

PERFECT 7

**Weekly
Current Affairs**

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS



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Impact and Mitigation

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DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION



Vinay Kumar Singh
Founder & CEO

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

The rigorous syllabi not only instills in them, a passion for knowledge but also attempts to teach them how to apply that knowledge in real-life situations. The programmes lay emphasis on well-rounded personality development of the students and also in inculcating the values of honesty and integrity in them.



Q.H. Khan
Managing Director

Dhyeya IAS is an institution that aims at the complete development of the student. Our faculty are hand-picked and highly qualified to ensure that the students are given every possible support in all their academic endeavors. It is a multi-disciplinary institution which ensures that the students have ready access to a wide range of academic material. Our brand of education has broad horizons as we believe in exposure. Our students are encouraged to widen their knowledge base and study beyond the confinements of the syllabus. We aim to lend a gentle guiding hand to make our students recognize their inner potential and grow on their own accord into stalwarts of tomorrow's society.

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION



Kurban Ali
Chief Editor

With immense pleasure I would like to inform you that the new version of 'Perfect 7', from the Dhyeya IAS, is coming with more information in a very attractive manner. Heartily congratulations to the editorial team. The 'Perfect 7' invites a wider readership in the Institute. The name and fame of an institute depends on the caliber and achievements of the students and teachers. The role of the teacher is to nurture the skills and talents of the students as a facilitator. This magazine is going to showcase the strength of our Institute. Let this be a forum to exhibit the potential of faculties, eminent writers, authors and students with their literary skills and innovative ideas.

Please do visit our website www.dhyeyaias.com and our youtube channel for regular and updated information on current affairs.



Ashutosh Singh
Managing Editor

We have not only given the name 'Perfect 7' to our magazine, but also left no stone unturned to keep it 'near to perfect'. We all know that beginning of a task is most vital and full of challenges. So we met the same fate.

Publishing 'Perfect 7' provided us various challenges because from the beginning itself we kept our bar too high to ensure the quality. Right from the very first issue we had a daunting task to save aspirants from the 'misinformation' or 'overdose of information'. Focussing on civil services examination 'Perfect 7' embodies in itself perfect friend and guide in your preparation. This weapon is built to be precise yet comprehensive. It is not about bombardment of mindless facts, rather an analysis of various facets of the issues, selected in a systematic manner. We adopted the 'Multi Filter' and 'Six Sigma' approach, in which a subject or an issue is selected after diligent discussion on various levels so that the questions in the examination could be covered with high probability.

Being a weekly magazine there is a constant challenge to provide qualitative study material in a time bound approach. It is our humble achievement that we feel proud to make delivered our promise of quality consistently without missing any issue since its inception.

Your suggestions and popular demands always motivate us and keep our morale high.

May this version of 'Perfect 7' instill a new energy and a new spirit in you. We wish that the bond of affection between you and Dhyeya IAS reaches at a new height.



Send us your suggestions, comment, views and feedback for guiding us on

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PREFACE



Dhyeya family has decided to bring a new colourful and vibrant version of '**Perfect 7**' – a panacea for current affairs, which will add positive and dynamic energy in your preparation.

'**Perfect7**' is an outstanding compilation of current affairs topics as per the new pattern of Civil Services Examination (CSE). It presents weekly analysis of information and issues (national and international) in the form of Articles, News Analysis, Brain Boosters, PIB Highlights and Graphical Information, which helps to understand and retain the information comprehensively. Hence, '**Perfect 7**' will build in-depth understanding of various issues in different facets.

'**Perfect7**' is our genuine effort to provide correct, concise and concrete information, which helps students to crack the CSE. This magazine is the result of the efforts of the eminent scholars and the experts from different fields. '**Perfect 7**' is surely a force multiplier in your effort and plugs the loopholes in the preparation.

We believe in environment of continuous improvement and learning. Your constructive suggestions and comments are always welcome, which could guide us in further revision of this magazine.

Omveer Singh Chaudhary

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

As a proud jewel of Dhyeya IAS, '**Perfect 7**' now comes in a new coloured avatar. '**Perfect 7**' is a quintessential part of your preparation strategy for Civil Services Examination. A regular and manageable dose of current affairs will now reach you in new format, making it more reader friendly. Our humble attempt to serve you is surely rewarded by your appreciations. It encourages us to innovate and provide the best as per our ability.

A dedicated team of experts at Dhyeya IAS toils night and day to make your dream of Civil Services come true. I heartily thank and express my gratitude to the esteemed readers and all the people involved in making this magazine a shining star in the galaxy of Dhyeya IAS.

Rajat Jhingan

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

PERFECT 7

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(Ex. Editor Rajya Sabha, TV) & by Team Dhyeya IAS
(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

Mauritius Oil Spill Disaster : Impact and Mitigation

Why in News?

- ♦ A Japanese-firm owned bulk carrier vessel 'MV Wakashio' ran aground on a reef at Pointe d'Esny along Mauritius' south-eastern coastal region on July 25, spilling more than 1,000 tonnes of oil into the Indian Ocean. Pointe d'Esny is a sanctuary for rare wildlife.
- ♦ The area where it happened which was a cause for concern as the spill had taken place near two environmentally protected marine ecosystems and the Blue Bay Marine Park Reserve, which is a wetland of international importance.

Background

- ♦ An oil spill refers to any uncontrolled release of crude oil, gasoline, fuels, or other oil by-products into the environment. Oil spills can pollute land, air, or water, though it is mostly used for oceanic oil spills.
- ♦ They have become a major environmental problem, chiefly as a result of intensified petroleum exploration and production on continental shelves and the transport of large amounts of oils in vessels.



- ♦ The amount of oil spilled from the Japanese-owned ship nearby the lagoons and coastal areas of south-east Mauritius is relatively low compared to the big oil spills the world has seen in the past, but the damage it will do is going to be huge and long-lasting.
- ♦ India has been assisting Mauritius in dealing with the crisis and has rushed a 10-member response team from the Indian Coast Guard along with 30 tonnes of specialised equipment for the clean-up operations.
- ♦ The 10,000 units of 'Made-in-India' Graphene oil absorbent pads called 'Sorbene' pads, ordered by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and carried as a part of this clean-up operation, were supplied by Log 9 Spill Containment Pvt Ltd
- ♦ Three existing variants of Sorbene pads, namely the Ultra High Oil Absorbent Pads, High Oil Absorbent Pads, and Oil Absorbent Pads were supplied for the emergency operation.
- ♦ Sorbene pads possess high elasticity and their hydrophobic

nature makes it difficult to get wet and helps in efficiently absorbing spill from land, cracks or water bodies.

- ◆ This year another major oil spill was a disaster on May 29, when Russia declared an emergency after 22,000 tons (20,000 metric tons) of oil spilled into the Arctic Circle, making it one of the largest oil spills in modern Russia.

Oil Spill: Environmental Impacts

- ◆ Oil on ocean surfaces is harmful to many forms of aquatic life because it prevents sufficient amounts of sunlight from penetrating the surface, and it also reduces the level of dissolved oxygen.
- ◆ Crude oil ruins the insulating and waterproofing properties of feathers and fur of birds, and thus oil-coated birds and marine mammals may die from hypothermia (decrease in body temperature to below-normal levels).
- ◆ Moreover, ingested oil can be toxic to affected animals, and damage their habitat and reproductive rate.
- ◆ Saltwater marshes and mangroves frequently suffer from oil spills.
- ◆ Experts say that despite best efforts, generally less than 10% of oil spilled in incidents like these is successfully cleaned up.

Oil Spill: Economic Impacts

- ◆ If beaches and populated shorelines are fouled, tourism and commerce may be severely affected.
- ◆ The power plants and other utilities that depend on drawing or discharging sea water are severely affected by oil spills.

◆ Major oil spills are frequently followed by the immediate suspension of commercial fishing.

◆ Mauritius Oil Spill: A Matter of Serious Concern

◆ Unlike most previous offshore spills, this has taken place near two environmentally protected marine ecosystems and the Blue Bay Marine Park reserve, which is a wetland of international importance.

◆ It's the location rather than the size of the spill which is causing greatest concern about its potentially serious environmental impact.

◆ The stunning turquoise waters of the blue lagoon outside the coastal village of Mahébourg in Mauritius is now stained black and brown.

◆ It is thought that more than 1,000 tonnes of fuel have leaked out of the ship and into the lagoon.

◆ A huge clean-up operation has been launched from the shore with many local people volunteering to help.

◆ On 7 August, nearly two weeks after the shipwreck, the Mauritian government declared the incident a national emergency.

Oil Spill: Effect on Biodiversity Hotspot

◆ Mauritius is a biodiversity hotspot with a high concentration of plants and animals unique to the region. There are very few such marine areas with such rich biodiversity left on the planet. An

oil spill like this will impact almost everything there.

◆ The wind and the water currents are not helping, they are taking the oil towards the areas that have vital marine ecosystems.

◆ The Mauritian marine environment is home to 1,700 species including around 800 types of fish, 17 kinds of marine mammals and two species of turtles, according to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

◆ Coral reefs, seagrasses and mangroves make Mauritian waters extraordinarily rich in biodiversity.

◆ It is not just about the light oil slick on the surface of the water caused by the spill. There will also be soluble compounds from the oil that will dissolve in the water, a mousse-like layer underneath the surface of the water, and then very heavy residues on the bed - so the entire marine ecosystem will be affected.

◆ The ship, is believed to have been carrying around 4,000 tonnes of fuel, of which nearly 1,200 tonnes have already spilled.

◆ Despite bad weather, Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth said all the oil has now been removed from the ship's fuel reservoirs, although a small amount remains on board elsewhere. There had been fears that the ship could break up, spilling even more oil into the sea.

Threats to Coral

- ◆ Coral bleaching is one of the major concerns has been for coral reefs in the lagoon - which are sometimes called the rainforests of the sea - because of the diversity of life found in them.
- ◆ Around 25% of fish in the ocean depend on healthy coral reefs, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the US.
- ◆ They protect coastlines from storms and erosion. Coral reefs and the marine ecosystems are the major pillars of Mauritian tourism which is a big part of the country's economy.
- ◆ The toxic hydrocarbons released from spilled oil will bleach the coral reefs and they will eventually die.
- ◆ Although the oil spill isn't large but the damage to the coral reefs will be massive.

Cleaning Mechanism

- ◆ There are a few ways to clean up oil spills including skimming, in situ burning and by releasing chemical dispersants.
- ◆ In situ burning means burning a particular patch of oil after it has concentrated in one area.
- ◆ Releasing chemical dispersants helps break down oil into smaller droplets, making it easier for

microbes to consume, and further break it down into less harmful compounds. Dispersing agents are chemicals that contain surfactants, or compounds that act to break liquid substances such as oil into small droplets. They accelerate its natural dispersion into the sea.

- ◆ Skimming involves removing oil from the sea surface before it is able to reach the sensitive areas along the coastline. Skimmers are devices used for physically separating spilled oil from the water's surface.
- ◆ Floating barriers, called Containment booms are used to restrict the spread of oil and to allow for its recovery, removal, or dispersal.
- ◆ By using Various sorbents (e.g., straw, volcanic ash, and shavings of polyester-derived plastic) that absorb the oil from the water are used.
- ◆ Natural actions in aquatic environments such as weathering, evaporation, emulsification, biodegradation and oxidation or by adding biological agents like nutrients, enzymes, or microorganisms such as *Alcanivorax* bacteria or *Methylocella silvestris* can also accelerate the recovery of an affected area. But these occur

differently in freshwater and marine environments.

Way Forward

- ◆ No human lives were lost but the environmental consequences have been devastating, as heavy fuel oil seeped into the pristine, species-rich waters of a protected marine park, with unspoiled coral reefs and mangrove forests. This accident illuminates all too clearly a debate that is going on thousands of kilometres away, as a warming ocean opens up new shipping routes in the Arctic.
- ◆ Therefore, to protect our oceans from damage, elaborated rules need to be enforced and complied with. Further, a closer co-operation and sharing of informational resources within the international community is urgently required, especially in the cases of conventions and their amendments ratification.



General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

- Disaster and disaster management.

Q. What caused the Mauritius oil spill? Also discuss its impact while suggesting the methods through which oil spills can be cleaned.

02

The Distinctiveness of Indian Secularism: An Evaluation

Why in News?

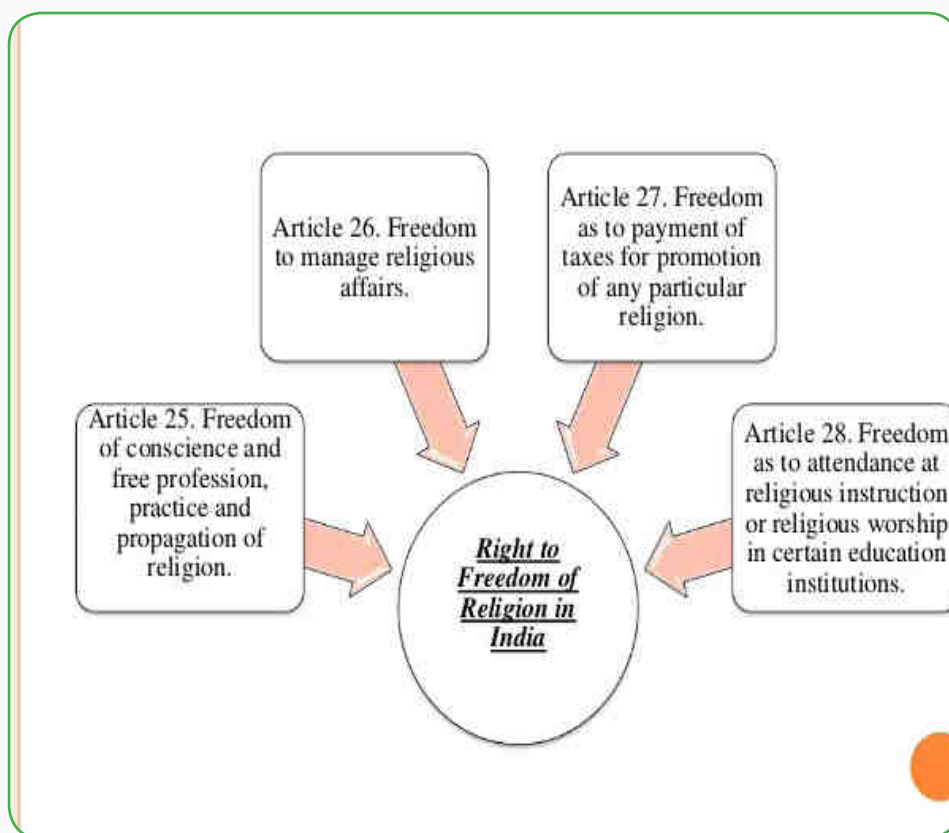
- ♦ The participation of Prime Minister in the ground breaking ceremony of Ayodhya Ram Temple has revived the debate on secularism.

Introduction

- ♦ Secularism means separation of religion from political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life, religion being treated as a purely personal matter.
- ♦ It emphasized dissociation of the state from religion and full freedom to all religions and tolerance of all religions.
- ♦ It also stands for equal opportunities for followers of all religions, and no discrimination and partiality on grounds of religion.
- ♦ A secular person is one who does not owe his moral values to any religion. His values are the product of his rational and scientific thinking.
- ♦ Secularism has paid a heavy price in our country for being at the centre of public and political discourse. It has been persistently misused and abused.

Secularism in Indian Constitution

- ♦ Article 14 grants equality before the law and equal protection of the laws to all, Article 15 enlarges the concept of secularism to the widest possible extent by



prohibiting discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

- ♦ Article 16 (1) guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters of public employment and reiterates that there would be no discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth and residence.
- ♦ Article 25 provides 'Freedom of Conscience', that is, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of profess, practise and propagate religion.
- ♦ According to Article 26, every religious group or individual has the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes and to manage its own affairs in matters of religion.
- ♦ Article 27 says that the state shall not compel any citizen to pay any taxes for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious institution.
- ♦ Article 28 allows educational institutions maintained by different religious groups to impart religious instruction.
- ♦ Article 29 and Article 30 provides cultural and educational rights to the minorities.
- ♦ Article 51A(e)- Fundamental Duties obliges all the citizens to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood and to value and preserve the rich

heritage of our composite culture.

- ◆ 42nd Constitution Amendment Act of 1976
 - ◆ The term 'Secular' was added to the preamble by the forty-second constitution Amendment Act of 1976.
 - ◆ It emphasises the fact that constitutionally, India is a secular country which has no State religion.
 - ◆ State shall recognise and accept all religions, not favour or patronize any particular religion.

Western Model of Secularism

- ◆ All secular states have one thing in common: they are neither theocratic nor do they establish a religion. However, in most commonly prevalent conceptions, inspired mainly by the American model, separation of religion and state is understood as mutual exclusion. The state will not intervene in the affairs of religion and, in the same manner, religion will not interfere in the affairs of the state.
- ◆ Each has a separate sphere of its own with independent jurisdiction. No policy of the state can have an exclusively religious rationale. No religious classification can be the basis of any public policy. If this happened there is illegitimate intrusion of religion in the state.
- ◆ Similarly, the state cannot aid any religious institution. It cannot give financial support to

educational institutions run by religious communities. Nor can it hinder the activities of religious communities, as long as they are within the broad limits set by the law of the land. For example, if a religious institution forbids a woman from becoming a priest, then the state can do little about it. If a religious community excommunicates its dissenters, the state can only be a silent witness. If a particular religion forbids the entry of some of its members in the sanctum of its temple, then the state has no option but to let the matter rest exactly where it is. On this view, religion is a private matter, not a matter of state policy or law. This common conception interprets freedom and equality in an individualist manner. Liberty is the liberty of individuals.

- ◆ Finally, this form of mainstream secularism has no place for the idea of state-supported religious reform.

Indian Brand of Secularism

- ◆ Indian secularism took on a distinct form as a result of an interaction between what already existed in a society that had religious diversity and the ideas that came from the west. It resulted in equal focus on intra-religious and inter-religious domination. Indian secularism equally opposed the oppression of dalits and women within Hinduism, the discrimination against women within Indian

Islam or Christianity, and the possible threats that a majority community might pose to the rights of the minority religious communities. This is its first important difference from mainstream western secularism.

- ◆ Connected to it is the second difference. Indian secularism deals not only with religious freedom of individuals but also with religious freedom of minority communities. Within it, an individual has the right to profess the religion of his or her choice. Likewise, religious minorities also have a right to exist and to maintain their own culture and educational institutions. A third difference is this. Since a secular state must be concerned equally with intra-religious domination, Indian secularism has made room for and is compatible with the idea of state-supported religious reform.
- ◆ The question however that arises is: can a state initiate or even support religious reforms and yet be secular? Can a state claim to be secular and not maintain separation of religion from state?
- ◆ The secular character of the Indian state is established by virtue of the fact that it is neither theocratic nor has it established any one or multiple religions. Beyond that it has adopted a very sophisticated policy in pursuit of religious equality. This allows it either to disengage with religion in American style, or engage with

Western Secularism	Indian Secularism
Strict non-interference of religion and state in each other's affairs	State supported religious reforms allowed
Equality between different religious groups is a key concern	Equality between different sects of a religion is emphasised
Attention to minority rights	Less attention to community based rights
Individual and his rights at the centre	Rights of both individual and religious community protected.

it if required. The Indian state may engage with religion negatively to oppose religious tyranny. This is reflected in such actions as the ban on untouchability, triple talaq etc. It may also choose a positive mode of engagement. Thus, the Indian Constitution grants all religious minorities the right to establish and maintain their own educational institutions which may receive assistance from the state.

Challenges to Indian Secularism

- ♦ Misusing for Electoral Benefits: Opportunistic distance (engagement or disengagement), mainly opportunistic alliance with religious communities, particularly for the sake of immediate electoral benefit.
- ♦ Neglecting the Core Idea of Indian Secularism: Political parties have bizarrely interpreted 'respect' to mean cutting deals with aggressive
- ♦ Victimization of Communities: Principled intervention by State in one religion is viewed as discriminatory treatment by fringe sections of society leading to Politicisation of Secularism.
- ♦ Politicisation of any one religious group leads to the competitive politicisation of other groups, thereby resulting in inter-religious conflict.
- ♦ Requires Continuous Civic Participation: India's constitutional secularism cannot be sustained by governments alone but requires collective commitment from an impartial judiciary, a scrupulous media, civil society activists, and an alert citizenry.
- ♦ Advent of Opportunism
 - ♦ Party-political secularism, born around 40 years ago, is a

nefarious doctrine practised by all political parties, including by so-called secular forces. This secularism has dispelled all values from the core idea and replaced them with opportunism.

- ♦ Opportunistic distance, but mainly opportunistic alliance with religious communities, particularly for the sake of immediate electoral benefit, is its unspoken slogan.
- ♦ Today, Indian constitutional secularism is swallowed up by this party-political secularism, with not a little help from the Opposition, media and judiciary.

Way Forward

- ♦ The political project of secularism arose precisely because religious toleration no longer worked. Indian secularism is not an end in itself but a means to address religious plurality and sought to achieve peaceful coexistence of different religions.



General Studies Paper- I

Topic:

- Social empowerment, Communalism, Regionalism - Secularism.

Q. Discuss the challenges Indian Secularism is facing and how it can be addressed.

03

A Self-reliant Foreign Policy : In a Multi-polar World

Why in News?

- ◆ Self-reliance is the theme of India's 74th Independence Day. This concept is commonly associated with the economy and production of key goods and services within the country in light of the global 'supply shock' caused by the pandemic. But it also has a parallel dimension in the domain of foreign policy.

Background

- ◆ Following independence, India's strategic outlook was shaped by Jawaharlal Nehru, who viewed the West with skepticism and had a rosy view of socialist ideals. This led to foreign policy that was built on three key pillars: non-alignment in the international arena; preservation of autonomy in domestic affairs; and solidarity among developing nations, particularly those that had recently gained independence from colonial powers. This policy continued throughout the Cold War, when India leaned toward the Soviet Union while deftly maintaining strategic autonomy and charting its own course in a bipolar international order.
- ◆ This worldview began to evolve following the collapse of the Soviet Union and an economic crisis at home. India slowly opened its economy through careful economic liberalization



that signalled the end of the license raj, and at the same time began to engage with the rest of a world on a different set of norms. A newfound pragmatism began to emerge and by the late 1990s India was willing to place its own national interest – both economic and security – ahead of broader ideas of global justice and equity.

- ◆ The high rates of economic growth ushered through domestic reforms attracted international investors and India's strategic thinkers quickly captured this opportunity. Economic attractiveness gave the country space to engage the rest of the world on its own terms. This meant that India would not give in easily on strategic issues, but it would at the same time be flexible and engage with the rest of a world to achieve win-win outcomes.
- ◆ As India's economy continued to grow and the country engaged with the rest of the world on a more equal footing, India underwent a third evolution in the country's strategic outlook. This shift, which is ongoing today, seeks to position India among the great powers by showcasing a willingness to take on more international responsibilities. India is taking on these responsibilities to achieve the holy grail in the international order: a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council.
- ◆ Narendra Modi's rise to power accelerated this shift, as he sought to not only push India to be a global leader, but to also secure his legacy as a transformative prime minister whose stature would rival some of India's greatest political leaders.

- ♦ The main and first and foremost objective of India's Foreign Policy –like that of any other country-is to secure its national interests.
- ♦ The scope of "national interests" is fairly wide. In our case it includes for instance: securing our borders to protect territorial integrity, countering cross-border terrorism, energy security, food security, cyber security, creation of world class infrastructure, non-discriminatory global trade practices, equitable global responsibility for the protection of environment, reform of institutions of global governance to reflect the contemporary realities, disarmament and regional stability.

Modern India's Policy Stance

- ♦ India believes in and supports democracy; however, India does not believe in the export of ideologies. India has therefore endeavoured to deal with the government-of-the-day, be it a democracy, monarchy or military dictatorship. India believes that it is best left to the people of the country to choose or remove their leaders and retain or change the form of governance.
- ♦ At the same time, India does not hesitate in promoting democracy wherever potential exists; this is done by proactively providing assistance in capacity building and strengthening the institutions of democracy, albeit with the explicit consent of the concerned

government. (e.g. Afghanistan)

- ♦ India does not endorse the idea of imposing sanctions/military action against any individual country by another country or a group of countries unless these sanctions/ military actions have been approved by the United Nations (UN) as a result of international consensus. India therefore contributes only to such peace-keeping military operations which are part of the UN Peace-keeping Forces.
- ♦ India has contributed nearly 195,000 troops, the largest number from any country, participated in more than 49 missions and 168 Indian peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice while serving in UN missions. India has also provided and continues to provide eminent Force Commanders for UN Missions.
- ♦ India does not believe in interference in the internal affairs of other countries. However, if an act - innocent or deliberate - by any country has the potential of impinging upon India's national interests, India does not hesitate in quick and timely intervention. Noticeably, intervention is qualitatively different from interference, particularly when the intervention is made at the request of the country concerned. (Examples: Bangladesh 1971, IPKF in Sri Lanka (1987-90), Maldives (1988).

- ♦ India advocates the policy of constructive engagement over aggression. It believes that violent retaliation and confrontation can only complicate the matters. This applies in particular to Pakistan-the origin of State-sponsored terrorism targeted at India.
- ♦ Independence of decision making and strategic autonomy are yet another significant features of India's foreign policy. India thus believes in 'Partnerships' and shuns 'Alliances', particularly military alliances.

Self-Reliance as Strategic Advantage

- ♦ In the threat environment marked by a aggressive land-grabbing China, which the United States (US) is now beginning to confront frontally, India should aim to have the proverbial cake of American support and also eat the cake i.e., stay as an independent power center by means of intensified cooperation with middle powers in Asia and around the world.
- ♦ Diversification is the essence of self-reliance. A wide basket of strategic partners, including the US, with a sharper focus on constraining China, is the only viable diplomatic way forward in the current emerging multipolar world order.
- ♦ India is free and self-reliant not through isolation or alliance with one great power, but only in variable combinations with

several like-minded partners. India is familiar with the phrase 'multi-vector' foreign policy. It is time to maximize its potential.

International Partnerships

- ◆ Self-reliant concept, therefore, provides greater emphasis on foreign direct investment (FDI) from countries such as the US, Japan, Australia and South Korea
- ◆ Importantly, India and the US are looking to revitalize their "exclusive partnership" to provide preferential market access to both nations. New Delhi has already inked several agreements with Washington such as the US Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), the Industrial Security Annex (ISA), Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).
- ◆ Japan too has portrayed itself as India's natural partner in Northeast India by investing in a host of projects including water supply project in Guwahati, the road network in Assam-Meghalaya, forest management and agriculture and

developmental projects across the region.

- ◆ The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is already partnering with the Indian government in the North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project and other transport projects in India such as Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet-train project, the Metro Rail projects in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata and Ahmedabad; and the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor from National Capital Region to Mumbai.
- ◆ India has been signing several free-trade agreements (FTAs) or economic partnerships such as the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), India-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement as a way to enhance economic partnerships in the region.
- ◆ The Defense Acquisition Council (DAC) approving deals that focus on indigenous design and development is a testament to the atmanirbharta (self-reliance).

In order to bolster the indigenous defense manufacturing.

Way Forward

- ◆ Indian foreign policy vision is evolving – only natural for a nation that is rising in the global power hierarchy. The Modi government is likely to continue on a foreign policy trajectory that will challenge long-held assumptions about the way India conducts itself on the world stage. In recent months, contestations on domestic political issues have bedeviled India's external engagements. Yet India's aspiration to emerge as a leading power will lead it into terrain that is at times confounding and costly. There is every indication that New Delhi is ready to bear those costs even with a weakening economy.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Topic:

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

Q. Atmanirbhar Bharat is not just an economic policy proposition but it justly applies to India's foreign policy also. Comment,

04 India's Countermeasures to China's Aggression for Isolating It

Why in News?

- ♦ As the latest round of talks, between the Military Commanders of India and China, did not produce any breakthrough, M.K. Narayanan, a former National Security Adviser, analysed India's approach to isolate China as a countermeasure to China's military aggressiveness along the LAC.

Background

- ♦ The latest round of talks, between the Military Commanders of India and China, did not produce any breakthrough, and the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh sector thus remains essentially unchanged. All that is evident is that China has indicated a willingness to resile from occupying territory beyond its 1960 Claim line. A return to the status quo ante prior to May this year, is nowhere in sight.
- ♦ Meanwhile, a war of words between India and China has broken out. India's External Affairs Minister has promulgated that "the state of the border and the future of our ties (with China) cannot be separated. That is the reality." China's riposte was to reiterate that their troops "were on its side of the traditional customary boundary line". This was followed, thereafter, by China wading into and criticising what is essentially India's internal matter, viz., the changes effected to the status of Jammu and Kashmir in August last year.
- ♦ To deal with a resurgent India, Chinese hardliners suggest a policy of "three nos": "no weakness, no concession and no defensive

defence". In other words, China should take all opportunities to crack down on India, take the initiative to hit it hard whenever possible.

- ♦ While other narrative is that, it is "unwise" for China to take the initiative to get into a comprehensive military conflict with India — "a big country with comparable military strength" — at this point in time. The general view among these military analysts is that if China has an advantage in terms of psychology, equipment, and logistics mobilisation, India too has advantage on various fronts such as deployment, supply line, practical war experience, topography, and climate among others.
- ♦ If India's disadvantage remains in the fact that its capital lies well within the bombing range of China, China's key disadvantage is its particularly long supply lines. Therefore, if the conflict ends in a short period of time, it will benefit China. But if it is prolonged, China will be disadvantaged.

China's Aggression and Global Perception

- ♦ Chinese Intentions Exposed: Beijing's virtual takeover of Hong Kong, land grab in South China Sea and adventurism along India border exposed China's 'imperialist ambitions' and President Xi Jinping's authoritarian world view.
- ♦ Growing Voice about Chinese Unilateralism: China's approach has been unilateralism rather than compromise, when dealing with its smaller neighbours. Taiwan, Japan,

Vietnam, Indonesia and South Korea have all complained about China's menacing postures in their vicinity.

- ♦ Realignment in Global Geopolitics: After years of cooperating with one another, the United States (US) and China are currently at the stage of confrontation, with both flexing their military muscle and seeking allies to join their camps.
- ♦ Alliance vs Non-Alignment: A Cold war type politics places several countries, especially in Asia, in a difficult position as most of them do not wish to take sides — especially with a belligerent China as neighbour.
- ♦ Historical Traces of Chinese Aggression:
 - ♦ In the 1970s, China grabbed control over the Paracel Islands from Vietnam.
 - ♦ In the 1990s, it occupied Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands, an area of the South China Sea that the Philippines had always considered its territory.

India's Approach

- ♦ In the light of Chinese aggression along the LAC in the Ladakh sector, India had adopted both military as well as non-military countermeasures.
- ♦ The non-military measures included efforts to isolate China in the realm of global trade and investment, international relations.
- ♦ India has repeatedly reiterated that the state of the border and the future of its bilateral ties with China are closely related.

Concerns for India

- ◆ India's efforts to isolate China seem to be countered by China focusing its attention to garner support among India's neighbouring countries.
- ◆ Pakistan, considered China's ally and 'iron brother', has used the current situation of tense relations between China and India to take a more anti-India stand.
- ◆ India's relations with Nepal have been deteriorating. China has made headway in enhancing its relations with Nepal.
- ◆ In Sri Lanka, the return of the Rajapaksa's to power after the recent elections does not augur too well for India-Sri Lanka relations given the pro-China attitude displayed by the administration in its previous stint.
- ◆ The strain in India-Bangladesh relations is a real cause for concern given the previous warm ties between India and Bangladesh.
- ◆ China has also made headway in Iran to an extent, again at India's expense, with the economic and security partnership between Iran and China.
- ◆ Growing Chinese presence in India's sphere of influence. In July, the Chinese Foreign Minister organised a virtual meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Nepal, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In this meeting, China proposed economic corridor plan with Nepal, styled as the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.
- ◆ China has also made headway in Iran to an extent, again at India's expense.

China's Economic Power-Play

- ◆ Despite growing anti-China sentiments, the world over and repeated calls for an economic boycott of China, some nations have continued to be in favour of continued economic relations with China.
- ◆ Very few nations across the world are willing to risk China's ire because of strong economic ties that these countries have forged with China over the years. Economic ties are proving way stronger than military and strategic ones.
- ◆ Australia, a member of the Quad (the U.S., Japan, Australia and India), that is widely seen as an anti-China coalition has recently reiterated Australia's desire for a strong economic engagement with China.
- ◆ The UK's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has recently stated that the UK would continue to work with China.
- ◆ Even though the majority of ASEAN countries have expressed grave concerns about China's expansionist tendencies, the ASEAN grouping has never taken sides against the Chinese given the fact that ASEAN happens to be one of China's biggest trading partners.
- ◆ China's stranglehold on the global economy has led to the Chinese confidence in overcoming any calls for an economic boycott.
- ◆ China has been using its economic prowess to increase its influence in Asia and the surrounding areas.

- ◆ Recently, the Chinese Foreign Minister organised a virtual meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Nepal, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This included a proposal for an economic corridor plan with Nepal, styled as the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, and expanding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan.

Conclusion

- ◆ What is specially disconcerting is that despite a series of diktats from Washington to restrict economic and other relations with China, the United Kingdom's decision to end reliance on Chinese imports and call off its Huawei 5G project, and growing anti-China sentiments heard across Europe — all of which make for good copy — China remains unfazed. China seems confident that its stranglehold on the global economy ensures that it does not face any real challenge. It would be wise for India to recognise this. Geo-balancing is not happening to China's disadvantage. This lesson must be well understood, when countries like India plan their future strategy.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Q. Discuss how China's economic ties are proving way stronger/impactful than military and strategic ties.

05

75th Anniversary of Atomic Bombing and Present Nuclear Risk

Why in News?

- ◆ It is 75 years since the United States (US) dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August, leading to the end of World War II.
- ◆ Recalling the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through events all year round on its 75th anniversary is an opportunity to bring nuclear risks back into popular imagination and into the political agenda.

Background

- ◆ 'Little Boy' was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 at 0815 hours. This was followed

three days later by the dropping of 'Fat Man' on Nagasaki, at 1101 hours.

- ◆ The two nuclear bombs vaporised around 150,000 people who were going about their morning business; 130,000 others succumbed to burns, radiation sickness, and other ailments that the collapsed health system could not treat.
- ◆ The recorded death tolls are estimates, but it is thought that about 140,000 of Hiroshima's 350,000 population were killed in the blast, and that at least 74,000 people died in Nagasaki.

- ◆ The nuclear radiation released by the bombs caused thousands more people to die from radiation sickness in the weeks, months and years that followed.
- ◆ Those who survived the bombings are known as "hibakusha". Survivors faced a horrifying aftermath in the cities, including psychological trauma.
- ◆ The bombings brought about an abrupt end to the war in Asia, with Japan surrendering unconditionally to the Allies on 14 August 1945. But critics have said that Japan was already on the brink of surrender.
- ◆ The purpose of recalling these horrors from 75 years ago is to ensure that nuclear armed states do not forget the real nature of nuclear weapons. Human memory is short and often preoccupied with the immediate.
- ◆ Currently, the socio-economic-health emergency posed by COVID-19 and the growing geopolitical tensions between major powers owing to their abrasive behaviour seem to be consuming us all.

- The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT, is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.
- Opened for signature in 1968, the treaty entered into force in 1970. As required by the text, after twenty-five years, NPT Parties met in May 1995 and agreed to extend the treaty indefinitely.
- The NPT consists of a preamble and eleven articles. Although the concept of "pillars" is not expressed anywhere in the NPT, the treaty is nevertheless sometimes interpreted as a three-pillar system, with an implicit balance among them:
 - non-proliferation;
 - disarmament; and
 - the right to peacefully use nuclear technology.
- Four states—India, Israel, Pakistan, and South Sudan—have never signed the treaty. India and Pakistan have publicly disclosed their nuclear weapon programs, and Israel has a long-standing policy of deliberate ambiguity.

Political Jingoism and a War Crime

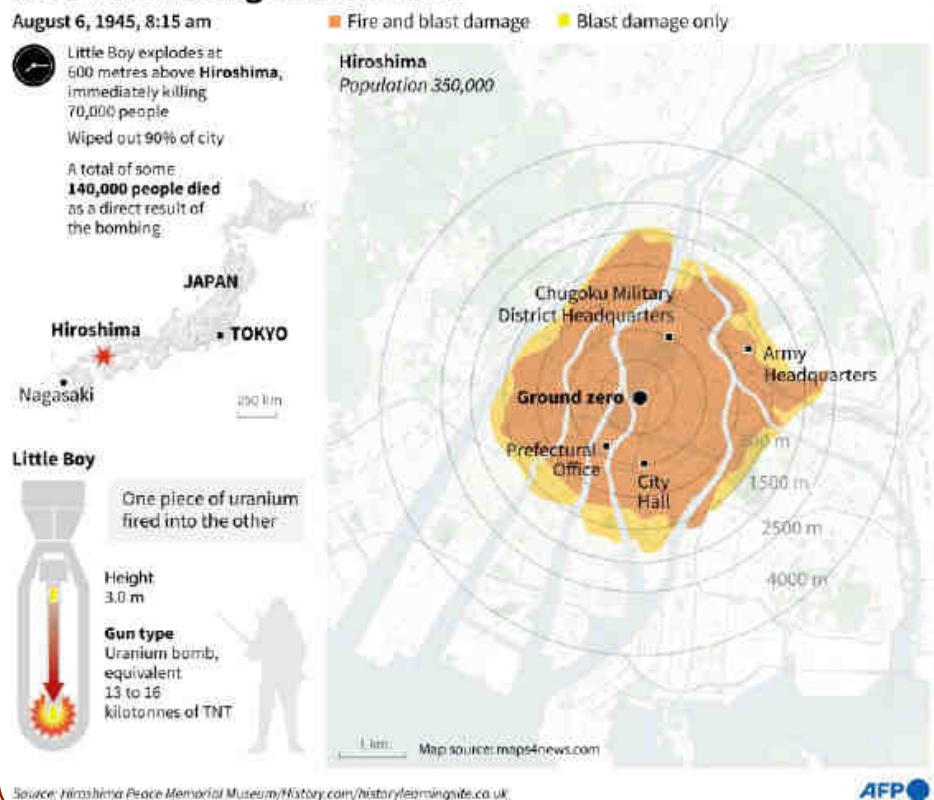
- ◆ US President Harry Truman gave an address to a crowd gathered outside the White House in which he said: "This is the day we have been waiting for since Pearl Harbor. This is the day when fascism finally dies, as we always knew it would."

- ◆ British Prime Minister Clement Atlee said: "The last of our enemies is laid low." He added that special thanks went to the US "without whose prodigious efforts the war in the East would still have many years to run".
- ◆ After the surrender of Japan, two days of national holiday were announced for celebrations in the UK, the US and Australia.
- ◆ Millions of people from the Allied countries took part in parades and street parties on Victory over Japan (VJ) Day on 15 August.
- ◆ In London, the Royal Family greeted cheering crowds from the balcony of Buckingham Palace.
- ◆ The official surrender documents were signed by Japan on 2 September aboard the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.
- ◆ Perhaps the history is written by the victors. US came with all the reasons to nuke Japan. But in this bombing, US killed civilians and non-combatants who were not the actual participants of the war. This was the biggest ever war crime conducted in human history.

Dangers of Unintended Use

- ◆ Among the risks of nuclear use, the highest likelihood is that of inadvertent escalation due to miscalculation or misperceptions.
- ◆ The severity of the damage would depend on the number and yield of weapons used. But studies indicate that use of even a fraction of the weapons held in medium-sized arsenals would cause a massive human tragedy and have long-term repercussions for food and water

Atomic bombing of Hiroshima



availability, agricultural output, climate change, migration, etc.

- ◆ Possibilities of unintended use are exacerbated by many factors: stressed inter-state relations, unchecked strategic modernization as arms control arrangements wither and nations hedge against each other; adoption of nuclear postures that peddle the benefits of 'limited' nuclear war; and emergent technologies creating new anxieties.
- ◆ Advancing capabilities of cyber-attacks on nuclear command and control, blurring lines between conventional and nuclear delivery, induction of hypersonic missiles capable of high speed and maneuverability, incorporation of artificial intelligence in nuclear decision making are new developments that threaten

to create unknown risks. As capabilities grow and inter-state trust diminishes, chances of stumbling into nuclear war are not insignificant.

Cold War and After

- ◆ However, the risks are not part of our collective popular imagination today. During the Cold War, citizens of affected nations were made to undergo regular nuclear drills.
- ◆ There were guidelines on what to equip these nuclear shelters with so as to be able to sustain lives in case mushroom clouds went up. Several works such as novels, movies and TV documentaries depicted life "the day after".
- ◆ The end of the Cold War pretty much brought down the curtains on nuclear weapons for the

common man. The perceived sense of danger of nuclear war receded and nuclear strategies went back to being dictated and driven primarily by security conclaves.

- ◆ Over the years, technological advancements and growing hyper-nationalist tendencies have shaped strategic discourse in a manner that is largely devoid of popular participation. But, this connect is important to temper national choices and create the much needed checks and balances.
- ◆ General awareness of the horrors accompanying nuclear weapons, therefore, needs to be revived since a high level of public apathy and political complacency have brought us to the threshold where the risks remain high but the desire to address them is low.
- ◆ In fact, one does not see a shared desire for nuclear risk reduction among nuclear armed states. Drunk on their faith in deterrence, there is a tendency to use strategies of nuclear brinkmanship and ambiguity that actually add to the risks.

A Media Campaign- Hopeful Suggestion

- ◆ In order to get nations to understand this, it is necessary to expose leaders and societies

to the full range of physical, economic, social, political, health, environmental, and psychological effects of nuclear weapons.

- ◆ This could be most effectively done through use of popular media. Just as the fight against COVID-19 is being won through global high intensity information dissemination about various facets of this highly contagious disease, a similar information campaign about the destructive potential of nuclear weapons is needed.
- ◆ This will help on three counts:
 - ◆ compel leaders to rationalize their weapon requirements;
 - ◆ force nations to find ways of reducing nuclear risks; and
 - ◆ Gradually pave the path towards elimination of nuclear weapons.
- ◆ Recalling the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through events all year round on its 75th anniversary is an opportunity to bring nuclear risks back into popular imagination and into the political agenda.
- ◆ Creative media can help by tapping available modern means of mass communication to create stories with identifiable characters and situations that tug at the heart and instill a larger respect for humanity.

Way Forward

- ◆ The number of nuclear weapons, which grow to approximately 70,000 at the peak of Cold war era, has been reduced steadily since the late 1980s. However, an estimated 13,865 nuclear weapons still exist in this world as of the end of 2019. The US and Russian nuclear stockpiles together constitute more than 90 percent of the total. The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has increased the momentum toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. In the meantime, Nuclear Weapon States continue to modernize their nuclear forces and delivery vehicles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. They have characterized that it is still essential to exert nuclear deterrence in order to protect national security. They also have attached importance to the role of nuclear deterrence again. 🔄🔄🔄

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- Important International institutions, agencies and for- their structure, mandate.

Q. Nuclear threat to the world is still relevant as was during the Second World War era. Discuss.

06

ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour : Universally Ratified

Why in News?

- Recently, International Labour Organization (ILO)'s convention on 'Worst Forms of Child Labour' has received universal ratification after the Kingdom of Tonga ratified the same. It is also known as Convention No. 182.
- India is a founder member of ILO.
- The convention, is legally binding on governments.
- The United Nations (UN) has a target of ending all forms of child labour by 2025 – one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed upon in 2015 to address a range of global ills.
- The conventions have resulted in significant increases in enrolments in primary education.
- These conventions also provide the necessary framework to counteract the predominance of informality in the conditions of work and ought to be a priority for governments.
- Under the influence of both these ILO standards, millions of young boys and girls have been rescued from hazardous conditions of work.
- Simultaneously, these have resulted in significant increases in enrolments in primary education.

Background

- All 187 member States of the ILO have ratified the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999. It was adopted in the 1999.
- Convention No. 182 calls for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including slavery, forced labour and trafficking. It prohibits the use of children in armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and illicit activities such as drug trafficking, and in hazardous work.
- This landmark achievement comes just months before the start of the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour in 2021.
- The Convention complements the ILO's efforts under the 1973 Minimum Age Convention to prevent the employment of children below a lower age threshold.
- India has signalled its legal commitment to the elimination of child labour with its 2017 ratification of Convention 182 and the instrument prescribing the minimum age of work for children.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989: It contains the idea that children are not just objects who belong to their parents and for whom decisions are made, or adults in training. Rather, they are human beings and individuals with their own rights.
- Minimum Age Convention 1973: It aims to prevent the employment of children below a lower age threshold.
- Both Convention No. 182 and the 1973 Minimum Age Convention are among the eight core ILO Conventions regarded as embodying the spirit of the 1998 declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work.
- India ratified the Convention No. 182 and the 1973 Minimum Age Convention in 2017.

Other International Laws on Child Labour

Impact of Laws on Child Labour

- According to ILO, incidence of child labour and its worst forms dropped by almost 40% between 2000 and 2016 as ratification rates on child labour increased and countries adopted laws and policies.

About International Labour Organization

- The ILO is a United Nations agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice through setting international labour standards. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The ILO was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it's based on social justice.
- In 1946, the ILO became a specialized agency of the UN.
- The ILO has 187 member states: 186 of the 193 UN member states plus the Cook Islands are members of the ILO.
- The ILO's international labour standards are broadly aimed at ensuring accessible, productive, and sustainable work worldwide

in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity.

- ◆ ILO's international labour standards are set forth in 189 conventions and treaties, of which eight are classified as fundamental according to the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.
- ◆ In 1969, the ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize for improving fraternity and peace among nations, pursuing decent work and justice for workers, and providing technical assistance to other developing nations.

Eight Core ILO Conventions

- ◆ These are regarded as embodying the spirit of the 1998 declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work.
- ◆ These conventions provide the necessary framework to counteract the predominance of informality in the conditions of work and ought to be a priority for governments.

The eight fundamental Conventions are-

- i. Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- ii. Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- iii. Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) (and its 2014 Protocol)

- iv. Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- v. Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- vi. Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- vii. Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- viii. Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

- ◆ Under the influence of both these ILO standards, millions of young children have been rescued from hazardous conditions of work. In turn, these have resulted in significant increases in enrolments in primary education. However, the landmark ratification does not detract from the enormity of the challenge that remains.

Related Laws in India

- ◆ The central legislature of India had promulgated a legislation Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 to regulate the child labour practices in India.
- ◆ In the year 2016 and the said amendments have been made effective from July 30, 2016. Pursuant to the said amendment the name of the CL Act has been changed to 'Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.
- ◆ New amendment prohibits employment of children below 14 years of age in all occupations. But it allows adolescents (those between 14 and 18 years of age) to work in non-hazardous occupations and processes.

- ◆ They can work in family-run establishments like a grocery store but can't work in a chemical factory. The government justified the exceptions to strike a balance between the need for education for a child and reality of the socio-economic condition and social fabric in the country. The bill is criticized for taking away basic protections for some of the most vulnerable workers.

Way Forward

- ◆ An estimated 152 million are trapped in child labour and 72 million of them are engaged in hazardous work. Due to COVID-19 pandemic is threatening a reversal of recent gains, with widespread job losses, deterioration in conditions of work, the decline in household incomes and temporary school closures.
- ◆ The current efforts would have to be stepped up significantly to achieve the ambitious goal of total abolition of the scourge of child labour by 2025. As the world prepares to designate 2021 as the year to abolish child labour, governments must seize the moment to instil hope in the future generations.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- Important International institutions, agencies and for-their structure, mandate.

Q. What is Convention 182 of ILO? Also discuss its relevance and how it will help ILO tackle emerging challenges.

07

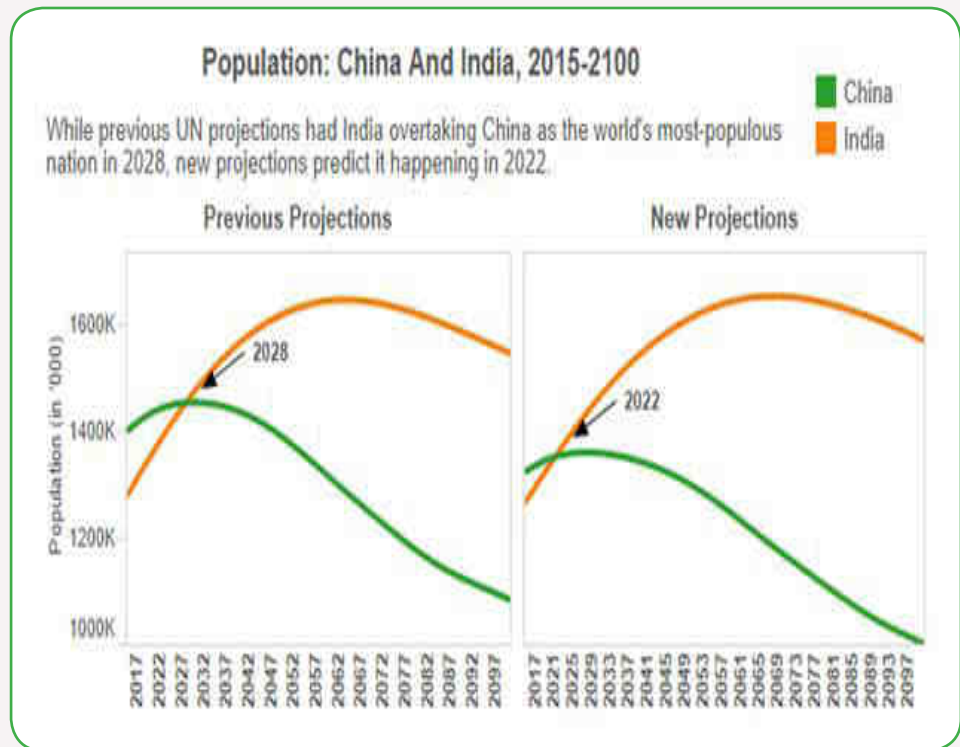
India's Demographic Future : Brief Projections

Why in News?

- A new study by the Seattle-based Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) has highlighted the population policy and projections of the world. It also highlighted that India's population will be about 1.09 billion instead of approximately 1.35 billion today. It could even be as low as 724 million.

Introduction

- The study, led by a team of researchers from the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), analysed population trends in 195 countries. It used data from the Global Burden of Disease Study, 2017, to model future population in various scenarios as a function of fertility, migration, and mortality rates.
- The top five most populous countries in the world in 2100 will be India (1.09 billion), Nigeria (791 million), China (732 million), USA (336 million) and Pakistan (248 million).
- It seems highly probable that the socioeconomic transformation of India since the 1990s has played an important role. Over this period, agriculture became an increasingly smaller part of the Indian economy, school and college enrolment grew sharply and individuals lucky enough to find a job in government,



multinationals or software services companies reaped tremendous financial benefits. Not surprisingly, parents began to rethink their family-building strategies. Where farmers used to see more workers when they saw their children, the new aspirational parents see enrolment in coaching classes as a ticket to success.

- The literature on fertility decline in western countries attributes the decline in fertility to retreat from the family; Indian parents seem to demonstrate increased rather than decreased commitment to family by reducing the number of children and investing more in each child.

India Specific

- Until 2050, the IHME projections

are almost identical to widely-used United Nations (UN's) projections. The UN projects that India's population will be 1.64 billion by 2050, the IHME projects 1.61 billion by 2048. It is only in the second half of the century that the two projections diverge with the UN predicting a population of 1.45 billion by 2100, and the IHME, 1.09 billion.

- The IHME population projections are also subject to underlying assumptions that deserve careful scrutiny. They predict that by the year 2100, on average, Indian women will have 1.29 children. Since each woman must have two children to replace herself and her husband, this will result in a sharp population decline. Contrast this predicted fertility rate of 1.29 for India with the

projected cohort fertility of 1.53 for the United States and 1.78 for France in the same model. It is difficult to believe that Indian parents could be less committed to childbearing than American or French parents.

Significance of the Study

- ◆ Despite the divergence in the projection of numbers for 2100, the UN's projections and the IHME projections both predict that India's population will peak by mid-century and subsequently decline driven by a sharp reduction in fertility.
- ◆ The high population would pressurize the developmental process in India given the scarce resource base.
- ◆ Ideally, the population policy should focus on peaking at the earliest and then decreasing. A major aspect of this would be the need to decrease the total fertility rate (TFR) in India.
- ◆ The UN projects that India's population will be 1.64 billion by 2050, the IHME projects 1.61 billion by 2048.
- ◆ The UN predicted a population of 1.45 billion by 2100, and the IHME, 1.09 billion.
- ◆ Reasons for divergence
 - ◆ IHME model excessively relies on data regarding current contraceptive use in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS).
 - ◆ Contraceptive use in the NFHS is poorly estimated, so the gap

in contraception may be lower than that estimated by the IHME model.

Fertility Decline

- ◆ By the year 2100, Indian women will have 1.29 children. Since each woman must have two children to replace herself and her husband, this will result in a sharp population decline.
- ◆ However, it is difficult to believe that this predicted fertility rate of 1.29 for India is less than the projected 1.53 for the United States and 1.78 for France. Fertility decline in western countries is due to retreat from the family system.
- ◆ In the 1950s, India's TFR was nearly six children per woman; today it is 2.2. The family planning initiatives and forced sterilisation during the Emergency led to a meagre 17% decline in TFR from 5.9 in 1960 to 4.9 in 1980. However, between 1992 and 2015, it had fallen by 35% from 3.4 to 2.2.
- ◆ 18 States and Union Territories have a TFR below 2, the replacement level.

Reasons for Decline in Fertility

- ◆ Family Planning Initiatives in India
 - ◆ Coercive policies: Between 1975 and 1994, family planning workers had targets they were expected to meet regarding sterilisations, condom distribution and intrauterine device (IUD) insertion which

led to explicit or implicit coercion.

- ◆ Following the Cairo conference on Population and Development in 1994, these targets were abandoned.
- ◆ Punitive policies include denial of maternity leave for third and subsequent births, limiting benefits of maternity schemes and ineligibility to contest in local body elections for individuals with large families. These policies were mostly ignored in practice.
- ◆ Disincentive System
 - ◆ Punitive policies designed to punish people with large families include measures like denial of maternity leave for third and subsequent births, limiting benefits of maternity schemes and ineligibility to contest in local body elections for individuals with large families.
 - ◆ These public policies are aimed to encourage the small family norm. However, these policies were mostly ignored in practice.
- ◆ Aspirational Revolution (The socioeconomic transformation of India since the 1990s)
 - ◆ Agriculture's share of India's GDP declined and school and college enrolment grew sharply and people started finding a job.
 - ◆ Earlier farmers used to have more children to produce

more workers, while the new aspirational parents seem to demonstrate increased commitment to family by reducing the number of children and investing more in each child.

- ◆ Small and large families do not differ in their leisure activities, women's participation in the workforce or how many material goods they purchase.
- ◆ But small families have more money for investments on children.

Need to Change Policies

- ◆ The number of working-age adults (20-64 years) in India is expected to decline to about 580 million in 2100 from 762 million in 2017. However, even the reduced number will be the largest working-age population in the world, followed by Nigeria, China and the US.
- ◆ Limited resources will transfer the burden on to the shrinking working age population to support the healthcare and social security of their dependent elderly population.
- ◆ Policy options to adapt to continued low fertility, while

sustaining and enhancing female reproductive health, will be crucial in the years to come.

- ◆ From 2017 to 2100, India is projected to rise up the list of countries with the largest GDP, from 7th to 3rd.
- ◆ India is projected to have the second largest net immigration in 2100, with an estimated half a million more people immigrating to India in 2100 than emigrating out.
- ◆ Among the 10 countries with the largest populations in 2017 or 2100, India is projected to have one of the lowest life expectancies (79.3 years in 2100, up from 69.1 in 2017).
- ◆ Staying fixated on the notion that revising State allocation of Central resources based on current population rather than population from 1971 punishes States with successful population policies is short-sighted.
- ◆ This is because current laggards will be the greatest contributors of the future for everyone, particularly for ageing populations of early achievers. Enhancing their productivity will benefit everyone.

- ◆ It is time for India to accept the fact that being the most populous nation is its destiny. It must work towards enhancing the lives of its current and future citizens.

Way Forward

- ◆ Demographic data suggest that the aspirational revolution is already under way. What we need to hasten the fertility decline is to ensure that the health and family welfare system is up to this challenge and provides contraception and sexual and reproductive health services that allow individuals to have only as many children as they want.
- ◆ In order to maximise the demographic dividend, we must invest in the education and health of the workforce, particularly in States whose demographic window of opportunity is still more than a decade away. <<<>

General Studies Paper- I

Topic:

- Role of women and women's organizations, Population and associated issues, Poverty and developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Q. Discuss the factors that have contributed to the decreasing Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in India.

7

IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01

Coronavirus Strain D614G

1. Why in News?

- Malaysia has detected a strain of the new coronavirus that's been found to be 10 times more infectious than the strain currently circulating.
- The mutant strain, earlier seen in other parts of the world and called D614G, was found in at least three of the 45 cases in a cluster that started from a restaurant owner returning from India and breaching his 14-day home quarantine. The man has since been sentenced to five months in prison and fined. The strain was also found in another cluster involving people returning from the Philippines.

2. Understanding D614G

- The strain has been found in many other countries and has become the predominant variant in Europe and the US.
- Coronavirus is made of spike proteins and the recently discovered mutant of the virus is called D614G.
- As per the experts, D614G is present in the proteins and changes the amino acid position at 614, from D (aspartic acid) to G (glycine). That's how it is named D614G.



3. Contagion Virulence

- The D614G mutation was first detected in Europe in February in a swap sample. So far there is no evidence that infection with SARS-CoV-2 containing the G614 variant will lead to more severe disease.
- Researches claim that D614G strain has a higher viral load and infectious pattern than that of virus 'Wuhan1'.
- Medical experts state that till now the mutant only brings changes in the protein spike and most likely won't affect the immunogenicity much.
- This means the vaccine is made for COVID-19 can be used for the D614G strain as well. As long as the mutant isn't aggressive, the treatment works.

4. Evolving Coronavirus

- Until late 2019, only six coronaviruses were known to infect humans: HCoV-229E, HCoV-OC43, SARS-CoV (SARS-CoV-1), HCoV-NL63, CoV-HKU1, and MERS-CoV.
- A seventh, SARS-CoV-2, emerged in the winter of 2019 from Wuhan, China. SARS-CoV-2 is closely related to SARS-CoV-1, a virus that appeared from Guangdong province, China in late 2002.
- The coronavirus spike (S) protein mediates receptor binding and fusion of the viral and cellular membrane. The S protein extends from the viral membrane and is uniformly arranged as trimers on the virion surface to give the appearance of a crown (corona in Latin).
- Currently, there are six strains of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). The original one is the L strain, that appeared in Wuhan in December 2019. Its first mutation - the S strain - appeared at the beginning of 2020, while, since mid-January 2020, we have had strains V and G. To date strain G is the most widespread: it mutated into strains GR and GH at the end of February 2020.
- G and GR are the most frequent across Europe and Italy.
- GH strain seems close to non-existence in Italy, while it occurs more frequently in France and Germany
- In North America, the most widespread strain is GH, while in South America we find the GR strain more frequently. In Asia, where the Wuhan L strain initially appeared, the spread of strains G, GH and GR is increasing. These strains landed in Asia only at the beginning of March, more than a month after their spread in Europe.

02

Demand of Sixth Schedule for Arunachal Pradesh

1. Why in News?

- Several community-based organizations (CBOs) and student unions in Arunachal Pradesh urged the government to bring the entire state under the ambit of the Sixth Schedule.
- The organizations also demanded that a high-level expert committee be formed to look into demand for two autonomous councils - Mon Autonomous Region (MAR) and Patkai Autonomous Council (PAC) in the state.



2. Demand for Sixth Schedule

- The Frontier State bordering Bhutan, China and Myanmar is under the Fifth Schedule that “does not provide special rights for the indigenous communities” unlike the Sixth Schedule or Article 371 (A) of the Indian Constitution.
- Sixth Schedule allows constitution of Autonomous District Councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram to safeguard the rights of tribal population.
- The Sixth Schedule currently includes 10 autonomous district councils in four north-eastern States — Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.
- Nagaland, on the other hand, is governed by Article 371 (A), which says that no Act of Parliament shall apply in the State in several areas unless the Nagaland Assembly so decides by a resolution. These include administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law and ownership and transfer of land and its resources.
- **Reasons cited for the demand are:**
 - Sixth Schedule would provide special rights to all Arunachalees on matters of religious and social practices, customary law, land (ownership, transfer and control) etc under the India Constitution.
 - The Statehood Act of 1987 more particularly Article 371(H) is technically defective as it provides no special rights for the indigenous people of the state.
 - Yardstick to measure the level of economic development and progress including socio-cultural preservation and development in a multi-tribal state like Arunachal is almost the same for every region.

3. About Sixth Schedule

- The Sixth Schedule consists of provisions for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, according to Article 244 of the Indian Constitution.
- Passed by the Constituent Assembly in 1949, it seeks to safeguard the rights of tribal population through the formation of Autonomous District Councils (ADCs).
- ADCs are bodies representing a district to which the Constitution has given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature.
- The governors of these states are empowered to reorganise boundaries of the tribal areas. In simpler terms, she or he can choose to include or exclude any area, increase or decrease the boundaries and unite two or more autonomous districts into one.
- They can also alter or change the names of autonomous regions without a separate legislation.

4. CAB and Sixth Schedule

- Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 aims to grant citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, Jains and Christians from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh who sought shelter in India following religious persecution. Those seeking citizenship will have to prove that they entered India on or before 31 December 2014.
- The tweaked CAB states that areas under the Sixth Schedule are exempted from its purview, which means non-Muslim refugees from the three countries who are granted Indian citizenship will not have any land or trading rights in the autonomous regions.
- If the bill is passed in both Houses of Parliament with all the provisions of exemption, the Sixth Schedule will play the primary role in these regions for safeguarding the rights of tribal population and preventing influx.
- This essentially means the refugees can neither reside or settle in the 10 autonomous districts, nor enjoy benefits extended to the tribals, even if they are provided with Indian citizenship. Further, the laws made by ADCs with the powers bestowed upon them by the Sixth Schedule will not be scrapped by the CAB.

03 Digital Quality of Life Index 2020

1. Why in News?

- Recently, the Digital Quality of Life (DQL) Index 2020 has been released by SurfShark.



2. Digital Quality of Life Index 2020

- The index, prepared by Surfshark, a virtual private network (VPN) provider based in the British Virgin Islands, sought to rank countries that define the digital quality of life by looking at five fundamental pillars. All parameters have equal weightage.
- It is a global research on the quality of a digital wellbeing in 85 countries (81% of the global population).
- The DQL Index has revealed insights on what tangible factors have the greatest impact on the country's digital wellbeing, and which areas should be prioritized in improving its potential.

3. Five Pillars of Digital Quality of Life

- Internet affordability: How much time people have to work to afford the internet connection?
- Internet quality: How fast and stable is the internet connectivity in a country?
- Electronic infrastructure: How developed and inclusive is the existing electronic infrastructure?
- Electronic government: How advanced and digitized are country's governmental services?
- Electronic security: How safe and protected can people feel in a country?

5. India's Performance

- India makes it into the top 10 in terms of Internet affordability. With a ranking of nine, it outperforms countries such as the U.K., the U.S. and China.
- Additionally, when it comes to e-government, India occupies the 15th place globally, just below countries like New Zealand and Italy.
- India's Internet quality is one of the lowest across 85 countries analysed in the research. In position 78, India is at the bottom of the pillar with unstable and slow mobile Internet dragging it down in the overall Internet quality index. However, India scored a mid-level 57th rank.
- On electronic infrastructure — focusing on active internet users and information and communications technology adoption rate — India ranked 79th, behind neighbours Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

4. Key Takeaways from the Index

- Top countries with the highest DQL: Scandinavian countries, Denmark and Sweden topped the index, with Canada rounding up the top three, excel in offering high quality digital wellbeing to their citizens.
- 7 out of 10 countries with the highest DQL are in Europe, reflecting strong development across the majority of aspects that influence quality of people's lives there.
- High inequality in affordability: people in 75% of the researched countries have to work more than the global average to afford the internet.
- COVID-19 impacted the internet stability: 49 of 85 countries experienced drops in mobile and 44 in broadband speed due to work from home (WFH) setting.
- 95% of people in Scandinavia use the internet (the most active internet users) vs. 35% in Southern Asia (the least active region globally).
- Internet speed (mobile and broadband) is higher in countries with high ICT adoption rates and internet usage.
- European Union countries lead in protecting people's personal data.
- Countries stagnate in improving e-infrastructure once they reach higher than average GDP per capita level.
- The UAE, Sweden and Denmark have the most developed e-infrastructure.
- Strong e-security positively correlates with well developed e-government, except for Eastern European countries.
- Singapore, the UK and the US performed the best on the e-government indicator — arrived at by checking the state of government's online presence and readiness to employ artificial intelligence technology and help "minimise bureaucracy, reduce corruption and increase transparency of the public sector".

04 National Recruitment Agency

1. Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved creation of a National Recruitment Agency (NRA) to conduct an online Common Eligibility Test (CET) for selecting candidates for majority of central government jobs.



2. Background

- At present, candidates seeking government jobs have to appear for separate examinations conducted by multiple recruiting agencies for various posts, for which similar eligibility conditions have been prescribed.
- Candidates have to pay fee to multiple recruiting agencies and also have to travel long distances for appearing in various exams.
- These multiple recruitment examinations are a burden on the candidates, as also on the respective recruitment agencies.

3. About NRA

- Initially, NRA will organise a CET to screen/shortlist candidates for the Group B and C (non -technical, non-gazetted) posts, which are now being conducted by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railways Recruitment Board (SSC) and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS). However, the present recruitment agencies— IBPS, RRB and SCC — will remain in place.
- The test will be conducted for three levels: graduate, higher secondary (12th pass) and the matriculate (10th pass) candidates.
- Based on the screening done at the CET score level, final selection for recruitment shall be made through separate specialised Tiers (II, III, etc.) of examination which shall be conducted by the respective recruitment agencies.
- The curriculum for CET would be common.

5. Benefit for Government Job Aspirants

- Candidates will not have to incur additional expenses for travel, boarding, lodging to reach their exam centres that are usually far from their home town. Single exam will reduce the financial burden on candidates.
- The availability of exam centres in every district would benefit the female candidates as well. Girls generally depend on a guardian to accompany them in reaching their exam centres if it is far away from their home town. The location of test centres in every district would benefit the candidates, particularly women.
- CET would be available in a number of languages, benefitting aspirants from different regions of country. Presently, most of the exams are conducted in English and Hindi languages.

4. Implementation

- Aspirants do not have to apply and appear separately for multiple recruitment exams. They will be able to apply once for a single or multiple recruitment exams in various departments and take the CET.
- After the CET is conducted, NRA will send the scores of eligible candidates to the respective agencies to continue the recruitment process.
- The CET score of the candidate shall be valid for a period of three years from the date of declaration of the result.
 - The best of the valid scores shall be deemed to be the current score of the candidate.
- There shall be no restriction on the number of attempts to be taken by a candidate to appear in the CET subject to the upper age limit. Relaxation in the upper age limit shall be given to candidates of SC/ST/OBC and other categories as per the extant policy of the Government.
- Candidates will have the facility to give a choice of centres and they would be allotted the chosen centres, based on availability. They will be given an option to schedule their own tests at their choice centres.
- • Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs 1517.57 crore for the NRA. The expenditure will be undertaken over a period of three years. The cost will also be incurred for setting up exam infrastructure in 117 districts with large numbers of aspirants. The proposal is expected to ease the access to aspirants residing in rural areas.

05 Bhadbhut Project

1. Why in News?

- The Gujarat government recently awarded the contract for a barrage project to a joint venture of Dilip Buildcon Ltd and Hindustan Construction Company Ltd.
- The Rs 4,167-crore Bhadbhut project in Bharuch is meant to solve freshwater problems in this region of Gujarat. It has also faced protests from local fishermen for its likely impact on fishing patterns, notably those of hilsa.



5. Advantages

- The main purpose of the project is to prevent salinity ingress.
- The sweet water from the reservoir will aim to meet the residential and industrial water requirements of Bharuch, Ankleshwar and Dahej.
- The barrage design also has a navigation lock to enable any future plans to run a ferry service or boats under the inland waterway scheme. The navigation lock is a passage about 18 metres wide and will allow larger vessels to cross the barrage.
- The Inland Waterway Authority of India has given clearance for this project.

2. About the Project

- It is planned to be a 1.7-km causeway-cum-weir barrage with 90 gates, across the river Narmada, 5 km from Bhadbhut village, and 25 km from the mouth of the river, where it flows into the Gulf of Khambhat.
- The barrage will stop most of the excess water flowing out of the Sardar Sarovar Dam from reaching the sea and thus create a "sweet water lake" of 600 mcm (million cubic metres) on the river.
- The barrage will also have a six-lane road that will connect the left and right banks of the river and provide shorten the land distance between two large industrial estates in Surat and Bharuch.
- The project also aims to prevent flooding in years when rainfall is higher than normal. Embankments 22 km long will be made and will extend upstream towards Bharuch, from either side of the river.
- The project is part of the larger Kalpasar Project, which entails construction of a 30-km dam across the Gulf of Khambhat between Bharuch and Bhavnagar districts. The reservoir is meant to tap the waters of the Narmada, Mahisagar and Sabarmati.

3. Need for Bhadbhut Project

- Ingress of tidal water in upstream of Narmada River up to 70 km near to Shuklatirth. It badly hampered the quality of water, which create the need of Barrage near Bhadbhut village to prevent the tidal ingress as well to create reservoir to fulfill the portable water demand of the area.
- Need of water of Bharuch and Ankleshwar mainly fulfilled by Narmada and Ukai-Kakrapar canal network. Existing capacity of these canal networks has been utilized beyond its design capacity with increasing the area of cities. It pressing the need of alternates to fulfill the water demand and Bhadbhut barrage will be proven as good alternate and it resolve increasing water demand to the great extent.
- Tidal ingress in Narmada river make Narmada water worthless which create the burden on industrial area of Bharuch and Dahej to get the water through pumping from 70 km upstream near Angareshwar.
- Protection from flood and tidal water salinity to the low-lying agricultural lands on bank of river Narmada for the villages like Dhanturia, Taria, Haripura, Borbhatha etc.
- Soil erosion and effect on agricultural land of villages on left bank of Shuklatirth-Kabirvad to Hansot due to tidal water ingress will be protected through this barrage.
- Silting on right bank of river Narmada from Bharuch to Bhadbhut, the river has meandered shifted nearly by 0.5 km to 1 km.

4. Hilsa Fish under Threat

- The barrage is expected to interfere with the migration and breeding cycle of hilsa.
- A marine fish, hilsa migrate upstream and arrives in the brackish water of the Narmada estuary near Bharuch for spawning usually during the monsoon months of July and August, and continue doing so till November.
- Once the barrage is built, it is expected to block their natural entry.

06

Bioethanol

1. Why in News?

- The government has set targets of 10 per cent bioethanol blending of petrol by 2022 and to raise it to 20 per cent by 2030 under the ethanol blending programme to curb carbon emissions and reduce India's dependence on imported crude oil.
- 1G and 2G bioethanol plants are set to play a key role in making bio-ethanol available for blending but face challenges in attracting investments from the private sector.



2. 1G and 2G Plants

- 1G bioethanol plants utilise sugarcane juice and molasses, by-products in the production of sugar, as raw material, while 2G plants utilise surplus biomass and agricultural waste to produce bioethanol.
- Currently, domestic production of bioethanol is not sufficient to meet the demand for bio-ethanol for blending with petrol at Indian Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).
- Sugar mills, which are the key domestic suppliers of bio-ethanol to OMCs, were only able to supply 1.9 billion litres of bio-ethanol to OMCs equating to 57.6 per cent of the total demand of 3.3 billion litres.
- Many sugar mills which are best placed to produce bioethanol do not have the financial stability to invest in biofuel plants and there are also concerns among investors on the uncertainty of the price of bio-ethanol in the future.
- The prices of both sugarcane and bio-ethanol are set by the central government.
- Producing ethanol from sugarcane juice instead of molasses can help India meet its nutrition requirements and make resources like land and water more sustainable.
- India's biofuel policy only recently allowed the use of sugarcane juice in ethanol production, in addition to molasses.

3. Ethanol

- Ethanol, an anhydrous ethyl alcohol having chemical formula of C_2H_5OH , can be produced from sugarcane, maize, wheat, etc. which are having high starch content.
- In India, ethanol is mainly produced from sugarcane molasses by fermentation process. Ethanol can be mixed with gasoline to form different blends.
- As the ethanol molecule contains oxygen, it allows the engine to more completely combust the fuel, resulting in fewer emissions and thereby reducing the occurrence of environmental pollution.
- Since ethanol is produced from plants that harness the power of the Sun, ethanol is also considered as renewable fuel.
- If molasses are used to meet the given target – requiring a production of 20 billion litres (bl) of bioethanol – it would require additional water and land resources, nearly four times more than the current, and would result in production of extra sugar of 161 mt.
- Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme was launched in January, 2003.
- Ethanol has also been blessed with a low GST and enjoys relaxed conditions for inter-state movement if used for blending with petrol.

4. Concern for Food Security

- Sugarcane cultivation — which benefitted from entrenched policies that incentivised production for decades — uses up more land and water, and, thus, reduces the use of these resources for foods that are rich in micro-nutrients.
- Institutionalised political interests in sugar production have threatened the country's food, water and energy security over time.
- In 2009, the National Policy on Biofuels stressed on the use of non-food resources to avoid a possible conflict between food and fuel.
- • In 2018, the government modified its 2009 policy. The new National Policy on Biofuels had a target of 20 per cent blending of ethanol in petrol and 5 per cent blending of biodiesel in diesel by 2030.
- o This was to be achieved by increasing production using second generation bio-refineries and developing new feedstock for biofuels. It allowed the production of ethanol from damaged food grains like wheat and broken rice, which are unfit for human consumption.

07

Minimum Age of Marriage

1. Why in News?

- In his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that the Centre will decide on the recommendations of a committee set up to reconsider the minimum age of marriage for women.
- Currently, the law prescribes a minimum age of marriage is 21 years for men and 18 years for women.
- The minimum age of marriage is distinct from the age of majority which is gender-neutral. An individual attains the age of majority at 18 as per the Indian Majority Act, 1875.



2. The Committee

- On June 2, the Union Ministry for Women and Child Development set up a task force to examine matters pertaining to age of motherhood, imperatives of lowering Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) and the improvement of nutritional levels among women.
- The task force will examine the correlation of age of marriage and motherhood with health, medical well-being, and nutritional status of the mother and neonate, infant or child, during pregnancy, birth and thereafter.
- It will also look at key parameters like Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), MMR, Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) and Child Sex Ratio (CSR), and will examine the possibility of increasing the age of marriage for women from the present 18 years to 21 years.
- Headed by former Samata Party president Jaya Jaitely, the committee includes Member Health at the NITI Aayog, Dr Vinod Paul, and several Secretaries to the Government of India.

3. Need for Minimum Age

- The law prescribes a minimum age of marriage to essentially outlaw child marriages and prevent the abuse of minors.
- For Hindus, Section 5 (iii) of The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, sets 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom. However, child marriages are not illegal — even though they can be declared void at the request of the minor in the marriage.
- In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid.
- The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men respectively.
- Additionally, sexual intercourse with a minor is rape, and the 'consent' of a minor is regarded as invalid since she is deemed incapable of giving consent at that age.

5. Other Side

- Noting the law's patriarchal underpinnings, the 18th Law Commission report (2008) asked for uniformity in the age of marriage at 18 years for both men and women and lowering the age of consent to 16 years, a recommendation also of the Justice Verma Committee.
- Efforts to address child marriage in India should be in consonance with the socio-economic realities that demand investment in education, welfare, and opportunities for women.
- Increasing the legal age of marriage to 21 years will add to these existing hurdles for young women's access to reproductive and sexual healthcare. All these put SC-ST households, who have the least recourse to legal and other safeguards, at a greater risk.
- In September 2018, the National Human Rights Commission showed how higher education levels lead to a lower likelihood of women being married early and strongly recommended that the Right to Education Act, 2009, be amended to make it applicable up to the age of 18 years.

4. Arguments in-favour

- From bringing in gender-neutrality to reduce the risks of early pregnancy among women, there are many arguments in favour of increasing the minimum age of marriage of women.
- Early pregnancy is associated with increased child mortality rates and affects the health of the mother.
- Despite laws mandating minimum age and criminalising sexual intercourse with a minor, child marriage are very prevalent in the country.
- Last year, the Delhi High Court also sought the central government's response in a plea that sought a uniform age for marriage for men and women.
- Several experts argued that Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution, which guarantee the right to equality and the right to live with dignity, were violated by having different legal ages for men and women to marry.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 Coronavirus Strain D614G

Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to the 'D614G':

1. The strain has become the predominant variant in Europe and the US.
2. Coronavirus is made of spike proteins and there are now seven types of coronaviruses.
3. The mutant strain D614G is present in the proteins and changes the amino acid position at 614, from D (aspartic acid) to G (glycine).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: All statements are correct. The strain has been found in many other countries and has become the predominant variant in Europe and the US.

Until late 2019, only six coronaviruses were known to infect humans: HCoV-229E, HCoV-OC43, SARS-CoV (SARS-CoV-1), HCoV-NL63, CoV-HKU1, and MERS-CoV. A seventh, SARS-CoV-2, emerged in the winter of 2019 from Wuhan, China.

As per the experts, D614G is present in the proteins and changes the amino acid position at 614, from D (aspartic acid) to G (glycine). Medical experts state that till now the mutant only brings changes in the protein spike and most likely won't affect the immunogenicity much.



02 Demand of Sixth Schedule for Arunachal Pradesh

Q2. With reference to the demand of Sixth Schedule for Arunachal Pradesh, consider the following statements:

1. The frontier state of Arunachal Pradesh borders Nepal, Bhutan, China and Myanmar is under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.
2. Sixth Schedule allows constitution of Autonomous District Councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura & Mizoram to safeguard the rights of tribal population.
3. The Sixth Schedule consists of provisions for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, according to Article 244 of the Indian Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. The frontier state of Arunachal Pradesh bordering Bhutan, China and Myanmar is under the Fifth Schedule. Arunachal Pradesh does not share border with Nepal.

Statement 2 and 3 are correct. The Sixth Schedule consists of provisions for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, according to Article 244 of the Indian Constitution. Passed by the Constituent Assembly in 1949, it seeks to safeguard the rights of tribal population through the formation of Autonomous District Councils (ADC). ADCs are bodies representing a district to which the Constitution has given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature.



03 Digital Quality of Life Index 2020

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to 'Digital Quality of Life Index 2020':

1. India's overall rank in the index is low at 57 out of 85 nations.
2. While, in terms of e-government, India occupied 15th place globally.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. India scored a mid-level 57 rank, but did well on two indicators. India makes it into the top 10 in terms of Internet affordability. With a ranking of nine, it outperforms countries such as the U.K., the U.S. and China. Additionally, when it comes to e-government, India occupies the 15th place globally, just below countries like New Zealand and Italy.

04 National Recruitment Agency

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to the 'National Recruitment Agency':

1. National Recruitment Agency will organize a Common Eligibility Test (CET) to shortlist candidates for all government posts.
2. The CET score of the candidate shall be valid for a period of three years from the date of declaration of the result.
3. NRA will subsume the functions of SSC, IBPS and RRB and these organisations will be abolished.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 and 3 are incorrect. NRA will organize a Common Eligibility Test (CET) to screen/shortlist candidates for the Group B and C (non -technical, non-gazetted)

posts, which are now being conducted by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railways Recruitment Board (SSC) and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS). However, the present recruitment agencies— IBPS, RRB and SCC — will remain in place.

Statement 2 is correct. The CET score of the candidate shall be valid for a period of three years from the date of declaration of the result. The best of the valid scores shall be deemed to be the current score of the candidate.

05 Bhadbhut Project

Q5. With reference to the Bhadbhut project consider the following statements:

1. Bhadbhut project is a part of the larger Kalpasar Project, which entails construction of a 30-km dam across the Gulf of Khambhat.
2. The project majorly aims to prevent flooding and salinity ingress.
3. The project is expected to interfere with the migration and breeding cycle of hilsa fish.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: All statements are correct. The project is part of the larger Kalpasar Project, which entails construction of a 30-km dam across the Gulf of Khambhat between Bharuch and Bhavnagar districts. The reservoir is meant to tap the waters of the Narmada, Mahisagar and Sabarmati.

The main purpose of the project is to prevent salinity ingress. The project also aims to prevent flooding in years when rainfall is higher than normal. Embankments 22 km long will be made and will extend upstream towards Bharuch, from either side of the river.

The barrage is expected to interfere with the migration and breeding cycle of hilsa. A marine fish, hilsa migrate upstream and arrives in the brackish water of the Narmada estuary near Bharuch for spawning usually during the monsoon months of July and August, and continue doing so till November. Once the barrage is built, it is expected to block their natural entry.

06 Bioethanol

Q6. Consider the following statements:

1. The government has set targets of 10 per cent bioethanol blending of petrol by 2022 and to raise it to 20 per cent by 2030.
2. Ethanol is a carbon compound whose lower calorific values and hydrogen content makes it an ideal fuel since it can burn completely and leaves fewer residues.
3. India's biofuel policy has allowed the use of sugarcane juice in ethanol production, in addition to molasses.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. The new National Policy on Biofuels had a target of 20 per cent blending of ethanol in petrol and 5 per cent blending of biodiesel in diesel by 2030 under the ethanol blending programme to curb carbon emissions.

Statement 2 is incorrect. As the ethanol molecule contains oxygen, it allows the engine to more completely combust the fuel, resulting in fewer emissions and thereby

reducing the occurrence of environmental pollution. Since ethanol is produced from plants that harness the power of the Sun, ethanol is also considered as renewable fuel.

Statement 3 is correct. India's biofuel policy has allowed the use of sugarcane juice in ethanol production, in addition to molasses.



07 Minimum Age of Marriage

Q7. Consider the following statements:

1. Currently, the Indian law prescribes a minimum age of marriage is 21 years for men and 18 years for women.
2. The minimum age of marriage is distinct from the age of majority which is gender-neutral.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. Currently, the law prescribes a minimum age of marriage is 21 years for men and 18 years for women.

The minimum age of marriage is distinct from the age of majority which is gender-neutral. An individual attains the age of majority at 18 as per the Indian Majority Act, 1875.

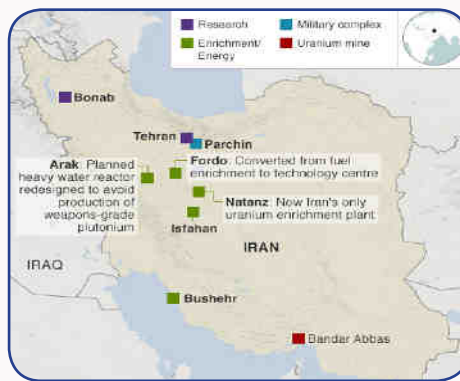


7 IMPORTANT NEWS

01

Iran and IAEA

- ◆ Iran has agreed to give International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors access to two suspected former nuclear sites near Karaj west of Tehran & near Isfahan in central Iran. A joint statement said Iran was doing so in good faith to resolve outstanding issues related to nuclear safeguards. The agreement came during a visit to Tehran by the IAEA's director-general.
- ◆ The IAEA is tasked with certifying Iran's declarations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and facilitating an Additional Protocol that Iran agreed to implement in 2015.



About the Deal

- ◆ The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal or Iran deal, is an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015, between Iran and the P5+1 together with the European Union.

- ◆ Under the accord, Iran scaled back its uranium enrichment programme and promised not to pursue nuclear weapons. In exchange, international sanctions were lifted, allowing Tehran to sell its oil and gas worldwide.
- ◆ But the JCPOA has been in jeopardy since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from it in 2018 and reimposed crippling economic sanctions on Iran, leading Tehran to start scaling back compliance with the deal.
- ◆ The JCPOA's European signatories - France, Germany and the United Kingdom - rejected the move, saying the US had no such right since it was no longer a party to the deal.



02

Interpol has Issued Red Notice against Nirav Modi's wife

- ◆ The Interpol has issued a Red Notice against Ami Modi, wife of the Punjab National Bank fraud case prime accused Nirav Modi, in connection with the money-laundering probe being conducted by the Enforcement Directorate. The ED probe has revealed the alleged role of Ms. Ami Modi, a US citizen, in the laundering of funds generated through diversion of loans extended by the bank.
- ◆ Mr. Modi had left India along with his wife and other family members in the first week of January 2018, shortly before the CBI registered FIRs against them.

What is a Red Notice?

- ◆ Interpol defines red notice as a request to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate

and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action.

- ◆ A red notice contains information to identify the wanted person, such as their name, date of birth, nationality, hair and eye colour, photographs and fingerprints if available. It also information related to the crime they are wanted for.



Effects of Notice

A red notice allows 192 member countries to locate a person wanted

- ◆ After a red notice against her, Ami's name will be now in Interpol database at all the ports and airports across the world.
- ◆ According to the Interpol, it cannot force the law enforcement authorities in any country to arrest someone who is the subject of a red notice.
- ◆ Each member country decides what legal value it gives to a red notice and the authority of their law enforcement officers to make arrests, according to Interpol website.



- ◆ It is issued at the request of member country. The Interpol clarifies that a red notice is an international wanted person notice, but not an arrest warrant.

by the country which has made the request. This means that Ami Modi's free movement will be affected now.

03

Kavkaz 2020

- ◆ In a resumption of bilateral and multilateral military exercises which were deferred due to coronavirus (COVID-19), India has withdrawn its participation in Kavkaz 2020 multinational exercise in Russia in September citing logistics difficulties due to COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is mainly due to participation of Chinese troops amid the ongoing standoff in Ladakh.
- ◆ The invitation for participation to Kavkaz 2020, also referred to as Caucasus-2020, has been extended to at least 18 countries

including China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey apart from other Central Asian Republics part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

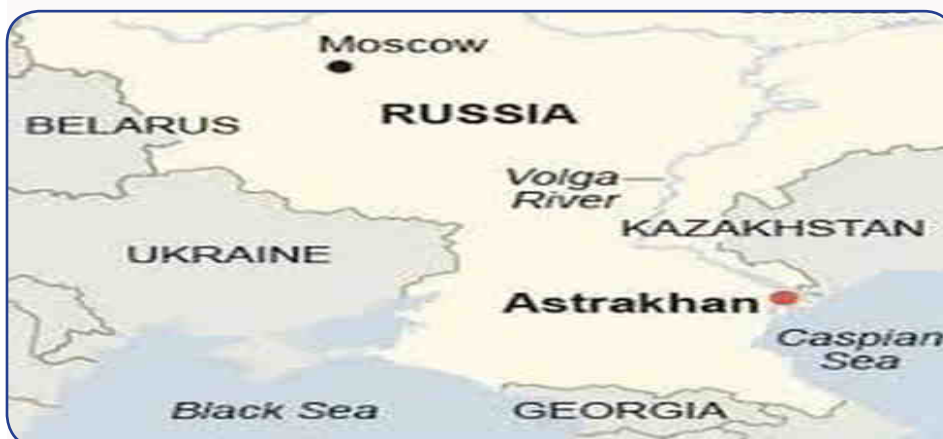
About Kavkaz 2020

- ◆ Russia has started a snap check of the combat readiness of its Southern and Western military districts, large troop units, airborne forces, and Northern and Pacific fleets.
- ◆ The exercise is aimed at assessing the ability of the armed forces

to ensure military security in Russia's southwest, where serious terrorist threats persist, and preparing for the strategic command-staff drills.

About SCO

- ◆ The grouping is eight-member economic and security bloc and India and Pakistan were admitted as full members back in 2017. The founding members of this grouping include China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- ◆ The grouping has been having multilateral drills and has developed Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS). This structure is regarded as very important in the counterterrorism operations by the member countries and has its headquarters based in Tashkent.



04

Turkey's Historic Chora Church

- ◆ Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has reconverted the historic Chora church, one of Istanbul's most celebrated Byzantine buildings, into a mosque recently, a month after opening the famed Hagia Sophia to Muslim worship.
- ◆ The move was sharply criticised by church leaders and some Western countries, who said that reconverting Hagia Sophia exclusively for Muslim worship risked deepening religious rifts.
- Last year a Turkish court annulled a 1945 government decision converting Chora – known as Kariye in Turkish – into a museum run by the Education Ministry.

About the Church

- ◆ The mediaeval Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora, built near the



ancient city walls of Constantinople, contains 14th century Byzantine mosaics and frescoes showing scenes from biblical stories.

- ◆ They were plastered over after the city was conquered by the Muslim Ottomans in 1453, but brought to light again when – like Hagia Sophia – the building was converted to a museum by Turkey's secular

republic more than 70 years ago.

- ◆ The official title of the chapel, dedicated to Jesus, was the 'Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora'. The literal meaning of chora in Greek is "country". The chapel was called Chora as it was located outside the city walls. It's believed that the land where the chapel was built was the

burial site of Babylas of Antioch, a saint of Eastern Christians, and his disciples.

- ◆ When Constantinople expanded during the Theodosian period and Emperor Theodosius II built new land walls in 413 CE, the chapel came within the city limits, but it retained the name Chora. 🇧🇪🇵🇹🇮🇹

05

Animal Cruelty

- ◆ The Union Government is actively examining the issue related to increasing the existing penalties for cruelty to animals by amending the existing laws. Inflicting any form of cruelty on animals and getting away by paying a penalty of just Rs 50 for such an offense may soon be a thing of the past with the Centre mulling making the law more stringent.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA), 1960 currently stipulates a penalty between Rs 10 and Rs 50 for any act of cruelty

against animals, including beating, kicking, torturing, starving, and mutilating the animal.

- ◆ Under the 60-year-old law, none of these actions amounting to animal cruelty, as recognized under Section 11(1) of the PCA, are cognizable except organizing fights and shooting matches that use animals.
- ◆ The proposed amendments to it will also make such offenses cognizable. Besides animal rights activists who have been demanding such amendments for years, 12 MPs including Union minister of social justice and empowerment and

seven other ruling BJP members too have recently flagged the issue of "unreasonably low penalties" in the existing law to the Union Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister.

About PCA, 1960

- ◆ The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted in 1960 to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals and to amend the laws relating to the prevention of cruelty to animals.
- ◆ As per the provisions of the law the government of India formed the Animal Welfare Board of India 🇧🇪🇵🇹🇮🇹

06

Indonesia's Mount Sinabung

- Indonesia's Mount Sinabung volcano has erupted recently, sending a column of ash and smoke more than 16,000 feet into the air. The volcano became active in 2010, erupting after nearly 400 years of inactivity.

Key Highlights

- Indonesia is home to many active volcanoes, due to its position on the "Ring of Fire", or the Circum-Pacific Belt, which is an area along the Pacific Ocean characterised by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes. The Ring of Fire is home to about 75 per cent of the world's volcanoes and about 90 per cent of its earthquakes.
- The volcano, which is situated in North Sumatra, has been active since 2010. Another eruptive phase for the volcano began in



September 2013, which continued uninterrupted until June 2018. During the 2018 eruption, the volcano released ash 5-7 km into the air, coating villages.

Why do Volcanoes Erupt?

- A volcano can be active, dormant or extinct. An eruption takes place when magma (a thick flowing substance), formed when the earth's mantle melts, rises to the surface. Because magma is lighter than solid rock, it is able to rise through vents and fissures on the

surface of the earth. After it has erupted, it is called lava.

- Not all volcanic eruptions are explosive, since explosivity depends on the composition of the magma. When the magma is runny and thin, gases can easily escape it, in which case, the magma will flow out towards the surface. On the other hand, if the magma is thick and dense, gases cannot escape it, which builds up pressure inside until the gases escape in a violent explosion.

07

Export Preparedness Index 2020

- NITI Aayog in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness released the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020. The first report to examine export preparedness and performance of Indian states, EPI intends to identify challenges and opportunities; enhance the effectiveness of government policies; and encourage a facilitative regulatory framework.
- The structure of the EPI includes 4 pillars— Policy; Business

Ecosystem; Export Ecosystem; Export Performance – and 11 sub-pillars –Export Promotion Policy; Institutional Framework; Business Environment; Infrastructure; Transport Connectivity; Access to Finance; Export Infrastructure; Trade Support; R&D Infrastructure; Export Diversification; and Growth Orientation.

Key Findings

- The EPI has shown is that most

Indian states performed well on average across the sub-pillars of Exports Diversification, Transport Connectivity, and Infrastructure. The average score of Indian states in these three sub-pillars was above 50%. Also, given the low standard deviation in Export Diversification and Transport Connectivity, the averages are not skewed to the higher side by a few over-achievers. However, Indian states should also focus on

LEADING THE PACK

Export preparedness score

Gujarat

75.2

Maharashtra

75.1

Tamil Nadu

64.9

Rajasthan

62.6

Odisha

58.2

other key components in order to improve export competitiveness.

- Overall, most of the Coastal States are the best performers. Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu occupy the top three ranks, respectively. Six of eight coastal states feature in the top ten rankings, indicating the presence of strong enabling and facilitating factors to promote exports. In the landlocked states, Rajasthan has performed the best, followed by Telangana and Haryana. Among the Himalayan states, Uttarakhand is the highest,

followed by Tripura and Himachal Pradesh. Across the Union Territories, Delhi has performed the best, followed by Goa and Chandigarh.

- The report also highlights that export orientation and preparedness are not just restricted to prosperous states. Even emerging states can undertake dynamic export policy measures, have functioning promotional councils, and synchronize with national logistical plans to grow their exports. Chhattisgarh and

Jharkhand are two landlocked states that had initiated several measures to promote exports.

- Based on the findings of the report, export promotion in India faces three fundamental challenges: intra- and inter-regional disparities in export infrastructure; poor trade support and growth orientation among states; and poor R&D infrastructure to promote complex and unique exports.
- There is a need to emphasize on key strategies to address these challenges: a joint development of export infrastructure; strengthening industry-academia linkages; and creating state-level engagements for economic diplomacy. These strategies could be supported by revamped designs and standards for local products and by harnessing the innovating tendencies to provide new use cases for such products, with adequate support from the Centre.



7

IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS (For Mains)



01

India must leverage its market to force China to settle border issue amicably. Comment.

02

Critically analyse the debate of “quota within quota” for schedule castes (SCs) and schedule tribes (STs).

03

Discuss the concept of vaccine nationalism.

04

Discuss how National Council for Transgender Persons would tackle the issues related to transgender persons in India.

05

What is the National Recruitment Agency (NRA)? Why is the NRA needed? Explain.

06

There is a view that the Official Secrets Act is an obstacle to the implementation of Right to Information Act. Do you agree with the view? Discuss.

07

How far is Vertical Farming System helpful in sustaining agricultural production?

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



- 01** Which city got the first position (more than 1 lakh population category) in the 'Swachh Survekshan Results 2020'?

Indore
- 02** What is the rank of India in recently released "Digital Quality of Life Index 2020"?

57th
- 03** Which institute has developed an oral nanomedicine for Kala-Azar?

Institute of Nano Science & Technology
- 04** Which state government has launched 'Indira Rasoi Yojana'?

Rajasthan
- 05** Which state government has opened the India's longest river ropeway for public?

Assam
- 06** Which ministry has constituted the 'National Council for Transgender Persons'?

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- 07** Which state is carrying out a unique programme called 'Namath Basai'?

Kerala

7

IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01



03



05

01

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit."

Aristotle

02

"If our Constitution fails, it is not because it is a bad Constitution; but because our functionaries have failed it."

B R Ambedkar

03

"The woman who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd."

Albert Einstein

04

"Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness."

George Washington

05

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself."

Leo Tolstoy

06

"Everything comes to us that belong to us if we create the capacity to receive it."

Rabindra Nath Tagore

07

"If you cannot feed a hundred people than feed just one."

Mother Teresa

AN INTRODUCTION

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

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