PERFECT 7
WEEKLY
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DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION

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.

Vinay Kumar Singh
CEO and Founder
Dhyeya IAS

Dheya 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.

Q H Khan
Managing Director
Dhyeya IAS

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION

With immense pleasure and gratitude I want 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.

I extend best wishes for the success of this endeavor.

Qurban Ali

Chief Editor
Dhyeya IAS
(Ex Editor- Rajya Sabha TV)

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 challenging as well as most important thing. 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 'overdose of information'. Focusing on civil services exams 'Perfect 7' embodies in itself rightful 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.

The new 'avatar' of 'Perfect 7' is a result of your love and affection. We feel inspired to continue our efforts to deliver effective and valuable content in interesting manner. Our promise of quality has reached you in around 100 issues and more are yet to come.

Ashutosh Singh

Managing Editor
Dhyeya IAS

PREFACE

Dhyeya family feels honoured to present you a pandora box 'Perfect 7'. 'Perfect7' is an outstanding compilation of current affairs topics as per the new pattern of Civil Service 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 civil service examination. 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

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Contents

SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. KHADI GRAM UDYOG : A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Why in News?

International Day of Yoga (IDY), which is celebrated annually on June 21 since 2015, is going green this year. For this purpose, the Ayush ministry has tied up with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), a body established by the government of India to promote and facilitate khadi and villages industries in the country.

Introduction

Khadi owes its revival to the 'Father of the Nation', Mahatma Gandhi. He was great visionary who saw its potential as a tool to being self-reliant, independent and bringing villages back to life. In his words: 'The spinning wheel represents to me the hope of the masses. The masses lost their freedom, such as it was, with the loss of the Charkha. The Charkha supplemented the agriculture of the villagers and gave it dignity.'

However, he soon understood that more than the production and sale of this hand-woven fabric, it's the acceptance of the very fabric in our own daily lives that will bring the change. Gandhi made the 'Swadeshi Movement' synonymous with khadi. He promoted its simplicity as a social equalizer and made it the nation's fabric. He said, "if we have the 'khadi spirit' in us, we would surround ourselves with simplicity in every walk of life". The 'khadi spirit' means illimitable patience. For those who know anything about the production of khadi know how patiently the spinners and the weavers have to toil at their trade and even so must we have patience while we are spinning 'the thread of Swaraj.' Said Gandhiji.

Introduced with the intention of boycotting foreign goods, khadi became a national movement under Gandhi. All India Spinners Association was launched with the intention of propagation, production and the selling of khadi in 1925. Techniques were improved upon, and employment to the scale of two lakh was created. After independence, the movement continued, and the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board was created, which later culminated in the formation of Khadi, Village and Industries Commission (KVIC). KVIC today is responsible for the planning, promotion, organization and implementation of programs for the development of khadi and other village industries in rural areas with the coordination of other agencies in rural development wherever necessary.

Since independence, the journey of khadi has been about maintaining a balance between traditions and modernity. Khadi stands for what's traditional, but every tradition has to undergo change to stay relevant. India now celebrates Khadi Day on September 19th. As per the Indian Flag Code law the government will use khadi as only material. If a flying flag is made with any other material, the offense is punishable by law with imprisonment up to three years plus a fine.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)

Before independence, the development of khadi and village industries was entirely a non-governmental effort under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. After independence, the government of India took the responsibility of bringing the development of khadi and village industries within the overall framework of the 'Five Year Plans'. Therefore, the government of India set up KVIC, which is a statutory organization by an Act of Parliament. This organisation came up in 1956 and it plays a pivotal role in the strengthening of rural economy by promoting and developing khadi and village industries. The khadi and village industries programme plays a predominant role in providing employment opportunities to rural artisans more specifically the socio-economic weaker strata of the society. Since agriculture sector has been losing its ability to generate additional employment opportunities for the fast increasing workforce in rural areas, the importance of KVIC has increased to find an alternative and appropriate employment for rural people.

Up to 1987-88, KVIC was entrusted with twenty six village industries. However, through an amendment of KVIC Act in 1987, the definition of village industries was changed without altering the definition of Khadi. A village industry means any industry, located in rural area (population of which does not exceed 10,000 or such other figures which may be specified), which produces any goods or renders any services with or without the use of power in which fixed capital investment (in plant, machinery, land and building) per head of an artisan or worker does not exceed Rs.15, 000. KVIC has taken up thirty four new village industries from 1988-89, in addition to the twenty six village industries entrusted to KVIC up to 1987-88. There are also few more village industries identified for being taken up in future by KVIC.

The definition of village industries was modified in the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (Amendment) Act, 2006. As per clause 2 of the Act it proposes to amend the definition of "village industry". The amendment proposed in the definition of "village industry" raised the fixed capital investment per head of an artisan or worker to an amount not exceeding one lakh rupees instead of fifteen thousand rupees under the existing provision. This will result in increase in the number of village industries which will be eligible for assistance by the KVIC.

Importance of Village and Small Industries Sector in the Indian Economy

Indian economy is featured with large scale unemployment and poverty. Village and small scale industries play an important role in the country by providing employment opportunities in rural areas with less amount of capital. Other factors, which weigh in favour of this sector, are its capacity to attract small savings to productive channels, short gestation period, and its adaptability to rural and semi urban environment where infrastructure may not be fully developed. The village and small industries sector has been recognized as an effective tool for providing gainful self-employment opportunities. These industries are also considered an important instrument for promoting rapid industrial growth by providing greater employment opportunities in particular to women and weaker sections of society and for bringing about a reduction in regional disparities and removal of economic backwardness of the rural and undeveloped area of the country. The importance of village and small industries sector in the economy is evident from the fact that, this sector provides employment opportunities to about 23.6 million persons as against 4.5 million persons in the large and medium sector. In the sphere of exports, this sector accounted for about 45% of the total exports of manufactured goods from the country. The promotion of village and small industries continues to be an important element in the national development strategy, particularly due to its lower capital output ratio and higher employment intensity.

Place of Khadi and Village Industries in the Economic Development

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for most of the people, and this sector is featured with chronic unemployment and underemployment. It is necessary that avenues of employment in the non-farming occupations have to be provided to tackle this problem. Khadi and village industries with its intermediate technology answer this need very well. The khadi and village Industries fulfill the social objective of providing employment to millions and ensure economic development, and help removal of the main obstacle to growth – the vicious circle of poverty. Khadi and village industries produce goods, which are articles of daily necessity like cloth, oil, gur, leather goods etc. Khadi and village industry help in the conversion of waste in to wealth. Gobar gas industry, handmade paper industry, non-edible oil, industry, soap industry are classical examples of production of wealth from waste. Thus khadi and village industries with its intermediate technology and emphasis on viability can fulfill the social objective of creating employment to millions and at the same time fulfilling the economic objective of producing saleable goods of daily use on a decentralized basis.

Challenges for Khadi and Village Industry

In spite of the huge spending by the government of India on khadi sector, there had been a decline in the production and sales of khadi and the employment generated by the sector in the last few decades. Moreover, the huge amount spent for the economic empowerment of the poor artisans is not reaching their hands.

The statistics provided by the annual reports of Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) showed that a rise in the plan and non-plan amount spent on Khadi sector during 1994-95 to 2014-15. But, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Audit report on KVIC also reveals that KVIC is ineffective in utilizing the plan and non plan funds for the Khadi sector promotion, clearly indicating the wastage of public monies.

According to the regulations of the MSME, only KVIC and KVIC certified institutions are allowed to produce khadi, creating significant entry barriers. The certification process of khadi is imposed by the government to protect the industry is not market friendly and does not cater to the interests and tastes of the customers.

Many weaving units, however, emerged only for getting KVIC rebates and other benefits but have not produced any khadi product. At the same time, this has also resulted in many piracy problems associated with khadi industry like producing spurious products in the name of Khadi through unofficial channels.

Khadi fabrics are available mostly in KVIC certified stores only, restricting the availability of Khadi products to the consumers. In addition to this, in the Khadi retail outlets, the working times are the government office timings in India, from 10 am to 5 pm. When the whole marketing is going e-commerce line 24×7 these days, the stereotypes in Khadi sector are not doing anything good for the marketing of khadi products. The marketing of khadi is mainly done by khadi institutions.

Khadi sector is an over-regulated one in India, where the entire production process, sales, distribution, and marketing is majorly regulated by the government through KVIC. The restrictive practices adopted by the government implemented through KVIC, have resulted in making the khadi industry ineffective, inefficient along with failing to deliver economic empowerment to the poor artisans working in the sector.

Way Forward

The khadi and village industries programme holds great potential for generating gainful employment opportunities for the rural poor, arresting migration of rural unskilled workers to urban areas and for promoting the strategy of sustainable development. It can also be a viable and effective social safety net to enable the poor to ward off the adverse impacts of structural adjustment and economic reforms on their wellbeing. However, this potential cannot be realised without addressing some basic challenges faced by the khadi sector.

The entry barriers in the market need to be removed and the fabric is made available to private retail stores, thereby the public is given a wider number of choices to opt. It is important to add here, that the opening up of khadi retailing to private players such as Raymond and Fabindia are good initiatives in this regard. However, at present, both require the prior permission of KVIC to retail khadi. This, is counterproductive and should be done away with.

Similarly, marketing techniques are also needed for the promotion of khadi rather than relying on outdated techniques. Here, the spinners and weavers should be allowed to work with private textile designers without the approval of KVIC. This will free up the labour market and will prevent leakages to middle men. The increase in the number of purveyors of Khadi will also prevent price monopolisation, and will increase the supply available. This will also prevent piracy problems associated with the khadi industry such as the production of fake products being sold as khadi through unofficial channels.

Export of khadi should also be looked upon for balancing international trade and commerce. At last khadi is indigenous to our country and it should be our duty to preserve, promote and propagate this worldwide.

General Studies Paper- III

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

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2. DRAFT NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2019 : AN OVERVIEW

Why in News?

Recently, a committee led by scientist K.Kasturirangan submitted the draft education policy to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The ministry has put up the draft policy for consultations and feedback from public.

Introduction

India has had a long history of holistic education. The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge, as preparation for life in this world or for life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of the self. The Indian education system produced scholars like Charaka and Susruta, Aryabhata, Bhaskaracharya, Chanakya, Patanjali and Panini, and numerous others. They made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering and architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess and more.

In the decades since Independence, we have been preoccupied largely with issues of access and equity and have unfortunately dropped the baton with regard to quality of education. The implementation of the two previous national education policies (NPE 1968 and NPE 1986) is still incomplete. A major development since the formulation of the NPE 1986 there has been the establishment of Constitutional and legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education. The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 that inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India envisages free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental

Right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) which came into force in April 2010, entitles every child of the age of six to fourteen years to the right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till the completion of elementary education. However, despite progress in some aspects, a mind-numbing uniformity prevails in the education system today, one in which students are not nurtured for their individual potential, in complete antithesis to our ancient traditions.

Need for New Education Policy

Young learners today belong to a generation that is born and raised in technology-rich environments. They will use technologies that haven't been invented so far and enter jobs that don't exist at present. Globalisation and the demands of a knowledge economy and a knowledge society call for emphasis on the need for acquisition of new skills by learners on a regular basis and become lifelong learners. The narrow time lag between the generation of new knowledge and its application, especially in the fields of science and technology, necessitate the periodic renewal of school and higher education curricula to maintain their relevance to the changing societal and personal needs of learners, and the emerging national development goals. The demographic dividend that India is fortunate to have is expected to last for only a little over 20 years. Therefore, it is essential that children and youth in the country are equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values as well as employable skills that would enable them to contribute to India's social, economic, and political transformation.

Draft National Educational Policy 2019

To keep the pace with demands of global environment, the government of India has unveiled the draft of new national education policy 2019. It will also deal with the unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education, 1986 [modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92)].

The draft Policy envisioned an India centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all. It provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education.

Key Observations and Recommendations of the Policy

For School Education

- **Early Childhood Care and Education:** In addition to problems of access, the Committee observed several quality related deficiencies in the existing early childhood learning programmes. These include: (i) curriculum that doesn't meet the developmental needs of children, (ii) lack of qualified and trained teachers, and (iii) substandard pedagogy. Currently, most early childhood education is delivered through anganwadis and private-preschools. However, there has been less focus on the educational aspects of early childhood. Hence, the draft Policy recommends developing a two-part curriculum for early childhood care and education. This will consist of: (i) guidelines for up to three-year-old children (for parents and teachers), and (ii) educational framework for three to eight-year-old children.
- **The Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act):** Currently, the RTE Act provides for free and compulsory education to all children from the age of six to 14 years. The draft Policy recommended extending the ambit of the RTE Act to include early childhood education and secondary school education. This would extend the coverage of the Act to all children between the ages of three to 18 years.

  In addition, the draft Policy recommends that the recent amendments to the RTE Act on continuous and comprehensive evaluation and the no detention policy must be reviewed. It states that there should be no detention of children till class eight. But, schools must ensure that children are achieving age-appropriate learning levels.
- **Curriculum Framework:** The current structure of school education must be restructured on the basis of the development needs of students. This would consist of a 5-3-3-4 design comprising: (i) five years of foundational stage (three years of pre-primary school and classes one and two), (ii) three years of preparatory stage (classes three to five), (iii) three years of middle stage (classes six to eight) and (iv) four years of secondary stage (classes nine to 12).
- **School Exam Reforms:** The Committee noted that the current board examinations: (i) force students to concentrate only on a few subjects, (ii) do not test learning in a formative to track students' progress throughout their school experience. The draft Policy proposed State Census Examinations in classes three, five and eight. Further, it recommended restructuring the board examinations to test only core concepts, skills and higher order capacities.
- **School Infrastructure:** The Committee noted that establishing

primary schools in every habitation across the country has helped increase access to education. However, it has led to the development of very small schools (having low number of students). The small size of schools makes it operationally complex to deploy teachers and critical physical resources. Therefore, the draft Policy recommended that multiple public schools should be brought together to form a school complex. A complex will consist of one secondary school (classes nine to twelve) and all the public schools in its neighbourhood that offer education from pre-primary till classes eight. The school complexes will also include anganwadis, vocational education facilities and an adult education centre. Each school complex will be a semi-autonomous unit providing integrated education across all stages from early childhood to secondary education.

- **Teacher Management:** For teacher training, the existing B.Ed. programme will be replaced by a four-year integrated B.Ed. programme that combines high-quality content, pedagogy and practical training. An integrated continuous professional development will also be developed for all subjects. Teacher are required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of continuous professional development training every year.
- **Languages:** The draft Policy said regional languages were already in use as the media of education in the primary and secondary stages. In addition, it said, at the secondary stage, state governments should adopt and vigorously implement the three-language formula, which includes the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking States. In the 'non-Hindi speaking States', Hindi should be studied along with the regional language and English. However, the clause recommending mandatory Hindi teaching in all schools was dropped from the Policy, after the government faced an intense backlash from some states.

For Higher Education

- **Regulatory Structure and Accreditation:** The draft Policy proposed setting up the 'National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA). This independent authority would replace the existing individual regulators in higher education, including professional and vocational education. This implies that the role of all professional councils such as AICTE and the Bar Council of India would be limited to setting standards for professional practice. The role of the University Grants Commission (UGC) will be limited to providing grants to higher educational institutions.

  Currently, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an accreditation body under the UGC. The draft Policy recommended separating NAAC from the UGC into an independent and autonomous body. In its new role, NAAC will function as the top level accreditor, and will issue licenses to different accreditation institutions, who will assess higher educational institutions once every five to seven years. Further, all existing higher education institutions should be accredited by 2030.
- **Restructuring of Higher Education Institutions:** Higher education institutions will be restructured into three types: (i) research universities focusing equally on research and teaching; (ii) teaching universities focusing primarily on teaching; and (iii) colleges focusing only on teaching at undergraduate levels. All such institutions will gradually move towards full autonomy - academic, administrative and financial.
- **Establishing a National Research Foundation:** The draft Policy recommended establishing a 'National Research Foundation', an autonomous body, for funding, mentoring and building the capacity for quality research in India. The Foundation will consist of four major divisions: sciences, technology, social sciences, and arts and humanities, with the provision to add additional divisions. The Foundation will be provided with an annual grant of Rs 20,000 crore (0.1% of GDP).

For Education Governance

The draft Policy proposed creation of a 'National Education Commission' or 'Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA)', as an apex body for education, to be headed by the Prime Minister. This body will be responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating, and revising the vision of education in the country on a continuous and sustained basis. It will oversee the implementation and functioning of several bodies including the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the proposed NHERA and National Research Foundation.

Further, the Ministry of Human Resources and Development must be renamed as the Ministry of Education in order to bring focus back on education.

For Financing Education

The Draft Policy reaffirmed the commitment of spending 6% of GDP as public investment in education. Note that the first NEP 1968 had recommended public expenditure in education must be 6% of GDP, which was reiterated by the second NEP in

1986. In 2017- 18, public expenditure on education in India was just 2.7% of GDP.

The draft Policy seeks to double the public investment in education from the current 10% of total public expenditure to 20% in the next 10 years. Of the additional 10% expenditure, 5% will be utilised for universities and colleges (higher education), 2% will be utilised for additional teacher costs or resources in school education and 1.4% will be utilised for early childhood care and education.

For Technology in Education

Draft Policy recommends focused electrification of all educational institutions as electricity is a pre-requisite for all technology-based interventions. Further, it recommended:

- **National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology:** The Mission will encompass virtual laboratories that provide remote access to laboratories in various disciplines. A National Education Technology Forum will also be setup under the Mission, as an autonomous body, to facilitate decision making on the induction, deployment and use of technology. This Forum will provide evidence-based advice to central and state-governments on technology-based interventions.
- **National Repository on Educational Data:** A National Repository will be setup to maintain all records related to institutions, teachers and students in digital form. Further, a single online digital repository will be created where copyright-free educational resources will be made available in multiple languages.

For Vocational Education

The draft Policy targets to offer vocational education to up to 50% of the total enrolment in higher education institutions by 2025, up from the present level of enrolment of well below 10% in these institutions.

National committee for the integration of vocational education. A National Committee will be set up to work out the steps that need to be taken towards achieving these goals. A separate fund will be setup for the integration of vocational education into educational institutions. The Committee will work out the modalities for the disbursement of these funds.

For Adult Education

As per Census 2011, India still had over 3.26 crore youth non-literates (15-24 years of age) and a total of 26.5 crore adult non-literates (15 years and above). In this regard, the draft Policy recommended an establishment of an autonomous Central Institute of Adult Education, as a constituent unit of NCERT, which will develop a National Curriculum Framework for adult education. The Framework will cover five broad areas: foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills, vocational skills development, basic education, and continuing education.

Criticism

Researchers argued that, while prima facie an RSA with the stated purpose of integrated implementation of all educational initiatives and programmatic interventions is hardly an objectionable institution, the problem lies elsewhere. In our education system, there is no lack of regulatory bodies, but lack of effective implementation and coordination among all oversight bodies that are supposed to deliver but they don't, be it the UGC, AICTE, MCI, CBSE, HRD or a whole lot of others, including the ones in the States. Prima facie, it is difficult to see why RSA should succeed where rest of all have failed?

Another apex body 'National Research Foundation' is proposed for building research capacity across higher education. India needs to build its research capabilities but there is enough historical scepticism where institutions have been used to discourage research, for example in the recent case of Central University of Kerala in March 2019 wherein a circular was issued to the Dean and faculty of the university to "discourage research in irrelevant areas" and students were asked to focus on areas of national interest.

According to the researchers, agriculture education received short-shrift indicating the lack of imaginaries to see the key role that India's diverse agricultural systems can play and the possibilities that lie in fostering new forms of rural-urban and agriculture-industry linkages.

Way Forward

The draft Policy 2019 is well researched theoretically and provides the framework that emphasises the right issues in secondary education such as flexibility, integration of 21st century skills, improved teacher quality and more rigorous outcome-based school regulation. Now we should remember that any policy is only as good as its implementation. This draft Policy needs to be implemented true to its spirit for India's education to be transformed. This implementation will require multiple initiatives and actions, which will have to be taken by multiple bodies in a synchronised and systematic manner. Further, the strategy of implementation would involve setting appropriate timelines and priorities.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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3. COMPULSORY RETIREMENT OF CIVIL SERVANTS : AN ANALYSIS

Why in News?

Recently, the government has compulsorily retired almost a dozen senior tax officers on charges ranging from extortion, bribe and sexual harassment. The axe has fallen on officers of the rank of chief commissioners, principal commissioners, commissioners of income tax department under rule Fundamental rule (FR) 56 (j) of Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules.

Introduction

The civil services are one of the most important cogs in the machine that is the Indian 'system'. In this country of extreme diversity and socio-cultural variations, the civil services, right from old times, have managed to maintain order within chaos. As the nature of politics and organisation of society and government changed over several years, it became imminent for the bureaucracy to reinvent itself as well. In India's case, this reinvention was in the hands of the democratic government – the same that granted the bureaucracy protection through Constitutional provisions when India became an independent nation. The bureaucracy, however, remained pretty much the same after India's independence. Reforms in the bureaucracy have at best been incremental and very far away from the proposed revolutionary changes.

Recently, the newly chosen government has taken sweeping action aimed at removing corrupt central government officials. In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (j) of rule 56 of the Fundamental Rules, the President of India has retired 12 Officers of the Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) in public interest with immediate effect on completing 50 years of age.

This rule to punish non-performers was revisited immediately after the previous government came to power in May 2014. However, the expected momentum could not be maintained due to a host of hurdles. The rules are now being implemented more forcefully for gazetted officers including those in IAS, IPS and other Group A services, Group B officers as well non-gazetted services. All the central Public Sector Units (PSUs) and autonomous bodies have also been asked to replicate the compulsory retirement policy.

Fundamental Rules (FR) and Supplementary Rules (SR)

Fundamental Rules together with the Supplementary Rules (popularly known as FRSR) are considered the Bible of Rules for the central government employees. Fundamental Rules trace back their origin to the pre-independence time (came to effect from 01-01-1922) and are the first set of rules which have been governing the terms and conditions of service of the central government employees till today (of course with amendments from time to time). There are a total of 130 Fundamental Rules.

On the other hand, Supplementary Rules are the rules framed by the President under various Fundamental Rules. There are a total of 335 Supplementary Rules.

Service Rules
In addition to the Fundamental Rules and the Supplementary Rules, there are various other rules which regulate specific aspects of service of the central government employees. These rules are known as Central Civil Service Rules.

Fundamental Rule 56(j) – Compulsory Retirement

Under FR 56 (j), the performance of an officer who has turned 50 or 55 or has completed 30 years of service (whichever is earlier,) is being reviewed to ascertain if he/she is liable for compulsory retirement. While the retired officers will be given pay and allowances, however, they will not be entitled to pension benefits.

A register of employees, who are due to attain the age of 50/55 years or complete 30 years of service, has to be maintained. The register should be scrutinized at the beginning of every quarter by a senior officer in the

FRs of Central Civil Service (Pension) Rules	
➢ FR 1-9 deals with Introduction & Definitions ➢ FR 10-18 deals with General Conditions of Service ➢ FR 19-43 deals with Pay and Pay Fixation ➢ FR 44-48A deals with Additions to Pay ➢ FR 49 deals with Combination of Appointment ➢ FR 50-51A deals with Deputation out of India ➢ FR 52-55 deals with Dismissal/Removal/ Suspension ➢ **FR 56-57 deals with Retirement** ➢ FR 58-104 deals withLeave ➢ FR 105-108A deals with Joining Time ➢ FR 109-127 deals with Foreign Service ➢ FR 128-130 deals with Service under Local Fund	**FR - 56 > Retirement** a) Date of retirement of Govt. employees (b) Date of retirement for workmen (c) (d) No extension in service beyond retirement (e) - (h) (i) Military officer in civil department (j) Premature retirement of Gr. A & B officers (k) Self retirement by Gr. A & B officers (l) Premature retirement of Class III staff (m) Self retirement by Class III staff

Ministry / Department and the review is undertaken accordingly.

Committees shall be constituted in each Ministry / Department / Office, to which all such cases shall be referred for recommendation as to whether the Officer concerned should be retained in service or retired from service in the public interest. The criteria to be followed by the Committee in making their recommendations would be as follows:-

- Government employees whose integrity is doubtful, will be retired.
- Government employees who are found to be ineffective will also be retired. The basic consideration in identifying such employee should be the fitness/competence of the employee to continue in the post which he/she is holding.
- While the entire service record of an officer should be considered at the time of review, no employee should ordinarily be retired on grounds of ineffectiveness if his service during the preceding 5 years or where he has been promoted to a higher post during that 5 year period, his service in the highest post, has been found satisfactory.
- No employee should ordinarily be retired on ground of ineffectiveness, if, in any event, he would be retiring on superannuation within a period of one year from the date of consideration of his Case

The above instruction is relevant only when an employee is proposed to be retired on the ground of ineffectiveness, but not on the ground of doubtful integrity. The damage to public interest could be marginal if an old employee, in the last year of service, is found ineffective; but the damage may be incalculable if he is found corrupt and demands or obtains illegal gratification during the said period for the tasks he is, duty bound to perform.

Extent of FR with respect to the State Government

The Fundamental Rules apply to all state government servants paid from the Consolidated Fund of the State and to any other class of government servants to which the state government may by general or special order declare them to be applicable. The state government may, in relation to service, under their administrative control, other than All India Services, make rules modifying or replacing any of the Fundamental Rules.

Validity of FR 56(j)

Article 310 of the Constitution of India incorporates the English doctrine of pleasure by clearly stating that every person who is a member of a defence service or of a civil service of the Union or of an all India service or holds any post connected with defence or any civil post under the Union, holds office during the pleasure of the President, and every person who is a member of a civil service of a state or holds any civil post under a state holds office during the pleasure of the Governor of the state . But this power of the government is not absolute.

Article 311 puts certain restriction on the absolute power of the President or Governor for dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of an officer. Article 311 reads as follows:

- No person who is a member of a civil service of the Union or an all India service or a civil service of a State or holds a civil post under the Union or a State shall be dismissed or removed by a authority subordinate to that by which he was appointed.
- No such person as aforesaid shall be dismissed or removed or reduced in rank except after an inquiry in which he has been informed of the charges against him and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges.

Despite the restriction on the absolute power of the President / Governor for dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of an officer, the Supreme Court in various cases had not only upheld the validity of FR 56 (j) but also held that no show-cause notice need be issued to any government servant before a notice of retirement is issued to him under the aforesaid provisions. To remove the arbitrariness of the decision, in every case where it is proposed to retire a government servant in exercise of the powers conferred by the said rule, the appropriate authority should record in the file its opinion that it is necessary to retire the government servant in pursuance of the aforesaid rule in the public interest.

Compulsory retirement simply is not punishment. It is done in ' public interest' and does not caste a stigma on the government servant. So the employee cannot claim an opportunity to be heard before he is compulsorily retired from service. The Supreme Court of India has issued certain guidelines regarding compulsory retirement. In State of Gujarat v Umedbhai M.Patel (2001) the Court laid down the following principles:

- When the Service of a public servant is no longer useful to the general administration, the officer can be compulsorily retired in public interest.
- Ordinarily the order of compulsory retirement is not to be treated as a punishment under Article 311 of the Constitution.
- For better administration, it is necessary to chop off dead wood

but the order of compulsory retirement can be based after having due regard to the entire service record of the officer.

- Any adverse entries made in the confidential record shall be taken note of and be given due weightage in passing such order.
- Even uncommunicated entries in the confidential report can also be taken in to consideration.
- The order of compulsory retirement shall not be passed as a short cut to avoid departmental inquiry when such course is more desirable.
- If the officer is given promotion despite adverse entries in the confidential report, that is a fact in favour of the officer.
- Compulsory retirement shall not be imposed as a punitive measure.

Principles relating to Compulsory Retirement

In Baikunth Nath v Chief Medical Officer (1992), the Supreme Court issued important principles regarding compulsory retirement. These are:

- An order of compulsory retirement is not a punishment. It implies neither any stigma nor any suggestion of misbehavior.
- The order has to be passed by the government on forming the opinion that it is in the public interest to retire a government servant compulsorily. The order is passed on the subjective satisfaction of the government.
- Principles of natural justice have no place in the context of an order of compulsory retirement. This does not mean that judicial scrutiny is excluded altogether. While the High Court or the Court would not examine the matter as an appellate Court, they may interfere if they are satisfied that the order is passed (a) mala fide or (b) that it is based on no evidence or (c) that it is arbitrary- in the sense that no reasonable person would form the requisite opinion on the given material. In short, if it is found to be a perverse order.
- The government (or the Review Committee, as the case may be) shall have to consider the entire record of service before taking a decision in the matter of course attaching more importance to record of and performance during the later years. The record to be so considered would naturally include the entries in the confidential records/character rolls, both favourable and adverse. If a government servant is promoted to a higher post notwithstanding the adverse remarks, such remarks loose their sting, more so, if the promotion is based upon merit (selection) and not upon seniority.
- An order of compulsory retirement is not liable to be quashed by a Court merely on showing that while passing it uncommunicated adverse remarks were also taken in to consideration. The circumstances by itself cannot be a basis for interference.

Conclusion

The Constitution of India through Article 311, protects and safeguards the rights of civil servants in government service against arbitrary dismissal, removal and reduction in rank. Such protection enables the civil servants to discharge their functions boldly, efficiently and effectively. But the public interest and security of India is given predominance over the rights of employees. So conviction for criminal offence, impracticability and inexpediency in the interest of the security of the State are recognised as exceptions. The judiciary has given necessary guidelines and clarifications to supplement the law in Article 311.

Key Facts

Dismissal and Removal: Dismissal and removal are synonymous terms, but in law they acquired technical meanings by long usage in Service Rules. In case of dismissal a person is debarred from future employment, but in case of removal he is not debarred from future employment.

Suspension: Suspension of a government employee is not a punishment. It is neither dismissal or removal nor reduction in rank. So the employee cannot claim a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

Reduction in Rank: Reduction in Rank means reduction from a higher rank or post to a lower rank or post and not loosing place in rank or cadre. In State of Punjab v Kishan Das. the Supreme Court held that a mere reduction in the salary in the same cadre is not reduction in rank.

Currently, there are about 48.41 lakh central government employees including defence and railways staff. Another about 6 lakh posts are vacant in various departments including the railways, armed forces, postal department, central schools etc. The new government is aiming at accelerating hiring to fill up key vacancies in the government over the next couple of years to improve administrative efficiency and also to reduce unemployment.

The recent move by the government is major crackdown on bureaucrats and officials indulging in alleged corruption practices and clearly sends a message to them that unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. In future the axe is also likely to fall on more such officers who have been under observation because of dubious records.

General Studies Paper- II

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

Topic: Role of civil services in a democracy.

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4. PAKISTAN'S CRUMBLING ECONOMY AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIA

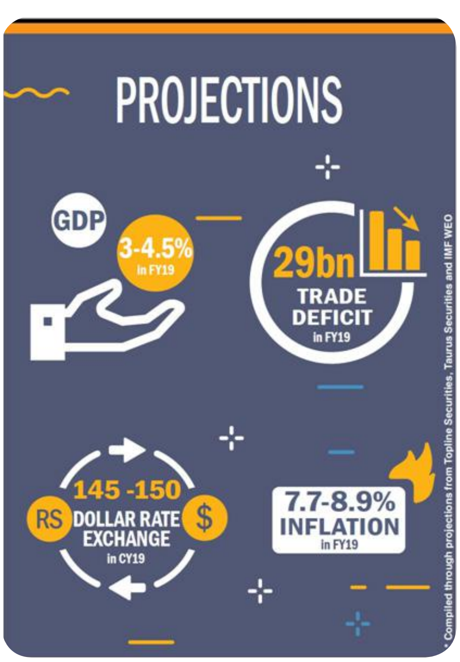
Why in News?

Recently, Pakistan secured a $6-billion bailout loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be disbursed over 39 months due to its economic crisis.

Current State of the Pakistan Economy

India and Pakistan both achieved their independence in 1947. With time there was a great deal of skepticism about Pakistan's economic future. India on other hand was much advanced on all indicators of economic sustenance, resource endowment, potential output and growth. In 2019, Pakistan finds itself facing a dire macro-economic crisis due to spending more on imports than on exports, with its current account deficit having risen from $2.7 billion in 2015 to $18.2 billion in 2018. The major driver of this rising current account deficit is an expanding trade deficit, which is mostly due to the rising imports under new China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and low exports in general.

Pakistani exports have been stagnant while, the government's external debt increased from $64.1 billion in June 2018 to $65.8 billion in January 2019. The inflation rate touched 9.4 percent, which was a record level high over the last five years mostly due to rupee depreciation and rising energy prices. In addition, increased defense spending and its ongoing fight against extremism further burden the economy. Along with a depreciating rupee that has made imports costlier, low foreign investment due to Pakistan's security and political challenges has also severely hit its foreign exchange reserves.



With rising deficit, Pakistan's tax revenue was only 13 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018. During the current fiscal year, the country has seen a decline in its revenues while expenditures rose, resulting in a half-year fiscal deficit of 2.7 % of GDP, the highest since 2010-11. Similarly, the previous government failed to make any significant progress in enhancing exports. In fact, Pakistan's total exports fell in real terms during the (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz)PML-N's tenure. In its recent report "Pakistan @100: Shaping the Future," the World Bank held that weak governance is responsible for the fiscal deficit. Pakistan's poorly regulated financial system facilitates tax evasion, which contributes significantly to the growth of the fiscal deficit. Having inherited this economic crisis from the previous government, the present government, led by Prime Minister Imran Khan, has an enormous task ahead to steer Pakistan's struggling economy out of a macro-economic crisis by fostering economic development.

With its domestic industry in ruins, Pakistan has consistently relied on foreign investment as stopgap measures. For too long, the Pakistan has been overly reliant on US bilateval assistance. It did recently receive $2 billion from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), which provides concessionary development loans. This inflow has increased Pakistan's foreign reserves from $14.956 billion at the start of March 2019 to $17.398 billion. In February, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad bin Salman, signed seven Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Pakistan, pledging up to $21 billion worth of investment over the next six years. However, relying only on foreign aid and friendly countries for loans is not enough. If Pakistan wants to tackle its current account deficit in the long run, the government must take substantial steps to improve the macroeconomic conditions of the country and modernize its industrial sector to become more competitive in international markets.

What Options are Left with Pakistan?

Pakistan appears to be in crisis-mode. While it may not be the first choice of the Pakistani government, an IMF bailout is the most likely outcome of this financial crisis because it is probably the only path for Pakistan to regain its macro-economic stability. Any "bailout" from a bilateral donor will not get at the root issues that Pakistan faces—its loose macro-economic, fiscal, and monetary policies. Pakistan needs to get its house in order and remedy many of its domestic economic issues. 18 out of Pakistan's 21 IMF programs over the last 60 years have not been completed despite obtaining over $30 billion in financial support across those programs. Just like today's current financial crisis, Pakistan's last two IMF packages (in 2008 and 2013) were also negotiated by incoming governments.

US and Pakistan's Crumbling Economy

The current US government is not supportive of additional bilateral funding to Pakistan—meaning money coming directly from the US. Since 2001, Pakistan has been the beneficiary of the US Coalition Support Fund (CSF), which reimburses allies for costs incurred by war on terrorism. The CSF is used to reimburse Pakistan for US military use of its network infrastructure (e.g., ports, railways, roads, airspace, etc.) so that the US can prosecute the war in neighboring Afghanistan, as well as certain Pakistani military counter-terrorism operations. The CSF for Pakistan has been as high as $1.2 billion per year, and, in recent years, $900 million per year. With nearly $1 billion in CSF distributed every year, along with $335 million in humanitarian assistance, it will be difficult to convince Congress to appropriate more funds for a Pakistan bailout. However, due to inaction on the part of Pakistan to expel or arrest Taliban insurgents operating from Pakistani territory, the US has recently cut another $300 million from the CSF, bringing the total to $850 million in US assistance from this year. In fact, all security assistance to Pakistan, whether it is international military education and training, foreign military financing, or the CSF, has been suspended for this year according to one State Department official.

The Trump administration has also taken a hardline stance towards assisting Pakistan with its financial crisis. Now, as Pakistan has secured, IMF bailout package, but there is no doubt that it would have stronger conditionality and a greater insistence on full transparency of Pakistan's debt obligations as componed to US financial assistance to Pakistan.

India – Pakistan Bilateral Trade

Bilateral trade between India and Pakistan has increased from $0.34 billion in 2003-05 to around $2.3 billion in 2016-17. However, it is abysmally low when compared to India's total trade of around $970 billion in 2018 and Pakistan's total merchandise trade of around $78 billion in 2017, which includes exports worth around $21.5 billion. At present, India exports goods worth $1.9 billion to Pakistan, while Pakistan exports goods worth $0.5 billion to India – just around 2% of Pakistan's total merchandise exports in 2017.

After partition in 1947, India initially accounted for about 70 percent of Pakistan's official trade. However, discordant political relations brought halt to the bilateral official trade between the two countries. During 1965 and 1973, bilateral trade flows brought to nil. In 1971, India and Pakistan signed first trade agreement, which did not last long. Pakistan introduced first positive list in 1989 (4 products originally), and then kept the number increasing almost every year. Soon after establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, India granted the most favored Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan, but it was not reciprocated by the latter.

Till 2011, Pakistan allowed only 1,946 items to be imported from India. All other items were prohibited. After 2011, Pakistan moved from a 'positive list' to a 'negative list' approach where it permitted all imports from India barring 1,209 items that remained on the banned list. While this was a step forward in normalising trade relations, it still fell short of fully honouring MFN obligation towards India because Pakistan does not impose such restriction on imports from other countries.

After the Pulwama terror attack this year, India withdrew the MFN status to Pakistan. Following this, India raised customs duties on goods being imported from Pakistan up to the bound level duty rates. This decision of India led to a significant drop in Pakistani imports to India. However, given the low trade volume between two countries, it will not have any noticeable impact on Pakistan.

Impact of Pakistan's Economic crisis on India

According to Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) deep economic troubles in Pakistan suggest that India might have to live with increased Chinese influence in Pakistan, in particular and South Asia, in general. The last time a big power, the US, had roped in Pakistan in its proxy war against the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), sections of Pakistan's ruling establishment felt emboldened to undertake hostile actions against India.

However, not everyone thinks Pakistan will necessarily pursue an adventurist policy against India with Chinese cover. "Alliances often have restraining effect on smaller partners," said Srinath Raghavan, a military historian and a senior fellow at the Centre for Policy Research in Delhi. China, because of its investments in Pakistan, would at least have a stake in stability, if not peace. Moreover, China has demonstrated in past instances that it could have a restraining effect on Pakistan.

It is too early to say whether a China-Pakistan alliance will lead to greater or less anti-India activities. But India might need a new strategy to engage with Pakistan's external donors to mitigate risks arising from a volatile situation in our neighbourhood. Pakistan's sorry fate today also has a lesson for the neighbourhood, as it exposes how jingoistic majoritarianism can wreak havoc on the social and economic fabric of a nation.

Therefore India still needs to check its short term, medium term and long term impact of failure of economic stability of its immediate neighbor i.e. Pakistan.

Recent Steps taken by India- Post Pulwama attack

Traders and businesses in Pakistan have been severely hit after India raised customs duty on the import of all Pakistani goods by over 200 per cent. Traders, especially those dealing in fresh fruits, cement, and cotton with India, have been affected as the high customs duty has almost put an end to the entire export activity with India. After the Pulwama attack, not only has India tried to stifle Pakistan by courting global support to declare it a terror monger and promoter, but the Indian government has also made efforts to cripple its economy by increasing duties on essential products. The ripple effect of the customs duty hike will severely affect small traders.

Recovery Mechanism for Pakistan

Pakistan should make a significant impact on the current account deficit and needs to ensure an investment-friendly environment that attracts more foreign direct investment (FDI), instead of relying so heavily on foreign aid (like that of China). According to the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business report, Pakistan ranked 136th out of 190 economies. To improve this ranking and draw more investment, Pakistan should ease custom laws and regulations, improve the security of the country, and rebrand and boost its international image as a desirable destination for tourism and industry alike – a goal that current government is set to pursue like easing its visa policies, including introduction of e-visas and visa-on-arrival. It should also encourage domestic investment through more flexible tax policies; particularly targeting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Such measures would reposition Pakistan on the international stage as stable, competitive ground for foreign investment and self-reliable.

Pakistan should focus and do effort on building its domestic industry to expand its export portfolio and enhance its competitiveness in the international markets.

In 2018, Pakistan ranked 107th out of 140 on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), which measures the performance of countries in indicators such as infrastructure, ICT adoption, macroeconomic stability, labor market, skills, financial stability, innovation capacity, etc. The ranking signifies that the Pakistani government needs to take measures to stimulate economic growth and provide favorable business environment.

The country's ongoing energy crisis, which has caused significant losses in industry, has led factory owners to increasingly relocate to countries such as Bangladesh. Moreover, since its exports currently lose out to low-priced, good-quality products from countries like China and Bangladesh, Pakistan needs to modernize and upgrade its industrial sector by establishing new plants and equipment to enhance global integration with technological innovations. Pakistan can do this by investing in research and development (R&D) to encourage product innovation and enhance labor productivity.

Currently, Pakistan is not taxing its agriculture sector and large businesses by often given big tax breaks. Hence, Pakistan needs to broaden its tax base – by taxing the agricultural produce of landlords with big land holdings and stop giving tax amnesties to big businesses – instead of overburdening current taxpayers, improve fiscal transparency and strengthen tax collection coordination at the national and provincial levels to ensure that revenue targets are met. These steps would go a long way to addressing the myriad financial and deficit issues stemming from the country's weak governance. Last but not least Pakistan should improve relationship with its neighboring countries like India, Bangladesh etc.

Conclusion

The upcoming months will be tough for the present government as the rupee is expected to depreciate further, causing inflation to rise. Pakistan's economic crisis cannot be addressed overnight. International support and observations from the IMF and friendly countries like Saudi Arabia, China, and the UAE will only provide some breathing room in the short term to its shattered economy. Promoting manufacturing by creating a more investment-friendly environment, single window clearance, broadening its tax base and encouraging innovation and modernization in export-led industries and improving the image of country as anti-terrorism state are just some of the most urgent measures which Imran's government should take to address the growing fiscal and current account deficit. Pakistan should take advantage of this moment of hard-won reprieve by building a truly stable and sustainable economy before it once again finds itself digging its own economic grave – and that of its people and ensure economic equilibrium in South Asia.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: India and its neighborhood-relations.

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5. INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN CHANGING GLOBAL DYNAMICS

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's massive electoral mandate should add to India's muscle as he strides onto the world stage in his second term. But the world's a bad-tempered place these days and his — and India's — diplomatic outreaches face a new set of challenges.

Introduction

Speaking at a public rally in Ahmedabad recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said that the coming five years will be "the time to regain India's lost position in the world order." An ambitious word, since India's share of the world product was 20 per cent in 1800 and is around eight per cent today. For the new government now, setting the domestic agenda will be a relatively straightforward affair as compared to foreign and security policy.

PM Modi put uncommon energy into foreign policy in his first term. But it was a scattershot approach with as many hits as misses. His focus on security was fitful, driven more by electoral considerations than anything else. But then, in his term, Indian security did not confront any challenge of the dimension of Kargil, or even Mumbai in November 2008. But both came together, aided – though not abetted – by Pakistan into the winning electoral strategy that built on the need for a strong and decisive PM.

Now the first priority before the government is to forge domestic economy in great shape. The decline in car and two-wheeler sales and the slowdown in air passenger traffic, labour survey report, declining GDP growth rate etc are signals that things are not good.

At home, we can control the various factors in play, but abroad, there are other players, some positive, others inimical. There are issues, such as the building US-Iran tensions, the US-China trade spat, the rising climate of protectionism and developments like Brexit, are not in our hand to control. The combined impact of all these factors has implication on our growth trajectory.

Troubling Neighbourhood

Despite the great energy PM Modi has put into foreign policy, the payoff has been limited in the neighbourhood. In Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, minus exportable resources or military power, India's clout depends on which government is in power, not on our intrinsic capacities. A self-identified 'leading power' like India should be able to shape the policies of its neighbours. But India lacks the material power to mould their behaviour and the inability to reform its military limits its role. Far from shaping events, we end up reacting to them.

According to experts, in our very neighbourhood, our clout depends on whether or not the political forces in power are partial to India or inimical to it. So when a Khaleda Zia, or an Abdulla Yameen are around, there is trouble. But things change when a Sheikh Hasina or a Mohammed Solih are in power. And here we are not even counting our most troublesome neighbour, Pakistan.

Dealing with Islamabad/Rawalpindi remains a herculean task that any Indian government finds daunting. The response to the Pulwama attack by a strike on Balakot is portentous and has put Pakistan on the backfoot, uncertain as to how it should respond next. But the generals in Rawalpindi are unlikely to abandon their game easily. So now we need the electoral strategy to become effective policy. This requires far more resources and effort than what was visible in Modi v 1.0. The armed forces are in desperate need of money for modernisation, but more important, they require deep restructuring and reform which crucially depends on effective political guidance and leadership. To press home the Balakot advantage, government need to shape a well-resourced and modern military, one that can fight and win wars, not merely conduct highly publicised one-off strikes.

What will be significant is the manner in which the two countries shape the post-Balakot narrative. If Pakistan is determined to continue the use of proxy warriors, New Delhi may be confronted with dangerous choices in view of the red lines drawn in the wake of the Pulwama blast.

The Extended Neighbourhood

In last week of May, PM Modi invited representatives from the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) member states to attend his swearing-in ceremony. BIMSTEC has been gaining prominence in Indian foreign policy over the last few years. More than two decades old, today it covers around 21 percent of the world's population and a combined gross domestic product of more than USD 2.5 trillion. Indeed, BIMSTEC has largely replaced the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), whose representatives were the guests of honour at PM Modi's last inauguration. The shift signals that the prime minister may have given up on engaging Pakistan.

Channeling India's regional foreign policy through BIMSTEC underlines New Delhi's desire to focus on the country's eastern frontier. As India focuses on the Indo-Pacific, BIMSTEC, if creatively engaged, can be an important platform for India to enhance its profile in East and Southeast Asia.

Similarly PM Modi's efforts have made the situation in the near abroad better. The outreach to Saudi Arabia and the UAE has yielded significant returns in political and economic terms and India has managed to maintain strong ties to Israel and Iran as well.

US-Iran Relations and India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has won his second term with a thumping victory, and the diplomatic dance being played by India between Iran and the US will become one of the first major foreign policy challenges of his new tenure. The US, an increasingly pivotal partner for India, offers a challenge not just to Indian bilateral ties, but its idea of 'strategic autonomy'. Foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale earlier this year said that India's alignment today is issue-based, not ideology-based, giving it diplomatic flexibility and decisional autonomy. This thinking is now being tested.

India's relations with Iran are in the Trump administration's cross-hairs. While New Delhi managed to save the Chabahar Port project from US ire, oil imports played the role of the 'fall guy' as Washington moves troops to West Asia amid an increasingly precarious geopolitical situation. India, which imports nearly 70% of its annual crude requirements, historically had Iran as one of its top three suppliers. Oil is the single-most important commodity, political or economic, between New Delhi and Tehran. Remove oil from the picture, and India-Iran trade ties are laid bare bone with little else to ride home about for now.

The loss of cheap oil is not the only issue here, the other is the American veto on India's ability to shape a policy related to its own interests. It's Iran today, it could be Russia, or some other region tomorrow. Modi successfully managed the transition from the Obama to the Trump administration. But the personal touch that characterised the Modi style is missing with Trump. The Indo-US-Japan trilateral, based on a mutuality of interests in the Indo-Pacific, is working well, but there's always danger that at some time it will crash into Trump's America First approach.

The Chinese Challenge vis a vis US Trade War

An even bigger challenge is around the corner with China. After Doklam, the Sino-Indian relationship has been reset by the Wuhan summit. Its next iteration is expected in September this year and we could see some interesting developments, including a forward movement on the border and, agreement to push third country infrastructure projects. This policy has sought to balance cooperation, competition and conflict with China in a manner that ensures that there is no mutually debilitating breakdown. But with the growing China-US schism, India may once again find it difficult to maintain an even keel. The US, for example, is making the blacklisting of Huawei as the touchstone of its friendship. Can India afford to take up the US on this score? India's ultra-cheap telecom networks depend vitally on their Chinese connection. Following the US lead here could be a bridge too far.

The US and China have been slugging it out since Trump slapped heavy tariffs on imported steel and aluminium items from China in March last year, and China responded by imposing tit-for-tat tariffs on billions of dollars worth of American imports. The dispute escalated after Washington demanded that China reduce its $375 billion trade deficit with the US, and introduces "verifiable measures" for protection of Intellectual Property Rights, technology transfer, and more access to American goods in Chinese markets.

There is no question that economic growth and asset markets will be badly hurt by a full-blown trade war. The more important issue is the current global economic order is in danger of being dismantled, brick by brick. The ramifications will go far beyond trade—the impact on geopolitics, for instance, could be far more serious.

But there is some silver lining too. This Sino-US standoff provides opportunities for New Delhi. US companies are scrambling to rebuild their supply chains away from China. India could be the destination for relocation. India can become more competitive in segments such as textile, garments and gems and jewellery since India already has an edge. However, this is doubtful in the short run because China's exports to the US are much more diverse and it's a tall order for India to fill the gap. The rupee will weaken more on account of capital flows than the impact of trade problems. Our exports plus imports of goods and services constitute around 42% of GDP. Also, we have a current account deficit dependent on external capital inflows for financing.

US under Trump Administration

India's going to have to tread a cautious path between the US and China, complicated by the capricious Donald Trump who's trying to create 'a my-way-or-the-highway' unipolar world in which the US rules are supreme. With economic growth slackening and unemployment at a 45-year peak, Modi will have to start emphasising trade and business.

Already, India's in the bad books of the US and as of June 5, Washington's ending India's preferential trade status over tariffs on US goods like Harley-Davidson motorcycles (a tiny fraction of US exports to India but one on which Trump appears fixated) and price caps on medical devices, of which

US is an important supplier. Besides that, the US is unhappy about our e-commerce rule changes and India's bid to build its own hi-tech national champions that could curb space for companies like Google, Microsoft and Facebook. At another level, the US has also scrapped India's dispensation to buy Iranian oil and its Iran blockade means the fate of Chabahar port is now uncertain. On a different front, with Russia too, relations are frayed though we're still buying their arms. But those arms purchases have riled the US and Moscow is worried the US will put intense pressure on India to buy American arms.

Conclusion

For the new government, playing by the rules of new global diplomatic challenges, weaponisation of international trade, threats to multilateralism and global diplomatic institutions are the challenges that wrap around the US—Iran kerfuffle, and by association, the globalised Indian economy as well.

Foreign and security policy are only a means to an end. To be truly transformative they must rest on the foundations of a vibrant economy which alone can provide the military and economic sinews to win friends and influence people. Perhaps, learning from the past, the new government will anchor itself on renewed economic growth and give us a foreign and security policy that is robust, sustainable and even historic. If the government can restore the economy to its growth path and push it up to a high-growth zone, its second term can be termed as successful. This requires not just political capital, but also executive skills. But to achieve all that at home, we need a peaceful periphery and a stable world order.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: India and its neighborhood-relations.

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

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

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6. DIGITAL PAYMENTS : AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF NEW INDIA

Why in News?

Recently, Nandan Nilekani-headed "High-Level Committee on Deepening of Digital Payments" has submitted its report to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Committee submitted the report after much deliberation with the consultations and various stakeholders. The RBI will now examine the recommendations of the Committee and if necessary, the bank will merge the recommendations with the recently released 'Payment Systems Vision 2021'.

Introduction

The Payment and Settlement Act, 2007 has defined Digital Payments. As per this any "electronic funds transfer" means any transfer of funds which is initiated by a person by way of instruction, authorization or order to a bank to debit or credit an account maintained with that bank through electronic means and includes point of sale transfers; automated teller machine transactions, direct deposits or withdrawal of funds, transfers initiated by telephone, internet and card payment.

India's payment system - particularly, its digital payments system - has been evolving robustly over the past many years, spurred by developments in information and communication technology, and fostered and in consonance with the path envisioned by the RBI.

Post demonetisation, the shift towards digital payments has been particularly striking. Yet, acceptance, from an infrastructure perspective, continues to be low. For instance, while debit card issuance has touched a billion, there are only about 3.5 million Point of Sale (POS) devices and two lakh ATMs that accept cards. Against this backdrop, a committee headed by Nandan Nilekani has recommended several suggestions to broaden the acceptance infrastructure and deepen digital financial inclusion.

Categories of Digital Payment Systems

Based on value of digital transactions, the digital payment system could be bifurcated into different categories.

High Value Payment Systems

It includes:

Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) System

RTGS system enables transfer of money from one bank account to another on a "real time" and on "gross" basis. The RTGS service window for customer's transactions is available to banks from 8 am to 4:30 pm on weekdays (Monday through Friday) and on working Saturdays for settlement at the RBI's end. RTGS is operated by RBI. Recently, RBI has extended RTGs window for customer transactions from 4.30 pm to 6 pm.

While settlement happens in real time, this system is not available 24×7. There are no technological challenges to operating the system around the clock, however, there are other considerations related to intra-day liquidity management, and the need to keep treasury operations for banks open.

Only banks, clearing houses and primary dealers can be members of this system, making it a non-level playing field for non-banks. Though in certain other jurisdictions, non-banks have been allowed access to RTGS.

National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT)

NEFT facilitates funds transfer across all computerised branches of banks (member / sub-member of NEFT) across the country. Presently, NEFT operates in half hourly batches – there are twenty-three settlements from 8 am to 7 pm on weekdays (Monday through Friday) and on working Saturdays. NEFT is operated by RBI. However vision document of RBI has proposed to examine the need for extenting availability of NEFT on 24×7 basis.

Settlement happens in batches, and the system is not available around the clock. There are no technological challenges to operating the system around the clock, and the RBI has recently increased the number of settlements

Card based Payment Systems

Cards are well understood products at the global level, and find acceptance at stores, as well as for online payments. Cards have played an important role in the spread of digital payments. Cards are also used to withdraw money from ATMs, and hence have been issued to most account holders. India has had the presence of international players in the payments space for many years. In the last decade, an Indian player – NPCI – has also introduced card payments through the 'RuPay' scheme.

Credit cards have been used in India for over 40 years now. While the other digital payments have taken off, the use of cards has gone up as well. There are 3 dominant card schemes in India – RuPay, Mastercard and Visa.

Acceptance Infrastructure for Debit and Credit Cards

- Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) serve as a common way for people to access cash. On an average, around 125 transactions are performed at an ATM every day.
- White Label ATMs (WLA) – Non-banks can set up, own and operate ATMs in India called as WLAs. Their number is still small.
- Point of Sale (POS) devices are used to accept payments at a merchant location. They are setup by acquirers at a merchant location, and may accept payment through cards, or other means.

Concern and Challenges

Here is a concern about the viability of ATMs, even though the average number of cash withdrawal transactions per ATM is around 125 per day.

The cost of ATM transactions is high, due to the high costs of compliance and operations. As a result, Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) have been reducing their investments in ATMs (and reducing their count as well). This is an indicator that the ATM operations may not be viable, and that their costs may need to be revisited.

ATM networks are important to ensure that people are comfortable that they can access cash when required. However, there is a need to work out a viable model for ATMs in a less cash world. ATM operators must start to explore options, such as reimagining them as an access point for a large number of banking and financial services, and as a channel for customer education, awareness, and support. They can better support the acceleration of digital services.

Non-Card Retail Payments Systems

It includes:

Immediate Payment Service (IMPS)

IMPS is a fast payment system operated by National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) and is available 24x7. Under this, beneficiary gets funds on a real time basis with the settlement between banks happening on a deferred net basis. IMPS has been used for remittance, and its use has gone up steadily over the past few years. Recently, IMPS has been allowed for receiving Foreign Inward Remittances.

Unified Payments Interface (BHIM UPI Platform)

The BHIM UPI Platform, which is application-based and usable on smartphones with internet access, has the potential to revolutionize the mobile payments arena. The customers can provide just a registered virtual address for making or receiving payments.

The BHIM UPI Platform was launched in August 2016, and currently 144 banks take part in the scheme. The system enables 2 factor authentication, and instant money transfer through a simple payment address. The payment interface is enabled through a smart phone application, which could be from a service provider other than the user's bank.

Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs)

PPIs are payment instruments that facilitate purchase of goods and services, including funds transfer, against the value stored on such instruments

National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) System

NETC system facilitates an automated and interoperable electronic toll collection structure across the country's network of highways

Other Payment Related Systems

It includes:

Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)

BBPS is an integrated bill payment system which offers "anytime anywhere" interoperable bill payment service to customers using online payments as well as through a network of physical agent locations.

BBPS was introduced to increase ease of bill payments in the country.

An estimated 2 to 3 Billion bills are paid per month, most of them in cash. BBPS allows users to pay in cash, or electronically, while allowing the utility to receive payment at once.

Bharat QR (BQR) Code

BQR is an interoperable QR code which obviates the need to have different QR codes at a merchant location for each of the card payment network. The QR code-based payment is initiated by the card holder using his / her mobile phone. Bharat QR includes common specifications for not just card transactions but also for BHIM UPI.

National Unified USSD Platform (NUUP) or *99#

With growing mobile density, banks had begun to offer mobile banking services to their customers using the USSD channel of the telecom providers. To ensure interoperability, a common platform offering USSD-based mobile payments services was set up. NPCI has introduces the USSD 2.0 version, which integrates BHIM UPI-based transactions for USSD users through any type of handset.

Key Recommendations - An Analysis

An RBI-appointed panel set up to review the status of digital payments has recently submitted its report, in which it said that the RBI and the government must target 10X growth in the volume of digital payments in the next three years. This growth will be driven by a shift from high-value, low-volume, high-cost transactions to low-value, high-volume, low-cost transactions, said the five-member panel, headed by Nandan Nilekani. Initiatives such as removing transaction charges on digital payments made to government, simplying KYC processes, and reducing KYC costs for banks are among the committee's recommendations.

On the issue of acceptance, the committee notes that "high cost structures, including merchant fees, as well as limited financial service offering impede merchants from accepting digital payments". To address this, it has recommended reducing the interchange on card payments by 15 basis points hoping this will "increase the incentive for acquirers to sign-up merchants". Then there's also the suggestion of setting up of a committee to review merchant discount rate and interchange on a regular basis. Now, merchant acquisition is central to expanding the payment ecosystem. But, rather than focusing more on the card-based ecosystem, perhaps greater emphasis could have been placed on the Aadhaar-enabled payment systems, which is likely to have greater appeal, especially in the rural hinterland. There are also suggestions which call for ensuring no user charges for digital payments, and providing businesses tax incentives "calibrated on the proportion of digital payments in their receipts". These are eminently sensible recommendations. But implementation is likely to prove challenging. Take, for instance, the government's decision to waive of fees on transactions less than Rs 2,000. Theoretically, a sound proportion. But, the roll-out was not as smooth as was expected.

The committee has also suggested that non-banks be encouraged to participate in payment systems. But, this is where questions over the existing payments architecture crop up. As the inter-ministerial committee had pointed out earlier, there is need to distinguish between the RBI's role "as an infrastructure institution providing settlement function from its role as regulator of the payments system". As the panel has said, the role of the regulator needs to evolve from being "largely bank centric". Non-banks are at an inherent disadvantage in the current payment ecosystem. Perhaps, as the Nilekani committee notes, bringing in "non-banks as associate members to build acceptance infrastructure", and allowing them access to settlement systems, might help create a level-playing field.

The Nandan Nilekani panel gets it broadly right on deepening digital payments. Its suggestions such as a government subsidy for the merchant discount rate and a 15-basis-point cut in the interchange fee for use of banks' ATM networks by customers of other banks make sense. There is scope to lower each of the three elements of the cost — the fee collected by the card-issuing bank, the fee collected by the payment network, and the fee charged by the bank that places the card-swipe machine at the shop and settles the payment. Tax incentives for digital payments is a way of compensating the merchant for the costs of digital transactions. Ultimately, what will lower the cost to the merchant of digital payments is a combination of competition from the payment networks and sharing with consumers the cost savings from reduced cash handling for the merchant, the banks and RBI.

The panel's recommendation to move away from plastic, and let the merchant use only the phone and a QR code, is a good idea. It makes digital payments seamless and convenient for customers. Merchants can generate their own code that will be interoperable with banks, doing away with card-swipe terminals. India is ahead of Singapore and Hong Kong with its Unified Payments Interface that enables people to transfer money from their accounts instantly and at any time to another bank account linked to a smart phone. So, the panel's suggestion to expand the platform to foreign currency remittances by the NRIs and to settle residents' payments when they travel overseas — just as Chinese users can use 'WeChat' — makes eminent sense. With mobile phone becoming the main mode for transitioning to the digital economy, India needs ubiquitous data connectivity and foolproof security to prevent hacking.

Challenges

Digital payments in India are going through a significant change, growing a factor of 10 in the last 5 years, and will likely grow by 10x in the next 3 years. This rapid change is bringing in many first-time users into the formal financial systems, as well as digital systems. Such a situation could put many first-time users at risk of fraud.

Further, the rate of change of systems in banking is growing considerably. Many systems have applications, which are now installed on a diverse set of devices. New and emerging technologies, such as cloud computing, and Internet of Things (IOT) are being brought into banking. This situation could lead to new, and unknown security risks.

In addition to it, with the growth in volumes of digital payments, these systems have become critically important to the functioning of the economy and must be secured as such. The RBI has been proactive and has provided guidance on the security framework for banks and other financial institutions. They have provided guidelines to limit liability of customers and made banks responsible for the safety of customer's funds.

While it is important that customers have a safety net, in the form of a prompt redress mechanism, payment systems operators and participants must go through a regular audit for security, and fraud. The RBI must be notified that the audit has been successfully completed.

Additionally, India remains a largely cash driven economy. Economic growth has been possible through many transactions – that are done primarily in cash. This demand for cash has led to a large growth in the Currency in Circulation (CIC). India has a large CIC / Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio (compared to other countries). CIC grows with GDP, and inflation. Even after demonetization, CIC has come back up rapidly – though not to the same level as would be predicted by GDP growth rate and inflation. Digital transactions have come up as well.

Despite many ambitious initiatives to promote digital payment, however, last-mile barriers are still writ large. Behavioural factors, weak economics and low product relevancy limit usage on the ground. For entrepreneurs and retailers who have creatively coped with cash for centuries, digital money poses an economic threat to their informal businesses and, ultimately perhaps, to their very survival. And digital propositions that provide immediate, tangible value and adequate levels of trust to small businesses are simply elusive.

Conclusion

India has made significant advances in digital payments and serves as an example to the world with increased coverage through the 'Jan Dhan Yojana', 'Direct Benefit Transfer' and with the traction obtained by BHIM UPI. The regulator must ensure that these systems are studied by researchers, so that the best features of these systems can be adopted by other countries. This will help India in deepening its digital presence on global stage and may open door for digital diplomacy as a tool in India's foreign policy.

General Studies Paper- III

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

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

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7. BARCODE AND QR CODE : CONCEPT AND APPLICATIONS

Why in News?

The government of India is planning to make barcoding mandatory on all medicines sold locally in a bid to offset India's growing reputation as a source of counterfeit medicines.

In other seperate event, the government of India may be made QR code-based payments via Unified Payments Interface (UPI), compulsory in Indian shops in the near future. The government is planning to make it mandatory for establishments beyond a certain threshold to offer the digital payment tool.

Introduction

Everyone is familiar with barcodes – the black-and-white codes featuring a series of parallel lines that a cashier scans in the checkout line – but QR codes are also becoming widely known and recognized. Both QR codes and barcodes store information about an item or product in a machine-readable format that can be easily scanned with a barcode scanner or, more recently, many smartphones (when equipped with a barcode-scanning app or QR code reader). When it comes to labeling inventory, parts, equipment and consumer products, does one offer more advantages over the other? The choice between a barcode and QR code is typically dependent on a few variables, such as the amount of data that needs to be stored in the code, the type of item or product being labeled and other considerations.

What is Barcode?

The concept for the barcode was developed by Norman Joseph Woodland, who drew a series of lines in the sand to represent Morse code, and Bernard Silver. A patent was granted in 1966 and NCR became the first company to develop a commercial scanner to read barcode symbology.

A barcode is a small, two-dimensional code featuring a series of lines (or bars) and spaces (typically white spaces of varying sizes with black lines of varying thickness). The specific sequence of bars and spaces are readable by a machine (a barcode scanner) and represent numbers and other symbols. There are generally five components of a barcode. These are quiet zone, start character, data characters (with an optional check character), stop character and additional quiet zone. Barcodes have been around for decades. They are used in retail stores as part of the purchase process, in warehouses to track inventory and on invoices to assist in accounting, among many other uses.

There are several different types of barcode standards for different purposes, which are called symbologies. Each type of symbology is a standard that defines the printed symbol and how a device - such as a barcode scanner - reads and decodes the printed symbol. Barcode standards define how to use the barcode symbology in a particular situation. For example, ISBN is a standard for labelling books and periodicals.

Types

There are two general types of barcodes: 1-dimensional (1D) and 2-dimensional (2D).

- 1D barcodes are a series of lines used to store text information, such as product type, size and color. They appear in the top part of universal product codes (UPCs) used on product packaging, to help track packages, as well as in ISBN numbers on the back of books.
- 2D barcodes are more complex and can include more information than just text, such as the price, quantity and even an image. For that reason, linear barcode scanners can't read them, though smartphones and other image scanners can.
- However, depending on the application, there are more than a dozen barcode variations.

Applications of Barcode

- Today, barcodes are used for identification in almost all types. If barcodes are used in the business process, the processing can be automated to increase productivity and reduce human error.
- Whenever there is a need to identify or track something accurately, barcodes should be used. In traditional working environment, workers are required to enter an enormous amount of data into a customer database system. Instead of manually typing the customer identification number into a database of information, contained in a barcode, a data entry maybe scanned easily. This increases the automation and reduces the human error.

Benefits of Barcode

- Barcodes eliminate the possibility of human error. The occurrence of errors for manually entered data is significantly higher than that of barcodes.
- Barcodes are inexpensive to design and print. They can be customized economically, in a variety of finishes and materials.
- Barcodes provide better data. Since one barcode can be used for inventory and pricing information, it is possible to quickly obtain data on both. Furthermore, barcodes can be customized to contain other relevant information as needed.

What is QR Code?

The QR code (Quick Response Code) was first created for the automotive industry in Japan in 1994, making it an infant relative to the decades-old barcode. QR codes are two-dimensional (2D) barcodes, also known as matrix codes. The term "QR code" is actually a trademark for a specific type of two-dimensional matrix code, but its use is so widespread that "QR code" has become the de-facto face of the two-dimensional barcode.

QR codes and barcodes are both machine-readable, optical labels that store information about an item or product. Unlike the standard 1D barcode, QR codes can store information in two directions – horizontally and vertically – while 1D barcodes can only store information in one direction – horizontally.

This allows them to hold much more information: a 1D barcode can typically store about 20 to 25 characters, although some variations can store more – the standard Code 39 barcode, for instance, can store up to 43 characters. A QR code, on the other hand, can store up to 2,509 numeric characters or 1,520 alpha-numeric characters, storing information such as email address, names and product details, among others.

QR Codes are popular with mobile phone users as the barcode can be used to store addresses and URLs. With a camera-enabled smartphone, users can scan the QR Code which has been coded to do things like display text, provide contact data or even open a webpage in the browser on the smartphone. QR Codes can be printed and displayed anywhere. A mobile phone user might scan the code such as in a magazine or displayed at a cash register. Also it can be displayed online.

Applications of QR Code

- QR codes are widely used in a number of industries, be it information technology, online and traditional marketing, advertising, manufacturing, construction and many others. The QR code developed formerly only for industrial uses, but it become common in consumer advertising, online transactions and packaging in recent years, because the popularity of smartphones has put a barcode reader in everyone's pocket for the first time.

- QR Codes are now used over a much wider range of applications such as commercial tracking, entertainment and transport ticketing, product marketing, alongside in-store product labeling.
- The QR codes in the agriculture could serve a number of purposes. For advanced gardeners, things like growing hybrids and/or a special genus of plants can be remarkable and also educational process. It is becoming a more common site to go to botanical gardens and find a QR Code identifying the plant you are admiring. These QR Codes bring instant enlightenment to the curious onlookers.

Benefits of QR Codes

- QR codes can be added to just about anything, from product packaging to TV advertising, magazine pages to billboards, and this versatility can be very useful for marketers.
- The most useful thing about QR codes is the way that they can seamlessly link the online world with the offline one, allowing marketers to drive online-to-offline sales, or use an offline campaign to promote an app or digital product.
- Though QR codes are typically black and white, they don’t always need to be. When designed properly, they can also contain images, logos and other artwork, which are either ignored by the QR code reader due to error correction, or are configured so that they still convey the right information even though the layout is unconventional.
- Creating the QR code itself doesn’t need to cost anything, but the value added can be immense.

Difference between Barcode and QR Code

Both barcodes and QR codes serve the basic purpose of storing information pertaining to a certain product or an organisation, there are a few major differences between them.

Design

One of the biggest differences comes in terms of differences between their design or simply how they look. Barcode has a small collection of black parallel lines of varying widths, which is different from QR code appereance.

Information Storage Capacity

A barcode only holds information in the horizontal direction, a QR code does hold information in both horizontal and vertical directions. Owing to this structural difference, a QR code holds hundreds of times more information than a barcode and has a greater potential to hold more information in a smaller space than a barcode.

Customisation and Error Correction

This is the most desirable advantage of QR codes above traditional barcodes. QR codes come with an error margin that ranges from 7-30%. In simple words, even if the packaging of the concerned product or the printed code is damaged or dirty, the QR code will still work. This feature is smartly exploited by companies and businesses.

What's Next

Despite the versatility and usefulness of QR codes, there are other methods of connecting the online and offline worlds via smartphones that consumers will be more willing to adopt.

One is ‘Near Field Communication’ (NFC), the technology that powers contactless payments. Near field communication is the future of QR codes. Instead of scanning a QR code with you phone, near field communication allows for two devices to exchange data and other information wirelessly in very close proximity to one another. Most smart phones already contain the technology to do this. They contain NFC (near field communication) chips that allow for this close transfer of information.

NFC can be used in many of the same ways as QR codes can, such as providing product information, activating a promotion, or triggering a digital experience. In parts of the world where QR codes have a poor reputation, NFC is typically perceived to be faster and provide a better experience than QR codes – though they are also used in conjunction with each other.

Another potential competitor to QR codes is‘SnapTags’. One of the most common complaints about QR codes is that they are ugly. And although it may seem arbitrary, design and aesthetic are playing a bigger role in technology than ever. Consumers are attracted to colors and interesting designs, which is where QR codes fall short.

Way Forward

Barcodes and QR codes are still around and are probably going to be around for at least a little while longer. However, new technologies like ‘NFC’ and ‘SnapTag’ are constantly improving on the things where existing codes fall short. ‘NFC’ and ‘SnapTag’ are only a small sample of technologies that bridge the gap between the physical and virtual world. These tools offer great potential for marketers because it enables them to engage with consumers in a more unique way.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

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SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

Khadi Gram Udyog : A Tool for Economic Empowerment

Q 1. In spite of the huge spending by the government of India on khadi sector, there had been a decline in the production and sales of khadi and the employment generated by the sector in the last few decades Critically disecuss.

Hints:

- Village and small scale industries play an important role in the country by providing employment opportunities in rural areas with less amount of capital.
- The importance of village and small industries sector in the economy is evident from the fact that, this sector provides employment opportunities to about 23.6 million persons as against 4.5 million persons in the large and medium sector.
- The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Audit report on KVIC also reveals that KVIC is ineffective in utilizing the plan and non plan funds for the Khadi sector promotion, clearly indicating the wastage of public monies.
- Khadi sector is an over-regulated one in India.
- The restrictive practices adopted by the government implemented through KVIC, have resulted in making the khadi industry ineffective, inefficient along with failing to deliver economic empowerment to the poor artisans working in the sector.

Draft National Education Policy 2019 : An Overview

Q 2. Critically discuss the provisions of newly drafted national education policy 2019.

Hints:

- To keep the pace with demands of global environment, the government of India has unveiled the draft of new national education policy 2019. It will also deal with the unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education, 1986 [modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92)].
- The draft Policy envisioned an India centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all. It provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education.
- The draft Policy recommended extending the ambit of the RTE Act to include early childhood education and secondary school education. This would extend the coverage of the Act to all children between the ages of three to 18 years.
- The draft Policy recommended establishing a 'National Research Foundation', an autonomous body, for funding, mentoring and building the capacity for quality research in India.
- India needs to build its research capabilities but there is enough historical scepticism where institutions have been used to discourage research.

Compulsory Retirement of Civil Servants : An Analysis

Q 3. "Compulsory retirement simply is not punishment. It is done in ' public interest' and does not caste a stigma on the government servant. Discuss it in the context of recently used Rule 56 (j) of Central Service (Pension) Rules.

Hints:

- Recently, the newly chosen government has taken sweeping action aimed at removing corrupt central government officials. In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (j) of rule 56 of the Fundamental Rules, the President of India has retired 12 Officers of the Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) in public interest with immediate effect on completing 50 years of age.
- Under FR 56 (j), the performance of an officer who has turned 50 or 55 or has completed 30 years of service

(whichever is earlier,) is being reviewed to ascertain if he/she is liable for compulsory retirement. While the retired officers will be given pay and allowances, however, they will not be entitled to pension benefits.

- The Supreme Court of India has issued certain guidelines regarding compulsory retirement.
  - When the Service of a public servant is no longer useful to the general administration, the officer can be compulsorily retired in public interest.
  - Ordinarily the order of compulsory retirement is not to be treated as a punishment under Article 311 of the Constitution.

Pakistan's Crumbling Economy and Its Impact on India

Q 4. Pakistan is facing a dire macro-ecomic crisis. Discuss its implications on India.

Hints:

- In 2019, Pakistan finds itself facing a dire macro-economic crisis due to spending more on imports than on exports, with its current account deficit having risen from $2.7 billion in 2015 to $18.2 billion in 2018.
- According to Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) deep economic troubles in Pakistan suggest that India might have to live with increased Chinese influence in Pakistan, in particular and South Asia, in general.
- It is too early to say whether a China-Pakistan alliance will lead to greater or less anti-India activities. But India might need a new strategy to engage with Pakistan's external donors to mitigate risks arising from a volatile situation in our neighbourhood.
- Therefore India still needs to check its short term, medium term and long term impact of failure of economic stability of its immediate neighbor i.e. Pakistan.

Indian Foreign Policy in Changing Global Dynamics

Q 5. Critically discuss the challenges for India foreign policy to deal with changing global dynamics.

Hints:

- Channeling India's regional foreign policy through BIMSTEC underlines New Delhi's desire to focus on the country's eastern frontier. As India focuses on the Indo-Pacific, BIMSTEC, if creatively engaged, can be an important platform for India to enhance its profile in East and Southeast Asia.
- As far as, India and Iran relations are concerned the loss of cheap oil is not the only issue here, the other is the American veto on India's ability to shape a policy related to its own interests. It's Iran today, it could be Russia, or some other region tomorrow.
- For the new government, playing by the rules of new global diplomatic challenges, weaponisation of international trade, threats to multilateralism and global diplomatic institutions are the challenges that wrap around the US—Iran kerfuffle, and by association, the globalised Indian economy as well.
- Foreign and security policy are only a means to an end. To be truly transformative they must rest on the foundations of a vibrant economy which alone can provide the military and economic sinews to win friends and influence people.

Digital Payments : An Important Component of New India

Q 6. What do you understand by 'digital payment'. Discuss the challenges and propectes related to it for India.

Hints:

- Digital Payments means "electronic funds transfer" means any transfer of funds which is initiated by a person by way of instruction, authorization or order to a bank to debit or credit an account maintained with that bank through electronic means.
- Digital payments in India are going through a significant change, growing a factor of 10 in the last 5 years, and will likely grow by 10x in the next 3 years.
- Additionally, India remains a largely cash driven economy. Economic growth has been possible through many transactions – that are done primarily in cash. This demand for cash has led to a large growth in the Currency in Circulation (CIC). India has a large CIC / Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio (compared to other countries).
- Despite many ambitious initiatives to promote digital payment, however, last-mile barriers are still writ large. Behavioural factors, weak economics and low product relevancy limit usage on the ground. For entrepreneurs and retailers who have creatively coped with cash for centuries, digital money poses an economic threat to their informal businesses and, ultimately perhaps, to their very survival.

Barcode and QR Code : Concept and Applications

Q 7. What do you understand by 'barcode' and 'QR code'? Discuss its challenges and applications in everyday life of the people.

Hints:

- A barcode is a small, two-dimensional code featuring a series of lines (or bars) and spaces (typically white spaces of varying sizes with black lines of varying thickness).
- The term “QR code” is actually a trademark for a specific type of two-dimensional matrix code, but its use is so widespread that “QR code” has become the de-facto face of the two-dimensional barcode.
- Today, barcodes are used for identification in almost all types. If barcodes are used in the business process, the processing can be automated to increase productivity and reduce human error.
- QR Codes are now used over a much wider range of applications such as commercial tracking, entertainment and transport ticketing, product marketing, alongside in-store product labeling.
- Despite the versatility and usefulness of QR codes, there are other methods of connecting the online and offline worlds via smartphones that consumers will be more willing to adopt.

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SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

Colombo Port

Why in News?

- **1.1** India, Sri Lanka and Japan has signed an agreement to jointly develop the East Container Terminal (ECT) at the Colombo Port, which has attracted major investment from China under its Belt and Road initiative (BRI)
- **1.2** The goal of agreement is to increase Colombo Port's container volume and increase transportation in and around South Asia

More from News

- **2.1** As per the agreement, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) will retain 100% ownership, while the Terminal Operations Company, conducting its operations, is jointly owned
  - 2.1.1 Sri Lanka will hold a 51 % stake in the project and the joint venture partners will retain 49%
  - 2.1.2 Japan is likely to provide a 40-year soft loan with a 0.1% interest rate
- **2.2** The deal comes at a time when China has been using its BRI projects to increase its influence in the region

About Colombo Port

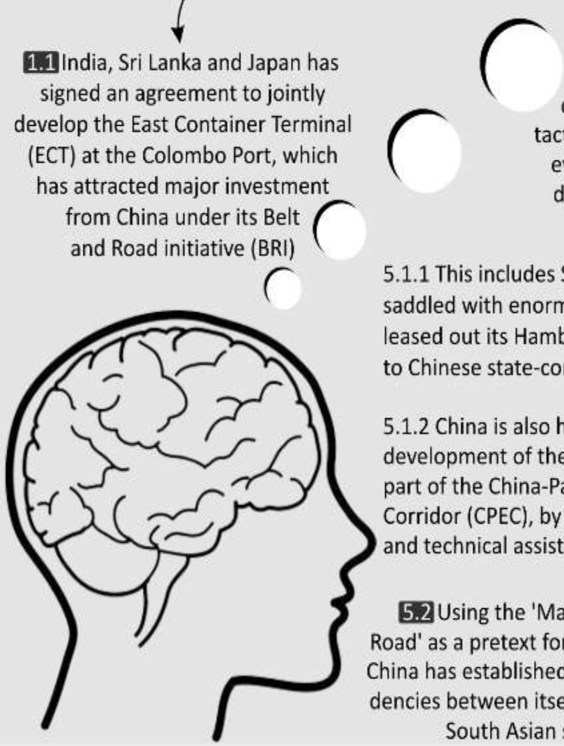
- **3.1** Colombo port, through which 90% of Sri Lanka's seaborne goods pass, connects Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia
- **3.2** The ECT is located some 3 km away from the China-backed international financial city, known popularly as "port city", being built on reclaimed land (from the Indian Ocean) on Colombo's sea front
- **3.3** It had traffic of 6.21 million twenty-foot equivalent units in 2017, making it one of the busiest ports in South Asia

Why India and Japan?

- **4.1** The involvement of India and Japan is being seen as a big development aimed at neutralising the growing influence of China, which has poured money into the Sri Lanka under its BRI
- **4.2** India along with Japan aspires to pursue a 'Free and Open Pacific Ocean' and 'Indian Ocean strategy'
- **4.3** Over 70% of the transshipment business at the strategically located ECT is linked to India
- **4.4** Some of Japan's maritime routes run through the Indian Ocean region where India is the primary power, so improved capacity at Sri Lankan ports will improve the security of tankers and commercial ships
- **4.5** Japan has been a long-standing partner of Sri Lanka and one of Sri Lanka's biggest donors in the past decades
- **4.6** Japan also helped develop of the Jaya Container Terminal at the Colombo Port, supporting its operations since the 1980s
- **4.7** India and Japan are also eyeing joint development of the Trincomalee Port in Eastern Sri Lanka

China's Presence in the Region

- **5.1** China has employed a combination of hard military tactics, political patronage, and an ever-widening list of economic dependents to gain a foothold in South Asia
  - 5.1.1 This includes Sri Lanka, which, saddled with enormous Chinese debt, leased out its Hambantota Port project to Chinese state-controlled entities
  - 5.1.2 China is also helping Pakistan in development of the Gwadar port, as part of the China-Pakistan-Economic-Corridor (CPEC), by providing financial and technical assistance
- **5.2** Using the 'Maritime Silk Road' as a pretext for this strategy, China has established inter- dependencies between itself and various South Asian states
- **5.3** It has gained docking rights and established firmer ties with a number of countries in the countries encircling Indian Ocean, and it has even secured an important base in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa



Cabinet Committees

Why in News?

1.1 The government of India has released the composition of eight Cabinet Committees, including two new ones — one on Investment, the other on Employment and Skill Development under the Transaction of Business Rules

What is Transaction of Business Rules?

2.1 The executive works under 'The Government of India Transaction of Business Rules, 1961'

2.2 These Rules emerge out of Article 77(3) of the Constitution, which states: "The President shall make rules for the more convenient transaction of the business of the government of India, and for the allocation among Ministers of the said business"

2.3 The Rules mandate the minister-in-charge of a department (ministry) to dispose of "all business allotted to a department under" him or her

2.3.1 However, "when the subject of a case concerns more than one department", no decision can be taken "until all such departments have concurred, or, failing such concurrence, a decision thereon has been taken by or under the authority of the Cabinet"

What are Cabinet Committees?

3.1 Cabinet committees are extra-constitutional bodies, but they derive their establishment from the Rules of Business

3.2 The cabinet committees ensure smooth functioning between two departments or ministries of the government

3.3 The ministries at times are seen holding contrasting views on policy matters or their implementation, these committees help in ironing out the differences by preparing a common ground

3.4 Cabinet committees work as organisations, which are instrumental in reducing the workload of the Union Cabinet

3.5 The Prime Minister (PM) constitutes Standing Committees of the Cabinet and sets out the specific functions assigned to them

3.5.1 He can add or reduce the number of committees

3.6 Currently, there are eight Cabinet committees

3.6.1 These are on appointments, accommodation, security, economic affairs, investment, parliamentary affairs, political affairs and skill development and employment

Composition

4.1 The PM will chair the Cabinet Committee on Investment and Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development

4.2 Union Home Minister will chair Cabinet Committee on Accommodation

4.3 Union Defence Minister will chair Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs

Functions of the Committees

5.1 Appointments committee will make high profile appointments such as posts of the three service chiefs, Director General of Military Operations, chiefs of all Air and Army Commands, among others

5.2 The Cabinet Committee on Accommodation will determine the guidelines or rules with regard to the allotment of government accommodation

5.3 The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs will review economic trends, problems and prospects for evolving a consistent and integrated economic policy

5.4 The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs will draw the schedule for Parliament sessions and monitors the progress of government business in Parliament

5.5 The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs will address problems related to Centre-State relations

5.6 The Cabinet Committee on Security will deal with issues relating to law and order, internal security and policy matters concerning foreign affairs with internal or external security implications

5.7 The Cabinet Committee on Investment will identify key projects required to be implemented on a time-bound basis with regard to infrastructure and manufacturing

5.8 The Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development will provide direction to all policies, programmes, schemes and initiatives for skill development

US demands Social Media Details from Visa Applicants

Why in News?

- **1.1** The United States (US) government has now required most of the US visa applicants to provide their social media usernames, email addresses and phone numbers for the past five years
- **1.2** This decision is in line with the President Donald Trump administration's decision to ensure more stringent screening of potential immigrants and visitors to the US

Why?

- **2.1** Such account information would give the government access to photos, locations, dates of birth, dates of milestones and other personal data commonly shared on social media
- **2.2** This decision represent a step up from a September 2017 measure in which the Homeland Security Department proposed and enacted a regulation calling for the surveillance of social media use of all immigrants, including naturalized citizens
- **2.3** Collecting this additional information from visa applicants will strengthen the process for vetting applicants and confirming their identity
- **2.4** The new requirement mark a shift away from the voluntary disclosure of social media profile information under the Barack Obama administration

Impact

- **3.1** The new policy will affect roughly 15 million US visa applicants around the world every year
- **3.3** The new policy will also monitor those already in the US, such as green card holders
- **3.4** Government officials and diplomats are exempt from providing the additional information
- **3.5** On India
  - 3.5.1 More than a million non-immigrant and immigrant US visas are given to Indians every year
  - 3.5.2 In 2018, 28,073 Indians were issued American immigrant visas, the vast majority of which passed through the "family preference" process
  - 3.5.3 Since 2009, the biggest jump in the number of Indian immigrants to the US — almost 20% — was seen during 2014-2015
  - 3.5.4 But after reaching a peak of 31,360 in 2016, the numbers of immigrant visas issued to Indians dropped in 2017
  - 3.5.5 In 2018, the US issued 10,06,802 non-immigrant visas to Indians, the third largest national group behind the Chinese and Mexicans and amounting to a little over 11% of total non-immigrant visa issuances

Concerns

- **4.1** Social media is an intricate map of its users' contacts, associations, habits and preferences
- **4.2** Full information on accounts will give the US government access to a visa applicant's whole trove of personal data that is commonly shared on social media, but which many may not like to share with agencies of state
- **4.3** Critics say the sweeping surveillance potential of the new regulations could discourage a wide range of visa applicants
- **4.4** Research shows that this kind of monitoring has chilling effects, meaning that people are less likely to speak freely and connect with each other in online communities that are now essential to modern life

Global Experience

- **5.1** In 2015, Indians faced further scrutiny in Schengen visas, after it was made mandatory to provide biometric data through fingerprints and a digital photo
- **5.2** Currently, the UK and Canada — popular destinations for Indian visitors and immigrants — do not have any policy of collecting social media information form visa applicants
  - 5.1.1 That requirement was already in place in the US and Britain

India's Infant Mortality Rate

Why in News?

1.1 According to the Sample Registration Survey (SRS) Bulletin, India has reduced its infant mortality rate (IMR) by 42% over 11 years – from 57 per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 33 in 2017

What is IMR?

2.1 IMR is the number of children dying before the age of one for every 1,000 live births

2.2 It is considered to be a crude indicator of the health scenario of a country

Key Findings of the Survey

3.1 Despite the reduction, India's IMR in 2017 remained higher than the global 29.4, a rate equivalent to that of the West African nation of Senegal and higher than most South Asian neighbours' except that of Pakistan and Myanmar

3.2 The absolute number of infants death is higher in rural areas, where the birth rate of 21.8 per 1000 populations is much higher than for urban centres, where 16.8 birth occur for 1000 population

3.3 The decadal decline in IMR was from 36 to 23 in urban areas, and from 58 to 37 in rural areas

3.4 Among Indian states, Madhya Pradesh recorded the most number of deaths of children younger than one (47) in 2017, followed by Assam (44) and Arunachal Pradesh (42), Odisha (41) and Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan (39)

3.5 Among the high performers are Nagaland with an IMR of 7, followed by the bigger states (with a population of more than 10 million) Kerala (10), Delhi & Tamil Nadu (16) and Maharashtra (17)

3.6 Among the small states (with a population of less than 10 million) best performers are Puducherry (11), Sikkim (12) and Manipur (12)

3.7 Among India's larger states (with a population larger than 10 million), New Delhi and Tamil Nadu both slashed their infant mortality rates by 57% – from 37 in 2006 to 16 in 2017

3.8 Household wealth and maternal education play an important role in infant and child mortality, and states with more educated women show better health outcomes for children

Reasons behind Improvement

4.1 India is promoting simple, cost-effective measures to improve mother and child health

4.1.1 These include exclusive breast-feeding; skin-to-skin contact between the parent and the baby; fully immunising the mother and child and providing nutrition and primary healthcare to prevent pregnancy-related complications, premature births, malnutrition and diseases

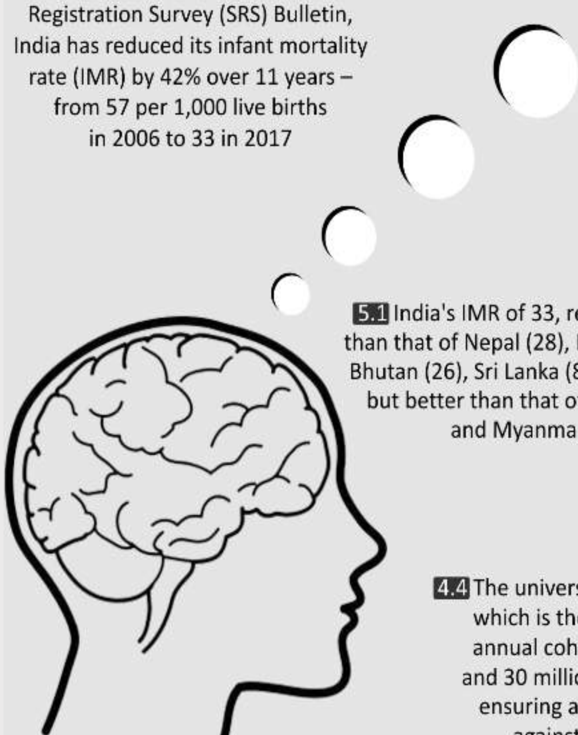
4.2 Apart from quality primary care, advising parents and families on getting children fully vaccinated, healthy nutrition and promoting basic hygiene and sanitation helped to reduce deaths from common infections, such as diarrhoea and pneumonia

4.3 India's Pulse Polio Programme and the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) strategy that used cross-sectoral partnerships to increase full immunisation coverage among children and women, also helped in achieving this feet

4.4 The universal immunisation programme, which is the largest in the world with annual cohorts of 26.7 million babies and 30 million pregnant women, is also ensuring all children get immunised against preventable diseases

India's Neighbours IMR

5.1 India's IMR of 33, remained worse than that of Nepal (28), Bangladesh (27), Bhutan (26), Sri Lanka (8) and China (8), but better than that of Pakistan (61) and Myanmar (38)



Fiscal Performance Index

Why in News?

- **1.1** Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has launched a 'Fiscal Performance Index (FPI)' to assess quality of budgets presented by the Centre and state governments

About the Index

- **2.1** FPI is a comprehensive index as it is multi-dimensional in nature and covers various aspects of fiscal performance of the states
- **2.2** It incorporates qualitative assessments of revenue expenditure; capital expenditure, revenues, fiscal prudence and the level of public debt to arrive at a more holistic assessment of fiscal performance than the fiscal deficit to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio

Key Findings

- **3.1** It analysed Central and state budgets from 2004-05 to 2016-17
- **3.2** The study found that despite improvement in the fiscal deficit between FY13 and FY18, the overall performance of the budget has been remained steady with improvements only in FY16 and FY17
  - 3.2.1 This is largely due to moderation in the revenue, capital expenditure and net tax revenues indices
- **3.3** As per Index, expenditure on infrastructure, education, healthcare and other social sector can be considered beneficial for economic growth
- **3.4** Tax revenues are sustainable sources of revenue for the government as compared to one-time income sources
- **3.5** The combine performance of all state budgets has improved despite worsening of fiscal deficit numbers because of improvements in revenue and capital expenditure indices
- **3.6** The financial performance of states with low income levels is better than those with higher income
  - 3.6.1 The high income states including Gujarat, Haryana and Maharashtra do not perform well on the composite FPI because of poor expenditure and revenue quality compared to other states
  - 3.6.2 The low income states including, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have done well on the FPI because of their good performance in revenue and capital expenditure indices

Key Recommendations

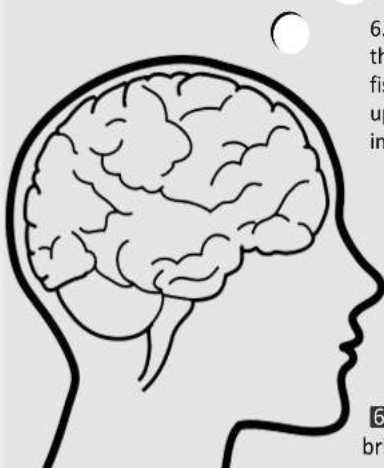
- **4.1** The government should attempt to broaden the tax base, increase investments in education and healthcare
- **4.2** It recommended for the maintenance of assets and increase investments in infrastructure, affordable housing as well as in public sector undertakings
- **4.3** It called for increasing capital expenditure by limiting dividends to the government
- **4.4** The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act which sets targets for the governments to reduce fiscal deficits should not solely focus on one component
  - 4.4.1 Instead, a holistic performance of all entities viewed from all angles of expenditure quality, revenue receipts quality, and fiscal prudence should be taken into consideration

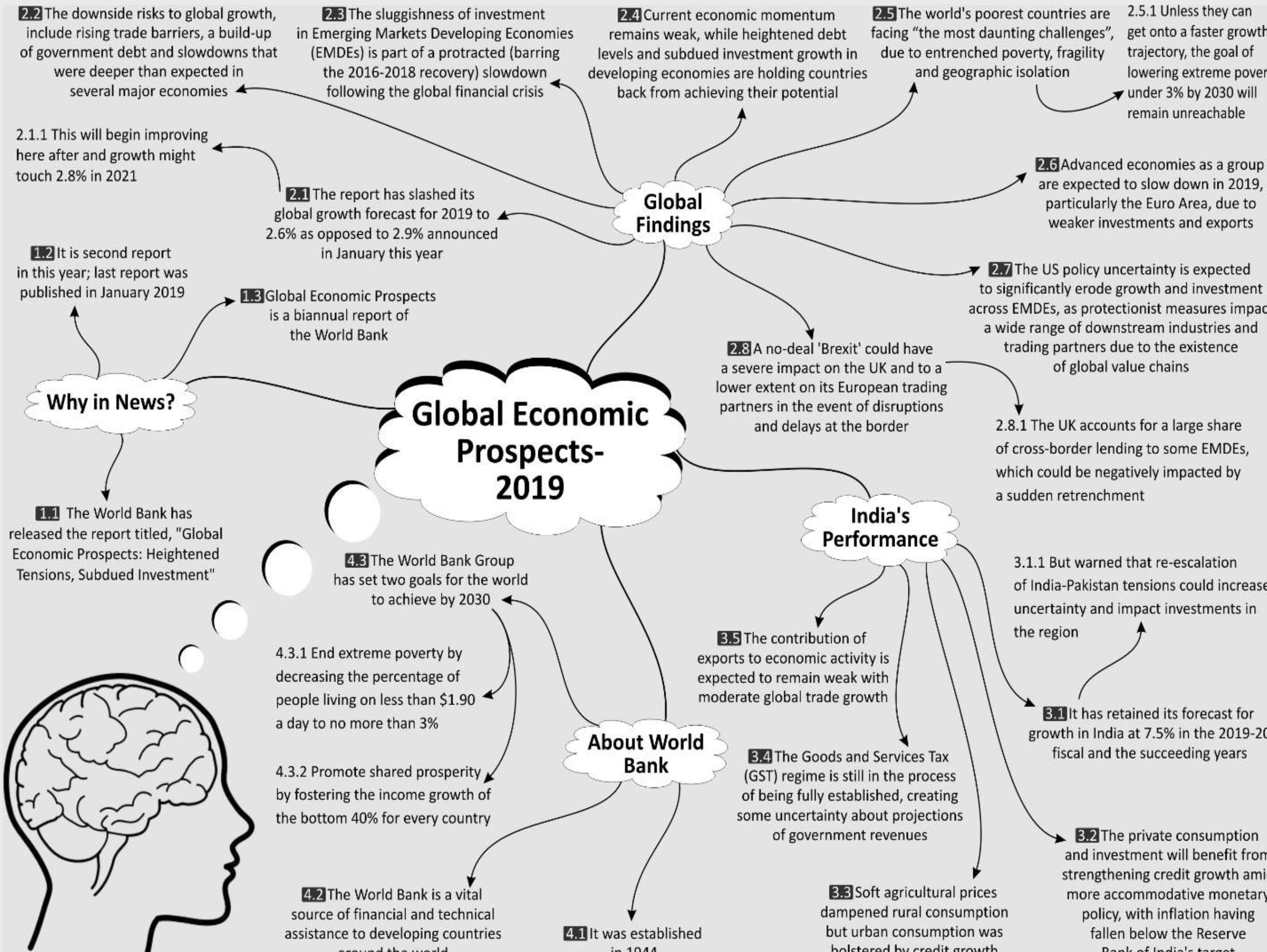
Significance

- **5.1** The measure of fiscal conditions which is provided by the index can better help in targeting government's social and capital expenditures keeping in mind fiscal stability
- **5.2** It would also contribute to strategy formulation to manage economic development with macro-economic prudence

What is FRBM Act?

- **6.1** It was enacted in 2003 to bring the financial discipline on government expenditure
- **6.2** It set targets for the government to reduce fiscal deficits; however the targets were put off several times
- **6.3** In May 2016, the government set up a committee under N K Singh to review the FRBM Act
  - 6.3.1 The committee recommended that the government should target a fiscal deficit of 3% of the GDP in years up to March 31, 2020 cut it to 2.8% in 2020-21 and to 2.5% by 2023




Global Economic Prospects-2019
Why in News?
1.1 The World Bank has released the report titled, "Global Economic Prospects: Heightened Tensions, Subdued Investment"
1.2 It is second report in this year; last report was published in January 2019
1.3 Global Economic Prospects is a biannual report of the World Bank
Global Findings
2.1 The report has slashed its global growth forecast for 2019 to 2.6% as opposed to 2.9% announced in January this year
2.1.1 This will begin improving here after and growth might touch 2.8% in 2021
2.2 The downside risks to global growth, include rising trade barriers, a build-up of government debt and slowdowns that were deeper than expected in several major economies
2.3 The sluggishness of investment in Emerging Markets Developing Economies (EMDEs) is part of a protracted (barring the 2016-2018 recovery) slowdown following the global financial crisis
2.4 Current economic momentum remains weak, while heightened debt levels and subdued investment growth in developing economies are holding countries back from achieving their potential
2.5 The world's poorest countries are facing "the most daunting challenges", due to entrenched poverty, fragility and geographic isolation
2.5.1 Unless they can get onto a faster growth trajectory, the goal of lowering extreme poverty under 3% by 2030 will remain unreachable
2.6 Advanced economies as a group are expected to slow down in 2019, particularly the Euro Area, due to weaker investments and exports
2.7 The US policy uncertainty is expected to significantly erode growth and investment across EMDEs, as protectionist measures impact a wide range of downstream industries and trading partners due to the existence of global value chains
2.8 A no-deal 'Brexit' could have a severe impact on the UK and to a lower extent on its European trading partners in the event of disruptions and delays at the border
2.8.1 The UK accounts for a large share of cross-border lending to some EMDEs, which could be negatively impacted by a sudden retrenchment
India's Performance
3.1 It has retained its forecast for growth in India at 7.5% in the 2019-20 fiscal and the succeeding years
3.1.1 But warned that re-escalation of India-Pakistan tensions could increase uncertainty and impact investments in the region
3.2 The private consumption and investment will benefit from strengthening credit growth amid more accommodative monetary policy, with inflation having fallen below the Reserve Bank of India's target
3.3 Soft agricultural prices dampened rural consumption but urban consumption was bolstered by credit growth
3.4 The Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime is still in the process of being fully established, creating some uncertainty about projections of government revenues
3.5 The contribution of exports to economic activity is expected to remain weak with moderate global trade growth
About World Bank
4.1 It was established in 1944
4.2 The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world
4.3 The World Bank Group has set two goals for the world to achieve by 2030
4.3.1 End extreme poverty by decreasing the percentage of people living on less than $1.90 a day to no more than 3%
4.3.2 Promote shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40% for every country

Post-conviction Mental Illness

Why in News?

1.1 In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court (SC) has barred the execution of a person if he develops a mental illness and loses cognitive power during post-conviction imprisonment

Background

2.1 The judgment came in a petition seeking review of the SC's 2008 ruling

2.1.1 In 2008 ruling, the court had upheld the death penalty awarded by the trial court and Bombay High Court to a person, referred to as "X" by the court, for sexually assaulting and murdering two minor girls in December 1999 at Gulumb in Maharashtra

What is Mental Illness?

3.1 Mental health refers to a broad array of activities directly or indirectly related to the mental well-being, prevention of mental disorders and treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders

3.2 Mental illness, also called mental health disorders, refers to a wide range of mental health conditions

3.3 Determinants of mental health and mental disorders include not only individual attributes such as the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, behaviours and interactions with others

3.3.1 But also social, cultural, economic, political and environmental factors such as national policies, social protection, living standards, working conditions and community social supports

Supreme Court's View

4.1 For the first time, the SC took note that punishment is a communication from the sentencing system to the criminal about the consequences of his action

4.1.1 When a condemned prisoner loses cognitive power because of post-conviction mental illness, the essence of that communication- consequences of the crime -is lost

4.2 While relieving him from execution, the SC ordered that the accused "X" should be kept in jail till death as given the serious crime; it would not be safe to send him back to society even though he has spent 20 years in prison, 17 of them on death row

4.3 The SC realised that this ruling could be misused; however the SC warned that post-conviction mental illness could not be used as a ruse by condemned prisoners to escape the noose

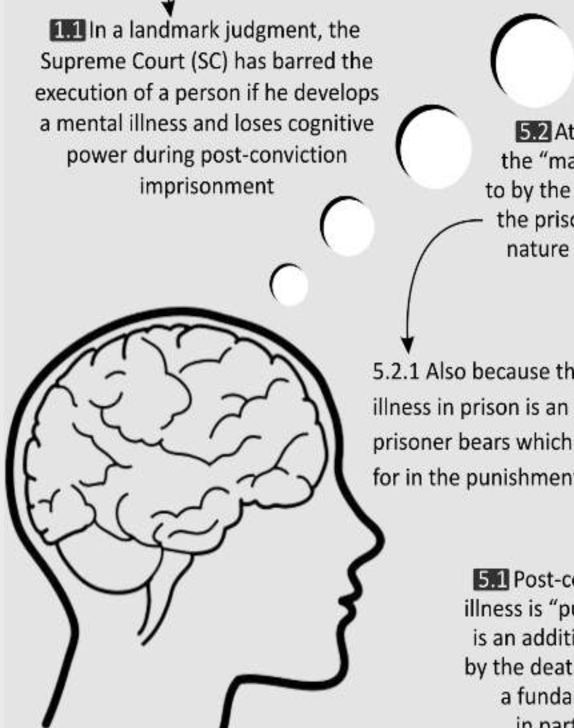
4.3.1 This ground needs to be utilised only in extreme cases of mental illness, only extreme cases of convicts being mentally ill are not executed

Post-conviction Mental Illness

5.1 Post-conviction onset of mental illness is "punishment plus" because it is an additional burden unwarranted by the death sentence and constitutes a fundamental rights violation, in particular the right to life

5.2 At the post-conviction stage, the "majesty of the law," as referred to by the Court, is not lowered because the prisoner may not understand the nature and purpose of punishment

5.2.1 Also because the onset of mental illness in prison is an additional cost the prisoner bears which is not accounted for in the punishment imposed by the law



SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS (Based on Brain Boosters)

Colombo Port

Q1. Consider the following statements in respect of 'Colombo Port':

1. India, Sri Lanka and Japan have signed an agreement to jointly develop the East Container Terminal (ECT) at the Colombo Port.
2. Colombo port, through which 90% of Sri Lanka's seaborne goods pass, connects Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia

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 statements are correct. India, Sri Lanka and Japan have signed an agreement to jointly develop the East Container Terminal (ECT) at the Colombo Port, which has attracted major investment from China under its Belt and Road initiative (BRI).

Colombo port connects Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Through, Colombo port 90% of Sri Lanka's seaborne goods pass.

Cabinet Committees

Q2. Consider the following statements in respect of 'cabinet committees':

1. Cabinet committees are extra-constitutional bodies.
2. Currently, there are eight Cabinet committees including new ones — one on Investment, the other on Employment and Skill Development.
3. The President of India constitutes Standing Committees of the Cabinet and sets out the specific functions assigned to them.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. Cabinet committees are extra-constitutional bodies, but they derive their establishment from the Rules of Business.

Statement 2 is also correct. Currently, there are eight Cabinet committees including new ones — one on Investment, the other on Employment and Skill Development.

Statement 3 is not correct. The Prime Minister constitutes Standing Committees of the Cabinet and sets out the specific functions assigned to them. He can add or reduce the number of committees.

US demands Social Media Details from Visa Applicants

Q3. Recently, the US has demanded social media details from visa applicants. Consider the following statements in this regard:

1. The new policy will exempt those who are already residing in the US, such as green card holders.
2. Government officials and diplomats are also exempt from providing the additional information.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. The new policy will affect roughly 15 million US visa applicants around the world every year. The new policy will also monitor those already in the US, such as green card holders.

Statement 2 is correct. Under the new policy, government officials and diplomats are exempt from providing the additional information.

India's Infant Mortality Rate

Q4. Consider the following statements in respect of 'India's Infant Mortality Rate':

1. India has reduced its infant mortality rate (IMR) by 42% over 11 years – from 57 per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 33 in 2017.

2. Among Indian states, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have the highest IMR .

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. According to the Sample Registration Survey (SRS) Bulletin, India has reduced its infant mortality rate (IMR) by 42% over 11 years – from 57 per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 33 in 2017.

Statement 2 is not correct. Among Indian states, Madhya Pradesh recorded the most number of deaths of children younger than one (47) in 2017, followed by Assam (44) and Arunachal Pradesh (42), Odisha (41) and Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan (39).

Fiscal Performance Index

Q5. With reference to the 'Fiscal Performance Index', consider the following statements:

1. It has developed by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and NITI Aayog.
2. It point out that the high income states do not perform well on the index because of poor expenditure and revenue quality compared to other states
3. While, the low income states have done well on the FPI because of their good performance in revenue and capital expenditure indices.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 and 3 only b) 2 and 3 only

c) 1 only d) 2 only

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has launched a Fiscal Performance Index (FPI) to assess quality of budgets presented by the Centre and state governments.

Statement 2 is correct. The high income states including Gujarat, Haryana and Maharashtra do not perform well on the composite FPI because of poor expenditure and revenue quality compared to other states.

Statement 3 is correct. The low income states including, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have done well on the FPI because of their good performance in revenue and capital expenditure indices.

Global Economic Prospects 2019

Q6. Consider the following statements in respect of '2019 Global Economic Prospects report':

1. It is flagship report of 'International Monetary Fund'.
2. It has slashed the global growth forecast for 2019 to 2.6% from the 2.9%.
3. It has also slashed the growth forecast of India to 7% for 2019-20.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only

c) 2 only d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. The World Bank has released the report titled, "Global Economic Prospects: Heightened Tensions, Subdued Investment". It is a biannual report of the World Bank.

Statement 2 is correct. The report has slashed its global growth forecast for 2019 to 2.6 per cent as opposed to 2.9 per cent announced in January this year.

Statement 3 is not correct. It has retained its forecast for growth in India at 7.5% in the 2019-20 fiscal and the succeeding years.

Post-conviction Mental Illness

Q7. Consider the following statements in respect of 'post-conviction mental illness':

1. The Supreme Court (SC) recently, has barred the execution of a person if he develops a mental illness and loses cognitive power during post-conviction imprisonment.
2. According to the SC, post-conviction onset of mental illness is "punishment plus" because it is an additional burden unwarranted by the death sentence and constitutes a fundamental rights violation.

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 statements are correct. The Supreme Court (SC) recently, has barred the execution of a person if he develops a mental illness and loses cognitive power during post-conviction imprisonment.

According to the SC, post-conviction onset of mental illness is "punishment plus" because it is an additional burden unwarranted by the death sentence and constitutes a fundamental rights violation.

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SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Which Indian state has lauched a public cycle sharing system 'Trin Trin'?

   –Karnataka

2. Who has been elected new President of El Salvador?

   –Nayib Bukele

3. Which country is among the top five e-waste generating countries in the world besides China, Germany, Japan and the US?

   –India

4. Which country hosted the G20 Finance Ministers level summit in 2019?

   –Japan

5. Which country has notified a tax information exchange agreement (TIEA) with the India?

   –Marshall Islands

6. Which city hosted 2nd Global Disability Summit?

   –Buenos Aires (Argentina)

7. Who has been appointed as the new leader of Rajya Sabha?

   –Thawarchand Gehlot

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SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS EXAM

1. "Lateral entry into secretary-level posts in government is welcome, but the principle of representation must be respected." Comment.

2. The context of India-Pakistan relationship has now changed significantly. Discuss why any framework for dialogue must reflect the changed situation.

3. "The proposal of extending the ambit of Right to Education to younger children would be a welcome step." Discuss.

4. Discuss how Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) significance for India lies in economics and geopolitics of the region.

5. The strengthening of ties between Russia and China present a challenge to Delhi. Discuss it in the context of India's foreign policy.

6. "Neighbourhood first remains India's foreign policy priority, but the emphasis has shifted from SAARC to BIMSTEC." Crititcally discuss.

7. What are heat waves? Discuss the factors, which are responsible for the formation of heat waves in North and Central India.

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SEVEN IMPORTANT NEWS

1. Clay Minerals on Mars

NASA's Curiosity Mars rover has found the highest amounts of clay minerals ever found during its mission on Mars.

Key Findings

The rover recently drilled two samples at rock targets called "Aberlady" and "Kilmarie" in a region of Mars called the "clay-bearing unit". Both drill targets were unveiled in a new selfie taken by the rover on May 12 (the 2,405th Martian day, or sol) of the mission.

The clay-enriched region, located on the side of lower Mount Sharp, stood out to NASA orbiters before Curiosity landed in 2012. Curiosity is exploring Mount Sharp to see if it had the conditions to support life billions of years ago. Clay often forms in water, which is essential for life. The rover's mineralogy instrument, called CheMin (Chemistry and Mineralogy), provided the first analyses of rock samples drilled in the clay-bearing unit. CheMin also found very little hematite, an iron oxide mineral that was abundant just to the north, on Vera Rubin Ridge.

Other than proof that there was a significant amount of water once in Gale Crater, what these new findings mean for the region is still up for debate.

It is likely that the rocks in the area formed as layers of mud in ancient lakes -- something Curiosity also found lower on Mount Sharp.

Water interacted with sediment over time, leaving an abundance of clay in the rocks there.

About Curiosity Rover

It was launched on November 26, 2011. with a primary mission to find out if Mars is, or was, suitable for life. Another objective is to learn more about the Red Planet's environment.

According to NASA, Curiosity has four main science goals:

- Determine whether life ever arose on Mars.
- Characterize the climate of Mars.
- Characterize the geology of Mars.
- Prepare for human exploration.

■

2. World Oceans Day 2019

World Oceans Day is celebrated each year on 8 June since 2009. The objective of day is to unite citizens on a project that will help sustaining world's ocean.

This year, the theme of the day was “Gender and Oceans”, which is vital to sustainability in the many ongoing efforts to protect and preserve the health of oceans around the world, in the view of the UN. As per current estimates, women occupy only around 27 percent of parliaments worldwide, and make up 38 percent of the scientific community studying oceans.

Key Findings

The lungs of our planet, providing most of the oxygen we breathe, the oceans are also a major source of food and medicines and a critical part of the biosphere. The concept of a 'World Oceans Day' was first proposed in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro as a way to celebrate our world’s shared ocean and our personal connection to the sea, as well as to raise awareness about the crucial role the ocean plays in our lives and the important ways people can help protect it.

World Oceans Day is marked by people around the world by honoring the ocean, which provides an opportunity to take personal and community action to conserve the ocean and its resources.

Gender and Oceans

The importance of gender equality — in particular for the effective conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources — is increasingly recognized. However, there is very little data and research on these issues, and a concerted action towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is still needed in all ocean-related sectors to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Threat

Some of the biggest modern threats to the oceans include pollution, overfishing, invasive species and rising ocean acidity due to the widespread use of fossil fuels. The problems but there are simple steps that you can to take to help protect the ocean.

■

3. Imports from Pakistan to India decline by 92%

Imports from Pakistan to India has declined by 92 per cent to 2.84 million US dollars in March this year after imposition of 200 per cent customs duties on all products following Pulwama terror attack. According to the data of the commerce ministry, the imports from the neighbouring country stood at $34.61 million in March 2018. Out of the $2.84 million imports in March, as much as $1.19 million was accounted for cotton import by India.

Key Findings

The main commodities imported during the month from the neighbouring country include plastics, knitted fabrics, preparation of vegetables, articles of apparel and clothing, spices, chemicals, man-made filaments, and wool. During January-March period of 2018-19 fiscal, the imports from Pakistan declined by 47 percent to $53.65 million.

India's exports to Pakistan too have dipped by about 32 percent to $171.34 million in March. However, the exports grew by 7.4 percent to $2 billion during 2018-19.

The main products being exported by India include organic chemicals; cotton; nuclear reactors, boilers; plastic products; tanning or dyeing extracts; cereals; sugar; coffee, tea; articles of iron and steel; copper and footwear.

Background

On February 16 this year, taking strong economic action against Pakistan following the attack, India raised the customs duty to 200 percent on all goods imported from the neighbouring country, including cotton, fresh fruits, cement, petroleum products and mineral ore. India had also revoked the 'Most Favoured Nation (MFN)' status to Pakistan in the aftermath of the terror attack. The country has repealed a security exception clause of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to withdraw this status. Both the countries are member of this body.

■

4. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande elected President of 74th UNGA

Nigeria's Ambassador to the United Nations Tijjani Muhammad-Bande has been elected as the next President of 74th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Muhammad-Bande will be the second Nigerian UNGA president after Joseph Nanven Garba, who held the position between 1989 and 1990. The office of the UNGA changes every year between the five geographic groups: African, Asian, Eastern European, Latin American and Caribbean, and Western European.

Key Highlights

The new President will try and hasten the long-delayed reform process of the Security Council to ensure that the powerful UN organ is more democratic and efficient. The long-pending reform of the powerful 15-nation UN organ has made little progress after the Inter-Governmental Negotiatins (IGN) a decade ago.

India and UN Security Council Reforms

Recently, India had strongly criticized the co-chairs of the Inter-Governmental Negotiatins (IGN) on Security Council reform for following an exclusionary approach, saying it cannot sanctify as normal their opaque methodologies and obfuscation of references in

moving the long-stalled reform process forward.

India has been calling for the reform of the UN Security Council along with Brazil, Germany and Japan for long, emphasising that it rightly deserves a place at the UN high table as a permanent member.

■

5. Protem Speaker of 17th Lok Sabha

Virendra Kumar, a BJP MP from Tikamgarh constituency in Madhya Pradesh and a former Union Minister, has been chosen to be the Protem Speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha. He administered the oath of office at the Rashtapati Bhavan on June 17, the day the newly-elected Lok Sabha commences its first session. On the first two day, the new MPs will take oath. The Election for the Speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha is scheduled to be held on June 19.

Who is a Pro-tem Speaker?

Pro-tem is a Latin phrase which translates to for the time being in English and so the Pro-tem Speaker is a temporary speaker appointed for a limited period of time to conduct the works in Lok Sabha or in state legislatures. Pro-tem speaker is chosen for the conduct of the house when the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies have been elected and the vote for the speaker and deputy speaker has not taken place.

A Pro-tem speaker is chosen with the agreement of the members of the Lok Sabha and legislative assembly. Usually, the senior-most member of the house is selected for the post who then carries on the activities till the permanent speaker is chosen.

Work of Pro-tem

The main duty of the Pro-tem Speaker is to administer the oath of office to new members of the house. He also enables the House to elect the new Speaker. Once the new Speaker is elected, the office of the pro tem speaker ceases to exist. He also administers the floor test. ■

6. Cyclone Vayu

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Cyclone Vayu, which intensified into a 'very severe cyclonic storm', has changed its course slightly westward. Now, it will not hit Gujarat coast, however, the western coast continues to be on high alert as strong winds and rough seas are expected for the next 24 to 48 hours. Earlier, the storm has intensified into a “very severe cyclonic storm” and was expected to hit the Gujarat coast on June 13. The cyclone which is around 340 km south of Gujarat’s Veraval coast been named by India as “Vayu”. Vayu means wind in Hindi.

Naming of Cyclone

India falls under the southern region of the world. A total of eight countries fall under this group and they give names to cyclones one by one. The countries involved are Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. These countries name cyclones one by one, which are discussed in the meeting of all countries and then later finalised. Next, the cyclone name will be given by say Maldives and they have named one Hika. Names are decided well in advance and as in when cyclone occurs, names are given to it.

The previous cyclone to come out of the Bay of Bengal was named Fani which caused a loss of an estimated Rs 9,336.26 crore in Odisha. Prior to that, there were cyclones Ockhi in 2017 and Titli and Gaja last year. ■

7. World Day Against Child Labour 2019

World Day Against Child Labour is celebrated each year on 12 June. It brings together governments, employers and workers organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world to highlight the plight of child labourers and what can be done to help them. The International Labour Organization (ILO) had launched the World Day Against Child Labour in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it. The theme of the day was "Children shouldn't work in fields, but on dreams!".

On this day, the body will look back on progress achieved over a 100 years of ILO support to countries on tackling child labour. It will also look forward towards the UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7 set by the international community calling for an end to child labour in all its forms by 2025.

What is Child Labour?

The term 'child labour' is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and is harmful to their physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Child Labour Facts

Around 152 million children are still in child labour. Child labour occurs in almost all sectors, yet 7 out of every 10 of these children are working in agriculture.

ILO 2016 data indicates that there are 152 million working children in the world between 5-17 years.

As per Census 2011, around 10.13 million child labourers between 5-14 years in India. However, child labour in 2011 has decreased by around 20 percent from 2001 census figures. ■

SEVEN IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS FROM PIB

1. India's 1st BS – VI Certificate in Two Wheeler Segment

International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) has released India's first Type Approval Certificate (TAC) for Bharat Stage - VI (BS – VI) norms for the two wheeler segment in New Delhi. ICAT has taken many steps in providing assistance and support to the automotive industry for the development, optimization and calibration of engines and vehicles for complying with these upcoming emission norms.

To curb growing menace of air pollution through the vehicles emission, the government of India has decided to leapfrog from the exiting BS – IV norms to the BS- VI, thereby skipping the BS – V norms, and to implement the BS – VI norms with effect from 1st April 2020. Only those vehicles will be sold and registered in India from 1st April 2020 onwards,which comply to these norms. The norms are stringent and at par with global standards.

Key Highlights

It is India's first certification in the two wheeler segment for the BS – VI norms that are the latest emission norms as notified by the government of India.

Bharat Stage norms are the automotive emission norms which the automotive manufacturers have to comply to sell their vehicles in India. These norms are applicable to all two wheelers, three wheelers, four wheelers and construction equipment vehicles.

What is ICAT?

ICAT is the premier testing and certification agency authorized by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for providing testing and certification services to the vehicle and component manufacturers in India and abroad. It has the latest equipment, facilities and capabilities to develop, validate, test and certify the engines and vehicles for the latest norms in the field of emission and many other facilities like crash lab, NVH lab, EMC lab and test tracks.

2. Education is one of the Major Catalysts of Growth and Development

The Vice President of India, Shri. M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for the revamping of our entire education system to equip our youth with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the 21st century.

Key Findings

Education is one of the major catalysts of growth and added that nations prosper only when its citizens become educated.

There is a need to aim for excellence and equity and strikes a balance between the national needs and ethos and the need to prepare our students to be among the best in the global context.

Our school system must be more child friendly and geared towards a holistic development of each child's innate faculties and that our higher education system needs to be re-engineered to bring in greater emphasis on excellence in research and teaching. The crucial responsibility of molding the future rests upon us collectively and asserted that we must not fail.

India is today a knowledge-based economy. We cannot afford to have a mediocre or qualitatively sub-optimal system of education, if we are to thrive in this rapidly changing world. He called for a much larger number of educational institutions that focus on all round development of an individual's personality. 'The head, hand and heart must develop simultaneously'.

The good quality education gave us the ability to sift the chaff from the grain and it would also liberate us from ignorance, superstition, bigotry, prejudices and narrow tunnel vision.

The intellectual brilliance must be combined with good deeds and compassionate behavior. Education is for life not merely for living so that education must be as 'transformational' and not merely 'transactional'.

3. MoU has signed between India and Maldives on Training and Capacity Building

The National Center for Good Governance (NCGG), India's leading civil services training institution, has entered into an MOU with the Maldives Civil Services Commission for capacity building of 1000 Maldives civil servants over the next 5 years. The agreement was signed during the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Male on 8th June 2019.

Key Highlights

The agreement envisages that NCGG will be the nodal institution for designing customised training modules and its implementation taking into account the requirements of the Civil Service Commission, Maldives.

The subject matters of the training program will include public administration, e-governance and service delivery, public policy and governance, information technology, best practices in fisheries in coastal areas, agro-based practices,self help group initiatives, urban development and planning, ethics in administration and challenges in implementation of SDGs.

Maldives will nominate suitable civil servants in the senior/ executive/ middle management levels as per agreed timelines.

Further the NCGG will assist the Civil Services Training Institute, a subsidiary of the Civil Service Commission, Maldives to develop training programs and materials, assist in organizing the exchange of experts as needed by the Civil Services Commission.

The Ministry of External Affairs will bear all expenses pertaining to the training program.

Background

NCGG had trained 28 Maldives Civil Servants in April 2019 and this successful engagement encouraged the two countries to take the collaboration forward. Along with that, in 2019 NCGG has also successfully conducted training programs for civil servants of Bangladesh, Myanmar, the Gambia and Maldives.

4. Future Roadmap for Food Corporation of India

The Ministery of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, has outlined a roadmap to make Food Corporation of India (FCI) a corruption free and efficient institution.

Key Highlights

The main objective of the Ministry is to ensure that not a single grain of food being produced by the hard work and labour of farmers gets wasted and all of it is procured by the government at Minimum Support Price while ensuring that corruption is completely removed.

The primacy will be given to ensuring that the functioning of FCI is streamlined and fast paced as per recommendations of the Shanta Kumar Committee. The government is planning to create 100 lakh ton silo storage capacity in the country. The reason for slow progress in construction of silos is mainly due to the necessity of having 1.5km rail siding next to the silos. Now RITES has been assigned the task of changing the silo model and they will give their recommendations in 90 days to FCI. The target for completion of remaining silos is 2021 so that the wheat procured in March 2022 can be stored in these silos.

The direct recruitment process of FCI is being made more transparent through online examination which is being done in two phases. While first phase has already been completed on 3rd June, second phase will be completed by the second week of July. Similarly, recruitment of 77 posts of category 1 and 367 posts of category 2 will begin in July.

In order to improve the usage of information technology in FCI, a Human Resource Management System (HRMS) will be implemented, the work for which will begin in August, 2019 and will be completed by August 2020. This move will benefit 22,000 employees in 196 offices of FCI.

5. World Food Safety Day

The first-ever World Food Safety Day was celebrated by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The theme for this day was 'food safety, everyone's business.'

Key Highlights

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare has appealed to all the people of India to make 'Eat Right Movement' a

'Jan Andolan' with 'Jan Bhagidhari' just as we all had come together and made India Polio-free.

Food is everyone's responsibility- let us pledge to not waste even one grain of food and ensure that in our own personal capacities and in our institutions, contribute towards food security. This will help to eliminate poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

People should adopt Gandhiji's messages of eating less, eating safe and healthy food, and also reducing waste and sharing surplus food. It needs to be used optimally and turned into a Jan Andolan.

Clean food will result in a clean body, mind and thoughts and deeds. For this people's awareness about safe and healthy food and participation is critical to make an impact on society.

FSSAI has developed the first State Food Safety Index (SFSI) to measure the performance of States on five parameters of food safety. The categories included Human Resources and Institutional Arrangements, Compliance, Food Testing- Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training and Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment. The leading states and UTs based on the ranking for the year 2018-2019 for their impressive performance were Chandigarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. States such as Bihar, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh followed close behind.

FSSAI has instituted the 'Eat Right Awards' to recognize the contribution of food companies and individuals to empower citizens to choose safe and healthy food options, which would help improve their health and well-being.

6. Swachh Bharat has led to Reduced Ground Water Contamination

According to the study which was conducted by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Swachh Bharat Mission has helped reduce groundwater contamination in the country. Swachh Bharat Mission was launched on October 2, 2014.

Key Findings

The study was based on data collected from three states -- Odisha, West Bengal, and Bihar. Groundwater samples collected from these three states suggested that villages that still reported open defecation were 11.25 times more susceptible to contaminating their groundwater resources than open-defecation-free villages. Faecal waste mixing with groundwater is more frequent in such villages as compared to open-defecation-free villages.

The study found that, in terms of faecal contamination, non-ODF villages were, on average: 11.25 times more likely to have their groundwater sources contaminated (12.7 times more from contaminants traceable to humans alone); 1.13 times more likely to have their soil contaminated; 1.48 times more likely to have food contaminated and 2.68 times more likely to have household drinking water contaminated.

The study findings indicated that these substantial reductions may potentially be attributed to the improvement in sanitation and hygiene practices, as well as supportive systems such as regular monitoring and behaviour change messaging, which have all been critical aspects of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen).

7. Training Programme for CBRN Emergencies at Kandla Port

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has conducted a basic training programme at the Deendayal Port Trust in Kandla, Gujarat. The five-day training programme, aimed at increasing the awareness and enhancing the preparedness of Seaport Emergency Handlers (SEHs) to respond to CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) emergencies at the seaports.This was the fourth in a series of such programmes that will be conducted at various seaports across the country to enable SEHs to respond suitably till the arrival of specialised response teams.

The training programme was conducted in collaboration with the Indian Ports Association (IPA), Institute of Nuclear Medicine & Allied Sciences (INMAS) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). This training programme would improve the CBRN safety at our seaports by enabling the SEHs to handle any CBRN emergency. Experts from stakeholder departments such as Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) trained the participants.

What is CBRN?

CBRN are weaponized or non-weaponized Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear materials that can cause great harm and pose significant threats in the hands of terrorists. Weaponized materials can be delivered using conventional bombs (e.g., pipe bombs), improved explosive materials (e.g., fuel oil-fertilizer mixture) and enhanced blast weapons (e.g., dirty bombs). Non-weaponized materials are traditionally referred to as Dangerous Goods (DG) or Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) and can include contaminated food, livestock and crops.

SEVEN IMPORTANT CONCEPTS THROUGH GRAPHICS

1. India in 1765

Key Facts

- During the 18th century, on the debris of the Mughal empire and its political system, rose a large number of independent and semi-independent powers such as the Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad, Mysore and Maratha kingdoms.
- Among them, the Maratha chiefs became the strongest rulers in the country in the eighteenth century. Thus, the British had to contest primarily against the Marathas for the sovereignty of India.
- Also the downfall of the Mughal Empire led to the independence of Deccan under Nizam-ul-Mulk, founder of Hyderabad state.
- Next to Hyderabad, the most important power that emerged in South India was Mysore under Haider Ali.
- In the East, taking advantage of the growing weakness of the central authority, two men Murshid Quli Khan and Alivardi Khan, made Bengal virtually independent.
- The conflict between the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daula and the English led to the Battle of Plassey held on 23 June 1757.
- Robert Clive, the Commander of the British troops emerged victorious by defeating the Nawab's army.
- The English ascendancy in Bengal proved to be the basis for the expansion of English rule in India.

- In 1764, the English once again defeated the combined forces of the Nawab of Oudh, the Mughal Emperor and the Nawab of Bengal in the Battle of Buxar. The English military superiority was decisively established. In 1765, Robert Clive was appointed as the Governor of Bengal.
- Other than political scenario, India of the 18th century failed to make progress economically, socially or culturally at an adequate pace.
- Education was not completely neglected in 18th century India. Elementary education was quite widespread. Among the Hindus it was impartd through town and villages schools while among the Muslims through the Maulvis in maktabs situated in mosques.
- Caste system was the central features of the social life of the Hindus. Muslims were no less divided by considerations of caste, race, tribe and status.
- Along with caste system, two evils namely custom of sati and the bad condition of the widows, were also present.

2. Beginning of British Rule 1772

Key Facts

- After the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the Battle of Buxar in 1764, the Company became a political power.
- In 1773, British parliament has passed Regulating Act by which Parliamentary control over companies' affair was introduced. The Act laid the foundation of a unitary type of government in British India.
- Apart from this, the governor of Bengal made the Governor General and a Supreme Court was established at Fort William.
- The Regulating Act proved to be an unsatisfactory document as it failed in its objective, hence Pitt's India Act was passed in 1784. Accordingly, the company's territories in India were called "the British possessions in India".
- In 1813, Charter Act was passed which terminated the company's monopoly over Indian trade.
- By Charter Act, 1833, Governor-general of Bengal designated as Governor-General of India. The first faint beginning of a Central Legislature for India can be traced to this act.
- Charter Act, 1853, the last of the charter acts, has opened Indian Civil Service for all.
- All the above acts have sowed the seed of discontentment among various sections of Indian population which has led to the revolt of 1857, the first war of independence.

3. Extent under British After Dalhousie 1857

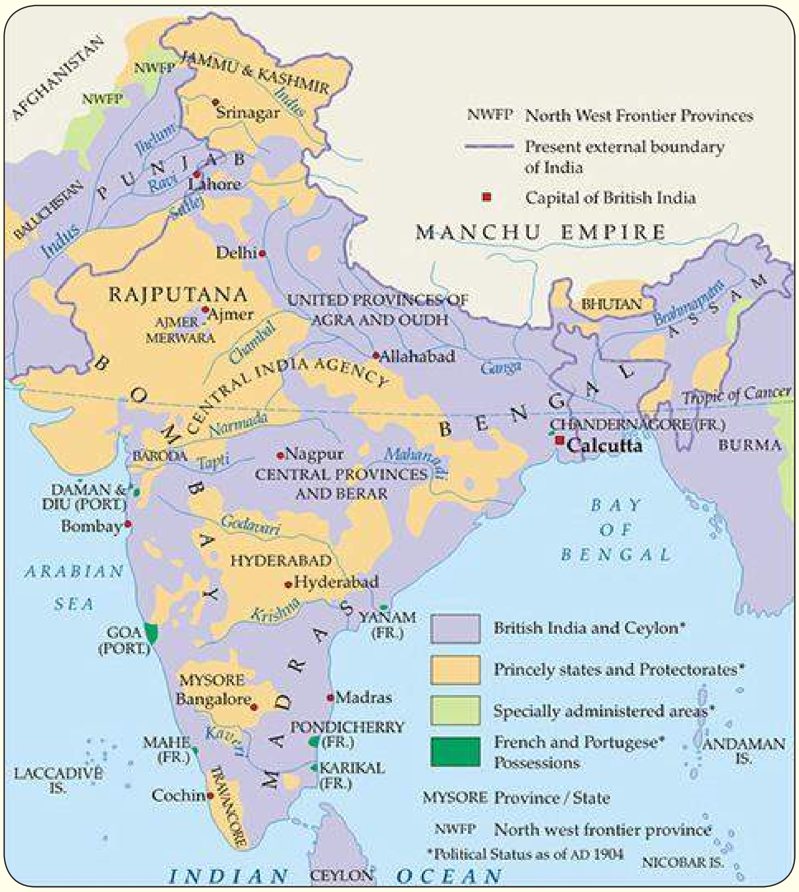
Key Facts

- The 1857 Revolt sowed the seeds of Indian nationalism. It started the movement which was a continuous struggle against the British rule till 1947.
- After the 1857 Revolt, the responsibility of ruling India was directly assumed by the British Crown. Lord Canning became the first Viceroy of India in 1858.
- The Government of India Act of 1858 and the Queen's Proclamation in the same year signify this change in the Indian administration.
- Apart from the above events, several other acts were also passed such as Vernacular Press Act, Factory Act, Ilbert Bill, Arms Act. These reforms introduced the major changes in political and social life of Indians.
- In between 1875 to 1900, the English systematically ruined the Indian trade and native industries. Therefore, economic exploitation by the British was one of the most important causes for the rise of Indian nationalism.
- In 1885, Allan Octavian Hume, a retired civil servant in the British Government founded the Indian National Congress and its first session was held at Bombay in 1885. W.C. Banerjee was its first President.
- Between 1885 and 1905, the Congress leaders were moderates. The Moderates had faith in the British justice and goodwill.
- They were called moderates because they adopted peaceful and constitutional means to achieve their demands.

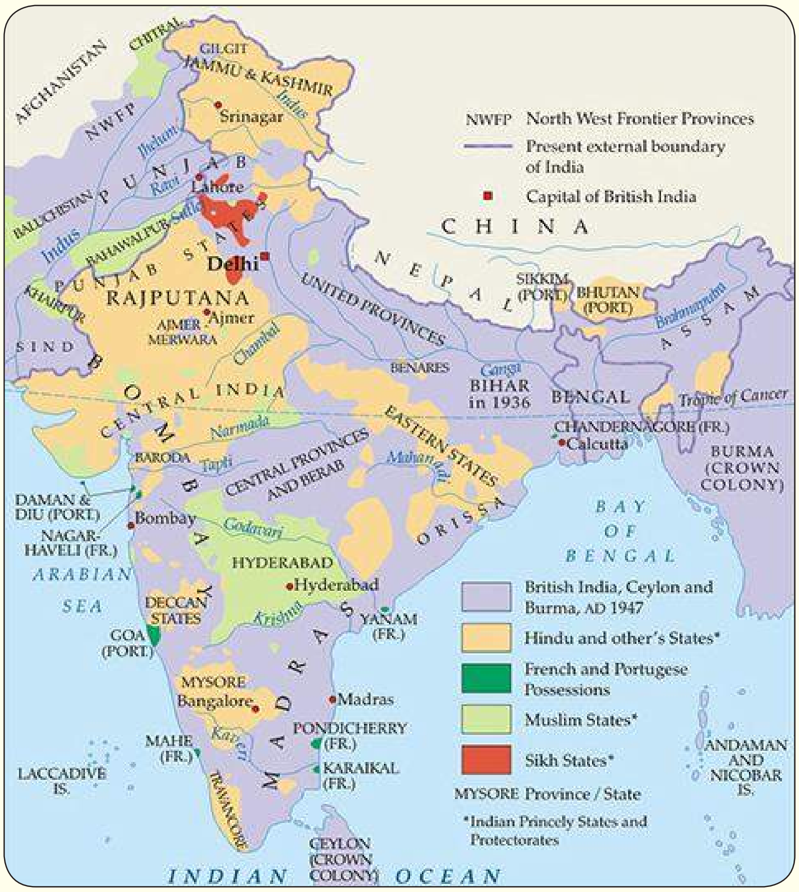
4. India in the Early Twentieth Century (1900-1913)

Key Facts

- The period from 1905 was known as the era of extremism in the Indian National Movement.
- The Partition of Bengal into two provinces was effected on 4 July 1905 which led to anti partition movement across Bengal.
- The anti-partition movement culminated into the Swadeshi Movement and spread to other parts of India.
- The differences between moderates and extremists have led to a split in the Congress at the Surat session in 1907. In 1916, the divided Congress became united again during Lucknow session of Congress and Lucknow pact was signed between Muslim League and Congress.
- In December 1906, Nawab Salimullah of Dacca founded the All-India Muslim League to look after the Muslim interests.
- By introducing Morley-Minto Reforms in 1909 (also known as Indian Council Act, 1909), British has successfully implemented Divide and Rule Policy. To pacify muslim population, the Act has introduced separate electorate for them.
- King George V at his Coronation Darbar in Delhi in December 1911 announced the revocation of the Partition of Bengal. At the same time, the Government of India has changed its capital from Calcutta to Delhi.



5. India before Independence (1913-1947)



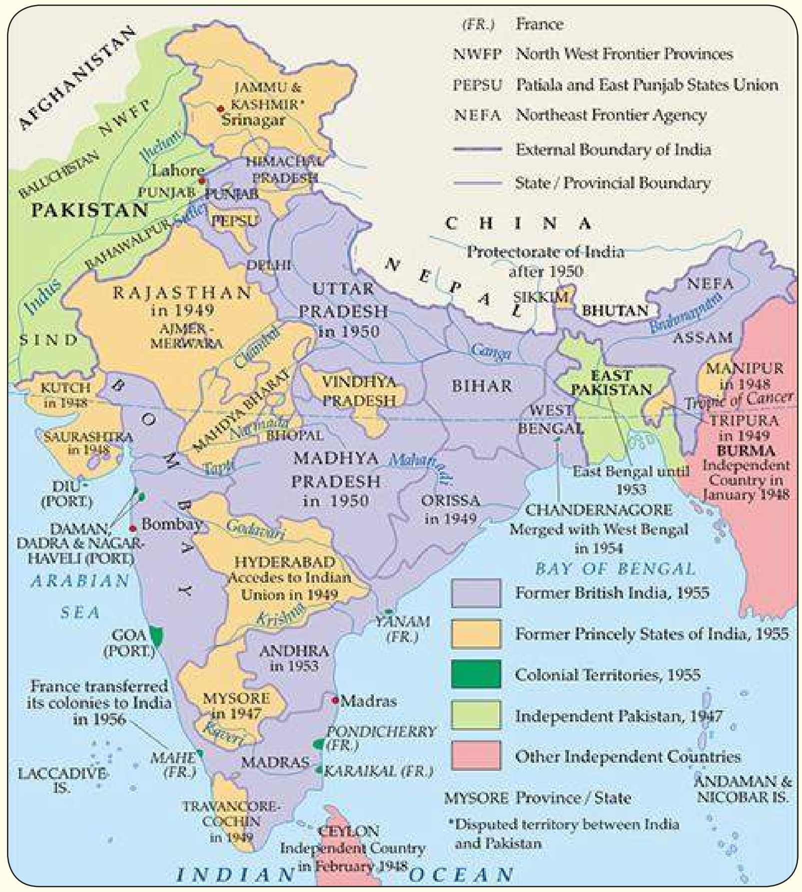
Key Facts

- Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in 1915.
- In 1918, the government announced constitutional reforms, known as Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Based on these, the Government of India Act, 1919 was enacted.
- The Rowlatt Act was passed in March 1919. In the protest of this Act, the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre took place on 13 April 1919.
- During 1919-22, the British were opposed through two mass movements- the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation. However, in 1922, Gandhi suspended the movement after the 'Chauri Chaura incident'.
- In 1928, Nehru report was drafted by the committee of major political parties of India, but the government failed to accept the Nehru Report. Thus the Congress gave a call to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- The country was again filled with hope and exhilaration and the determination to be free. Thus, the Civil Disobedience Movement was started by Gandhi on 12 March 1930 with his famous Dandi March.
- The failure of August Offer, Cripps Mission led Mahatma Gandhi to begin his campaign for the British to quit India.
- After the Second World War, Prime Minister Atlee declared that the British would quit India by June 1948 .
- On 15th August 1947 India, and on the 14th August Pakistan came into existence as two independent states.

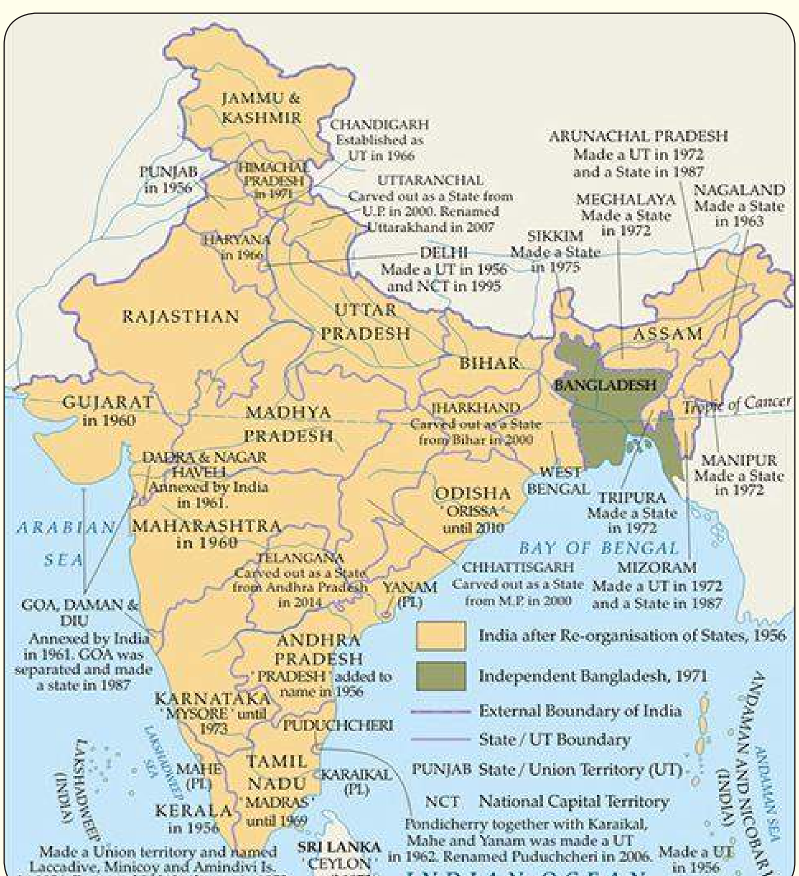
6. India after Independence (1947-1956)

Key Facts

- After the Independence in 1947, the most immediate and important tasks before the Indian leaders were the drafting of the constitution and the integration of Indian states into the Indian union.
- The Constitution came into effect on 26th January 1950.
- At the time of Independence there were 11 British provinces and nearly 566 princely states. With great skill and masterful diplomacy Sardar Vallabhai Patel succeeded in integrating the princely states with the Indian union by 15 August 1947.
- In 1948, the two commission namely S.K. Dar Commission and JVP committee, were formed to enquire into the possibility of linguistic provinces. But both commission do not favour for linguistic provinces.
- But there were popular movements for states reorganization all over the country and it was intensive in Andhra. Therefore, in 1953 Andhra was created as a separate state.
- The success of Andhra struggle encouraged other linguistic groups to agitate for their own state. In 1953, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru appointed the States Reorganization Commission.
- Based on the recommendations of States Reorganization Commission, the States Reorganization Act was passed by the Parliament in 1956. It provided for 16 states and six union territories.



7. India during 1956-2019



Key Facts

- Even after the large-scale reorganisation of the states in 1956, the political map of India underwent continuous change due to the pressure of popular agitations and political conditions.
- The demand for the creation of some more states on the basis of language or cultural homogeneity resulted in the bifurcation of existing states.
- In 1960, the state of Bombay was divided into two separate states—Maharashtra and Gujarat. Gujarat was established as the 15th state of the Indian Union.
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli was converted into a union territory of India by the 10th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1961.
- In 1987, Goa was conferred a statehood and Daman and Diu was made a separate union territory.
- On the recommendation of the Shah Commission (1966), the State of Punjab was bifurcated into Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.
- By the 36th Constitutional Amendment Act (1975), Sikkim became a full-fledged state of the Indian Union (the 22nd state).
- In 2000, three more new States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand were created out of the territories of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar respectively.
- In 2014, the state of Telangana was created out of the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh.

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 unparallel 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 evidents from success stories of the previous years.

Quite a large number of students desirous of building a career fro 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 vartly different from academic examination and call for a systematic and scientifically planned guidance by a team of experts. Here one single move my invariably put one ahead of many others who lag behind. Dhyeya IAS is manned with qualified & experrienced 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 individuals capacity to focus, learn and innovate as we are comfortably aware of the fact that you can't teach a person anything you can only help him find it within himself.

DSDL Prepare yourself from distance

Distance learning Programme, DSDL, primarily caters the need for those who are unable to come to metros fro 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 examoriented 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.

Face to Face Centres

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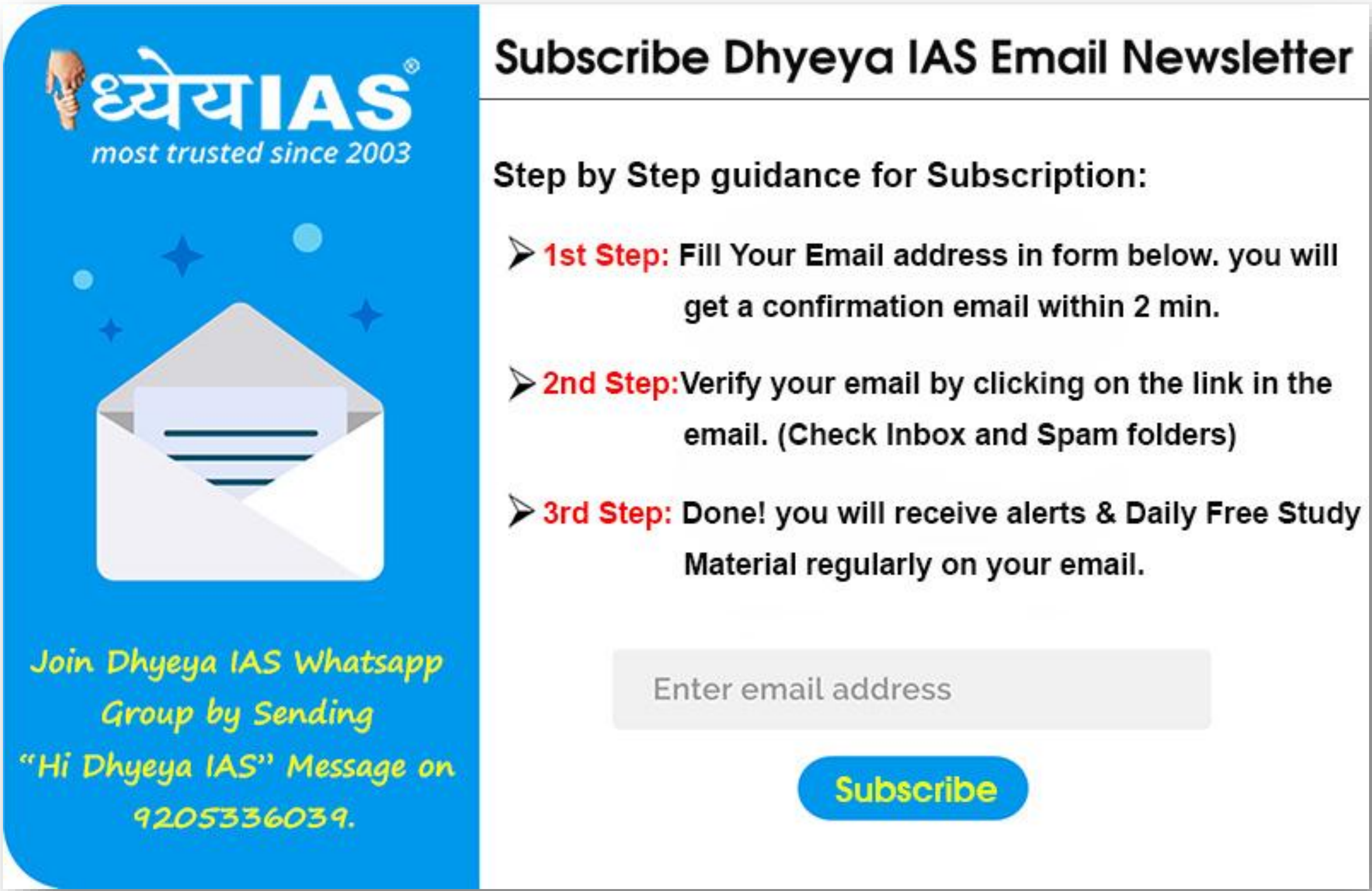
नोट (Note): अगर आपको हिंदी और अंग्रेजी दोनों माध्यम में अध्ययन सामग्री प्राप्त करनी है, तो आपको दोनों में अपनी ईमेल से Subscribe करना पड़ेगा | आप दोनों माध्यम के लिए एक ही ईमेल से जुड़ सकते हैं |



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