site.
4. Hawaii's Kilauea began erupting inside its summit crater, less than one month after the volcano and its larger neighbour Mauna Loa stopped releasing lava. Kilauea is one of the most active volcanoes in the world.
5. Indian Railways' Varanasi Cantt Railway Station has been awarded the 5-Star 'Eat Right Station' certification for providing high quality, nutritious food to passengers. The 'Eat Right Station' certification is awarded by FSSAI to railway stations that provide safe and nutritious food to passengers.
6. Ministry of Jal Shakti organized the "1st All India Annual State Ministers Conference on Water" with the theme "Water Vision@2047" on 05-06 January, 2023 at Bhopal to discuss the Water Vision@2047.
7. The Chief Justice of India (CJI) announced the launch of the Electronic Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) project to provide free access to its nearly 34,000 judgments to lawyers, law students and the general public.
8. Prime Minister paid tribute to Rani Velu Nachiyar on her birth anniversary. Rani Velu Nachiyar was the first queen to fight against the British colonial power in India. She is known as Veeramangai by Tamils.
9. India will take over the leadership of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU). Dr. Vinay Prakash Singh will take over as the General Secretary of the association for a term of 4 years. APPU is an intergovernmental organization of 32 member countries of the Asia-Pacific region. APPU is the only subsidiary union in the region of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), a specialized agency of the UN. The APPU is headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand.
10. Finance Minister told the Parliament that banks have written off non-performing assets worth Rs.10,09,511 crore during the last five financial years. Such banks write off loans that have little chance of recovery after the borrower defaults on the loan repayment. After writing off the bank shows that amount as loss.
11. At least 50 of India's 3,693 centrally protected monuments are missing, Parliament was told recently by the Ministry of Culture. Among the missing monuments, 11 monuments are from Uttar Pradesh, two each from Delhi and Haryana and monuments from Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are included in this list. Due to rapid urbanization, submergence of reservoirs and dams, non-availability of their proper location, etc., these monuments have remained undiscovered for years.
12. National Science Day 2023 with the title "Global Science for Global Good" unveiled in Delhi. National Science Day (NSD) is celebrated every year on 28 February to commemorate the discovery of 'Raman Effect'. On this day Sir C.V. Raman announced the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930.
13. The 14th edition of the World Spice Congress (WSC) will be held on 16-18 February 2023 in Mumbai.
14. Recently, India successfully test-fired the strategic ballistic missile Prithvi-II from a test range off the Odisha coast. The missile hit its target with high accuracy.
15. Recently, a team of butterfly observers and researchers discovered a rare butterfly species White Tufted Royal Butterfly at Kaliyad in Kannur.
16. The song Naatu Naatu from SS Rajamouli's film RRR has won the Golden Globe Award.

1. Why in Broadcast

NITI Aayog has recently launched a **pilot project** in collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh government on apple farming.

Indian natural farming is set to get a technological push through Blockchain, to ensure quality production and monitor the produce across the supply chain and entire storage.



Blockchain in Agriculture

2. About Blockchain

- The blockchain, in layman terms, is a ledger of accounts and transactions that are written and stored by all participants.
- The ledger is collectively managed by all participating parties typically through a peer-to-peer network.
- Multiple parties can access and validate new database additions, increasing security and lowering the risk of corruption.

3. Agriculture Sector and Blockchain

- Although India ranks **2nd in terms of the production of fruits and vegetables**, its **export share** around the world is only 1%.
- Blockchain technology can help in **bridging the gap between the lack of quality and traceability** enhancing the India's food export as well as incentivising the growers.
- IoT sensors are used to generate crop data, the distribution of grown crops to food processing companies, and supply of processed food to wholesalers and retailers.
- Recording information about the product at every stage might help remove the redundant processes, ensure quality control and monitor storage conditions.
- Even consumers can trace the supply chain of products to ensure quality products while buying.

6. Way Forward

- After completion of the pilot project on Apples, this **model will be further replicated** with other crops including **grapes, mangoes, pomegranates, bananas and vegetables**.
- Blockchain technology can increase security by preventing unethical crop production and distribution, which puts farmers' livelihood at risk, while boosting transparency in the food supply chain.
- It will allow consumers to make better informed choices, and will be able to assist (if implemented properly) small-scale farmers who are in need of security in terms of food and finance.

4. Hindrances

- There have been concerns regarding misuse and misapplication of Blockchain technology. For example, privately held blockchain have less security and are easy to hack.
- Small scale farmers who are rather a newbie to this and lack technological know-how may be left behind.
- To serve small farmers and rural residents, blockchain implementation must be decentralised or food security will continue to be a problem for the country.
- It's important to educate people who lack the digital literacy and are required to use blockchain technology or the lack of digital literacy may prevent them from participation.

5. Fruits and Vegetables in India

- As per Agriculture and processed food products export development authority, **India exported fresh fruits and vegetables worth \$1.52 billion in 2021-22**.
- While, the export of **processed fruits and vegetables** (pulses, processed fruits and juices etc.) accounted for approximately **\$1.73 billion**.
- Major **export destinations** for India's fresh fruit and vegetable include **Bangladesh, UAE, Nepal, Netherlands, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Oman and Qatar**.

1. Why in Broadcast

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan chaired the 3rd meeting of the steering committee of **National Skill Development Mission (NSDM)** on January 5, 2023.

In the meeting, discussions centered around **skill development schemes, skill gap analysis and skill mapping**.

A significant point of deliberation was on how the **curriculum be developed** keeping in mind the **emerging trends** so that **Indian youth** can connect with **global opportunities**.



Skill India: A Bridge Between Indian Youth & Global Opportunities

aspirational value for competency-based skill development training.

- **STRIVE:** The main focus of Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) scheme is to improve the performance of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
- **SANKALP:** Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which is collaborated with the World Bank and focuses on district-level skilling ecosystem through convergence and coordination.
- **Industrial Training Centres (ITIs):** These centres are aimed at expanding and modernizing the existing training ecosystem. Recently, 116 Government Industrial Training Institutes were given approval for running drone courses. A total of 274 Government ITIs were given approval for running a Dual System of Training, DST. Around 10,000 working women and ITI girl students were given training for self-defence.

2. Apprenticeship

- On 21st April 2022, the **Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Mela** was launched.
- Apprenticeship is considered the most sustainable model of skill development, and it has been getting a big boost under **Skill India Mission**.
- The government is aiming to **train one million youth per annum** through apprenticeship training.

3. Roadmap for Developing India's Skilled Youth

- NSDM was launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) on 15th July 2015.
- The mission was launched for creating convergence across various sectors and different states in terms of activities relating to skill training.

4. Objectives of the Mission

- Implementing the **National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF)** which will allow opportunities for long-term, as well as short-term training, leading to productive employment and career improvement.
- Using the NSQF module to maintain a balance between the industry- employer demand.
- Providing facilities of **re-skilling** and **up-skilling** to the workforce of the unorganised sectors of the industry.
- Ensuring **high-quality training standards** through high-quality teaching and benchmarked institutions according to national and international standards.
- Support weaker and disadvantaged sections of society through focused outreach programmes.
- Enabling pathways for transitioning between the vocational training system and the formal educational system, through a credit transfer system.
- Maintaining a national database, known as the **Labour Market Information System (LMIS)**, which will act as a portal for matching the demand and supply of skilled workforce in the country.

5. Government Initiatives to Promote Skill Development

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** It aims to provide free skill training avenues to youths of India. More than 7.36 lakh candidates were trained under PMKVY over the last one year.
- **Skill Saathi Counseling Program:** MSDE also launched the Skill Saathi program, aimed to sensitize youth on various avenues of Skill India Mission.
- **Skill Hubs:** MSDE informed that 2,28,000 students were enrolled in 1,957 Skill Hubs this year. Skill Hub initiative aims to facilitate and make education more relevant and create industry fit skilled workforce.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK):** These are the state-of-the-art model training centres envisaged to create benchmark institutions that demonstrate

1. Why in Broadcast

The Reserve Bank of India recently released the 26th issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR). The report reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the **Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)** on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the financial system.



Financial Stability Report

4. Conclusion

- The recent FSR report suggests that India's banking and financial sector has significantly improved from July assessment 2021.
- However, the rise of omicron as well as the slowing global growth, monetary tightening in developed nations (which is likely to hinder foreign monetary flows) still remain a concern.

- RBI examines several aspects such as state of global as well as domestic economy, and conducts tests on how variables will react if the economy doesn't grow as anticipated
- The report is **published twice a year**, and as a part of it **RBI conducts Systematic risk surveys** as well.

2. Major takeaways

1. The Global economy is faltering:

- The interplay of multiple shocks has resulted in tightened financial conditions and heightened volatility in financial markets.
- **WTO's Goods Trade Barometer** shows that the World merchandise trade volumes, have been slowing in the second half of the year.
- The slowdown reflects a combination of tapering import demand and disrupted production and supply of widely traded goods such as automobiles and semiconductors
- **Baltic Dry Index**, which is a measure of shipping charges for dry bulk commodities and had crossed its highest mark in October 2021, recorded a sudden drop after that.

2. Bank credit growth:

- As per report, Banking stability indicator (BSI), which indicates the changes in underlying conditions and risk factors of India's commercial banks, **showed improvement in soundness, asset quality, liquidity and profitability parameters.**
- The growth rate, however is still far off the ideal level. The retail credit is growing at a decent clip, **wholesale credit growth continues to struggle.**
- Further, data shows that most of the wholesale credit is being picked up by public sector undertakings while the private sector is holding back from raising fresh funding

3. Non performing assets:

- The gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) fell to a seven-year low of 5.0 per cent and net non-performing assets (NNPA) have dropped to ten-year low of 1.3 per cent in September 2022.

3. About the Report

- Financial Stability Report lays out the state of financial stability of the country and is prepared after taking into account the contribution from all financial sector regulators such as banks etc.
- Further, it informs about the **state of credit growth and non performing assets.**

1. Why in Broadcast

In the recent meeting of the **National Ganga Council**, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, it was informed that the Union Government has **spent more than 13000 crores** on cleaning Ganga since 2014.



National Mission For Clean Ganga

2. Major Takeaways From the Meeting

- NGMC provided a detailed financial progress report in the council meeting.
- As per the details, the Union government has released a total of 13,709.72 crores to NGMC from the financial year 2014 to October 31st, 2022.
- The state of **Uttar Pradesh** received the **largest outlay of Rs. 4,205.41 crores**. Out of a total of 2,525 km of Ganga, about 1100 km length of Ganga falls under Uttar Pradesh.
- Uttar Pradesh was followed by **Bihar** (3516.63 crores), **West Bengal** (1320.39 crores), **Delhi** (1253.86 crores), and Uttarakhand (1117.34 crores).

3. Namami Gange Programme

- The Union Government designated the **Namami Gange Programme** as a “Flagship Program” in June 2014 to achieve the **twin goals** of effective pollution abatement, conservation and **rejuvenation of the National River Ganga**.
- The government had launched the programme for a period up to 31st March 2021, this period was extended for another five years till March 31st 2026.
- It is being operated under the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The program is being implemented by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga** (implementation wing of the national Ganga Council), and its state counterpart organizations.

6. Challenges Associated With Ganga Rejuvenation

- Pollution remains a major challenge for Ganga rejuvenation.
- Kanpur's tanneries, and distilleries, paper, and sugar mills in the catchments of the Kosi, Ramganga, and Kali rivers, are major contributors to this.
- The problem of illegal and rampant construction near river beds has become a major hurdle in cleaning the river.
- Although, various efforts are made in this direction, poor governance such as lack of proper supervision and monitoring still remains a major challenge.

4. Major Pillars

- Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure & Industrial Effluent Monitoring.
- River-Front Development & River-Surface Cleaning.
- Bio-Diversity & Afforestation.
- Public Awareness.

5. Recent updates about the programme

- The **United Nations (UN)** recognized **Namami Gange initiative** to rejuvenate India's sacred River Ganga as **one of the top 10 World Restoration Flagships to revive the natural world**.
- There has been a gradual shift in the goals from mere maintaining cleanliness around the river and its tributaries to developing tourism, conservation and livelihood.
- The PM urged for a shift from Namami Gange, the Union Government's flagship project to clean the Ganga, to the model of Arth Ganga.

1. Why in Broadcast

The PM, Shri Narendra Modi flagged off the World's Longest River Cruise-MV Ganga Vilas and inaugurated the Tent City at Varanasi on 13th January, 2023.



MV Ganga Vilas

2. About MV Ganga Vilas Cruise

- The MV Ganga Vilas cruise is a first-of-its-kind cruise service, with support from the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) under Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways (MoPSW).
- It will begin its journey from Varanasi in UP and travel around 3,200 km in 51 days to reach Dibrugarh in Assam via Bangladesh, sailing across 27 river systems in India and Bangladesh.
- The ship follows sustainable principles at its core as it is equipped with pollution-free mechanisms and noise control technologies.

3. Places to be Covered

- The MV Ganga Vilas cruise is curated to bring out the best of the country to be showcased to the world.
- The 51 days cruise is planned with visits to 50 tourist spots including World Heritage Sights, National Parks, river Ghats, and major cities like Patna in Bihar, Sahibganj in Jharkhand, Kolkata in West Bengal, Dhaka in Bangladesh and Guwahati in Assam.

4. Boost For Tourism in India

- The journey will give the tourists an opportunity to embark upon an experiential voyage and indulge in the art, culture, history, and spirituality of India and Bangladesh.
- From the "Ganga Arti" in Varanasi, it will stop at Sarnath, a place of reverence for Buddhism.
- It will also cover Mayong, known for its Tantric craft, and Majuli, the largest river island and hub of Vaishnavite cultural in Assam.
- The travellers will also visit the Bihar School of Yoga and Vikramshila University.
- The cruise will also traverse through the biodiversity rich World Heritage Sites of Sunderbans in Bay of Bengal delta, famous for Royal Bengal Tigers, as well as Kaziranga National Park, famous for one horn rhino.

5. Indian Tourism Market

- The Tourism and Hospitality industry is one of the largest service industries in India.
- The tourism industry is one of the largest employers of the women workforce.
- The tourism sector in India is an integral pillar of the Make in India programme.

- The industry in India plays a role of significant economic multiplier and becomes critical since India has to grow at rapid rates and create jobs.
- India is currently ranked 54th in World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index (2021).
- By 2030, India is expected to be among the top five business travel markets.
- India offers geographical diversity, world heritage sites and niche tourism products like cruises, adventure, medical, eco-tourism, etc.
- Incredible India has spurred growth in tourists arrivals and employment.
- India aims to increase cruise passenger traffic from 0.4 mn at present to 4 mn.
- Economic potential of Cruise tourism is expected to go up from \$110 mn to \$5.5 bn in the years to come.
- Tourism tends to encourage the development of multiple-use infrastructure including hotels, resorts & restaurants, transport infrastructure (aviation, roads, shipping & railways) and healthcare facilities.

1. Why in Broadcast

Indian navy signs contract for autonomous armed boat swarms under SPRINT scheme. The contract was signed with Sagar defence Engineering pvt Ltd. This is the 50th contract signed under SPRINT scheme by Indian navy.



SPRINT Scheme

5. Way forward

SPRINT scheme will help Indian Navy in its transformational journey from buyer to builder and improve its readiness to deal with every situation. Navy also expediting process and trying to sign 100th contract by January end.

2. About the scheme

- SPRINT stands for- Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIO) and Technology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC).
- It was launched by PM Narendra Modi on July 18th, 2022 during Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIO) seminar.
- It is a collaborative project between NIO and Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO).
- It is an initiative to promote development of niche defence technologies by domestic companies.
- It aims to develop 75 new indigenous technologies by the industries for the Indian Navy.
- The 75 new technologies will be inducted by August 15, 2023 as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

3. Significance of the scheme

- It will be giving a boost to the usage of indigenous technology in Indian Navy.
- It will promote Innovation & indigenisation, which is central to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence and overall goal of safety, security & prosperity of the Nation.
- Shift from 'whole of the government' approach for a self-reliant India to 'whole of the Nation' approach.
- Under this programme government and navy will provide handholding support to domestic entrepreneurs and promote indigenous technologies in collaboration with defence establishment, academicians and private startups.

4. About boat swarms

It will be helpful to navy in conducting-

- High speed interdiction.
- Surveillance and constabulary operation.
- Command, control, communication, computers(C4) Intelligence.
- Surveillance and reconnaissance(C4ISR)
- Low intensity maritime operations.

1. Why in Broadcast

Recently, the University Grants Commission (UGC) announced the draft regulations for 'Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India'.



Foreign Universities: Campuses in India

5. Mechanism for the selection of the foreign universities

There will be two categories of foreign institutions eligible to apply for setting up their campuses in India:

1. The universities that have secured a position within the top 500 of overall or subject-wise global ranking.
2. A reputed institution in its home jurisdiction.

UGC will be the regulatory body:

1. The UGC shall constitute a standing committee to examine matters related to the setting up and operation of campuses of foreign HEIs in India.
2. The standing committee shall assess each application on:
 - » The credibility of the educational institutions.
 - » The programmes to be offered.
 - » Potential to strengthen educational opportunities in India.
 - » Proposed academic infrastructure.

2. Terms and conditions for foreign universities

Only full-time programmes in offline mode:

- Foreign universities with campuses in the country can only offer full-time programmes in offline mode.
- Online or distance learning will not be allowed.

Need of University Grants Commission (UGC) nod:

- The foreign universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will need a nod from the UGC to set up their campuses in India.

Limited period approval with strict quality control:

- Initial approval will be for 10 years and will be renewed in the ninth year subject to the meeting of certain conditions.
- The foreign universities shall not offer any such study programme which jeopardizes the national interest of India or the standards of higher education in India.

Functional autonomy to Foreign Universities:

- Foreign universities will have the freedom to decide their admission criteria and fee structure.
- However, the commission can advise on keeping the fees "reasonable and transparent".

Matters related to funds and funding as per FEMA, 1999:

- The cross-border movement of funds will be according to the Foreign Exchange Management Act.
- Cross-border movement of funds and maintenance of Foreign Currency Accounts, mode of payments, remittance, repatriation, and sale of proceeds, if any, shall be as per FEMA, 1999.
- An audit report shall be submitted annually to the commission certifying the operations of the FHEIs.

3.NEP, 2020

- The National Education Policy [NEP], 2020, has envisioned that top universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India.
- A legislative framework facilitating such entry should be brought by the Government.
- Foreign universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India.

4. Benefits of Establishing the foreign Universities in India

Such Foreign Higher Educational Institutions will provide:

1. International dimension to higher education in India.
 2. Enable Indian students to obtain foreign qualifications at affordable cost.
 3. It will make India an attractive global study destination.
- The foreign institution will recruit the top international faculty and staff and strengthen the quality of higher education in India.

Prelims Special 2023: Polity

Bilkis Bano Case

- Eleven men who were sentenced to life imprisonment in 2008 for the gang rape of Bilkis Bano were released from a jail in Gujarat. This calls into question the state government's remission policy for convicts.
- The state government argued in court saying that the convicts have already completed 14 years of their imprisonment and have shown good behaviour and are therefore eligible for remission.
- Previously, a Special CBI Court had sentenced the men to life imprisonment in 2008.

What is Remission?

- In remission, the nature of the sentence remains untouched; while the duration is reduced i.e. the rest of the sentence need not be undergone. For example, if a person is sentenced to a term of 20 years, after remission his sentence may be reduced to 15 years.
- The Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) is clear that life convicts have to undergo a minimum of 14 years of actual imprisonment before they can be considered for remission/premature release.

Article 161

- It deals with the Pardoning Power of the Governor. The Governor can grant pardons, reprieves, respites, and remissions of punishments or suspend, remit, and commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the state extends.

Anti-doping bill

- The parliament passed the National Anti-Doping Bill unanimously. The Bill aims to provide a statutory framework for the functioning of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) and the National Dope Testing Laboratory in sports.
- The legislation prohibits athletes, athlete support personnel, and other persons from engaging in doping in sports.
- The bill will give NADA the powers of investigation, levying sanctions for anti-doping rule violations, the disciplinary procedures to be adopted, and the powers of inspection, sample collection and sharing, and the free flow of information.

The privilege of MPs does not extend to criminal matters

- Rajya Sabha Chairman clarified in the House

that MPs are not immune from being arrested in a criminal case during the session or otherwise. In criminal matters, Members of Parliament (MPs) are not on a different footing from ordinary citizens.

- A member of Parliament cannot be arrested in a civil case, 40 days before the commencement of the Session or Committee meeting and 40 days thereafter.

Centre vs state tussle over IAS posting

- In West Bengal, the State government and Union government have been fighting over IAS officer deputation in the centre.

The issue with All India Services:

- The selection of AIS is through the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which holds an annual examination.
- Appointment officers are allotted to various States, and the number of officers depends on each State's requirement.
- Thereafter, they spend most of their career in those States, intervened by short spells of deputation to the Centre.
- While they are functioning under a State government, disciplinary authority is vested with the centre.
- The state cannot impose a major penalty on a delinquent AIS officer for any misconduct.
- The suspension of an officer from state services will have to be ratified by central government within three months.

Disqualification proceedings under the office of profit

- Disqualification proceedings are going on against Hemant Soren for holding an office of profit. If an MLA or an MP holds a government office and receives benefits from it, then that office is termed as the office of profit

Basic criteria to disqualify an MP or MLA:

- Article 102 and 191: Basic disqualification criteria for an MP are laid down in Article 102 of the Constitution, and for an MLA in Article 191.
- Grounds for disqualification under the Constitution:

They can be disqualified for:

- Holding an office of profit under the government of India or state government
- Being of unsound mind
- Being an undischarged insolvent
- Not being an Indian citizen or acquiring citizenship of another country.

Uniform civil code

News- Parliament panel has highlighted some outdated provision of Goa UCC.

- The UCC refers to a common set of laws governing personal matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, and succession that will apply to all citizens irrespective of their religion, caste, and gender.
- Article 44 of the Constitution, which is one of the Directive Principles of State Policy, also advocates a uniform civil code.
- However, governments since Independence have allowed respective religion-based civil codes to respect the diversity of India.

100% quota for local people

News- SC quashes decision to give 100% quota to Jharkhand local in government jobs

- The move is unconstitutional and ultra vires Articles 14, 16(2), 16(3) and 35 of the Constitution of India.
- For reservation outer limit is 50% as specified in the Indra Sawhney case, 1992.

Minority

News- Supreme Court held that recognition of minority status at district level is contrary with law, thus, unconstitutional. Currently, only those communities notified under section 2(c) of the NCM (National Commission for Minorities) Act, 1992, by the central government are regarded as a minority.

Constitutional provision:

- Constitution doesn't define the word 'minorities'
- Article 29 (Right to conserve distinct language, script and culture)
- Article 30 (Right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice)
- Article 350-B (provides for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities appointed by the President of India)

Legal Aid defence Council system

News- NALSA has launched LADCS with full-time legal aid lawyers in 365 district legal services authorities across India. LADC is a NALSA-funded project to provide free legal aid (in line with the Public defender system) to accused persons to defend themselves in criminal trials. NALSA has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, to provide free legal services to weaker sections of society as per provision of 39A of the Indian constitution.

Constitutional bench

News- Chief justice UU Lalit said that one constitutional bench will sit throughout the year.

- Constitutional bench is the name given to the benches of the Supreme Court of India which consist of at least five judges of the court who sit to decide any case:
- Involving a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution of India

- For the purpose of hearing any reference made by the President of India under Article 143
- This provision has been mandated by Article 145 (3) of the Constitution of India

NEVA

- One Nation-One Application' is being implemented using the National eVidhan Application (NeVA).
- NeVA is a portal to bring all the legislatures of the country together, on one platform.

OBCs not included in the Central List can apply under EWS

- People belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities in the State list but not in the Central list will be eligible to apply for posts and services of the Government of India under the EWS quota criteria, but SC and ST are not eligible.

Article 342A

- It was inserted into the Constitution of India through the 102nd Amendment.
- It empowers the President to specify the socially and educationally backward classes with respect to a state or UT
- The article makes it mandatory to get parliamentary approval for adding to or deleting a community from the Backward List of communities.

Eighth Schedule

News- Kurmi stirs protest over to inclusion of Kurmi language in the eighth schedule.

- Part XVII of the Indian constitution deals with the official languages in Articles 343 to 351. The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution consists of 22 languages.
- Amendments that added new languages to the schedule:
- The Sindhi language -21st Constitutional amendment act, 1967
- Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali -71st Constitutional amendment act, 1992
- Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali -92nd Constitutional amendment act, 2003

Preventive Detention in 2021

- The year 2021 saw an increase of over 23.7% cases of preventive detentions. According to the latest crime figures released by National Crime Records Bureau.
- Preventive detention involves the detainment (containment) of a person in order to keep him/her from committing future crimes and/or from escaping future prosecution.
- Under the section 151 of CrPC, the police is empowered to make preventive arrests if it believes that it must do so to prevent the commission of

any cognisable offense. This detention can be extended beyond 24 hours if required under any other provisions of this Code or of any other law.

Article 22(3):

- It allows for preventive detention and restriction on personal liberty for reasons of state security and public order.

Article 22(4):

- No law providing for preventive detention shall authorize the detention of a person for a longer period than three months unless an Advisory Board reports sufficient cause for extended detention.

Places of Worship Act, 1991

News- Gyanvapi issue

- The Act seals the religious character of all places of worship as it stood on August 15, 1947. It mandates that any case seeking the conversion of such a place into that of another religion should be abated.
- Article 25: gives every person the right to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion subject to public order, morality, and health. Article 26 also gives all denominations the right to manage their own affairs in matters of religion.

Cooperative societies

News- government has initiated national cooperative policy.

- The word cooperatives was added in Article 19(1) (c) under Part III of the Constitution through 97th constitutional amendment.
- This enables all the citizens to form cooperatives by giving it the status of fundamental right of citizens.
- A new Article 43B was added in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) regarding the promotion of cooperative societies.

CSR Policy Amendment Rules 2022

News- MCA (Ministry of Corporate Affairs) has released Companies (CSR Policy) Amendment Rules 2022.

New Rules:

- Unspent CSR amount must be utilized within 3 years
- Mandatory constitution of CSR committee to implement CSR works
- Amount Spent for Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to not exceed 2.5% of total CSR or Rs 50 lakh
- SIA has been made mandatory for businesses with Rs 10 crores or more CSR budget or for projects with an outlay of Rs 1 crore or more
- Companies are to disclose the composition of the CSR Committee and CSR policy on the company website.

State vigilance commission

News- Punjab assembly has dissolved state vigilance commission.

- The Central Vigilance Commission was set up by the Government in 1964 on the recommendations of Santhanam committee.
- **Members:** Central Vigilance Commissioner - Chairperson. Not more than two Vigilance Commissioners
- **Function:** The CVC receives complaints on corruption or misuse of office and recommends appropriate actions.

Hate speech

- ECI in the Supreme Court has said that due to the lack of a specific law against hate speech during polls, it has to resort to the IPC and RPA
- **Section 295A of the IPC-** Its deals with punishing acts that deliberately or with malicious intention outrage the religious feelings of a class of persons.
- **Sections 123(3A) and 125 of the RPA:** Bar the promotion of animosity on the grounds of race, religion, community, caste, or language in reference to elections and include it under corrupt electoral practices.

Doctrine Of Precedence: Article 145(5)

- Majority view of a larger bench will prevail over a judgement passed by a lesser strength bench in case of conflict, even if a lesser strength bench saw a greater number of judges agreeing with each other.
- Doctrine of precedence stated that judgement become thumb rule for future court proceeding until a larger bench overruled it.
- Article 145(5) states that no judgment shall be delivered by the Supreme Court without the concurrence of a majority of the judges present at the hearing of the case, but nothing in this clause shall prevent a judge from delivering a dissenting judgment.

Mercy Petition

News- the Supreme Court criticised the delay by the government to decide a mercy petition.

- Mercy Petition is the last resort of a person when all his/her remedies are exhausted that are available to him/her under the prevailing laws and the Constitution. A mercy petition may be filed before the President of India under Article 72 or the Governor of the state under Article 161.

Rules for the Identification of Criminals

News- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified the rules governing the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, of 2022.

- The Act empowers a Magistrate to direct any person to give measurements

- **Measurements include:** Finger-impressions, Palm-print and footprint, photographs, iris and retina scan, physical, and biological samples and their analysis(including DNA profiling), behavioural attributes including signatures, handwriting, or any other examination referred to in Section 53 or Section 53A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973

Lok Adalats

- News- many prisoners have been released from jail of Chhattisgarh after Lok Adalats were set up in jails across state.
- Lok Adalat is a people's court based on Gandhian principle.
- It is one of the components of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system and delivers informal, cheap, and expeditious justice to the common people.
- The first Lok Adalat camp was organized in Gujarat in 1982 as a voluntary and conciliatory agency.
- It was given statutory status under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

Doctrine of pleasure

News- Kerala Governor threatened to remove Ministers from their posts if they continued to lower the dignity of his office.

- Article 164 says that the minister shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor. But as per the rules, no Governor can dismiss an individual Minister from a State Cabinet unless recommended by the Chief Minister
- **Article 163:** There is a Council of Ministers with the CM at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions, except for some discretion enjoyed by the governor.
- Shamsher Singh case, 1974 and Nabam Rebia case, 2006)- Governors were bound by the advice of the Chief Minister in matters relating to the appointment and dismissal of Ministers.

National Commission for Schedule Caste

News- The Delhi High Court ruled that the National Commission for Scheduled Castes cannot initiate an inquiry based on any specious complaint and unsubstantiated allegations made by a person belonging to Scheduled Castes.

- NCSC is a constitutional body that works to safeguard the interests of the scheduled castes (SC) in India (Article 338).
- It consists of a Chairperson, vice-chairperson, and three other members.
- They are appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.
- The Commission is also required to discharge similar functions concerning the Anglo-Indian Community as it does concerning the SCs.

CBI

News- Maharashtra recently restored the general consent of CBI.

- The CBI is governed by the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act which makes consent of a state government mandatory for conducting an investigation in that state (Section 6 of The DSPE Act).
- Under general consent, once consent is given by the states no fresh consent is required for each case.

Prisoners Eligible for Special Remission:

News- The Home ministry finalised the guidelines for remission for prisoners.

- Women and transgender convicts of ages 50 and above and male convicts of age 60 and above.
- Physically challenged or disabled convicts with 70% disability and more who have completed 50% of their total sentence period.
- Terminally ill convicted prisoners who have completed two-thirds (66%) of their total sentence
- Poor or indigent prisoners who have completed their sentence persons who committed an offence at a young age (18-21)
- Persons convicted with a death sentence or an offence for which the punishment of death has been specified or life imprisonment or terror-related crime, dowry deaths or counterfeiting currency (Money laundering Act, 2002), the serious offence of rape, and human trafficking, Cases related to POCSO Act 2012 are not eligible for remission.

Constitutional Basis for Delimitation

News- delimitation commission in Jammu and Kashmir

- **Under Article 82:** the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- **Under Article 170:** States get divided into territorial constituencies as per the Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Once the act is in force, the Union government sets up a Delimitation Commission.
- The delimitation commission is an independent body constituted under Article 82 after the Parliament enacted a Delimitation Act after every census.
- The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the President of India and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.

Composition:

- Retired Supreme Court judge
- Chief Election Commissioner
- Respective State Election Commissioners

Chief election commissioner

News- the Supreme Court said that the government has not given much importance to independence to the CEC, as for evidence the tenure of the CEC has reduced from the initial 8 years to a few days.

- Presently, Election Commissioners are appointed by the President of India, on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.
- The Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991, prescribes that the term of a CEC and Election Commissioners is 6 years or till the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- Article 324 of the Indian Constitution, dealing with the appointment of Election Commissioners, called for the enactment of legislation to oversee such appointments, but the government is yet to do so.

First constitutional amendment Act, 1951

News- SC agrees to hear a PIL challenging the first amendment to the Constitution on the grounds of damaging the basic structure doctrine under changes made to the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression.

- 1st Amendment of the Indian Constitution amends Articles 15, 19, 85, 87, 174, 176, 341, 342, 372 and 376.
- The basic structure doctrine is a legal doctrine which states that the constitution of a sovereign state has certain characteristics that cannot be erased by its legislature.
- The Supreme court of India put forward this doctrine in the Kesavananda Bharati case, 1973; where using its judicial review and powers as an apex court can declare any law that it finds unconstitutional void as well as declare any element as basic structure of the Constitution.

Right to vote

- The Supreme Court has examined many petition that seeking right to vote of prisoner, or convicts serving their jail term. The petition said that blanket ban on right to vote of these persons is unconstitutional.
- **Article 326:** It provides that the election to the House of People and Legislative Assembly of States should be conducted on the basis of adult suffrage i.e., citizens who are 18 years of age are entitled to vote.
- **Section 62(5) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951:** It mandates that no person shall vote at any election if he is confined in a prison, whether under a sentence of imprisonment or transportation or otherwise, or is in the awful custody of the police.

Disqualification under RPA, 1951

News- MLA of Uttar Pradesh disqualified under representation of people act, 1951.

- Section 8 of the RPA contains provisions aimed at decriminalising electoral politics. There are two categories of criminal cases that attract disqualification upon conviction.
- Offences that entail disqualification for a period of six years upon any conviction - If the punishment is a fine, the six-year period will run from the date of conviction, but if there is a prison sentence, the disqualification will begin on the date of conviction, and will continue up to the completion of six years after the date of release from jail.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

News- the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has recommended the 'Pahari ethnic group' in the Scheduled Tribes list of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

- It was set up in 2004 by inserting a new article 338A in the Constitution through the 89th Constitution Amendment Act, 2003.
- Article 342 empowers the President of India to notify such tribes. Although, the criteria of defining ST is not mentioned in the constitution.
- The NCST consists of one chairperson, one vice-chairperson and three full-time members. Out of the three members, there should compulsorily be one lady member. All the members of the Commission have tenure of 3 years.

Governor

News- Tamilnadu has sent a proposal to Union Government for removing the governor.

- Under Articles 155 and 156 of the Constitution, a Governor is appointed by the President and holds office during the pleasure of the President.
- **Governor's Removal:** If this pleasure is withdrawn before the completion of the five-year term, the Governor has to step down. There is no provision for impeaching the Governor.

22nd law commission

News- 22nd Law Commission of India has been constituted with Justice (retd) Rituraj Awasthi as its head. Commission would have tenure of three years.

- The Law Commission of India is a non-statutory body that is constituted by a notification of the Government of India, with definite terms of reference to carry out research in the field of law.
- D. Y. Chandrachud (50th CJI) important decisions
- Ayodhya land dispute, Right to Privacy, Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (include unmarried women for abortion), Decriminalising same-sex relations (Sec 377), Validity of the Aadhaar

scheme, Sabarimala temple entry of women.

Article 142

News- the Supreme Court, invoking its exceptional jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution, ordered the early release of all six remaining convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

- Article 142 provides discretionary power to the Supreme Court as it states that the Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.

Ninth Schedule

News- 77 percent reservation in Jharkhand

- The Ninth Schedule (inserted by the 1st Constitutional Amendment) contains a list of central and state laws which cannot be challenged in courts. Currently, 284 such laws are shielded from judicial review.
- 1st CAA also created Article 31A (extends protection to 'classes' of laws) and Article 31B (it shields specific laws or enactments).
- If laws are inserted in the Ninth Schedule after they are declared unconstitutional, they are considered to have been in the Schedule since their commencement, and thus valid.
- Although Article 31B excludes judicial review, laws under the Ninth Schedule are open to scrutiny if they are violative of the basic structure of the Constitution (I.R. Coelho case (2007)).

National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)

News- Hansraj Ahir takes charge as NCBC chairman.

- After the 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018, NCBC became a constitutional body, established under Article 338B of the Indian Constitution.
- The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and other members of the Commission will be appointed by the President
- The conditions of service and term of office shall be decided by the President.
- The Commission shall have the power to regulate its own procedure.
- The Commission considers inclusion and exclusion from the list of communities.
- The commission has the same powers as that of a civil court

Exit polls

News- Election in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh

In 1998, the Election Commission of India (ECI) issued guidelines under Article 324 of the Constitution, prohibiting the media from publishing opinion and exit poll results during the restricted period.

- In 1999, the SC held that in the absence of

statutory sanction, the ECI cannot enforce any guidelines prohibiting such elections.

- The insertion of Section 126(A) in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 in 2010 only banned exit polls.
- Section 126(A): No person shall conduct any exit poll and publish or publicize the results thereof through print or electronic media, during such period as the ECI may notify in this behalf.
- Any person who contravenes the provisions of this section shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with fine, or with both.

SC reservation

News- debate of SC quota to those Scheduled Caste people who have converted to another religion

- Under article 341 of the Indian constitution, President may with respect to any State/UT and where it is a State after consultation with the Governor, may notify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes to be SCs in relation to that State/UT.
- **Clause (2):** Parliament may by law include or exclude from the list of SCs specified in a notification issued.
- The Union government rejected the possibility of including Dalit Christians and Muslims and recently constituted a new Commission under former CJI K.G. Balakrishnan to re-examine their inclusion.

Recognition of National party

News- AAP becomes the national party of India

- For recognition of national party, party is 'recognised' in at least four states; or
- If its candidates have secured at least 6% of the valid votes polled in any four or more states in the last Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha elections and have at least four MPs in the last Lok Sabha elections; or
- If it has won at least 2% of the total seats in the Lok Sabha from at least three states.

State Party recognition

- At least 6% vote share and at least 2 MLAs in the last assembly election; or
- 6% vote share in the last Lok Sabha elections from that State and at least one Member of Parliament from that State; or
- At least 3% of the total number of seats in the last assembly election or three seats, whichever is higher; or
- At least one Member of Parliament for every 25 members or any share allotted to the State in the Lok Sabha; or
- At least 8% of the total valid votes polled in the

last Vidhan Sabha election or Lok Sabha election from the State.

Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution

News- inclusion of Ladakh under 6th schedule

- The Schedule protects tribal populations, providing autonomy to communities through the creation of Autonomous District Councils (ADCs), which can frame laws on land, public health, and agriculture.
- According to Article 244 of the Indian Constitution, the Sixth Schedule consists of provisions for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- As of now, 10 autonomous councils exist in the above 4 states. Along with ADCs, the 6th Schedule also provides for separate Regional Councils for each area constituted as an autonomous region.
- Each autonomous district and regional council for term of five year and consists of not more than 30 members, of which four is nominated by the governor and the rest via elections.
- Governor can increase and decrease the boundary of ADC and authorised to what is the jurisdiction of HC and state legislature and parliament.

Alcohol ban

- **Article 47:** The State shall make every effort to ban the consumption of intoxicating drinks and substances that are injurious to health.
- 7th Schedule of the Constitution puts alcohol on the state list. state legislatures have the right and responsibility to draft laws regarding it.
- Currently, there are five states (Bihar, Gujarat, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, and Mizoram) with total prohibition and some more with partial prohibition.

North eastern council

News- PM participated in NEC meeting

- NEC was established under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971 as an apex level body to achieve balanced and coordinated development and to facilitate coordination with the states.
- After the 2002 amendment, the NEC has been mandated to act as a regional planning body for the North Eastern Region and while formulating a regional plan for the region.
- In June 2018, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal for nomination of Union Home Minister as ex-officio Chairman of the North Eastern Council (NEC) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER). The Cabinet also approved that the Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of DoNER will act as the Vice-Chairman of the Council.
- The NEC and all the governors and chief ministers

of the north-eastern states will be its members.

New Delhi International Arbitration Centre

Centre has appointed Justice Hemant Gupta as Chairperson of the NDIAC. NDIAC was set up through NDIAC Act 2019 and is a 7-member body:

- One Chairman + Two eminent persons + Three ex-officio members(CEO and a nominee from finance ministry) + Part-time member (from trade body)
- NDIAC has been declared an institution of national importance

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

- It is an Indian statutory body established by an Act of Parliament - the Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.
- The commission works under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development and became operational in 2007.
- It is mandated to ensure that all laws, policies, programs, and administrative mechanisms are in line with the child rights perspective enshrined in the Indian Constitution and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- As defined by the Commission, a child is a person up to the age of 18 years.

JJ Act, 2015

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced the Act to replace the Juvenile Offences Act and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2000.
- One of the main provisions of the Act is that minors who are in conflict with the law between the ages of 16 and 18 can be tried as adults

Interstate dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka

- The dispute can be resolved by judicial mechanism under article 131 of the Indian constitution. If the dispute involves any question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends.
- Supreme Court has the original jurisdiction in any dispute between –
- The Government of India and one or more States; or
- The Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or
- Two or more States,
- Exemption: The said jurisdiction shall not extend to a dispute arising out of any treaty, agreement, covenant, or engagement, having been entered into or executed before the commencement of

this Constitution.

- Inter-state council by amicable means under article 263 of Indian constitution.

National Commission for Women

News- the National Commission for Women (NCW) has asked all states to ensure that coaching centres and educational institutes strictly enforce the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

- It is a statutory body of the Government of India established on January 31, 1992 by the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. Its mandate is:
- review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women
- recommending remedial legislative measures
- grievance redressal facility and
- To advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women

Important Acts

Disaster management act, 2005

Why in News- Disaster Management in Joshimath
The Disaster Management Act, 2005 was made effective from December 23, 2005, to provide for the effective management of disasters and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

About the Act:

- The Act calls for the establishment of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) with the Prime Minister of India as its chairman.
- The NDMA cannot have more than nine members, including a vice-chairman. The members of the NDMA have a term of five years.
- The NDMA is responsible for “laying down policies, plans, and guidelines for disaster management” and ensuring “timely and effective response to the disaster”. Under section 6 of the Act, it is also responsible for laying down “guidelines to be followed by the State Authorities in preparing State Plans”.

Other bodies established under the Act:

- **National Executive Committee:** To assist NDMA.
- **State Disaster Management Authority:** The SDMA under Section 14 consists of the Chief Minister of the State, who is the Chairman, and not more than eight members appointed by the Chief Minister. It is responsible for disaster management within the boundary of a state.
- **District Disaster Management Authority:** The District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) will be headed by the Collector or District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner of the district. The elected representative of the area is a member of the DDMA as ex-officio co-chairman
- **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF):** Sections

44-45 of the Act provide for the constitution of a National Disaster Response Force under a Director General to be appointed by the Central Government “for the purpose of an expert response to a threatening disaster situation or the disaster”.

Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897

Why in News- re-emergence of corona

- The Act provides for better prevention of the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases. Through this act, the central and the state governments can take such measures that will aid in controlling the outbreak of any epidemic disease.

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958

Why in News- Reduction of the area under AFSPA by the central government

About the Act:

- The act gives unfettered powers to the armed forces and the Central armed police forces, deployed in the disturbed areas, to kill anyone who is acting in contravention of law and arrest and search any premises without a warrant and with protection from prosecution and legal suits.
- The Act was amended in 1972 and the powers to declare an area as disturbed were conferred concurrently upon the Central government along with the States.
- Currently, the act is in force in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh.

The National Investigation Agency Act, 2008:

- The Act constitutes a National Investigation Agency (NIA) at the national level to investigate and prosecute offences affecting the sovereignty, security, and integrity of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, and offences under Acts enacted to implement international treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions of the United Nations, its agencies and other international organisations and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- The 2019 amendment allowed the central government to designate Sessions Courts as Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences under the Act. The central government is required to consult the Chief Justice of the High Court under which the Sessions Court is functioning, before designating it as a Special Court.
- It expands the ambit of the list of crimes that the agency can investigate, including human trafficking, counterfeit currency, manufacture or sale of prohibited arms, cyber-terrorism, and offences under the Explosive Substances Act.
- It extends the NIA's jurisdiction outside India, subject however to international treaties and domestic laws of the concerned foreign nation.

Representation of the People Act, 1951

Why in News- The Supreme Court said it will constitute a three-judge Bench to re-consider a 2013 judgment which held that the pre-poll promises made by a political party cannot constitute a corrupt practice under the Representation of people act, 1951.

Section 123 of the RP Act:

- Section 123 of the RP Act is deals with the corrupt practices. The provision says it is bribery and thus deemed to be a corrupt practice if any gift, offer or promise of gratification is made to voters directly or indirectly by a candidate or his agent.

About the act:

- The Representation of the People Act, 1951 is an Act of the Parliament of India to provide for the conduct of elections to the Houses of Parliament and the House or Houses of the Legislature of each State, qualifications and disqualifications for the membership of those Houses, corrupt practices at or in connection with such elections and other offenses and the decision of doubts and disputes arising out of or in connection with such elections.
- The Representation of the People (Amendment) Act of 1966 abolished election tribunals and transferred election petitions to high courts whose orders lay in appeal to the Supreme Court. However, electoral disputes relating to the election of the President and Vice President are directly heard by the Supreme Court.

Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950

Why in News- The J&K Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), announced that anyone who is living ordinarily in J&K can avail themselves the opportunity to get enlisted as a voter in the Union Territory in accordance with the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

About the Act:

- The Act lays down procedures for the delimitation of the constituencies.
- It provides for the allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Councils of the States.
- Prescribes the procedure for the preparation of electoral rolls and the manner in which seats are to be filled.
- Determines the qualifications of voters
- The President of India has been empowered to amend the orders delimiting constituencies only after consulting the Election Commission.

The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996

Why in News- Madhya Pradesh has notified its PESA Rules on the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas on 15th November, 2022

About PESA:

- PESA is legislation that extends the provisions of Panchayats to the Fifth Schedule Areas. This Act is called The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996. A total of ten States are covered under PESA.
- These states are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Telangana.
- All posts of Chairpersons of PRIs in the areas covered under PESA are reserved for the tribal community and only persons belonging to the tribal community can contest for these posts.
- Gram Sabha has been given the following powers under PESA: consultation before the land acquisition, stopping land transfer, power to enforce prohibition, prior approval of all developmental projects and control over tribal sub-plan, Power to issue utilization certificate for developmental expenditure, selection of beneficiaries of poverty alleviation and other schemes of personal benefit, control over institutions and functionaries of social sectors, collective settlement of disputes on the basis of customs, traditional laws and religious beliefs of tribal areas, local control over water resources, maintenance of tribal community ownership on common land, minor forest produce, minor minerals etc.

Gram Nyayalaya Act 2008

Why in News- Recently, the Supreme Court has asked all the states to submit a detailed report about the Gram Nyayalayas (GN). There are still some states where Gram Nyayalayas have not been established.

About the Act:

- The Act provides for establishment of GN at the Panchayat level to settle criminal, and civil claims and disputes.
- GNs will be headed by 'Nyadhikaari ' (to be appointed by the State Government in consultation with the High Court).
- It shall be guided by the principles of natural justice (and is not bound by the rules of evidence provided in the Indian Evidence Act, 1872).

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006

Why in News- new Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2022 and the apprehension of these rules violating the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

About the Act:

- The act recognizes the rights of the forest-dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest-dwellers to forest resources, on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation, and other socio-cultural needs.

Objectives:

- To undo the historical injustice occurred to the forest-dwelling communities
- To ensure land tenure, livelihood, and food security of the forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest-dwellers
- To strengthen the conservation regime of the forests by including the responsibilities and authority on Forest Rights holders for sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity, and maintenance of ecological balance.

Prevention of corruption act, 1988

Why in News- Public servant can be proven guilty under the act even on the basis of circumstantial evidence

About the Act:

- The act has been enacted by the parliament to curb the corruption in government functioning. Under the act, the central government is authorised to appoint a special judge who will try the corruption cases. CBI is the main agency which was authorised to probe the corruption cases against employee.

Highlights of the 2018 amendment:

- The trial in cases pertaining to the exchange of bribes and corruption should be completed within two years. Further, even after reasoned delays, the trial cannot exceed four years.
- Anyone taking bribes will face imprisonment for 3 to 7 years along with being levied a fine
- Those giving bribes can also be punished with imprisonment for up to 7 years and levied a fine.
- It redefines criminal misconduct and will now only cover the misappropriation of property and possession of disproportionate assets.
- It proposes a 'shield' for government servants, including those retired, from prosecution by making it mandatory for investigating agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation to take prior approval from a competent authority before conducting an inquiry against them.
- However, it states that such permissions shall not be necessary for cases involving the arrest of a person on the spot on the charge of accepting or attempting to accept any undue advantage for himself or any other person.
- In any corruption case against a public servant, the factor of undue advantage will have to be established.

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA):

Why in News- Recently, Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the PMLA act.

About PLMA:

- PMLA was enacted in 2002 and it came into force in 2005 as a response to India's global commitment (including the Vienna Convention) to curb the menace of money laundering (the process of converting black money into white)
- To provide for confiscation and seizure of property derived from money laundering.
- To deal with any other issue connected with money laundering in India.

PMLA (Amendment) Act, 2019:

- It provided extensive power to Enforcement Directorate(ED) for summons, arrests, and raids, and makes bail provisions difficult while shifting the burden of proof of innocence onto the accused rather than the prosecution.

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985

Why in News- Karnataka high court granted bail to a person who was arrested for carry a huge quantity of bhang.

About the Act:

- NDPS Act 1985 deals with drugs and their trafficking.
- The NDPS Act defines cannabis (hemp) as a narcotic drug which is Charas, Ganja and any other mixture. Only Bhang, which is made with the leaves of the plant, is not mentioned in the NDPS Act.
- The Act prohibits the production, sale, purchase, transport, and consumption of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, except for medical and scientific purposes.
- The act extends to the whole of India and also to aircraft and ships that are registered in India.
- The Act states that the government may allow the cultivation of any cannabis plant for industrial purposes only of obtaining fibre or seed or for the horticultural purposes.

FCRA Act, 2010

Why in News- Recently, The Ministry of Home Affairs has cancelled the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) licence of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF) and Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust (RGCT) for alleged violations of the provisions of the Act.

About the Act:

- The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) regulates foreign donations and ensures that such contributions do not adversely affect the internal security.
- The FCRA requires every person or NGO wishing

to receive foreign donations to be registered under the Act.

- For the receipt of foreign funds, it is mandatory to open a bank account in the State Bank of India, Delhi.
- These funds can be utilised only for the purpose for which they have been received, and as stipulated in the Act.
- The receivers of foreign funds are also required to file annual returns, and they must not transfer the funds to another NGO.
- Implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

POCSO Act

Why in News- Supreme Court treats minor of Jammu and Kashmir as an adult for the heinous crime

About the Act:

- The Act was designed to protect children from sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography offences, as well as to provide for the establishment of Special Courts for the trial of such offences.
- The Act was amended in 2019 for enhancing the punishments for specific offences in order to deter abusers and ensure a dignified childhood.

Features of the act:

- Gender neutral law
- Not reporting abuse is an offence
- No time limit for FIR
- Privacy of victim identity

Essential commodities act, 1955

- Under the EC Act of 1955, if the Central Government is of the opinion that it is necessary to maintain or increase the supply of any essential commodity or to make it available at a reasonable price, it may regulate or restrict the production, supply, distribution and sale of that commodity.
- The Centre has the power to add or remove any item from this list of essential commodities in the public interest.

Essential commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020:

- It aims to address the fears of private investors of excessive regulatory interference in their business operations.
- The bill allows the central government to regulate the supply of certain food items only under extraordinary circumstances (such as war and famine). Stock limits may be imposed on agricultural produce only if there is a steep price rise.

MTP Act:

Why in News – Recently the Supreme Court has recognized the safe abortion of unmarried women.

About the Act:

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act,

1971 (“MTP Act”) was passed with regard to safe abortion of women.

- The new Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act 2021 expands access to safe and legal abortion services on medical, anogenital, humanitarian, and social grounds to ensure universal access to comprehensive care.

Key provisions:

- Under the Act, a pregnancy up to 20 weeks can be terminated by a married woman in case of failure of a contraceptive method or device. It also allows unmarried women to terminate pregnancy for this reason.
- Opinion of a Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP) is required for termination of pregnancy up to 20 weeks of the gestation period and two RMPs for termination of pregnancy of 20-24 weeks. The opinion of a state-level medical board is necessary for the termination of pregnancy after 24 weeks in case of substantial foetal abnormalities.
- Increases the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women, including rape survivors, victims of incest, and other vulnerable women (differently abled women, minors, others).
- The name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated shall not be disclosed, except to a person authorized in any law for the time

Family Court Act 1984:

Why in News- Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2022
About:

- The amended bill seeks to provide statutory cover to the family courts established in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland.
- The Family Courts Act of 1984 was enacted to establish Family Courts to promote reconciliation and ensure the speedy resolution of disputes relating to marriage and family matters.
- The State Government may, with the concurrence of the High Court, appoint one or more persons to be a Judge or Judges of the Family Court.

Preamble, Constitutional Interpretation And Constitutionalism

- The term, Sovereign in the preamble implies that India is internally supreme and externally free. India's membership of the Commonwealth or the United Nations does not impose any external limit on her sovereignty.
- The terms Socialist and Secular were added to the preamble by the 42nd amendment in 1976.

- India being a 'Secular State' does not mean that India is non-religious or irreligious, or anti-religious, but simply that the State in itself is not religious and embodies the ancient Indian principle of Sarva Dharma Samabhava, meaning thereby that the State shall not discriminate against the citizens in any way on the basis of religion.
- The term Democratic in the preamble is very important. India aims to build not only a democratic political system but also a democratic social system.
- A system is Republican where no office of the state is held on the basis of hereditary prescriptive rights.

Constitutionalism

- Constitutionalism' means limited government or limitation on government. Constitutionalism envisages checks and balances and puts the powers of legislature and executive under some restraints and not making them uncontrolled and arbitrary.
- **Rule of law-** the absence of arbitrariness in the government.
- DICEY'S THEORY of the Rule of Law consists of three main principles:
 - Absence of Arbitrary Power or Supremacy of Law
 - Equality before Law
 - The primacy of the rights of individuals (This principle is not applied in India.)

Citizenship

- The provisions related to citizenship are mentioned in Articles 6-11 of the Constitution. Article 11 of the Indian constitution gives a proper way to the Parliament for making any law relating to Citizenship. While exercising the authority, the Parliament enacted the Citizenship Act, 1955 for the acquisition and termination of citizenship in India.
- Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) does not mean 'dual citizenship'. Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) does not confer any political right on the concerned persons. The registered Overseas Citizens of India cannot enjoy the same status as that of Indian citizens in case of equal opportunities in public employment. The Parliament of India is the sole repository body for making legislation on Citizenship. The legislature is authorized to introduce and regulate the conditions of citizenship.
- Parliament has approved voting rights to Non-Resident Indians in elections with the Lok Sabha adopting the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2010. However, the Non-Resident Indian has to be present in the constituency on the date of polling.

- The Government of India launched the PIO scheme in 1999 for every person of Indian origin who is a citizen of another country, NOT being a citizen of any country that may be specified by the Government of India from time to time, will be eligible to apply for PIO Card. Presently, the specified countries whose nationals are ineligible for grant of PIO Card are Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Iran, China, and Nepal. PIO card is valid for 15 years.
- The Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme was introduced by amending the Citizenship Act, 1955 in August 2005. The Scheme was launched in 2006. A registered Overseas Citizen of India gets an Indian visa for his/her whole life. He or she enjoys the same status as that of Non-Resident Indians except for matters of agricultural properties. Although, PIO and OCI cards were merged in 2015.

Fundamental Rights

The fundamental rights in India are guaranteed by civil liberties enshrined in Part III (Articles 12-32) of the Constitution of India. These rights are known as "fundamentals" because they are essential for all-round development. The six fundamental rights are-

- Right to equality (Article 14-18)
- Right to freedom (Article 19-22)
- Right against exploitation (Article 23-24)
- Right to freedom of religion (Article 25-28)
- Cultural and educational rights (Article 29-30)
- Right to constitutional remedies (Article 32)

Important features of Fundamental Rights:

- They are described in Part III (Articles 12-35) of the Indian Constitution
- Fundamental rights reflect the progress of democracy.
- They protect the citizens from the harsh rules of the state.
- They are justiciable, meaning they can be prosecuted in a court of law.
- They are not absolute but qualified.
- These are not permanent and can be amended.
- Except for Articles 20 and 21, they can be suspended during an emergency.
- There were seven fundamental rights in the constitution but now there are only six fundamental rights in the Indian constitution. The right to property has become a legal right from a fundamental right after the 44th amendment to the Indian Constitution.

Important facts:

- The definition of 'the State' in article 12 being an inclusive one, courts have ruled that where there is pervasive or predominant governmental control or significant involvement in its activity,

such bodies, entities, and organizations fall within the definition of the State.

- Article 19(1)(a) refers to the freedom of speech and expression
- The Supreme Court has spelt out in articles 14 and 21 the right to travel abroad and return to one's country
- The right to Privacy is protected under the Right to Life- article 21 of the Indian constitution.

DPSPs

- Articles 36-51 of the Indian Constitution deal with the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP). They are borrowed from the Constitution of Ireland. Although, the constitution has not classified DPSP into different categories, however for better understanding of these DPSP, they are classified into 3 broad categories.

Socialistic principles:

- **Article 38:** To promote the welfare of the society by securing the social order pervaded by justice
- **Article 39:** To secure the right to adequate means of livelihood, equitable distribution of the material resources of the community for the common good, prevent the concentration of wealth and means of production, Equal pay for equal work for men and women, Protection of health and strength of workers and children against forcible abuse, opportunities for the healthy development of the child
- **Article 39A:** Promotion of equal justice and providing free legal aid to the poor
- **Article 41:** To secure the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement
- **Article 42:** Make provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief
- **Article 43:** To secure for all workers a living wage, a decent standard of living and social and cultural opportunities
- **Article 43A:** Steps to ensure participation of workers in the management of industries
- **Article 47:** Raising the level of nutrition and the standard of living of the people and improving public health

Gandhian principles:

- **Article 40:** Organization of village panchayats and giving them necessary powers
- **Article 43:** Promotion of cottage industries on individual and co-operative basis
- **Article 43B:** Promotion of the working of cooperatives
- **Article 46:** Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections

- **Article 47:** To prohibit the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs
- **Article 48:** To prohibit the slaughter of cows, calves, and other milch animals and to improve their breeds

Liberal-intellectual principles:

- **Article 44:** Ensuring Uniform Civil Code for all
- **Article 45:** Providing early childhood care up to the age of 6
- **Article 48:** To organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern scientific basis
- **Article 48A:** To protect and improve the environment and to safeguard forests and wildlife
- **Article 49:** To protect monuments, places, and objects of artistic or historical interest
- **Article 50:** Separation of Judiciary from Executive
- **Article 51:** Promotion of international peace and security

Features of DPSP:

- DPSPs are not enforceable in a court of law.
- They were made non-justifiable considering that the state may not have enough resources to implement all of them or it may also come up with some better and more progressive laws.
- It includes all the ideals that the state should follow and keep in mind while formulating policies and laws for the country.
- The DPSPs are like a collection of instructions and directions, which were issued to the governors of the colonies of India under the Government of India Act, 1935.
- It constitutes a very broad economic, social and political guideline or principles and strategies for a modern democratic state, which aims to embody the ideals of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity enunciated in the Preamble. The Preamble contains all the objectives that need to be achieved through the Constitution.

Important facts about DPSP:

- A new DPSP under Article 38 was added by the 44th Amendment Act of 1978, which requires the state to reduce inequalities in income, status, facilities, and opportunities.
- The 86th Amendment Act of 2002 changed the contents of Article 45 and made elementary education a fundamental right under Article 21A. The revised directive requires the state to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete 14 years of age.
- A new DPSP was added under section 43B by the 97th Amendment Act of 2011 relating to cooperatives. For this, the State needs to promote the voluntary formation of cooperatives, autonomous functioning, democratic control, and professional management.
- The Constitution of India under Article 37

makes it clear that 'DPSPs are fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws.

The Judicial system in India:

- In India, there is an integrated judicial system.
- In the hierarchy, the Supreme Court is at the top, then the High Courts, and then the District Courts.
- Articles 124 to 147 of the Constitution lay down the Supreme Court's composition and jurisdiction. Primarily, it is an appellate court that takes up appeals against judgments of the High Courts of the states and territories. It also takes writ petitions in cases of serious human rights violations or any petition filed under Article 32, which is the right to a constitutional remedy, or any serious case that involves a need for immediate resolution.
- It is empowered to issue directions, orders or writs, including writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto, and certiorari to enforce them. Article 32 also empowers Parliament to authorize any other court to issue these writs.
- The Supreme Court has been conferred with power to direct transfer of any civil or criminal case from one State High Court to another State High Court or from a Court subordinate to another State High Court.
- The Supreme Court comprises the Chief Justice and 33 judges.
- The Indian judicial system is managed and administrated by officers. Judges of Subordinate Judiciaries are appointed by the governor on recommendation by the High Court. Judges of the High Courts and Supreme Court are appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of a collegium under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution.
- Article 222: It provides for the transfer of HC judges, including the Chief Justice. The President, after consultation with the CJI, may transfer a judge from one HC to any other HC. A compensatory allowance is provided to the transferred judge.
- CJI can appoint an ad hoc judge when there is lack of quorum to hold or continue any session of Supreme Court, this is done on previous recommendation of president.
- In order to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court, a person must be a citizen of India and must have been: for at least five years, a Judge of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession, or an Advocate of a High Court or of two or more such Courts in succession for at least 10 years or he must be, in the opinion of the President, a distinguished jurist.
- All courts exercise various powers falling within their respective civil and criminal jurisdictions.
- Certain jurisdictions are exclusive to a particular court – for example, only the Supreme Court can exercise jurisdiction to entertain SLPs under Article 136 and Jurisdiction under Article 143 as advisory jurisdiction.
- While certain types of jurisdiction are common to SC and HC, for instance, the writ jurisdiction.
- Tribunals are quasi-judicial bodies established in the net of the court under various constitutional and statutory provisions, but cannot subsume their HC Jurisdiction under articles 226 and 227.
- There are other judicial bodies that are involved in the judicial system such as Lok Adalats and Nyaya panchayat.
- The power of the court to punish for contempt of itself is part of sovereign power and can inhere only in a sovereign. Articles 129 and 215 recognize the existence of such power in the Supreme Court and the High Courts as they exercise inter alia the sovereign judicial power.
- No other court except Supreme Court and the high court can punish for contempt of court. High Court to exercise the same jurisdiction, powers, and authority in respect of contempt of the Courts subordinate to it.
- The exclusive original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court extends to any dispute between the Government of India and one or more States or among the States, if and in so far as the dispute involves any question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of legal rights depends on.
- The original jurisdiction of the high court is in revenue matters (Article 225) as well as those relating to admiralty, matrimony, probate, contempt of court, and election petitions.
- An appeal may lie to the Supreme Court in civil cases if the High Court concerned certifies: (a) that the case involves an important question of law of general importance, and (b) that, in the opinion of the High Court, the said question is in Need to be decided by the Supreme Court.
- In criminal cases, an appeal lies to the Supreme Court if the High Court (a) has on appeal reversed an order acquitting an accused person and sentenced him to death or imprisonment for life or to a term of less than 10 years; Sentenced to imprisonment. , or (b) has withdrawn any case from any court under its jurisdiction and has convicted the accused in such trial and sentenced him to death or to imprisonment for

life or to a term of less than 10 years sentenced to imprisonment, or (c) is certified that the case is fit for appeal to the Supreme Court.

- Parliament is authorized to confer on the Supreme Court any other powers to consider and hear appeals from any judgment, final order or sentence in a criminal proceeding of a High Court.
- The procedure relating to the removal of a judge of the Supreme Court is regulated by the Judges Inquiry Act, 1968, by the process of impeachment.
- A Judge of the Supreme Court and the high court cannot be removed from office except by an order of the President passed after an address in each House of Parliament supported by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of members present and voting, and presented to the President in the same Session for such removal on the ground of proven misbehaviour or incapacity.

Parliament

- Articles 79 to 122 in the fifth part of the Indian Constitution deal with the organisation, composition, duration, officers, privileges, and power of the Parliament.
- Draupadi Murmu is the President of India since 25 July 2022
- From 11 August 2022, the Vice President of India and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is Jagdeep Dhankhar
- Harivansh Narayan Singh is the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha since 14 September 2020
- Piyush Goyal is the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha since 14 July 2021
- Mallikarjun Kharge is the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha from 1 October 2022.
- Om Birla is the Speaker of the Lok Sabha since 19 June 2019.
- The office of Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha is vacant since 23 May 2019.
- The Leader of the House in the Lok Sabha is Narendra Modi since 26 May 2014.
- The office of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha is vacant since 26 May 2014 as no party other than the BJP has more than 10% of the seats.
- Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar was the first Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha (30 May 1952-7 March 1956).
- The quorum to constitute a sitting of the House is one-tenth of the total number of Members of the House as mentioned under article 100(3) of the Constitution.
- The highest number of members in Rajya Sabah is from Uttar Pradesh- 31, Maharashtra- 19, Tamil Nadu- 18 West Bengal- 16.
- Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale (1952-56 and 1956-62) is the first nominated member of rajya sabha.
- Special powers of Rajya Sabha - to empower Parliament to make laws in respect of any matter enumerated in the State List in the national interest by adopting a resolution to this effect (article 249), creation of All India Services (article 312) and approving Proclamations (issued under article 352 or article 356 or article 360) if the Lok Sabha stands dissolved or the dissolution of the Lok Sabha takes place within the period allowed for the approval of the Proclamation by Parliament.
- The Speaker continues in office till immediately before the first meeting of Lok Sabha after dissolution of the one to which he/she was elected, unless he/she ceases to be a Member by any of the reasons specified in articles 94, 101 and 102 of the Constitution.
- When the offices of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker become vacant, the duties of the office of the Speaker shall be performed by such member of the Lok Sabha as the President may appoint for the purpose. The person appointed is known as the Speaker Pro Tem.
- Speaker shall nominate from amongst the Members a Panel of not more than ten Chairpersons, any one of whom may preside over the House in the absence of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.
- To become a member of the Lok Sabha, a person should be a citizen of India, not less than 25 years of age and possess such other qualifications as may be prescribed by or under any law made by Parliament [Art. 84]
- A Money Bill can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha. In case any question arises as to whether a Bill is a Money Bill or not, the decision of the Speaker, Lok Sabha, thereon, is final.
- Adjournment is a postponement of the sitting or proceedings of the House from one time to another specified for the reassembling of the House
- "Prorogation" means the termination of a Session of the House by an order made by the President under article 85(2)(a) of the Constitution
- "Dissolution" of the House means the end of the life of the Lok Sabha either by an order made by the President under article 85 (2) (b) of the Constitution or on the expiration of the period of five years from the date appointed for its first meeting.
- Rule-32 of the "Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha" provides that unless

the Speaker otherwise directs, the first hour of every sitting of the House shall be available for the asking and answering of Questions and shall be called question hour.

- Admissibility of questions is governed by Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, Directions by the Speaker as also the past precedents
- **Starred question:** A Member who desires an oral answer to his question is required to distinguish it by an asterix. Minimum of 15 clear days notice is required for tabling Starred Questions.
- **Unstarred question:** These questions do not carry the asterix mark and are meant for obtaining written reply. Minimum 15 clear days notice is required for tabling Unstarred Questions.
- **Short Notice Question:** A question can also be asked on a matter of urgent public importance at a notice of less than ten clear days.
- **Calling Attention-** Under this procedural device, a Member may, with the prior permission of the Speaker, call the attention of a Minister to any matter of urgent public importance and the Minister may make a brief statement thereon. Only those matters which are primarily the concern of the Union Government can be raised through a Calling Attention notice. The Calling Attention procedure is an Indian innovation which combines asking a question with supplementaries and making brief comment. The Calling Attention matter is not subject to the vote of the House.
- Motion' in parliamentary parlance means any formal proposal made to the House by a Member for the purpose of eliciting a decision of the House.
- Motions may be classified into three broad categories, namely, substantive motions, substitute motions and subsidiary motions.
- A substantive motion is a self-contained, independent proposal made in reference to a subject which the mover wishes to bring forward. All Resolutions, Motions for election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, and Motion of Thanks on the Address by the President, etc are examples of substantive motions.
- A substitute motion, as its name suggests, is moved in substitution of the original motion for taking into consideration a policy or situation or statement or any other matter. Amendments to substitute motions are not permissible.
- Subsidiary motions depend upon or relate to other motions or follow up on some proceedings in the House.
- Adjournment Motion is the procedure for

adjournment of the business of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, which can be moved with the consent of the Speaker. Its adoption is regarded as a sort of censure of the Government.

- Rule 198 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha lays down the procedure for moving a Motion of No-Confidence in the Council of Ministers. A Motion of No-confidence need not set out any grounds on which it is based.
- If the Speaker admits notice of a motion and no date is fixed for its discussion, it is called a 'No-Day-yet-Named Motion'
- **Short Duration Discussion-** Under this Rule, Members can raise discussion for short durations without a formal motion or vote thereon.
- A Point of Order relates to the interpretation or enforcement of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House or convention or such Articles of the Constitution as regulate the business of the House and raises a question which is within the cognizance of the Speaker.
- Parliamentary privilege' refers to certain rights and immunities enjoyed by each House of Parliament and Committees of each House collectively, and by Members of each House individually, without which they cannot discharge their functions efficiently and effectively- (article 105.)
- No law so far has been enacted by Parliament (and State Legislatures) to define the powers, privileges, and immunities available to each House, its Members, and the Committees thereof.
- There had three occasions when both Houses of Parliament held a joint sitting to resolve deadlock on Bills between them, last time 26 March 2002 on the Prevention of Terrorism Bill, 2002 when joint setting held.
- Standing Committees are permanent Committees whose members are either elected by the House or nominated by the Chairman every year or from time to time.
- Department Related Standing Committees were set up in 1993 to scrutinize the functioning of the various Ministries/ Departments of the Union Government assigned to them in order to further strengthen the accountability of the Government to Parliament. Twenty-four DRSCs have been constituted consisting of not more than thirty-one members, out of which twenty-one members are nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and ten members are nominated by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha.

MCQs based on Preliminary Exam

1. Consider the following statements regarding *e-kuber*:
 1. e-kuber is the core banking solution of the RBI that gives high degree of access to commercial banks to their current account with the RBI.
 2. e-kuber is used to conduct exercises like auctioning of government securities.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

2. Consider the following statements:
 1. The Unemployment Rate is the percentage of people in the labour force who demanded work but did not get it.
 2. The labour force includes those who are employed and those who are looking for work but unable to get it.
 3. The fall in Unemployment Rate happens only when more jobs are created.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

3. *The government plans to sell as much as 5% of its stake in Life Insurance Corporation of India in the initial public offering (IPO). For LIC, the listing of the shares means:*
 1. Investors will be able to actively trade in its shares on the stock exchanges.
 2. It means more transparency from the LIC side which was hitherto answerable only to the government.
 3. It is not mandatory for LIC to inform the investors and exchanges details about all price sensitive information after listing.
 Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

4. Consider the following statements:
 1. States can borrow interest-free loans with a tenure of upto 50 years, to make capital investments.
 2. The rise in the prices of vegetables impact only the retail inflation (CPI) and not Wholesale inflation (WPI).
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

5. Consider the following statements regarding *Nitrous Oxide*:
 1. Being a short-lived greenhouse gas, it substantially contributes to global warming.
 2. When it reaches the stratosphere it reacts with ozone and depletes it, with an impact comparable to that of CFCs.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

6. Consider the following statements regarding *Miyawaki technique*:
 1. Miyawaki technique allows for growing dense forests comprising native trees on small patches of land.
 2. In Miyawaki technique the tree growth is slower compared to the traditional afforestation method.
 3. They help lower temperatures in urban heat islands, reduce air and noise pollution.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

7. *Kawal Tiger Reserve*, recently seen in news is located in :

(a) Kerala	(b) Telangana
(c) Karnataka	(d) Tamil Nadu

8. Consider the following statements:
 1. As per State of Forests Report, 2021 Uttarakhand reported the maximum forest fires among all states.
 2. State of Forests Report, 2021 acknowledged the link between climate change and forest fires.
 3. The Union Environment Ministry supports the efforts of state governments in preventing and controlling forest fire by providing financial assistance under the 'centrally sponsored forest fire prevention and management scheme'.
 Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

9. Consider the following statements regarding the recently launched *Operation AAHT*:
 1. It is a nationwide operation to curb human trafficking.

2. As part of Operation AAHT, special teams will be deployed on all long-distance trains/routes.
3. It was launched by the Union Ministry of Women & Child Development.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

10. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) can designate individuals as "terrorists" under which of the following provisions?

- (a) Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002
(b) National Security Act, 1980
(c) The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019
(d) None of the above

11. Consider the following statements regarding the role played by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) in promoting millets production and export:

1. APEDA has developed its own Virtual Trade Fair (VTF) application to facilitate interaction among exporters, producer organizations and international buyers
2. A series of Virtual Buyer-Seller Meets (BSM) with Embassies, importers, exporters and product associations from India have been organized.
3. APEDA has created, 'Nutri Cereals Export Promotion Forum' to remove the bottlenecks in the supply chain of nutria-cereals.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

12. Consider the following pairs of Nuclear Power Plants and their location:

1. Jaitapur Atomic Power : Gujarat Station
2. Kaiga Generating : Karnataka Station
3. Narora Atomic Power : Uttar Pradesh Station
4. Kakrapar Atomic : Maharashtra Power Station

Which of the above pair/s is/are correctly matched?

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

13. Consider the following statements regarding Statue of Equality:

1. It is a statue of 8th Century Bhakti Saint Shankaracharya, located in Hyderabad.
2. It is the tallest sitting statue in the world.
3. The Statue is made of 'panchaloha', a combination of five metals: gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

14. Countries can investigate and determine war crimes through which of the following ways:

1. Through the International Criminal Court.
2. Creating a tribunal or court by a group of interested or concerned states.
3. Through their own laws for prosecuting war crimes.

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

15. Consider the following statements :

1. Reservation in promotion in public posts can be claimed as a fundamental right.
2. States are bound to provide reservation in appointments and promotions.

Which of the statement/s given above is/are **incorrect**?

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

16. Consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution permits the Central government to make laws when Parliament is not in session.
2. An ordinance can be re-promulgated any number of times.
3. Governor of a state can issue ordinances only with the approval of the President.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

17. Which of the following states have legislative council?

1. Telangana
2. Tamil Nadu
3. Maharashtra
4. Punjab
5. Andhra Pradesh

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

- 18.** Consider the following statements regarding *SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications) messaging system*:
1. It is a messaging network that financial institutions use to securely transmit information and instructions through a standardized system of codes.
 2. SWIFT facilitate funds transfer and sends payment orders.
 3. SWIFT India is a consortium of all Indian public sector banks.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 19.** Consider the following statements regarding *National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR)*:
1. The National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), an attached office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) monitors the shoreline erosion in India.
 2. The shoreline erosion is monitored using remote sensing data and GIS mapping techniques.
 3. NCCR has prepared and published an atlas of Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI) maps for the entire coastline of India.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 20.** Consider the following statements:
1. The UNFCCC established a framework for action to stabilise concentrations of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere.
 2. Nearly all member states of the United Nations have ratified the convention.
 3. The framework sets binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 21.** Consider the following statements regarding *Participatory Notes (P-Notes)*:
1. Participatory Notes are instruments that are issued by registered FIIs to overseas investors who want to invest in the stock markets in India.
 2. They are also known as offshore derivative instruments.
 3. The P-Note holder enjoy voting rights in relation to shares invested through the
- P-Notes.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 2 (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 22.** Which among the following statements *best describes the term 'Black Gold'*?
- (a) Coal and its derivatives
 - (b) Gold extracted from Placer deposits
 - (c) Petroleum and its derivatives
 - (d) Residual that remain after Gold extraction
- 23.** Consider the following statements regarding the *roles and functions of Financial Action Task Force (FATF)*:
1. FATF set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
 2. FATF does not involve in monitoring countries' progress in implementing its recommendations.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are **incorrect**?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 24.** Consider the following statements regarding *Avian influenza or Bird flu*:
1. Avian influenza is a highly contagious viral disease caused by Influenza Type A viruses.
 2. It can be spread through their droppings while flying.
 3. It does not affect the egg production in poultry birds.
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 25.** Consider the following statements regarding *Financial Action Task Force (FATF)*:
1. Once a country is blacklisted, FATF urges all member countries to put economic sanctions on the blacklisted country.
 2. Gulf Cooperation Council is a full member of Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 26.** Consider the following statements regarding *Census and Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC)*:
1. Census is a statutory exercise conducted under the provisions of the Census Act

1948.

2. All information collected under the Census is to be published in the local areas for public scrutiny.
3. All the personal information given in the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

- 27.** Consider the following statements regarding the *impact of External Aids on Indian Economy*:

1. It brings in foreign currency that is useful to bridge the Balance of Payments (BoP) deficit.
2. It causes 'crowding out effect' in the domestic market, which is not favourable to the domestic borrowers.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

- 28.** Consider the following statements regarding *Trans-fats*:

1. Trans-fats are industrially produced and are not naturally present.
2. Repeated use of oil at high temperature can increase the trans-fat content.
3. If trans-fat is to be replaced with healthier substitutes, one must compromise on food taste and cost.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

- 29.** Consider the following statements:

1. The gravitational force of the earth holds the atmosphere around it.
2. Earth's atmosphere is only about 1/100th as dense as Mars'.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

- 30.** *Lithospheric plates move around very slowly – just a few millimetres each year. What is the reason behind this movement?*

- (a) Rotation of earth
(b) Movement of magma inside earth
(c) Ocean currents
(d) Formation of folds on earth's crust

- 31.** Consider the following statements:

1. Tornadoes and cyclones do not co-exist.
2. The direction of rotation of a hurricane/cyclone is decided by the direction of earth's rotation, which is not the case with tornadoes.
3. Tornadoes are much smaller in scale than hurricanes.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

- 32.** *Acidification of ocean can have a beneficial effect on:*

1. Photosynthetic algae
2. Seagrasses
3. Deep sea corals

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

- 33.** What is the *correct sequence of occurrence of the countries in Eastern coast of Africa as one proceeds from South to North?*

1. Mozambique
2. Tanzania
3. Kenya
4. Somalia

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

- 34.** Consider the following statements:

1. The Equator runs almost through the middle of Africa.
2. Africa is the only continent through which the Tropic of Cancer, the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn passes.
3. Australia is the smallest continent that lies entirely in the Southern Hemisphere.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

- 35.** According to the terms of the '*Subsidiary Alliance*', *Indian rulers were* :

1. Not allowed to have their independent armed forces.
2. Supposed to protect the British representatives in the princely states.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

36. Consider the following statements regarding *Mahalwari system*:

1. Warren Hastings was associated with the conception of this system.
2. Under the system, ryots paid a variable sum to the Zamindars who then paid to the British.
3. Village lands, forestland and pastures were included under the system.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

37. *Welby Commission setup in British India concerned an enquiry into the :*

- (a) Educational reforms in Indian Universities
(b) Atrocities of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre
(c) Royal Indian Navy (RIN) mutiny
(d) Drain of wealth issue

38. *The Poligar revolt of early 19th Century was rooted in:*

- (a) General discontentment with foreign rule
(b) Oppressive land revenue system
(c) Control of tribal forests and river streams by British Government
(d) Enmity of tribals with non-tribals

39. Which of the following factor/s influenced the growth of Modern Nationalism during British rule in India?

1. French Revolution.
2. Indian Renaissance.
3. Offshoot of modernization initiated by the British in India.
4. Strong reaction to British imperialist policies in India.

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

40. Consider the following statements regarding *East India Association*:

1. The East India Association was founded by Dadabhai Naoroji, in collaboration with Indians and retired British officials in London.
2. It was the successor organisation of the Indian National Congress.
3. It worked towards presenting the correct information about India to the British Public and voice Indian grievances in British press.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

41. Which of the following organized 'Pledge Movement'?

- (a) The Madras Mahajana Sabha
(b) The British Indian Association
(c) Indian Social Conference
(d) Servants of India society

42. Consider the following statements:

1. The first session of Indian National Congress was presided over by S.N. Banerjee.
2. First woman to address an open session of the Indian National Congress was Kadambini Ganguly, also the first woman graduate of Calcutta University.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

43. *The aim of the Indian Association founded by Surendranath Banerjee was to :*

- (a) Give shape to and establish the Indian National Congress (INC)
(b) Advocate constitutional reforms through legislative action
(c) Represent the views of the educated middle class and inspire the Indian community to take the value of united action
(d) Organize seditious movements to dethrone the British Empire

44. *The moderates succeeded on a number of fronts. These include:*

1. Popularizing the ideas of democracy, civil liberties and representative institutions
2. Explained British exploitation of the Indian economy
3. Getting the legislative councils expanded for Indian benefit

Select the correct answer code:

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

45. In the context of *Modern India*, *Jugantar* and *Bharathamatha Association* were :

- (a) Pre-Congress Social Organisations
(b) Publications against colonialism
(c) Revolutionary groups
(d) Reformist Hindu Organisations

46. Consider the following statements:

1. Barrah Dacoity was organized by Dacca

Anushilan under Pulin Das.

2. Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose staged a bomb attack on Viceroy Irwin.

Which of the above statement/s is/are **incorrect**?

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

- 47.** *The period between 1885 – 1905 is known as the era of the moderates.* Which of the following were the *main demands of Moderates*?

1. Separation of the judiciary from the executive.
2. Reduction of land revenue and protection of peasants from unjust landlords.
3. Abolition of salt tax and sugar duty.
4. Freedom of speech and expression and freedom to form associations

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

- 48.** Consider the following statements:

1. Amrita Bazar Patrika, one of the oldest newspapers in India, was launched in Bengali.
2. Mahratta was launched by B.G. Tilak in Marathi.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

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

- 49.** Why *Defence of India Act 1915* was opposed by the nationalists?

1. It aimed at curtailing the nationalist and revolutionary activities.
2. It made a sharp distinction between European and Indian subjects.

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

- 50.** *The Congress split in 1907 was due to the issue of:*

- (a) Increasingly religious tones in the Indian National Movement
- (b) Economic ideology of state-led development of India
- (c) Methodology of struggle against the British
- (d) Grant of concessions to the All-India Muslim League

ANSWER

1. (c)	11. (d)	21. (c)	31. (c)	41. (c)
2. (b)	12. (b)	22. (c)	32. (b)	42. (b)
3. (b)	13. (b)	23. (b)	33. (b)	43. (c)
4. (a)	14. (d)	24. (b)	34. (d)	44. (d)
5. (b)	15. (c)	25. (b)	35. (a)	45. (c)
6. (c)	16. (a)	26. (b)	36. (b)	46. (b)
7. (b)	17. (a)	27. (a)	37. (d)	47. (d)
8. (c)	18. (a)	28. (d)	38. (b)	48. (a)
9. (b)	19. (a)	29. (a)	39. (d)	49. (a)
10. (c)	20. (b)	30. (b)	40. (b)	50. (c)

MCQs Based on Current Affairs

1. Consider the following statements related to Investor Risk Reduction Access (IRRA) platform-
1. It has been developed up by SEBI.
 2. The SEBI has asked the stock exchanges and clearing corporations to operationalize the IRRA platform by October 1, 2023.
- Choose the correct options-
- A. Statement 1 is correct.
 - B. Statement 2 is correct.
 - C. Both statements are correct.
 - D. None of the statements are correct.

Answer- B

2. Under which article of the Constitution, the Parliament can make a Delimitation Act?
- A. Article 82
 - B. Article 324
 - C. Article 182
 - D. Article 170

Answer- A

3. How does a catalyst increase the rate of a reaction?
- A. By creating an intermediate complex
 - B. changing the equilibrium constant
 - C. by increasing the activation energy
 - D. lowering the activation energy

Answer – D

4. The term '3C strategy' refers to-
- A. Aspirational District Program
 - B. Atal Innovation Mission
 - C. Aspirational Block Program
 - D. India Innovation Mission

Answer- A

5. The first synchronous census was conducted in India-
- A. 1872
 - B. 1881
 - C. 1891
 - D. 1861

Answer – B

6. Which of the above statements are correct?
1. The Food Price Index is the flagship

- publication of FAO.
2. FAO was established in 1945.
 3. The Russia-Ukraine war has affected the global price of commodities.
- choose the right option-
- A. 1 and 2
 - B. 2 and 3
 - C. 1 only
 - D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer – D

7. Consider the following statements.
1. India is a non-signatory to the United Nations Convention on Refugees.
 2. Illegal migrants in India are dealt with under the Foreigners Act.
- choose the right option-
- A. 1 only
 - B. 2 only
 - C. Both 1 and 2
 - D. none of the above

Answer – C

8. A recently discovered species, named *Tropidophis canungoae*, is related to-
- A. Snake
 - B. Bird
 - C. Crocodile
 - D. Lizard

Answer- A

9. Consider the following statements.
1. Bureau of Indian Standards is a statutory body under the Ministry of Commerce.
 2. India has recently prepared its first National Electricity Code in 2022.
 3. SNAP 2022-27 is a proposed plan for national standardisation.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- A. 1 and 2
 - B. 2 and 3
 - C. 3 only
 - D. All of the Above

Answer – C

10. With reference to Indo-US relations, consider the following statements.

1. India has a trade deficit with the US in 2020-21.
2. Top traded goods include pearls and precious stones and pharmaceuticals.
3. The 13th Trade Policy Forum was held in New Delhi in 2021.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. 2 only
- B. 2 and 3
- C. 1 and 3
- D. 1 and 2

Answer- A

11. Consider the following statements.

1. ILO was established by the Treaty of Versailles.
2. Minimum Age Convention is a convention under ILO.

Select the incorrect statements.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None

Answer – D

12. Consider the following statements.

1. New Umbrella Entity (NUE) is a new concept envisaged by RBI for retail payments in the country.
2. NUE will replace NPCI.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None

Answer- A

13. Consider the following statements related to Silent Valley Bird Survey

1. A total of 200 species were identified during the Silent Valley Bird Survey.
2. Silent Valley was first discovered in 1847 by botanist Robert Waite.
3. 17 new species were recorded during this survey.
4. In 1914 the forest of the Silent Valley area was declared a reserve forest.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

- A. 1, 2 and 3

- B. 2, 3 and 4

- C. 1 and 4

- D. 1 only

Answer: B

14. Consider the following statements regarding pollutants.

1. Ion exchange is one of the techniques to reduce total dissolved solids (TDS) in water.
2. Typhoid, cholera and diarrhea are water borne diseases.

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

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. none of the above

Answer – C

15. Which of the following revolution is related to prawn (fish) production?

- A. Yellow Revolution
- B. blue revolution
- C. Red Revolution
- D. Round Revolution

Answer – B

16. Consider the following statements related to Asian elephant

1. The Asian elephant has been listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List since 1986.
2. There are five subspecies of the Asian elephant.
3. A recent study revealed that most of the Asian elephant's habitat has been lost due to human interference.
4. Project Elephant was started by the Government of India in 1992.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

- A. 1, 2 and 3
- B. 2 and 4
- C. 1, 3 and 4
- D. 2 only

Answer: C

Personality



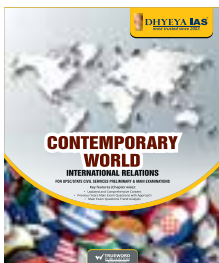
**Subhas Chandra
Bose**

Subhas Chandra Bose was born on 23 January 1897 in a Bengali family in Cuttack, Orissa. His father Jankinath Bose was a famous lawyer and his mother Prabhavati Devi was a pious and religious lady. After completing his primary education from the Protestant European School in Cuttack, he joined Ravenshaw Collegiate School in 1909. The personality of college principal Benimadhav Das had a good effect on Subhash's mind. Later, due to some difficulties, he left this college and joined the Scottish Church College. He left for England on 15 September 1919. There he was admitted to the Kitts William Hall to study the Tripass (Hons) examination of mental and moral sciences. In England he appeared for the ICS competitive examination in 1920 and secured fourth in order of merit. The ideas of Swami Vivekananda and Maharishi Aurobindo Ghosh had made a deep impact on Netaji's mind, so by becoming an ICS he could not work under the British and on 22 April 1921 he resigned. After coming back to India, he first went to Mumbai on the advice of Rabindranath Tagore and met Mahatma Gandhi. There on July

20, 1921, the first meeting between Gandhiji and Subhash took place. There were two special phases of Netaji's politics and ideology. During 1920-30, the Congress started leaning towards socialism, in which Netaji had an important role. Major changes took place in international politics during 1938. During this, the Second World War started. In these circumstances, three types of thinking emerged in the freedom movement. The communists wanted some leniency against the British in the fight against fascism, while Subhash wanted to take advantage of the world war and intensify the fight against the British. Due to this, he had differences with Gandhiji. It is said that in order to get Bhagat Singh's execution pardoned, Subhash wanted Gandhi to break the agreement made with the British government on this subject and try to pardon Bhagat Singh, but Gandhiji did not agree to break the promise made by him. He also became the President of Congress twice, but due to differences, he left the Congress and from the year 1942, he started the freedom struggle in his own way. Despite the difference of opinion, both Gandhiji and Subhash had great respect for each other. Both the great men had the same goal, but the paths were different. During the Second World War, to fight against the British, he formed the Azad Hind Fauj with the help of Japan. In 1943, while addressing the army as 'Supreme Commander' in the Town Hall of Singapore, he gave the slogan "Dilli Chalo". "You give me blood, I will give you freedom" was also his slogan, which was very popular at that time. In October 1943, Subhas Bose formed the Provisional Government of independent India as the Supreme Commander of the Azad Hind Fauj, which was recognized by the governments of 11 countries including Germany, Japan, Philippines, Korea, China, Italy, Manchukuo and Ireland. Japan gave the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to this provisional government. Subhash went to those islands and renamed them also. Except for the Azad Hind Fauj, there is no such instance in world history where, about thirty to thirty-five thousand war prisoners organized such a power struggle for the independence of their country. Netaji's name is first taken as a true and brave son of Mother India. On the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the government has announced that this day will now be celebrated every year as Parakram Diwas and a grand statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will also be installed at India Gate in New Delhi.



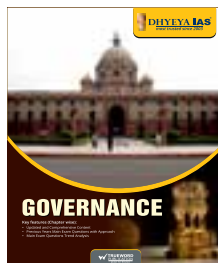
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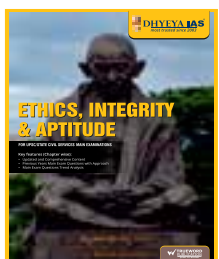
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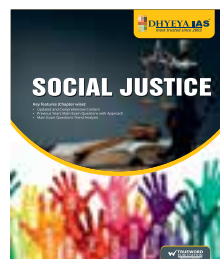
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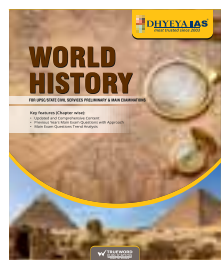
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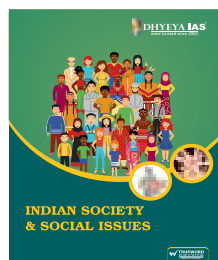
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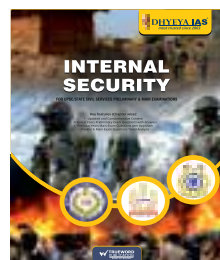
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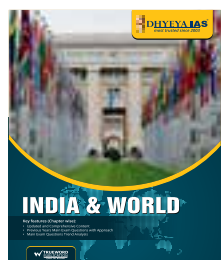
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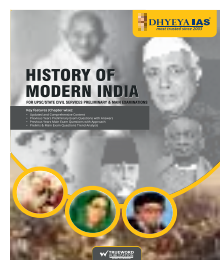
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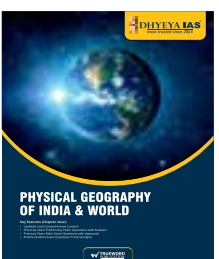
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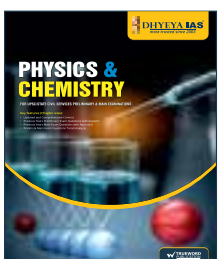
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