

PERFECT 7

**Weekly
Current Affairs**

An Initiative of **Dhyeya IAS**



1 | Myanmar's Military Coup

Impact on India

**Budget Special
2021-22**

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| 2 New Geopolitics and India's Foreign Policy Challenges | 5 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons : 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

February 2021 | ISSUE 03

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DHYEYA TV
Current Affairs Programmes hosted
by Mr. Qurban Ali
(Ex. Editor Rajya Sabha, TV) & by Team Dhyeya IAS
(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

Union Budget 2021-22



Union Budget 2021-22 : Key Highlights

Introduction

- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman has presented the first ever digital Union Budget for the year 2021-22. The budget for 2021-22 is based on 6 pillars - Health and Wellbeing; Physical & Financial Capital, and Infrastructure; Inclusive Development for Aspirational India; Reinvigorating Human Capital; Innovation and R&D; and Minimum Government and Maximum Governance.

1. Health and Wellbeing

- There is substantial increase in investment in Health Infrastructure. The Budget outlay for Health and Wellbeing has been increased by 137 percentages as against 2020-21.

PM AatmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana

- A new centrally sponsored scheme, PM AatmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, will be launched for 6 years.
- This will develop capacities of primary, secondary, and tertiary care Health Systems, strengthen existing national institutions, and create new institutions, to cater to detection and cure of new and emerging diseases.
- This will be in addition to the National Health Mission.

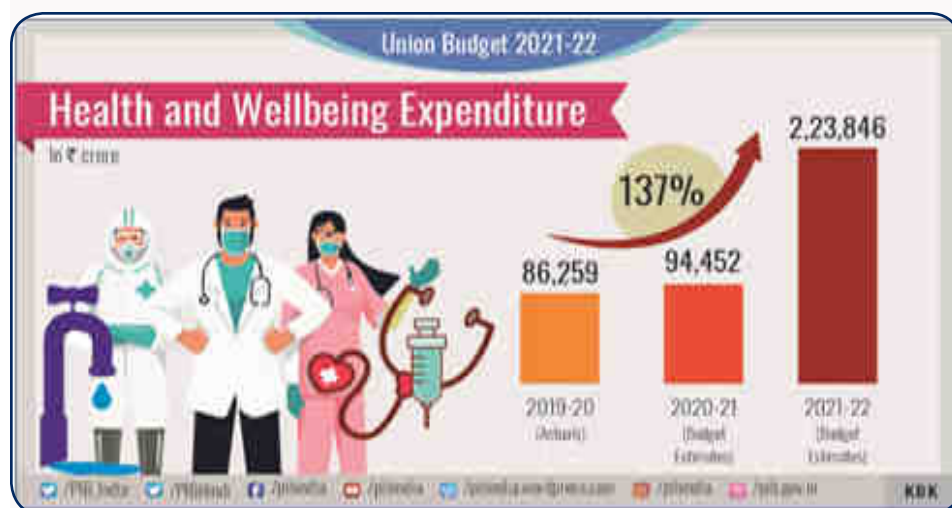
Vaccines

- Provision of Rs 35,000 crore made for COVID-19 vaccine.
- The Pneumococcal Vaccine, a Made in India product, presently limited to only 5 states, will be

rolled out across the country aimed at averting 50,000 child deaths annually.

Nutrition

- Government will merge the Supplementary Nutrition Programme and the Poshan Abhiyan.
- Mission Poshan 2.0 to be launched to improve nutritional outcomes across 112 Aspirational Districts.
- Universal Coverage of Water Supply and Swachh Bharat Mission
- Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) will be launched for universal water supply in all Urban Local Bodies with 2.86 crore household tap connections.
- Urban Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 will be implemented for a period of 5 years from 2021-2026.
- The government has proposed an amount of Rs. 2,217 crore for 42 urban centres to tackle the air pollution.
- Voluntary vehicle scrapping policy to phase out old and unfit vehicles.
- Fitness tests in automated fitness centres:
 - After 20 years in case of personal vehicles
 - After 15 years in case of commercial vehicles



2. Physical and Financial Capital and Infrastructure

AatmaNirbhar Bharat-Production Linked Incentive Scheme

- ◆ In order to create manufacturing global champions for an AatmaNirbhar Bharat, Production Linked Incentive Scheme has been announced for 13 sectors.

Textiles

- ◆ In order to enable the textile industry to become globally competitive, a scheme of Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA) will be launched in addition to the PLI scheme.
- ◆ Under the scheme, 7 Textile Parks will be established over 3 years.

Infrastructure

- ◆ The National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) has now expanded to 7,400 projects.
- ◆ It will require a major increase in funding both from the government and the financial sector.
- ◆ Three steps are proposed to be undertaken to increase funding for NIP:
 - ◆ Creation of institutional structures
 - ◆ Big thrust on monetizing assets
 - ◆ Enhancing the share of capital expenditure

Infrastructure financing - Development Financial Institution (DFI)

- ◆ Development Financial Institution (DFI) to be set up for long term debt financing.
- ◆ Debt Financing by Foreign Portfolio Investors to be enabled by amending InvITs' and REITs' legislations.

Asset Monetisation

- ◆ National Monetization Pipeline to be launched for potential Brownfield infrastructure assets.
- ◆ Some other important measures in the direction of monetisation are:
 - ◆ National Highways Authority

of India and PGCIL each have sponsored one InvIT that will attract international and domestic institutional investors.

- ◆ Railways will monetize Dedicated Freight Corridor assets for operations and maintenance, after commissioning.
- ◆ The next lot of Airports will be monetised for operations and management concession.

Roads and Highways Infrastructure

- ◆ Rs. 1,18,101 lakh crore, highest ever outlay, for Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- ◆ Under the Rs. 5.35 lakh crore Bharatmala Pariyojana, more than 13,000 km length of roads worth Rs. 3.3 lakh crore awarded for construction.
- ◆ To further augment road infrastructure, more economic corridors and expressways are also being planned.
- ◆ Advanced Traffic management system in all new 4 and 6-lane highways.

Railway Infrastructure

- ◆ Rs. 1,10,055 crore has been awarded for Railways.
- ◆ National Rail Plan for India (2030) to create a 'future ready' Railway system by 2030.

- ◆ 100% electrification of Broad-Gauge routes to be completed by December, 2023.
- ◆ Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) and Eastern DFC to be commissioned by June 2022.
- ◆ Future dedicated freight corridor projects:
 - ◆ East Coast corridor from Kharagpur to Vijayawada
 - ◆ East-West Corridor from Bhusaval to Kharagpur to Dankuni
 - ◆ North-South corridor from Itarsi to Vijayawada
- ◆ For Passenger convenience and safety the following measures are proposed:
 - ◆ Introduction of aesthetically designed Vista Dome LHB coach on tourist routes to give a better travel experience to passengers.
- ◆ High density network and highly utilized network routes to have an indigenously developed automatic train protection system, eliminating train collision due to human error.

Urban Infrastructure

- ◆ Raising the share of public transport in urban areas by expansion of metro rail network and augmentation of city bus service.

RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

- ◆ National Rail Plan for India - 2030 to create a 'future ready' Railway system by 2030.
- ◆ Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) and Eastern DFC to be commissioned by June 2022, will bring down the logistic costs thereby enabling Make in India strategy.
- ◆ 100% electrification of Broad-Gauge routes will be completed by December, 2023.

For Passenger convenience and safety :

- Aesthetically designed Vista Dome LHB coach on tourist routes for better travel
- Indigenously developed automatic train protection system to eliminates train collision due to human error

- ◆ A new scheme will be launched at a cost of Rs. 18,000 crore to support augmentation of public bus transport services.
- ◆ 'MetroLite' and 'MetroNeo' will be deployed to provide metro rail systems at much lesser cost with same experience, convenience and safety in Tier-2 cities and peripheral areas of Tier-1 cities.

Power Infrastructure

- ◆ 139 Giga Watts of installed capacity and 1.41 lakh circuit km of transmission lines added, and additional 2.8 crore households connected in past 6 years
- ◆ Rs. 3,05,984 crore over 5 years for a revamped, reforms-based and result-linked new power distribution sector scheme
- ◆ A comprehensive National Hydrogen Energy Mission 2021-22 to be launched.

Ports, Shipping, Waterways

- ◆ Rs. 2,000 crore worth 7 projects to be offered in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode in FY21-22 for operation of major ports.
- ◆ A scheme to promote flagging of merchant ships in India will be launched by providing subsidy support to Indian shipping companies in global tenders floated by Ministries and CPSEs.
- ◆ To double the recycling capacity of around 4.5 Million Light Displacement Tonne (LDT) by 2024; to generate an additional 1.5 lakh jobs.

Petroleum & Natural Gas

- ◆ Ujjwala Scheme which has benefited 8 crore households will be extended to cover 1 crore more beneficiaries.
- ◆ Government will add 100 more districts in next 3 years to the City Gas Distribution network.



- ◆ A gas pipeline project will be taken up in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
- ◆ An independent Gas Transport System Operator to be set up for facilitation and coordination of booking of common carrier capacity in all-natural gas pipelines on a non-discriminatory open access basis.

Financial Capital

- ◆ The Finance Minister proposed to consolidate the provisions of SEBI Act, 1992, Depositories Act, 1996, Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956 and Government Securities Act, 2007 into a rationalized single Securities Markets Code.
- ◆ The Government would support the development of a world class Fin-Tech hub at the GIFT-IFSC.
- ◆ Asset Reconstruction Company Limited and Asset Management Company (Bad Bank) to be set up.
- ◆ Setting up a system of Regulated Gold Exchanges.

Increasing FDI in Insurance Sector

- ◆ To increase the permissible Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit from 49% to 74% and allow foreign ownership and control with safeguards.

Disinvestment and Strategic Sale

- ◆ Strategic disinvestment of BPCL, Air India, Shipping Corporation of India, Container Corporation of India, IDBI Bank, BEML, Pawan Hans, Neelachal Ispat Nigam limited etc. to be completed in 2021-22.
- ◆ Other than IDBI Bank, two Public Sector Banks and one General Insurance company to be privatized
- ◆ IPO of LIC in 2021-22.
- ◆ New policy for Strategic Disinvestment approved.

Recapitalization of PSBs

- ◆ Rs. 20,000 crore in 2021-22 to further consolidate the financial capacity of Public Sector Banks (PSBs).

Deposit Insurance

- ◆ Amendments to the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 (DICGC Act, 1961), to help depositors get an easy and time-bound access to their deposits to the extent of the deposit insurance cover.
 - ◆ Deposit insurance increased from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh for bank depositors.
- ◆ Minimum loan size eligible for debt recovery under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002



proposed to be reduced from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 20 lakh for NBFCs with minimum asset size of Rs. 100 crore

Company Matters

- ♦ To decriminalize the Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) Act, 2008.
- ♦ Easing Compliance requirement of Small companies by revising their definition under Companies Act, 2013.
- ♦ Promoting start-ups and innovators by incentivizing the incorporation of One Person Companies (OPCs).
- ♦ Reducing the residency limit for an Indian citizen to set up an OPC from 182 days to 120 days and allowing Non Resident Indians (NRIs) to incorporate OPCs in India.
- ♦ To ensure faster resolution of cases by:
 - ♦ Strengthening National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLT) framework
 - ♦ Implementation of e-Courts system
 - ♦ Introduction of alternate methods of debt resolution and special framework for MSMEs.
 - ♦ Launch of data analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning driven MCA21 Version 3.0 in 2021-22.

Government Financial Reforms

- ♦ Treasury Single Account (TSA) System for Autonomous Bodies to be extended for universal application.
- ♦ Separate Administrative Structure to streamline the 'Ease of Doing Business' for Cooperatives.

3. Inclusive Development for Aspirational India

- ♦ The pillar of Inclusive Development for Aspirational India will cover Agriculture and Allied sectors, farmers' welfare and rural India, migrant workers and labour, and financial inclusion.

Agriculture

- ♦ Ensured Minimum Support Price (MSP) at minimum 1.5 times the cost of production across all commodities.
- ♦ SWAMITVA Scheme to be extended to all States/UTs.
- ♦ Agricultural credit target enhanced to animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries to be the focus areas.
- ♦ 'Operation Green Scheme' to be extended to 22 perishable products, to boost value addition in agriculture and allied products.
- ♦ 1,000 more mandis to be integrated with e-NAM to bring transparency and competitiveness.

- ♦ Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) to get access to the Agriculture Infrastructure Funds for augmenting infrastructure facilities.

Fisheries

- ♦ 5 major fishing harbours – Kochi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Paradip, and Petuaghat to be developed as hubs of economic activity.
- ♦ Multipurpose Seaweed Park in Tamil Nadu to promote seaweed cultivation.
- ♦ Migrant Workers and Labourers
- ♦ One Nation One Ration Card scheme for beneficiaries to claim rations anywhere in the country - migrant workers to benefit the most.
- ♦ Portal to collect information on unorganized labour force, migrant workers especially, to help formulate schemes for them.
- ♦ Implementation of 4 labour codes underway.
 - ♦ Social security benefits for gig and platform workers too.
 - ♦ Minimum wages and coverage under the Employees State Insurance Corporation applicable for all categories of workers.
 - ♦ Women workers allowed in all categories, including night-shifts with adequate protection.
 - ♦ Compliance burden on employers reduced with single registration and licensing, and online returns.

Financial Inclusion

- ♦ To further facilitate credit flow under the scheme of Stand Up India for SCs, STs, and women
 - ♦ Margin money requirement reduced to 15%.
 - ♦ To also include loans for allied agricultural activities.

- ◆ Rs. 15,700 crore budget allocation to MSME Sector, more than double of this year's Budget Estimates.

4. Reinvigorating Human Capital

School Education

- ◆ 15,000 schools to be strengthened by implementing all National Education Policy (NEP) components. Shall act as exemplar schools in their regions for mentoring others.
- ◆ 100 new Sainik Schools to be set up in partnership with NGOs/private schools/states.

Higher Education

- ◆ Legislation to be introduced to setup Higher Education Commission of India as an umbrella body with 4 separate vehicles for standard-setting, accreditation, regulation, and funding.
- ◆ Creation of formal umbrella structure to cover all Govt. colleges,

universities, research institutions in a city for greater synergy.

- ◆ Central University to come up in Leh for accessibility of higher education in Ladakh.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Welfare

- ◆ 750 Eklavya model residential schools in tribal areas.
- ◆ Focus on creation of robust infrastructure facilities for tribal students.
- ◆ Revamped Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for welfare of SCs.

Skilling

- ◆ Proposed amendment to Apprenticeship Act to enhance opportunities for youth.
- ◆ Rs. 3000 crore for realignment of existing National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS) towards

post-education apprenticeship, training of graduates and diploma holders in Engineering

- ◆ Initiatives for partnership with other countries in skilling to be taken forward, similar to partnership:

- ◆ With United Arab Emirates (UAE) to benchmark skill qualifications, assessment, certification, and deployment of certified workforce.
- ◆ With Japan for a collaborative Training Inter Training Programme (TITP) to transfer of skills, technique and knowledge.

5. Innovation and Research and Development

- ◆ Modalities of National Research Foundation announced in July 2019:
 - ◆ To strengthen overall research ecosystem with focus on national-priority thrust areas.
- ◆ Rs. 1,500 crore for proposed scheme to promote digital modes of payment.
- ◆ National Language Translation Mission (NTLM) to make governance-and-policy related knowledge available in major Indian languages.
- ◆ PSLV-CS51 to be launched by New Space India Limited (NSIL) carrying Brazil's Amazonia Satellite and some Indian satellites.
- ◆ As part of the Gaganyaan mission activities:
 - ◆ 4 Indian astronauts being trained on Generic Space Flight aspects, in Russia.
 - ◆ First unmanned launch is slated for December 2021.
- ◆ Rs. 4,000 crore over five years for Deep Ocean Mission survey exploration and conservation of deep sea biodiversity.

Achievements and Milestones during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY)**
 - Valued at Rs. 2.76 lakh crore
 - Free food grain to 80 crore people
 - Free cooking gas for 8 crore families
 - Direct cash to over 40 crore farmers, women, elderly, the poor and the needy
- **AatmaNirbhar Bharat package (ANB 1.0)**
 - Estimated at Rs. 23 lakh crore – more than 10% of GDP
- **PMGKY, three ANB packages (ANB 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0), and announcements made later were like 5 mini-budgets in themselves.**
- **Rs. 27.1 lakh crore worth of financial impact of all three ANB packages including RBI's measures – amounting to more than 13% of GDP.**
 - Structural reforms:
 - One Nation One Ration Card
 - Agriculture and Labour Reforms
 - Redefinition of MSMEs
 - Commercialisation of the Mineral Sector
 - Privatisation of Public Sector Undertakings
 - Production Linked Incentive Schemes
- **Status of India's fight against COVID-19**
 - 2 Made-in-India vaccines – medically safeguarding citizens of India and those of 100-plus countries against COVID-19
 - 2 or more new vaccines expected soon
 - Lowest death rate per million and the lowest active cases

6. Minimum Government, Maximum Governance

- ◆ National Commission for Allied Healthcare Professionals already introduced to ensure transparent and efficient regulation of the 56 allied healthcare professions.
- ◆ The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Bill introduced for the same in nursing profession.
- ◆ Proposed Conciliation Mechanism with mandate for quick resolution of contractual disputes with Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSEs).
- ◆ Rs. 3,768 crore allocated for first digital census in the history of India.
- ◆ Rs. 300 crore grant to the Government of Goa for the diamond jubilee celebrations of the state's liberation from Portuguese.
- ◆ Rs. 1,000 crore for the welfare of Tea workers especially women and their children in Assam and West Bengal through a special scheme.

Fiscal Position

- ◆ The fiscal deficit is estimated to be 6.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021-22. The fiscal deficit in 2020-21 is pegged at 9.5% of GDP.
- ◆ Gross borrowing from the market for the next year to be around 12 lakh crore.
- ◆ The government is planning to continue on the path of fiscal consolidation, achieving a fiscal deficit level below 4.5% of GDP by 2025-2026 with a fairly steady decline over the period.
 - ◆ It will be achieved by increasing the buoyancy of tax revenue through improved compliance, and secondly, by increased receipts from monetisation of assets, including Public Sector Enterprises and land.

- ◆ The Contingency Fund of India is to be augmented from Rs. 500 crore to Rs. 30,000 crore through Finance Bill.
- ◆ Net borrowing for the states allowed at 4% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for the year 2021-2022 as per recommendation of 15th Finance Commission.
- ◆ Additional borrowing ceiling of 0.5% of GSDP will be provided subject to conditions.
- ◆ States expected to reach a fiscal deficit of 3% of GSDP by 2023-24, as recommended by the 15th Finance Commission.

Fifteenth Finance Commission

Key Recommendations

- ◆ The final report covering 2021-26 was submitted to the President, retaining vertical shares of states at 41%.
- ◆ Funds to UTs of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh would be provided by Centre.
- ◆ On the Commission's recommendation, Rs. 1,18,452 crore have been provided as Revenue Deficit Grant to 17 states in 2021-22, as against Rs. 74,340 crore to 14 states in 2020-21.

Tax Proposals

Direct Taxes

- ◆ Exemption from filing tax returns for senior citizens over 75 years of age and having only pension and interest income; tax to be deducted by paying bank.
- ◆ No exemption on interest, if Provident Fund PF contribution is more than Rs. 2.5 lakh.
- ◆ Income Tax settlement commission abolished.

- ◆ National Faceless Income Tax Appellate Tribunal Centre to be established.
- ◆ Additional deduction of interest, up to Rs. 1.5 lakh, for loan taken to buy an affordable house extended for loans taken till March 2022.
- ◆ Capital gains exemption for investment in start-ups extended till 31st March, 2022.

Indirect Taxes

- ◆ Revised, distortion-free customs duty structure to be put in place from 1st October 2021 by reviewing more than 400 old exemptions.
- ◆ Duty on some parts of mobiles revised to 2.5% from 'nil' rate
- ◆ Anti-Dumping Duty (ADD) and Counter-Veiling Duty (CVD) revoked on certain steel products.
- ◆ Duty on solar invertors raised from 5% to 20%, and on solar lanterns from 5% to 15% to encourage domestic production.
- ◆ Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC) on a small number of items.
- ◆ Turant Customs initiative, a Faceless, Paperless, and Contactless Customs measures.

2021 - Year of Milestones for Indian History

- ◆ 75th year of India's independence
- ◆ 60 years of Goa's accession to India
- ◆ 50 years of the 1971 India-Pakistan War
- ◆ Year of the 8th Census of Independent India
- ◆ India's turn at the BRICS Presidency
- ◆ Year for Chandrayaan-3 Mission
- ◆ Haridwar MahaKumbh

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

Myanmar's Military Coup : Impact on India

Why in News?

- ◆ Myanmar's military on 1st February 2021 detained Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, declared a state of emergency for a year and voided her party's landslide election victory in a setback for the country's nascent democracy.
- ◆ The move led the United States (U.S.) to declare the military takeover a coup, prompting a review of foreign assistance and the possibility of new sanctions against the country's leaders.

Introduction

- ◆ The military is now back in charge and has declared a year-long state of emergency. It seized control following a general election which Ms Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party won by a landslide.
- ◆ The armed forces had backed the opposition, who were demanding a rerun of the vote, claiming widespread fraud.
- ◆ The election commission said there was no evidence to support these claims.
- ◆ The coup was staged as a new session of parliament was set to open.
- ◆ Many other NLD officials have also been detained.

- ◆ Power has been handed over to commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing. He has received international condemnation and sanctions for his alleged role in the military's attacks on ethnic minorities.
- ◆ The military has replaced ministers and deputies, including in finance, health, the interior and foreign affairs.
- ◆ It says it will hold a "free and fair" election once the state of emergency is over.

Global Response

- ◆ The U.S., China and other members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) called for the "immediate release" of all those detained in Myanmar while emphasizing the need for the "continued support of the democratic transition" in the Southeast Asian nation.
- ◆ In a rare show of unity, the 15-member body on called for "the continued support of the democratic transition in Myanmar." In a statement, the panel "stressed the need to uphold democratic institutions and processes, refrain from violence and fully respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law."
- ◆ India is learnt to have played a pivotal role to "bridge" differing

positions in talks that led to a statement from the UN Security Council, calling for the "immediate release" of Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi who has been detained by the military.

- ◆ China's diplomats sought to strike a balance by supporting the Security Council statement while issuing a separate statement noting that China is a "friendly neighbor" of Myanmar and highlighting that the council is calling for "dialogue and reconciliation in accordance with the will and interests of the people of Myanmar."
- ◆ United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called the coup "absolutely unacceptable," urging the international community to make sure democracy is protected in Myanmar.
- ◆ The UK, EU and Australia are among those to have condemned the military takeover.
- ◆ Neighbours including Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines, have said it is an "internal matter".

India's Pragmatic Foreign Policy

- ◆ Foreign policy may be occasionally influenced by idealism, but it is definitely shaped by self-interest. The coup in Myanmar presents a complex mosaic of threats and opportunities for India.

- ◆ There was never any real tension between idealism and realpolitik for democratic nations in their terms of engagement with Myanmar. The West's abandonment of Suu Kyi carried with it a sense of betrayal and a conviction that Myanmar's democratic veneer was nominal and never based on liberal values. The 'backsliding' of democracy here is not a tectonic shift.
- ◆ India has stepped up its strategic engagement with Myanmar because of insurgent groups from the Northeast which have set up base in Myanmar. Myanmar has let India reach out and carry out raids against Indian insurgent groups across the border.
- ◆ Also, India is now selling Myanmar quite a bit of military hardware.
- ◆ The biggest stake of all is Sittwe in the Rakhine province where India has built a large, deep seaport. The location of the port, which will play a central role in connecting the Northeast region to the sea, and China's string of pearls policy are the reasons why India has not taken any hostile stance, rather a balanced approach.
- ◆ New Delhi is on firmer geopolitical footing here because China's meddling in Myanmar's ethnic politics and links with militia forces that operate on their common border have made the Tatmadaw wary of Beijing.
- ◆ For its part, India has expressed its "deep concern" with the developments in Nay Pyi Taw. The MEA release states "India has always been steadfast in its support to the process of democratic transition in Myanmar. We believe that the rule of law and the democratic process must be upheld. We are monitoring the situation closely."
- ◆ This is the farthest that New Delhi may go in publicly condemning the coup in Myanmar unlike its Quad partners such as the US and Australia.

Key Pillar of Act East Policy

- ◆ In the past few years, officials from the defence and security establishment have made several reciprocal visits to underline the closeness of ties. The 2017 visit by Gen Hlaing was an indication that the Tatmadaw was eager to diversify its defence cooperation with India and it also presented a chance for New Delhi to balance its interests in a country that was seen to be ensconced firmly in China's sphere of influence.
- ◆ India had offered to sell artillery guns, naval boats, road-building and other defence-related equipment, and some lightweight torpedoes as well. Hlaing's visit two years later in 2019 resulted in both nations signing a new memorandum of understanding on bilateral defence cooperation. On that occasion, Tatmadaw's top commander had met senior Indian leaders, including the chief of all three major Indian armed services: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, Chief of Army Staff General Bipin Rawat, and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh.
- ◆ The visit came shortly after both countries carried out a coordinated border security operation against militia groups along the shared border, and New Delhi supplied an initial batch of indigenously built torpedoes for the Myanmar Navy at an estimated cost of \$37.9 million.
- ◆ A release by India's defence ministry covering that visit had

called Myanmar a "key pillar of India's Act East Policy" and stated that the talks between both sides were aimed at "enhancing defence co-operation, review joint exercises and training provided to Myanmar Defence Services, strengthen maritime security by joint surveillance and capacity building, medical co-operation, pollution response and for developing new infrastructure."

Way Forward

- ◆ Under the hood, however, the effort to further consolidate the relationship with the Tatmadaw while nudging the military to reopen the democratic process shall go on. The thing to note here is that India has always maintained a robust rapport with Myanmar's defence and security edifice based on a realist approach to foreign policy, need to safeguard national security and an acknowledgement that New Delhi lacks the toolkit or the power to force Myanmar military to relinquish control or initiate a vigorous democratic process.
- ◆ On the much-discussed dilemma between India's need for promoting democracy in the neighbourhood, India will take the road it has always taken — engage with the military establishment to secure its core interests and gently raise the issue in closed-door discussions. 🇮🇳🇲🇲🇬🇪

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Q. Discuss India's policy stance with referee to the military coup in Myanmar and significance of Myanmar in India's foreign policy matrix.

02

New Geopolitics and India's Foreign Policy Challenges

Context

- ♦ As the world adjusts to the 'new normal' ushered in by the dramatic developments of the year 2020, it is important to acknowledge that not only is a year ending, but so is a decade. The 21st century is ostensibly veering away from adolescence towards maturity, but the ground realities paint a picture of great turbulence.
- ♦ For India, these challenges have coincided with its aspirations to play a leading role in global politics as a role shaper.

Continuation of Legacy

- ♦ The year 2021 therefore is beginning with a certain clarity which only the turmoil of 2020 could have made possible. Consequently, key aspects of the global order this year will be sculpted by the legacy of the year gone by.
- ♦ And perhaps no other factor will have as much of an impact on international affairs as China's foreign policy trajectory under President Xi Jinping. Xi has already veered away from his predecessors in carving a more ambitious and aggressive approach to the external world.
- ♦ As the COVID-19 outbreak reached pandemic proportions, he used the crisis as an opportunity to expand China's geopolitical footprint across the world — from the South and East China Seas to the Himalayas, from Europe to the Middle East. As Xi lays down a blueprint for a new world order hinged on the Chinese Communist Party's worldview, the rest of the world will be anxiously looking for a greater balance in the global matrix.
- ♦ The US-China contestation is shaping up as the epochal geopolitical contest of the coming years.

Questioning Globalisation and Multilateralism

- ♦ Attempts by key global actors towards trade and technological decoupling are setting the stage for a conflict that is challenging the fundamentals of globalisation as we have known it since the early 1990s.
- ♦ An ongoing backlash against globalisation is likely to gain further momentum, especially as the costs of global integration are seemingly rising by the day. Already, there is a recalibration happening across the West where even mainstream political parties have been changing their long-held positions on issues such as trade and migration. It is unlikely, however, to be restricted to the West.
- ♦ As the world becomes more fragmented — from supply chains to connectivity initiatives — shoring up support for globalisation will only become more difficult.
- ♦ This fragmentation will influence the future of global multilateralism. While most nations continue to profess their abiding faith in multilateralism, the institutional manifestations underpinning the extant order are getting hobbled by their internal contradictions. Indeed, a global health pandemic should have been the high point of the search for a collective solution; instead, it has turned out to be its nadir.

- ♦ Not only is China challenging an order that it believes was created in its absence, but even the US, which was its most important founder, seems dissatisfied with the status quo.

Unfolding Situation in South Asia

- ♦ The emergence of China and more recently, India, has reshaped relations and produced a broader area of economic integration in Asia.
- ♦ Even in southern Asia, where the strategic triangle of China, India, and Pakistan has resulted in flashpoints and suspicions, both India and China have kept their sights on increasing trade and economic growth as a security imperative for the long term.
- ♦ However, southern Asia's security, political, and economic foundations face stresses that could profoundly alter its evolution, usher in the return of geopolitics, and reshape political and economic relations globally.
- ♦ The cancellation of Japan-India port development project in Sri Lanka and the coup in Myanmar has created a trust-deficit in South Asia.
- ♦ Turbulence in Nepal where pro and anti-Chinese sentiments reflect not just growing but a powerful control of China in Nepal's internal politics and threat to Indian interests.

Emerging Aspirations

- ♦ The world is also seeing regional rebalancing at a massive scale. With the signing of Abraham accords, the Middle East is being transformed. More and more countries are trying to normalise relations with Israel in the hope of dealing with Iran challenge. At some point in time,

Saudi Arabia may normalise its relations with Israel.

- ◆ The net result is that Iran-Saudi rivalry is becoming more acute.
- ◆ Turkey is trying to regain the glory of the Ottoman Empire. Its role in regional conflicts is increasing. A new axis of Turkey-Iran-Russia-Pakistan is in the making.
- ◆ The rivalry between Turkey and Israel, between Turkey and Saudi Arabia is also sharpening. Tensions in the Mediterranean region have increased. Although Turkey is a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), its relations with the West are highly strained.
- ◆ The US has sanctioned Turkey for the purchase of S 400 missile defence system from Russia. New hotspots are emerging in North Africa.
- ◆ The ISIS may have been defeated militarily; its radical ideology continues to exert influence across the region and beyond.

Rise of China's Hegemony

- ◆ It now has to contend with the structural realities of a rising power in its vicinity, one that doesn't want to play by the rules set by others. The challenge China poses to India is, in many ways, a microcosm of the challenge the Chinese Communist Party's malevolent intent poses to the liberal order. As powers rise and fall, they inevitably produce consequences; some are structural about balancing and band-wagoning, while others are institutional and normative. Today, the consequences of such a power transition are visible across domains in the global order.
- ◆ China sees the geostrategic concept of the Indo-Pacific and the Quad as a US attempt to contain China. With Biden's victory doubts are being expressed whether the new administration's commitment to the concept of Indo-Pacific will remain as strong as that of Trump. It remains to be seen whether some momentum which the Quad got in 2020 will continue in 2021.
- ◆ Technology is playing an increasingly important role in global rebalancing that is underway. Technology underpins the US-China contest. Having realised the importance of technology, China is racing ahead to achieve supremacy in emerging strategic technologies. It has made substantial and impressive gains in artificial intelligence, space, quantum computing, drones and deep sea bed mining technologies. It also dominates the global value chains for critical materials. The recently concluded trade agreement between the EU and China will facilitate greater cooperation between the two sides. It remains to be seen how China gains by greater access to Europe in high-technology.
- ◆ In addition to information and data, the mastery of health and food issues is being strategized. China is preparing itself for likely global food shortages in 2030.
- ◆ The other geography that is key to unlocking the global geopolitical chessboard will be Eurasia, where the Sino-Russian entente is producing new realities and can profoundly shape the global balance of power. While unlikely to result in a formal alliance, the China-Russia

relationship is disproving some of the initial scepticism about it. Its future trajectory will not only shape the geopolitics of the heartland but will also push other major powers into reacting in ways that will upend some of the traditional calculus as we know them. And then there is the Middle East, a region that tends to hog the global limelight.

Way Forward

- ◆ Indian foreign policy will have to respond to these meta-trends by crafting an approach that is more than just the sum of its bilateral and multilateral engagements. The year gone by was an inflection point in India's China policy as it made clear for New Delhi the choices that it faces in the coming years and decades. But the crisis with China continues, even as the world's expectations for India to play a larger global role are heightening.
- ◆ An aspirational India in the third decade of the 21st century will no longer be satisfied with sitting on the margins; it is eager to play in the big league. 

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Topic:

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

Q. In the post pandemic world, the international relations are getting reset not only being guided by the 'new normal', but are the continuation of the trends continuing from pre-pandemic times. Comment.

03

India- Sri Lanka Relationship : Challenges and Opportunities

Why in News?

- ◆ The Rajapaksa government's decision to overturn Sri Lanka's tripartite agreement to develop Colombo's East Container Terminal (ECT) is a setback to India and Japan.
- ◆ The project, worth an estimated \$500-\$700 million, was a key marker for infrastructure investment in the island nation where Chinese projects are most prominent. More than two-thirds of trans-shipment at this port is tied to India, making it an important trade and connectivity link.

Introduction

- ◆ On 28 May 2019, India, Sri Lanka and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to develop the ECT when Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena was in power. This, despite the deal having been under negotiation from the previous year and Sirisena's earlier objection to any Indian involvement.
- ◆ The \$500-million project aims to upgrade the port to allow large container ships to enter with the aim of enhancing Sri Lanka's status as a maritime hub. New Delhi is said to be keen on the deal as about 70 per cent of the transshipment business at the port is linked to India. The Adani Group is also said to be a front-runner to upgrade the ECT.
- ◆ According to the agreement, Japan, which has supported operations of the Jaya Container Terminal at the Colombo Port, is set to provide a 40-year soft loan with a 0.1 per cent interest rate. Japan has also been pushing to be a player in the

region under its 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy'.

- ◆ The MoC stated that the Sri Lanka Ports Authority will have the control and ownership of the project with 51 per cent stake, while India and Japan will jointly own the remaining 49 per cent stake.
- ◆ But after the Rajapaksa government came to power, the project suffered another setback when President Gotabaya Rajapaksa decided to undertake a review of the project in July 2020 ahead of the parliamentary polls there owing to stiff opposition from labour unions.
- ◆ The Narendra Modi government, which shares cordial ties with both the Sri Lankan President as well as Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, had been pushing for a quick implementation of the project.
- ◆ It was decided that the ECT will be developed by the Adani Group, for which the company had also signed a preliminary agreement in 2019.

Cancelling the Agreement

- ◆ After the strong opposition from trade unions across the country, the Sri Lankan government was forced to renege on a 2019 agreement with India and Japan to develop the strategic ECT at the Colombo Port.
- ◆ After Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's statement that the operation of the east terminal would be done by Sri Lanka Ports Authority on its own, a cabinet meeting approved a proposal to develop the West Terminal at the Colombo Port as a Public Private Partnership with India and Japan, which was seen as a bid to compensate India. It is unclear whether India would accept the

latest proposal even as the Sri Lankan government rules out chances of further troubles.

- ◆ To Mahinda Rajapaksa's statement that ECT development and operation will be done by Sri Lanka on its own, a news that was seen as embarrassing the Indian side, India's first response was that the island nation should not be taking a decision in a unilateral manner on an existing tripartite agreement.
- ◆ Senior leaders of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa-led Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party said the pressure was immense on the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to cancel the 2019 agreement.
- ◆ What had finally made the government surrender before trade unions was the increasing support of many more sections in the society for the protests against privatisation.
- ◆ While there were reports and allegations among diplomatic circle that the Chinese had played a role in instigating port unions protest against India's interest, some 223 Sri Lankan unions from different walks of life, including trade unions and civil societies groups, declared support for the port trade unions demand to cancel the ECT agreement.

India's Concerns

- ◆ India's concern over the Colombo Port project stems from what had happened at Hambantota Port.
- ◆ Sri Lanka had taken massive loans from China, which it could not repay, leading to Beijing taking control over the port under a 99-year lease for debt relief in 2018.

- ♦ The ECT project was also discussed during External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Sri Lanka on 5-7 January.
- ♦ On 22 January, Anurag Srivastava, spokesperson, Ministry of External Affairs, said, "We'll be happy to see the development of the East Container Terminal through investments from India and Japan as is preferred by the current Sri Lankan government."
- ♦ The island nation has become strategically crucial for India even as it aims to expand the objectives under the Indo-Pacific initiative.
- ♦ In November last year, National Security Advisor AjitDoval had visited Sri Lanka to participate in the trilateral maritime cooperation with India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.
- ♦ India's response is seen as muted as New Delhi works behind the scenes to persuade Colombo to change its decision. Indian prime minister Narendra Modi in a message to Colombo on the anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence this week, referred to the cultural traditions that bound the two countries together. India views the project as important given the increasing profile of China in the island nation that New Delhi sees as traditionally lying within its sphere of influence. Sources said India will now "watch the situation" before taking an official decision.
- ♦ Meantime, internationally an offended India can make life tough for Sri Lanka, isolating the tiny island nation, geo-politically and on the economic front. The economic isolation will not help Sri Lanka at a time when the country is taking steps to revive the economy amid a pandemic.

Back Channel Diplomacy

- ♦ India is in discussions with the Sri Lankan government to persuade Colombo to rethink its cancellation of a three way agreement between New Delhi, Colombo and the government of Japan to develop and operate the ECT of Colombo Port.
- ♦ The pact was signed in 2019 with India and Japan holding 49% stake in ECT.
- ♦ But earlier this month, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa said that the operation of the east terminal would be done by Sri Lanka Ports Authority.

Consolation for India

- ♦ After the Sri Lankan decision reneging on the 2019 agreement, the country's cabinet has now approved a proposal to develop the west terminal of the Colombo port as a Public Private Partnership with Japan and India.
- ♦ While two top sources in the Sri Lankan government said Indian response to the compensatory offer was "ambiguous" and "almost rejecting," Indian officials said there

was no formal communication about it.

Way Forward

- ♦ With the cancellation of the agreement, all these groups including unions of working professionals and a scattered middle class population have all gained an upper-hand, which is politically not favourable for both Prime Minister Mahinda and his younger brother, President Gotabaya.
- ♦ Over the past year, the Modi government has invested much time and resources to India-Sri Lanka ties, including a new credit line, currency swap agreement, and COVID-19 assistance and vaccines. NSA AjitDoval and EAM S. Jaishankar have visited Colombo more than once, and Mr. Modi has hosted President Gotabaya and Prime Minister Mahinda. India has also set much store by its partnership with Japan, which could be a template for similar projects, as a counter to China's BRI.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Topic:

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

Topic:

- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Q. With Sri Lanka, cancelling East Container Terminal and walking out of international commitments raises a doubt about future credibility of the nation. Also, for India, it shows the indirect impact of Chinese influence and meddling in India's neighbourhood by China. Discuss.

04

Biden's Presidency and Multilateralism

Why in News?

- ◆ The Chinese People's Liberation Army's southern theatre command issued a statement saying it deployed warships and aircraft to warn and drive away USS John S McCain from near the Xisha Island (Paracel Island in English) in the South China Sea (SCS) region.
- ◆ China expelled the US warship and now the whole world is looking towards US with recalculating foreign equation.

Background

- ◆ Four years of Donald Trump's presidency noticed elevated tensions between the world powers over a variety of points together with disputes within the SCS area and Taiwan.
- ◆ China claims practically the complete SCS, however that declare is disputed by a number of maritime neighbours together with The Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia moreover Vietnam and Taiwan (which China claims to be its breakaway area).
- ◆ Tian Junli, spokesperson of the Chinese theatre command, mentioned the passage of the US warship "seriously" infringed upon China's sovereignty and safety, undermined regional peace and stability, and intentionally disrupted the "good atmosphere" of peace, friendship, and cooperation within the SCS maritime zone.
- ◆ In an assertion, the US Navy mentioned its warship was asserting worldwide navigational rights within the SCS area.
- ◆ For all the opprobrium that the Trump presidency has elicited, his unpredictable China policy merits scrutiny from both the US and Indian perspective.

- ◆ Trump forced the US establishment and the world at large to acknowledge the predatory nature of China's global aspirations and its corrosive impact.
- ◆ How this policy shift towards Beijing will unfold in the Biden years will be extremely relevant for the global strategic order and its regional/Asian implications will be even more acute for Delhi.

Significant Indicator for India

- ◆ Post-Galwan, the China challenge looms large for India and the recent statement by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat is pertinent.
- ◆ In relation to the current military stand-off in Ladakh, General Rawat asserted: "Our posturing is unambiguous. We will not accept any shifting of the LAC. In the overall security calculus, border confrontations, transgressions, unprovoked tactical military actions spiralling into a larger conflict therefore cannot be discounted."
- ◆ How the Biden team will frame the China challenge to Indian sovereignty in relation to abiding US interest will be a critical indicator for the Narendra Modi government in mediating the Delhi-Beijing relationship.
- ◆ The more recent defence cooperation traction accorded to the bilateral track, by way of Delhi signing the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement and inviting Australia to be part of the Malabar naval exercises, is illustrative of the potential that needs to be explored.

On Multilateralism

- ◆ The Biden presidency offers the hope that the US commitment to multilateralism will be back on

track and here there are many areas where Delhi could be a relevant stakeholder in global load-sharing. It is encouraging to note that in his statements, Biden has promised to bring the US back into the World Health Organization (WHO)'s fold and focused on the need to give this challenge the highest policy priority in relation to COVID-19.

- ◆ There are many areas/sectors in the multilateral basket relevant to India and paradoxically, China, that a Biden presidency could enable if it remains committed to a pragmatic and equitable global partnership.
- ◆ With the US now preparing for greater spending, we should look for greater market access, which India is entitled to, under the WTO's General Scheme of Preferences.
- ◆ The Trump Administration denied such access to India on crucial Indian exports like aluminum, steel and medical products. India would have to initiate early negotiations with the Biden team to get included in the US Generalized System of Preferences, permitting easier market access for Indian products.
- ◆ Biden will return to the traditional US policy of close consultations with European partners like the UK, France, Germany and Italy, on important foreign policy and security issues. These old American allies will also be consulted in formulating policies towards the Islamic world. While traditional policies of security and international support for Israel will continue, Biden will not allow Israel to determine and guide US policies on Iran, and on the Palestinian issue. He will take a more measured position towards Iran, seeking to end sanctions imposed by Trump.
- ◆ Most importantly for India, the US policies towards China and

India will be carefully coordinated with European Allies, and other members of the “Quad”. The US will continue to act firmly against China, opposing its extravagant territorial claims on its maritime borders with virtually every maritime neighbour. But, given the economic mess he has inherited from his predecessor, the primary focus of attention of Biden will be on setting his country’s house in order.

Other International Arenas

- ◆ Joe Biden now has strong views on China. He would like to moderate and contain China’s aggressive policies across the Indo-Pacific Region. He will carry along his European allies in the conduct of these policies. He has indicated that the US would counter China’s threats to seize territory, on their maritime boundaries, from countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia.
- ◆ China will also no longer get easy access to US technology and investment, in sensitive areas. The US has welcomed moves by India to avoid getting overdependent on Chinese imports and investments.
- ◆ There could, however, be differences on the approach of India and the US, on relations with Russia. The Obama and Trump Administrations did not interfere with India’s defence acquisitions from Russia. There are also concerns about a hasty American withdrawal from Afghanistan, at a time when the Taliban, armed and equipped by Pakistan army, is

seizing more territory. Pakistan’s logistical and armed support to the Taliban within its own borders is now well documented. The Afghan government would need air support from the US, to deal with this situation.

Missed India

- ◆ US President Joe Biden promised a new era after the scattershot foreign policy of his predecessor, Donald Trump, declaring “America is back” on the global stage in his first diplomatic address as president on 5th Feb 2021.
- ◆ Biden’s speech was a full-throated attempt to vanquish doubts, and convince Americans of the value of a forceful international approach.
- ◆ In his speech, Biden signalled aggressive approaches to China and Russia, urged Myanmar’s military leaders to halt their coup, and declared an end to US support for a Saudi Arabia-led military campaign in Yemen.
- ◆ But what about India? A long time ally of the US, a member of the Quad, and one of America’s most important partners.
- ◆ The new vice-president - Kamala Harris - is a half-Indian herself. There are at least 20 Indian-Americans in Biden’s White House team. But the new US president made no mention of India. Not once.
- ◆ Historically, Democrats have been friendlier with India - from John F Kennedy to Barack Obama. And all American presidents have tried to improve ties with India.

- ◆ India also sits at the centre of the strategic architecture, and the US envisions for the Indo-Pacific region. New Delhi is Washington’s biggest Asian partner.
- ◆ Their interests coincide as far as Chinese aggression is concerned.
- ◆ So Joe Biden’s omission of India from his diplomatic address may or may not have been intentional. But it certainly raises questions.

Way Forward

- ◆ In his agenda-setting foreign policy speech, US President Joe Biden has made China the principal adversary of America, but failed to make any mention of the Indo-Pacific region or of India in confronting it.
- ◆ Biden did not mention the Indo-Pacific or, while speaking of allies, the Quad or India. But he mentioned his conversations with the leaders of Japan, South Korea and Australia in the region with a view to “rebuilding the muscle of democratic alliances that have atrophied over the past few years of neglect”.
- ◆ India is calculating its US relations and has to observe US reply on China’s aggression. Any back step by US will surely put a question mark on the Quad too. 🔄🔄🔄

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. Rise of China on the global forum and open challenge to US authority has raised many nations including India to re-consider US as a credible ally. Discuss.

05

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons : An Understanding

Why in News?

- ◆ The first multilateral nuclear disarmament treaty in more than two decades came into force just after midnight on 22 Jan 2021, hailed by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General as “an important step towards a world free of nuclear weapons”.
- ◆ António Guterres said that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) also represents a “strong demonstration of support for multilateral approaches to nuclear disarmament” overall.
- ◆ None of the nuclear states have signed it.

Introduction

- ◆ The TPNW secured the 50 ratifications it needed to then enter into force, at the end of last October (2020). The campaigners, who had steered momentum towards the milestone, described it then as “a new chapter for nuclear disarmament”.
- ◆ Honduras became the 50th country to ratify the treaty, which automatically led it to enter into force in 90 days on January 22, 2021. The treaty currently has 86 signatories, with 52 member states having submitted instruments of ratification. In South Asia, Bangladesh and Maldives have ratified the agreement.
- ◆ The accord was approved initially by 122 nations at the UN General Assembly in 2017, but it was civil society groups led by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) which had put in the “decades of activism” to secure the number of countries required to make it a reality.

- ◆ So far however, the main nuclear powers of the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China and France, have not signed the accord.
- ◆ The treaty declares that countries ratifying it must “never under any circumstances develop, test, produce, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.”
- ◆ In a statement released last October by the civil society and campaign umbrella group ICAN – which won the Nobel Peace Prize for its work in 2017 – it said that once the treaty comes into force, all States parties will need to follow through on their promises, and abide by its prohibitions.
- ◆ The treaty was approved by the 193-member UN General Assembly on July 7, 2017 by a vote of 122 in favour, the Netherlands opposed, and Singapore abstaining. Among countries voting in favor was Iran. The five nuclear powers and four other countries known or believed to possess nuclear weapons — India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel — boycotted negotiations and the vote on the treaty, along with many of their allies.

Provisions of the Treaty

- ◆ The treaty, which has a 24-para preamble, lists numerous prohibitions on the use of nuclear weapons, including undertakings to not develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. It also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory.
- ◆ TPNW makes it obligatory for states to “suppress” any of the prohibited activities in its territory, compensate and provide necessary

assistance to persons affected by nuclear testing in any way, and also take remedial action to undo environmental damage in areas under its jurisdiction which have been affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons.

- ◆ The provisions of the treaty are not binding on non-signatories.
- ◆ The treaty, due to its very provisions, did not find much support from the P-5 countries of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) despite being party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This is since it prevents countries from participating in any nuclear weapons-related activities, including development, testing, possession, stockpile, use, or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

India's Stance

- ◆ India had refused to be a party to the talks, which concluded in New York on 7 July 2017, when the treaty was being negotiated at the UN. Earlier in March that year, New Delhi had abstained on this resolution and provided a detailed ‘Explanation of Vote’.
- ◆ India expressed its position on the issue of its non-participation in these negotiations at a Plenary of the Conference on Disarmament, also held in March 2017.
- ◆ After the treaty entered into effect, India issued a statement reiterating that it “did not participate in the negotiations on the TPNW and has consistently made it clear that it will not become a party to the Treaty”. India does not support the Treaty, and shall not be bound by any of the obligations that may arise from it. India believes that this Treaty does not constitute or contribute to the development of customary international law; nor does it set any new standards or norms.

- ◆ The reference to customary international law echoed India's statement issued just after the adoption of the treaty in 2017.
- ◆ That was, perhaps, a throwback to the suit brought against India and other nuclear states by Marshall Islands in the International Court of Justice that they had failed to "pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament". The argument against India was that while indeed it was not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it could not violate the NPT's disarmament provisions which Marshall Islands claimed applied to all states as a matter of customary international law.
- ◆ Customary international law refers to "international obligations arising from established international practices, as opposed to obligations arising from formal written conventions and treaties".
- ◆ In October 2016, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled in favour of India by nine votes to seven on technical grounds, refusing to admit the Marshall Islands case, as there was no existing legal dispute between the two countries.
- ◆ Also, the NPT only recognises a country as a nuclear power if tests were conducted before 1967. India is not ready to sign the treaty as a non-nuclear weapons state.
- ◆ After the 1974 Pokhran nuclear test, India was denied nuclear technology by the West, with sanctions led by the US.
- ◆ In 1992, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), a multilateral export control regime, decided, as a matter of policy, to stop all nuclear commerce with countries that have not ratified all NPT safeguards. This basically made India an outcast, boosting the country's confidence in self-reliance and reiterating the philosophy of expanding nuclear powers on its own with certain safeguards. In September 2008, the NSG exempted India though it had not ratified the NPT.
- ◆ In 2006, India signed a civil nuclear deal with the US, which was the first implicit recognition of India as a nuclear power. The core of this agreement was the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- ◆ In 2017, India joined the Wassenaar Arrangement, to build up a strong case for its entry into the NSG. Like the NSG, Wassenaar is a group of elite countries that subscribe to arms export control. The agreement ensures greater transparency in the exchange of conventional arms, dual-use goods, and technologies. All UNSC members are part of the agreement except China.
- ◆ Prior to this, India acceded to the Missile Technology Control Regime (CTBT), primarily because it feels they are discriminatory — while non-nuclear states are not allowed to have nuclear weapons, nuclear-weapon states have no obligation to give them up.

Growth of India as Nuclear Power

- ◆ Currently, India possesses approximately 150 nuclear weapons that it can launch from missiles and aircraft. It spent approximately \$2.3 billion in building and maintaining its nuclear weapons.
- ◆ In the past too, India has refrained from signing nuclear disarmament treaties such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and Comprehensive Nuclear Ban Treaty

(MTCR) in 2016 while in 2018, it was admitted to the Australia Group.

India: Policy Choice

- ◆ Being home to one of the second largest population that shares its border with China which is a hostile nation and a nuclear power and Pakistan which is also a nuclear-power and a belligerent nation.
- ◆ India's move towards nuclear weapons came after China conducted its nuclear tests and India had already suffered a military defeat in 1962.
- ◆ Signing peace treaty and banning nuclear weapons for India will make India vulnerable if the hostile nations with proven records of war has not ratified and taken concrete steps for disarmament.

Way Forward

- ◆ The TPNW turns back the clock on verification and disarmament and is dangerous to the half-century-old Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, considered the cornerstone of global nonproliferation efforts.
- ◆ The TPNW is and will remain divisive in the international community and risk further entrenching divisions in existing nonproliferation and disarmament fora that offer the only realistic prospect for consensus-based progress. <<<

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. Discuss the provisions and significance of UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). What are the reasons for India not ratifying such a global treaty?

06

Ageing Water Infrastructure : An Emerging Global Risk

Why in News?

- Over a thousand large dams in India will be roughly 50-years-old in 2025 and such aging structures across the world pose a growing threat, according to a United Nations (UN) report which notes that by 2050, most people on Earth will live downstream of tens of thousands of dams built in the 20th century.

Introduction

- The report, titled 'Ageing water infrastructure: An emerging global risk' and compiled by United Nations University's Canadian-based Institute for Water, Environment and Health, says most of the 58,700 large dams worldwide were constructed between 1930 and 1970 with a design life of 50 to 100 years.
- It said at 50 years, a large concrete dam "would most probably begin to express signs of ageing." Ageing signs include increasing cases of dam failures, progressively increasing costs of dam repair and maintenance, increasing reservoir sedimentation, and loss of a dam's functionality and effectiveness, "strongly interconnected" manifestations.
- "By 2050, most people on Earth will live downstream of tens of thousands of large dams built in the 20th century, many of them already operating at or beyond their design life," according to the UN University analysis.
- The analysis includes dam decommissioning or ageing case studies from the U.S., France, Canada, India, Japan, and Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Lead author and UNU-INWEH Senior Researcher Duminda Perera said the problem of ageing large dams today confronts a relatively

small number of countries — 93% of all the world's large dams are located in just 25 nations.

- The pace of large dam construction has dropped dramatically in the last four decades and continues to decline in part because "the best locations for such dams globally have been progressively diminishing as nearly 50% of global river volume is already fragmented or regulated by dams.
- There are also strong concerns regarding the environmental and social impacts of dams, and large dams in particular, as well as emerging ideas and practices on the alternative types of water storage, nature-based solutions, and types of energy production beyond hydropower.
- Public safety, escalating maintenance costs, reservoir sedimentation, and restoration of a natural river ecosystem are among the reasons driving dam decommissioning, the report said, adding that overall, dam decommissioning should be seen as equally important as dam building in the overall planning process on water storage infrastructure developments.

Situation of Dams in India

- In India, there are over 1,115 large dams that will be roughly 50-years-old in 2025, more than 4,250 large dams in the country will be over 50-years-old in 2050 and 64 large dams will be more than 150-years-old in 2050.
- The report said that approximately 3.5 million people are at risk if India's Mullaperiyar dam in Kerala, built over 100 years ago, "were to fail".
- The dam, in a seismically active area, shows significant structural flaws and its management is a

contentious issue between Kerala and Tamil Nadu States.

- In the absence of a proper legal framework, safety and maintenance of these large numbers of dams are a cause of concern.

Bleak Global Situation

- Worldwide, the huge volume of water stored behind large dams is estimated at 7,000 to 8,300 cubic kilometres — enough to cover about 80% of Canada's landmass under a meter of water.
- The report's co-author Vladimir Smakhtin, Director of UNU-INWEH, said the report aims to attract global attention to the creeping issue of ageing water storage infrastructure and stimulate international efforts to deal with this emerging, rising water risk.
- "Underlined is the fact that the rising frequency and severity of flooding and other extreme environmental events can overwhelm a dam's design limits and accelerate a dam's ageing process. Decisions about decommissioning, therefore, need to be taken in the context of a changing climate.

Ageing Signs

- Ageing signs include increasing cases of dam failures, progressively increasing costs of dam repair and maintenance, increasing reservoir sedimentation, and loss of a dam's functionality and effectiveness, "strongly interconnected" manifestations.
- Dams that are well designed, constructed and maintained can "easily" reach 100 years of service but predicts an increase in "decommissioning", a phenomenon gaining pace in the US and Europe, as economic and practical limitations prevent ageing dams from being

upgraded or if their original use is now obsolete.

- ◆ The climate change will accelerate the dam ageing process.

Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)

- ◆ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the PM Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase II & Phase III with the financial assistance of the World Bank (WB), and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to improve the safety and operational performance of selected dams across the whole country, along with institutional strengthening with system wide management approach.
- ◆ DRIP Phase II & Phase III Objectives
 - ◆ To improve the safety and performance of selected existing dams and associated appurtenances in a sustainable manner;
 - ◆ To strengthen the dam safety institutional setup in participating states as well as at central level; and
 - ◆ To explore the alternative incidental means at few of selected dams to generate the incidental revenue for sustainable operation and maintenance of dams.
- ◆ DRIP Phase II & Phase III Components
 - ◆ Rehabilitation and improvement of dams and associated appurtenances,
 - ◆ Dam safety institutional strengthening in participating States and Central agencies,
 - ◆ Exploration of alternative incidental means at few of

selected dams to generate the incidental revenue for sustainable operation and maintenance of dams, and

- ◆ Project management.
- ◆ DRIP Funding
- ◆ The project cost is Rs 10,211 crore. The Project will be implemented over a period of 10 years duration in two Phases, each of six years duration with two years overlapping from April, 2021 to March, 2031.
- ◆ The share of external funding is Rs 7,000 crore of the total project cost, and balance Rs 3,211 crore is to be borne by the concerned Implementing Agencies (IAs). The contribution of Central Government is Rs 1,024 crore as loan liability and Rs 285 crore as counter-part funding for Central Component.

Dam Safety Bill

- ◆ It was passed by Lok Sabha on Aug 02, 2019.
- ◆ The Bill provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all specified dams across the country. These are dams with height more than 15 metres, or height between 10 metres to 15 metres with certain design and structural conditions.
- ◆ It constitutes two national bodies: the National Committee on Dam Safety, whose functions include evolving policies and recommending regulations regarding dam safety standards; and the National Dam Safety Authority, whose functions include implementing policies of the National Committee, providing technical assistance to State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs), and resolving matters between SDSOs of states or between a SDSO and any dam owner in that state.

- ◆ If the bill is made into a law, then dam owners will have to provide a dam safety unit in each dam. The dam safety unit will be required to inspect the dam before and after the monsoon session, and also during and after natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods.
- ◆ The bill requires dam owners to prepare emergency action plans. Risk-assessment studies will also have to be undertaken by owners, regularly.
- ◆ The primary objection to the bill is that is unconstitutional, as water is one of the items on the State List.

Way Forward

- ◆ Worldwide, the huge volume of water stored behind large dams is estimated at 7,000 to 8,300 cubic kilometres - enough to cover about 80 per cent of Canada's landmass under a meter of water.
- ◆ By 2050, most people on Earth will live downstream of tens of thousands of large dams built in the 20th century, many of them already operating at or beyond their design life, according to a United Nations University analysis.
- ◆ Dams can pose a huge public safety threat and needs to be addressed at the earliest. The amount of destruction caused by the breaking down of such structure could prove to be catastrophic to the extent of wiping down districts and submerging huge areas putting lives and economy at a greater risk. 🏰🏰🏰

General Studies Paper- III

Topic

- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Q. With respect to the condition of large scale dams, highlight the rising voices for safety and concerns along with the situation in India. Also mention the steps taken by India in this regard.

07

Big Tech Model and Related Threats

Why in News?

- ◆ There are ongoing investigations worldwide, including in the European Union and the United States (U.S.), on the abuse of monopolistic power by the Big Tech firms, especially Facebook and Google.
- ◆ Many compare this with the earlier antitrust investigations in the U.S. on the telecom industry and the break-up of the AT&T dictated by the Department of Justice in its Modified Final Judgment in 1982.

Introduction

- ◆ For much of their existence, the big four US tech giants—Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google—have been viewed as scrappy startups. Consumers loved their products, regulators largely looked away, and competitors either got acquired or fell by the wayside. That run of good fortune has been under threat for a while, but 2020 may well mark the beginning of the end.
- ◆ In US, a 16-month congressional investigation into Amazon, Apple, Google and Facebook has found that the tech giants hold "monopoly power" in key business segments and have abused their dominance in the marketplace, in a full-throated condemnation of the giants.
- ◆ The findings set the stage for possible future legislation

designed to rein in Big Tech, even as antitrust enforcers at the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission gear up for potential litigation against some of the companies.

- ◆ US politicians are of course divided along party lines and are driven by motivations that don't necessarily align, but strangely, there is almost complete unanimity on one aspect: Big Tech has a track record of anti-competitive behaviour and something must be done.
- ◆ While one of the proposed solutions in the US Congress' report is a structural break up of these firms into multiple entities in order to restrain their market power, it also hints at possible new trigger points for anti-competitive investigations in the future. In effect, a legal update for the internet age is in the works.
- ◆ US action also sends an important signal to other regulators. Europe is reportedly preparing a "hit list" of 20 large tech firms that could potentially face tougher regulations. Amazon and Google have, meanwhile, had recurrent run-ins with the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Big Tech model

- ◆ Beyond the widening scope for potential antitrust action against the top four US tech giants, what also matters perhaps is some reckoning on the model that they

have championed which many internet startups have gladly adopted. While consumers have undeniably benefited, allegations of market concentration, harm to dependent economic actors (from sellers and advertisers to delivery persons), and extractive data collection fuelled by lax privacy safeguards abound all across the internet ecosystem.

- ◆ With a handful of internet companies projected to control 30% of the world's gross economic output by 2030, the essential question before many regulators across the world is this: Is free (or cheap) too high a price to pay under certain specific circumstances?
- ◆ In India, Reliance Jio even brought a variant of this model to telecom, by offering free services for nearly a year after its launch in 2016.
- ◆ We have never thought of making laws against anything that is free in India
- ◆ The outgoing Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) chairman R.S. Sharma. "We didn't think such a day would come. The general attitude is: Free mein mil raha hai, kya problem hai (It's free, so what is the problem)." But digital monopolies, free or otherwise, could have very serious implications for citizens and democracies.

- ◆ Even during the net neutrality debate, Facebook got its users to send 1.8 million (templated) emails to Trai which all said "We love free basics". This is akin to weaponizing users. What happens when they start using such methods during the political process?

Threat of Big Tech

- ◆ Big Tech firms have acquired extraordinary amounts of data on individuals. How we browse, what goods we covet, where we shop, what shows we watch, what music we listen to, where we travel, who our friends are, who we follow — all this information is now sitting in vast server farms around the world. At a click, Big Tech barons can summon up this information and sell it to whoever they want. Moreover, this transaction happens outside the country beyond the reach of our tax authorities. So Big Tech takes full advantage of a country's prosperity yet makes limited tax contributions.
- ◆ As Big Tech has become pervasive, its conduct has to be evaluated across multiple dimensions. First, are markets contestable and fair? Big Tech often engages in competitive practices that require detailed scrutiny by the Competition Commission of India. These practices include tying or bundling different products and services together, acquisition of competitors, predatory pricing, and exclusive arrangements with the trade.

- ◆ e-commerce platforms have the ability to make or break millions of small merchants. Their pricing and promotion decisions can be managed subtly to favour some merchants and their own private label products.
- ◆ We are the world's largest democracy and will soon be the largest digital nation. We cannot allow foreign powers to manipulate narratives and distort public opinion. Technology-driven economic activity will soon be close to a fifth of our economy.

US Actions Shaping India's Digital Landscape

- ◆ The unfair business practices of Big Tech firms that have been well documented in the US are also widely prevalent in the Indian market.
- ◆ But the broad direction of US regulation matters for another reason. US authorities helped in capacity building and guiding Competition Commission of India (CCI) when it got off the ground in 2003.
- ◆ CCI even had an antitrust division - a distinctly US concept, originating from the break-up of monopoly entities which operated as trusts in that country in the 1890s).
- ◆ These contexts and debates (in the US) will shape what happens in other countries too.
- ◆ India has two possible paths ahead: adopt progressive new antitrust approaches which may emerge from the ongoing global

churn that could help create more innovation-friendly markets or adopt a narrow nationalistic plank and characterize the problem as merely a "foreign" monopoly concern.

- ◆ The direction of policy on data sovereignty seems to be about creating opportunities for large Indian businesses. This could easily create the same types of monopolies in the Indian market.

Emerging Monopolies in India

- ◆ India already has its own local monopoly concerns. A recent analysis found that one-sixth of the country's business sectors have a dominant firm that controls over 70% of all sales. Indian businesses have often resorted to pointing fingers at foreign firms in order to cover their own tracks.
- ◆ Even the recent dispute over a new Google Play Store fee rapidly descended into an Indian startups vs foreign company fight. The goal should not be to reign in global Big Tech by creating a domestic Big Tech.
- ◆ Threat of Reliance dominating key markets is real and the competition authority should step in.
- ◆ E-commerce is likely to be a particularly tricky minefield in the days ahead. In a recent CCI market study—released just before the pandemic in January 2020—the regulator came close to saying Flipkart and Amazon indulged in anti-competitive

behavior via mechanisms such as deep discounts. The practice of exclusive partnerships between smartphone brands and e-commerce firms has also come under regulatory scrutiny. Now, with the pandemic giving a boost to online retail—thereby raising the stakes—and Jio positioning itself as an Indian rival to American giants, conflicts are only bound to rise.

Atamirbhar Digital India Foundation

- ◆ In November, the CCI had written to startup founders, collating their view on Google abusing its dominant position in the operating system market.
- ◆ Founders of Indian startups have come together to form an indigenous startup association, Atamirbhar Digital India Foundation (ADIF), as a representative body for domestic technology firms to ensure growth and development of the country's digital economy.
- ◆ The association will put forth the views of these startups and new-age tech firms as it looks to advise the government and sector regulators with legal and policy framework, and design new solutions.

- ◆ ADIF, which is expected to create a knowledge hub and a repository of best practices for building digital products and services, will open chapters in 25 cities in the coming months and expand membership in Tier-2 and 3 cities to promote industry-wide participation.
- ◆ The entity is registered as a non-profit company under Section 8 of Companies Act, 2013.
- ◆ The association comes at a time when Indian startups have been discontent and actively lobbying against Google's new Play Billing policy, which has made it mandatory for Indian developers using Google Play to pay 30% commission for every in-app purchase. This sparked a debate in India's technology ecosystem, with several founders accusing Google of abusing its market dominance.
- ◆ Messaging giant WhatsApp has also been facing the ire of Indian users after its recent update of terms of service, which includes sharing data with parent Facebook. This led to several Indian users boycotting the platform to join instant messaging apps such as Telegram and Signal.

Way Forward

- ◆ A better solution for the Indian market would be to expand our current understanding of consumer welfare to include the seller on two-sided platforms in addition to strong laws protecting data and breaking monopolies.
- ◆ If you are an advertiser on Facebook or a seller on Amazon, you are a consumer too because you are using their product. Vertical integration in itself is not wrong if there is platform neutrality and everyone (the owner of the platform as well as the third-party) is treated equally.
- ◆ This is going to be a prolonged tug of war as India's economy digitises more. The tech ecosystem has a tendency to produce natural monopolies, which can then distort markets. 

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

Q. Monopoly by the big technology companies in controlling and regulating the internet while claiming to be the platforms are a potent threat to markets and democracies worldwide. Discuss.

7

IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01

Draft Arctic Policy of India

1. Why in News?

- India has recently released a draft Arctic Policy document in order to solicit public comments.



2. Arctic Policy and Other Nations

- The Arctic region comprises the Arctic Ocean and parts of countries such as Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Russia, USA (Alaska), Finland, Sweden and Iceland. These countries together form the core of the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum.
- These nations set policy guidelines about their future Arctic interactions and likely developmental goals.
- However, others outside the Arctic, such as EU, UK, Netherlands, China, Korea and Japan have defined guidelines and, in many instances, dedicated departments and ministries to handle Arctic affairs.
- The European nations have report-like policy papers, with large sections dedicated to Arctic research, on-board state-owned polar ice-class vessels, well-manned stations in the Arctic and collaborative drilling and exploration work countries have undertaken, indicative of large financial outlays. The policy papers significantly flag security and political concerns, among other goals. Netherlands and Spain also present a polar outlook, more science-oriented in its approach.
- On the other hand, China presents a white paper, with numbered sections and a conclusion, serving perhaps as an inspiration for India's draft policy.
- While, Korea and Japan provide succinct summaries, profiling their intent briefly. Unlike Europe, the document in both Korea and Japan have emanated from the ocean-related scientific ministries.

6. Benefits for India

- Arctic research will help India's scientific community to study melting rates of the third pole – the Himalayan glaciers, which are endowed with the largest freshwater reserves in the world outside the geographic poles.
- India would also like to contribute in ensuring that as the Arctic becomes more accessible, the harnessing of its resources is done sustainably and in consonance with best practices formulated by bodies such as the Arctic Council.

3. India in Arctic

- India became an Observer in the Arctic Council for the first time in 2013; its membership in that body was renewed for a second five-year term in 2018.
- British India signed the Svalbard Treaty – which, while recognizing Norway's sovereignty over Spitsbergen, also allowed other signatories free access to the region along with maintaining a commitment to not militarizing it – in 1920.
- Independent India's engagement with the Arctic started in 2007 with a scientific expedition to the region.
- India now maintains a permanent presence in the region through a research base, Himadri, and two observatories, in Kongsfjorden and Ny Alesund.

4. Svalbard Treaty

- On February 9, 1920, Norway and eight other countries signed the Svalbard Treaty (originally the Spitsbergen Treaty) in Paris.
- The Treaty entered into force in 1925, and Svalbard became part of the Kingdom of Norway.
- The treaty, now with nearly 50 signatories, sets out that:
 - ☛ Spitsbergen is under Norwegian administration and legislation.
 - ☛ Citizens of all signatory nations have free access and the right of economic activities.
 - ☛ Spitsbergen remains demilitarized. No nation, including Norway, is allowed to permanently station military personnel or equipment on Spitsbergen.

5. Five Pillars of India's Arctic Policy

- India's draft policy draws from Arctic influences on tropical and sub-tropical climate, leveraging Indian monsoon teleconnections with the Arctic as a critical engagement. Greater interest in Arctic science is envisaged to synergise Himalaya centric cryospheric studies too.
- The five pillars of India's Arctic Policy are:
 - ☛ Scientific Research;
 - ☛ Economics and Human Development;
 - ☛ Connectivity;
 - ☛ Global Governance and International Cooperation; and Development of Indian Human Resource Capabilities.

02

AstroSat's Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope

1. Why in News?

- Recently, Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have spotted rare hot Ultraviolet (UV)-bright stars in Milky Way's massive intriguing globular cluster called NGC 2808 that is said to have at least five generations of stars.
- The team captured these stars using Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (UVIT) onboard AstroSat, India's first multi-wavelength space satellite.



2. Findings by the Astronomers

- The team of scientists from IIA combined the UVIT data with observations made using other space missions such as the Hubble Space Telescope and the Gaia telescope along with ground-based optical observations.
- These rare hot Ultraviolet (UV) bright stars, whose inner core is almost exposed, making them very hot, exist in the late stages of evolution of a Sun-like star.
- It is not clear how these stars end their lives as not many of them are detected in these fast-evolving phases, making this study crucial.
- With spectacular UV images of the cluster, they distinguished the hot UV-bright stars from the relatively cooler red giant and main-sequence stars which appear dim in these images.
- Most of the stars were found to have evolved from a solar stage called the horizontal branch stars with hardly any outer envelope. Thus, they were bound to skip the last major phase of life called the asymptotic giant phase and directly become dead remnants or white dwarfs.
- Such UV-bright stars are speculated to be the reason for the UV radiation coming from old stellar systems such as elliptical galaxies which are devoid of young blue stars. Hence, it is all the more important to observe more such stars to understand their properties.

3. Significance

- The scientists combined the UVIT data with observations made using other space missions such as the Hubble Space Telescope and the Gaia telescope along with ground-based optical observations.
- About 34 UV-bright stars were found to be members of the globular cluster. From the data, the team derived the properties of these stars such as their surface temperatures, luminosities and radii.
- One of the UV-bright stars was found to be about 3,000 times brighter than the Sun with a surface temperature of about 1,00,000-K (Kelvin). The properties of these stars were then used to place them on what astronomers call the Hertzsprung-Russel (HR) diagram along with theoretical models to throw light on the characteristics of their parent stars and to predict their future evolution.

5. AstroSat Mission: Objectives

- To understand high energy processes in binary star systems containing neutron stars and black holes;
- Estimate magnetic fields of neutron stars;
- Study star birth regions and high energy processes in star systems lying beyond our galaxy;
- Detect new briefly bright X-ray sources in the sky; and
- Perform a limited deep field survey of the Universe in the Ultraviolet region.

4. About AstroSat

- AstroSat is the first dedicated Indian astronomy mission aimed at studying celestial sources in X-ray, optical and UV spectral bands simultaneously.
- The payloads cover the energy bands of Ultraviolet (Near and Far), limited optical and X-ray regime (0.3 keV to 100keV).
- One of the unique features of AstroSat mission is that it enables the simultaneous multi-wavelength observations of various astronomical objects with a single satellite.
- AstroSat with a lift-off mass of 1515 kg was launched on September 28, 2015 to the equator by PSLV-C30 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- In September 2020, AstroSat completed five years in orbit.

03

New Chinese Village in Arunachal Pradesh

1. Why in News?

- Recently, China said its construction of a village across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh was “beyond reproach” because it had “never recognised” Arunachal.
- The construction of the village has been seen by analysts as a move to bolster China’s claim to the area, and part of a broader recent push by China to build civilian settlements in disputed frontier areas, which it has also done with Bhutan.



2. Ground Zero

- The “model village” in question, built in Arunachal’s Upper Subansiri district, has been in adverse occupation since 1959.
- The site of the village is close to where China had attacked an Assam Rifles post in 1959, in what is known as the Longju incident, and they have maintained their position there ever since.
- China has been building similar infrastructure in all sectors along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and Indian forces are monitoring them. India too is strengthening the infrastructure on its side.
- There are close to two dozen spots along the entire length of the LAC in all sectors where India and China do not agree on its alignment.
- China had earlier built a permanent construction of military barracks in this area.
- Another village built last year, called Pangda, was built 2-3 km inside what Bhutan sees as its territory, in another disputed area.

3. India Stance

- Indian government has seen recent reports on China undertaking construction work along the border areas with India and satellite images of the village, built between November 2019 and November 2020.
- China has undertaken such infrastructure construction activity in the past several years.
- In response, Indian government too has stepped up border infrastructure including the construction of roads, bridges etc, which has provided much needed connectivity to the local population along the border.
- The image located a couple of kilometres across the LAC, beyond what India sees as the border separating Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet, on the banks of Tsari Chu river in Upper Subansiri district in Arunachal.

5. Outlook

- The government remains committed to the objective of creating infrastructure along the border areas for the improvement of livelihood of its citizens, including in Arunachal Pradesh.
- India keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India’s security and takes all the necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

4. China’s Stance

- The Chinese Foreign Ministry said its position on the construction in Zangnan (or South Tibet, as China refers to Arunachal) region is consistent and clear.
- Chinese government never recognised Arunachal Pradesh as Indian Territory.
- According to Chinese officials, China’s development and construction activities within Indian Territory is normal. This is beyond reproach as it is in Chinese territory.

04 Traffic Violation Premium

1. Why in News?

- Recently, a working group set up by regulator Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) has suggested introduction of 'Traffic Violation Premium' in addition to own damage and third party and other types of motor insurance premium.
- The group has recommended inserting a fifth section to motor insurance called "Traffic Violation Premium" in addition to motor own damage insurance, basic third party insurance, additional third party insurance and compulsory personal accident premium.



2. Key Highlights

- The report has recommended a system of calculating traffic violation point's basis frequency and severity of different traffic offences.
- The amount of traffic violation premium will depend upon driving habits which will be determined by the number and types of challans, suggested the report of the working group on 'Linkage of Insurance Premium with Traffic Violation'.
- Traffic violation premium shall be payable by the registered owner of the vehicle, whether an individual or an entity. Effectively this means that the owner will take full responsibility for the traffic violations caused by the authorized vehicle driver.
- As per the table of offences provided by the working group, drinking driving will attract the highest penalty of 100 points, while wrong parking will have 10 points penalty. The amount of premium will be linked to these penalty points.

3. Motor Insurance and Traffic Violation Premium

- The data of traffic challans will be stored by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and shared with the Insurance Information Bureau of India (IIB) on a daily basis.
- Every motor insurance buyer, when he/she approaches any general insurer for any type of motor insurance, own damage or third party or package, will be assessed for his traffic violation points and motor insurance premium he/she needs to pay.
- In case of transfer of insurance of a vehicle after sale, the traffic violation premium would start from ground zero from the date of vehicle ownership transfer and build depending upon the traffic violations caused by vehicle after ownership transfer.
- The report said traffic violation premium will be charged only on the policy anniversary, once paid with any motor cover.
 - Traffic violation premium is a premium payable 'As On Date' and does not vary with the period of insurance cover.

6. Outlook

- The government has already introduced heavy penalties on different types of traffic violations in the amended Motor Vehicles Act, 2019. In addition, the Government of India is also focusing on Intelligent Traffic Management System in the Metropolitan and smart cities.
- In September 2019, the IRDAI constituted the Working Group to examine the establishment of a system of Linking Motor Insurance Premium with Traffic Violations.

4. Pilot Project

- High Powered committee for Traffic Management in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has recommended this to be run on a pilot basis in NCT of Delhi.
- The vehicles from other states, that cause traffic violation in NCT of Delhi, will have to pay traffic violation premium at the time of insuring their vehicle in their state, any time after causing traffic violation in NCT of Delhi.

5. Road Accidents Report

- According to Road Accidents Report, 2018 issued by Ministry of Road Transport, India witnessed 4.67 lakh road accidents that snuffed life out of 1.51 lakh citizens who were mostly in their productive age.
- India ranks first in the number of road accident deaths across the 199 countries reported in the World Road Statistics, 2018 followed by China and the US.

05

Four-tier Structure for Regulation of NBFCs

1. Why in News?

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a tighter regulatory framework for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) by creating a four-tier structure with a progressive increase in intensity of regulation.



5. Need of the Hour

- According to RBI, in view of the recent stress in the sector, it has become imperative to re-examine the suitability of this regulatory approach, especially when failure of an extremely large NBFC can precipitate systemic risks.
- The regulatory framework for NBFCs needs to be reoriented to keep pace with changing realities in the financial sector.

4. NBFC So Far

- The NBFC sector has seen tremendous growth in recent years.
- In last five years alone, size of balance sheet of NBFCs (including HFCs) has more than doubled from Rs 20.72 lakh crore (2015) to Rs 49.22 lakh crore (2020).

2. Key Highlights

- In its discussion paper on revised regulatory framework for NBFCs, the RBI has said the regulatory and supervisory framework of NBFCs should be based on a four-layered structure: Base Layer, Middle Layer, Upper Layer and a possible Top Layer.
- It has also proposed classification of non-performing assets (NPAs) of base layer NBFCs from 180 days to 90 days overdue.
 - ☛ NBFCs in lower layer will be known as NBFC-Base Layer (NBFC-BL).
 - ☛ NBFCs in middle layer will be known as NBFC-Middle Layer (NBFC-ML).
 - ☛ An NBFC in the Upper Layer will be known as NBFC-Upper Layer (NBFC-UL) and will invite a new regulatory superstructure.
 - ☛ There is also a Top Layer, ideally supposed to be empty.
- Once an NBFC is identified as NBFC-UL, it will be subject to enhanced regulatory requirement at least for four years from its last appearance in the category, even where it does not meet the parametric criteria in the subsequent year.

3. Revised Regulatory Framework for NBFCs: 4 Layers

- **Base Layer**
 - ☛ If the framework is visualised as a pyramid, the bottom of the pyramid, where least regulatory intervention is warranted, can consist of NBFCs, currently classified as non-systemically important NBFCs (NBFC-ND), NBFCP2P lending platforms, NBFCAA, NOFHC and Type I NBFCs.
- **Middle Layer**
 - ☛ As one moves up, the next layer can consist of NBFCs currently classified as systemically important NBFCs (NBFC-ND-SI), deposit taking NBFCs (NBFC-D), housing finance companies, IFCs, IDFs, SPDs and core investment companies.
 - ☛ The regulatory regime for this layer will be stricter compared to the base layer. Adverse regulatory arbitrage vis-à-vis banks can be addressed for NBFCs falling in this layer in order to reduce systemic risk spill-overs, where required.
- **Upper Layer**
 - ☛ Going further, the next layer can consist of NBFCs which are identified as systemically significant among.
 - ☛ This layer will be populated by NBFCs which have large potential of systemic spill-over of risks and have the ability to impact financial stability.
 - ☛ There is no parallel for this layer at present, as this will be a new layer for regulation.
 - ☛ The regulatory framework for NBFCs falling in this layer will be bank-like, albeit with suitable and appropriate modifications.
- **Top Layer**
 - ☛ It is possible that considered supervisory judgment might push some NBFCs from out of the upper layer of the systemically significant NBFCs for higher regulation/supervision.
 - ☛ These NBFCs will occupy the top of the upper layer as a distinct set. Ideally, this top layer of the pyramid will remain empty unless supervisors take a view on specific NBFCs.
 - ☛ In other words, if certain NBFCs lying in the upper layer are seen to pose extreme risks as per supervisory judgement, they can be put to higher and bespoke regulatory/supervisory requirements.

06

National Girl Child Day 2021

1. Why in News?

- Recently, India celebrated National Girl Child Day (NGCD) on January 24, an initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.



2. Girl Child Day: Significance

- The day was an initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2008.
- The objective of celebrating National Girl Child Day are:
 - Highlight the inequalities faced by girls in the country;
 - Promote awareness about the rights of a girl child; and
 - Generate awareness on importance of girl education, health and nutrition.
- To mark the day, the government organised awareness campaigns under Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save the girl child, Educate the girl child) schemes.
- NGCD 2021 is celebrated across the nation with objectives of generating awareness on the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and creates a positive environment around valuing the girl child.

3. Celebration in States

- The state of Punjab has announced January 2021 to be the 'month of Girl Child'. The scheme 'Dheeyan Di Lohri' has also been launched.
- The Odisha state government honours the individuals and organisations who have worked towards the cause of child marriage free villages on January 24 - the National Girl Child Day.
- Odisha has a child marriage prevalence of 21.3 % as against the national average of 26.8 %.

4. Forming New Values

- The Government issues simple directives for citizens which include:
 - ☛ celebrate the birth of girl child in the family and community,
 - ☛ take pride in daughters and oppose the mentality of 'Bojh' and 'ParayaDhan',
 - ☛ find ways to promote equality between boys and girls,
 - ☛ secure admission to & retention of girl child in schools,
 - ☛ engage men and boys to challenge gender stereotypes and roles and
 - ☛ educate and sensitize our sons to respect women and girls as equal members of society.

5. Schemes for the Girl Child Welfare

- National Education Policy (NEP)-2020
- NEP-2020 has introduced "Gender Inclusion Fund" for targeting the development of girl child.
- The fund will focus on ensuring 100% enrollment of girls in schooling and a record participation rate in higher education, decrease gender gaps at all levels, practice gender equity and inclusion in society, and improve the leadership capacity of girls through positive civil dialogues.
- Funds will also enable States to support and scale effective community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to girls and transgender students.
- Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports
- An exclusive component of the Khelo India Scheme focuses on barriers faced by girls and women to take part in sporting activities, and creating mechanisms to overcome these and increase participation. There is 161% increase in women participation at the Khelo India Games from 2018 to 2020.
- Department of Science and Technology (DST)
- DST has launched 'Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN)' Scheme to provide various career opportunities to women scientists and technologists. It is primarily aimed to bring gender parity in Science & Technology sector by inducting more women talent in the research & development domain through various programmes.
- Ministry of Skill Development
- Ministry of Skill Development is making efforts for building conducive ecosystem for skilling women in India. Out of 33 National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs), 19 NSTIs are providing skill training exclusively for women.

07 The Inequality Virus Report

1. Why in News?

- Recently, the 'Inequality Virus Report', released by Oxfam International, has found that the Covid pandemic deeply exacerbated existing inequalities in India and around the world.
- Oxfam India's findings are part of the Oxfam International report released on the opening day of the World Economic Forum's "Davos Dialogues".



2. Impact of the Pandemic on Rich and Poor

- As the pandemic stalled the economy, forcing millions of poor Indians out of jobs, the richest billionaires in India increased their wealth by 35 per cent.
- The wealth of Indian billionaires increased by 35 per cent during the lockdown and by 90 per cent since 2009 to \$422.9 billion ranking India sixth in the world after US, China, Germany, Russia and France.
- Since March, as the government announced possibly the strictest lockdown anywhere in the world, India's top 100 billionaires saw their fortunes increase by Rs 12.97 trillion.
- In stark contrast, 170,000 people lost their jobs every hour in the month of April 2020.

3. Impact on Informal Sector

- India's large informal workforce was the worst hit as it made up 75 per cent of the 122 million jobs lost.
- Informal workers had relatively fewer opportunities to work from home and suffered more job loss compared to the formal sector.
- The 40-50 million seasonal migrant workers, typically engaged working in construction sites, factories etc. were particularly distressed.

4. Education Inequalities

- Over the past year as education shifted online, India saw the digital divide worsening inequalities.
- On the one hand, private providers experienced exponential growth yet, on the other, just 3 per cent of the poorest 20 per cent of Indian households had access to a computer and just 9 per cent had access to the internet.

5. Health and Sanitation Inequalities

- Since India does not report case data desegregated by socio-economic or social categories, it is difficult to gauge the distribution of the disease amongst various communities.
- But India currently has the world's second-largest cumulative number of COVID-19 positive cases and globally, the poor, marginalised and vulnerable communities have higher rates of COVID-19 prevalence.
- The spread of disease was swift among poor communities, often living in cramped areas with poor sanitation and using shared common facilities such as toilets and water points.
- Only 6 per cent of the poorest 20 per cent households had access to non-shared sources of improved sanitation, compared to 93 per cent of the top 20 per cent households in India.
- In terms of caste, just 37.2 per cent of SC households and 25.9 per cent of ST households had access to non-shared sanitation facilities, compared to 65.7 per cent for the general population.

6. Gender Disparities and Domestic Violence

- The unemployment rate among women rose from already high 15 per cent before Covid to 18 per cent.
- This increase in unemployment of women can result in a loss to India's GDP of about 8 per cent or \$218 billion.
- Of the women who retained their jobs, as many 83% were subjected to a cut in income according to a survey by the Institute of Social Studies Trust.
- Beyond income and job losses, poorer women also suffered health wise because of the disruption in regular health services and Anganwadi centres.
- The pandemic also fuelled domestic violence against women. As of November 30, 2020, cases of domestic violence rose by almost 60% over the past 12 months.

7. Outlook

- There is an urgent need for policymakers to tax the wealthy individuals and rich corporates and use that money to invest in free quality public services and social protection to support everyone, from cradle to grave.
- Reducing inequalities is very important but it should be a medium-term target. Between growth and distribution, India must get the sequencing right.
- India needs to grow first before it can distribute. Otherwise, it can get stuck in a low-income equilibrium.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 Draft Arctic Policy of India

Q. With reference to India's Draft Arctic Policy, consider the following statements:

1. By this 'Draft Arctic Policy', it is the first time that, India has undertaken any major step towards Arctic exploration.
2. Currently India's interest in Arctic is dominated by environmental, human development and scientific concerns and contributing towards global governance issues.

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: (b)

Explanation

Statement 1 is incorrect. India has recently released a draft Arctic Policy document in order to solicit public comments. India became an Observer in the Arctic Council for the first time in 2013; its membership in that body was renewed for a second five-year term in 2018. India now maintains a permanent presence in the region through a research base, Himadri, and two observatories, in Kongsfjorden and Ny Alesund.

Statement 2 is correct. India's draft policy draws from Arctic influences on tropical and sub-tropical climate, leveraging Indian monsoon teleconnections with the Arctic as a critical engagement. The Five pillars of India's Arctic Policy are: Scientific Research; Economics and Human Development; Connectivity; Global Governance and International Cooperation; Development of Indian Human Resource Capabilities.



02 AstroSat's Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have spotted rare hot Ultraviolet (UV)-bright stars.
2. AstroSat is the first dedicated Indian astronomy mission aimed at studying celestial sources in X-ray, optical and UV spectral bands simultaneously.

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: (c)

Explanation

Both the statements are correct. Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have spotted rare hot Ultraviolet (UV)-bright stars in Milky Way's massive intriguing globular cluster called NGC 2808 that is said to have at least five generations of stars.

AstroSat is the first dedicated Indian astronomy mission aimed at studying celestial sources in X-ray, optical and UV spectral bands simultaneously.



03 New Chinese Village in Arunachal Pradesh

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. China's new land grabbing adventure has been recently reported from a border village from Arunachal Pradesh which was illegally occupied by China in 1959.
2. Arunachal Pradesh though has not been at the center of India - China dispute, it is a recent flare-up.
3. The said village is located in upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, it was taken when Chinese army attacked Assam Rifles post in 1959.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation Statement 1 is correct. Recently, China said its construction of a village across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh was "beyond reproach" because it had "never recognised" Arunachal. The construction of the village has been seen by analysts as a move to bolster China's claim to the area, and part of a broader recent push by China to build civilian settlements in disputed frontier areas, which it has also done with Bhutan.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The Chinese Foreign Ministry said its position on the construction in Zangnan (or South Tibet, as China refers to Arunachal) region is consistent and clear". Chinese government never recognised Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory. China had earlier built a permanent construction of military barracks in this area.

Statement 3 is correct. The "model village" in question, built in Arunachal's Upper Subansiri district, has been in adverse occupation since 1959. The site of the village is close to where China had attacked an Assam Rifles post in 1959, in what is known as the Longju incident, and they have maintained their position there ever since.



04 Traffic Violation Premium

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. India ranks first in the number of road accident deaths across the 199 countries followed by China and the US.
2. The vehicles from other states, that cause traffic violation in NCT of Delhi, will have to pay traffic violation premium at the time of insuring their vehicle in their state.
3. Traffic violation premium is a premium payable 'As On Date' and does not vary with the period of insurance cover.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation All the statements are correct. India ranks first in the number of road accident deaths across the 199 countries reported in the World Road Statistics, 2018 followed by China and the US.

The vehicles from other states, that cause traffic violation in NCT of Delhi, will have to pay traffic violation premium at the time of insuring their vehicle in their state, any time after causing traffic violation in NCT of Delhi.

Traffic violation premium is a premium payable 'As On Date' and does not vary with the period of insurance cover.



05

Four-tier Structure for Regulation of NBFCs

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a tighter regulatory framework for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) by creating a four-tier structure with a progressive increase in intensity of regulation.
2. In last five years alone, size of balance sheet of NBFCs (including HFCs) has greatly reduced from Rs 49.22 lakh crore (2020) to Rs 20.72 lakh crore (2015).

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. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a tighter regulatory framework for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) by creating a four-tier structure with a progressive increase in intensity of regulation.

Statement 2 is incorrect. In last five years alone, size of balance sheet of NBFCs (including HFCs) has more than doubled from Rs 20.72 lakh crore (2015) to Rs 49.22 lakh crore (2020).



06

National Girl Child Day 2021

Q. With reference to the National Girl Child Day 2021, consider the following statements:

1. The state of Punjab has announced January 2021 to be the "month of Girl Child".
2. The Odisha state government honours the individuals and organisations who have worked towards the cause of child marriage free villages.
3. National Education Policy 2020 has introduced "Gender Inclusion Fund" for targeting the development of girl child.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: All the statements are correct. The state of Punjab has announced January 2021 to be the "month of Girl Child". The scheme Dheeyan Di Lohri has also been launched.

The Odisha state government honours the individuals and organisations who have worked towards the cause of child marriage free villages on January 24 - the National Girl Child Day. NEP-2020 has introduced "Gender Inclusion Fund for targeting the development of girl child."



07 The Inequality Virus Report

Q. With reference to the recent 'Inequality Virus Report', consider the following statements:

1. India's large informal workforce was the worst hit as it made up 75 per cent of the 122 million jobs lost.

2. Only 6 per cent of the poorest 20 per cent households had access to non-shared sources of improved sanitation, compared to 93 per cent of the top 20 per cent households in India.

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: (c)

Explanation: Both the statements are correct. India's large informal workforce was the worst hit as it made up 75 per cent of the 122 million jobs lost. Only 6 per cent of the poorest 20 per cent households had access to non-shared sources of improved sanitation, compared to 93 per cent of the top 20 per cent households in India.



7 IMPORTANT NEWS

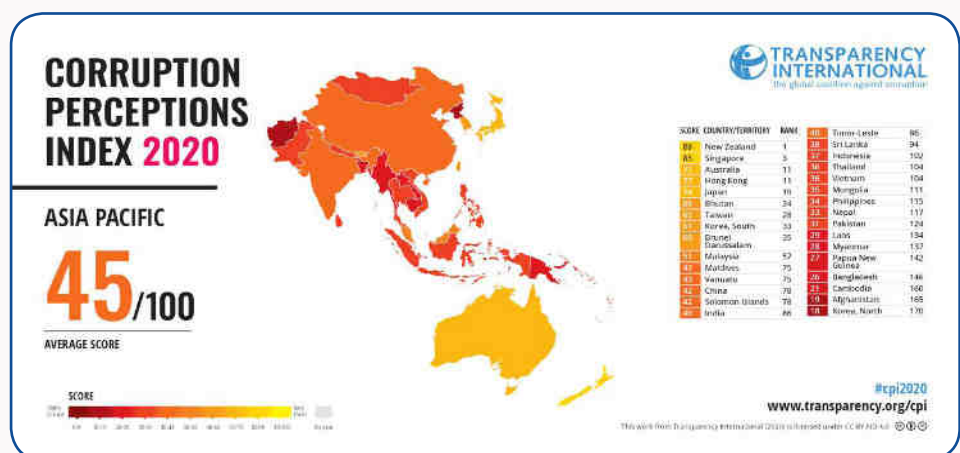
01

Corruption Perception Index 2020

- For 2020, Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has been released by Transparency International.

Key Highlights

- India's rank has slipped six places to 86th among 180 countries with a score of 40 in corruption perception index (CPI) in 2020. In 2019, India's score was 41.
- At 40, India's score is below the average score of the Asia-Pacific region (31 countries) and global average. India's overall score is also two points less than that of China, which docked at 78th position, with a score of 42. Pakistan, however, scored just 31 points, falling at the 144th position on the index.
- The overall list was topped by New Zealand and Denmark (88 each), followed by Switzerland, Finland, Sweden and Singapore (85 each).



Australia and Hong Kong were among the top performers with scores of 77 each. Meanwhile, South Sudan and Somalia were at the bottom of the global ranking, with scores of 12 each.

About CPI

- The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector

corruption according to experts and business people, uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

- A country with a higher score has a higher rank.
- The CPI ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people.

02

India Justice Report 2020

- The second edition of the Indian Justice Report, compiled to assess how India has fared in the delivery of justice in terms of various indicators concerning the working of the police, the judiciary, prisons and legal aid has been released recently.

- The India Justice Report (IJR) is an initiative of Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS-Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and How India Lives.

Key Highlights

- At 25.3 per cent, Bihar leads the list of 25 states for employing most women in its police force. The state finished ahead of Himachal Pradesh (19.2%) and Tamil Nadu (18.5%). However, although it is the only state to

have more than 20 per cent women in the police force, women account for only 6.1 per cent in the officer category.

- ◆ Tamil Nadu has the highest percentage of women police officers (24.8%) , followed by Mizoram (20.1%).
- ◆ On diversity, Karnataka is the only state to meet its quotas for SC, ST and OBC in both officer cadre and constabulary, Chhattisgarh being the only other state that meets the diversity requirements for constabulary.
- ◆ Sikkim has topped the list with 33.3 per cent women – Sikkim High Court has just three judges, Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai being its lone woman judge. Overall, only 29 per cent judges in High Courts (HCs) across the country are women, but no state except Sikkim has over 20 per cent women judges.
- ◆ Of the rest, Andhra Pradesh tops the list with 19 per cent, followed by Punjab and Haryana, where the common HC for the two states has 18.2 per cent women judges.
- ◆ Four states — Bihar, Uttarakhand, Tripura and Meghalaya — have no woman judge in its high courts.
- ◆ Despite the low figures, women's representation has marginally increased in police, prisons and the judiciary. Women account for 10 per cent of all police personnel, up from 7 per cent in January 2017; 13 per cent prison staff (10% in December 2016); 29.3% of judges (26.5% in 2017-18).
- ◆ Overall, Maharashtra retained the top spot on delivery of justice to people among 18 large and mid-sized states, followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab and Kerala.
- ◆ The report also noted that an overwhelming two-thirds of all prisoners are undertrials awaiting a conviction.
- ◆ Legal services institutions remain affected by a lack of infrastructure, uneven human resource distribution, poor utilization of central funds and an inability to effectively harness Lok Adalats to ease the burden on the judiciary.
- ◆ In the last 25 years, since 1995, only 1.5 crore people have received legal aid with the Centre spending Rs. 1.05 per capita in 2019-20, though 80% of the country's population is entitled to it.
- ◆ Two-thirds of the country's prison inmates are undertrial prisoners.



03

NITI Aayog's Megacity Plan for Little Andaman

- ◆ The NITI Aayog has released its plan for Little Andaman namely "Sustainable Development of Little Andaman Island Vision Document". It has been developed for the sustainable and holistic development of the island in Andaman and Nicobar. However, the plan raised the alarm among conservationists.



Key Highlights of the Project

- ◆ The object of the proposal to leverage the strategic location and natural features of the island. This, the vision says, will be done by building a new greenfield coastal city there, that will be developed as a free trade zone and will compete with Singapore and Hong Kong.
- ◆ The proposal is pivoted along three development anchors and zones.
 - Zone 1 — spread over 102 sq km along the east coast of Little Andaman — will be the financial district and medi city and will include an aerocity, and a tourism and hospital district. Spread over 85 sq km of pristine forest.
 - Zone 2, the leisure zone, will have a film city, a residential district and a tourism SEZ.
 - Zone 3 — on 52 sq km of pristine forest — will be a nature zone, further categorised into three districts: an exclusive forest resort, a nature healing district and a nature retreat, all on the western coast.
- ◆ An international airport capable of handling all types of aircraft will be central to this development vision.

- ◆ The only jetty on the island will be expanded and a marina will be developed next to the tourist entertainment district.
- ◆ A 100 km greenfield ring road will be constructed parallel to the coastline from east to west and will be supplemented with a mass rapid transit network with stations at regular intervals.

Blocks to Development

- ◆ Lack of good connectivity with Indian mainland and global cities.
- ◆ Fragile biodiversity and natural ecosystems and certain Supreme Court notifications that pose an impediment to development.
- ◆ Another key factor is the “presence of indigenous tribes and concerns for their welfare”.

- ◆ 95% of Little Andaman is covered in forest, a large part of it the pristine evergreen type. Some 640 sq km of the island is Reserve Forest under the Indian Forest Act, and nearly 450 sq km is protected as the Onge Tribal Reserve, creating a unique and rare socio-ecological-historical complex of high importance. 📌📌📌

04

100 Years of Chauri Chaura Incident

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Chauri Chaura Centenary Utsav celebrations in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. Organised by the government of Uttar Pradesh, the celebrations mark the tribute to the freedom fighters who fought against the British 100 years ago.

Background

- ◆ The Chauri Chaura incident took place on 4 February 1922. Angered by the people killed in the police firing, the protesting people set the police thana on fire. Several policemen were killed in the retaliatory action. Mahatma Gandhi was pained to hear about the event. It led him to withdraw the Non Cooperation movement.
- ◆ Gandhi had called off the movement due to the violence. The killing of the Chauri Chaura policemen had resulted in arrest of hundreds of protesters with 228 of them being put on trial, six of them dying during it and 172 ordered to be hanged to death with the remaining sentenced to long-term imprisonments after a hasty eight-month trial.



- ◆ Reviewing the death sentences, the Allahabad High Court finally in April 1923 confirmed it for 19 convicts and sentenced 110 of them to life imprisonments in Port Blair and long jail terms to others.

Key Highlights

- ◆ Prime Minister has also released a postal stamp to mark centenary celebrations of Chauri-Chaura incident.
- ◆ Uttar Pradesh government's year-long commemoration of the Chauri Chaura incident's centenary began in all 75 districts

of the state with 'Prabhat Pheris' (early morning rounds) and other programmes that will continue till February 4, 2022.

- ◆ The Chief Minister also felicitated families of freedom fighters and gave away 100 motorised tri-cycles to people with physical disabilities.
- ◆ Uttar Pradesh government has also announced that the state government will organise programmes to honour freedom fighters who died between 1857 and 1947, and the soldiers killed in wars post-Independence. 📌📌📌

05

Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)

- ◆ In Union Budget 2021-22, the Finance Minister has announced Jal Jeevan Mission (URBAN) which has been designed to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns in accordance with SDG Goal- 6.

Key Highlights

- ◆ 2.68 crore is the estimated gap in urban household tap connections that is proposed to be covered under JJM(U). Likewise, estimated gap in sewer connections/septage in 500 AMRUT cities proposed to be covered in JJM(U) is 2.64 crore.
- ◆ Rejuvenation of water bodies to augment sustainable fresh water supply and creating green spaces and sponge cities to reduce

floods and enhance amenity value through an Urban Aquifer Management plan are other key areas of the Mission.

- ◆ JJM(U) will promote circular economy of water through development of city water balance plan for each city focusing on recycle/reuse of treated sewage, rejuvenation of water bodies and water conservation. 20% of water demand to be met by reused water with development of institutional mechanism.
- ◆ Pey Jal Survekshan will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping

of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenge process.

- ◆ In order to promote Public private partnership (PPP), it has been mandated for cities having million plus population to take up PPP projects worth minimum of 10 percent of their total project fund allocation.
- ◆ For Union Territories, there will be 100% central funding. For North Eastern and Hill States, central funding for projects will be 90%. Central funding will be 50% for cities will less than 1 lakh population, one third for cities with 1 lakh to 10 lakh population and 25% for cities with million plus population. 

06

MITRA Scheme

- ◆ In Union Budget 2021-22, the government has proposed a scheme of Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA) to enable the textile industry to become globally competitive, attract large investments, boost employment generation and exports.

Key Highlights

- ◆ MITRA will be launched in addition to the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI).
- ◆ It will create world class infrastructure with plug and play facilities to enable create global champions in exports.
- ◆ Under the scheme, 7 textile parks will be established over 3 years.

Significance

- ◆ MITRA will be a game changer for the Indian Textiles Industry. Along with the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, MITRA will lead to increased investments and enhanced employment opportunities.
- ◆ Emphasis on state-of-the-art infrastructure through MITRA will give our domestic manufacturers a level-playing field in the international textiles market & pave the way for India to become a global champion of textiles exports across all segments.

About PLI Scheme

- ◆ The PLI scheme will be implemented by the concerned

ministries/departments and will be within the overall financial limits prescribed. The final proposals of PLI for individual sectors will be appraised by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) and approved by the Cabinet. Savings, if any, from one PLI scheme of an approved sector can be utilized to fund that of another approved sector by the Empowered Group of Secretaries. Any new sector for PLI will require fresh approval of the Cabinet.

- ◆ In order to create manufacturing global champions for an AatmaNirbhar Bharat, Production Linked Incentive Scheme has been announced for 13 sectors. 

07

Operation Green Scheme – ‘TOPS’

- ◆ In Union Budget 2021-22, to boost value addition in agriculture and allied products and their exports, government has proposed to increase the scope of ‘Operation Green Scheme’ that is presently applicable to tomatoes, onions, and potatoes (TOPS), to be enlarged to include 22 perishable products.

From ‘TOP’ to TOTAL

- ◆ “Operation Greens” to be extended from tomatoes, onion and potatoes to all fruit and vegetables.
- ◆ Under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, this scheme has been extended from tomato, onion and potato (TOP) crops to the other notified horticulture crops (Total) for a period of six months.

About Scheme

- ◆ Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) is implementing a central sector scheme “Operation Greens – A scheme for integrated



development of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) value chain” to provide support to farmers when prices of agri produce is low.

- ◆ This scheme is not meant for intervention in the market during price rise. Under the short term-price stabilization measures of the scheme, there is a provision for 50 per cent subsidy on cost of transportation and storage for

evacuation of surplus production from producing area to the consumption center during the glut situation.

- ◆ By November, 2020, 5 approved projects (2 for tomato in AP & Gujarat, 2 for onion in Gujarat & Maharashtra and 1 for Potato in Gujarat) are under implementation for long-term integrated value chain creation.



7

IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS (For Mains)



01 Explain the concept of Judicial Activism and evaluate its impact on the relationship of Executive and Judiciary in India.

02 Comment on India-America “2+2 ministerial dialogue.”

03 Discuss the role of World Health Organisation (WHO) in the period of COVID-19.

04 Indian food processing industry has grown with the pace of developed countries. Discuss it.

05 Explain Science, Technology and Innovation Policy- 2020.

06 How will you apply emotional intelligence in administrative practices? Explain.

07 Explain the importance of persuasive communication in attitudinal change.

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



- 01** What is the theme for 'World Wetlands Day 2021 (2nd Feb)

Wetlands and Water
- 02** Which state has launched the 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission

Punjab
- 03** Which state has set up its first Human Milk Bank (HMB)

Kerala
- 04** Which word has been chosen as 'Oxford Hindi Word of 2020'

Aatmanirbharta
- 05** What is the rank of India in Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Democracy Index 2020?

53rd
- 06** What is the rank of India in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2020?

86th
- 07** Which state will get the country's first thunderstorm research testbed?

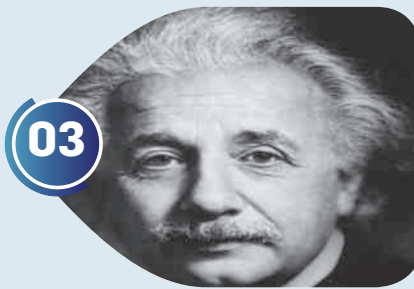
Odisha

7

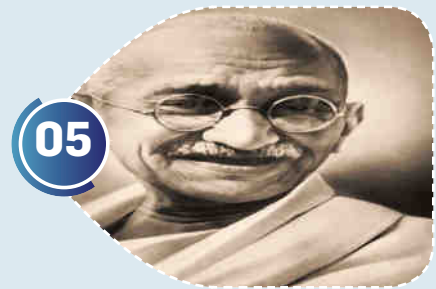
IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01



03



05

01

"Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark"

Rabindranath Tagore

02

"Precision Beats Power, and Timing Beats Speed"

Conor McGregor

03

"In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity"

Albert Einstein

04

"Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime"

Aristotle

05

"It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver"

Mohandas K. Gandhi

06

"Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it"

George Santayana

07

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and most inhuman"

Martin Luther King Jr.

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.

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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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