

PERFECT 7

Weekly Current Affairs

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS



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An Understanding

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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

Weekly Current Affairs

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS

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OUR TEAM

Founder & CEO	➤ Vinay Kumar Singh
Managing Director	➤ Q. H. Khan
Chief Editor	➤ Qurban Ali
Managing Editor	➤ Ashutosh Singh
Editors	➤ Omveer Singh Chaudhary ➤ Rajat Jhingan ➤ Jeet Singh ➤ Avaneesh Pandey
Editorial Support	➤ Prof. R. Kumar
Lead Authors	➤ Swati Yadav ➤ Anshuman Tiwari ➤ Ajay Singh ➤ Ahamad Ali
Authors	➤ Ashraf Ali ➤ Girraj Singh ➤ Hariom Singh ➤ Sneha Tiwari
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Design & Development	➤ Sanjeev Kumar Jha ➤ Punish Jain
Promotion & Advertisement	➤ Gufran Khan ➤ Rahul Kumar
Graphics	➤ Krishna Kumar ➤ Krishna Kant Mandal ➤ Mukund Patel
Office Assistants	➤ Hari Ram ➤ Raju Yadav

Content Office



DHYEYA IAS
302, A-10/11, Bhandari House,
Near Chawla Restaurants,
Dr. Mukherjee Nagar,
Delhi-110009



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(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

Emissions Gap Report 2020 : An Understanding

Why in News?

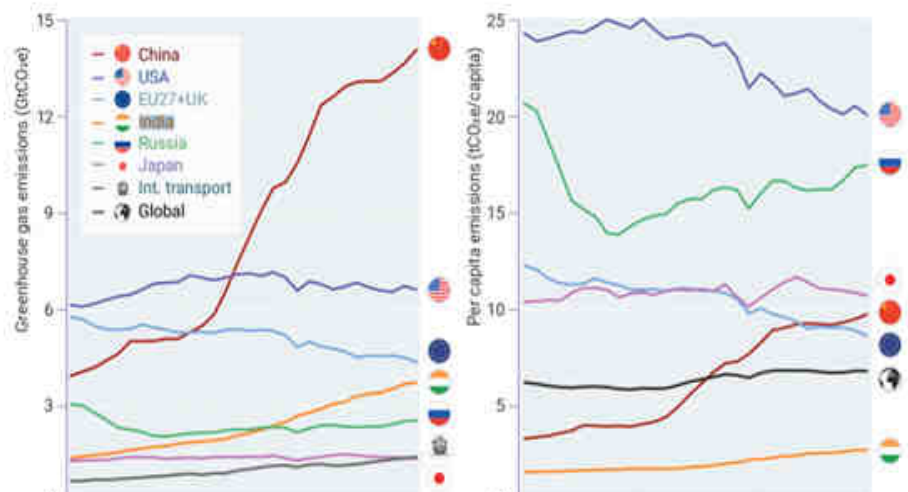
- ◆ The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on December 9, 2020, released its annual Emissions Gap Report 2020. The much-awaited report is unequivocal that there is no ebb to human-induced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the year 2020 would be one of the warmest years on record.

Background

- ◆ Despite a dip in GHG emissions from the COVID-19 economic slowdown, the world is still heading for a catastrophic temperature rise above 3°C this century – far beyond the goals of the Paris Agreement. But UNEP's Emissions Gap points to hope in a green pandemic recovery and growing commitments to net-zero emissions.
- ◆ The 'Emissions Gap' is the gap between what we have pledged to do and what we need to do to keep global warming well below 2°C and pursue 1.5°C, as agreed to in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Emissions Gap Report 2020

Figure ES.2. Absolute GHG emissions of the top six emitters (excluding LUC emissions) and international transport (left) and per capita emissions of the top six emitters and the global average (right)



- ◆ The United Nations Secretary-General is calling on governments to use COVID-19 recovery as an opportunity to create more sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies. Aligned with this, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has stressed that governments could integrate and specify some of their post-COVID-19 recovery plans and policies in their new or updated NDCs and long-term mitigation strategies, both of which countries are requested to submit in 2020
- ◆ Government pledges under the Paris Agreement, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), are still woefully inadequate. Predicted emissions in 2030 leave the world on the path to a 3.2°C increase this century, even if all unconditional NDCs are fully implemented.
- ◆ The levels of ambition in the Paris Agreement must be roughly tripled for the 2°C pathway and increased at least fivefold for the 1.5°C pathway.

Report Findings

- ◆ Global GHG emissions continued to grow for the third consecutive year in 2019, reaching a record high of 52.4 Gigatonne carbon equivalent (GtCO₂e) (range: ±5.2) without land-use change (LUC) emissions and 59.1 GtCO₂e (range: ±5.9) when including LUC.
- ◆ Fossil carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions (from fossil fuels and carbonates) dominate total GHG emissions including LUC (65 per cent) and consequently the growth in GHG emissions. Preliminary data suggest that fossil CO₂ emissions reached a record 38.0 GtCO₂ (range: ±1.9) in 2019.
- ◆ The shipping and aviation sector, which account for 5 per cent of global emissions and growing, also requires more attention.
- ◆ Although the net-zero emissions goals are encouraging, they highlight a vast discrepancy between the ambition of the goals and the inadequate level of ambition in NDCs.
- ◆ Around two-thirds of global emissions are linked to private households, when using consumption-based accounting. The mobility, residential and food sectors each contribute about 20 per cent of lifestyle emissions.
- ◆ Over the last decade, the top four emitters (China, the United States of America, EU27+UK and India) have contributed to 55 per cent of the total GHG emissions without LUC. The top seven emitters (including the Russian Federation, Japan and international transport)

have contributed to 65 per cent, with G20 members accounting for 78 per cent. The ranking of countries changes dramatically when considering per capita emissions.

Differentiated Responsibilities

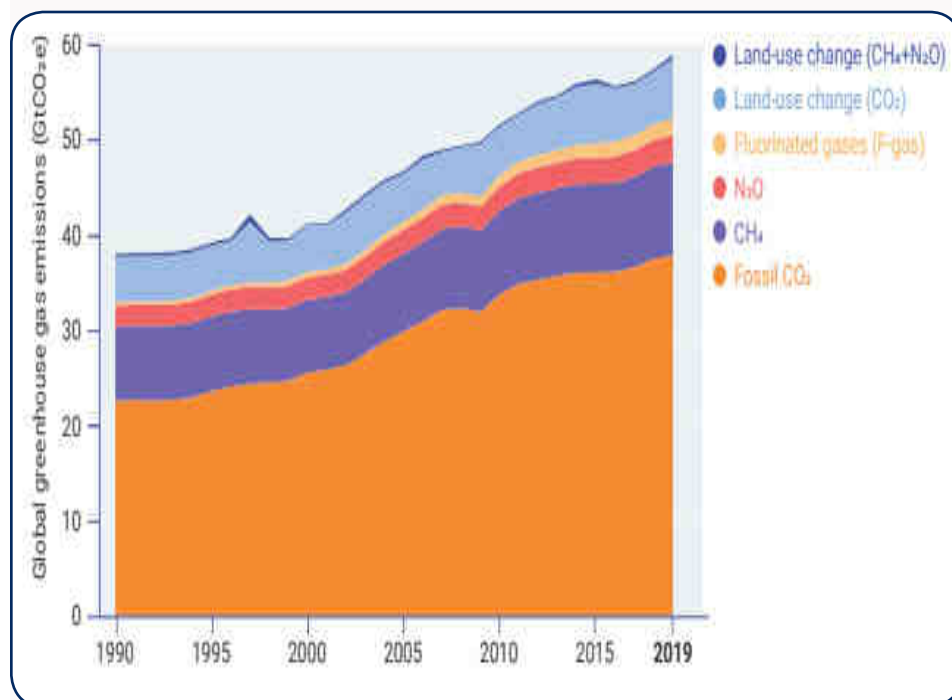
- ◆ There is a general tendency that rich countries have higher consumption-based emissions (emissions allocated to the country where goods are purchased and consumed, rather than where they are produced) than territorial-based emissions, as they typically have cleaner production, relatively more services and more imports of primary and secondary products.
- ◆ In the 2000s, the gap between consumption and production was growing in rich countries but stabilised following the 2007–2008 global financial crisis.
- ◆ Even though rich countries have had higher consumption-based emissions than territorial-based emissions over the last decade, both emission types have declined at similar rates.
- ◆ There is some indication that the growth in global GHG emissions is slowing. However, GHG emissions are declining in Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) economies and increasing in non-OECD economies. Many OECD economies have had a peak in GHG emissions, with efficiency improvements and growth in low-carbon energy sources more than offsetting the growth in economic activity. Despite improving energy efficiency

and increasing low-carbon sources, emissions continue to rise in countries with strong growth in energy use to meet development needs.

- ◆ The combined emissions of the richest one per cent of the global population account for more than twice the poorest 50 per cent. The elite will need to reduce their footprint by a factor of at least 30 to stay in line with the Paris Agreement targets.

Need for Corrective Measures

- ◆ Measures to prioritize under a green recovery include:
 - ◆ direct support for zero-emissions technologies and infrastructure,
 - ◆ reducing fossil fuel subsidies,
 - ◆ backing nature-based solutions – including large-scale landscape restoration and reforestation during the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration,
 - ◆ investing in actions to enable lower-carbon consumption – such as replacing domestic short haul flights with rail, incentives and infrastructure to enable cycling and car-sharing and policies to reduce food waste.
- ◆ Improvements in technology and operations can improve the fuel efficiency of transport if incentivized, but projected increases in demand mean this will not result in decarbonization and absolute reductions of CO₂. Both sectors need to combine energy efficiency with a rapid transition away from fossil fuel.



- ◆ Governments must enable and encourage consumers to avoid high-carbon consumption. Possible actions include replacing domestic short haul flights with rail, incentives and infrastructure to enable cycling and car-sharing, improving energy efficiency of housing, renewable energy defaults from grid providers and policies to reduce food waste.

India Shines on Mitigating Climate Crisis

- ◆ India has allocated about 10.1% of 2019 GDP for COVID-19 rescue and recovery measures, according to the report based on data from Oxford Recovery Project which has an overview of total fiscal rescue and recovery measures of G20 members. But data shows that

most of India's recovery measures have high carbon effects.

- ◆ India ranked high along with the European Union and the United Kingdom in the latest edition of the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) released by non-profit Germanwatch December 7, 2020.
- ◆ No country was doing enough to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement, according to the index. Six G20 countries were ranked among very low performers. The United States, with a rank of 61, was the worst performer.
- ◆ India, for the second time in a row, continued to remain in the top 10. The country scored 63.98 points out of 100.
- ◆ It received high ratings on all CCPI indicators except

'renewable energy', where it was categorised as having a 'medium' performance.

Way Forward

- ◆ The pandemic is a warning from nature that we must act on climate change, nature loss and pollution. It also provides an opportunity for a recovery that puts the world on a 2°C pathway.
- ◆ A green recovery could put emissions in 2030 at 44 GtCO2e – within the range of emissions that give a 66 per cent chance of holding temperatures to below 2°C.
- ◆ Measures to prioritize include direct support for zero-emissions technologies and infrastructure, reducing fossil fuel subsidies, no new coal plants, and promoting nature-based solutions – including large-scale landscape restoration and reforestation.
- ◆ More countries need to develop long-term strategies consistent with the Paris Agreement, and new and updated NDCs need to become consistent with the net-zero emissions goals.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Q. Despite a momentum create by various climate change mitigation policies and measures, the world is still inching towards a catastrophic temperature rise above 3°C this century – far beyond the goals of the Paris Agreement. Discuss the given statement in the light of UNEP Emission Gap Report 2020 and highlight possible solutions.

02

Vaccine Distribution in India : Needs Strong Centre-State Partnership

Why in News?

- ◆ With all eyes on its efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, India -- the world's second worst-hit country with over 10 million cases is readying a huge vaccination drive, aiming to inoculate around 300 million people by August 2021.
- ◆ This translates to 600 million doses till August, a target that may be hard to attain, given India's state of cold storage infrastructure such as depots and refrigerated vans.

Background

- ◆ When the COVID-19 pandemic began spreading, India, like most other countries, was left scrambling for protective gear and medical equipment to manage the crisis. As the world prepares itself for the launch of vaccines that are expected to bring the pandemic to an end, India may be better prepared at least on one count.
- ◆ As the world's leading vaccine manufacturer, India may have better access to vaccines than many other parts of the developing world. Serum Institute of India (SII) alone is a producer of more than 1.5 billion vaccine doses every year and is expected to produce 1 billion doses of the Novavax vaccine by 2021.
- ◆ Yet, distributing the vaccines in India's first mass adult vaccination drive might prove to be a daunting task.
- ◆ It will require expansion of India's existing cold chain capacity at a break-neck speed, especially in some of the more densely populated parts of the country, where such infrastructure is severely limited.

- ◆ It will also require addressing gaps in India's existing vaccine distribution network, which a health ministry report flagged a couple of years ago.

Constitutional Mandate

- ◆ Public health and law & order finds mention in List II (the State List) while, List III (the Concurrent List) allows the union government to supersede so as to ensure prevention of infectious/contagious diseases (for e.g., coronavirus pandemic) from one state to another.
- ◆ In the constitutional scheme of things, union government has upper hand providing firm grasp to handle disasters. It can be seen in the schema of Disaster Management Act (DMA).
- ◆ But when it comes to managing the supplies and procurement of utilities, it is the state governments and respective district authorities though there are bypassing powers vested in National Disaster Management Authority to tackle disasters.
- ◆ It is the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, for approving the vaccines and testing procedures. Industries (Development & Regulation) Act deals with industrial production. These powers by the union are in a sense important to counter the Covid threat.
- ◆ Not to forget, the foreign relations where the Indian government via diplomatic and trade routes can ensure the availability of medical equipments, vaccines and other resources to deal with the emergency.

- ◆ There by we see that the union has the powers to impact and deliver the results and also manage the crisis under a unified command and policy leadership.
- ◆ This approach allows an integrated and uniform approach and can settle inter-state disparities.
- ◆ Union government had exercised these powers during the pandemic to clear supply chain bottlenecks for maintaining lifesaving oxygen supplies and prevented their hoarding by some states.

Resourceful Centre, States to Catch Up

- ◆ Union government under PM Modi has made domestic and international agreements to make the vaccine available for the nation and to supply it to the regional depots;
- ◆ Now the state governments has to organise and manage their logistical chains and to do acute planning to identify infrastructure gaps and to fill them up fast;
- ◆ Awareness campaigns, setting up of vaccination centres, reaching to target population and aligning to national priorities to help develop herd immunity and many such tasks at ground level are to be done by the states;
- ◆ States need to train manpower in providing vaccine and tracking of cases and handling the logistics;
- ◆ States will, therefore, need to have in place appropriate contractual arrangements well in time before the actual vaccination rollout begins, it could be either PPP-based Service-level agreements)/ IDIQs (indefinite delivery indefinite quantity) or framework agreements;

- ♦ States can also opt for technological solutions and applications like AI based modelling for vaccine distribution process and tracking the supply needs in advance.

Vaccine Development Underway

- ♦ The developer of India's main homegrown coronavirus vaccine is already producing millions of doses of its yet-to-be-authorized candidate, but says the thought of supplying enough shots for half the country's nearly 1.4 billion people is daunting. "It's nightmarish," said Suchitra Ella, joint managing director of Bharat Biotech International Ltd.
- ♦ Bharat Biotech has already produced about 10 million doses of its still-in-trials Covaxin shot, ahead of an anticipated roll out by the middle of next year. It has a current annual capacity of 300 million vaccines and expects the first 100 million to be deployed by India, which has partly financed the development.
- ♦ The lack of Phase III trial data didn't stop Bharat Biotech from applying for emergency use authorization this month, though the company and Serum Institute -- which has submitted final-stage trial numbers -- have been asked by Indian regulators to provide additional figures on safety, efficacy, and immunogenicity.
- ♦ Pfizer Inc. has also applied for urgent approvals of its own vaccine, though its requirements for ultra-cold storage make it an unlikely candidate for widespread use across India, particularly in the impoverished countryside. Both Bharat Biotech and Serum's vaccines can be stored at refrigerator temperature, making them more suited to India's infrastructure.

India Standing Up to the Challenge

- ♦ To meet the target for the first phase of the Covid vaccination drive, the public sector distribution capacity will need to be expanded 2-3 times.
- ♦ Augmenting this capacity is not the only challenge. Gaps in the existing supply chain are an equally big challenge.
- ♦ India's vaccine management has improved over the years thanks to a real-time supply chain management system known as the electronic vaccine intelligence network (eVIN). As of August 2020, it had been implemented in 32 states and union territories, and it will come in handy during the covid vaccination drive.
- ♦ The latest available audit of the vaccine chain conducted by the health ministry in 2017-18 shows that bottlenecks still exist. 26% of eVIN cold chain points reported instances of stock out during the period of assessment. More than a fifth of facilities reported wastage of vaccines.
- ♦ India ranked within the 51-75 percentile range among 89 countries on effective vaccine management as per a global analysis by WHO-UNICEF in 2018. Its performance was relatively poor when it came to following the required vaccine arrival procedures and using the MIS system for estimating demand of vaccine, syringe, etc.
- ♦ What adds to the vaccination challenge is the inter-state disparity in the distribution of cold chain points across the country.

Way Forward

- ♦ Preparations for the rollout of a COVID-19 vaccine are being carried out by the central government in collaboration with the country's

states and union territories. India is also working to bolster its cold storage infrastructure for handling vaccines.

- ♦ India already runs the world's largest universal immunization program, targeting 26.7 million infants and 29 million pregnant women each year. Around nine million vaccination drives are held annually. The country has also developed a mobile app called Co-WIN to monitor delivery of the vaccine.
- ♦ Current task of Covid-vaccine distribution is surely daunting, but it seems the largest democracy can handle mass distribution owing to the experiences in handling national vaccine programmes and conducting elections. 

General Studies Paper- II

Topic

- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Topic

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

Topic

- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

Q. Covid vaccine distribution at a national level poses significance challenges to India's administrative machinery. Only the federal cooperation can be the saviour for the world's largest democracy. Discuss.

03

National Family Health Survey-5 : An Analysis

Why in News?

- ◆ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has recently released the results from the first phase of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). This is the fifth such survey and the first phase — for which data was collected in the second half of 2019 — covered 17 states and five Union Territories (UTs).

Background

- ◆ NFHS is a large-scale nationwide survey of representative households. The data is collected over multiple rounds. The MoHFW has designated International Institute for Population Sciences in Mumbai as the nodal agency and the survey is a collaborative effort of IIPS; ORC Macro, Maryland (US); and the East-West Center, Hawaii (US). The survey is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with supplementary support from UNICEF.
- ◆ This is the fifth NFHS and refers to the 2019-20 period. The first four referred to 1992-93, 1998-99, 2005-06 and 2015-16, respectively.
- ◆ The initial factsheet for NFHS-5 provides state-wise data on 131 parameters. These parameters include questions such as how many households get drinking water, electricity and improved sanitation; what is sex ratio at birth, what are infant and child mortality metrics, what is the status of maternal and child health, how many have high blood sugar or high blood pressure etc.
- ◆ Each round of NFHS has also expanded the scope of inquiry. In

the fifth iteration, for instance, there are new questions on preschool education, disability, access to a toilet facility, death registration, bathing practices during menstruation, and methods and reasons for abortion.

- ◆ The NFHS database is possibly the most important one because it not only feeds into the research needs and informs advocacy but also is central to both central and state-level policymaking. NFHS survey results also provide internationally comparable results. That's because the questions and the methodology is internationally valid. Thus, it places the results of say child malnutrition trends in Bihar in the global context.

Nutritional Concerns

- ◆ Researchers and experts on health and welfare metrics have described the latest results as "shocking", "alarming" and "very troublesome".
- ◆ What is most troubling is that on child malnutrition parameters — such as infant and child (under 5 years of age) mortality, child stunting (low height for one's age), child wasting (low weight for one's height) and proportion of underweight children — several states have either been stagnant or worsened.
- ◆ Across the 22 States/Union Territories for which the NFHS-5 has released the factsheets, the percentage of children (aged 6-23 months) who do not meet the minimum dietary adequacy — as defined under the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices by WHO — is 83.9%; a decline of just over 2 percentage points from what

was observed in NFHS-4 (2015-16). Thus, eight out of 10 children appear to be experiencing a dietary shortfall. It would not be surprising if this situation has worsened with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing 2020 lockdown.

- ◆ Although 17 of the 22 States/UTs did experience a decline, the percentage of children not meeting the dietary adequacy norms increased in five States/UTs. Goa experienced the largest percentage point decline (11.1%), and Jammu and Kashmir observed the highest increase in its percentage of children not meeting dietary adequacy over the last three years (76.5% to 86.4%). While there are some variations, in every State more than 75% of the children do not receive the minimum adequate diet.
- ◆ In other words, children born between 2014 and 2019 (that is, 0 to 5 years of age) are more malnourished than the previous generation. The reversal in the proportion of children who are stunted is the most worrisome because unlike wasting and being underweight (which can be due to short term reasons and represent acute malnutrition), stunting represents chronic malnutrition. Reversals in stunting are unheard of in growing economies with stable democracies.
- ◆ Another cause of concern is the fact that the first phase data is pre-pandemic and it is quite likely that the second phase — which will also incorporate Covid's impact — may throw up ever poorer results.

Alarming Anaemia

- ◆ Across the 22 States/UTs, anaemia prevalence among children increased by about eight percentage points from 51.8% to 60.2%.
- ◆ The prevalence of anaemia in childhood increased in 18 of the 22 States/UTs.
- ◆ In the majority of the States, two out of three children have possible iron-deficiency.
- ◆ The State-wise trends for adults are mixed, although it is clear that women are substantially at a far greater risk for anaemia than men.
- ◆ The Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (POSHAN) Abhiyaan and, particularly, the Anemia Mukh Bharat, or AMB, Strategy was launched in 2018 with efforts to improve Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation, behaviour change and anaemia-related care and treatment across six target groups including pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children, and the provisional verdict is mixed for women and concerning for children.

Need for Course Correction

- ◆ Health outcomes such as child malnutrition data are the result of a complex set of reasons — ranging from the state of a family's income generation to environmental factors to government interventions.

- ◆ A classification of nutritional status using a combined typology based on children who experience dietary failure and anthropometric failure is crucial. Previously, NFHS-4 based study using this typology found that 36.3% of children who experienced a dietary failure do not show anthropometric failure. Anthropometric-centric measures thus run the risk of omitting such children from policy discussions.
- ◆ Dietary factors can clearly be a major determinant of stagnancy in the nutritional status of Indian children. The true burden of child undernutrition thus may well be underestimated by the sole reliance on anthropometric measures. Besides, a child's anthropometric status is a consequence of several complex factors, including inter-generational, which current policies and interventions cannot alter in the short term. Importantly, food and diet have an intrinsic importance, regardless of their impact on a child's anthropometry. Therefore the nutrition agenda needs to be considered from "food as a right" perspective.
- ◆ Decluttering our current approach to reducing the burden of child undernutrition and keeping it simple with a policy goal to providing affordable (economic and physical) access to quality food items, particularly for lower socioeconomic populations groups, should be prioritised. This may serve well as India tries to realise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2 and 3) related to zero hunger and good health and well-being.

- ◆ Food production, procurement and availability are supply side matrix of the equation. We also need to balance it with the nutritional quality, affordability and universal coverage.

Way Forward

- ◆ Disruptive maternal and child care along with malnutrition may spell the end of a stable campaign to reduce child mortality, especially in developing countries. A WHO report emphasised the indirect effects of a pandemic on child mortality. The report advocates immediate resumption of healthcare and nutrition services for children and pregnant women to avoid child deaths.
- ◆ Lack of nutrition is alarming for India's growing children as it affects many other facets of human development. Nutrition is one of the building blocks of a person other than education, hygiene and skill. India's demographic dividend will be of no use if the quality of food provided to children is lacking in nutritional components. Food fortification and food distribution need to be scaled up to pre-Covid levels at war footing. Policy priority should also include nutrition and not just food availability. 🔄🔄🔄

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. The recent National Family Health Survey (NFHS) has highlighted alarming concerns related to child health and nutrition. Discuss the finding of the survey and the need to place nutrition as a policy centre point of all food schemes.

04

Debate around Contempt of Court in India

Why in News?

- ◆ The Supreme Court on December 18th 2020 initiated contempt proceedings against stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra and cartoonist Rachita Taneja for scandalising the court and the highest judiciary with their tweets.
- ◆ A three-judge Bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah issued notice asking Mr. Kamra and Ms. Taneja to show cause why they should not be punished for contempt of court. The notice to them is returnable in six weeks.

Background

- ◆ On 12 November, Attorney General K.K. Venugopal had given consent to several people, including lawyers, to initiate contempt of court proceedings against Kamra for his tweets criticising the Supreme Court and Justice D.Y. Chandrachud.
- ◆ The petitioners, mostly law students and lawyers, had moved the Supreme Court after getting the statutory consent for contempt action from Attorney General K.K. Venugopal. The AG's consent is necessary for a private individual to initiate criminal contempt proceedings against anybody in the Supreme Court, according to the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.
- ◆ The controversy pertains to Kamra posting a series of tweets on November 11 after a two-judge bench, comprising Justice Chandrachud and Justice Indira Banerjee, granted interim bail to Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami in a 2018 alleged abetment to suicide case. Kunal Kamra is a vocal critic of Arnab Goswami.

- ◆ The AG's letter had specifically pointed out to certain statements from Kamra's tweets — "honour has left the building (Supreme Court) long back" and "Supreme Court of the country is the most Supreme joke of the country".
- ◆ AG Venugopal noted that Kamra had also posted a picture of the Supreme Court dressed in saffron colour with the flag of the ruling party, the BJP.
- ◆ Taking strong exception to this tweet, he had written, "This is a gross insinuation against the entirety of the Supreme Court of India that the Supreme Court of India is not an independent and impartial institution and so too its judges, but on the other hand is a court of the ruling party, the BJP, existing only for the BJP's benefit."
- ◆ A day after the AG's consent, Kamra had said he would neither retract nor apologise for the remarks.
- ◆ This year taking up the 2009 contempt of court case against lawyer Prashant Bhushan, the Supreme Court said that there is a thin line between free speech, humour and contempt.

Provision in Law

- ◆ Provision in India, the concept of Contempt of Court is defined in Section 2(a) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 which has broadly describe it as civil contempt or criminal contempt.
- ◆ There are three Articles in the Constitution of India which talk about the Contempt of Court and these are Article 129 and Article 142(2) and Article 215:
 - ◆ Art 129 - Supreme Court to be a court of record.— The Supreme Court shall be a court of record and shall have all the powers of

such a court including the power to punish for contempt of itself.

- ◆ Art 215 - High Courts to be courts of record. —Every High Court shall be a court of record and shall have all the powers of such a court including the power to punish for contempt of itself.
- ◆ Art 142 (2) - Subject to the provisions of any law made in this behalf by Parliament, the Supreme Court shall, as respects the whole of the territory of India, have all and every power to make any order for the purpose of securing the attendance of any person, the discovery or production of any documents, or the investigation or punishment of any contempt of itself

Constitution itself has not defined contempt of court.

Types of Contempt

- ◆ **Civil Contempt:** Section 2(a) of the Contempt of Court Act, 1971 states Civil Contempt as wilful disobedience to the order, decree, direction, any judgment or writ of the Court by any person or willfully breach of undertakings by a person given to a Court.
 - ◆ Since Civil Contempt deprives a party of the benefit for which the order was made so these are the offences essential of private nature.
 - ◆ In other words, a person who is entitled to get the benefit of the court order, this wrong is generally done to this person.
- ◆ **Criminal Contempt:** According to Section 2(c) of the Contempt of Court Act, 1971, Criminal Contempt is Defined as (i) the publication of

any matter by words, spoken or written, or by gesture, or by signs, or by visible representation or (ii) doing of any act which includes:

- ♦ Scandalize or tends to scandalise, or lowers or tends to lower the authority of any court, or
- ♦ Biasness, interferes or tends to interfere with the due course of any type of Judicial proceedings, or
- ♦ obstructs or tends to obstruct, interfere or tend to interfere with the administration of justice in any manner.

Punishment

- ♦ Section 12(1) of the Contempt of Court Act, 1971 states that a person who alleged with the Contempt of Court can be punished with simple imprisonment and this imprisonment can extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees or can be of both type punishment.
- ♦ However, an accused may be discharged or the punishment that was awarded to him maybe remitted on the condition that if he makes an apology and this apology should satisfy the court then only he can be exempted from the punishment of Contempt of Court.
- ♦ Explanation of this sentence is that if the accused made an apology in the bona fide then this apology shall not be rejected on the ground that it is conditional or qualified.

Criminal Defamation

- ♦ Contempt is often confused with defamation. The definition of criminal defamation has been given under Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860. It states about defamation that "Whoever, by words either spoken or intended to be read, or by signs or by visible representations, makes or publishes any imputation concerning any person intending to harm, or knowing or having reason to believe that such imputation will harm, the reputation of such person, is said, except in the cases hereinafter expected, to defame that person."
- ♦ There are certain exceptions of criminal defamation and these are:
 - ♦ If the publication of anything is in truth and for public good then it cannot be treated as defamation.
 - ♦ When a person touches any public questions then for that he cannot be liable.
 - ♦ If the publication is of the reports of the proceedings of the court.
- ♦ As the right to reputation is an important facet of the right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, hence, the aim of the criminal defamation is to prevent a person from maligning harming the reputation of others by using absurd or malign words with malafide intentions.

- ♦ In the case of Dr. Subramanian Swamy vs. Union of India (UOI), Ministry of Law and Ors. the constitutional validity of the criminal defamation was upheld.

Way Forward

- ♦ Contempt of Court Act, 1971 is one of the most powerful statutes in the country. This statute gives the Constitutional Court the wide power to restrict an individual's fundamental rights to personal liberty (that he got under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution) for 'scandalizing the court' or willfully disobeying the court's order, judgment, decree, and direction, etc. It is for the court to decide if satire, humour or things said for recreational purpose to be taken as contempt. Surely, insulting judiciary by hiding under the garb of humour and satire is unacceptable.
- ♦ Judges are bound by the law and are interpreting the law. The field of law is governed by evidence and logic. Any comment, joke, etc. on judicial process based on personal bias puts judiciary in a bad light, even for doing its constitutional duty. 

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Ministries and Departments of the Government: pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Q. Discuss the issue of contempt of court in India, while highlighting the constitutional provisions related to the contempt and the need for it in democracy?

05

India-Bangladesh Relations : Towards Newer Heights

Why in News?

- ◆ Bangladesh and India held a virtual leaders' summit on December 17 as Bangladesh gears up to celebrate its 50th anniversary as an independent state December 16 next year. Speaking at the summit, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi front-and-centered the symbolic significance of the upcoming anniversary, noting "It is a matter of pride for us to celebrate the historic victory of Bangladesh over Anti-liberation forces as the Victory Day with you."

Background

- ◆ On December 16, 1971, Indian forces defeated Pakistan in war — the most intense of the four the two countries have fought so far — leading to the creation of an independent state in place of Pakistan's eastern wing. India's military intervention followed a humanitarian crisis in the country's east which — in turn — arose out of genocide committed by the Pakistan Army in erstwhile East Pakistan.
- ◆ In his opening remarks at the December 17 summit, Prime Minister Modi announced that India would be celebrating a "Golden Victory Year" in the run-up to Bangladesh's 50th Victory Day "during which many events will be organized across India."
- ◆ Bangladesh had announced a "Mujib Borsho" ("the Year of Mujib") between March 17, 2020 to March 26, 2021 in the honor of the country's founding father and first

President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; Rahman was born on March 17, 1920 while Bangladesh will celebrate its 50th Independence Day on March 26, 2021.

- ◆ Mujib Borsho has been extended to December 16, 2021, according to a Bangladesh government notification published on December 14.
- ◆ Prime Minister Modi has also launched a stamp in honor of Rahman on December 17.
- ◆ The Liberation War has been foundational to the India and Bangladesh friendship, which has withstood the test of time over the past 50 years.
- ◆ The India and Bangladesh relationship is considered to be a copybook example of a neighbourly relationship. India considers Bangladesh a close partner in its neighbourhood first policy, its major outreach to the countries within its immediate vicinity.
- ◆ In the past the few years, there have been a series of high-level visits, starting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit in 2010 and followed by her visits in 2017 and 2019. Indian leaders also reciprocated with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visiting Bangladesh in 2011 and his successor Prime Minister Modi visiting in 2015. Prime Minister Modi is expected to visit Bangladesh to join the golden jubilee celebration of Bangladesh's independence in March 2021.
- ◆ India and Bangladesh are two countries bound together with the commonality of history, geography, language and culture. Given the commonalities and bonds they share, there will be a plethora of

issues between the two countries like any other neighbours.

7 Agreements and the Summit

- ◆ India and Bangladesh signed seven MoUs and agreements during the virtual summit.
- ◆ The agreements include:
 - i. Framework of understanding in Hydrocarbon sector;
 - ii. Framework agreement on High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP);
 - iii. Protocol on transborder elephant conservation;
 - iv. MoU on the supply of equipment and improvement of Garbage and solid waste disposal;
 - v. MoU in the field of agriculture;
 - vi. MoU between National Museum Delhi and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial museum, Dhaka; and
 - vii. Terms of reference for India Bangladesh CEO forum.
- ◆ The two leaders also jointly inaugurated the restored Chilahati — Haldibari rail route re-linking Bangladesh with North Bengal in India. This is the fifth of the six cross-border rail routes. Severed in 1965 by the then Pakistani Government, to be restored.

Improving Trade Relations

- ◆ On the economic front, Bangladesh is India's largest trading partner in South Asia. Between 2009-10 and 2015-16, the trade deficit grew in India's favour at a staggering 164.4%.
- ◆ Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from India to Bangladesh is \$3.11 billion, including Reliance's

\$642-million 745 MW gas-fired project and Adani's \$400 million in Mirsarai Economic Zone.

- ◆ Despite India-Bangladesh relations being referred to as a "role model", the irony is that in India's Consolidated FDI policy 2017, Bangladesh is put in the same category as Pakistan.
- ◆ Today, India and Bangladesh are better connected and goods are transported by road, rail and river routes using Bangladeshi vessels, trucks and railway. Recent agreements allow India to ship goods through Mongla port road, rail, and water routes.

Challenges in Bilateral Relationship

- ◆ The Bangladesh-India border in the recent past has also witnessed security forces from both sides opening fire. In spite of Section 11 (11) of the India-Bangladesh Coordinated Border Management Plan --- which says, "Neither side will resort to the use of lethal weapons except in self-defence against terrorists or smugglers" --- at least 25 Bangladeshi civilians were killed by the Border Security Force (BSF) in the first six months of this year.
- ◆ Water remains a difficult issue. Bangladeshis have observed the tug-of-war on the Teesta water-sharing issue between the Centre and state. Indian PMs are sometimes accompanied by West Bengal Chief Minister (CM) Mamata Banerjee during state visits to Dhaka; sometimes the CM has visited on her own. But all that has transpired are empty promises,

as rivers run dry and farmers are cut off from their livelihood. However, during PM Sheikh Hasina's India tour, an MoU was signed allowing India 1.82 cusecs of water from the Feni River.

- ◆ India's controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) have created a negative impression in Bangladesh of India's intent, which the Bangladesh Prime Minister termed "unnecessary".
- ◆ Bangladesh in the recent years has sought to leverage ties with China for economic reasons. Dhaka has also advanced its military relations with Beijing.

Navigating Diplomatically

- ◆ The China factor also adds another dimension to the ties. Bangladesh is China's second-largest arms export destination.
- ◆ Chinese firms have been outbidding their Indian counterparts in infrastructure projects. Bangladesh is deftly navigating relations with its two biggest neighbours in a neighbourhood in flux.
- ◆ Nepal is increasingly becoming closer to China; Bhutan has withdrawn from the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) initiative, Sri Lanka and the Maldives are playing a balancing act, both rooted in Chinese investments; Afghanistan is increasingly under the Taliban's sphere of influence as the US withdraws troops.
- ◆ In a thaw in relations, Pakistan's high commissioner to Bangladesh recently met the Bangladesh PM as both sides pledged to improve bilateral relations.

- ◆ If Indo-Bangla relations are to move to "newer heights", then unresolved issues have to be dealt with soon.
- ◆ Any dithering on this, with the region's only trusted partner, may prove costly for India if it wants to avoid the kind of catch-up diplomacy it has been doing in the neighbourhood in the wake of the growing Chinese threat and Beijing's widening influence in South Asia.

Way Forward

- ◆ India's victory in the 1971 war is widely seen as its greatest military feat so far. That India managed to essentially carve an independent state out of Pakistan is seen as a signal strategic gain over Pakistan. Internationally, the year will provide India additional opportunities to highlight historical instances of Pakistan's human-right crimes, with the Pakistan Army's 1971 conduct in East Pakistan being the focal point.
- ◆ The ties between India and Bangladesh have witnessed an upswing in the last few years. Both sides have scaled up trade and economic engagement besides implementing a number of connectivity and infrastructure projects.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Q. India and Bangladesh share historical and cultural roots, which makes them natural friends. But geo-strategically, India needs to act fast and solve the pending issues as historical and cultural roots are not enough for a sound bilateral relation. Comment.

06

India-Philippines : Strategic Partnership

Why in News?

- ◆ The Philippines' interest in purchasing India's BrahMos cruise missile has thrown a spotlight on the growing security ties between Manila and New Delhi. The acquisition of the supersonic anti-ship missile, which can be mounted on multiple platforms, would signal the arrival of Delhi as a new security partner for the Southeast Asian country.

Background

- ◆ Despite the stark difference in size and population, on paper India and the Philippines would appear to make natural partners. They are both noisy Indo-Pacific democracies.
- ◆ The Philippines is a treaty ally of the United States while India is one of America's closest strategic partners.
- ◆ Manila and Delhi are both engaged in active territorial disputes with Beijing, and both are (mostly) invested in the rules-based order. In practice, however, strategic interactions between Delhi and Manila have traditionally been quite shallow.
- ◆ That's true of many of India's relationships in East and Southeast Asia, though it's gradually changing under a reinvigorated "Act East" policy launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014. In recent years Delhi has strengthened ties with traditional partners like Japan, Vietnam, and Singapore while conducting new forms of outreach to Indonesia, South Korea, and Australia.
- ◆ In May 2019, India, the US, and the Philippines held Navy drills in the disputed South China Sea, for the first time, as a display of freedom of navigation in the sea lane claimed entirely by China. Indian vessels INS Kolkata and tanker INS Shakti participated in the exercise. The exercise overlapped with a U.S. freedom of navigation operation in the South China Sea challenging illegal Chinese claims there. While it was a low-level exercise from a technical standpoint, India's participation carried geopolitical significance.
- ◆ In December 2019, Filipino Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana announced that the Philippines was interested in purchasing from India two batteries of Brahmos missiles, an advanced cruise missile co-developed by Indian and Russian defence firms.
- ◆ On 6th November 2020, India and Philippines discussed the shared interest in visa liberalization during the fourth Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation his meeting was co-chaired by Indian External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, and Secretary of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs, Teodoro Locsin Jr.
- ◆ Both sides "agreed to further strengthen defence engagement and maritime cooperation especially in military training and education, capacity building, regular goodwill visits, and procurement of defence equipment", a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) statement said.

Slowly Evolving Partnership

- ◆ Despite establishing diplomatic relations in November 1949 and

signing a Treaty of Friendship in July 1952, relations between India and the Philippines were insubstantial through much of the 20th century.

- ◆ The pace of high-level political and defence exchanges did begin to increase in the 1990s following the launch of India's "Look East" policy, with head-of-state exchanges in 1991, 1997, 2006, and 2007. Leaders from both countries also periodically met on the side-lines of major regional gatherings, including in 2007, 2012, and 2014.
- ◆ During a 2006 meeting between the two countries' presidents, they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Defence and Security Cooperation and established several high-level commissions and dialogues.
- ◆ By the mid-2010s the two had established a Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation, a Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation, new foreign policy consultations and security dialogue, and a joint working group on counterterrorism.
- ◆ At a meeting of the joint defence committee in March 2017, the two discussed "significant regional security concerns," including tensions in South China Sea and Indian Ocean piracy.
- ◆ India and the Philippines have also begun holding regular intelligence exchange meetings on a range of sensitive issues. India trains Filipino Foreign Service officers at its Foreign Service Institute, and the two have begun conducting military training exchanges, including India hosting a 34-member Filipino military delegation for a week-long training course in 2016.

- ◆ In November 2017, the two countries witnessed a breakthrough when Modi became the first Indian leader to visit the Philippines in 36 years. In Manila, Modi attended the ASEAN and East Asian Summits and met with President Rodrigo Duterte, where the two signed an agreement to boost cooperation in defence and logistics. Two months later, Duterte was welcomed in Delhi for Republic Day celebrations along with the leaders of other ASEAN member states.
- ◆ Despite this progress, and expressed interest from both sides, the two have found little success to date in boosting cooperation in defence sales or co-production. This is a least partly a product of broader problems afflicting India's defence export industry and partly a product of the Philippines' underdeveloped military capabilities, among the weakest in the region.

Convergence of Interests

- ◆ China has significantly increased its military capabilities and coercive measures in Southeast Asia, particularly in the disputed South China Sea where Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines also have territorial claims. China's expansive claims coupled with its growing assertion and disdain for a rules-based order leave little room for negotiation between it and the other claimants.
- ◆ Both Manila and Delhi have territorial conflicts with Beijing. While Indian Defence forces are engaged in a standoff at the Ladakh border, the Philippines has been fighting Beijing's claims in the South China Sea.
- ◆ Despite being aware that China's rise is a serious concern towards its national and strategic interest, as highlighted in the country's National Security Policy 2017-2022, the Philippines finds it difficult to openly work with the US. This dilemma has significantly restrained its ability to freely manoeuvre its foreign policy.
- ◆ At the economic level, a significant push has also been made with the commencement of negotiations on a new bilateral investment treaty.
- ◆ New Delhi's actions have shown that standing-up to Beijing does not mean that a full-scale war or cutting ties serve as the only options. India has maintained open communications with China and continues to engage with it on several levels; however, it has consistently emphasised and showed that its territorial integrity and strategic interests are uncompromisable.
- ◆ Philippines-India ties can anchor national and regional synergies. The BrahMos missile acquisition, if completed, will take bilateral ties to a whole new level.



Way Forward

- ◆ India-Philippines bilateral relations are now reaching new heights in the political, defence, and economic domains. The continuous elevation of this partnership will have strong and positive implications for the Philippines' strategic policy vis-a-vis China increasing assertion in the region.
- ◆ Both India and the Philippines adhere to the same democratic principles and ideals vis-a-vis maintaining a rules-based international order. This aspect of bilateral relations is essential given that both states converge on long-term goals. This growing bilateral partnership will provide both India and the Philippines with a platform to not only secure their strategic interests but also maintain a truly rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. Discuss the significance of India-Philippines relations with respect to regional stability and its impact on countering China's hegemony in Asia-Pacific?

07

India-UK Relationship in Post-Brexit Era

Why in News?

- ◆ India has recently invited the United Kingdom (UK)'s Prime Minister Boris Johnson as chief guest for Republic Day 2021. Johnson, has officially accepted the invitation, and UK foreign secretary Dominic Raab's visited New Delhi to set the agenda.
- ◆ The visit took place less than a month after the UK leaves the European Union (EU) — with or without a deal. The timing and occasion of the visit signals intent on both sides to develop a genuine partnership.

Background

- ◆ For decades, India-UK relations remained suboptimal. This was because neither side was invested in truly understanding what the other valued.
- ◆ In India, London's motivations were — incorrectly — viewed as a former colonial power's desire to weigh in on regional issues such as Kashmir and the Afghan war by tilting towards Pakistan.
- ◆ The disconnect was apparent when the UK was pilloried in the Indian media for not countering China's move to make Kashmir a formal agenda item at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) after the effective nullification of Article 370.
- ◆ In London, New Delhi's lack of appreciation for the UK's security concerns about troops in Afghanistan and radicalisation at home — both of which necessitate a security partnership with Pakistan — remained an irritant.

India's 2012 decision to purchase the French Dassault Rafale over the UK's Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jet increased the estrangement.

- ◆ India lately invited the UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson as chief visitor for Republic Day 2021. PM Modi also accepted the invitation of PM Johnson to attend the G7 summit in the UK next year. Australia and South Korea are the other countries that will attend it. Later in the year, India will attend the COP 26 meeting in Glasgow.
- ◆ With this intensity and frequency of engagement, India-UK relations seem set for take-off. The time is particularly opportune for enhanced engagement between the two countries, with the UK headed for 'Brexit'. India is seen as a significant partner in the post-Brexit vision of Global Britain that the UK has envisaged.

UK-India: Partners for a Better Future

- ◆ India became the second-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) projects into the UK according to the UK Department for International Trade inward investment results, 2019 to 2020.
- ◆ There are around 850 Indian companies in the UK with combined revenue of over £41 billion.
- ◆ The Indian diaspora has also contributed to creation of businesses and jobs.
- ◆ These trends would receive a fillip if the UK is able to ease up the movement of people from India, especially students, professionals

and business persons. It has been examining the drafts of agreements on migration and mobility and social security. Finalisation of these would generate confidence amongst Indian businesses and professionals.

- ◆ In addition to economic incentives, London's sharp downturn in relations with Beijing since the introduction of the draconian national security law in Hong Kong imparts strategic synergy to India-UK relations. The UK's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development, and Foreign Policy 2021 has indicated that London must tilt towards the Indo-Pacific. The aim is to augment the UK's presence in the Indian Ocean Region and work with powers such as India, Japan, and Australia, along with the EU and the US, to counter China.
- ◆ Indo-Pacific is increasingly a region of interest to Europe. With Germany coming out with its Indo-Pacific strategy recently, and France having done so earlier, the UK too is looking to clarify its own vision towards this region. It reaffirmed that its HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group will visit the Indo-Pacific region next year. An expansion of the existing Quadrilateral on the Indo-Pacific, including the US, Japan, and Australia along with India, is looking more desirable than ever.
- ◆ India's collaboration with the UK in the area of science and technology is most manifestly demonstrated through the Oxford

University AstraZeneca vaccine being manufactured by the Serum Institute of India. The 'design in UK, make in India, and export to the world' model is best illustrated by this vaccine.

- ◆ UK and India can cooperate on "cyber, and countering misinformation" and in the "maritime sphere".

Commonwealth Advantage

- ◆ Most fruitful engagement with Britain, however, may come through an organisation long disdained by most Indians: the Commonwealth.
- ◆ Yet many—including some Brits—consider the far-flung group an arcane artefact of Empire, devoid of real economic or strategic benefit; the Guardian called the annual meeting of member nations the "zombie summit", a biennial gathering of whimsy that refuses to die'. Others refer to it simply as the 'British Empire 2.0'.
- ◆ Britain is hoping to revitalise the Commonwealth to compensate for the trade losses incurred by Brexit. That will be tough to pull off; pre-Brexit, the EU accounted for half of Britain's trade, with only 9 percent going to Commonwealth countries. Similar to India, most Commonwealth members have spent years nurturing new trade relationships with other countries, and will not easily forsake those to please their former overlord. Some Commonwealth nations, including Singapore, have exceeded the UK in GDP growth and per capita

income and have no reason to be accommodating.

- ◆ India, however, has nothing to lose by stepping up its engagement in the Commonwealth, as Modi has vowed to do. It certainly won't hurt, and it may actually help—not just the member nations and the India-UK relationship, but also India itself. It affords Delhi diplomatic contact with smaller nations it might not otherwise connect with, and is one of the few places where Beijing can't interfere.
- ◆ At the very least, it provides another global forum for showcasing India's strengths. Already Indians comprise more than half the Commonwealth's total population of 2.4 billion. A 2018 report credited India with driving increased intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, which it predicted would exceed \$700 billion by 2020.
- ◆ With calls mounting for Britain to appoint an outsider to succeed Prince Charles as head of the Commonwealth in 2020, India is an obvious choice to fill that role.

Emerging Challenges to the Relationship

- ◆ The raising of Khalistani flags at the recent demonstrations outside India House in London and Indian Consulate in Birmingham was a reminder of the anti-India elements that continue to enjoy the freedom and protection available under the democratic dispensation of the UK. These elements seem to operate with impunity.

- ◆ Linkages between Khalistani elements and Pakistan, as brought out by a report titled 'Khalistan: a Project of Pakistan' by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, have been a source of concern to India.
- ◆ The presence of financial and other offenders from India is another irritant.
- ◆ Inputs about the activities of the Pakistani establishment in the UK and their alleged manipulative linkages with UK-based extremists from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have long been a source of distrust between India and the UK.

Way Forward

- ◆ Post-Covid economic recovery in both India and the UK would benefit from greater economic engagement between the two countries. There is enormous potential for India-UK relations to develop and prosper. With the UK going into a stricter lockdown and flights suspended between the two countries due to the new coronavirus variant found there, the two sides would need some out-of-box methods to achieve these objectives. 

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. In the event of Brexit, India-UK partnership can be fruitful as there exists lots of enablers in the relationship and can also lead to strategic advantage. Comment.

7

IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01

Lok Adalat

1. Why in News?

- A total 8,152 benches were constituted by 31 State legal services authorities to hold the national Lok Adalat on December 12 through virtual and physical mode across the country.
- The last national Lok Adalat of the year 2020, held on 12th December 2020 settled 10,42,816 cases, out of which 5,60,310 were at the pre-litigation stage and 4,82,506 were pending in courts, the Law Ministry reported.



2. Last Lok Adalat of 2020

- The details, as provided by States on National Legal Services Authority portal, indicate that the settlement amount was nearly Rs. 3,227.99 crore, for all the cases.
- A total 8,152 benches were constituted by 31 state legal services authorities to hold the national Lok Adalat on December 12 through virtual and physical mode across the country.
- The case was settled in the Lok Adalat, and the dependents were awarded a compensation of Rs. 11,30,000.

3. Lok Adalat's Status

- A mode of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism.
- Conducted by National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) along with other Legal Services Institutions.
- It is strictly not a Court in the conventional sense in as much as the Lok Adalat does not adjudicate on dispute.
- Disputes between the parties are resolved by conciliation, mediation and negotiation.
- The Lok Adalats have been statutorily recognized in India.
- Award passed by Lok Adalat formulating the terms of compromise will have the force of a Decree of a Court which can be duly executed as a Civil Court decree.
- Award is final and binding on all parties and no appeal lies against such an award before any court.

5. Cases and Jurisdiction

- Lok Adalat takes two kinds of cases:
 - i. Case pending before the court.
 - ii. Any dispute at pre-litigative stage.
- No jurisdiction in respect of matters relating to divorce or matters relating to an offence not compoundable under any law.
- The State Legal Services Authority or District Legal Services Authority as the case may be on receipt of an application from any one of the parties at a pre-litigation stage may refer such matter to the Lok Adalat for amicable settlement of the dispute for which notice would then be issued to the other party.
- National Lok Adalats are conducted quarterly for settlement of cases.
- Mobile Lok Adalats are also organized in various parts of the country which travel from one location to another to resolve disputes in order to facilitate the resolution of disputes through this mechanism.

4. Features of Lok Adalat

- The Lok Adalat is presided over by Members of Lok Adalat; they act as statutory conciliators only and they can therefore, only persuade the parties to come to a settlement, rather than order them.
- The main condition of the Lok Adalat is for both parties to agree on the forum.
- There is no court fee; if a matter pending in the court of law is referred to the Lok Adalat and is settled subsequently, then the court fee paid initially in the court on the complaints/petition is refunded back to the parties.
- The procedural laws and the Evidence Act are not strictly followed while assessing the merits of the claim by the Lok Adalat.
- The decision of the Lok Adalat is binding; the award can be executed by a court of law.
- All proceedings in a Lok Adalat are recorded and maintained for future reference. Thus, it is also known as a court of record.

02

Human Development Index 2020 and India

1. Why in News?

- India slipped two spots to rank 131 among 189 countries in the 2020 human development index, a report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said.
- Norway topped the index, followed by Ireland, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Iceland.



2. India's Overall Performance

- While India is ranked 131, its neighbours Bhutan is ranked 129, Bangladesh 133, Nepal 142, and Pakistan 154, the report said. India had ranked 129 in 2018 in the index.
- According to the 2020 Human Development Report, life expectancy of Indians at birth in 2019 was 69.7 years while Bangladesh has a life expectancy of 72.6 years and Pakistan 67.3 years.
- The report also shows India's gross national income per capita fell to USD 6,681 in 2019 from USD 6,829 in 2018 on purchasing power parity (PPP) basis.
 - Purchasing power parity or PPP is a measurement of prices in different countries using the prices of specific goods to compare the absolute purchasing power of the countries' currencies.
- Human Development Index is the measure of a nation's health, education, and standards of living. However, if the Index were adjusted to assess the planetary pressures caused by each nation's development, India would move up eight places in the ranking, according to the report.

3. Gender Development Index

- The UNDP also calculates as a part of its Human Development Report, the Gender Development Index (GDI).
- As per the HDR 2020, the GDI value of India is 0.820, with the GDI value for females standing at 0.573 and that for males at 0.699, showcasing a wide contrast.
- In this measure, India is behind Bangladesh, with a GDI value of 0.904, while it stayed ahead of Pakistan (0.745). The average GDI for the South Asian region stood at 0.824, while that for medium HDI countries was 0.835, with India's value being lower than both.
- Gender Inequality Index (GII) highlights gender-based inequalities in the countries, taken on three measures – economic activity, reproductive health and empowerment. The GII value of the country was 0.488, which made it rank at the 123rd place out of the 162 nations.

5. About HDI

- Human Development Index is the measure of a nation's health, education, and standards of living.
- For the first time, the UNDP introduced a new metric to reflect the impact caused by each country's per-capita carbon emissions and its material footprint, which measures the amount of fossil fuels, metals and other resources used to make the goods and services it consumes. This paints a "less rosy, but clearer assessment" of human progress.

4. Health, Education and Participation

- In terms of health measured by life expectancy at birth, females in India had a value of 71.0 years, while that for males was 68.5 years.
- For education, the index takes into account expected years of schooling for children, and mean years of schooling for adults. The expected years of schooling for males in India was valued at 11.7 years, while that for females was 12.6 years. On the other hand, mean years of schooling for males was 8.7 years and for females was 5.4 years.
- To calculate the economic resources, the report takes into consideration the estimated GNI per capita for males and females. For females, this value was \$2,331, while for males, it was at \$10,702.
- Economic activity is measured by the labour market participation, which stood for Indian males at 76.1% and for females at 20.5%. The index measures reproductive health using maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rate, which were at 133 deaths per 1 lakh live births and 13.2 births per 1,000 women respectively.
- For empowerment, the index measures the percentage of female seats in the Parliament, which is at 13.5% in India, and the percentage of males and females with at least some secondary education. For females, this was at 27.7% and for males, it was 47%, in India.

03 India Workplace Equality Index

1. Why in News?

- For the first time in India, the country's 'Workplace Equality Index (IWEI)' has been rolled out for employers to check their progress on inclusion of people from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) communities at the workplaces. This workplace index is considered as the first comprehensive bench-marking tool for employers.



2. Background

- The IWEI has been brought to India by hotelier-activist Keshav Suri's non-profit Keshav Suri Foundation, along with Pride Circle an LGBT+ inclusion consultancy, Stonewall UK a British LGBT+ advocacy group and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).
- It's now two years (2018) since the landmark repeal of Section 377, which decriminalised same-sex relationships in India. The next step is to open up access to work for LGBT people in the world's second most populous country, and to support employers themselves to become more LGBT inclusive.
- The index measures nine areas: policies and benefits, employee lifecycle, employee network group, allies and role models, senior leadership, monitoring, procurement, community engagement and additional work.
- Twenty-one firms won under the gold category, while 18 were placed under silver and 13 got bronze.

3. Homosexuality

- The shift in the understanding of homosexuality from sin, crime and pathology to a normal variant of human sexuality occurred in the late 20th century. The American Psychiatric Association, in 1973, and the World Health Organisation, in 1992, officially accepted its normal variant status. Many countries have since decriminalised homosexual behaviour and some have recognised same-sex civil unions and marriage.
- Medicine and psychiatry employ terms like homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality and trans-sexuality to encompass all related issues, while current social usage argues for LGBT, which focuses on identities.

5. Supreme Court Judgment on Section 377

- The court while delivering the judgment laid down the following aspects, the highlights of the judgment of the case (Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, 2018)-
 - ☛ Section 377 of IPC is arbitrary and irrational and hence it is liable to be struck down partially to the extent to which it criminalises consensual sex between two adults.
 - ☛ The court however laid down that a person indulging in any kind of sexual activity with that of animals will still be a criminal offence under section 377 of IPC.
 - ☛ Sexual orientation being a biological phenomenon, any discrimination which solely made on this ground would be held to be violative of fundamental rights of the citizens.
 - ☛ The LGBT community owns the same fundamental and human rights as others and shall not be discriminated in any way.
 - ☛ It is the duty cast on the court to protect and uphold the dignity of each and every individual in the society, the right to live with dignity is a fundamental right granted to each and every citizen by the Indian Constitution.
 - ☛ Section 377 of IPC was indeed used as a weapon to harass the members of the LGBT community and they were discriminated as against other citizens which would no longer continue to exist.

4. Section 377

- Section 377 of Indian Penal Code is a 157-year old colonial law which criminalised homosexuality in India. The section was introduced in the year 1864 while India was under British Colonial rule.
- The wrongs committed in relation to section 377 came under the ambit of 'Unnatural Offences'.
- Section 377 stated- whoever has voluntary carnal intercourse with a man, woman or an animal and which goes against the order of nature will be liable under for a criminal offence under section 377 of IPC.

04 Database of Migrants

1. Why in News?

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs that reviewed the COVID-19 management in the country has recommended the government to set up a database of the migrant workers and prepare a comprehensive healthcare legal framework to tackle any future pandemic.

2. Background

- The government is creating a national database of the unorganized workforce, including migrant labourers, and will seed their profiles with the 12-digit Aadhaar number to provide them social security coverage, the labour ministry said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.
- The Labour and Employment Ministry has sought help from other ministries to build a new database for migrant workers and others in the unorganised sector, which it hopes to operationalise by May-June next year.
- Centre expects 20-25 crore unorganised workers to be added to the portal.



3. Modus Operandi

- The government will tap into existing databases of schemes such as Mahatma National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and One Nation, One Ration Card, along with data from Employees' State Insurance Corporation and Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, to create a unique registration for migrant workers.
- Since multiple databases will be used, a de-duplication exercise using Aadhaar data will be undertaken prior to registration for the new portal, which the National Informatics Centre (NIC) is developing.
- Details of gig and platform workers and other unorganised sector workers will be separately added to this database.

5. Need for the Database

- Migrant labourers, abandoned by employers and the state, undertaking an arduous journey home, in many cases walking hundreds of kilometres on the highways, became the defining image of the national lockdown during the pandemic.
- The exodus from the cities exposed the gaping holes in the safety net. The Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, required all establishments who hired inter-state migrants to be registered, as well as all contractors who recruited these workers to be licensed.
- Proper implementation of this law would have ensured that information on inter-state migrants would have been readily available to aid the state machinery in its relief efforts.
- However, no such detailed records were maintained, and information on the number of migrants, and their whereabouts, was unavailable to both central and state governments.

4. Towards Social Security

- The new database will also be the first step towards "initiating social security measures for unorganised sector workers under the Code on Social Security, 2020".
- The code proposes the formation of a National Social Security Board which will recommend suitable schemes for different sections of unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers.
- There are around 8-10 crore workers registered under NREGA. About 10-15 lakh would be gig and platform workers.
- One Nation, One Ration card is a big database, around 30-35 crore people under it. But many would be common between NREGA and One Nation, One Ration. So those would be duplications.

05 Currency Manipulation

1. Why in News?

- The US Treasury Department's semi-annual report on the macroeconomic and foreign exchange policies of major trading partners has put India on the watch list of countries being monitored for currency manipulation. This comes after the Indian central bank stepped up purchases of foreign currency as portfolio flows surged in the second half of the year.



2. Currency Manipulation

- This is a label given by the US government to countries it feels are engaging in "unfair currency practices" by deliberately devaluing their currency against the dollar.
- The practice would mean that the country in question is artificially lowering the value of its currency to gain an unfair advantage over others.
- This is because the devaluation would reduce the cost of exports from that country and artificially show a reduction in trade deficits as a result.
- The US Treasury department's decision to put India back on the currency manipulator's watchlist could keep RBI somewhat "guarded on aggressive forex intervention"
- India was last included in the currency watchlist in October 2018, but removed from the list that came out in May 2019.
- The designation of a country as a currency manipulator does not immediately attract any penalties, but tends to dent the confidence about a country in the global financial markets.

3. Criteria which Led to Targeting India

- The US Treasury uses three benchmarks to judge currency manipulators:
 - i. A bilateral trade surplus with the U.S. of more than \$20 billion.
 - ii. A current account surplus of at least 3% of GDP.
 - iii. Net purchases of foreign currency of 2% of GDP over a 12-month period.
- India breached the first and the third benchmarks. On the second, on a four-quarter basis, the country's current account surplus remained below the threshold level.
- "India for several years has maintained a significant bilateral goods trade surplus with the United States, which totalled \$22 billion in the four quarters through June 2020," the report said. The economy's first four-quarter current account surplus since 2004 stood at 0.4% of GDP over the year to June 2020, it said.
- According to the report, net purchases of foreign currency added up to 2.4% of GDP. While the department acknowledged the RBI's transparency in publishing data on intervention, it called for the central bank to allow the rupee to adjust based on fundamentals.

5. RBI's Dilemma

- Amid consistent foreign flows, the external sector continues to pose the problem of plenty. The RBI so far has been deflecting massive capital inflows by intervening aggressively to prevent the rupee's appreciation amid competitiveness and currency overvaluation concerns.
- The aggressive intervention in spot and forward FX markets has led to the rupee being an underperformer in the emerging markets grouping (the worst performer in emerging Asia in 2020), with RBI possibly treating relative rupee weakness as an automatic stabilizer for the growth downturn.
- Also, letting the rupee strengthen technically would have constituted a tightening of monetary conditions that offsets interest rate cuts and liquidity injections.

4. Global Liquidity Surplus

- The new watch list also names China, Japan, Korea, Germany, Italy, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand. Switzerland and Vietnam have been declared as outright currency manipulators, the first countries so designated since China (in 2019).
- India's re-entry into the watch list is not entirely surprising amid massive forex intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) this year.
- The expected balance of payments surplus in FY21 is at least \$90 billion.
- The gush of global liquidity has led to search for carry among foreign investors as risk appetite improved.
- This has meant strong inflows into emerging economies like India.
- So far this financial year, foreign portfolio flows, led by equities, have surged to \$21.5 billion compared to \$7.8bn a year ago while patchy and bulky FDI flows also boosted the capital account.

06

NITI Aayog - Vision 2035 - Public Health Surveillance

1. Why in News?

- NITI Aayog has released a white paper: Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India on 14th December 2020.



2. Background

- Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India is a continuation of the work on health systems strengthening.
- It contributes by suggesting mainstreaming of surveillance by making individual electronic health records the basis for surveillance. Public health surveillance (PHS) is an important function that cuts across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of care. Surveillance is 'Information for Action'
- The white paper lays out India's vision 2035 for public health surveillance through the integration of the three-tiered public health system into Ayushman Bharat.
- It also spells out the need for expanded referral networks and enhanced laboratory capacity.
- The building blocks for this vision are an interdependent federated system of governance between the Centre and states, a new data-sharing mechanism that involves the use of new analytics, health informatics, and data science.

3. Vision 2035

- To make India's public health surveillance system more responsive and predictive to enhance preparedness for action at all levels.
- Citizen-friendly public health surveillance system will ensure individual privacy and confidentiality, enabled with a client feedback mechanism.
- Improved data-sharing mechanism between Centre and states for better disease detection, prevention, and control.
- India aims to provide regional and global leadership in managing events that constitute a public health emergency of international concern.

5. Lessons Learnt

- Multiple disease outbreaks have prompted India to proactively respond with prevention and control measures. These actions are based on information from public health surveillance.
- India was able to achieve many successes in the past. Smallpox was eradicated and polio was eliminated. India has been able to reduce HIV incidence and deaths and advance and accelerate TB elimination efforts.
- Many outbreaks of vector-borne diseases, acute encephalitis syndromes, acute febrile illnesses, diarrhoeal and respiratory diseases have been promptly detected, identified, and managed.
- These successes are a result of effective community-based, facility-based, and health system-based surveillance. The program response involved multiple sectors, including public and private health care systems and civil society.
- The COVID19 pandemic has further challenged the country. India rapidly ramped up its diagnostic capabilities and aligned its digital technology expertise. This ensured that there was a comprehensive tracking of the pandemic.

4. Building on Ayushman Bharat Scheme

- This vision document on India's Public Health Surveillance by 2035 builds on opportunities that include the Ayushman Bharat scheme that establishes health and wellness centers at the community level- to strengthen non-communicable disease prevention, detection, and control and assures government payment for hospitalization- to reduce out of pocket expenses of individuals and families at the bottom of the pyramid.
 - It builds on initiatives such as the Integrated Health Information Platform of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Program.
 - It aligns with the citizen-centricity highlighted in the National Health Policy, 2017 and the National Digital Health Blueprint. It encourages the use of mobile and digital platforms and point of care devices and diagnostics for amalgamation of data capture and analyses.
 - It highlights the importance of capitalizing on initiatives such as the Clinical Establishments Act to enhance private sector involvement in surveillance.
 - It points out the importance of a cohesive and coordinated effort of apex institutions including the National Centre for Disease Control, the Indian Council of Medical Research, and others. As well, there may be a need to create an independent Institute of Health Informatics.

07 Winter Session of Parliament

1. Why in News?

- Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Prahlaad Joshi informed that winter session will not be held in the Parliament view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government also indicated that it will be appropriate to convene the budget session in January next year.
- Joshi said that he informally contacted floor leaders of various political parties and they have expressed their concerns about the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and many have suggested the government to cancel the session.



2. Convening the Session of Parliament

- The power to convene a session of Parliament rests with the government.
- The decision is taken by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, which currently comprises nine ministers, including those for Defence, Home, Finance, and Law.
- The decision of the Committee is formalised by the President, in whose name MPs are summoned to meet for a session.
- India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar.

3. Sessions of Parliament

- By convention, Parliament meets for three sessions in a year.
 - The longest, the Budget Session, starts towards the end of January, and concludes by the end of April or first week of May. The session has a recess so that Parliamentary Committees can discuss the budgetary proposals.
 - The second session is the three-week Monsoon Session, which usually begins in July and finishes in August.
 - The parliamentary year ends with a three week-long Winter Session, which is held from November to December.
- A general scheme of sittings was recommended in 1955 by the General Purpose Committee of Lok Sabha. It was accepted by the government of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, but was not implemented.

4. Constitutional Provisions

- As per Article 79 of the Indian Constitution - Indian Parliament for the Union consist of the President and two Houses to be known respectively as the Council of States and the House of the People
- Lok Sabha (House of the People) or the lower house has 543 members. 543 members are directly elected by citizens of India on the basis of universal adult franchise representing Parliamentary constituencies across the country.
- Rajya Sabha (Council of States) or the upper house is a permanent body not subject to dissolution. One third of the members retires every second year, and is replaced by newly elected members.
- The summoning of Parliament is specified in Article 85 of the Indian Constitution. Like many other articles, it is based on a provision of The Government of India Act, 1935.
- The period during which the House meets to conduct its business is called a session. The Constitution empowers the President to summon each House at such intervals that there should not be more than a six-month gap between the two sessions. Hence the Parliament must meet at least twice a year.

6. Criticism

- The arrangements made over August and September to prevent the virus from spreading during the Monsoon Session of Parliament did not seem adequate, forcing it to be adjourned ahead of time.
- Opposition parties have said that it is a disguised effort to avoid discussion of the three agricultural laws that were passed in September.
- Also, if the pandemic threat alone was the issue, then there would be no question of holding a Session in January.
- Some political parties have accused the ruling party of trying "avoid being answerable to the parliament... thus abandoning its constitutional responsibility of being accountable in the parliament."

5. Adjusting the Sessions

- In 2017, the Winter Session was delayed on account of the Gujarat Assembly elections.
- In 2011, political parties agreed to cut short the Budget Session so they could campaign for Vidhan Sabha elections in five states.
- Sessions have also been cut short or delayed to allow the government to issue Ordinances. For example, in 2016, the Budget Session was broken up into two separate sessions to enable the issuance of an Ordinance.
- Sessions have been stretched — in 2008, the two-day Monsoon Session (in which a no-confidence motion was moved against the UPA-I government over the India-US nuclear deal) was extended until December. The ostensible reason was to prevent the moving of another no-confidence motion. It meant that there were only two sessions that year.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 Lok Adalat

Q. Consider the following statements with reference to the National Lok Adalat:

1. Lok Adalat is meant for Alternate Dispute Resolution.
2. Though Lok Adalat is not a court in a stricter sense, but its decree can be executed as Civil Court decree.
3. There is no appeal against the award sentenced by Lok Adalat.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation. All the statements are correct. Lok Adalat is a mode of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism. It is conducted by National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) along with other Legal Services Institutions. It is strictly not a Court in the conventional sense in as much as the Lok Adalat does not adjudicate on dispute. Disputes between the parties are resolved by conciliation, mediation and negotiation.

The Lok Adalats have been statutorily recognized in India. Award passed by Lok Adalat formulating the terms of compromise will have the force of a Decree of a Court which can be duly executed as a Civil Court decree. Award is final and binding on all parties and no appeal lies against such an award before any court.



02 Human Development Index 2020 and India

Q. With reference to the Human Development Index 2020, consider the following statements:

1. For the first time UNDP in calculated HDI has included country's per-capita carbon emissions and its material footprint.
2. The HDI also measures gender related indices for its rankings.
3. In HDI 2020, India ranks 129 and has registered life expectancy of around 72.6 years which is an increase from the previous 69.7 years.

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) All of the above |

Answer: (a)

Explanation. Statement 1 and 2 are correct. Human Development Index is the measure of a nation's health, education, and standards of living. For the first time, the United Nations Development Programme introduced a new metric to reflect the impact caused by each country's per-capita carbon emissions and its material footprint, which measures the amount of fossil fuels, metals and other resources used to make the goods and services it consumes.

The UNDP also calculates as a part of its Human Development Report, the Gender Development Index or the GDI. As per the HDR 2020, the GDI value of India is 0.820, with the GDI value for females standing at 0.573 and that for males at 0.699, showcasing a wide contrast.

Statement 3 is incorrect. According to the 2020 Human Development Report, life expectancy of Indians at birth in 2019 was 69.7 years while Bangladesh has a life expectancy of 72.6 years and Pakistan 67.3 years.



03 India Workplace Equality Index

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. In India, Section 377 which has been related to homosexuality has been decriminalized to the extent of homosexuality between consenting adults by Supreme Court in 2018.
2. Section 377 is decriminalized in the Indian Penal Code in relation to homosexuality, but it do criminalises acts of sexual nature with animals.
3. Workplace Equality Index is to measure the work place participation and inclusion of vulnerable sections, women, LGBT etc.

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) All of the above

Answer: (a)

Explanation. Statement 1 and 2 are correct. Supreme Court in the case Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, 2018 has decriminalised. Court has observed that Section 377 of IPC is arbitrary and irrational and hence it is liable to be struck down partially to the extent to which it criminalises consensual sex between two adults. Sexual orientation being a biological phenomenon, any discrimination which solely made on this ground would be held to be violative of fundamental rights of the citizens. The LGBT community owns the same fundamental and human rights as others and shall not be discriminated in any way.

The court however laid down that a person indulging in any kind of sexual activity with that of animals will still be a criminal offence under section 377 of IPC.

Statement 3 is incorrect. 'Workplace Equality Index' has been rolled out for employers to check their progress on inclusion of people from LGBT+ communities at the workplaces. 

04 Database of Migrants

Q. With reference to the creation of 'database for migrants' in unorganised sector, consider the following statements:

1. There is a provision under Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 for all the contractors to register inter-state migrants.
2. Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry for the development of a 'National Database of Unorganised Workers' (NDUW) seeded with Aadhaar.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation. Statement 1 is correct. The Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, requires all establishments who hired inter-state migrants to be registered, as well as all contractors who recruited these workers to be licensed.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The Ministry of Labour & Employment has envisaged development of a 'National Database of Unorganised Workers' (NDUW) seeded with Aadhaar. The project will enrol all unorganised workers, including migrant workers. The Labour and Employment Ministry has sought help from other ministries to build a new database for migrant workers and others in the unorganised sector, which it hopes to operationalise by May-June next year. Centre expects 20-25 crore unorganised workers to be added to the portal. 

05 Currency Manipulation

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. India has been added to 'currency manipulator' watchlist by US due to massive forex intervention by RBI.
2. RBI needed to balance the massive foreign inflows into the country to stabilize the rupee.
3. This is the first time India has been added to the currency manipulator watchlist by USA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation. Statement 1 and 2 are correct. The U.S. Treasury Department's semi-annual report on the macroeconomic and foreign exchange policies of major trading partners has put India on the watchlist of countries being monitored for currency manipulation. According to the report, net purchases of foreign currency added up to 2.4% of GDP. While the department acknowledged the RBI's transparency in publishing data on intervention, it called for the central bank to allow the rupee to adjust based on fundamentals.

India's re-entry into the watch list is not entirely surprising amid massive forex intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) this year. The RBI so far has been deflecting massive capital

inflows by intervening aggressively to prevent the rupee's appreciation amid competitiveness and currency overvaluation concerns.

Statement 3 is incorrect. India was last included in the currency watchlist in October 2018, but removed from the list that came out in May 2019.



06 NITI Aayog - Vision 2035 - Public Health Surveillance

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. NITI Aayog's - 'Vision 2035 - Public Health Surveillance' builds on the facilities created under Ayushman Bharat Scheme and other related initiatives.
2. The Vision 2030, mentioned in above point pertains to universal health coverage and availability of medicines in rural areas.
3. The Vision aims to take the aid of technology in surveillance and record keeping along with analytics for citizen's health.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation. Statement 1 is correct. India's Public Health Surveillance by 2035 builds on opportunities that include the Ayushman Bharat scheme and related initiatives like National Health Policy, 2017 and the National Digital Health Blueprint. It encourages the use of mobile and digital platforms and point of care devices and diagnostics for amalgamation of data capture and analyses.

Statement 2 is incorrect. It contributes by suggesting mainstreaming of surveillance by making individual electronic health records the basis for surveillance. Public health surveillance (PHS) is an important function that cuts across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of care. Surveillance is 'Information for Action'

Statement 3 is correct. The building blocks for this vision are an interdependent federated system of governance between the Centre and states, a new data-sharing mechanism that involves the use of new analytics, health informatics, and data science.



07 Winter Session of Parliament

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Parliament of India consists of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
2. Parliament should meet at least twice in a year.

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: (b)

Explanation. Statement 1 is incorrect. As per Article 79 of the Indian Constitution - Indian Parliament for the Union consist of the President and two Houses to be known respectively as the Council of States and the House of the People.

Statement 2 is correct. The period during which the House meets to conduct its business is called a session. The Constitution empowers the President to summon each House at such intervals that there should not be more than a six-month gap between the two sessions. Hence the Parliament must meet at least twice a year.



7 IMPORTANT NEWS

01

Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile

- ◆ India has successfully conducted the first Army version test of state-of-the-art Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) from a defence facility off Odisha coast. This most advanced sleek missile has been developed by India in a joint collaboration with Israel.

About MRSAM

- ◆ Army version of MRSAM is a surface to Air for use of the Indian Army. MRSAM Army weapon system comprises of Command post, Multi-Function Radar and Mobile Launcher system.
- ◆ Number of range instruments such as Radar, Telemetry and Electro-Optical Tracking System were deployed and captured the complete mission data, validating the weapon system performance including the destruction of the



target.

- ◆ The new generation MRSAM has been developed to neutralise airborne threats like jets, missiles and rockets, including projectiles

launched simultaneously. The missile has a speed of Mach 2 and possesses high degrees of maneuverability at the target interception range.



02

Shigella Infection

- ◆ Several cases of shigella infection and 20 other suspected cases, mostly among children, have been reported in Kerala.

About Shigella Infection

- ◆ Shigellosis, or shigella infection, is a contagious intestinal infection

caused by a genus of bacteria known as shigella. The bacteria is one of the prime pathogens responsible for causing diarrhea, fluctuating between moderate and severe symptoms, especially in children in African and South Asian regions.

- ◆ The bacteria, after entering the body through ingestion, attack the epithelial lining of the colon resulting in inflammation of the cells and subsequently the destruction of the cells in severe cases. It takes only a small number of shigella bacteria to

Shigella infection

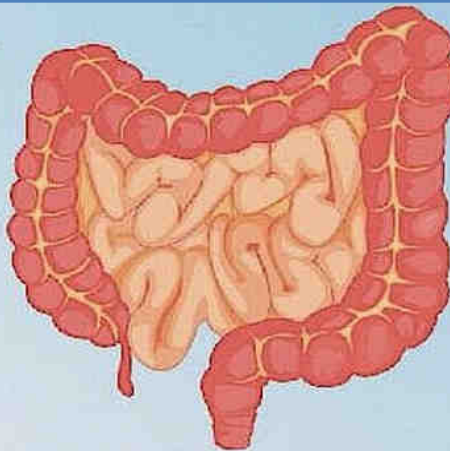
AN INTESTINAL DISEASE CAUSED BY A FAMILY OF BACTERIA KNOWN AS SHIGELLA

SYMPTOMS

- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain or cramps
- Fever

COMPLICATIONS

- Dehydration
- Seizures
- Rectal prolapse
- Hemolytic uremic syndrome
- Toxic megacolon
- Reactive arthritis



enter a person's system and get her sick.

- ♦ The common symptoms are diarrhea (often bloody and painful), stomach pain, fever, nausea and vomiting. There have been cases too where people don't experience any signs of the bacterial infection.
- ♦ Spread through contaminated food and water is the most common form of transmission across the world.



03

India's Economy Recovering Faster: RBI

- ♦ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its 'State of the economy' report said that there is more evidence of India's economy recovering quickly after the deep COVID-19 shock.

Key Highlights

- ♦ Key indicators like real GDP, which is expected to break out into positive territory in the third quarter of the year. The RBI report said India's recovery is being aided by the improving COVID-19 situation in the country.
- ♦ It also said that many sectors like auto and capital goods, which had been hit hard during the initial lockdown, are expecting

a turnaround in future earnings. Meanwhile, healthcare, IT and FMCG companies are now aiming for a stronger earnings outlook. "Moreover, intrinsic strength in the manufacturing and services sectors is being built as debt servicing capacity is getting reinforced and leverage is being brought down. India's farm sector is also forging ahead, backed by pathbreaking marketing reforms.

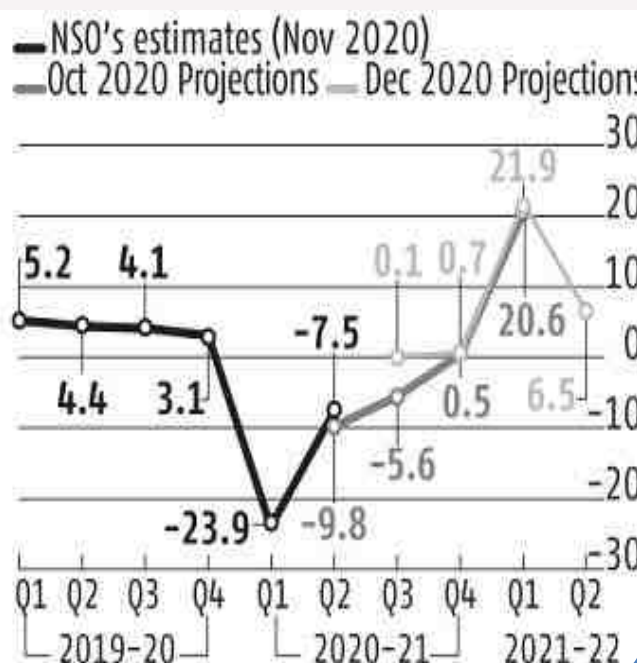
- ♦ Despite the quicker recovery, the central bank continues to be worried about the consistently high rate of retail inflation which came down just marginally in November to 6.93 per cent. It still remains higher than the RBI's target of 2-6 per cent.
- ♦ Efforts need to be redoubled to excoriate the 'worm in the apple' inflation before it hurts the impulses of growth that are taking root.



QUARTERLY GROWTH PROJECTIONS IN MPC RESOLUTIONS

YoY growth in %

Source: National Statistical Office (NSO); and RBI estimates.



04

EU has Banned Plastic Waste Exports to Poor Nations



- ◆ The European Union has announced new rules for plastic waste shipments—including a ban on some exports to poorer countries—that will take effect on January 1 as part of the bloc's Circular Economy Action Plan and European Green Deal.

Key Highlights

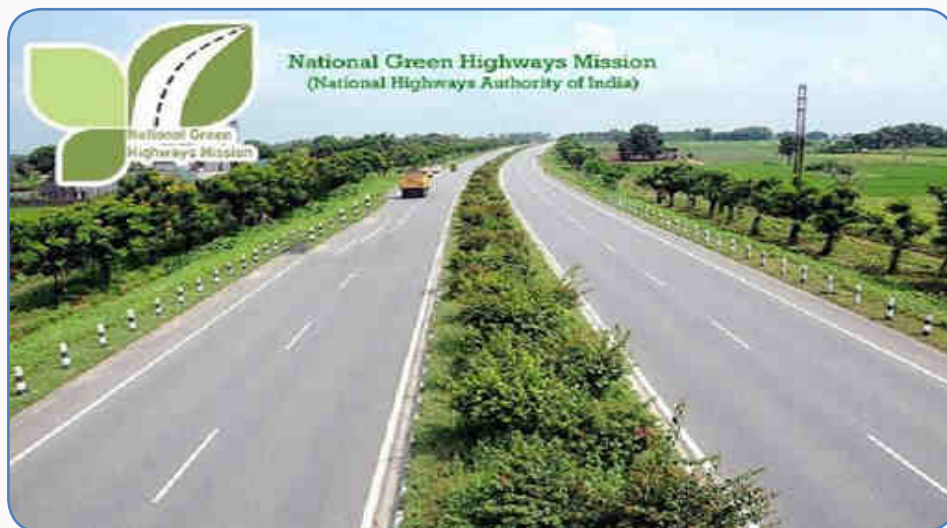
- ◆ The new rules amending the bloc's 2006 Waste Shipment Regulation will completely ban exports of unsorted plastics to less industrialized nations outside the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

- ◆ The moves follow China's 2018 ban on plastic imports and statements from environmentalists that waste was ending up in other Asian nations, such as Malaysia, and then being dumped into ocean waters.
- ◆ The new rules, effective from January 1, also govern plastics shipments within the 27-member EU and stem from a May 2019 conference decision binding most signatory nations of the so-called 1989 Basel Convention.
- ◆ That Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal — still not ratified by the United States as one of the few hold-outs — requires 184 nations to expand plastics control from January. As a bloc, the European Union ratified the convention in 1994.

**05**

Green National Highways Corridors Project

- ◆ The Government of India and the World Bank have signed a \$500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in the states of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The project will also enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in mainstreaming safety and green technologies.



Key Highlights

- ◆ The Green National Highways Corridors Project will support

MoRTH construct 783 km of highways in various geographies by integrating safe and green

technology designs such as local and marginal materials, industrial byproducts, and other

bioengineering solutions. The project will help reduce GHG emissions in the construction and maintenance of highways.

- ◆ The ultimate objective of transport infrastructure is to provide seamless connectivity and reduce logistics costs. The Government of India has launched many

investment programs in road sector infrastructure to strengthen and improve logistics performance.

- ◆ This project will also support analytics to map the freight volume and movement pattern on the National Highway network, identify constraints, and provide innovative logistics solutions.

- ◆ The project will support the ministry with an in-depth analysis of gender-related issues in the transport sector along with help in creating jobs for women by training women-led micro enterprises and women collectives to implement green technologies in the highway corridors.



06

Call for a New Public Health Act by Parliamentary Standing Committee

- ◆ The report of the parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs calling for a comprehensive Public Health Act, as a response to the extreme stresses caused by COVID-19, is a welcome call to reform a fragmented health system.

Need

- ◆ When the pandemic arrived, National Health Profile 2019 data showed that there were an estimated 0.55 government hospital beds for 1,000 people. Prolonged underinvestment in public health infrastructure thus left millions seeking help from a highly commercialised private sector with little regulatory oversight; the situation was even worse in rural areas, where care facilities are weaker, and urban workers fled to their villages, afraid of the cost of falling sick in cities.

The way ahead |

A look at the panel's key observations and suggestions:



Health check: A man registering for COVID-19 testing at the Delhi-Noida border. • AP

Slowing case growth rate: The growth rate of COVID-19 cases at the beginning of the lockdown was 36% while during unlock, it reduced to 3.3%

0.55 beds per 1,000: There are 7,13,986 govt. hospital beds, which amounts to 0.55 per 1,000 people. **12 States stand below the national average**

Peak in oxygen usage: The oxygen production in the country is roughly 6,900 metric tonnes per day. Of this, the highest consumption of medical oxygen was reported in mid-September, when it was almost 3,000 metric tonnes per day

Testing facilities: The committee observed that initially only NIV-Pune was equipped to carry out COVID-19 testing. However by April 1, testing facilities were increased to 151. The



total number of testing labs stands at 2,082 as on November 10

Creation of IHS: The Committee underlines an urgent need for capacity building and maintaining the pool of health resources to fight the pandemic

• It supports the demand for an 'Indian Health Service' (IHS) on the pattern of the Indian Administrative Service to help streamline healthcare delivery as envisaged in the National Health Policy 2017

- ◆ India has committed itself to covenants such as the Sustainable Development Goals, but continues to evade making the right to health a full legal and justiciable right under the National Health Policy.

Key Highlights

- ◆ Acknowledging these distortions, and the inadequacy of existing legal frameworks, the panel has

called for an omnibus law that will curb profiteering during such crises and provide robust cashless health insurance.

- ◆ Its indictment of the feverish commerce surrounding health-care provision, however, can serve a larger purpose if it covers overall system reform, addressing the structural asymmetry created by misguided policies.



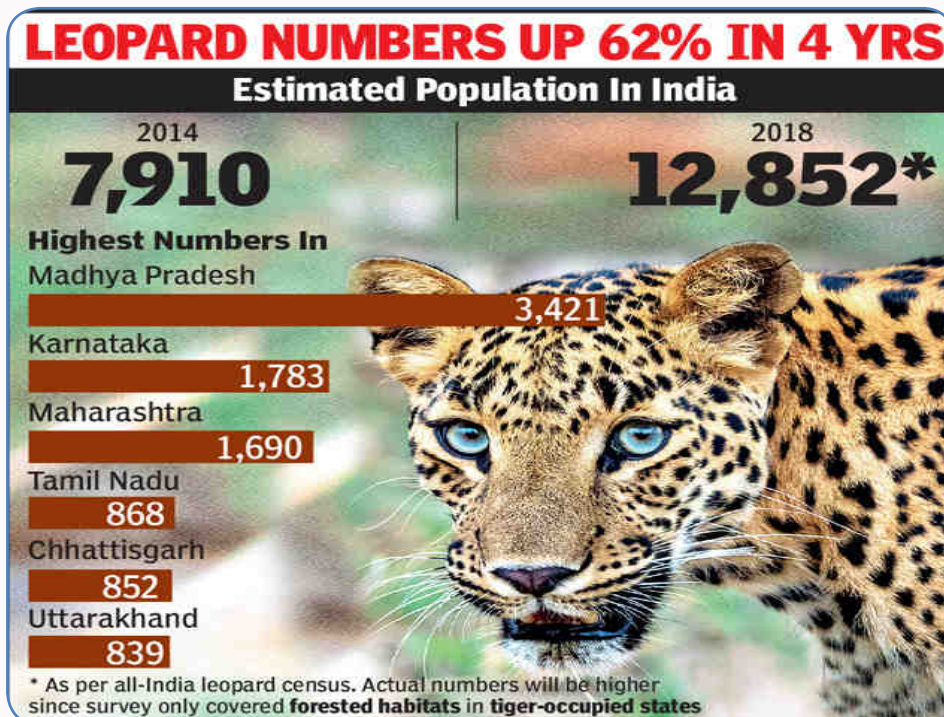
07

Status of Leopard in India 2018

- India now has 12,852 leopards as compared to the previous estimate of 7,910 conducted in 2014. More than 60% increase in population has been recorded. The States of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra recorded the highest leopard estimates at 3,421, 1,783 and 1,690 respectively.

Key Highlights

- The increase in Tiger, Lion & Leopards numbers over the last few years is a testimony to the conservation efforts and of the fledgling wildlife & biodiversity of the country.
- India's world record tiger survey also estimated the population of leopards and the tiger range was found home to 12,852 (12,172-13,535) leopards. They occur in prey rich protected areas as well as multi-use forests.
- A total of 5,240 adult individual leopards were identified in a total of 51,337 leopard photographs using pattern recognition



software. Statistical analysis estimates the leopard population at - 12,800 leopards within the tiger's range.

- The leopard was estimated across forested habitats in tiger range areas of the country but other leopard occupied areas such as non-forested habitats (coffee and tea plantations and other land uses from where leopards are known to occur), higher

elevations in the Himalayas, arid landscapes and majority of North East landscape were not sampled and, therefore, the population estimation should be considered as minimum number of leopards in each of the landscapes.

- Tiger has not only served as an umbrella species but even its monitoring has helped evaluate the status of other species, like the leopard.



7

IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS (For Mains)



01

To allow central universities, the IITs and other public institutions to truly blossom, government needs to reform their governance. Justify.

02

India and Pakistan should take steps to formalise their informal trade. Discuss.

03

Discuss how India can leverage present geopolitical situation to encourage a significant flow of capital, technology and knowledge to accelerate its own modernization.

04

Education is an essential activity. Ignoring schooling will have long-term implications. Elaborate.

05

PM-WANI has the potential to revolutionise the way India accesses the internet. Discuss how PM-WANI will give a fillip to small businesses in India.

06

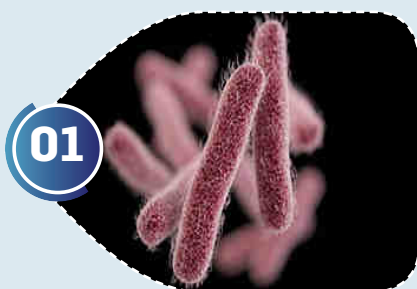
Indian armed forces must prepare personnel to shoulder responsibilities at all levels of new unified commands. Discuss.

07

What do you understand by the term 'public servant'? Reflect on the expected role of public servant.

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



01



03



05

01

Which state has recorded several cases of shigella infection, bacterial intestinal infection?

Kerala

02

Which country has given 'Legion of Merit' award to Prime Minister of India?

United States

03

Which Indian site has been recognized as 42nd Ramsar Site?

Tso Kar Wetland complex,
Ladakh

04

What is the status of Himalayan trillium (*Trillium govanianum*) as per IUCN Red List?

Endangered

05

Which indigenously built facility has been inaugurated at the DRDO's Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex, Hyderabad?

Hypersonic Wind Tunnel (HWT)
test facility

06

Which state will get India's first Lithium refinery?

Gujarat

07

Which state's government has collaborated with UN women to set up India's first gender hub?

Kerala

7

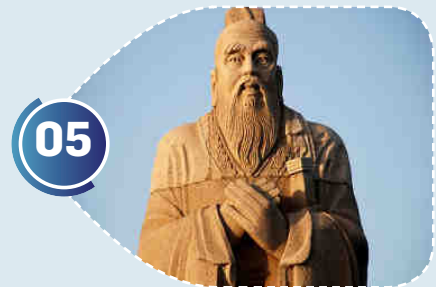
IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01



03



05

01

"Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet."

Aristotle

02

"To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

Theodore Roosevelt

03

"Rarest of all human quality is consistency."

Jeremy Bentham

04

"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

Benjamin Franklin

05

"Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles."

Confucius

06

"Every morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most."

Gautam Buddha

07

"Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom."

Thomas Jefferson

AN INTRODUCTION

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

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.

Civil Services Exam requires knowledge base of specified subjects. These subjects though taught in schools and colleges are not necessarily oriented towards the exam approach. Coaching classes at Dhyeya IAS are different from classes conducted in schools and colleges with respect to their orientation. Classes are targeted towards the particular exam. Classroom guidance at Dhyeya IAS is about improving the individual's capacity to focus, learn and innovate as we are comfortably aware of the fact that you can't teach a person anything you can only help him find it within himself.

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Distance learning Programme, DSDL, primarily caters the need for those who are unable to come to metros for economic or family reason but have ardent desire to become a civil servant. Simultaneously, it also suits to the need of working professionals, who are unable to join regular classes due to increase in work load or places of their posting. The principal characteristic of our distance learning is that the student does not need to be present in a classroom in order to participate in the instruction. It aims to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance. Realizing the difficulties faced by aspirants of distant areas, especially working candidates, in making use of the institute's classroom guidance programme, distance learning system is being provided in General Studies. The distance learning material is comprehensive, concise and exam-oriented in nature. Its aim is to make available almost all the relevant material on a subject at one place. Materials on all topics of General Studies have been prepared in such a way that, not even a single point will be missing. In other words, you will get all points, which are otherwise to be taken from 6-10 books available in the market / library. That means, DSDL study material is undoubtedly the most comprehensive and that will definitely give you added advantage in your Preliminary as well as Main Examination. These materials are not available in any book store or library. These materials have been prepared exclusively for the use of our students. We believe in our quality and commitment towards making these notes indispensable for any student preparing for Civil Services Examination. We adhere all pillars of Distance education.

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