

PERFECT 7

**Weekly
Current Affairs**

An Initiative of **Dhyeya IAS**



1 | **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

A Pathway to Gender Equality

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DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION



Vinay Kumar Singh
Founder & CEO

The guiding philosophy of the institute, throughout, has been creation of knowledge base. Dhyeya IAS inculcates human values and professional ethics in the students, which help them make decisions and create path that are good not only for them, but also for the society, for the nation, and for the world as whole. To fulfill its mission in new and powerful ways, each student is motivated to strive towards achieving excellence in every endeavor. It is done by making continuous improvements in curricula and pedagogical tools. The rigorous syllabi not only instills in them, a passion for knowledge but also attempts to teach them how to apply that knowledge in real-life situations. The programmes lay emphasis on well-rounded personality development of the students and also in inculcating the values of honesty and integrity in them.



Q.H. Khan
Managing Director

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

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION



Kurban Ali
Chief Editor

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

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



Ashutosh Singh
Managing Editor

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

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

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

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

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



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

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PREFACE



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

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

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

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

Omveer Singh Chaudhary

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

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

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

Rajat Jhingan

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

PERFECT 7

Weekly Current Affairs

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS

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OUR TEAM

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

Content Office



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



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OUR OTHER INITIATIVES



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

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene : A Pathway to Gender Equality

Context

- Given that women are the primary 'users, providers, and managers' of water and sanitation facilities, their participation in such programmes is necessary.
- Worldwide women are primarily responsible for 'care work' which includes fetching water, cooking, cleaning, washing, and taking care of children, elderly or ill. This gendered division of labour typically purports that women and girls shoulder a series of roles in the 'private sphere' that, for the most part, men do not share.

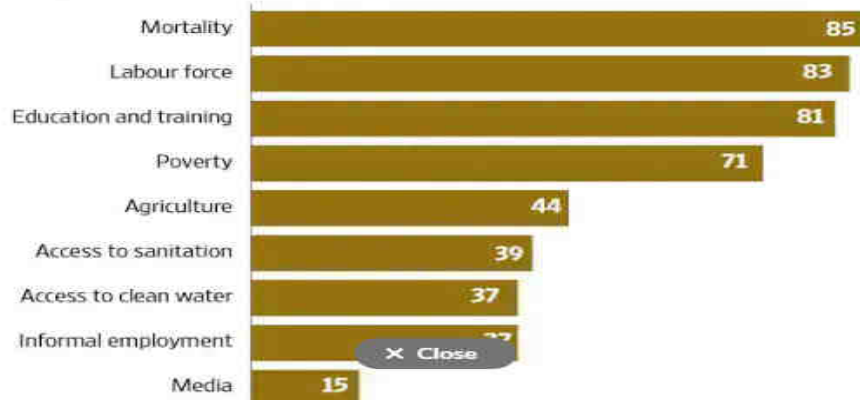
Background

- Effective gender-responsive programming in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector can contribute to progress towards gender equality.
- 'Water, Sanitation and Hygiene' and gender equality are represented in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6 and 5, respectively, and also contribute to the achievement of other sectoral goals across the development agenda. Likewise,

ABOUT HALF OF ALL COUNTRIES DO NOT PRODUCE ANY GENDER-DISAGGREGATED STATISTICS RELATED TO WATER

Overall, 45.2% of countries do not produce any gender statistics related to water

Percentage of countries "regularly" producing sex-disaggregated statistics on specific issues



United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF's) Strategy for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (2016-2030) and UNICEF's Gender Action Plan (GAP) recognize the importance of leveraging linkages across sectors to deliver priority interventions for children and adolescents that are well-resourced, innovative, and expert-led in order to maximize quality, reach and sustainability.

- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene programming, in times of peace and humanitarian crisis, reduces

the burden of access to water, improves hygiene facilities and provides dignified menstrual hygiene management (MHM).

- Ensuring that women and girls have an equal role in the design, management and monitoring of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) ecosystem can be a strategic gender-mainstreaming practice that empowers women and girls while improving WASH outcomes. Gender diversity in decision-making is linked to more effective decisions, which is one of

many evidence points highlighted in the growing field of gender lens investing, which offers expanded financing possibilities for WASH programming.

Situation in India

- ◆ According to an International Labour Organisation (ILO) report, in 2018, women in India spend 312 minutes every day in urban areas and 291 minutes per day in rural areas on unpaid care work. In contrast, men barely spent 29 minutes every day (in urban) and 32 minutes every day (in rural areas) on care work.
- ◆ These socially allocated roles are effort-heavy but 'invisible', 'unrecognised' and 'unpaid'. While performing these traditional social roles, women make sizeable contributions to the family economy, which is unaccounted for both within the family and as a part of our national accounts. The unpaid labour is often observed to be higher in developing countries where women compensate for the absence of or inadequate public infrastructure and services including water and sanitation services. This traditional gender role places a double burden on women and adolescent girls.
- ◆ In the last five years, while there has been thrust on the creation of sanitation infrastructure, it has led to a simultaneous increase in the burden on women for Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) related activities.

- ◆ A study by the Centre for Policy Research in collaboration with Kalinga Institute of Rural Management, KIIT Bhubaneswar on Gender and urban sanitation in ten slums in Bhubaneswar revealed that women are disproportionately burdened by 'care work'.
- ◆ Findings revealed that in 79% households women fetch water, in 69% households women are responsible for solid waste disposal, in 68% households women clean individual household latrine Individual Household Latrine (IHHL), and in 82% of households they take care of the ill.
- ◆ Study findings also reveal that more than half of those who reported difficulty in accessing IHHL, also reported that IHHL has increased the burden of fetching water. Nearly three-fourth respondents disclosed that women and girls were responsible for fetching water. They spend close to one to two hours daily securing water for the entire household.

Impact on Women Due to Lack of Sanitation Facilities

- ◆ World Health Organisation (WHO) conducted study in India found a strong association between open defecation and adverse pregnancy outcomes, even after controlling for sociodemographic and clinical factors.
- ◆ The findings suggest that private household water and sanitation

that decreases open defecation and time travelled to the water source could help to reduce preterm birth and low birth rate.

- ◆ The lack of basic water, sanitation and hygiene services in households and extra-household settings, such as schools and health-care facilities, has implications for girls' menstrual hygiene management, safety and emotional and physical well-being. The presence of these services in health-care facilities is critical to reducing the risk of infections among patients and providers, especially during childbirth.
- ◆ In many low- and middle-income countries, water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities are far from adequate.
- ◆ In schools, the lack of basic infrastructure, privacy, spaces, materials and guidance to manage menstruation has been associated with harassment, sexual exploitation, psychosocial impacts, decreased school attendance rates and drop-out for girls.

Unfolding Situation in India

- ◆ Fortunately, sanitation continues to be central to the government's agenda. With the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recognised that by addressing sanitation and water issues, we improve hygiene, health, gender, and livelihoods. The Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 (SBM) aims, among other things, to find solutions for sustained behaviour change, addressing



GENDER EQUALITY: WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

7 in 10 people worldwide have access to safe, readily available water at home.



But women still spend **16 million hours per day** collecting water in 25 sub-Saharan countries.

WOMEN	MEN	CHILDREN
16 million hours	6 million hours	4 million hours

SOURCE | WHO, 2018

women and their personal hygiene needs.

- ◆ There is a growing consensus now that whereas the statutory framework relating to sanitation is gender neutral in its approach, the policy framework does recognise gender-related issues. However, when it comes to implementation, it is evident that sanitation-related needs and vulnerabilities of women need to be better addressed. Examples such as women not being consulted in decisions taken on sanitation-related matters such as the building and use of toilets and failing to take into account the prevalent socio-cultural norms, which for generations have defined the status of women as one that needs to be protected from all forms of exposure, while, at the same time, forcing them to defecate in the open even if

this is in groups, substantiate this contention.

- ◆ Even in unorganised sector and private offices there has been very negligent to careless attitude by managements in responding to hygiene and sanitation need for female co-workers. This abysmal approach has led to lower female work participation in the economy.

Need of the Hour

- ◆ Women's participation in water, sanitation and hygiene decision-making and governance, leading to their social and political empowerment is necessary as they are the prime victims of such negligible administrative setup.
- ◆ The central role of women and girls in the procurement and management of water, sanitation and hygiene at the household level is recognized. However, measures

of women's participation in the governance and household decision-making control over such resources is scarce, although such participation may result in more gendered considerations in addressing some of the mentioned issues related to access and safety.

Way Forward

- ◆ For ensuring gender transformation, it is vital to first recognise the gender-based complexities and vulnerabilities women and girls face and to develop gender-responsive strategies so that men's and women's group no longer work in silos. There is a need to find synergies and make concerted efforts to engage more with men and boys in WATSAN community forums. To achieve sanitation outcomes enshrined in the SDGs by 2030, it is necessary to interlink SDG 5 (Gender Equality), with SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation) and, SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). <>>

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. Women empowerment and gender sensitisation will remain a mere talk if women are not at the decision making centre-stage for hygiene and sanitation policies. Discuss.

02

Afghan-Taliban Peace Talk : Slow Progress

Why in News?

- ◆ World has welcomed the resumption of the second round of the Afghan peace talks in Qatar between representatives of the Kabul government and the Taliban, which commenced after a three-week break.

Background

- ◆ The year 2020 was one of the bloodiest in Afghanistan's 19-year-long conflict. It saw a United States (US) -Taliban agreement in February where the Americans promised to withdraw troops in return for the insurgents' assurance that they would not allow terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda to operate from Afghan soil.
- ◆ In September, the Afghan government and the Taliban began peace talks for the first time in Doha. But despite these diplomatic openings, both sides have continued their attacks.
- ◆ In the quarter that ended on September 30, violence surged by 50%, according to the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.
- ◆ Afghanistan also saw increased targeted killings, especially of media professionals. On December 10, Malala Maiwand, a TV host, was shot dead along with her driver. In less than two weeks, Rahmatullah Nikzad, a freelance photographer, was killed in Ghazni.
- ◆ The Taliban have denied any role, but government officials say the insurgents, who banned TV and turned print and radio into propaganda platforms when in power in the late 1990s, were behind the attacks as they seek to silence critical voices.
- ◆ The peace talks are a complicated process. The US first cut a deal with

the Taliban and then arm-twisted the government to join the talks. Abdullah Abdullah, (opposition leader) who challenged the 2019 election results and formed a short-lived parallel government questioning the legitimacy and authority of President Ashraf Ghani, is heading the government delegation in the talks.

- ◆ Mr. Ghani's Vice-President, Amrullah Saleh, the former intelligence chief, is known for his strong anti-Taliban views.
- ◆ Despite the divisions within, the government had demanded a ceasefire, but the Taliban resisted such demands and emphasised other talking points such as prisoner swaps and the future governance system.
- ◆ As a result, violence continued even as both sides negotiated ways to end the war. Earlier in December, after three months of talks, the Taliban and the government delegation agreed on a set of "rules and procedures" for the talks. But a ceasefire is still elusive.

Faultiness in US-Taliban Peace Deal

- ◆ On 29 February 2020, the US has signed an agreement with the Taliban, aimed at ending the two-decade-long war in Afghanistan.
- ◆ It provided for a phased US military withdrawal, contingent upon the Taliban delivering on certain security guarantees, which included severing ties with the Al-Qaeda.
- ◆ While a comprehensive ceasefire was not included as a precondition

for the withdrawal, it was made part of the agenda of the intra-Afghan talks that were to follow.

- ◆ The talks were preceded by a long-drawn process of back-and-forth between the Republic and the Emirate, on the contentious issue of "prisoner release."
- ◆ They finally began on 12 September 2020, and were attended by key regional and international stakeholders. The future of the talks so far seems less than promising, as the negotiating parties continue to remain divided, both on procedural issues and on the validity of the US-Taliban agreement as the basis for the talks.
- ◆ The conditions under which the negotiations commenced had already raised questions about the entire peace process.
- ◆ The outgoing Trump administration seemed set on continuing with the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, which will render the Islamic Republic vulnerable to encirclement by the Islamic Emirate, both politically and militarily. While the US-Taliban agreement does lay out an eventual US military exit from Afghanistan, the pace at which the drawdown will be executed remains unclear.
- ◆ The Trump administration, in its quest to get out of the war, failed to extract any major compromise from the Taliban when it rolled out the peace process. The insurgents, who control most of the countryside, are already upbeat. The next American administration should carry out an honest review of the entire peace process and push the Taliban to make concessions. The talks are vital to finding a lasting solution to the conflict. But it should not be on

the Taliban's terms, which could erase whatever little progress Afghanistan has made since the fall of the Taliban.

Doubts over Taliban's Intentions

- ◆ As the Afghanistan government and Taliban resumed peace talks, several Afghans feel that the Taliban has failed to change its ways. Several Afghans feel that the Taliban has failed to change its ways and that its fighters still believe in the rebel groups "medieval, totalitarian and dogmatic ideologies".
- ◆ Afghan people are caught in between and they are experiencing two realities on the ground - new Afghanistan that is supported by almost two decades of US and Western support and newly emboldened Taliban, with their sympathisers and regional supporters who believe that they have finally prevailed and are on the verge of military and political victory.
- ◆ Violence has skyrocketed in the country. In the last few months, improvised explosive devices caused over 60 per cent more civilian casualties and child casualties rose 25 per cent over previous periods. In addition, the ongoing security transition and the emerging reality of international troop withdrawals, have added to the deep anxieties felt by the population

India's Evolving Policy

- ◆ India, which has a long relationship with Afghanistan and its people, has been an onlooker in the process. The reason is that Pakistan, its ability to deliver the Taliban to the talks table, was more valuable to the US than anything India, with

its suspicion of Taliban as a proxy of the Pakistan Army and ISI, could offer. India has so far said it will not engage with the Taliban until they enter the political mainstream.

- ◆ Addressing the opening session of the Doha meeting (in September 2020), India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar reiterated that the peace process must be "Afghan led, Afghan owned and Afghan controlled" but Indian policy has evolved from its earlier hands-off approach to the Taliban.
- ◆ India has vital geostrategic interests in Afghanistan and much to gain from enduring peace and stability in the country. However, India's Afghan policy has often been shaped by its need to strike a strategic balance between Islamabad and Kabul, to curtail Pakistan's influence over terrorist outfits in Afghanistan. While India considers Pakistan as the biggest obstacle to peace in Afghanistan, it must accept that Pakistan has weaved itself intricately into the Afghan reconciliation narrative, with the US acknowledging it as an indispensable force in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

Challenges Ahead

- ◆ There are various loopholes in the US-Taliban deal which makes it harder for various stakeholders to reconcile
- ◆ When the US entered into talks with the insurgent group, it did not insist on a ceasefire. So the Taliban continues to engage in war and talks simultaneously.
- ◆ The US is badly looking for a way out of the conflict, kept the Afghan government out of the peace process, thus weakening their position.

- ◆ The burden was on a weakened Afghan government to start talks even as the Taliban continued attacks.
- ◆ It will be the government's key challenge when its representatives and that of the Taliban, which sees itself as the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan and has not recognised the country's Constitution, would be holding talks.

Way Forward

- ◆ With US interest in Afghanistan waning—and likely to vanish once its forces withdraw substantially, if not completely—and internal disagreements within the Afghan government becoming increasingly strident, the peace process appears susceptible to breakdown.
- ◆ The future of Afghanistan is largely contingent upon how regional and international stakeholders respond to the evolving political and security situation in the country. While long-term peace in Afghanistan would be advantageous to all powers involved, the need to secure their respective strategic interests in the country—often at odds—could altogether threaten the prospects for peace.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic

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

Topic

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

Q. Afghan-Taliban peace process is a multi-stakeholder process where the interests of many nations are also included. There is an attempt to weave the partnership between a democratic modern system and a medieval emirate setup, which seems to be at odds. Comment.

03

Work from Home to Work from Anywhere : New Normal

Why in News?

- ◆ Most Indian firms (42%) would continue working remotely – most as long as one more year-- as Coronavirus outbreak still looms large, found a new TimesJobs survey. The survey titled 'How do corporates envisage year 2021?' was conducted among 1,376 Human Resource (HR) managers working in different industrial domains and startups.
- ◆ The accelerating remote work culture born during COVID-19 is bound to further propel the growth of flexible workspaces, especially since several employers are looking at remote working as a long-term practice.

Background

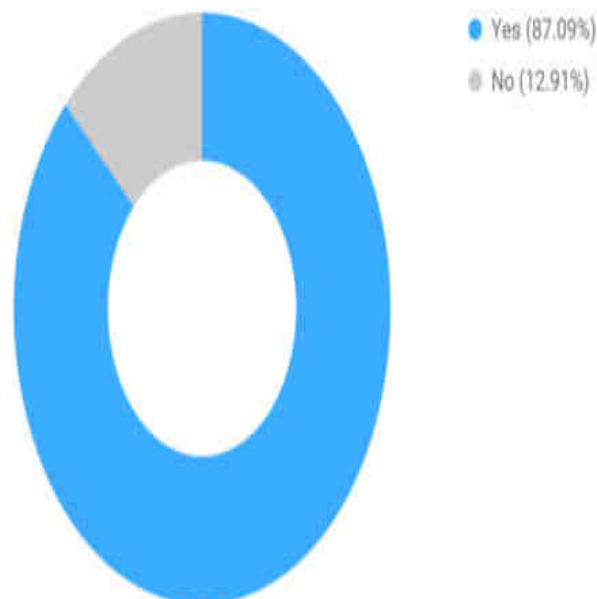
- ◆ Through late March and April, the immediate impact of the Corona virus pandemic was primarily driven by a shutting down of business activity due to the nationwide lockdown.
- ◆ As companies went into business continuity planning mode, workforces were trimmed, and the lines between work and home blurred. Several influential companies completely curbed their onsite business activities during the lockdown and simultaneously launched policies that allowed employees to maximise output through work from home (WFH) setups.

- ◆ In the new year of 2021 WFH has been seen as a new model for working.
- ◆ In the survey mentioned above, most HR managers (42%) said that their organisations will continue with remote working owing to the COVID-19 widespread. Almost 40% respondents stated that they will follow a hybrid structure – WFH and office on alternate days. The remaining 18% said that they would completely revoke the WFH policies.
- ◆ 85% firms said they are ready to 're-hire' talent laid off in COVID-19 business turmoil. 31% respondents will hire candidates on contractual basis next year v/s permanent roles.
- ◆ More than 85% HR professionals plan to hold appraisals in 2021.
- ◆ The cause for optimism emanates from the fact that the massive disruptions brought about by COVID-19 has created the need for business solutions that are cost-effective, agile and sustainable. This can be a counter to rising unemployment and allow increased workforce engagement.
- ◆ In India, the demand for flexible offices — including co-working spaces and serviced offices — has grown faster in the Asia Pacific region than anywhere else, with India emerging as the second-largest market for flexible workspaces in the region.

Rise of Flexible Working in India

- ◆ The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the shift to flexible workspaces.
- ◆ Given that the feasibility of WFH is limited in India due to several restrictions, from the lack of widespread internet connectivity to other severe challenges, flex spaces offer both flexibility to employees and cost-effective solutions to businesses, which will be especially relevant in a post-COVID-19 world.
- ◆ These spaces already support a significant number of small and medium enterprises, with reports revealing that over 13 million people were predicted to work out of flex spaces by 2020 in a non-pandemic context.
- ◆ Moreover, flexible workspaces will also complement the upsurge in the Indian gig economy, which has a 17% annual growth rate, whose scope will now broaden dramatically and encompass not only blue-collar jobs but also various white-collar jobs.
- ◆ Flex spaces can prove to be a problem solver as outsourcing office spaces to flexible workspace operators could substantially ease the commitments associated with maintaining a permanent staff whilst also ensuring that social distancing, sanitation and safe hygiene within premises is strictly adhered to.

Would you recommend remote working to a friend?



CI COWORKING INSIGHTS

2020 Future of Remote Work Report

Challenges to WFH

- ◆ A recent survey by a Kochi-based NGO highlighted that WFH was more stressful and lethargic than working from office for most people and nearly 87% of the respondents felt that companies must evolve clear WFH policies focused on the wellbeing of employees. Increased screen time, awkward sitting positions and a lack of social interaction has also resulted in physical health-related issues. Such sedentary work patterns have been known to have long term health impacts, including increased stress levels.
- ◆ Another truism that has come to light thanks to the pandemic is that offices continue to be important spaces for training, mentorship and collaboration — something employees have vocally stated

that they miss. Whilst industry leaders like Google's SundarPichai and Accenture's Julie Sweet have emphasised the importance of in-person interactions for business growth.

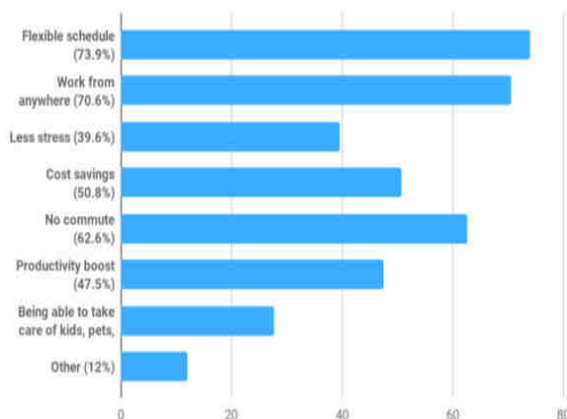
- ◆ A 2020 McKinsey report also found that teams that work in the same space find it easier to build trust. The report also emphasised several other challenges faced by employees practicing WFH, including lack of sufficient communication and coordination.
- ◆ These findings were echoed in a Brookings Institution report that reiterated that people prefer communicating complex information face-to-face rather than digitally.
- ◆ Due to these problems, studies have shown that over 90% of people want to return to the office

at least one day a week. Statistics like this highlight the value people associate with physical workspaces.

Towards Formalisation of WFH

- ◆ The government has proposed to formalise WFH facility for the services sector, but left the manufacturing sector outside the ambit of the concept for now.
- ◆ Regulatory parameters for WFH have not been prescribed.
- ◆ Separately, it has also issued draft model standing orders for the manufacturing and the mining sectors seeking comments from stakeholders.
- ◆ Model standing orders set standards for service conditions and employees' conduct in an establishment. There are no such standards for the services sector so far, it is being proposed for the first time. These standing orders will be applicable in organisations having 300 or more workers.
- ◆ For the manufacturing sector, the standing order governing work conditions was applicable in organisations having 100 or more workers until last year. The threshold has been increased to 300 workers in the labour code on industrial relations approved in Parliament late last year.
- ◆ **Need for Regulation:**
 - ◆ Without proper regulations for WFH, employees will be left at the mercy of the employers. Employees' bargaining power will be reduced. WFH should

What do you enjoy the most about remote working?



CI COWORKING INSIGHTS

2020 Future of Remote Work Report

also figure in the model standing orders for the manufacturing sector. The concept of WFH should be left for the individual establishment to decide, whether it is in the manufacturing or in the services sector.

Flex Workspace - Remote Working

- ◆ A report by MoveInSyn showed that Indians spend 7% of their day commuting to office, averaging less than three minutes per kilometre.
- ◆ Remote working enables employees to cut living costs by moving to affordable cities instead of metro cities where the average household rent in cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi are bordering on the exorbitant.
- ◆ Another major advantage a shift towards flexible workspaces brings

relates to urban infrastructure development.

- ◆ Flexible workspaces offer this compliance with the 'smart city' model by facilitating ease of travel, access to the latest technology and reliable sanitation — all under one roof. By providing the facilities for office spaces in local areas, flexible workspaces solve the problem of growing congestion in cities due to traffic-related pollution.
- ◆ Even from an employment point of view, flexible workspaces make a lot of sense to India's growing 'gig' workforce. More and more professionals, especially the increasing millennial workforce, prefer freelance work and smaller contracts. Indian freelance workers today make up 24% of the global online gig economy and flexible workspaces have a

long history in catering to these workers' space needs.

- ◆ Trends are also showing that full-time jobs are diminishing, and assignment-based hiring is gradually becoming the norm.

Way Forward

- ◆ The accelerating remote work culture born during COVID-19 is bound to further propel the growth of flexible workspaces, especially since several employers are looking at remote working as a long-term practice. A symbiotic and sustained collaboration between the government and the flexible workspace industry is required to navigate this growth and to ensure that the economy benefits from innovative workplace solution(s).
- ◆ WFH is not a sustainable work-model and the industry is showing a decided pivot towards a 'work from anywhere' model instead. The hope is that the government, companies and workers will coalesce around the idea of remote working.



General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. 'Work from Home' and 'Remote Working' are one of the major improvisations done during the lockdown are there to stay in the future. It is meant to provide advantages to both businesses and workers. Discuss.

04

India to become Fifth Largest Economy in 2025 : CEBR

Why in News?

- ◆ India, which appears to have been pushed back to being the world's sixth biggest economy in 2020, will again overtake the United Kingdom (UK) to become the fifth largest in 2025 and race to the third spot by 2030, a think tank, Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) said in December 2020.
- ◆ India had overtaken the UK in 2019 to become the fifth largest economy in the world but has been relegated to 6th spot in 2020.

Background

- ◆ COVID-19 delivered a major blow to the Indian economy; it was losing momentum even ahead of the pandemic due to fragile banking system, adjustment to reforms and deceleration of global trade.
- ◆ The UK appears to have overtaken India during 2020 as a result of the weakness of the rupee.
- ◆ Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) forecast that the Indian economy would expand by 9% in 2021 and by 7% in 2022. "Growth will naturally slow as India becomes more economically developed, with annual GDP growth expected to sink to 5.8% in 2035."
- ◆ Indian would overtake "Germany in 2027 and Japan in 2030," it said. The UK-based think tank forecasts that China would overtake the US to become the world's biggest economy in 2028, five years earlier than estimated due to the contrasting recoveries of the two countries from the pandemic.

- ◆ Japan would remain the world's third-biggest economy, in dollar terms, until the early 2030s when it would be overtaken by India, pushing Germany down from fourth to fifth.
- ◆ The CEBR said India's economy had been losing momentum even ahead of the shock delivered by the COVID-19 crisis. The rate of GDP growth sank to a more than ten-year low of 4.2% in 2019, down from 6.1% the previous year and around half the 8.3% growth rate recorded in 2016.
- ◆ The COVID-19 pandemic, the think tank said, has been a human and an economic catastrophe for India, with more than 1,40,000 deaths recorded as of the middle of December. However, it equates to around 10 deaths per 100,000, significantly lower figure than much of Europe and the Americas.
- ◆ India manufactured majority of the world's vaccines and had 42-year-old vaccination programme, which put it in a better position than other developing countries to roll out a coronavirus vaccine in 2021.

COVID-19 Shock to the Economy

- ◆ The onset of Corona virus, induced lockdowns that stopped most economic activities in India, it' April-June quarter GDP took a massive hit of 23.9 per cent below its 2019 level and entered into a phase of 'technical recession'.
- ◆ The economic shock was so strong that nearly a quarter of the country's economic activity was wiped out by the drying up of global demand and the collapse of domestic demand.
- ◆ Only the agricultural sector, buoyed by a bountiful harvest, remained

largely unaffected and emerged as an important driver of India's economic recovery.

- ◆ The worst affected sectors were construction (–50%), trade, hotels and other services (–47%), manufacturing (–39%), and mining (–23%). It is pertinent to note that these are the sectors that generate the maximum new jobs in the country. In a scenario where each of these sectors is contracting so sharply — that is, their output and incomes are falling — it would lead to more and more people either losing jobs (decline in employment) or failing to get one (rise in unemployment).
- ◆ With this, the GDP growth rate in April-September, the first half of this financial year, contracted by 15.7 per cent compared with a 4.8 per cent growth during the same period last year. In July-September last year, GDP had grown by 4.4 per cent.

Re-emerging India

- ◆ As restrictions were gradually lifted, many parts of the economy were able to spring back into action, although output remains well below pre-pandemic levels. An important driver of India's economic recovery thus far has been the agricultural sector, which has been buoyed by a bountiful harvest.
- ◆ The pace of the economic recovery will be inextricably linked to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, both domestically and internationally.
- ◆ "In the medium to long-term, reforms such as the 2016 demonetisation and more recently the controversial efforts to liberalise the agricultural sector can deliver economic benefits," the think tank said.

- ◆ The government's stimulus spending in response to the COVID-19 crisis has been significantly more restrained than most other large economies, although the debt to GDP ratio did rise to 89% in 2020.
- ◆ The infrastructure bottlenecks that exist in India mean that investment in this area has the potential to unlock significant productivity gains. Therefore, the outlook for the economy going forwards will be closely related to the government's approach to infrastructure spending.
- ◆ The research note also highlighted that despite the sharp improvement in economic activity, the key services sector is still struggling. This research note and many others suggested that India's economic recovery in the long-term will depend on employment and income growth.
- ◆ Persistently high inflation is another factor which could disrupt the economic recovery. It is likely that the overall inflation would remain above RBI's medium-term target of 2-6 per cent, leaving the central bank little space to ease monetary policy further.

Challenges to Post Covid Recovery

- ◆ The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by IHS Markit, declined to 56.3 in November after it rose to a decade-high in October at 58.9.
- ◆ The festive season this year was a good one for the country as demand peaked during the height of festivities after the pandemic had brought economic growth to a standstill. While the festive pickup has boosted the economy, long-term sustainability will be a key factor aiding the recovery.
- ◆ While a pickup in economic activity is one key facet of recovery, the more important factors are demand and investments. UBS Research recently said in a note that the Indian economy may have lost nearly Rs 20 lakh crore due to the pandemic, equalling 10 per cent of the country's GDP, between April and September 2020.
- ◆ The projected GDP growth does indicate that the worst is over, but it still does not indicate whether the economy has recovered the lost ground or surpassed it, said a report by India Ratings. The size of the Indian economy in FY20 was Rs 145.66 lakh crore at constant prices. Further, it is expected to contract 7.8 per cent on-year to Rs 134.33 lakh crore in FY21, and grow 9.6 per cent on-year to Rs 147.17 lakh crore in FY22, according to the estimates of India Ratings.

Resilience in Recovery by India

- ◆ While the global economic recovery has been hit by second waves of infections and more stringent lockdowns in several countries, India's economy is 'riding against the COVID-19 wave' with persistent improvements in economic indicators showing a V-shaped recovery.
- ◆ The New Year 2021 has dawned with the approval of long-awaited

COVID-19 vaccine and initiation of vaccination drives in various countries. This gives strength to the optimism on both health and economic fronts despite continuing surge in global cases and the potential challenge of a mutant strain.

- ◆ Agriculture sector, which clocked 3.4% growth in the first two quarters of 2020-21 remains the bright spot of the Indian economy, the review pointed to a 2.9% rise in rabi sowing this year along with accelerating tractor sales, to suggest rural distress has been successfully addressed by the PM Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY).

Way Forward

- ◆ India's recovery is bucking the global trend but has its own challenges to face. Being a developing country there is a prime need to generate employment and address the issue of high inflation. Agriculture sector has been performing positively but other sectors belonging to secondary economic activities took the biggest hit. Despite constant growth in GDP, it will be hard to recover the losses and many reforms and painful adjustments are needed to uplift the nation from the clutches of poverty, unemployment and inflation. <<<>>>

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. Discuss the issue of the recovery of Indian economy after getting struck by Corona virus. Also comment on the growth pattern and trace India's economic losses during the pandemic.

05

MSME Sector : Strong Backbone for Growing India

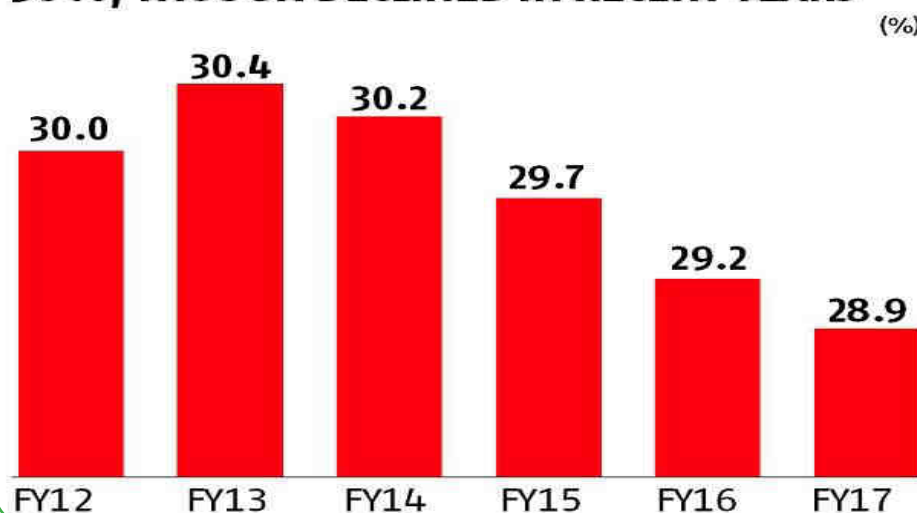
Why in News?

- Speaking at the inaugural session of the three-day TiE Global Summit (TGS), Union Minister of Road Transport Nitin Gadkari has told that the government's aim is to increase the sector's contribution to the GDP to 50 per cent from the existing 30 per cent.
- Union Minister further said, "Currently village industries such as handlooms, handicrafts, Khadi Gram Udyog are generating Rs 80 thousand crore revenues which needs to be taken up to Rs five lakh crore in the next few years."

Background

- India is expected to emerge as one of the leading economies in the world over the next few years in the light of a positive political and economic scenario. The Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) segment is expected to play a significant role in the emergence of the Indian economy.
- The development of this segment is extremely critical to meet the national imperatives of financial inclusion and generation of significant levels of employment across urban, rural and rural areas across the country. Further, it can nurture and support development of new age entrepreneurs who have the potential to create globally competitive businesses from India.
- In India, MSME are very large in numbers, diverse in type of business

1: MSMEs' CONTRIBUTION TO GDP ABOUT 30%, THOUGH DECLINED IN RECENT YEARS



and are spread across remote geographies of a vast country. A large portion of the MSMEs are informal and not registered with the formal eco system of MSME.

- Globally the MSME segment development has shown mixed results depending on various policies and initiatives undertaken by developing and developed economies during their critical economic lifecycle. Many developed and developing economies have demonstrated that the MSME segment constitutes the backbone for maintaining growth rates as well employment generation rate and provides stability during economic downturns.

Missing Middle

- Within MSME sector, each of the three sub-sectors, namely, trade, manufacturing and other services accounted for about a third of total employment. Around 50 per cent of the total MSMEs operate in rural

areas and provide 45 per cent of total employment. Interestingly, the micro enterprises account for 97 per cent of total employment in MSME sector.

- This relates to the problem of what is called the 'missing middle', which suggests that micro firms have failed to grow into smaller and medium firms and so on over time. This seems to have kept the micro sector bereft of enjoying economies of scale, investment into fixed assets, adoption of technology and innovation.
- In this background, special attention needs to be given to improve the competitiveness and technology up-gradation endeavours. Various schemes and programmes of the government, therefore, should be continued and effectively implemented.

Challenges in the MSME sector

- Despite the MSME sector contributing significantly to the

economy, it continues to face several challenges:

- ◆ Infrastructure bottlenecks and competition: MSME clusters, particularly the micro enterprises, are inadequately equipped with necessary support systems which not only impede their day-to-day business operations but also their future growth prospects. On the other hand these MSMEs also need to do their bit to improve competitiveness. They need to shed their inhibition to adopt new technologies; accept e-payments; and foster in-house innovation which will help them manage their businesses digitally and compete globally.
- ◆ Access to credit and formalisation: Credit disbursal to this sector has, however, remained sluggish in recent periods. As many MSMEs mainly operate in the informal space, assessing their creditworthiness can be difficult due to information asymmetry, particularly with respect to the financial performance of their businesses. In the absence of collateral, under-writing the customer often entails higher operating cost. Furthermore, due to their small-scale operations, MSMEs are not able to raise risk capital. They are also unable to take advantage of most of the government schemes which are mostly based on digital infrastructure and require beneficiaries to have some form of digital identity and presence.
- ◆ Delayed payments: A large number of MSMEs are ancillary units

catering to the needs of large industries, both in the public and private sector. They often face the problem of delayed payments, affecting their cash flow and working capital availability. Most of the time, delay in realisation of such receivables increases their operating cycle and reduces their ability to procure new orders or fulfil the existing ones.

- ◆ GST and compliance: GST has emerged as the biggest compliance issue before the MSMEs. It is time that the GST issues/bottlenecks are addressed and resolved at the earliest. Then there are issues related to labour, research, infrastructure and others for MSMEs. Some new Labour Law Codes are already in place and some others are in the pipeline. Equally important is to sensitize the State Governments/local bodies not to impose undue compliance burden on these units. Also, continuous research and development through State-funded institutions may go a long way in making MSMEs internationally competitive.

Expert Committee on MSMEs

- ◆ In order to understand the structural bottlenecks and factors affecting the performance of the MSMEs, RBI had set up an Expert Committee on MSMEs under the Chairmanship of Shri U.K Sinha in January 2019.
- ◆ The Committee has undertaken comprehensive review of the sector and given several recommendations for the economic and financial sustainability of the MSME sector.

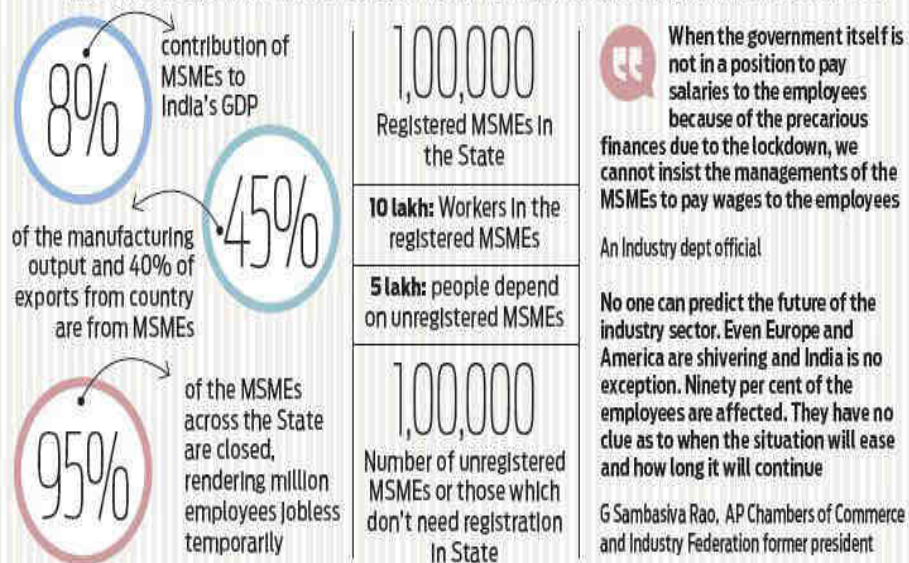
- ◆ These recommendations are wide-ranging and broadly relate to legislative changes; infrastructure development; capacity building; technological upgradation; improving backward and forward linkages; improving financial support from formal sources; newer technological interventions for robust underwriting practices; and credit delivery, among others.
- ◆ Whilesomeoftherecommendations of the Committee have already been implemented, others are under consideration by the authorities concerned.

Initiatives for MSME Development

- ◆ MSME sector contributes to 30 per cent of GDP and 48 per cent to exports. MSME sector created 11 crore jobs.
- ◆ Ministry of MSME implements various schemes and programmes for promotion and development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises throughout the country.
- ◆ The schemes and programmes includes Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), A Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE), Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme, Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises, Credit Linked Capital Subsidy - Technology Up-gradation Scheme, Micro and Small Enterprises - Cluster Development Programme,

Small-scale industries come to a standstill

Most of the Industries in the State were shut down following the lockdown, rendering many people jobless. A look



National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Hub.

- Under Atmanirbhar Bharat, government had announced a special economic and comprehensive package of 20 Lakh crore rupees for all the sections of the society including Industries and MSMEs.
- Government has taken a number of initiatives to support the MSME sector in the country which include, 20 thousand crore rupees Subordinate Debt for MSMEs, 3 lakh crore rupees Collateral free Automatic Loans for business, including MSMEs, New revised criteria for classification of MSMEs, New Process of MSME Registration through Udyam Registration and no global tenders for procurement up to 200 crore rupees, which is helping MSMEs.
- The Prime Minister has launched an online Portal Champions which covers many aspects of e-governance including grievance redressal and handholding of MSMEs.
- Government has notified Public Procurement Policy for Micro and Small Enterprises Order, 2012 under MSMED Act. Under this policy, 25 per cent of annual procurement by Central Ministries or Departments or Public Sector Enterprises has to be made from Micro & Small enterprises. This includes 4 per cent from MSEs owned by SC/STs and 3 per cent from MSEs owned by Women entrepreneurs.

358 items are reserved for exclusive procurement from MSEs.

- MSME Ministry has launched SAMADHAAN portal to enable MSEs to directly register their cases on the portal relating to delayed payments by Central Ministries or Departments or CPSEs (Central Public Sector Enterprises) or State Government and other buyers.

Way Forward

- Seizing the emerging opportunities to develop a robust MSME sector as a strong backbone for a growing economy will require efforts by the government to bring the various stakeholders i.e. equity funds, banks and financial institutions, industry sector majors and MNCs, regulators across various Ministries at the centre and state level and trade associations and global economies having trade flows with India and others stakeholders, etc, together and create a forward looking framework and eco system.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. What is the significance of MSME sector in Indian economy? Discuss the challenges faced by MSME sector and mention governmental efforts to support this sector.

06

India must Integrate its UNSC Engagement with National Goals

Why in News?

- ◆ With the start of 2021, India began its eighth term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council with the stated objective of raising its voice against terrorism, speaking for the developing world and bringing “human-centric inclusive solutions” to matters of global peace and security.

Background

- ◆ India was elected in June 2020, to the UN Security Council as non-permanent member with 184 of the 192 votes for a two-year term starting January 1, 2021.
- ◆ India, with its unopposed victory, will hope to use its eighth term as a non-permanent member to further bolster its claim to a permanent seat with the avowed goal of forging a “new orientation for a reformed multilateral system”.
- ◆ The UN Security Council has 15 members. Five of them are permanent members — the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China — and 10 are non-permanent. Half the non-permanent members are elected every year, each for a two-year term, starting January 1 2021.
- ◆ India will pursue these priorities through a Five-S approach, according to the “priorities paper”: Samman (respect), Samvad (dialogue), Sahyog (cooperation) and Shanti (peace); to create Samridhi (Prosperity).
- ◆ India expects to use its eighth term to further build its case for a permanent seat in a reformed Security Council, something that it has been pushing for years now along with other claimants such as

Japan, Germany and Brazil — the G-4 — calling the current council outdated and out of sync with the changed global realities.

- ◆ Given its population and growing profile, India has been seeking a greater say in international rule making. But its efforts to ensure veto-wielding the UN Security Council to include itself and other nations has come to nought mainly due to opposition from China.
- ◆ India joined the Security Council technically on January 1, which was a public holiday. The term got underway on January 4 with a flag installation ceremony, accompanied by the four other countries joining as non-permanent members: Norway, Ireland, Kenya and Mexico.

India on High Table

- ◆ For decades, India has sought the permanent membership at the UNSC. To reach this goal, India has used its non-permanent status as a stepping stone to prepare a bid for the permanent candidacy. In the past, India has held the same position seven times. For years, New Delhi has worked closely with the so-called G-4 group, with Brazil, Japan, and Germany, to push for structural reforms within the UNSC.
- ◆ UNSC reform has been considered necessary for decades. Experts believe that a lack of reforms has produced a “highly unequal and inefficient” Security Council. “The five permanent members (P5) — Britain, France, United States, Russia, and China — possess permanent seats and have the privilege of the veto whilst the status of non-permanent members

is low,” notes a study. The current structuring of the UNSC converges most of the power to the P5, while non-permanent members of the council have been “relegated to a role of rubberstamping.”

- ◆ Still, India’s election as a non-permanent member for another two-year term helps the country’s in its attempt to push for the association’s reforms and solidify its image as a major power that should be accommodated by the permanent members of the assembly.

India’s Opportunity to Make a Change

- ◆ As India looks for a productive tenure at the UNSC, there are several opportunities which New Delhi is seeking.
- ◆ One of the objectives New Delhi wants to achieve is making the UNSC “effective”. Delhi, however, might be sensible to pare down that ambition. The UNSC is becoming less effective today thanks to the deep divisions among the major powers. The UNSC offers room for sustained diplomatic interaction between the major powers, which could minimise tensions and create new opportunities for cooperation. The UNSC system was designed to function as a concert of five powers. Unanimity among the five permanent members with veto powers was rare during the Cold War decades. After a brief moment of great power cooperation in the 1990s, we are now back in an era of contestation. But there will be enough room for India to carve out

a larger role for itself amid renewed great power rivalry.

- ◆ Another objective is making the UNSC more “representative” has been one of India’s demands since the end of the Cold War. China has no interest in letting two other Asian powers — India and Japan — join the UNSC as permanent members. Delhi’s campaign, in partnership with Brazil, Germany and Japan, to expand the UNSC must continue.
- ◆ Delhi, which was eager to build a multipolar world with Beijing, now finds itself in a unipolar Asia that is centred around China. Meanwhile, the boundary dispute has worsened over the last decade. India now joins the UNSC amid a continuing military standoff between the two armies in the high Himalayas following the Chinese aggression in the Ladakh region. Senior Indian officials have promised to “work with” China with an open mind.
- ◆ China has repeatedly tried to get the UNSC to focus on India’s constitutional changes in Kashmir. On the question of cross-border terrorism, Beijing protects Pakistan from the international pressures that India has sought to mobilise at various fora. On the nuclear front, China continues to block India’s membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
- ◆ Quad — which brings together Australia, India, Japan and the

US. India could also use the UNSC tenure to deepen collaboration with its European partners like France and Germany in the security arena, and find common ground with “Global Britain” that is carving out a new international path for itself after breaking away from the European Union.

- ◆ Delhi must also sustain an intensive dialogue with Moscow on all international issues, notwithstanding Russia’s worsening problems with the West and closer ties to China.
- ◆ Delhi needs to revitalise its engagement with its traditional partners in the “global south” by articulating their peace and security concerns in the UNSC. The numerous small island states around the world face existential challenges from global warming and rising sea levels. They also struggle to exercise control over their large maritime estates. Supporting the sovereignty and survivability of the island states is a crucial political task for India.
- ◆ Africa is the other priority. Nearly half of UNSC meetings, 60 per cent of its documents, and 70 per cent of its resolutions are about peace and security in Africa. The continent has three seats in the UNSC (Kenya, Niger and Tunisia) and there is regular consultation between the UNSC and the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU).

Expanding Role

- ◆ India will chair the Counterterrorism Committee in 2022, which coincides with the 75th Anniversary of India’s Independence. It was formed in

September 2001 soon after the tragic terrorist attack of 9/11 in New York. India had chaired this committee in the Security Council in 2011-12.

- ◆ India will also chair Taliban Sanctions Committee and Libyan Sanctions Committee.
- ◆ India’s Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador is T S Tirumurti.
- ◆ The chairing of this committee has a special resonance for India, which has not only been in the forefront of fighting terrorism, especially cross-border terrorism, but has also been one of its biggest victims

Way Forward

- ◆ India’s growing global stature cannot be ignored in a multipolar world. Rather India is one of the prime architects of the multilateralism that is unfolding in the current century. Frequent foreign visits by the Prime Minister Modi have led to a pro-active in positioning of India to take advantage of collapsing unipolar world. From being the net-security provider in Indian Ocean Region and to undertaking various humanitarian missions during the covid pandemic has signalled the rise of India as one of the major powers shaping international politics.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. India has been elected eighth time as the non-permanent member of UN Security Council. Discuss the significance of this election along with India’s effort to revitalise UN and making it relevant.

07

Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea : Forging a Strategic Gateway

Why in News?

- ◆ In recent years, India's continental approach has been replaced with a precedence to maritime matters essentially due to two reasons. The first is its ambition to emerge as a predominant power in the Indian Ocean Region and second is its apprehensions about China's assertive rise in these waters.

Background

- ◆ In recent years, the Bay of Bengal has emerged as a critical area of interest for China and Chinese companies have been setting up critical shipping and energy infrastructure in Bay states. In a bid to emphasise its regional preeminence, the Indian Navy has raised the tempo of naval operations in the Bay of Bengal. Reinforcing strategic infrastructure on the islands is a way of highlighting India's combat prowess.
- ◆ As regional maritime forces have expanded their cooperation with the Indian Navy in recent years, there is a new appreciation in Southeast Asia of India's potential in offsetting China's dominance of littoral-Asia. As a consequence, the consensus in New Delhi over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has also shifted. Secure in the knowledge that a strategically proactive posture wouldn't make India's regional credentials any less estimable, Delhi today is keener than ever to develop the islands militarily.
- ◆ In 2015, when the government had first announced its intention to transform the Andaman and Nicobar into a maritime hub —

allocating 10,000 crores for the endeavour — the emphasis was on tourism and port development. In recognition of the islands' potential for trade enhancement, there is a plan to build a transshipment terminal at Campbell Bay, the largest of the Nicobar Islands, located just 90 km away from the Malacca Strait. Efforts are on to boost air connectivity and helicopter tourism, with INS Kohassa being developed for both military and civil use. This is likely to provide an impetus to the Centre's UDAN scheme to boost regional connectivity.

Strategic Significance of Andaman Islands

- ◆ Eminent geopolitician, Saul Bernard Cohen, described 'Gateways' as regions "which serve as bridges between realms, regions or states." Although further details are unavailable on this geopolitical concept, the fact that it serves as a 'bridge' between two regions suggests that collaboration, cooperation and connectivity are its chief characteristics.
- ◆ Security cooperation is thus intrinsic to a 'Gateway' to ensure the safety of stakeholders as well as their efforts at collaboration. Therefore, to understand the potential of the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea as not only a geographic but also a strategic 'Gateway' between India and Southeast Asia
- ◆ Andaman & Nicobar Islands dominate the Bay of Bengal and Six Degree and Ten Degree Channels through which over 60,000 commercial vessels move west to east and back annually. The northern groups of islands are

separated from the southern group by 80 nautical miles wide 10 Degree Channel which, are international waters.

- ◆ Andaman and Nicobar Islands sit in this strategically important zone, close to an important SLOC or Sea Lane of Communication where India can play a significant role in denying access and restrict entry with its growing naval prowess.
- ◆ As the islands provide India with a commanding geostrategic presence—with-domination of the Bay of Bengal and access to South and Southeast Asia, a focused development plan for the islands would greatly enhance the country's military capabilities and allow it to check a growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

INS Kohassa

- ◆ In early 2019, INS Kohassa became India's fourth air base and the third naval air facility in the Andamans that overlooks key sea lanes of communication and strategic points. These islands dominate the Bay of Bengal with more than 60,000 commercial vessels passing through each year.
- ◆ New Delhi is looking for building defence infrastructure on the Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- ◆ INS Kohassa is like INS Baaz at Campbell Bay in the Greater Nicobar, a naval air station that has been upgraded into an aviation base.
- ◆ Post commissioning, the station functions as a base for joint operation of both military and civil aircraft in keeping with the UDAN scheme of the government.

- ◆ With commissioning the base become self-contained with fuel storage, repair facility, manpower under a commanding officer.
- ◆ As part of an expansion plan, the runway length will be extended to 3000 metre. This will enable the operation of bigger civil and defence aircraft.

Island Development

- ◆ The GOI constituted the Island Development Agency (IDA) on June 1, 2017 for the development of islands. For the first time, under the guidance of the IDA, an initiative has been taken for sustainable development in the identified Islands. Four islands of Andaman & Nicobar have been covered in the first phase. The focus is on creation of jobs through the promotion of tourism, seafood, coconut industry, etc. In the second phase, suitable sites in 12 more islands of Andaman & Nicobar have been covered.
- ◆ The A&N Islands have played a key role in enhancing India's regional engagement with the Bay of Bengal littorals.
- ◆ On the recommendation of the NITI Aayog — mandated by the Island Development Agency to head a 'Holistic Development Program' — the government recently invited global players to invest in a wide-ranging social and infrastructure development programme, including investments in resorts and other tourist infrastructure at the Andaman. Authorities, of course, are being careful; they know their plans need to take into account the fragile ecology of the islands, which conservationists say is bound to be threatened by massive infrastructure creation.

- ◆ For the Indian Navy, the ANI's core utility remains its potential for nontraditional security cooperation. Over the years, the ANC has been a 'staging post' for India's humanitarian efforts in the Bay of Bengal.

Challenges to Strategic Gateway

- ◆ India perceives China's intention to be to create a Beijing controlled, elongated Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC) to aid the country in shaping the security dynamics of the region. Naturally, apprehensions prevail about the freedom of navigation in this maritime space.
- ◆ In 2018 Prime Minister Modi, while addressing the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, laid emphasis on 'Freedom of Navigation' as a key element of the Indo-ASEAN maritime partnership and the leaders agreed on establishing a joint mechanism to ensure freedom of navigation. Since then, New Delhi's Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative of 2019 and the ASEAN-India Plan of Action 2021-2025 have encouraged freedom of navigation. It may, thus, be observed that India and ASEAN collaboration is as yet nascent in the domain of conventional security concerns.
- ◆ The limited initiatives in deepening such security cooperation may be attributed to two reasons. The first is the fear of earning Chinese displeasure — China is wary of New Delhi's growing closeness to ASEAN and perceives this as a strategy to counter balance a rising China.

- ◆ The limited initiatives in deepening such security cooperation may be attributed to two reasons. The first is the fear of earning Chinese displeasure — China is wary of New Delhi's growing closeness to ASEAN and perceives this as a strategy to counter balance a rising China.
- ◆ Secondly, India and ASEAN suffer from a sense of disillusionment on both sides about the present state of the relationship. While India's capacity to offer security guarantees remains limited compared to ASEAN's other dialogue partners, ASEAN's inclination to harness India's offerings for regional stability also remains 'circumscribed' by its sensitivities to other powers.

Way Forward

- ◆ In recent years, India has adopted a proactive policy aimed at transforming the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a tri-services command, as an economic hub and one of the key centres of its defence and security strategy. A focused development plan for the Islands is expected to greatly enhance the country's geopolitical leverage in the Indian Ocean Region.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Topic:

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

Q. Discuss the strategic importance of Andaman Nicobar Islands and efforts undertaken by the government to leverage its geo-political access.

7

IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01

AFSPA has extended in Nagaland

1. Why in News?

- The Ministry of Home Affairs, declared Nagaland as a 'disturbed area' for the next six months under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958. The home ministry in its notification said that the 'use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary.'



2. AFSPA in North East

- Nagaland has been under AFSPA for almost six decades now and it was not withdrawn even after a framework agreement was signed on August 3, 2015, by Naga insurgent group National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak Muivah) General Secretary Thuingaleng Muivah and government interlocutor R.N. Ravi in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- It also remains in force in Assam, most of Manipur, and three districts and areas falling under the jurisdiction of four police stations in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The AFSPA gives the military sweeping powers to search and arrest, and to open fire if they deem it necessary for "the maintenance of public order", and to do so with a degree of immunity from prosecution.
- The Armed forces Special Power Act came to an end in the state of Tripura after a time period of 18 years.

5. Important Rulings

- The Supreme Court in its decision in the case of Naga People's Movement of Human Rights v Union of India upheld the constitutional validity of AFSPA but laid down certain guidelines in the form of do's and don'ts.
- In another famous case of Indrajit Barua v The State Of Assam And Anr, where the court found and declared that it is the duty of the state to assure the protection its citizens and their rights guaranteed under Article 21 which is also given to people where the AFSPA is enforced.
- The Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law (popularly referred to as the Justice Verma Committee), 2013 stated that the AFSPA legitimised impunity for sexual violence, and recommended an immediate review of the continuance of the Act 1958 in internal areas of conflict.

3. AFSPA

- Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 had its roots in the Lord Linlithgow Ordinance 1942 which was enacted to curtail the Quit India movement and Nagaland was one of the first former states to demand the withdrawal of itself from India.
- In simple terms, AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".
- If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can also arrest a person without a warrant; enter or search premises without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms.
- Any person arrested or taken into custody may be handed over to the officer in charge of the nearest police station along with a report detailing the circumstances that led to the arrest.

4. Disturbed Area

- A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA.
- An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The Central Government, or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.
- As per Section 3, it can be invoked in places where "the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary".
- The Ministry of Home Affairs would usually enforce this Act where necessary, but there have been exceptions where the Centre decided to forego its power and leave the decision to the State governments.

02 Prevalence of Anaemia in India

1. Why in News?

- Indian women and children are overwhelmingly anaemic, according to the National Family Health Survey 2019-20 released in December 2020, and the condition is the most prevalent in the Himalayan cold desert.
- Anaemia testing during the survey was done among children aged 6 to 59 months and among women and men aged 15 to 49 years of age. In a majority of these states and UTs, more than half the children and women were found to be anaemic.



5. Significance of NFHS Survey

- NFHS is a large-scale nationwide survey of representative households. The data is collected over multiple rounds. The MoHFW has designated International Institute for Population Sciences in Mumbai as the nodal agency and the survey is a collaborative effort of IIPS; ORC Macro, Maryland (US); and the East-West Center, Hawaii (US).
- The survey is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with supplementary support from UNICEF.
- The NFHS database is possibly the most important one because it not only feeds into the research needs and informs advocacy but also is central to both central and state-level policymaking.
- NFHS survey results also provide internationally comparable results. That's because the questions and the methodology is internationally valid.

2. Alarming Anaemia

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

3. Causes of Prevalent Anaemia

- Iron-deficiency and vitamin B12-deficiency anaemia are the two common types of anaemia in India.
- Among women, iron deficiency prevalence is higher than men due to menstrual iron losses and the high iron demands of a growing foetus during pregnancies.
- Lack of millets in the diet due to overdependence on rice and wheat, insufficient consumption of green and leafy vegetables.
- Dominance of packaged and processed foods which are low in
- Food habits have changed and variation in cereals and natural food items has reduced.
- There could be genetic or environmental factors, but such a study has never been conducted. Also, the current haemoglobin norms are based on western populations. In India, the normal standards could be different. There are women whose haemoglobin drops to six or eight sometimes but they remain healthy and well.

4. Critical Case of Cold Deserts

- In the union territory of Ladakh, whopping 92.5 per cent children, 92.8 per cent women and around 76 per cent men are anaemic in the given age groups.
- In Lahaul and Spiti district which lies in Himachal Pradesh, 91 per cent children and 82 per cent women are anaemic.
- Both these areas are part of the Himalayan cold desert.
- In J&K and in rest of Himachal, the prevalence of anaemia is comparatively lower.
- Possible causes:
 - Short supply of fresh vegetables and fruits during the long winter each year.
 - Crops here are generally only grown in summer and during winter
 - Residents fail to get a regular supply of green vegetables and fresh produce from outside, as connectivity becomes restricted due to harsh weather and snowbound roads.
 - Other factors are yet to be scientifically ascertained.

03

Governor's Role in Calling an Assembly Session

1. Why in News?

- Recently, the Kerala Governor has turned down a request of the state Cabinet to summon a special sitting of the Assembly to debate the new three central farm laws.



2. Governor's Role: Constitutional Provisions

- Article 174: The Governor shall from time to time summon the House or each House of the Legislature of the State to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit.
 - ☛ The provision also puts on the Governor the responsibility of ensuring that the House is summoned at least once every six months.
- Article 163: Although it is the Governor's prerogative to summon the House, according to Article 163, the Governor is required to act on the "aid and advice" of the Cabinet.
 - ☛ So when the Governor summons the House under Article 174, this is not of his or her own will but on the aid and advice of the Cabinet.

3. Governor Summoning a Session: Exception

- When the Chief Minister appears to have lost the majority and the legislative members of the House propose a no-confidence motion against the Chief Minister, then the Governor can decide on his or her own on summoning the House.
 - ☛ But the actions of the Governor, when using his discretionary powers can be challenged in court.

4. Supreme Court's Ruling

- In 2016, the Supreme Court looked into the constitutional crisis in Arunachal Pradesh after the Governor had imposed President's Rule in the state.
 - ☛ In ordinary circumstances during the period when the Chief Minister and his council of ministers enjoy the confidence of the majority of the House, the power vested with the Governor under Article 174 to summon, prorogue and dissolve the house(s) must be exercised in consonance with the aid and advice of the chief minister and his council of ministers.
 - ☛ In the above situation, he is precluded [from taking] an individual call on the issue at his own will, or in his own discretion.
 - ☛ The court read the power to summon the House as a "function" of the Governor and not a "power" he enjoys.

6. Kerala Case

- If the Kerala government insists on holding the special session, there can be no legal ground to deny a request for summoning the session since the Governor's powers are limited with regard to summoning the House.

5. Sarkaria Commission, 1983: Governor's Role

- So long as the Council of Ministers enjoys the confidence of the Assembly, its advice in these matters, unless patently unconstitutional must be deemed as binding on the Governor.
- It is only where such advice, if acted upon, would lead to an infringement of a constitutional provision, or where the Council of Ministers has ceased to enjoy the confidence of the Assembly, that the question arises whether the Governor may act in the exercise of his discretion.

04

Lightning Incidents in India

1. Context

- Lightning strikes have caused 1,771 deaths between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020, according to a report published on December 31 on lightning incidents in India.



8. Recommendations of the Report

- The NDMA has issued comprehensive guidelines for preparations of Lightning action plans to states, but the large number of fatalities show the implementation also needs a more 'scientific and focused community centric approach' as well as convergence of various departments.
- Mapping of lightning is a major breakthrough in identifying the precise risk in terms of lightning frequency, current intensity, energy content, high temperature and other adverse impacts.
- With continuous mapping for at least three years, a climatology can be established. This would yield a Lightning Risk Atlas map for India which will form the basis for a lightning risk management programme.

2. About the Report

- The report has been prepared by Climate Resilient Observing Systems Promotion Council (CROPC), a non-profit organisation that works closely with India Meteorological Department (IMD) along with Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), India Meteorological Society (IMS) and World Vision India to disseminate early lightning forecasts.

3. Key Highlights of the Report

- Uttar Pradesh with 293 deaths, Madhya Pradesh 248, Bihar 221, Odisha 200 and Jharkhand 172 deaths together accounted for more than 60 per cent of the numbers, which are 33 per cent of total fatalities from all natural disasters during the time period.
- In 2018-19 period, there were 2,800 deaths and the drop has been attributed to the efforts of various stakeholders, including CROPC.
- In order to further reduce deaths, the report suggests states "aggressively participate in Lightning Resilient India Campaign and undertake lightning risk management more comprehensively".
- As per the report, the Government of India and most states have not notified lightning as a disaster.

4. Occurrence of Lightning

- Lightning is the process of occurrence of a natural 'electrical discharge of very short duration and high voltage between a cloud and the ground or within a cloud', accompanied by a bright flash and sound, and sometimes thunderstorms.
- Inter cloud or intra cloud (IC) lightning which are visible and are harmless. It is cloud to ground (CG) lightning, which is harmful as the 'high electric voltage and electric current' leads to electrocution.

5. How to Minimise Deaths?

- Every lightning strikes around a fixed period and almost similar geographical locations in similar patterns.
- As per the report, Kalbaishakhi—Norwesters, which are violent thunderstorms with lightning—claims life in eastern India; pre-monsoon lightning deaths occur mostly in Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and UP.
- Early lightning warning to farmers, cattle grazers, children and people in open areas is key.
- A local lightning safety action plan, like installing Lightning Protection Devices, is also need to prevent deaths.

6. Technology used to Forecast Lightning Strikes

- CROPC has a MOU with the India Met Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Science (MoES), Government of India to disseminate early lightning forecasts which uses satellite observations, inputs from 'network of Doppler and other radars', 'lightning detection Sensors' among others.
- This makes Lightning Forecast unique with best possible lead time of even a week taking into account the devastations caused by the severe thunderstorms during pre-monsoon.

7. Economic Impact of Lightning

- The Centre had increased compensation for victims of natural disaster to Rs 4 lakh in 2015.
- In the last five years there were 13,994 fatalities, which brings the total compensation to around Rs 359 crore.
- There have been phenomenal losses of animal life also from lightning strike.

05 Zero Coupon Bonds

1. Why in News?

- The government has used financial innovation to recapitalise Punjab & Sind Bank by issuing the lender Rs 5,500-crore worth of non-interest bearing bonds valued at par.
- The funds raised through issuance of these instruments, which are a variation of the recapitalisation bonds issued earlier to public sector banks, are being deployed to capitalise the state-run bank.



2. Zero-Coupon Bond

- A zero-coupon bond is a debt security that does not pay interest but instead trades at a deep discount, rendering a profit at maturity, when the bond is redeemed for its full face value.
- A zero-coupon bond is also known as an accrual bond.
- The difference between the purchase price of a zero-coupon bond and the par value, indicates the investor's return.
- This support will now facilitate the bank to use this capital to expand its banking activities for agriculture, rural and MSME sectors, with its prominent presence in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, which account for nearly 900 out of its 1,500 branches.
- The significant aspect is that the capital support will be achieved without the government really infusing funds (no cash outgo) in the bank.

3. What kind of bonds are these?

- These are "non-interest bearing, non-transferable special GOI securities".
- It is not tradable bond.
- It has a maturity of 10-15 years and issued specifically for Punjab & Sind Bank.
- Only those banks, whosoever is specified, can invest in them, nobody else.
- It is held at the held-to-maturity (HTM) category of the bank as per the RBI guidelines.
- Since it is held to maturity, it is accounted at the face value, not requiring it to book any mark-to-market gains or losses from these bonds.

4. Difference from zero coupon bonds issued by Private Firms

- Though zero coupon, these bonds are different from traditional zero coupon bonds on one account — as they are being issued at par, there is no interest; in previous cases, since they were issued at discount, they technically were interest bearing.
- Normally zero coupon bonds are issued at a discount, which are tradable also. Here, there is no question of trading and these are special types of bonds, which the government issues specifically to a specified person and it's issued at par.
- Since they are issued by the government, thus they are only to be purchased by the buyers (banks) selected by the issuing authorities. It is not open to public. Normally, private issued bonds are open for institutional buyers and sometimes to retail investors too.

5. Significance of Zero-Coupon Bond

- Though these will earn no interest for the subscriber, market participants term it both a 'financial illusion' and 'great innovation' by the government where it is using Rs 100 to create an impact of Rs 200 in the economy.
- It is issuing a zero coupon bond aggregating to Rs 5,500 crore at par to Punjab & Sind Bank that will mature in tranches between 2030 to 2035.
- The market value of this bonds would be around Rs 2,750 crore.
- Punjab & Sind Bank, by investing in these bonds from held-to-maturity category, won't have to book mark-to-market loss and will value the bonds at cost, i.e. Rs 5,500 crore.
- By doing so, the capital adequacy of Punjab & Sind Bank goes up by Rs 5,500 crore (instead of Rs 2,750 crore).
- It is an innovative way to capitalise banks, which does not affect the fiscal deficit while at the same time provides much needed equity capital to the banks.

06 Inner Line Permit in Manipur

1. Why in News?

- Manipur has started issuing Inner Line Permit (ILP) system to non-indigenous population entering the state.
- As many as six counters have been opened and operational at Mao, Jiribam, Jessami, Moreh, Behiang and Singjowl.
- According to a gazette notification dated December 31, 2019, the Manipur Inner Line Permit Guidelines, 2019 shall apply to the entire state.



2. Background

- A concept drawn by colonial rulers, the Inner Line separated the tribal-populated hill areas in the Northeast from the plains.
- To enter and stay for any period in these areas, Indian citizens from other areas need an Inner Line Permit (ILP).
- The concept originates from the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act (BEFR), 1873.
- The policy of exclusion first came about as a response to the reckless expansion of British entrepreneurs into new lands which threatened British political relations with the hill tribes.
- The BEFR prohibits an outsider's — "British subject or foreign citizen" — entry into the areas beyond the Inner Line without a pass and his purchase of land there. On the other hand, the Inner Line also protects the commercial interests of the British from the tribal communities.
- After Independence, the Indian government replaced "British subjects" with "Citizen of India".

3. InnerLine Permit

- The ILP is a travel document which a non-native is required to carry while he or she is travelling to any of the states where it is enforced.
- It permits stay only for a limited period and the basic reason behind its implementation was to protect indigenous tribal cultures.
- The Inner Line Permit comes into effect in Manipur from January 1, 2020, making it the fourth north-eastern state after Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh to come under the ILP regime.
- Pressure groups in the northeast view this permit as a shield against the entry of illegal immigrants.

5. Exemption from ILPs

- The ILP system shall not apply to foreigners, All India Service officers belonging to Manipur, all central government officers and state government officers, employees of central co-operation and government undertaking, including their families.
- Paramilitary forces, armed forces and their families would also be relieved from the purview of the regulation including executive members of recognised national parties, state political parties and students admitted to various educational institutions in Manipur possessing valid identity.

4. Four Types of ILPs

- **Special Category Permit:** It will be issued by the Home Department for "special category people, including government contractors, investors, and traders with business establishments in the state or intending to do business in the state". The ILP would be issued for a period of three years subject to renewal. The person seeking this category of ILP will have to pay a fee of Rs 5,000 in the first instance and Rs 10,000 during renewals.
- **Regular Permit:** The regular permit is for individuals who visit the state regularly and to be sponsored by any permanent resident of the state. This permit will be issued by the deputy commissioners for Rs 500 and initially give six months period to visitors.
- **Temporary Permit:** The temporary permit is for tourists, business representatives or those who visit for a short period (subject to the production of valid identity card) and is issued initially for a period of fifteen days at the cost of Rs 100. The permit is to be issued by the deputy resident commissioner or OSD of Manipur Bhawan New Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati among others in addition to deputy commissioners.
- **Labour Permit:** This is to be issued by Deputy Labour Commissioner or any other competent authority under the state government for group of labourers brought by any contractor or firm, or company or individual for construction work. This ILP will be issued to the labourers for a maximum period of six months in the first instance, and could be further extended for another six months.

07

Giant Antarctic Iceberg 'A68a'

1. Why in News?

- The giant iceberg A68, the biggest block of free-floating ice from Antarctica with an area of about 5,800 sq. km, has been drifting in the Atlantic Ocean since 2017.
- Recently, due to an ocean current, the iceberg was propelled into the South Atlantic Ocean and since then it has been drifting towards the remote sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia, prompting fears about the impact the iceberg could have on the island's abundant wildlife.



2. Iceberg A68a

- Icebergs travel with ocean currents and either get caught up in shallow waters or ground themselves.
- A68a, an iceberg roughly the size of the state of Delaware, split off from Antarctica's Larsen C ice shelf in July 2017.
- Since then it has been drifting towards the remote island of South Georgia, which is a British Overseas Territory (BOT).
- On its journey, smaller icebergs have calved from the iceberg and right now, the biggest section of the iceberg is called A68a and spans an area of roughly 2,600 sq. km.
- The US National Ice Center (USNIC) is responsible for naming icebergs, which are named according to the Antarctic quadrant in which they are spotted) confirmed that two new icebergs calved from A68a are A68E and A68F.

3. Major Concerns

- According to the IUCN, South Georgia Island is home to about 450,000 King penguins, among other species.
- The fear is that if the iceberg grounds itself near the island, it could cause disruption to the local wildlife that forages in the ocean.
- Ecologists from British Antarctic Survey (BAS) has launched a research mission to study the impact of iceberg A68a on the ecosystem of South Georgia Island.
- If the iceberg gets stuck near the island, it could mean that penguins and seals will have to travel farther in search of food, and for some this might mean that they don't get back in time to prevent their offspring from starving to death.
- Though there are some positives regarding the iceberg. One of it is, that the iceberg carries dust particles with it. These dust particles act as the fertilisers for ocean plankton. These plankton serve as a food for some herbivorous and omnivorous species. Also, planktons draw up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere thereby acting as carbon sinks.

4. Iceberg Calving

- Ice calving, also known as glacier calving or iceberg calving, is the breaking of ice chunks from the edge of a glacier.
- As per BAS, the iceberg's calving is thought to be a natural event and not a result of climate change. However, some models predict that a warming Antarctica in the future could mean more calving events as ice shelves and glaciers retreat.
- More than 90% of all icebergs calved from Antarctica end up traveling a near-coastal current, which moves clockwise around Antarctica before hitting the Weddell Gyre and slingshotting around to the Antarctic Circumpolar Current moving in the opposite direction.
- A68a broke off as a 5,800-square-kilometer mass behind that gyre on the eastern side of the Antarctic peninsula.
- Still, the path it has taken is not uncommon. As the face of the Larsen C ice shelf has disintegrated in recent years, other bergs have traced a similar route as A68a.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 AFSPA has extended in Nagaland

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".
2. "Disturbed Area" is defined as per AFSPA and can be declared by Central Government, Governor or Administrator of the Union.

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. The Ministry of Home Affairs, declared Nagaland as a 'disturbed area' for the next six months under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958. In simple terms, AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas". Nagaland has been under AFSPA for almost six decades now.

A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA. An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities. The Central Government, or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area. <>>

02 Prevalence of Anaemia in India

Q. With reference to the prevalence of anemia in India, consider the following statements:

1. Deficiency of Iron and Vitamin B-12 are the two common types of anemia in India.
2. Prevalence of anaemia among children across major parts of India has touched around 60%.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both the statements are correct. Iron-deficiency and vitamin B12-deficiency anaemia are the two common types of anaemia in India. The Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (POSHAN) Abhiyaan and, particularly, the Anaemia Mukt Bharat, or AMB, Strategy was launched in 2018 with efforts to improve Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation, behaviour change and anaemia-related care and treatment across six target groups including pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children, and the provisional verdict is mixed for women and concerning for children.

Indian women and children are overwhelmingly anaemic, according to the National Family Health Survey 2019-20 released in December 2020, and the condition is the most prevalent in the Himalayan cold desert. Across the 22 States/Union Territories, anaemia prevalence among children increased by about eight percentage points from 51.8% to 60.2%. <>>

03 Governor's Role in Calling an Assembly Session

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Governor's power to summon the House is a discretionary power.
2. Governor can exercise his power to summon the house by himself, only when if the Chief Minister and his Council does not have the confidence of the House or summoning the House causes infringement to the constitutional setup.

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. Article 163: Although it is the Governor's prerogative to summon the House, according to Article 163, the Governor is required to act on the "aid and advice" of the Cabinet. So when the Governor summons the House under Article 174, this is not of his or her own will but on the aid and advice of the Cabinet.

Statement 2 is correct. Governor can exercise his power to summon the house by himself, only when if the Chief Minister and his Council does not have the confidence of the House or summoning the House causes infringement to the constitutional setup.



04 Lightning Incidents in India

Q. Consider the following statements with reference to deaths due to lightning strikes in India:

1. Lightning strikes are categorized as minor disaster by NDMA.
2. Kalbaishakhi—Norwesters is a phenomenon during which there are increased cases of lightning strikes.
3. 'Network of Doppler and other radars' and 'lightning detection Sensors' can be used to forecast lightning strikes and save lives.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. The report has been prepared by Climate Resilient Observing Systems Promotion Council (CROPC), a non-profit organisation that works closely with India Meteorological Department (IMD) along with Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), India Meteorological Society (IMS) and World Vision India to disseminate early lightning forecasts. As per the report, the Government of India and most states have not notified lightning as a disaster.

Statement 2 and 3 are correct. As per the report, Kalbaishakhi—Norwesters, which are violent thunderstorms with lightning—claims life in eastern India; pre-monsoon lightning deaths occur mostly in Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and UP. CROPC has a MOU with the India Met Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Science (MoES), Government of India to disseminate early lightning forecasts which uses satellite observations, inputs from 'network of Doppler and other radars', 'lightning detection Sensors' among others.



05 Zero Coupon Bonds

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Government has devised an innovative route to recapitalise Punjab & Sind Bank by issuing zero coupon bonds to the amount of Rs5,500 crores.
2. Public can subscribe to these non-interest-bearing bonds which are non-transferable.
3. This is done to increase the capital adequacy ratio of Punjab and Sind Bank and will also allow bank to expand its activities into agricultural, rural and MSME sectors.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. The government has used financial innovation to recapitalise Punjab & Sind Bank by issuing the lender Rs 5,500-crore worth of non-interest bearing bonds valued at par. It has a maturity of 10-15 years and issued specifically for Punjab & Sind Bank.

Statement 2 is incorrect. These are "non-interest bearing, non-transferable special GOI securities". It is not tradable bond. Since they are issued by the government, thus they are only to be purchased by the buyers (banks) selected by the issuing authorities. It is not open to public.

Statement 3 is correct. It is an innovative way to capitalise banks, which does not affect the fiscal deficit while at the same time provides much needed equity capital to the banks. By doing so, the capital adequacy of Punjab & Sind Bank goes up by Rs 5,500 crore (instead of Rs 2,750 crore). This support will now facilitate the bank to use this capital to expand its banking activities for agriculture, rural and MSME sectors.



06 Inner Line Permit in Manipur

Q. With reference to the Inner Line Permit in Manipur, consider the following statements:

1. The concept of Inner Line Permit is taken from British rule, where tribal population areas in Northeast were separated from non-indigenous population to protect their culture.

2. Inner Line Permit is a travel document to be carried by a non-native which mentions his reason of stay and the period.
3. Manipur is the only state in independent India to have Inner Line Permit.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 and 2 are correct. Manipur has started issuing Inner Line Permit (ILP) system to non-indigenous population entering the state. A concept drawn by colonial rulers, the Inner Line separated the tribal-populated hill areas in the Northeast from the plains. To enter and stay for any period in these areas, Indian citizens from other areas need an Inner Line Permit (ILP).

The concept originates from the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act (BEFR), 1873. The ILP is a travel document which a non-native is required to carry while he or she is travelling to any of the states where it is enforced. It permits stay only for a limited period and the basic reason behind its implementation was to protect indigenous tribal cultures.

Statement 3 is incorrect. The Inner Line Permit comes into effect in Manipur from January 1, 2020, making it the fourth northeastern state after Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh to come under the ILP regime.



07 Giant Antarctic Iceberg 'A68a'

Q. With reference to the Antarctic Iceberg 'A68a', consider the following statements:

1. The floating iceberg which is drifting in the Atlantic Ocean is a possible threat to the ecosystem of South Georgia Island.
2. The iceberg also carried dust which acts as the fertilizer for ocean plankton. These planktons draw carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thus acting as a carbon sink.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Both the statements are correct. The giant iceberg A68, the biggest block of free-floating ice from Antarctica with an area of about 5,800 sq. km, has been drifting in the Atlantic Ocean since 2017. Recently, due to an ocean current, the iceberg was propelled into the South Atlantic Ocean and since then it has been drifting towards the remote sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia, prompting fears about the impact the iceberg could have on the island's abundant wildlife.

Though there are some positives regarding the iceberg. One of it is that the iceberg carries dust particles with it. These dust particles act as the fertilisers for ocean plankton. These plankton serve as a food for some herbivorous and omnivorous species. Also, planktons draw up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere thereby acting as carbon sinks.



7 IMPORTANT NEWS

01

African Swine Fever

- ◆ The contagious African Swine Fever (ASF) has been reported in Manipur. Last year, the ASF killed many pigs in Assam, subsequently the import of the animal was prohibited in Manipur. In September 2019, the outbreak of the disease swept through pig populations in China — which is the largest exporter and consumer of pork — leading to large-scale cullings. As a result, the prices of pork shot up by over 50 per cent in the country over pre-outbreak levels.

About ASF

- ◆ African Swine Fever (ASF) does not affect humans but can be catastrophic for pigs. The current outbreak of ASF in India is the first



time that the disease has been reported in the country. ASF is a severe viral disease that affects wild and domestic pigs typically resulting in an acute haemorrhagic fever. The disease has a case fatality rate (CFR) of almost 100 per cent.

- ◆ Its routes of transmission include direct contact with an infected or wild pig (alive or dead), indirect contact through ingestion of

contaminated material such as food waste, feed or garbage, or through biological vectors such as ticks.

- ◆ The disease is characterised by sudden deaths in pigs. Other manifestations of the disease include high fever, depression, anorexia, loss of appetite, haemorrhages in the skin, vomiting and diarrhoea among others. 📌📌📌

02

Indonesia's Mount Merapi Volcano

- ◆ Indonesia's most active volcano, Mount Merapi, has erupted recently. The geological authority had raised the alert level of Mount Merapi to the second-highest level in November after sensors picked up increasing activity. Tourism and mining activities were halted.

Currently, Merapi is entering a new eruption phase, namely the eruption phase in 2021. The main phenomenon is the observation of silent flames and incandescent lava.

About Mount Merapi

- ◆ Mount Merapi, Gunung Merapi

(literally Fire Mountain in Indonesian and Javanese), is an active stratovolcano located on the border between Central Java and Special Region of Yogyakarta provinces, Indonesia. It is the most active volcano in Indonesia and has erupted regularly since 1548.



- ◆ The name "Merapi" from old Javanese language means "the one making fire" is a popular name for volcanoes: another volcano with the same name Merapi is in the Ijen Massif in East Java and similarly called volcano "Marapi" lies on Sumatra Island.

03 Identification Number to Track Large Value Transactions

- ◆ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced identification number to track large value transactions. The legal entity identifiers (LEI) will be mandatory for all fund transfers worth Rs. 50 crore and above.



Background

- ◆ The idea of LEI, a 20-digit unique code to identify parties to financial transactions worldwide, was conceived in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis in a bid to improve financial data systems and strengthen risk management capabilities.
- ◆ LEI was introduced by the Reserve Bank in a phased manner for participants in the over the counter (OTC) derivative and non-derivative markets as also for large corporate borrowers.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The LEI is a 20-digit number used to uniquely identify parties involved in financial transactions world over.
- ◆ LEI numbers of the beneficiaries and remitters must be included on all payment transactions of value Rs. 50 crore made via the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT).

- ◆ The LEI code can be obtained from local operating units accredited by the Global Legal Entity Identifier Foundation, which supports and implements the use of LEI. In India, the code can be obtained from Legal Entity Identifier India Ltd, a subsidiary of RBI-recognized Clearing Corporation of India Ltd.
- ◆ Introduction of the LEI for all transactions above Rs. 50 crore will help banks and regulators track large value transactions more closely.

04 Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act

- ◆ The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to "delete" its three-year-old law which allowed seizure and subsequent confiscation in 'gaushalas' of livestock from people, who depended on these animals for a livelihood, even

before they were found guilty of cruelty towards them.

- ◆ A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde warned the government that it would "stay" the implementation of a 2017 law which allowed authorities to seize

cattle on a mere suspicion that they suffered cruel treatment at the hands of their owners or were being primed for slaughter.

- ◆ These animals, the law prescribes, would then be lodged in 'gaushalas' as "case property" to await the

court's verdict. In short, a farmer, a livestock owner or a cattle trader loses his animals before being found guilty of the charge of cruelty.

About Laws

- ◆ The law under question is the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Care and Maintenance of Case Property Animals) Rules, 2017 notified on May 23, 2017. The rules were framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.



- ◆ The 2017 Rules allow a Magistrate to forfeit the cattle of an owner facing trial under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. The animals

are then sent to infirmaries, 'gaushalas', 'pinjarapole', etc. These authorities can further give such animals for "adoption".

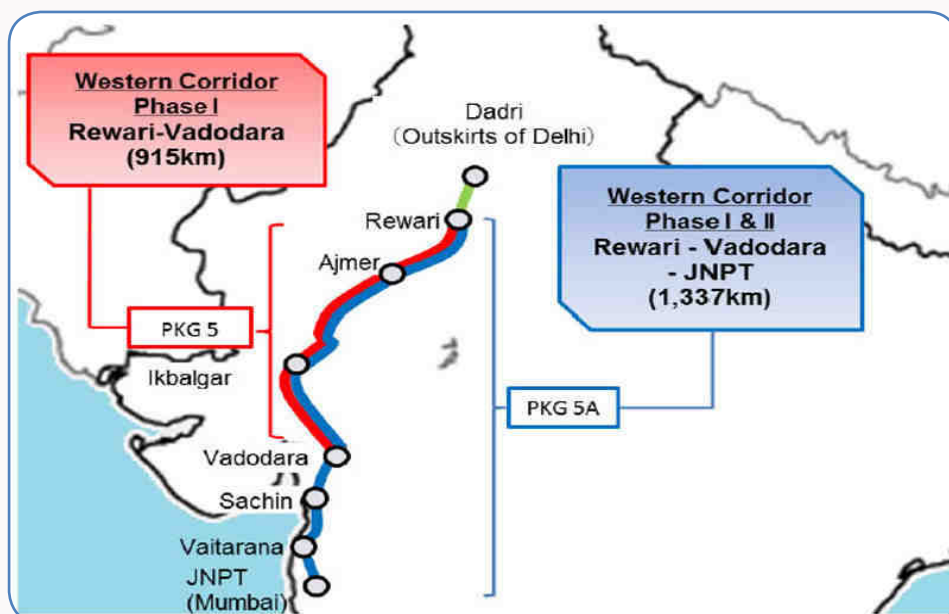
05

Western Dedicated Freight Corridor

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the New Rewari-New Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor and flagged off the world's first 1.5-km-long electrified double stack long haul container train.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The corridor would lead to the development of growth centres and points in several cities, creation of job opportunities and conditions attracting more investments. It would give a new fillip to the local industries and manufacturing units by providing them faster and cheaper access to the national and international markets. They would get easy access to the ports in Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- ◆ A portion of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor, the New Bhaupur-New Khurja section was started last month and through it, farm products were being transported from Punjab and coal from



Jharkhand was being supplied to the National Capital Region, Haryana and Punjab. Compared to the previous freight train average speed of 25 km/hour, the maximum of 90 km/hour had now been achieved.

- ◆ In all, 133 railway stations in nine States would be impacted by the Dedicated Freight Corridor. New multi-model logistic parks, freight terminals, container depots/terminals, parcel hubs and other

big facilities would be developed at these places.

- ◆ The modernisation of infrastructure would further improve the national economy, by ensuring growth in the allied sectors and creating employment opportunities.
- ◆ With the launch of the double stack long haul container train between New Ateli in Haryana and New Kishanganj in Rajasthan, India had also entered the club of nations with such high capabilities.

06

Sunflower Sea Star

- ◆ The iconic sunflower sea star has been listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature following a groundbreaking population study led by Oregon State University and The Nature Conservancy.
- ◆ The sunflower sea star, known scientifically as *Pycnopodia helianthoides*, plays an important role in maintaining kelp forests, and thus sustaining marine life, along the West Coast from Alaska to Baja, California.

Threat

- ◆ Populations of the sunflower sea star suffered dramatic crashes because of a marine wildlife epidemic event, referred to as sea star wasting syndrome, that began in 2013.
- ◆ Scientists used more than 61,000 population surveys from 31 datasets to calculate a 90.6% decline in the sunflower sea stars and estimated that as many as 5.75 billion animals died from the disease, whose cause has not been determined. Sunflower sea stars

are now nearly absent in Mexico as well as the contiguous United States.

- ◆ Sunflower sea stars are a key predator of purple sea urchins and the sea star decline has helped fuel an explosion in the urchin population in many regions. An overabundance of urchins is linked to a decline in kelp forests already facing pressure from marine heat wave events, making the future uncertain for ecosystems that provide habitat for thousands of marine animals and help support coastal economies. 

07

Central Vista Project

- ◆ The Supreme Court on January 5 has allowed the central vista project to go ahead. A Bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna pronounced the 2-1 judgment, with Justice Khanwilkar and Justice Maheshwari forming the majority. Justice Khanna pronounced a separate judgment.
- ◆ Justice Sanjeev Khanna, in a separate dissent, upheld the project bid notice, award of consultancy and the order of the Delhi Urban Arts Commission, but concluded that the Centre did not take the public into confidence about the changes proposed for Central Vista, an area, which in post-Independent India, “inspires



and connects common people to the citadels of our democracy”.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The project aims to renovate and redevelop 86 acres of land in Lutyens's Delhi, in which the landmark structures of the Indian government, including Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhavan, India Gate, North Block and South Block, etc. stand.

- ◆ The proposed Parliament House has a built-up area of 65,000 sq.m and is scheduled to be completed in 2022, in time for the 75th Independence Day celebrations and the Global G-20 summit.
- ◆ The Central Vista project aims for an “integrated administration block” and “synergised functioning” of ministries presently spread across 47 buildings in the region, and in particular, Central Secretariat block. 

7

IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS (For Mains)



- 01** The line between 'reserved' and 'general' is blurring, impacting reservation as an idea and as practice. Analyse.
- 02** Corona virus pandemic has presented an opportunity to reimagine schools as places for community learning in India. Critically analyse.
- 03** Improving diet of low-income households only way to address chronic malnutrition. Justify.
- 04** Is over-reliance on digital technology has worsen financial exclusion in rural India? Do you agree? Give suitable examples.
- 05** Discuss the role of science and technology in Indian farming system.
- 06** Pala period is the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India. Enumerate.
- 07** What are the main components of emotional intelligence? Can they be learned? Discuss.

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



- 01** What was the theme of Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas 2021?

Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat
- 02** Which central Asian country has recently abolished the capital punishment?

Kazakhstan
- 03** Which country has announced that it will offer a free IDN (Internationalized Domain Name) in local languages?

India
- 04** Which state has become the 3rd State in the country to successfully undertake "Urban Local Bodies (ULB)" reform?

Telangana
- 05** Which country is planning to join 'Five Eyes' intelligence network?

Japan
- 06** Which country will carry out wargames codenamed Exercise SKYROS in India between January 19 and 25?

France
- 07** Which state is constructing the world's largest floating 600 MW solar energy project?

Madhya Pradesh

7

IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01



03



05

01

"A gender-equal society would be one where the word 'gender' does not exist: where everyone can be themselves"

Gloria Steinem

02

"There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing"

Swami Vivekanand

03

"We may have different religions, different languages, different colored skin, but we all belong to one human race"

Kofi Annan

04

"What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another"

Mahatma Gandhi

05

"May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears"

Nelson Mandela

06

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power"

Abraham Lincoln

07

"Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured, as they are the future of the Nation and the citizens of tomorrow"

PT. Jawahar Lal nehru

AN INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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