

PERFECT 7

Weekly Current Affairs

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS



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Highlighted India's Disaster Preparedness

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Need Broader Angle

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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

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An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS

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(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

Uttarakhand Flash Flood : Highlighted India's Disaster Preparedness

Why in News?

- ◆ The natural disaster in Uttarakhand and the ongoing rescue operation provide an opportunity to assess where India stands on disaster management. If one compares the current response to the Kedarnath tragedy (2013) — while keeping aside the difference in altitude and the scale of the challenge — the system has improved in terms of response time, equipment availability, professional manpower training and information flow.

Introduction

- ◆ A glacier break is suspected to have caused the flash floods in Uttarakhand's Chamoli, recently. Last October, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), which is headed by PM Narendra Modi, had issued detailed guidelines on how to reduce and deal with disasters caused by what is scientifically called Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).
- ◆ In 2013, it took the State several days to mount a search-and-rescue operation, losing precious time. In the Chamoli case, the response has

been swift and the political leaders have been forthcoming with on-the-ground information.

- ◆ Drones, ground penetrating radars, remote cameras, sonar systems and VSAT antennae — the rescue teams on the ground in Uttarakhand are relying on a host of technologies as they search for nearly 200 people who remain missing since the floods struck.
- ◆ A landslide at Ronti peak in Chamoli district triggered a sudden deluge of water and slush Sunday morning that left a trail of death and destruction in its wake. So far, 32 bodies (till the writing of this article), mainly of workers of the Tapovan Vishnugad Hydropower and the Rishi Ganga Hydropower plants, have been found.

Increasing Glacial Lakes

- ◆ Glaciers are the largest source of freshwater outside of the polar regions. Glaciers and snow melt in the Himalayan ecosystem are the source of water for several rivers across the subcontinent, and are responsible for maintaining the perennial supply of water in

the river systems like the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra to over a billion people.

- ◆ A glacial lake burst, a cloud burst or an avalanche, the impact of climate change or "development" — scientists are not sure what triggered the sudden surge of water near Chamoli in Uttarakhand.
- ◆ Retreating glaciers, like several in the Himalayas, usually result in the formation of lakes at their tips, called proglacial lakes, often bound only by sediments and boulders. If the boundaries of these lakes are breached, it can lead to large amounts of water rushing down to nearby streams and rivers, gathering momentum on the way by picking up sediments, rocks and other material, and resulting in flooding downstream.
- ◆ GLOF events are not unusual, but their impact depends on the size of the proglacial lake that burst, and location. The breach can be caused by several reasons — in this particular case, for instance, an avalanche was reported in the region two days ago.

- ♦ What scientists are almost certain of is that the incident was not a result of any glacier 'breaking off'. In fact, glaciers are not known to break in a manner that ice-sheets in the polar regions do. Some chunks of snow from near the tip of the glacier can indeed slide down, but they do not result in huge amounts of water like those seen in incidents like these.

Technology & Coordination

- ♦ NDMA had in-house technology of radars, cameras and drills. There is continuous assistance from drone start-ups who helped with resources. Even IITians pitched in resources.
- ♦ While the radars, remote cameras and antennae were sourced from the DRDO and the CSIR, start-ups were contacted for hi-tech drones.
- ♦ Using the antennae, the DRDO could survey the glacier where the landslide occurred. ISRO assisted

in the mapping efforts by providing the NDRF with before-and-after satellite images of the location.

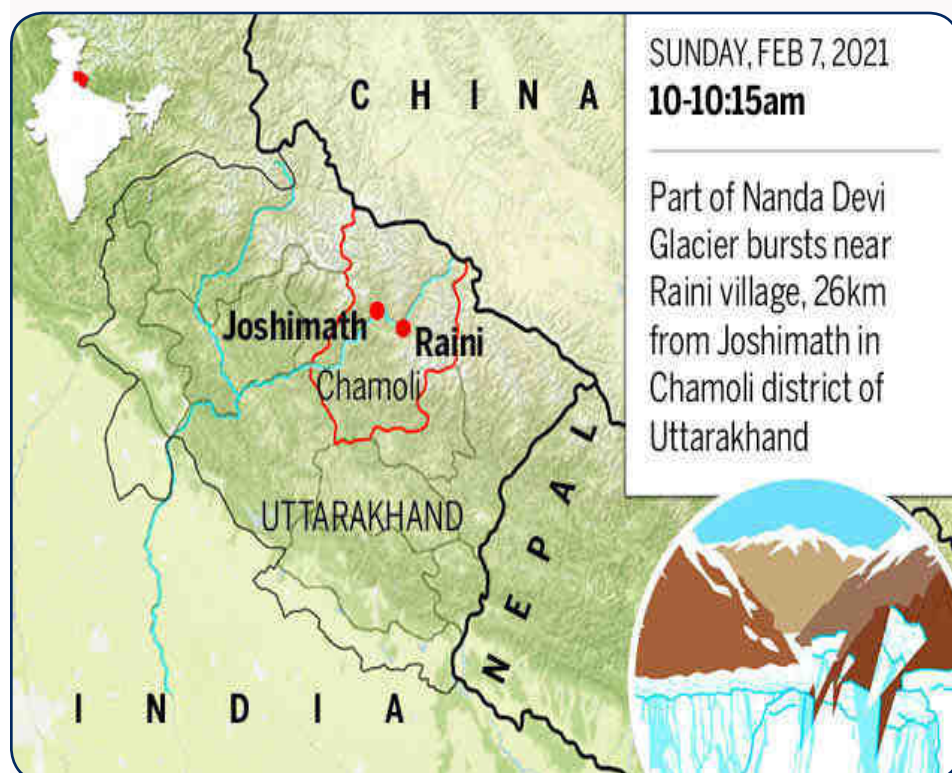
- ♦ With the help of VSAT Quick Deployment Antennae, rescue workers could visually see the situation before the eyes, and it helped to plan operations in a more meticulous manner
- ♦ Moreover, helicopters of the CSIR flew over the disaster site along with radars, to give a sense of where the sludge was in the tunnel and help to plan the operations better. With their help, rescue workers were able to map the points that had the sludge, where people could be stuck.
- ♦ The radars were helpful in detecting air pockets under the dam and where the sludge was trapped, critical for mapping out "strategic points".
- ♦ Three JCB machines stationed outside the tunnels are being used

in turns to take out the slush and mud from inside. Additionally, the rescue teams have been intermittently sending in drones to scope out their depths.

- ♦ As and when sections of debris are taken out, rescue teams equipped with "victim-locating cameras" — comprising a camera at the end of a long, extendable stick, a screen, a drill, and in-built speaker and receiver systems — are sent into the tunnel.
- ♦ In addition to this, the teams also have access to sonar systems that can trace people who have drowned, rescue radars to locate those alive and trapped inside tunnels or other closed spaces, and other Quick Deployment Antennae.
- ♦ The rescue operation currently under way is more "technical than manual".

Swift Post-Disaster Response

- ♦ In India, disaster management is a State responsibility. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the States in five ways:
 - ♦ By establishing and sustaining agencies for providing alerts / warnings (in case of hazards that can be predicted), and post-disaster information (in case of transpired hazards). These agencies are connected to National Control Room (MHA), the State EOCs, District EOCs, and Control Rooms in NDRF, CAPF, nodal ministries / departments, CPSUs, HQ Integrated Defence Staff and the MEA



- ◆ By nominating Nodal Central Ministries with disaster-specific responsibilities for National-level coordination of the response and mobilisation of necessary resources in the case of major disasters
- ◆ Maintaining an NDRF
- ◆ Providing aid, funds, resources on required basis
- ◆ Formulating and issuing guidelines and policies; rendering advice and technical assistance; and assisting in capacity-building
- ◆ Yet, the response at all levels has been swift. This is because the Disaster Management Act 2005 had led to establishment of a three-tiered institutional mechanism.
- ◆ The NDRF, presently comprising 12 battalions (four more under operationalisation), has been, based on a nation-wide hazard vulnerability risk assessment, strategically placed at 40 locations (battalion main — 12; Regional Response Centres — 28) across India. Maintained at a state of constant readiness, the NDRF is able to mobilise quickly.
- ◆ The situation becomes more challenging because there are no early warning systems; there is lack of seamless flow of information between those at the frontline (the police or communities) and the government/scientists to report and assess gaps; and there is an absence of disaster-related training for the population. For example, did the workers undergo mock drills on what to do if a disaster strikes, and how to survive in such biting cold? This is even more critical for migrant labourers who have no knowledge of the local environment and modes of survival.
- ◆ Rescue operations in India remain human-intensive, but technology has moved forward and, therefore, constant upgradation is required.
- ◆ The number of implemented and operational GLOF EWS (Early Warning Systems) is still very small, even at the global scale. In the Himalayan region, there are at three reported instances (two in Nepal and one in China) of implementation of sensor- and monitoring-based technical systems for GLOF early warning.

Further Concerns

- ◆ Hydropower projects are often built in ecologically fragile areas, ignoring scientific evidence.

Way Forward

- ◆ In geopolitical terms, India is deemed an 'island' — with seas, mountains and hostile neighbours

around it, India therefore has to accommodate its huge population and all their needs within a finite landmass. Rising national aspirations imply greater industrialisation and better infrastructure for increasing per capita GDP. The problem is that industrialisation, infrastructure-building, living spaces and agriculture are all land-use intensive — and competing for land in this finite landmass. Eventually, this is leading to encroachment on jungles, green zones, habitats and biospheres — and their gradual destruction. In turn, this is feeding directly into climate change.

- ◆ Although the government is doing a good amount in terms of inducing 'green' and renewable technologies, considering our large population and GDP needs, planners need to start focusing immediately and sincerely on the how to implement widespread sustainable initiatives. <><>

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. India's disaster preparedness has come a long way from Kedarnath Floods. As more technology has come to the aid, there are still major lacunae when it comes to advanced preparedness and early warning systems. Discuss.

02

Sino-India Relations : Need Broader Angle

Why in News?

- ◆ In late January, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that while both India and China remained committed to a multipolar world, they should recognise that a "multipolar Asia" was one of its essential constituents. As it moves to becoming the third largest economy in the world, India needs to have a clear-eyed world view and strategy as it makes hard choices. It needs to reject the developing country regional mindset that has hobbled national aims and foreign policy.
- ◆ Nearly nine months after India and China got embroiled in their worst border tensions since the 1967 clash, both sides began a phased disengagement from the southern and northern banks of the Pangong Tso in Ladakh starting 10th February 2021.

Introduction

- ◆ India envisions a 'multipolar Asia': shared regional leadership where major and minor powers have equal standing in decision-making. This model is based on the rationale that China's rise in Asia is unbalancing the regional power structure and eroding India's strategic choices. While a growing association with China in bilateral and multilateral mechanisms has made New Delhi more open to Beijing's engagement, China's strategic urge to dominate has also created a need for caution.
- ◆ India's vision for a multipolar Asia rests on three critical elements.

Border stand-off

A timeline of the months-long stand-off between India and China at the Pangong Tso lake

May 5, 2020: First major clash reported after Chinese mobilisation at Pangong Tso North bank, several soldiers injured in the scuffle

May 5 to May 15: PLA transgressions, clashes with Army reported at Pangong, Galwan, Depsang, Sikkim, and other points on LAC

June 15: 20 Indian soldiers die in Galwan clash; no word on Chinese casualties



Easing friction: Indian army trucks seen near the Pangong Tso lake. ■ FILE PHOTO

June 19: Prime Minister holds all-party meet, says "no one has transgressed India's borders"

Aug. 29-30: Indian and Chinese troops clash at Pangong Tso South bank; Indian troops dominate peaks

Sept. 3: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets his Chinese counterpart

Sept. 10: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar meets Chinese FM Wang Yi, both agree to a five-point resolution

Nov. 6: Officials say a disengagement plan has been agreed upon

Jan. 24, 2021: Ninth round of Corps Commander talks go on for 16 hours

- ◆ First, India aims to make global governance more equitable, pluralistic and representative.
- ◆ Second, minor and major powers in Asia must have a shared role in regional decision-making. India's support for Association of Southeast Asian Nations ASEAN-centred architecture confirms its preference for a consultative mechanism for regional economic integration, as does its association with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.
- ◆ The third pillar of India's push for multipolarity is inclusivity, rather than exclusivity. Multipolarity allows space for an external power like the United States to contribute to the region's evolving security architecture. It also allows India to promote a regional paradigm of 'shared leadership' among the three major Asian powers: India, China and Japan.
- ◆ Former foreign secretary Shyam Saran has said that, China does not believe in a multi-polar Asia where there is a cluster of major powers and will not accept a hierarchical order in which India is a "parallel power".
- ◆ Noting that India-China relationship is in essence "adversarial", thus there is a "strong sense" of competition and rivalry between the two countries.

Diplomatic Challenge

- ◆ The foreign policy challenge for India is really two sides of the China conundrum: defining engagement with its neighbour which is consolidating an expanding Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) while remaining involved with the strategic, security and technological concerns of the U.S. located across the vast Pacific Ocean.

- ◆ The United States (U.S.) 'Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments involving the People's Republic of China' cautions that U.S. aircraft carriers, symbols of the country's military hegemony, may not enjoy unquestioned dominance for much longer. Former President Barack Obama's military pivot to Asia failed to overawe China in the South China Sea and the costs of former President Donald Trump's trade tariffs were borne by American consumers and companies.
- ◆ In the financial sphere, there is the real possibility of the Chinese Renminbi becoming a global reserve currency or e-yuan becoming the digital payments currency.
- ◆ China is the world's largest trading economy. It could soon become the world's largest economy — the Fortune Global 500 list of the world's largest companies by revenue for the first time contains more companies based in China, including Hong Kong, than in the U.S.
- ◆ The BRI countries are using the Renminbi in financial transactions with China, and can be expected to use it in transactions with each other. Even the European Union (EU), smarting under Mr. Trump's sanctions, created its own cross-border clearing mechanism for trade.
- ◆ China has stitched together an investment agreement with the EU and with most of Asia. Relative attractiveness will determine when the dollar goes the way of the sterling and the guilder. China, facing technological sanctions from

the U.S., may well put in the hard work to make this happen soon.

Review in China Policy

- ◆ The Year End Review of the Ministry of Defence pertinently refers to the "sanctity of our claims in Eastern Ladakh" instead of the term "border" used since 1954, opening space for a settlement. We are now confidently moving out of the predicament that Jawaharlal Nehru placed us in Kashmir, fully integrating it into the Indian Union and consolidating our claim line.
- ◆ The External Affairs Ministry is also now more forthright. We have a "special and privileged strategic partnership" with Russia, which provides more than three-quarter of India's military equipment, and a "comprehensive global strategic partnership" with the U.S. despite the United States Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific, 2018, wishing that India sees the U.S. as its preferred partner on security issues.
- ◆ India's relationship with the U.S.-led Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), where the others are military allies, has rightly been cautious, as U.S. President Joe Biden sees China as a 'strategic competitor' rather than a 'strategic rival'. Realism dictates that India does not need to compromise on its strategic autonomy.

Unchallenged China

- ◆ Some form of the EU's China policy of seeing the emerging superpower as a partner, competitor, and economic rival depending on the

policy area in question is going to be the global norm. The EU's reaching out to China despite misgivings of the U.S. means the West has given up on containing the rise of China.

- ◆ This broad perspective is also reflected in India's participation in both the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, led by Beijing and Moscow and designed to resist the spread of Western interests, and in the U.S.-led Quad, with its anti-China stance.
- ◆ Within the United Nations, India's interests have greater congruence with China's interests rather than the U.S.'s and the EU's; sharing the COVID-19 vaccine with other countries distinguishes India, and China, from the rest.

Disengagement or Strategic Blunder

- ◆ Military veterans have questioned the government's "concessions" in agreeing to create a 10km-wide, demilitarised buffer zone within India-claimed territory in eastern Ladakh as part of the agreement with China to disengage troops from the Pangong Lake's north and south banks.
- ◆ They said India had committed a "big blunder" by not forcing China to agree to simultaneous disengagement from the Depsang Plains, which is operationally critical for the Indian Army and where the Chinese are said to be entrenched 18km inside India-claimed lines.
- ◆ During the bilateral disengagement from the Galwan Valley last summer, too, veterans had expressed dismay at India agreeing to retreat from

held positions to create a buffer zone within territory it claims.

- ◆ Defense experts have said that it is blunder, considering the buffer zone has been created without restoring the April 2020 status on the Depsang Plains.
- ◆ Retired Colonel Ajai Shukla has said: "Indian, Chinese troops start disengaging in Ladakh's Pangong sector. A buffer zone separates the two sides — a 10-km stretch between Finger 3 and Finger 8. Indian Army has patrolled this area since the 1962 Sino-Indian war but now cannot enter the zone."
- ◆ India claims territory till Finger 8 on the Pangong Lake's north bank but the Chinese have advanced 8km up to Finger 4 from their erstwhile position at Finger 8.
- ◆ Under the disengagement agreement, the Chinese would return to the east of Finger 8 and the Indian troops will reciprocate by pulling back to their permanent base near Finger 3. Neither side will patrol the buffer zone till all the modalities are worked out at operational and diplomatic levels.
- ◆ The government has not given details of the disengagement process relating to the lake's south bank, where India had captured key heights — the Kailash Range — last September.

◆ The control of Depsang would allow China to threaten the Indian strategic airfield at Daulat Beg Oldie, located at an altitude over 16,000 feet. The DBO airstrip was built after the 1962 war to check Chinese incursions.

◆ Disengagement is a long-drawn process. The real test will come in the summer. We have to watch what the Chinese army's response is over the next few months. They can always return to the no-man's land between Finger 3 and Finger 8.

Balancing China

◆ India has welcomed most China-backed multilateral bodies such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), New Development Bank (NDB) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). As the AIIB's second-largest shareholder, New Delhi has always perceived it to be an Asian multilateral institution that will facilitate the accumulation of national and international infrastructure. Joining the AIIB was seen as a historic opportunity to occupy a greater role in the governance of multilateral institutions.

◆ In contrast, New Delhi has always had strong reservations about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India questions the BRI's legitimacy as a connectivity initiative and has stated that such initiatives must be

based on 'universally recognised international norms, including good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality'. India perceives the BRI's China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as a large-scale strategic hindrance since it ignores India's sensitivities about territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Way Forward

- ◆ India's sustained economic growth along with strengthening strategic outreach across Asia — through its Act East policy, Link West policy, Connect Central Asia policy and S-A-G-A-R (Security and Growth for All in the Region) — has led to its embrace of a multipolar Asia where New Delhi has a greater role in regional affairs. An ideal alignment with China would both protect and enhance India's rise, without contesting China's rise if Chinese land-grabbing tactics and wolf-warrior diplomacy are curtailed.
- ◆ A multipolar Asia is not possible if China aims to claim territories of nations on all its borders. India's uniting efforts should not be seen as surrendering its sovereignty and territorial integrity. 

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Q. India and China's view of multipolar Asia are not in tandem to each other. There is a strong need for India to backup its peace talks with deterrence against rising hegemonistic China. Discuss.

03

Bank Privatisation : Latest Proposal and Concerns

Why in News?

- ◆ The Union Budget has announced the privatisation of two public sector banks (in addition to IDBI Bank) and one general insurance company in the upcoming fiscal.
- ◆ It also announced a strategic sale/disinvestment policy for four strategic sectors — including banking, insurance and financial services — in which it will have a “bare minimum presence”.

Introduction

- ◆ The banking landscape in India is set to change with the government's decision to privatise two public sector banks. Coming after 51 years of nationalisation of government-owned banks in 1969, the move will give the private sector a key role in the banking sector.
- ◆ India's public sector banks have seen change in the last three years after the government tried to build scale through mergers, and also bring a wider geographical footprint under each bank.
- ◆ After three rounds of consolidation public sector banks have shrunk from 27 in March 2017 to 12 in April 2020. Now, two are to be privatised.
- ◆ This presents a tricky situation as the government does not want to exit commercial operations in the financial sector.
- ◆ It's been identified as a strategic sector where the government wants to retain a “minimum” presence.

- ◆ According to economists, the government wants only 4 to 5 government banks in the country. Currently, there are 12 state-owned banks in India, of which the central government holds more than 51 percent. Apart from this, 47.11% stake is in IDBI Bank. Government insurance company LIC holds a 51 per cent stake in this bank.
- ◆ The government wants to start this process of privatization of banks at a time when the country's major state-run banks are struggling with the NPA crisis.

Building the Case

- ◆ NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar has said that further reforms in banking sector are needed in terms of autonomy and working at arms' length from the government while the government must raise long-term funds for infrastructure financing without solely depending on banks.
- ◆ Lessening the burden on the banks, the government should not force banking sector alone to do the “heavy lifting” to provide funds to finance investments, specially in infrastructure sector, and the government must look at tapping capital markets.
- ◆ As banking is set to be in the list of ‘strategic sectors’ fit for discretionary privatisation under a new policy being unveiled, the NITI Aayog has prepared a blueprint for the key sector, with consolidation in focus. The think tank has asked the government to retain control over the country's top four state-run lenders — State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda and Canara Bank, even as it recommended that three small public-sector banks — Punjab &

Sind Bank, Bank of Maharashtra and UCO Bank — be privatised on a priority basis.

- ◆ As for the remaining five PSBs (Bank of India, Union Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Central Bank and Indian Bank), the government may either amalgamate them with the four larger ones it chooses to retain or trim its stake in them over a stipulated time-frame to 26%, before exiting fully, according to the NITI Aayog proposal.
- ◆ For privatising the banks, the government will have to repeal the bank nationalisation Act — the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act of 1970.

The Ongoing Process

- ◆ Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had nationalised 14 private banks in 1970, followed by another six banks in 1980. The Modi-government is trying to unshackle the hold of the public sector by encouraging private players to acquire government assets.
- ◆ Already, the NDA government has undertaken a series of consolidation exercises in the public-sector banking space.
- ◆ In 2019, the government had sold a majority stake in IDBI Bank Ltd. to Life Insurance Corporation of India, effectively privatising the lender. Besides the two banks, the government will divest stake in a general insurance company. The proposed initial public offering for LIC, as part of the Rs 1.75-lakh-crore disinvestment plan, will also conclude in FY22. The government expects to raise Rs 1 lakh crore from disinvestment in public sector banks and financial institutions in FY22, up from Rs 32,000 crore revised estimates of 2020-21.

- ◆ In August 2019, it had announced merger of 10 public sector banks into four, effective April 1, 2020. Punjab National Bank acquired Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India; Union Bank of India acquired Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank; Allahabad Bank merged with Indian Bank, while Syndicate Bank was merged with Canara Bank. Separately, in the budget for FY22, the government also announced a recapitalisation plan worth Rs 20,000 crore for state-run banks.
- ◆ The public banks continue to remain a large mobiliser of domestic savings with a relatively higher share of deposits at 70 percent of the banking sector as of September 2020 (83percent as of March 2010). Given the high level of stressed assets of these banks in relation to their net worth, the move towards privatisation will reduce further capital infusion into these banks.
- ◆ Apart from political consensus and legislative changes, the Government of India will have an uphill task of bringing all the stakeholders such as employees, investors and depositors on board and convince them of longer-term benefits of the move.

Concerns

- ◆ While privatisation of public banks is a welcome move, we must remember that the private sector banks have not been immune to failures.
- ◆ Though there is no precedence whereby the depositors of scheduled commercial banks have taken a hit, private banks will have to continuously strive to improve their deposit franchise and public

confidence given that deposits form a large part of a bank's balance sheet and also account for the majority of domestic household savings.

- ◆ Despite a hike in deposit insurance in March 2020, the insured deposits account for just around 50 percent of the total system deposits. A further increase in deposit insurance amount in future may enable private banks to scale up faster with increase in depositor confidence on private banks.
- ◆ Mere replacement of non-performing assets with investment in Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) will not result in an improvement in solvency profile of the lender.

Lacunae with the Private Sector

- ◆ Private Banks' market share in loans has risen to 36% in 2020 from 21.26% in 2015, while public sector banks' share has fallen to 59.8% from 74.28%.
- ◆ Competition heated up after the RBI allowed more private banks since the 1990s. They have expanded the market share through new products, technology, and better services, and also attracted better valuations in stock markets — HDFC Bank (set up in 1994) has a market capitalisation of Rs 8.80 lakh crore while SBI commands just Rs 3.50 lakh crore. India has 22 private banks and 10 small finance banks.
- ◆ However, in the last couple of years, some questions have arisen over the performance of private banks, especially on governance issues. ICICI Bank MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar was sacked for

allegedly extending dubious loans. Yes Bank CEO Rana Kapoor was not given extension by the RBI and now faces investigations by various agencies. Lakshmi Vilas Bank faced operational issues and was recently merged with DBS Bank of Singapore. Moreover, when the RBI ordered an asset quality review of banks in 2015, many private sector banks, including Yes Bank, were found under-reporting NPAs.

Way Forward

- ◆ If successful, it is highly likely that more PSBs, including the larger ones could be offered for privatisation in future, given the intent of the government to have limited number of entities in strategic sectors. As a result, India can expect a steady gain in the market share of private banks over the next decade, which will be in line with the intention of government to reduce its presence in the banking sector.
- ◆ Less government and more governance has been the principle approach of the Modi government. This has been unlocking the economy from the shackles of red-tapism and rent-seeking bureaucracy. But with the welcoming of the private sector, the governance and regulatory oversight is the need of the hour.



General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Q. Bank privatization is the ongoing process since 1960s. Discuss the need for bank privatization and concerns related to it.

04

Rationale behind India's Disinvestment Policy

Why in News?

- ◆ The government's spending plans for 2021-22 hinge on better compliance lifting tax collections, and an ambitious plan to raise non-tax revenue. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced large-scale monetisation of government sector assets, including vast tracts of land, and is banking on disinvestment receipts of Rs. 1.75-lakh crore.

Background

- ◆ Presenting the Union Budget 2021-22, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the disinvestment target for Fiscal Year 2021-22 is Rs.1.75 lakh crore.
- ◆ As per the Centre's new disinvestment policy, every Public Sector Undertakings in all but 4 strategic sectors will be privatised.
- ◆ She also revealed that the IPO of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) will be brought soon for which the requisite amendments shall be introduced.
- ◆ Moreover, she declared that two more Public Sector Banks apart from IDBI and one General Insurance Company will be taken up for disinvestment in 2021-22 itself.
- ◆ The Union Finance Minister said that the NITI Aayog has been asked to work on the next list of central public sector companies for strategic disinvestment.
- ◆ Additionally, Sitharaman stated that an incentive package of Central funds will be given to the states to encourage the latter to speed up disinvestment.

Strategic Disinvestment: Rationale

- ◆ The Government has given 'in-principle' approval for strategic disinvestment of 33 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)

including subsidiaries, Units and Joint Ventures with sale of majority stake of Government of India and transfer of management control in December 2019.

- ◆ These include profit making as well as loss making CPSEs. Government follows a policy of strategic disinvestment of CPSEs, which are not in 'priority sectors' For this purpose, NITI Aayog has been mandated to identify such CPSEs based on the criteria of (i) National Security; (ii) Sovereign function at arm's length, and (iii) Market Imperfections and Public Purpose. However, profitability/loss of the CPSEs is not among the relevant criteria.
- ◆ Strategic disinvestment of CPSEs is being guided by the basic economic principle that Government should discontinue in sectors, where competitive markets have come of age and economic potential of such entities may be better discovered in the hands of strategic investor due to various factors such as infusion of capital, technological upgradation and efficient management practices. The success of the transaction depends on the prevailing market conditions and the investors' interest.

Policy on Strategic Disinvestment

- ◆ Fulfilling the governments' commitment under the AtmaNirbhar Package of coming up with a policy of strategic disinvestment of public sector enterprises, the Minister highlighted the following as its main features :
- ◆ Existing CPSEs, Public Sector Banks and Public Sector Insurance Companies to be covered under it.
- ◆ Two fold classification of Sectors to be disinvested :
- ◆ Strategic Sector : Bare minimum presence of the public sector

enterprises and remaining to be privatised or merged or subsidised with other CPSEs or closed.

- ◆ Following 4 sectors to come under it :
- ◆ Atomic energy, Space and Defence
- ◆ Transport and Telecommunications
- ◆ Power, Petroleum, Coal and other minerals
- ◆ Banking, Insurance and financial service
- ◆ Non- Strategic Sector : In this sector, CPSEs will be privatised, otherwise shall be closed.
- ◆ A number of transactions namely BPCL, Air India, Shipping Corporation of India, Container Corporation of India, IDBI Bank, BEML, Pawan Hans, Neelachal Ispat Nigam limited among others are proposed to be completed in FY 2021-22.
- ◆ Other than IDBI Bank, a proposal of privatization of two Public Sector Banks and one General Insurance company will be taken up in the year 2021-22.
- ◆ Special purpose vehicle for monetising idle land.
- ◆ Recognising that Idle assets will not contribute to AtmaNirbhar Bharat and the non-core assets largely consist of surplus land with government Ministries/ Departments and Public Sector Enterprises, the Minister proposed to use a Special Purpose Vehicle in the form of a company to carry out monetization of idle land. This can either be by way of direct sale or concession or by similar means.
- ◆ Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)
- ◆ DIPAM deals with all matters relating to management of Central Government investments in equity including disinvestment of equity in Central Public Sector Undertakings.

- ◆ The Four major areas of its work relates to Strategic Disinvestment, Minority Stake Sales, Asset Monetisation and Capital Restructuring.
- ◆ It also deals with all matters relating to sale of Central Government equity through offer for sale or private placement or any other mode in the erstwhile Central Public Sector Undertakings.
- ◆ DIPAM is working as one of the Departments under the Ministry of Finance.

Concerns

- ◆ In India's brief but tortuous history of disinvestment since it began listing PSUs on the stock markets through minority stake sales in the 1990s, this is undoubtedly the boldest stance yet.
- ◆ It can be no one's case that India's public sector remains at the 'commanding heights' of the economy. Apart from raising precious revenues, the sale or closure of such firms will help the exchequer stop throwing good money after bad, and funnel it into more productive endeavours.
- ◆ Now that the policy is in place, tactful execution will be as critical as dealing with the usual pockets of resistance that would crop up.
- ◆ While stock markets are on a high, the financial capacity of potential bidders may not be optimal, thanks to the pandemic.
- ◆ Among its multiple challenges, the government will need to create confidence in the sale processes, ensure a semblance of fair valuations, give officers some cover from potential post-transaction witch-hunts by auditors and investigating agencies, sequence the sales so that the economy

does not face shocks or create monopolies, and most of all, manage electoral pressures in jurisdictions where these units would be located.

- ◆ A single controversial transaction could scuttle the momentum behind such a plan and India can ill afford it.

Counter Argument

- ◆ Much of the support for privatisation is based on the argument that the performance of public enterprises can be improved by exposing them to forces in product and capital markets. Globally, the experience with privatisation raised a host of concerns about economic, social/distributional and environmental consequences which have eventually broadened the agenda for state-owned enterprises (SOE) reform in many countries.
- ◆ In a country like India, it is important to put in place measures to prevent exploitation of monopoly power and wider social costs in the privatisation process.
- ◆ A diluted public sector would possibly mean that India missing out on the opportunity to capitalise on the global distrust against Chinese supply lines in the wake of the current crisis.
- ◆ Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) is not an abandoned concept, they still exist in many countries and have played an important role in shaping the economy. The restructuring of the PSEs needs to have a clear vision and strategy, and definitely have a major role in our multi-faceted strategy to achieve a \$5 trillion economy.
- ◆ There is a genuine need to strengthen the independence and professional nature of PSE

boards. PSEs can also be used for achieving public policy objectives. For instance, the Kerala State Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (KSDP)—reportedly the only state government-run pharmaceutical PSE in India—which was running into losses, was transformed to become profitable.

- ◆ Considering the mammoth infrastructure of PSEs in India, there is a scope for developing start-ups using their unspent resources, a useful starting point for many start-ups. PSEs should open their premises for fresh thoughts and new technology.

Way Forward

- ◆ The UK is a pioneer in privatisation. Even after a long period of privatisation, there is enough controversy over poor service, high prices and huge pay-outs to shareholders and in many instances muted regulatory bodies too. Although a strong market economy exists in China, the role of the state planning and state-controlled firms are still dominant.
- ◆ Privatisation may be a magic solution to raise revenues, but it is a tamed tiger—the performance depends on how to tame it in accordance to the sectoral policies, strength and presence of the public sector, competency of regulatory agencies and wider political economy compulsions. 🏠🏠🏠

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Q. Discuss the rationale and policy behind the strategic disinvestment which has been mentioned in the budget speech 2021-2022.

05

The Crisis of Indian Agriculture and Solutions

Why in News?

- ◆ Economist Dr. Surjit Bhalla, who is currently executive director for India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said that the Centre's three new farm laws, which the farmers have been resisting for more than five months, are crucial reforms in a sector that's been tied down for decades. He said that farmers protesting against the new laws benefit poorer farmers for whom Minimum Support Price (MSP) has been exploitative.
- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has defended his government's agricultural reform laws by invoking Chaudhary Charan Singh and pointing to the "dayaniyasthiti (sorry plight)" of marginal farmers. These below-one-hectare cultivators accounted for 51 per cent of India's total operational holdings in 1970-71, a share that crossed 68 per cent in the last 2015-16 Agriculture Census.

Background

- ◆ The crisis of Indian agriculture is of the chhota kisan and the government's reform measures are aimed at uplifting this stratum of smallholders.
- ◆ The political scientist Paul R Brass has shown, Charan Singh didn't believe agriculture policy should focus on the one-hectare farmer. The redemption for those tilling tiny uneconomic plots lay in non-farm employment, especially in rural small-scale and cottage industries. Charan Singh, in fact, advocated both a maximum ceiling of 27.5 acres and a minimum floor of 2.5 acres that would provide decent subsistence and also prevent large-scale capitalist farming.
- ◆ Today's farm crisis is not of the impoverished chhota kisan, but of Charan Singh's khudkasht peasant-

proprietor who has seen better times. It is this rural middle class — which experienced a roughly four-decade spell of prosperity from the 1970s and now has its back to the wall — that's at the forefront of the agitation against the farm reform laws.

Unviability of APMCs and Political Implications

- ◆ The corrosive monopoly power held by the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMCs) has been recognised by almost all political parties and farmer unions (for example, the Bharat Kisan Union took out a protest in 2008 arguing for the right of farmers to sell produce to corporates). The Congress party had these very same laws in its 2019 election manifesto.
- ◆ For reasons best known to the "political" economists, agriculture was not freed in 1991, or thereafter — until now. Farmers are forced to sell their marketable produce only through a mandi regulated by the government. The new reformed law allows the farmer to sell through the APMC, and to sell outside the APMC. It is her choice.
- ◆ The government procures all of its food through APMCs — only about 6 per cent of the farmers in India sell through the APMCs to the government. These 6 per cent are all large farmers, primarily residing in the two states of Punjab and Haryana. These two states typically account for close to 60 per cent of wheat procurement and close to a third of rice procurement.
- ◆ The government procures from these farmers in order to re-distribute the food via ration shops to the bottom two-thirds of the population. But there are leakages. This leakage was first openly discussed by former Prime Minister

Rajiv Gandhi in 1985 when he stated that only 15 per cent of the food procured by the government reached the poor.

Farm Laws and Protests

- ◆ According to a gazette notification, the president gave assent to three bills (on 27th September 2020): The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 (FPTC), The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 (FAPAFS), and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020.
- ◆ The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 aims to permit the sale of agricultural produce outside the mandis regulated by the APMC constituted by different state legislations.
- ◆ The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, provides for contract farming.
- ◆ The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 deregulates the production, supply, distribution of food items like cereals, pulses, potatoes, onion and edible oilseeds.
- ◆ Indeed, when these ordinances were brought in June, there was no widespread opposition. Ashok Gulati, eminent agriculture economist, called it a "1991 moment" for Indian agriculture. But winter is fast becoming the trimester for protesters to learn a new grammar of anarchy, and this year has turned out to be no different.
- ◆ Farmers mainly from Punjab, with sporadic support from other states, are staging a protest believing to represent whole farming

community from north to south. To be sure, the protesters still constitute a fraction of the total population dependent on agrarian economy. Yet, they marched to Delhi and blocked several borders of the national capital restricting flow of goods and services. Their demand? Repeal the agriculture reforms in totality.

Middle Class Farmer's Concerns

- ◆ Punjab and Haryana were the earliest beneficiaries of the Green Revolution. Farmers in these states worked hard, and used the region's natural abundance and the influx of new technology to soon become the grain bowl of India. The government would guarantee a MSP for their produce year after year; the APMC system worked well; and up to 70% of the central food grain procurement continued to happen from these two states.
- ◆ But this monopoly on government procurement also eventually became their undoing.
- ◆ Other states such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh caught up on food grain production.
- ◆ As Punjab and Haryana got guaranteed prices year after year, there was no local innovation.
- ◆ Instead, more chemicals made their way to the fields, leading to the rise of cancer. The story of the Bhatinda-Bikaner daily cancer train is well-documented.
- ◆ Young people from rich rural families migrated overseas or were happy to do odd jobs on farms, with labour coming in from far-off Bihar and other states, leading to the erosion and exodus of local talent.
- ◆ The problem of plenty has hit Punjab hard since the turn of the century. Since then, Haryana,

Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have gone past Punjab on per capita net state domestic product calculated at constant prices with 2011-12 reference.

- ◆ While farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and southern states improvised and did local innovations and did industry-farm integration which led to farm-based industries being set up in these states, Punjab and Haryana were mostly dependent on MSPs and protected government mechanisms.
- ◆ Addicted to the allure of MSP, Punjab's agriculture has become relatively uncompetitive. And its farmers are now up in arms, worried that the option of free market trade will expose that weakness. The MSP demand is simply a smokescreen — the government, to adhere to India's food security act and to run a host of welfare programmes, will continue to procure on the basis of MSP.

Taxation and Farming Income

- ◆ There are no more than two million farmers — total — in Punjab and Haryana and less than 5 per cent have holdings above 10 hectares.
- ◆ A rough back of the envelope calculation suggests that the protesting farmers from Punjab and Haryana total no more than 200,000 — that is two hundred thousand so there is no confusion with numbers.
- ◆ The number of all farmers in India, very small, small and large is 100 million. So about 0.2 per cent of all farmers in India have "reason" to protest. And what are they protesting for?
- ◆ Likely the licence to remain the richest farmers in India or the world

because in addition to the exclusive APMC largesse, the income of these farmers is not taxed.

- ◆ The non-taxation of agricultural incomes does not benefit the poor farmer because she does not have enough income to be taxed.

Way Forward

- ◆ All these facts are well known, except to large elements of the ideologically motivated domestic and international media. Fake news can only be "influential" if there is some plausibility in the fakeness. What we are being asked to believe is that the richest 2,00,000 farmers are being supported by the considerably poorer 100 million farmers and all those who earn considerably less than the rich untaxed farmers.
- ◆ The Punjab farmer protest has had little resonance in most parts of India. This is because other states are hardly a beneficiary of MSP, except where state governments procure directly from farmers. Also, the adoption of collective negotiation through Farmer Producer Organisations and involvement of private buyers has been growing faster in other states, even if this remains low in absolute terms.



General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System-objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

Q. "The protests by the farmers against the farm laws are entrenched in the class divide in the rural segment where the marginal farmer is not represented." Discuss.

06

Disinformation and Fake News : Cybersecurity Threats

Why in News?

- ♦ The pandemic and the worldwide adoption of remote working resulted in cybersecurity undergoing years' worth of transformation in a matter of months and therefore it is tough to understand the current cybersecurity landscape and predict security trends.
- ♦ In 2021, some 42% of organisations in India and globally, will continue to invest in cybersecurity and privacy solutions to steer away from the rising cyberattacks in the era of remote working, as per the data protection trends released by Dell.

Background

- ♦ The effects of the COVID-19 crisis that began last year are still visible across the cybersecurity landscape, making it difficult to predict security trends for 2021. Considering the unprecedented events of last year, any predictions for the immediate future cannot be definitive.
- ♦ Rising geopolitical tensions worldwide have resulted in governments and enterprises increasingly focusing on cybersecurity to protect their assets from cyberattackers. Instances of cyberattacks by national/state actors targeting critical infrastructure and nationally important establishments are becoming more common.
- ♦ Misinformation and disinformation are rife, but so far it's been seen as a challenge for policy-makers and big tech, including social media



platforms. However, because disinformation is by nature an online risk, it is a challenge for our cyber security ecosystem to tackle, too.

- ♦ Cybersecurity focuses on protecting and defending computer systems, networks, and our digital lives from disruption. Nefarious actors use attacks to compromise confidentiality, the integrity and the availability of IT systems for their benefit. Disinformation is, similarly, an attack and compromise of our cognitive being.
- ♦ The spread of fake news and the rise of disinformation is plaguing the modern world by destroying the very fabric that is keeping our society safe and democracy standing.
- ♦ Separating fact from fiction has never been harder, and with the popularity of social media misleading information is spreading like wildfire. It is swaying elections,

distorting truth and putting people in harm's way.

Rising Menace

- ♦ Disinformation and fake news is also part of the delivery package, rather than being the end goal – it is increasingly being used to deliver malware by manipulating people's fears and heightened emotions. For example, Avast has found that fake shops claiming to sell Covid-19 cures that use the World Health Organization's logo were intended to get people to download malware.
- ♦ So far, the tech sector – primarily social media companies, given that their platforms enable fake news to spread exponentially – have tried to implement some measures, with varying levels of success.
- ♦ Historically, the industry has treated these attacks independently, deployed different countermeasures, and even have

separate teams working in silos to protect and defend against these attacks. The lack of coordination between teams leaves a huge gap that is exploited by malicious actors.

Cognitive Hacking

- ◆ Cognitive hacking is a threat from disinformation and computational propaganda. This attack exploits psychological vulnerabilities, perpetuates biases, and eventually compromises logical and critical thinking, giving rise to cognitive dissonance.
- ◆ A cognitive hacking attack attempts to change the target audience's thoughts and actions, galvanise societies and disrupt harmony using disinformation. It exploits cognitive biases and shapes people by perpetuating their prejudices. The goal is to manipulate the way people perceive reality. The storming of the U.S. Capitol by right-wing groups on January 6, 2021, is a prime example of the effects of cognitive hacking.
- ◆ Also Big-tech companies are also being blamed many a times working for questionable motives. Twitter deleted and blocked many accounts while US Capitol was stormed, but at the same time allowed many anti-Indian accounts to function during the 'siege of Red Fort', under the excuse of freedom of speech. Though many known terrorists and tweets emerging from controversial geo-locations like Pakistan was the proof available. Similarly, after Myanmar coup, Facebook reduced



- the circulation of Myanmar armed forces content. Big tech companies seem to be deciding the direction of democracies and public choices.
- ◆ The implications of cognitive hacking are more devastating than cyberattacks on critical infrastructure. The damage wrought by disinformation is challenging to repair. Revolutions throughout history have used cognitive hacking techniques to a significant effect to overthrow governments and change society. It is a key tactic to achieve major goals with limited means.
- ◆ Nefarious actors use both attacks in concert to create more havoc.
- ◆ Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) is a well-coordinated cybersecurity attack achieved by flooding IT networks with superfluous requests to connect and overload the system to prevent legitimate requests being fulfilled. Similarly, a well-coordinated disinformation campaign fills broadcast and social channels with so much false information and noise, thus taking out the system's oxygen and drowning the truth.
- ◆ The advertisement-centric business modes and attention economy incentivise malicious actors to run a sophisticated disinformation campaign and fill the information channels with noise to drown the truth with unprecedented speed and scale.

Similar Tactics

- ◆ There is a lot of similarity in the strategies, tactics and actions between cybersecurity and disinformation attacks.
- ◆ Cyberattacks are aimed at computer infrastructure while disinformation exploits our inherent cognitive biases and logical fallacies.
- ◆ Cybersecurity attacks are executed using malware, viruses, trojans, botnets, and social engineering. Disinformation attacks use manipulated, miscontextualised, misappropriated information, deep fakes, and cheap fakes.

Suggestions

- ◆ A critical component of cybersecurity is education. Technology industry, civil society and the government should coordinate to make users aware of cyber threat vectors such as phishing, viruses, and malware.

- ◆ The industry with public-private partnerships must also invest in media literacy efforts to reach out to discerning public. Intervention with media education can make a big difference in understanding context, motivations, and challenging disinformation to reduce damage.
- ◆ The freedom of speech and the freedom of expression are protected rights in most democracies. Balancing the rights of speech with the dangers of disinformation is a challenge for policymakers and regulators.
- ◆ We can develop disinformation defence systems by studying strategy and tactics to understand the identities of malicious actors, their activities, and behaviours from the cybersecurity domain to mitigate disinformation threats. By treating disinformation as a cybersecurity threat we can find effective countermeasures to cognitive hacking.
- ◆ Section 505(1) of Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860- Punishment for making, publishing or circulating any statement, rumour or report which may cause fear for an alarm to the public, or to any section of the public.
- ◆ Section 153 of IPC- Wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot—if rioting be committed—if not committed.
- ◆ Section 499 and 500 of IPC- Defamation and punishment for defamation.

Other Provisions

- ◆ One can file a complaint with the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) which represents the private television news and current affairs broadcasters.
- ◆ Indian Broadcast Foundation (IBF) is a body where one can file complaints against contents aired by 24*7 channels for promoting smoking, abuse, or any violent action by online or offline.
- ◆ Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC) deals with complaints relating to the TV content which is objective or fake news, where the Broadcaster incites communal hatred, encourage violence against woman, child abuse or promotes consumption of drugs.
- ◆ The Press Council of India (statutory body) can warn newspaper

agencies, the news agency, the editor or the journalist or disapprove the conduct of the editor or the journalist if it finds that a newspaper or a news agency has violated journalistic ethics.

- ◆ The issue with these bodies is that they don't have detrimental penalising powers.

Way Forward

- ◆ Data breaches result in the loss of value, but so can data manipulation. This reflects the changing nature of cyber security at large – it's now more about protecting an enterprise's values, brand and reputation rather than just a network security issue.
- ◆ Disinformation is still an emerging frontier for cyber security, and we will need unconventional techniques far beyond data breach notifications and regulatory fines. New alliances and partnerships must emerge between industry and government. More than that, our fundamental assumptions of what a cyber attack looks like must also evolve.



Fake News Mechanism

- ◆ Laws Regarding Fake News
- ◆ Section 66D of Information Technology Act- Punishment for cheating by personation by using computer resource.
- ◆ Section 54 of the Disaster Management Act- Punishment for false warning.

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. Disinformation is needed to be considered as a cyber-security threat as other threats like malware and trojans. Comment.

07

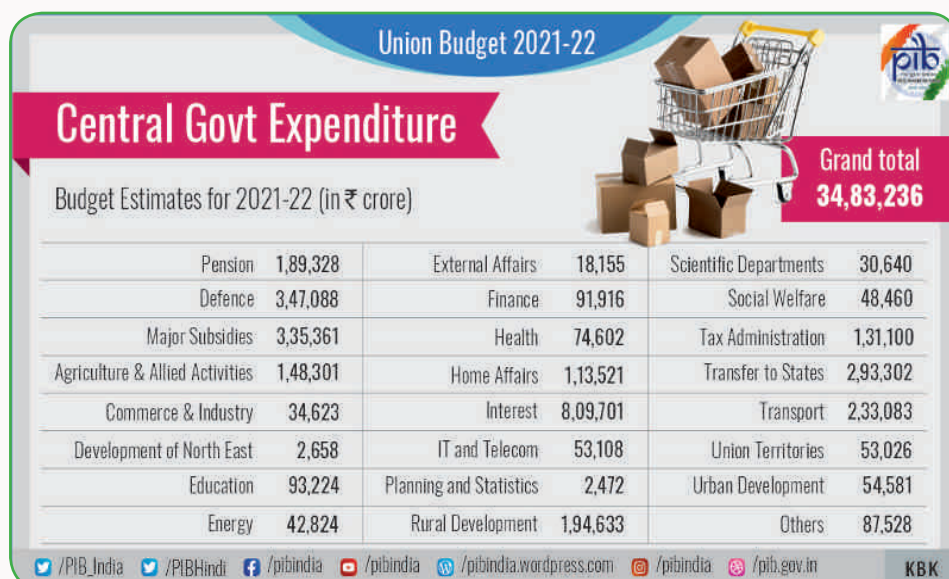
Reduced Allocation for Education Sector : Union Budget 2021-22

Why in News?

- The Centre has slashed allocation for education by about 6.13%, even as it announced the development of 15,000 'Adarsh Vidyalayas' (model schools), a new central university in Leh, a 'glue grant' for better synergy among institutions and a single higher education regulator in the budget for 2021-22 presented on 1st February 2021.
- The allocation for the education ministry has been cut to Rs 93,224 crore from Rs 99,311 crore, as per the budgetary proposals.

Introduction

- By 2030, India is set to have the largest working-age population in the world. Not only do they need literacy but they need both job and life skills. Government think-tank NITI Aayog's CEO Amitabh Kant said that it's not possible for India to grow over a long period of time and create jobs without a massive focus on nutrition, health and education.
- Remember, the government's efforts to make India a manufacturing and export hub through the Make in India initiative has been hobbled by a severe shortage of skilled workers. Decades of neglect in education and training have left scores of industries with a deficit of skilled labourers.



- Education ministry officials termed the cut "rationalisation" on account of the COVID-19 exigencies and said the allocation must be viewed vis-à-vis the revised budget estimates instead. Moreover, they said the budget cut will not impact higher education institutions as much as they will now get funding directly from the National Research Foundation instead of the ministry's budget.
- Experts were of the view that barring a few good announcements, the fineprint has not been very encouraging, especially in a year when the Centre is looking to implement the national education policy (NEP).

Budgetary Announcements for Education Sector

- According to the Finance Minister's speech, for 2021-22 a total amount of Rs 93,224 crore

will be allocated for the Ministry of Education. This consists of Rs 54,874 crore for Department of School Education and Literacy and Rs 38,350 crore for the Department of Higher Education. The allocation for 2021-22 in respect to Education is 6.13% less than the allocation made by the Union Government in 2020-21. In 2020-21, the budgeted estimate for the Ministry of Education was Rs 99,312 crore, which was revised to Rs 85,089 crore (Revised Estimate).

- Among the most prominent announcements concerning education in the country are the 100 new Sainik schools that will come up across India in partnership with NGOs and Private schools and a Central University in Leh.
- The legislation to implement a Higher Education Commission will be introduced in the coming year. It will be an umbrella body

with four verticals to oversee standard-setting, accreditation, regulation, and funding.

- ◆ 15,000 schools across the country will be strengthened quality wise and will serve as exemplar schools in that region. These schools will lead the way in helping other schools to achieve the goals of the National Education Policy.
- ◆ National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed to set standards for school teachers. This will impact around 92 lakh teachers currently in the public and private schools in the country.
- ◆ Formal umbrella structures will be set up to bring research institutions, colleges and universities in nine cities. These will help institutions have better synergy and also retain their internal autonomy. A 'Glue Grant' will be set up for this purpose.
- ◆ 750 Eklavya Model Residential Schools will be set up in Tribal areas. The cost of each school will be increased to Rs 38 crores and for those schools in hilly and difficult areas, the unit cost to set it up will be Rs 48 crores.
- ◆ Central Assistance for Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for students from Scheduled Castes will be Rs 35,219 crores for six years (till 2025-26).
- ◆ Rs 3000 crore allocated for apprenticeship initiatives and opportunities for graduates and diploma holders in Engineering.
- ◆ A National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR) will be

set up to support teaching and learning activities. The digital architecture set up under this will also help in educational planning, governance and administrative activities of the Centre and the States/ Union Territories.

- ◆ Union Government will work on standardising Indian sign language across the country and develop curriculum to be used in this language.
- ◆ National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers for Holistic Advancement (NISTHA) will train 56 lakh school teachers in 2021-22 digitally.
- ◆ CBSE Board Exams reforms will be introduced in a phased manner from 2022-23. Students to be tested on conceptual clarity, analytical skills and application of knowledge to real-life situations.
- ◆ Partnerships with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to benchmark the skill levels of workforce and with Japan for skill transfer.

Conundrum in Policy Axis

- ◆ More recently, the state's position with regard to the provision of education in general and budgetary allocations to education in particular hinges on two paradoxical axes.
- ◆ On one axis, is its appreciation of the commitment and passion of the community volunteers to reach out to children who may not be learning for multiple reasons. They are intrinsically motivated, driven by passion and selfless service.

- ◆ Acknowledging the contribution of such people, the NEP proposes ideas of "peer-tutoring and trained volunteers" as "voluntary and joyful activity" to support teachers to impart foundational literacy and numeracy skills to children in need of such skills.
- ◆ It also proposes tapping of active and healthy senior citizens, school alumni, local community members and maintaining databases of literate volunteers, retired scientists, alumni, and educators for the same.
- ◆ None of these measures have any cost implications. While such efforts need to be applauded, they cannot be regarded as substitutes of the formal state apparatus.
- ◆ Such a view also de-legitimises the teaching profession-associated qualifications and the training mandated by the state for people to become teachers.
- ◆ In the name of passion and commitment, salaries and working conditions of the local community, most of whom are unemployed youth and women, are often compromised.
- ◆ On the other axis, is the position advocating partnerships between public and private bodies which rests on the belief that the dysfunctionality of PES can be tackled by infusing them with managerial principles of choice, efficiency and accountability. Not that the involvement of private individuals/organisations/schools in education is anything new in India.

- ◆ However, in the past, private schools catered to the relatively better-off but now the poor are being targeted for profit.
- ◆ This narrative draws its support from two sources: Poor learning outcomes of children, particularly those studying in government schools as reported by large scale assessment surveys, and large-scale absenteeism/dereliction of duty on the part of government school teachers. Reasons for these are attributed to government school teachers having no accountability.

Rising Concerns

- ◆ Slashing allocation for education will adversely impact programmes like Right to Education and will pave the way for privatization of school education, edging out govt-run schools
- ◆ The dip in the education budget may also impact India's efforts to contain the country's COVID-19 epidemic. Official figures clearly say that only 54% schools in India have drinking water, functioning toilets and hand wash facilities. All three are essential to keep students and teachers safe and healthy.
- ◆ The Right to Education Act provides for such facilities to

be built in schools. However, its implementation has been subpart for many years, with 2020 being possibly the worst.

- ◆ Curiously, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman thought it fit this year to open more routes to privatise school education. She announced that the Union government would include a hundred government-run Sainik schools to be managed under the public-private partnership programme, and open around 750 Eklavya schools across India.
- ◆ Experts have been pointing out that spending on Eklavya schools – which are single-teacher schools – instead of full-fledged facilities for children should only be a stop-gap arrangement in between the government's efforts to build permanent education infrastructure.
- ◆ The NEP roll-out requires massive investments, with the school education department telling the finance commission that it alone needs Rs. 1.14 trillion for a five-year period.
- ◆ Likewise, the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA), which is expected to accelerate funding, will find it difficult to do so. The higher education commission is an old plan and India has not

moved much in the past one year. Budget 2021-22 has pegged Rs. 1 crore for HEFA, compared to Rs. 2,200 crore in 2020-21 BE. The move may impact disbursement of approved loans to educational institutions.

Way Forward

- ◆ Covid hit Indian economy is finding hard to balance the budgetary priorities. Education though is the most essential parameter for human development, still has got a reduced allocation. Though a higher budget for Defence is justified due to the stand-off at the northern borders. But education similarly needs funds for training and making workforce ready for the new technological economy and shifting of global supply chains.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. In the budget 2021-22, the allocation to the education sector has been reduced by 6.13%. This on one hand opens the space for private sector but also exposes the welfare functions of the state to market vulnerabilities while impacting quality outcome. Discuss.

7

IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01

PM Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana

1. Why in News?

- Recently, in Budget 2021, the Finance Minister announced that the Union Budget is set on six pillars with the first being healthcare and wellbeing.
- The government has launched a new centrally sponsored scheme, PM AtmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, with an outlay of about Rs 64,180 crores over 6 years.
- The investment in healthcare sector has increased "substantially" in budget 2021 as the government focuses on strengthening institutions.
- The earlier allocations to health and wellbeing were Rs 94,452 crore in 2020-21 and Rs 86,259 crore in 2019-20.



5. Outlook

- Healthcare spend is proposed to more than double and this will help in rolling out the vaccination program as well as strengthen the delivery system and build better capability and capacity to combat any future pandemics.
- India is rolling out the world's second largest vaccination program and the Government has provided for almost 5 bn USD in the next year's budget to make it happen.
- Besides curative care the focus on preventive and well being will usher in a more holistic approach to reduce morbidity and mortality.

2. Key Objectives

- The PM AtmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana has been announced for developing 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.
- 20% of funds under the NHM are placed in an incentive pool. Incentives are provided to States on achievement of priority indicators including an increase in States' budgetary expenditure on health.

3. Main Interventions

- Support for 17,788 rural and 11,024 urban Health and Wellness Centers;
- Setting up integrated public health labs in all districts and 3382 block public health units in 11 states;
- Establishing critical care hospital blocks in 602 districts and 12 central institutions;
- Strengthening of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), its 5 regional branches and 20 metropolitan health surveillance units;
- Expansion of the Integrated Health Information Portal to all States/UTs to connect all public health labs;
- Operationalisation of 17 new Public Health Units and strengthening of 33 existing Public Health Units at Points of Entry, that is at 32 Airports, 11 Seaports and 7 land crossings;
- Setting up of 15 Health Emergency Operation Centers and 2 mobile hospitals; and
- Setting up of a national institution for One Health, a Regional Research Platform for World Health Organisation (WHO) South East Asia Region, 9 Bio-Safety Level III laboratories and 4 regional National Institutes for Virology.

4. Other Health Initiatives

- In February 2018, the Indian Government had announced Ayushman Bharat Program (ABP) with two components of Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs), to deliver comprehensive primary health care (PHC) services to the entire population.
- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) was launched for improving access to hospitalisation services at secondary and tertiary level health facilities for bottom 40% of total population. The plans were to have 1,50,000 Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) by December 2022.
- The first HWC was launched on 14 April 2018 and by 31 March 2020, a total 38,595 AB-HWCs were operational across India.

02

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

1. Why in News?

- The government's maternity benefit scheme, or Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), has crossed 1.75 crore eligible women till financial year 2020, the Centre informed Parliament.



2. Introduction

- Under-nutrition continues to adversely affect majority of women in India. In India, every third woman is undernourished and every second woman is anaemic.
- An undernourished mother almost inevitably gives birth to a low birth weight baby.
- When poor nutrition starts in-utero, it extends throughout the life cycle since the changes are largely irreversible.
- Owing to economic and social distress many women continue to work to earn a living for their family right up to the last days of their pregnancy.
- Under PMMVY, a cash incentive of Rs 5000 would be provided directly in the account of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) for first living child of the family subject to their fulfilling specific conditions relating to Maternal and Child Health.
- The eligible beneficiaries would receive the remaining cash incentives as per approved norms towards maternity benefit under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) after institutional delivery so that on an average, a woman will get Rs 6000.
- PMMVY would provide grants-in-aid to the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations (UTs) in a dedicated Escrow account for the purpose of direct benefit transfer to the beneficiaries.

3. Objectives of PMMVY

- Providing partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentives so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first living child.
- The cash incentive provided would lead to improved health seeking behaviour amongst the PW&LM

6. Umbrella ICDS

- Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing Umbrella Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).
- ICDS is a unique early childhood development programme, aimed at addressing malnutrition, health and also development needs of young children, pregnant and nursing mothers.
- It has following components:
 - Anganwadi Services Scheme;
 - Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana;
 - National Creche Scheme;
 - POSHAN Abhiyaan;
 - Scheme for Adolescent Girls; and
 - Child Protection Scheme.

4. Target beneficiaries

- All Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers, excluding PW&LM who are in regular employment with the Central Government or the State Governments or PSUs or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force.
- All eligible Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers who have their pregnancy on or after 01.01.2017 for first child in family.
- The date and stage of pregnancy for a beneficiary would be counted with respect to her LMP date as mentioned in the MCP card.

5. Implementation

- PMMVY is implemented using the platform of Anganwadi Services scheme of Umbrella ICDS under Ministry of Women and Child Development in respect of States/ UTs implementing scheme through Women and Child Development Department/ Social Welfare Department and through Health system in respect of States/ UTs where scheme will be implemented by Health & Family Welfare Department.
- PMMVY is implemented through a centrally deployed Web Based MIS Software application and the focal point of implementation would be the Anganwadi Centre (AWC) and ASHA/ ANM workers.

03

DNA Technology (Use and Application) Bill, 2019

1. Why in News?

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on science and technology has recommended that the government assuage concerns raised over the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019 both in Parliament and outside.



5. Issues at Hand

- The bill is in violation of human rights as it is in conflict with the privacy of the individuals, because all the details of the individual person's body and his DNA profile will be with the state.
- In Justice K. S. Puttaswamy and Ors. vs Union of India and Ors, case, The Apex Court has interpreted the Constitution to include 'right to privacy' as a fundamental right. The court said that this right may be infringed only if three conditions are met. Which are:
 - There should be a law;
 - The law should aim to achieve a public purpose; and
 - The public purpose should be proportionate to the infringement of privacy.
- The schedule lists civil matters where the DNA profiling can be taken in use. This includes the issues which are related to the establishment of an individuals' identity.
- A DNA sample of an individual can provide additional information with regard to that individual other than his identity.

2. Intended Purpose

- The main purpose of the bill as per the Department of Biotechnology is to:
 - enable identification of missing children and of unidentified deceased individuals including disaster victims; apprehend repeat offenders for heinous crimes (rape, murder, etc.);
 - develop stringent standards, and quality assurance system to grant approval and accreditation to the laboratories undertaking DNA profiling; and
 - regulate the use of DNA profiles in establishing identity in criminal and civil proceedings.
- The bill aims to establish:
 - a DNA regulatory board which will advise the Centre and the state governments on establishing of DNA laboratories; and
 - DNA data banks and laying down guidelines, standards and procedures for establishment and functioning of such laboratories and data banks.
- **The bill said that every data bank will maintain the indices for the following categories:**
 - The crime scene index
 - An offender's index
 - A suspect's index
 - An under trials' index
 - Missing person's index and
 - An unknown deceased persons' index

3. DNA: Relevance

- The DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) is a complex molecule which contains all the information necessary to build and maintain an organism.
- DNA can be extracted from saliva, hair, blood, bones, semen and from other organs of the body.
- The DNA of every person is unique in itself, and variation in the sequence of DNA can be used to match individuals and identify them.
- DNA Technique helps the identification of criminals on the scientific lines.
- The DNA techniques is basically made up of amino acids and it is matched with the bases which provide the key to determine the genetic blueprints of a living being.

4. Data Safety

- The bill also proposes a provision related to a 'written consent' of an individual to be obtained before collection of their DNA samples.
- Such consent is not required for the offences which include the punishment of more than seven years in prison or in case of DNA profiling for civil matters.
- The bill allows DNA testing only in respect of matters listed in the schedule to the bill.
- The disclosure of DNA information will be punishable with imprisonment of up to three years and fine of up to one lakh Indian rupees.
- The DNA profile of a person will be kept in a government run regulatory body.
- DNA profiles to be stored are not for the entire population but for specified categories of individuals such as convicts and suspects of major crimes, relatives of missing persons (so that their DNA profiles can be compared with profiles of unidentified deceased individuals).

04

Reconsider the Seventh Schedule

1. Why in News?

- Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Chairman NK Singh, suggested that the government should set up committees to revisit the Seventh Schedule and Article 282 of the Indian Constitution.
- The final report of the 15th Finance Commission (2021-26) is now public.

2. Background

- There is a need to recognise the contemporary context of technology, global interdependence and changes in our national priorities. These necessitate a revisit to the traditional classification of subjects embedded in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution divides subjects broadly into the Union, State, and Concurrent list.
- The legitimacy of all centrally sponsored schemes, most of which are in the domain of the states, emanates from the use or misuse of Article 282 of the Indian Constitution.
- Article 282 of the Indian Constitution deals with expenditure defrayable by the Centre or a state out of its revenues. The article says the Centre or states may make any grants for any public purpose, notwithstanding that the purpose is not one with respect to which Parliament or the Legislature of the State, as the case may be, may make laws.
- Centrally sponsored schemes are paid for by the Centre and states in a pre-determined ratio, while central sector schemes are entirely financed by the Centre.



3. Need for Reconsideration

- Over a period of time the division of functions got increasingly eroded.
- The first reason perhaps would be the constitution of the Planning Commission in 1951.
- Another reason is the shifting of the subjects like forest and education from the State to the Concurrent list by the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution, which significantly changed the dynamics.
- Some examples in today's context are the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005, the Right of Children to Free and the National Food Security Act, 2013.
- Over time, the Union has transgressed into subjects assigned to states for various reasons, including the fact some of these are national priorities and the Centre has obligations going beyond the Schedule.
- The symmetry in the working of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council and the Finance Commission deserves serious considerations.

4. Issues Related to Centrally Sponsored Schemes

- There are 211 sub-schemes under the 29 centrally sponsored schemes. Considering that the states often protest that these schemes are ill designed and not suited to their specific needs and entail significant financial outlays by them, no state has really decided to abandon them.
- There is a need for rationalisation of centrally sponsored schemes by revisiting Article 282 of the Indian constitution to make them flexible enough to allow States to adapt and innovate.

5. 15th Finance Commission

- The Finance Commission is a constitutional body formed by the President of India to give suggestions on centre-state financial relations. The 15th Finance Commission was required to submit two reports.
- Key Recommendations:
- The share of states in the centre's taxes is recommended to be decreased from 42% during the 2015-20 period to 41% for 2020-21. The 1% decrease is to provide for the newly formed union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh from the resources of the central government.
- In 2020-21, the following grants will be provided to states: (i) revenue deficit grants, (ii) grants to local bodies, and (iii) disaster management grants. The Commission has also proposed a framework for sector-specific and performance-based grants.
- The Commission noted that recommending a credible fiscal and debt trajectory roadmap remains problematic due to uncertainty around the economy. It recommended that both central and state governments should focus on debt consolidation and comply with the fiscal deficit and debt levels as per their respective Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Acts.
- The Commission recommended the following to expand the taxing capacity: (i) broadening the tax base, (ii) streamlining tax rates, (iii) and increasing capacity and expertise of tax administration in all tiers of the government.
- The Commission recommended forming an expert group to draft legislation to provide for a statutory framework for sound public financial management system.
- It recommended that both the central and state governments should make full disclosure of extra-budgetary borrowings. The outstanding extra-budgetary liabilities should be clearly identified and eliminated in a time-bound manner.

05

Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management

1. Why in News?

- Recently, a dedicated Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) has been set up under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, at the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) in Chennai.
- The new governmental centre was announced by the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Babul Supriyo on World Wetland Day on 2 February 2021.



2. Objective of the Management Centre

- It will address specific research needs and knowledge gaps to address wetlands and their management and bring capacity development and cutting-edge research to wetlands in India.
- It is also positioned to apply integrated approaches for conservation, management and wise use of India's 42 globally-significant 'Ramsar' wetland sites.

3. Wetlands in India

- Wetlands are one of the most important freshwater sources. They also provide various ecological services.
- India is extremely rich in terms of wetland diversity and is one of the few countries in the world to have a wetland inventory system, wherein remote sensing techniques have been used to map the wetlands.
- Almost 4.6 percent of India's land area is wetlands, spanning 15.26 million hectares.
- 2021 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, which is celebrated annually as "World Wetlands Day" on 2 February.
- There are 42 sites in the country that have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance or Ramsar sites.

4. Ramsar Convention

- Ramsar sites are wetlands designated to be of global importance under the Ramsar Convention, also known as the (international) Convention on Wetlands.
- The intergovernmental Ramsar treaty was established in 1971 by UNESCO.
- It aims to develop a global network of wetlands for conservation of biological diversity and for sustaining human life.

6. Recent Edition - Ramsar Sites in India

- In December 2020 – Tso Kar Wetland Complex. It includes two connected lakes, Startsapuk Tso and Tso Kar, in Ladakh.
- In November 2020 – Maharashtra – Lonar Lake
- In November 2020 – Agra (Uttar Pradesh) – Sur Sarovar also called, Keetham Lake
- In November 2020 – Uttarakhand – Asan Barrage
- In July 2020 – Bihar – Kanwar Lake or Kabal Taal
- In February 2020 – Kolkata – Sunderban Reserve Forest (Sunderban Wetlands)

5. Scope

- The newly-established CWCM will support partnership and networks with national and international agencies that work on wetlands.
- It will allegedly also act as a knowledge hub and facilitate exchanges between States and Union Territory Wetland authorities, users, managers, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners.
- The Centre will also help national and State/UT governments plan, monitor, design and implement policy and regulations, as well as carry out targeted research for effective conservation strategies.

06

Nord Stream 2 Pipeline between Germany and Russia

1. Why in News?

- The consortium behind the Russia-led Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline has resumed laying pipes in the waters of Denmark, despite mounting pressure on the project from Washington.



2. Introduction

- The pipeline is a system of offshore natural gas pipelines from Russia to Germany.
- The Nord Stream 2 is designed to double the capacity of the existing undersea gas pipeline from Russia to Germany to 110 billion cubic meters per year. The initiative is led by Russia's Gazprom with western partners.
- The pipeline is more than 90 per cent complete and scheduled to operate from this year.
- The United States (U.S.) is fiercely against Nord Stream 2 project. The Trump administration had imposed sanctions on a ship involved in construction work.
- The new pipeline will run alongside the already constructed Nord Stream.

5. Nordic Security

- The 1,200 kilometer pipeline travels from Russia to Germany, but its proposed route enters the territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of three other countries: Finland, Sweden and Denmark.
- National governments and local authorities are set to benefit economically from investment and employment in the pipeline, but politicians and military experts have raised issues related to European security.
- Plans to allow Nord Stream workers to use Swedish ports, including their main navy base in Karlskrona, could provide Russia with an opportunity to gain intelligence and plot espionage activities.
- Experts including Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz have warned that the pipeline gives Russia the pretext to increase their military presence in the Baltic Sea, even using it as a means to transmit military information on the movements of naval vessels.
- Despite these concerns, Denmark remains the only country yet to approve construction through its waters. In other words, Danish refusal would only delay the project, not kill it entirely.

3. Geo Political Equation

- The U. S. has long said the pipeline will increase Russian leverage over Europe and will bypass Ukraine, depriving Kyiv of lucrative transit fees.
- The U. S. is also keen to sell its sea-borne liquefied natural gas to European countries.
- U.S. President Joe Biden has said he believes Nord Stream 2 is a "bad deal for Europe".
- Ukraine's opposition to Nord Stream 2 also stems in part because Kyiv benefits by collecting transit fees from Russian gas shipped through existing pipelines to Europe. Nord Stream 2's Baltic Sea routing will bypass Ukraine, sending that gas directly from Russia to Germany.
- France has also expressed its opposition to the project, as have some others in Eastern Europe.
- Germany, however, has solidly stood behind the Nord Stream 2, despite opposition from allies, with Chancellor Angela Merkel's government insisting that it is a commercial project.

4. German Dependence

- Oil and gas are the lifeblood of Germany's manufacturing economy, but the country produces very little energy domestically and is dependent on imports for 98% of its oil and 92% of its gas supply.
- As of 2015, Russia already supplied the plurality of its oil and gas (40% and 35% respectively), so it was with no great surprise that plans to increase Russia's presence were met with hostility on both sides of the Atlantic.
- The core concern centers around Germany's dependence on Russian energy which could make it susceptible to exploitation and more vulnerable to interference.
- Germany, Europe's biggest natural gas consumer, has made efforts to downplay the relevance of Russian energy on the nation's security.

07

Historical Significance of Jerenga Pothar and Dhekiajuli

1. Why in News?

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made his second visit to Assam, and venues have historical significance.
- He also laid the foundation stone for two medical colleges and a road and highway project.
- The first was Sivasagar's Jerenga Pothar, where 17th-century Ahom Princess Joymoti sacrificed her life.
- The second was "martyr" town of Dhekiajuli, associated with the Quit India Movement of 1942,



2. About Jerenga Pothar

- Formerly known as Rangpur, Sivasagar was the seat of the powerful Ahom dynasty, who ruled Assam for around 600 years (1228-1826).
- Jerenga Pothar, an open field in Sivasagar town, is popularly connected to the valour of 17th century Ahom princess Joymoti.
- While the courage of Ahom kings is well-documented, Joymoti's story — little-known until the latter part of the 19th century — is today celebrated and invoked as a symbol of inspiration.

3. Historical Importance: Jerenga Pothar

- From 1671 to 1681, the Ahom kingdom was undergoing a period of tumult under 'ministerial superiority', meaning the nobles and prime ministers were more important than the king, who were often puppets.
- It was at this time that Sulikhpaa— also known as 'Lora Raja' or the boy prince — and his Prime Minister Laluksala Borphukan were tracking down, and killing, possible heirs, to ensure a clear passage to the throne.
- Prince Godapani, Joymoti's husband, was next in line, but he escaped to the Naga Hills before Lora Raja and his men could capture him. It was then that Lora Raja sought out Godapani's wife Joymoti, hoping she would tell him about his whereabouts.
- However, despite being tortured for days, tied to a thorny plant, in an open field, Joymoti refused to divulge any information.
- She died, sacrificing her life for her husband, who ultimately became the king, ushering in an era of stability and peace in Assam. The place Joymoti was tortured to death was Jerenga Pothar.

4. Significance of this Place

- While the Jerenga Pothar itself is not a protected archaeological site, its vicinity includes a number of protected sites, including the Na Pukhuri tank to its east and the PohuGarh, a natural zoo built during the Ahom era, to its west.
- Close by is the large Joysagar tank, built by Ahom king Swargadeo Rudra Singha in 1697, and the Vishnu Dol temple.
- In 2017, the field was used for the centenary celebrations of the apex and influential literary body, the Asam Sahitya Sabha.

5. Dhekiajuli's Connection to the Quit India movement

- Dhekiajuli was home to possibly the youngest martyr of the Indian freedom struggle.
- On September 20, 1942, as part of the Quit India movement, processions of freedom fighters marched to various police stations across several towns in Assam.
- These squads, which were known as 'Mrityu Bahini', or death squads, had wide participation — including women and children — and set out to unfurl the tricolour atop police stations, seen as symbols of colonial power.
- The British administration came down heavily on them. In Gohpur, 17-year-old Kanaklata Barua and others fell to bullets.
- In Dhekiajuli, at least 15 people were shot dead, three of them women, including the 12-year-old Tileswari Barua.
- Tileswari is considered as one of the youngest martyrs of India's freedom struggle.
- 20th September has for long been observed as Martyrs' Day in Dhekiajuli town.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 PM Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana

4. Consider the following statements with reference to the 'PM AtmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana':

1. The PM AtmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana has been announced for developing capacities of primary, secondary and tertiary care health systems along with strengthen existing national institutions.
2. The budget 2021-22 allocated Rs 2,23,846 crore for health and wellbeing.
3. The investment in healthcare sector has decreased "substantially" in budget 2021 as the government focuses on economic recovery and widening tax base.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 and 2 are correct. The PM AtmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana has been announced for developing 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. The budget 2021-22 allocated Rs 2,23,846 crore for health and wellbeing.

Statement 3 is incorrect. The investment in healthcare sector has increased "substantially" in budget 2021 as the government focuses on strengthening institutions. 

02 Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

2. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, consider the following statements:

1. PMMVY would provide grants-in-aid to the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations (UTs) in a dedicated Escrow account for the purpose of direct benefit transfer to the beneficiaries.
2. Under PMMVY, a cash incentive of Rs 5000 would be provided directly in the account of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) for first living child.
3. PMMVY is be implemented using the platform of e-Panchayat Services scheme under Ministry of Health.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 and 2 are correct. PMMVY, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, would provide grants-in-aid to the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations (UTs) in a dedicated Escrow account for the purpose of direct benefit transfer to the beneficiaries.

Under PMMVY, a cash incentive of Rs 5000 would be provided directly in the account of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) for first living child of the family. The eligible beneficiaries would receive the remaining cash incentives as per approved norms towards maternity benefit under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) after institutional delivery so that on an average, a woman will get Rs 6000.

Statement 3 is incorrect. PMMVY is be implemented using the platform of Anganwadi Services scheme of Umbrella ICDS under Ministry of Women and Child Development in respect of States/ UTs implementing scheme through Women and Child Development Department/ Social Welfare Department and through Health system in respect of States/ UTs where scheme will be implemented by Health & Family Welfare Department. 

03 DNA Technology (Use and Application) Bill, 2019

3. Consider the following statements with reference to the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Bill, 2019:

1. One of the main purposes of the bill is to enable identification of missing children and of unidentified deceased individuals.
2. The bill proposes a provision related to a 'written consent' of an individual to be obtained before collection of their DNA samples.
3. The bill aims to establish a DNA regulatory board and DNA data banks.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: All the statements are correct.

The main purpose of the bill as per the Department of Biotechnology is to enable identification of missing children and of unidentified deceased individuals including disaster victims; apprehend repeat offenders for heinous crimes (rape, murder, etc.); develop stringent standards, and quality assurance system to grant approval and accreditation to the laboratories undertaking DNA profiling; regulate the use of DNA profiles in establishing identity in criminal and civil proceedings.

The bill aims to establish a DNA regulatory board which will advise the Centre and the state governments on establishing of DNA laboratories and DNA data banks and laying down guidelines, standards and procedures for establishment and functioning of such laboratories and data banks.

The bill also proposes a provision related to a 'written consent' of an individual to be obtained before collection of their DNA samples. Such consent is not required for the offences which include the punishment of more than seven years in prison or in case of DNA profiling for civil matters. The bill allows DNA testing only in respect of matters listed in the schedule to the bill.



04 Reconsider the Seventh Schedule

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Finance Commission is a constitutional body formed by the Cabinet to give suggestions on centre-state financial relations.
2. Fifteenth Finance Commission has suggested that the government should set up committees to revisit the Seventh Schedule and Article 282 of the Indian Constitution.

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

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. The Finance Commission is a constitutional body formed by the President of India to give suggestions on centre-state financial relations.

Statement 2 is correct. Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Chairman NK Singh, suggested that the government should set up committees to revisit the Seventh Schedule and Article 282 of the Indian Constitution. The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution divides subjects broadly into the Union, State, and Concurrent list. Article 282 deals with expenditure defrayable by the Centre or a state out of its revenues. The article says the Centre or states may make any grants for any public purpose, notwithstanding that the purpose is not one with respect to which Parliament or the Legislature of the State, as the case may be, may make laws.



05 Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management

5. With reference to the Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM), consider the following statements:

1. It is a dedicated organisation set up under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, at the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) in Dehradun.
2. There are 42 sites in the country that have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance or Ramsar sites.

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. Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) has been set up under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, at the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) in Chennai.

Statement 2 is correct. There are 42 sites in the country that have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance or Ramsar sites.



06 Nord Stream 2 Pipeline between Germany and Russia

6. With reference to the Nord Stream 2, consider the following statements:

1. Its proposed route enters the territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of three other countries: Finland, Sweden and Denmark.
2. Ukraine has supported this intra-continental pipeline since it is one of the major beneficiaries of the pipeline.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. The 1,200 kilometer pipeline travels from Russia to Germany, but its proposed route enters the territorial waters and EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) of three other countries: Finland, Sweden and Denmark. The Nord Stream 2 is designed to double the capacity of the existing undersea gas pipeline from Russia to Germany to 110 billion cubic meters per year. The initiative is led by Russia's Gazprom with western partners.

Statement 2 is incorrect. Ukraine's opposition to Nord Stream 2 also stems in part because Kyiv benefits by collecting transit fees from Russian gas shipped through existing pipelines to Europe. Nord Stream 2's Baltic Sea routing will bypass Ukraine, sending that gas directly from Russia to Germany.



07 Historical Significance of Jerenga Pothar and Dhekiajuli

7. Consider the following statements:

1. Formerly known as Rangpur, Sivasagar was the seat of the powerful Ahom dynasty, who ruled Assam for around 600 years (1228-1826).
2. Jerenga Pothar, an open field in Sivasagar town, is popularly connected to the valour of 17th century Ahom princess Joymoti.

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

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Both the statements are correct. Formerly known as Rangpur, Sivasagar was the seat of the powerful Ahom dynasty, who ruled Assam for around 600 years (1228-1826). Jerenga Pothar, an open field in Sivasagar town, is popularly connected to the valour of 17th century Ahom princess Joymoti.



7 IMPORTANT NEWS

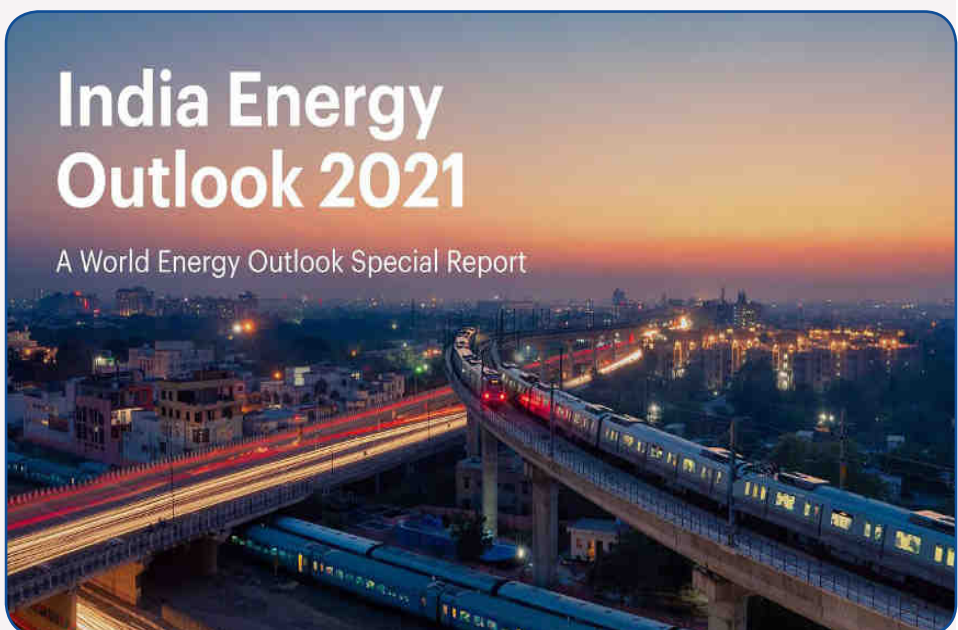
01

India Energy Outlook 2021

- ◆ The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released the India Energy Outlook 2021 report which examines the opportunities and challenges faced by the planet's third-largest energy-consuming country as it seeks to recover from the COVID-19 crisis.

Key Highlights

- ◆ India is set to experience the largest increase in energy demand of any country worldwide over the next 20 years as its economy continues to develop and bring greater prosperity to its citizens. The combination of a growing and industrialising economy and an expanding and increasingly urban population will drive energy usage up significantly.
- ◆ India has made remarkable progress in recent years, bringing electricity connection to hundreds of millions of people and impressively scaling up the use of renewable energy, particularly solar.
- ◆ Based on India's current policy settings, nearly 60 per cent of its CO₂ emissions in the late 2030s will be coming from infrastructure and



machines that do not exist today. This represents a huge opening for policies to steer India onto a more secure and sustainable course.

- ◆ The additional funding for clean-energy technologies required to put India on a sustainable path over the next 20 years is \$1.4 trillion, or 70 per cent higher than in a scenario based on its current policy settings. But the benefits are huge, including savings of the same magnitude on oil-import bills.

About IEA

- ◆ The International Energy Agency (IEA) is a Paris-based autonomous

intergovernmental organisation established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis. The IEA was initially dedicated to responding to physical disruptions in the supply of oil, as well as serving as an information source on statistics about the international oil market and other energy sectors. The IEA family is made up of 30 member countries, 8 association countries, and 3 accession countries. 

02

China's First Mars Mission - Tianwen-1

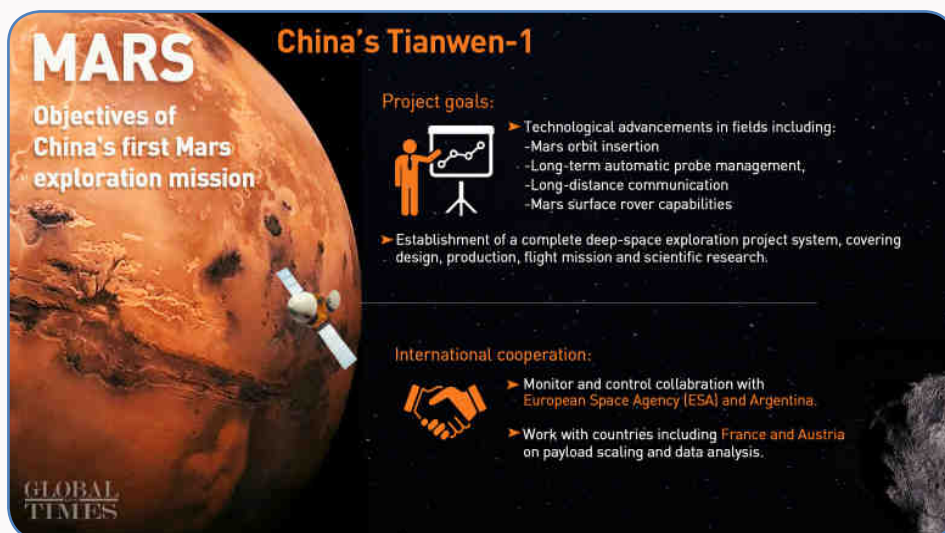
- China's first Mars mission, Tianwen-1 has arrived in orbit around the Red Planet February, 10. The milestone makes China the sixth entity to get a probe to Mars, joining the United States, the Soviet Union, the European Space Agency, India and the United Arab Emirates, whose Hope orbiter made it to the Red Planet on February, 9).

Background

- China took its first crack at Mars back in November 2011, with an orbiter called Yinghuo-1 that launched with Russia's Phobos-Grunt sample-return mission. But Phobos-Grunt never made it out of Earth orbit, and Yinghuo-1 crashed and burned with the Russian probe and another tagalong, the Planetary Society's Living Interplanetary Flight Experiment.

About Mission

- Tianwen-1 (which means "Questioning the Heavens") is a big step up from Yinghuo-1, however. For starters, this current mission is an entirely China-led affair; it was developed by the China National



Space Administration (with some international collaboration) and launched atop a Chinese Long March 5 rocket on July 23, 2020.

- The orbiter will study the planet from above using a high-resolution camera, a spectrometer, a magnetometer and an ice-mapping radar instrument, among other scientific gear.
- The orbiter will also relay communications from the rover, which sports an impressive scientific suite of its own. Among the rover's gear are cameras, climate and geology instruments and ground-penetrating radar,

which will hunt for pockets of water beneath Mars' red dirt.

- Tianwen-1 consists of an orbiter and a lander-rover duo. The lander, meanwhile, will serve as a platform for the rover, deploying a ramp that the wheeled vehicle will roll down onto the Martian surface.
- If the Tianwen-1 rover and lander touch down safely this May and get to work, China will become just the second nation, after the United States, to operate a spacecraft successfully on the Red Planet's surface for an appreciable amount of time.



03

Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020

- Parliament has passed the Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020. Now the Bill will go to the President of India for his assent.

Key Features of the Bill

- With a view to promote the expansion of port infrastructure and facilitate trade and commerce, the Major Port Authorities Bill 2020 bill aims at decentralizing

decision making and to infuse professionalism in governance of major ports.

- The Bill is more compact in comparison to the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963 as the number of sections has been reduced to 76 from 134 by eliminating overlapping and obsolete Sections.

- The new Bill has proposed a simplified composition of the Board of Port Authority which will comprise of 11 to 13 Members from the present 17 to 19 Members representing various interests. A compact Board with professional independent Members will strengthen decision making and strategic planning.



**Reforming Indian Ports
Major Ports Authorities Bill Approved**

Major Port Authorities Bill will replace the 1963 act that regulates 12 major ports in India

The new law would take into account the entry of private players and public private partnership (PPP) model being used

Provisions for resolving disputes with private players would also be incorporated into the act

The new law will enhance the overall efficiency of the major ports which collectively handled 699 million tons of cargo in 2018-2019

- ◆ It imparts faster and transparent decision making benefiting the stakeholders and better project execution capability.
- ◆ The Bill is aimed at reorienting the governance model in central

ports to landlord port model in line with the successful global practice. This will also help in bringing transparency in operations of Major Ports.

- ◆ This will empower the Major Ports to perform with greater efficiency on account of full autonomy in decision making and by modernizing the institutional framework of Major Ports.
- ◆ The role of Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) has been redefined. Port Authority has now been given powers to fix tariff which will act as a reference tariff for purposes of bidding for PPP projects. PPP operators will be free to fix tariff- based on market conditions. The Board of Port Authority has been delegated the power to fix the scale of rates for other port services and assets including land.



04

India's First Diesel-converted CNG Tractor

- ◆ Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadakri has launched India's first-ever diesel tractor, converted to a much cleaner (compressed natural gas) CNG variant.

Key Features

- ◆ With this, farmers will be able to save more than Rs. 1 trillion annually on fuel cost, which will help them to improve their livelihood.
- ◆ The government has been trying to promote clean fuel for transportation as well as other alternatives such as electric mobility as one of its ways to reduce pollution and cut fuel import bill.
- ◆ The Union Road Transport and Highways Ministry has proposed the adoption of E20 fuel—blend of 20% of ethanol with gasoline—as an automobile fuel, in its attempt to reduce harmful emissions



from vehicles. In had also notified hydrogen-enriched CNG as an automobile fuel to promote green fuel for automobiles in India.

- ◆ Currently, around 12 million vehicles are already powered by natural gas throughout the world and more companies and municipalities adopting this cleaner fuel.

Significance of CNG

- ◆ CNG is a clean fuel as it has the lowest content of carbon and other pollutants, while also being

economical. It has zero lead and is non-corrosive, non-dilutive and non-contaminating which helps in increasing the life of the engine and it requires less regular maintenance.

- ◆ It is Cheaper as CNG prices are far more consistent than fluctuating petrol prices; also, the average mileage of CNG vehicles is better than that of diesel/petrol driven vehicles.
- ◆ It is safer as CNG tanks come with a tight seal, which reduces the possibility of explosion while refueling or in the event of a spill.



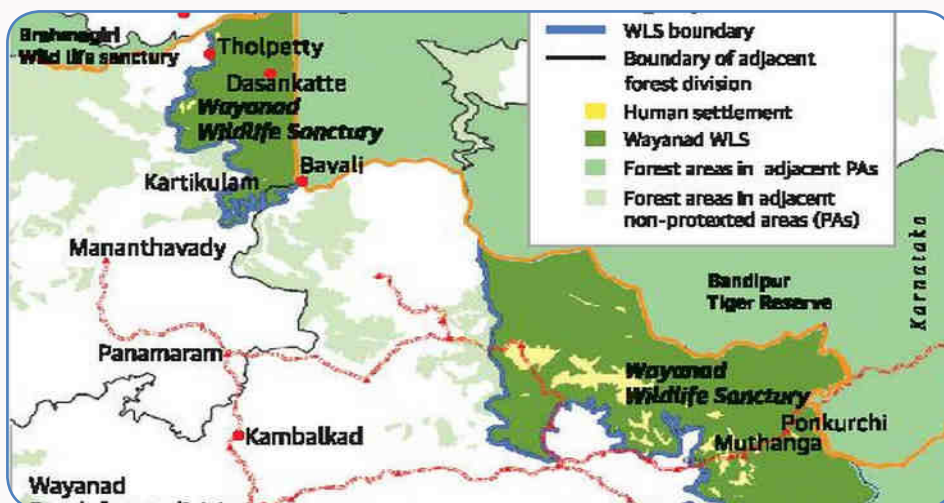
05

Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

- On January 28, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has published a draft notification to declare an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)—a buffer or transition zone around highly-protected areas—around the Wayanad wildlife sanctuary in Kerala.

Key Highlights of the Notification

- The proposed zone will cover an area of 118.59 square kilometres, of which 99.5 square kilometres is outside the sanctuary, which could include human-inhabited areas.
- The Ministry has proposed prohibiting nine activities in the Eco-Sensitive Zone, including setting up new industrial, waste management and stone quarrying units. Residents can undertake construction on their land to meet residential needs.
- The notification has also banned the establishment of major hydroelectric projects and setting up of new sawmills, brick kilns and commercial use of firewood within ESZ.
- Although tourism-related activities are allowed with some regulations



per laws, the construction of new commercial hotels and resorts will not be permitted in the ESZ. Agricultural activities by residents, too, will be permitted, albeit with regulations as applicable under certain laws.

Significance of ESZ

- According to experts, the existence of a transition zone between the core protected area and the mainland is integral to the sustenance of the protected areas. The Eco-Sensitive Zone is like an ecotone — the transition between two biological communities or ecosystems — and it is crucial for the protection of protected areas

like wildlife sanctuaries and forests. Its aim is to reduce the impact of human intervention in the core protected area.

Related Issues

- According to the draft notification issued on January 28, the eco-sensitive zone would be an extent of 0 to 3.4 km around the boundary of the sanctuary. It will badly affect the lives of thousands of farmers on the fringes of the sanctuary spread over six villages.
- As much as 29,291 acres of private land on the fringes of the sanctuary would come under the zone and the development would be stopped for ever.

06

Vigyan Jyoti Programme

- The second phase of Vigyan Jyoti programme was commenced on the occasion of International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11, 2021, which will spread the programme for encouraging girls to take interest in science and build a career in Science, technology, engineering,

and mathematics (STEM) to 50 more districts adding to the existing 50 districts across the country.

About Vigyan Jyoti

- Vigyan Jyoti programme, a new initiative to encourage girls to take interest in science and build career, was launched by the Department

of Science & Technology (DST) to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls to pursue STEM. It had been running successfully in 50 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNV) since December 2019 and has now been expanded to 50 more JNVs for the year 2021-22.

- ◆ Vigyan Jyoti activities include student-parent counselling, visit to labs and knowledge centres, partners role model interactions, science camps, academic support classes, resource material distribution and tinkering activities. Online academic support to students includes streaming of video classes, study materials, daily practice problems and doubt clearing sessions.

VIGYAN JYOTI SCHEME

Significance

- ◆ This programme would improve by learnings of the past one year and expand to more and more districts of the country to empower women and help increase number of women in top science institutes.
- ◆ The New Education Policy and the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy could remove the constraints and make use of the demographic dividend to progress long in short time to help increase number of women in science.
- ◆ The programme addresses the underrepresentation of women in certain areas of STEM. As a first step, the programme has been started at school level for meritorious girls of Class IX to Class XII to encourage and empower them to pursue STEM courses in reputed institutions of the country.



07

World Sustainable Development Summit 2021

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 (WSDS 2021) via video conferencing. The theme of the Summit is 'Redefining our common future: Safe and secure environment for all'. The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).



Key Highlights

- ◆ Climate justice is inspired by a vision of trusteeship- where growth comes with greater compassion to the poorest. Climate justice also means giving the developing countries enough space to grow. When each and every one of us understands our individual and/ collective duties, climate justice will be achieved.
- ◆ India has also reassured commitments to its targets under the Paris deal to reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 33 to 35 percent from 2005 levels.
- ◆ India's steady progress on its commitment to Land Degradation Neutrality and setting up of 450 gigawatts of Renewable Energy generating capacity till 2030 was also highlighted. Initiatives of India under International Solar Alliance were also discussed.

India's Progress towards Sustainable Development

- ◆ In March 2019, India achieved nearly hundred percent electrification.
- ◆ Under the Ujala program, the government has distributed three sixty seven million LED bulbs. This reduced over thirty eight million tonnes carbon dioxide per year.
- ◆ The Jal Jeevan Mission has connected over thirty four million house-holds with tap connections in just about 18 months.
- ◆ The PM Ujjwala Yojna more than 80 million house-holds below poverty line have access to clean cooking fuel. Indian government is also working to increase the share of natural gas in India's energy basket from 6 percent to 15 percent.



7

IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS (For Mains)



01



03

Ministry of
Railways



05

Pressure
Groups

01

In the backdrop of the challenges of fourth industrial revolution, agriculture needs disruptive digital thinking. Discuss.

02

Decreased allocations for education in Union Budget 2021-22 will sharpen educational divide in the country. Elaborate.

03

Discuss the features of National Rail Plan (NRP) for 2030.

04

“The Gandhian ideal of satyagraha can be recognised in the movement against farm laws.” Evaluate.

05

Identify the major pressure groups in Indian politics and examine their role in it.

06

What are the objectives of NITI Aayog? Explain its proposal for Little Andaman ‘Sustainable Development of Little Andaman Island - Vision Document’.

07

What are the causes of low agricultural productivity in India?

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



- 01** Which organisation has entered into an agreement with the Indian Space Research Organisation to build an alternative to Google Maps?

MapmyIndia
- 02** Which state government has launched 'Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha' Scholarship Scheme?

Delhi
- 03** Which state has launched a Police Museum, themed on the dacoits to showcase their stories?

Madhya Pradesh
- 04** Who is the winner of VLCC Femina Miss India 2020?

Manasa Varanasi
- 05** Which country's pro-democracy protesters are using the 'three-finger salute'?

Myanmar
- 06** Which country has announced a new 'digital corona passport' to ease travel restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic?

Denmark
- 07** Which country has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India to build Lalandar (Shatoot) Dam?

Afghanistan

7

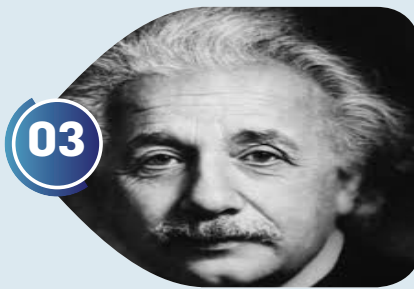
IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01

01 "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence."

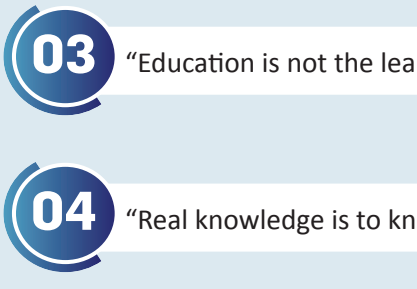
Rabindranath Tagore



03

02 "There is only one purpose in the whole of life — education. Otherwise what is the use of men and women, land and wealth?"

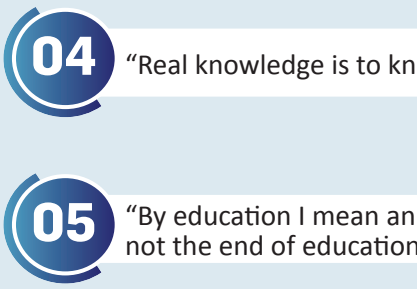
Swami Vivekananda



03

03 "Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of minds to think."

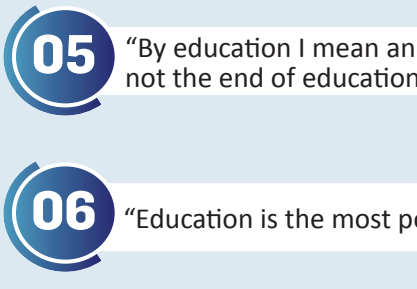
Albert Einstein



04

04 "Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance."

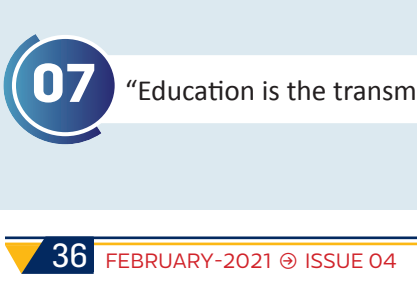
Confucius



05

05 "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning."

Mahatma Gandhi



06

06 "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela



07

07 "Education is the transmission of civilization."

Will Durant

AN INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

DSDL Prepare yourself from distance

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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नोट (Note): अगर आपको हिंदी और अंग्रेजी दोनों माध्यम में अध्ययन सामग्री प्राप्त करनी है, तो आपको दोनों में अपनी ईमेल से **Subscribe** करना पड़ेगा | आप दोनों माध्यम के लिए एक ही ईमेल से जुड़ सकते हैं |

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