

PERFECT 7

**Weekly
Current Affairs**

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS



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A Trilateral Equation

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Needs Attention

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DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION



Vinay Kumar Singh
Founder & CEO

The guiding philosophy of the institute, throughout, has been creation of knowledge base. Dhyeya IAS inculcates human values and professional ethics in the students, which help them make decisions and create path that are good not only for them, but also for the society, for the nation, and for the world as whole. To fulfill its mission in new and powerful ways, each student is motivated to strive towards achieving excellence in every endeavor. It is done by making continuous improvements in curricula and pedagogical tools.

The rigorous syllabi not only instills in them, a passion for knowledge but also attempts to teach them how to apply that knowledge in real-life situations. The programmes lay emphasis on well-rounded personality development of the students and also in inculcating the values of honesty and integrity in them.



Q.H. Khan
Managing Director

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

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION



Kurban Ali
Chief Editor

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

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



Ashutosh Singh
Managing Editor

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

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

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

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

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



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

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PREFACE



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

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

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

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

Omveer Singh Chaudhary

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

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

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

Rajat Jhingan

Editor
Dhyeya IAS



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Founder & CEO	➤ Vinay Kumar Singh
Managing Director	➤ Q. H. Khan
Chief Editor	➤ Qurban Ali
Managing Editor	➤ Ashutosh Singh
Editors	➤ Omveer Singh Chaudhary ➤ Rajat Jhingan ➤ Jeet Singh ➤ Avaneesh Pandey
Editorial Support	➤ Prof. R. Kumar
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Authors	➤ Ashraf Ali ➤ Girraj Singh ➤ Hariom Singh ➤ Sneha Tiwari
Reviewers	➤ Ranjeet Singh ➤ Ramyash Agnihotri
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Graphics	➤ Vipin Singh ➤ Krishna Kumar ➤ Nikhil Kumar ➤ Ramesh Kumar ➤ Krishna Kant Mandal ➤ Mukund Patel
Office Assistants	➤ Hari Ram ➤ Raju Yadav

Content Office



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



www.dhyeyaias.com

PERFECT 7

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS

Weekly Current Affairs

JUNE 2020 | ISSUE 01

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(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

India - Nepal - China : A Trilateral Equation

Why in News?

- ◆ India's Army Chief General M.M. Naravane remarked recently, that the recent diplomatic objection made by Nepal to India's newly christened link road via the Lipulekh Pass near its trijunction with China and Nepal, was likely at the behest of "someone else".
- ◆ His inference most likely echoes the strategic thinking in New Delhi that China is fomenting friction between India and Nepal, over the access road in the disputed Kalapani territory.

Introduction

- ◆ India and Nepal have reached a flashpoint over the Kalapani territorial issue that appears to threaten the basis of their special relationship, which has nurtured open borders and the free movement of people.
- ◆ Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli took New Delhi by surprise this month with an aggressive posture on the issue, especially over the inauguration of a motorable road to the Lipulekh pass, near the disputed Kalapani area, which is used by Indian pilgrims to Kailash Mansarovar. The row over an Indian road further deepened after Nepal government has released a new map including territory on Indian maps.

- ◆ The government of India has rejected Nepal's claim that the recently inaugurated link roadlinking Dharchula in Uttarakhand to Lipulekh as part of the Mansarovar Yatra route, passes through its territory, saying the region lies completely within Indian borders. Further, the government of India has rejected Nepal's new map.
- ◆ The Lipulekh pass is a far western point near Kalapani, a disputed border area between Nepal and India. Both India and Nepal claim Kalapani as an integral part of their territory – India as part of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district and Nepal as part of Dharchula district.

Historical Background of the Kalapani Dispute

- ◆ The long running territorial dispute over the Kalapani territory in western Uttarakhand in Pithoragarh district (claimed by Nepal as a part of its Darchula district, Sudurpashchim Pradesh), owes its origins to the colonial history of the Indian sub-continent. After achieving victory in the Anglo-Nepalese War, the British East India Company received territorial concessions from the

then Kingdom of Nepal via the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816.

- ◆ The Kalapani territorial dispute is the result of this treaty, wherein, the border between India and Nepal was delineated based on the River Kali, with Nepalese territory falling on the eastern side of the river and Indian territory on the western side.
- ◆ However, there remains multiple disagreements regarding the course of the River Kali, and this forms the crux of the territorial dispute. At present, India claims the territory and maintains actual control over the region through troops it has positioned there since the 1960s.
- ◆ Multiple border management mechanisms between India and Nepal have been established to resolve territorial disputes concerning the two countries, but in spite of success in other areas, this tract of roughly 35 square kms remains unresolved.
- ◆ Back in November 2019, the dispute came into attention, when Nepal voiced concern over the inclusion of the Kalapani territory in new maps circulated by the Indian government in the aftermath of the bifurcation of the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

Domestic Politics of Nepal

- ◆ China and Nepal's bilateral relationship has been on an upward trajectory in recent times, marked by the visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the Himalayan nation in October 2019, the first by a Chinese head of state in 23 years.
- ◆ China is strategically invested in making Nepal a vital link in its Belt and Road Initiative and competes for influence with India in the country. Ever since, a unity government formed by a merger between the various communist factions of Nepal claimed power in May 2018, China has been particularly interested in ensuring its stability.
- ◆ In May this year, the Chinese ambassador to Nepal, held a sequence of consultative meetings with senior members of the different factions of the Nepal Communist Party to mediate in the ongoing power tussle within the ruling party.
- ◆ Comparatively, India – Nepal relations have been cold since 2015, owing to an economic blockade imposed by the Madheshi people along border crossings with India. The Indian government sympathized with the Madheshi community at that time, irking the political elite in Kathmandu.
- ◆ China's Recent Diplomatic and Territorial Offensives
- ◆ Beijing has markedly stepped up its efforts to reiterate its position as a global power ever since its standing in the international community was dented by its careless handling of the COVID-19 disease. The public relations blitzkrieg initiated by Chinese diplomats across the world, coupled with actions in

strategic theatres such as the South China Sea, reaffirms the notion that when totalitarian states face criticism, they respond aggressively.

- ◆ The Himalayan region is no different. The situation over Lipulekh pass could possibly be Beijing's comeback as Chinese officials have expressed similar intentions in the past. It is important to note that the link road is the result of an agreement signed between India and China in 2015. The agreement was to develop the border post on Lipulekh Pass, into a trading outpost between the two nations, so any instigation on Beijing's part needs to be carefully calculated. This maneuver would be straight out of China's playbook of passively seeking rapprochement with India, while actively working to destabilize India's strategic position in the Himalayas.
- ◆ However, at the time, Global Times, an accurate barometer of what the Chinese state is thinking on any international issue, declared that Beijing should remain "neutral" and be mindful of the "sensitivities in the India-Nepal relationship". Though China has said nothing about the road construction to Lipulekh, it has protested similar road building activity at other places on the Indian side close to the LAC, including Ladakh.
- ◆ In view of all this, Kalapani and the approach to Lipulekh has only grown in strategic importance for India, especially as relations between the two countries have remained uneven over the last few years, and China has

upped its game for influence in India's neighbourhood.

Way Forward

- ◆ Prime Minister Modi began his tenure prioritizing India's relations with its neighboring nations by outlining the 'Neighborhood First' initiative.
- ◆ Yet, the progress on the initiative has been plagued by a dogmatic bureaucracy. The political tension surrounding the Kalapani dispute demonstrates, that New Delhi cannot continue to remain complacent vis-à-vis Kathmandu's demand for resolution of the dispute.
- ◆ India and Nepal have a long-standing special relationship, and New Delhi needs to step-up its diplomatic outreach before this escalates further in the international arena. In future, the Indian strategic establishment needs to be pro-active in its dealings with neighboring countries to avoid giving any quarter to China in the region.
- ◆ Given the importance of ties with Nepal, often romanticised as one of "roti-beti" (food and marriage), India must not delay dealing with the matter, and at a time when it already has its hands full with the pandemic and a faceoff with China in Ladakh and Sikkim. <<<

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations.

Q. "The Indian strategic establishment needs to be pro-active in its dealings with neighboring countries to avoid giving any quarter to China in the region." Elaborate.

02

Mental Health during COVID-19 : Needs Attention

Why in News?

- ♦ United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged governments, civil society and health authorities to urgently address mental health needs arising from the coronavirus pandemic, warning that psychological suffering is increasing.

Background

- ♦ In January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease, COVID-19, to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. WHO stated that there is a high risk of COVID-19 spreading to other countries around the world. In March 2020, WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic. WHO and public health authorities around the world are acting to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.
- ♦ However, this time of crisis is generating stress throughout the population. The WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Use has developed a series of messages that can be used in communications to support mental and psychosocial well-being in different target groups during the outbreak.

Messages for the General Population

- ♦ COVID-19 has and is likely to affect people from many countries,

in many geographical locations. When referring to people with COVID-19, do not attach the disease to any particular ethnicity or nationality. Be empathetic to all those who are affected, in and from any country. People who are affected by COVID-19 have not done anything wrong, and they deserve our support, compassion and kindness.

- ♦ Do not refer to people with the disease as "COVID-19 cases", "victims" "COVID-19 families" or "the diseased".
- ♦ They are "people who have COVID-19", "people who are being treated for COVID-19", or "people who are recovering from COVID-19", and after recovering from COVID-19 their life will go on with their jobs, families and loved ones. It is important to separate a person from having an identity defined by COVID-19, in order to reduce stigma.
- ♦ Minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19 that causes you to feel anxious or distressed; seek information only from trusted sources and mainly so that you can take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones.
- ♦ Honour carers and healthcare workers supporting people affected with COVID-19 in your community. Acknowledge the role they play in saving lives and keeping your loved ones safe.

Messages for Healthcare Workers

- ♦ Feeling under pressure is a

likely experience for healthcare workers. It is quite normal to be feeling this way in the current situation. Stress and the feelings associated with it are by no means a reflection that they cannot do their job. Managing their mental health and psychosocial well-being during this time is as important as managing their physical health.

- ♦ Try and use helpful coping strategies such as ensuring sufficient rest and respite during work or between shifts, eat sufficient and healthy food, engage in physical activity, and stay in contact with family and friends. Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. In the long term, these can worsen your mental and physical well-being.
- ♦ The COVID-19 outbreak is a unique and unprecedented scenario for many workers, particularly if they have not been involved in similar responses. Even so, using strategies that have worked for you in the past to manage times of stress can benefit you now.
- ♦ Some healthcare workers may unfortunately experience avoidance by their family or community owing to stigma or fear.
- ♦ Use understandable ways to share messages with people

with intellectual, cognitive and psychosocial disabilities. Where possible, include forms of communication that do not rely solely on written information.

Messages for Carers of Children

- ◆ Help children find positive ways to express feelings such as fear and sadness. Every child has his or her own way of expressing emotions. Sometimes engaging in a creative activity, such as playing or drawing can facilitate this process. Children feel relieved if they can express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.
- ◆ Keep children close to their parents and family, if considered safe, and avoid separating children and their careers as much as possible. If a child needs to be separated from his or her primary career, ensure that appropriate alternative care is provided and that a social worker or equivalent will regularly follow up on the child. Further, ensure that during periods of separation, regular contact with parents and careers is maintained, such as twice-daily scheduled telephone or video calls or other age-appropriate communication (e.g. social media).

Messages for Team Leaders or Managers in Health Facilities

- ◆ Keeping all staff protected from chronic stress and poor mental health during this response means that they will have a better capacity to fulfil their roles. Be



sure to keep in mind that the current situation will not go away overnight and you should focus on longer-term occupational capacity rather than repeated short-term crisis responses.

- ◆ Manage urgent mental health and neurological complaints (e.g. delirium, psychosis, severe anxiety or depression) within emergency or general healthcare facilities. Appropriate trained and qualified staff may need to be deployed to these locations when time permits, and the capacity of general healthcare staff capacity to provide mental health and psychosocial support should be increased.

Messages for Older Adults, People with Underlying Health Conditions and their Careers

- ◆ Older adults, especially in isolation and those with

cognitive decline/dementia, may become more anxious, angry, stressed, agitated and withdrawn during the outbreak or while in quarantine. Provide practical and emotional support through informal networks (families) and health professionals.

- ◆ Share simple facts about what is going on and give clear information about how to reduce risk of infection in words older people with/without cognitive impairment can understand. Engage family members and other support networks in providing information and helping people to practice prevention measures (e.g. handwashing, etc.).

Messages for People in Isolation

- ◆ Stay connected and maintains your social networks. Try as much as possible to keep your

personal daily routines or create new routines if circumstances change. If health authorities have recommended limiting your physical social contact to contain the outbreak, you can stay connected via telephone, e-mail, social media or video conference.

- ◆ During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food. Keep things in perspective. Public health agencies and experts in all countries are working on the outbreak to ensure the availability of the best care to those affected

COVID-19 and Mental Health Crisis in India

- ◆ For a country with the highest number of poor and malnourished, and individuals with depression and anxiety, this is the perfect storm. Given that the second wave is expected, most of these deaths can be prevented.
- ◆ First, India can appoint a minister with a Cabinet rank as head of mental health and well-being, and create an emergency task force of public health experts in creating

and executing evidence-based interventions.

- ◆ Second, work on a war footing to push to implement the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, (MHCA) that promises mental health care to all and introduce a suicide prevention policy. Many countries, including China, have been able to significantly reduce suicides after they implemented a suicide prevention policy.

➤ To address the huge burden of mental disorders and shortage of qualified professionals in the field of mental health, Government of India has been implementing National Mental Health Program (NMHP) since 1982. The district Mental Health Program was added to the Program in 1996. The Program was re-strategized in 2003 to include two schemes, viz. Modernization of State Mental Hospitals and Up-gradation of Psychiatric Wings of Medical Colleges/ General Hospitals. The Manpower development scheme (Scheme-A & B) became part of the Program in 2009

- ◆ To reduce the pressure on the overworked primary and secondary mental health task force, the focus should be on self, family, community and primary care. Group psychological support

for the unemployed through non-profits and the community will help.

- ◆ Digitally-mediated therapy and telepsychiatry (NIMHANS runs a successful telepsychiatry intervention in Karnataka) should be scaled up. A mental health startup incubator (funded by the Startup India programme) should provide the necessary impetus to spawn innovations that tap technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning and chatbots.

Way Forward

- ◆ There should be a large public engagement campaign to increase help-seeking. This must be centrally driven, supported by state governments, and endorsed by influential people. Mental health and suicide should be treated as a public health crisis that needs immediate fixing. Mainstream media and social media giants can be roped in to create and spread awareness.



General Studies Paper- II

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

Q. The COVID-19 outbreak has generated mental stress across the global population. Discuss how the governments are responding to it.

03

Global Nutrition Report 2020 : An Overview

Why in News?

- ◆ The 2020 Global Nutrition Report looks beyond global and national patterns, revealing significant inequalities in nutrition outcomes within countries and populations. Based on the best-available data, in-depth analysis and expert opinion rooted in evidence, the report identifies critical actions to achieve nutrition equity. Everyone deserves access to healthy, affordable food and quality nutrition care.

About the Report

- ◆ The Global Nutrition Report was conceived following the first Nutrition for Growth Initiative Summit (N4G) in 2013 as a mechanism for tracking the commitments made by 100 stakeholders spanning governments, aid donors, civil society, the UN and businesses. The following year, the first of these annual reports was published.
- ◆ Today, the Global Nutrition Report is the world's leading independent assessment of the state of global nutrition. It is data-led and produced independently each year to cast a light on where progress has been made and identify where challenges remain.
- ◆ The report aims to inspire governments, civil society and private stakeholders to act to end malnutrition in all its forms.

GLOBAL TARGETS

World Health Assembly Global Nutrition Targets 2025

Stunting



TARGET: 40% reduction in the number of children under-5 who are stunted

Overweight



TARGET: No increase in childhood overweight

Anemia



TARGET: 50% reduction of anemia in women of reproductive age

Breastfeeding



TARGET: Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding the first 6 months up to at least 50%

Low birth weight



TARGET: 30% reduction in low birth weight

Wasting



TARGET: Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5% from 8% by 2025

It also plays the important role of helping hold stakeholders to account on the commitments they have made towards tackling malnutrition.

- ◆ The Global Nutrition Report's emphasis on nutritional well-being for all, particularly the most vulnerable, has a heightened significance in the face of this new global threat. The need for more equitable, resilient and sustainable food and health systems has never been more urgent.
- ◆ The 2020 Global Nutrition Report reports on country-level progress towards eight of the ten 2025 global nutrition targets: anemia, low birth weight, exclusive breastfeeding, childhood stunting, childhood wasting, childhood overweight (including obesity), adult obesity (men, women) and adult diabetes (men,

women). Progress is not assessed at the country level for salt intake and raised blood pressure, due to lack of comparable projections.

Vision: A world free from malnutrition in all its forms.

- ◆ **Mission:** The Global Nutrition Report drives greater action to end malnutrition in all its forms.

Key Findings

- ◆ The Global Nutrition Report calls on governments, businesses and civil society to step up efforts to address malnutrition in all its forms and tackle injustices in food and health systems.
- ◆ Everyone deserves access to healthy, affordable food and quality nutrition care. This access is hindered by deeper inequities that arise from unjust systems and processes that structure everyday living conditions.

- ◆ Today, one in every nine people in the world is hungry, and one in every three is overweight or obese. More and more countries experience the double burden of malnutrition, where under nutrition coexists with overweight, obesity and other diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
- ◆ Poor diets and resulting malnutrition are among the greatest current societal challenges, causing vast health, economic and environmental burdens. To fix the global nutrition crisis equitably, we must shift our approach dramatically in two ways: focusing on food and health.
- ◆ The intensified drive needed to meet global targets and end malnutrition is the collective responsibility of all sectors and countries. Domestic funding by country governments is crucial to ensure sustained improvements. At the same time, the international donor community has a duty to step up where governments lack the resources to respond effectively.
- ◆ Food is an important global issue – crucial to health, equity, sustainability, economies and livelihoods. Increased global recognition that governments, businesses and civil society are accountable for healthier and more equitable food and health systems provides an opportunity for us to invest in nutrition to preserve our future. Over

the next two years, there are key opportunities to priorities nutrition in policy agendas and to rethink our food and health systems. These include the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G), the 2020 UN Climate Change Conference (to be held in 2021) and the 2021 Food Systems Summit.

Indian Nutrition Profile

- ◆ India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025. India is also the country with the highest rates of domestic inequalities in malnutrition.
- ◆ India experiences a malnutrition burden among its under-five population. As of 2015, the national prevalence of under-five overweight is 2.4%, which has increased slightly from 1.9% in 2006. The national prevalence of under-five stunting is 37.9%, which is greater than the developing country average of 25%. India's under-five wasting prevalence of 20.8% is also greater than the developing country average of 8.9%.
- ◆ In India, 54.9% of infants under 6 months are exclusively breastfed. There is insufficient data on low birth weight.
- ◆ India's adult population also faces a malnutrition burden. 51.4% of women of reproductive age have anemia, and 9.1% of adult men have diabetes, compared to 8.3% of women. Meanwhile, 5.1% of women and 2.7% of men have obesity.

- ◆ India is identified as among the three worst countries, along with Nigeria and Indonesia, for steep within-country disparities on stunting, where the levels varied four-fold across communities. Stunting level in Uttar Pradesh is over 40% and their rate among individuals in the lowest income group is more than double those in the highest income group at 22.0% and 50.7%, respectively. In addition, stunting prevalence is 10.1% higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. The same applies for overweight and obesity, where there are nearly double as many obese adult females than there are males (5.1% compared to 2.7%).
- ◆ India is off course to meet the global targets for all indicators analysed with adequate data. There is insufficient target data to assess India's progress for under-five overweight, infant exclusive breastfeeding, and low birth weight.

Way Forward

- ◆ To ensure that healthy and sustainably produced food is the most accessible, affordable and desirable choice for all, sectors must work together to mainstream nutrition into all elements of the food system.
- ◆ Implement strong regulatory and policy frameworks to support healthier diets for all at country and community level and across sectors, from production to consumption.

- ♦ Optimize agricultural subsidies and increase public investment for producing a broader range of more diverse and healthier foods.

Global Nutrition Targets 2025

- In 2012, the World Health Assembly identified six nutrition targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition to be met by 2025. These require governments to reduce stunting by 40% in children under 5 and prevalence of anaemia by 50% among women in the age group of 19-49 years, ensure 30% reduction in low-birth weight and no increase in childhood overweight, increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50% and reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%.
- ♦ Provide support for public transport schemes and shorter supply chains for fresh-food delivery products, particularly to the most nutritionally disadvantaged or harder-to-reach groups.
- ♦ To save lives and cut healthcare costs, sectors must work in collaboration to mainstream nutrition as a basic health service through leveraging existing infrastructure and introducing new technologies.
- ♦ Roll out nutrition services within health services by developing costed nutrition care plans that should be scaled up and sustained to cover all forms of malnutrition, including overweight, obesity and other diet-related NCDs.



- ♦ Invest in human resources to increase the number of qualified nutrition professionals and level-out access to quality nutrition care.
- ♦ Use a variety of health professionals and workers to alleviate inequities in access, and enhance their performance through educational and development opportunities.
- ♦ Include nutrition-related health products like therapeutic foods and innovative technological solutions like digital nutrition counseling, where appropriate – especially when working with more remote and harder-to-reach communities.
- ♦ Sectors must work in partnership to develop complementary funding and accountability mechanisms focused on directing resources and programs to the communities and people most affected by malnutrition.
- ♦ Increase domestic financing to respond to the needs of communities most affected by malnutrition – including under nutrition, as well as overweight, obesity and other diet-related NCDs.
- ♦ Invest in data management systems to strengthen data on financial flows, enabling alignment with national nutrition priorities.
- ♦ Increase international nutrition financing and coordination, targeting populations most in need – especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries and in those with limited possibility for domestic resource mobilization.

General Studies Paper- II

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

Q. "Poor diets and resulting malnutrition are among the greatest current societal challenges, causing vast health, economic and environmental burdens." Discuss it in the context of 'Global Nutrition Report 2020'.

04

Cooperative Banks under SARFAESI Ambit

Why in News?

- Recently, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court (SC) brought cooperative banks under a stringent 2002 law that empowers lenders to seize and sell defaulters' assets, in a boost for these institutions that play a vital role in financial inclusion across large swathes of India.
- The SC held that cooperative banks established under a State law or multi-State level societies come within the ambit of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act of 2002.

SC: Cooperative Banks can use SARFAESI Act



Court too had in 2007 directed that cooperative banks cannot be included under the Recovery of Debt and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 as they are governed by the Multi-State Cooperative Society Act.

provide services such as savings and loans to non-members as well as to members and some participate in the wholesale markets for bonds, money and even equities.

Background

- The recent crisis surrounding Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank Ltd. and other such lenders exposed the vulnerability of cooperative banks, after the central bank superseded the lenders' boards after uncovering several irregularities.
- The Union Cabinet, in February 2020, approved an amendment to the Banking Regulation Act to bring multi-state cooperative banks under the watch of the central bank and prevent a repeat of Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank-like crisis.
- So far, there was a difference of opinion among various High Courts on this issue. The Supreme Court too had in 2007 directed that cooperative banks cannot be included under the Recovery of Debt and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 as they are governed by the Multi-State Cooperative Society Act.
- There are 1,540 cooperative banks with a depositor base of 8.60 crore having total savings of about Rs 5 lakh crore. The proposed law seeks to enforce banking regulation guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in cooperative banks, while administrative issues will still be guided by Registrar of Cooperatives.

Cooperative Banks

- Cooperative banks are owned by their customers and follow the cooperative principle of one person, one vote.
- Cooperative banks are often regulated under both banking and cooperative legislation. They

- Many cooperative banks are traded on public stock markets, with the result that they are partly owned by non-members.
- Member control is diluted by these outside stakes, so they may be regarded as semi-cooperative.
- The reference to the question of law on the applicability of the 2002 Act in the cooperative banking sector was made to the Constitution Bench in 2016.
- According to an RBI report, there were 1,551 urban cooperative banks as on 31 March 2018, and 96,612 rural cooperative banks as on 31 March 2017, with the latter accounting for 65.8% of the total asset size of all cooperative banks.

Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Act of 2002 (SARFAESI Act)

- ◆ The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 (also known as the SARFAESI Act) is an Indian law. It allows banks and other financial institution to auction residential or commercial properties (of Defaulter) to recover loans. The first asset reconstruction company (ARC) of India, ARCIL, was set up under this act.
- ◆ Under this act secured creditors (banks or financial institutions) have many rights for enforcement of security interest under section 13 of SARFAESI Act, 2002.
- ◆ If borrower of financial assistance makes any default in repayment of loan or any installment and his account is classified as Non-

performing Asset by secured creditor, then secured creditor may require before expiry of period of limitation by written notice.

- ◆ The SARFAESI Act, which is now rarely being used after the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has come into existence since 2016, allows banks to seize, take control, manage and sell assets of defaulting borrowers without the intervention of any court/tribunal and also ensures speedy recovery.
- ◆ SARFAESI Act allows secured creditors to take possession of the assets of a borrower who fails to pay dues within 60 days of demanding repayment.
- ◆ According to the judges, 'the co-operative banks are involved in banking activities and they accept money from the public, repayable on demand or otherwise and withdrawal by

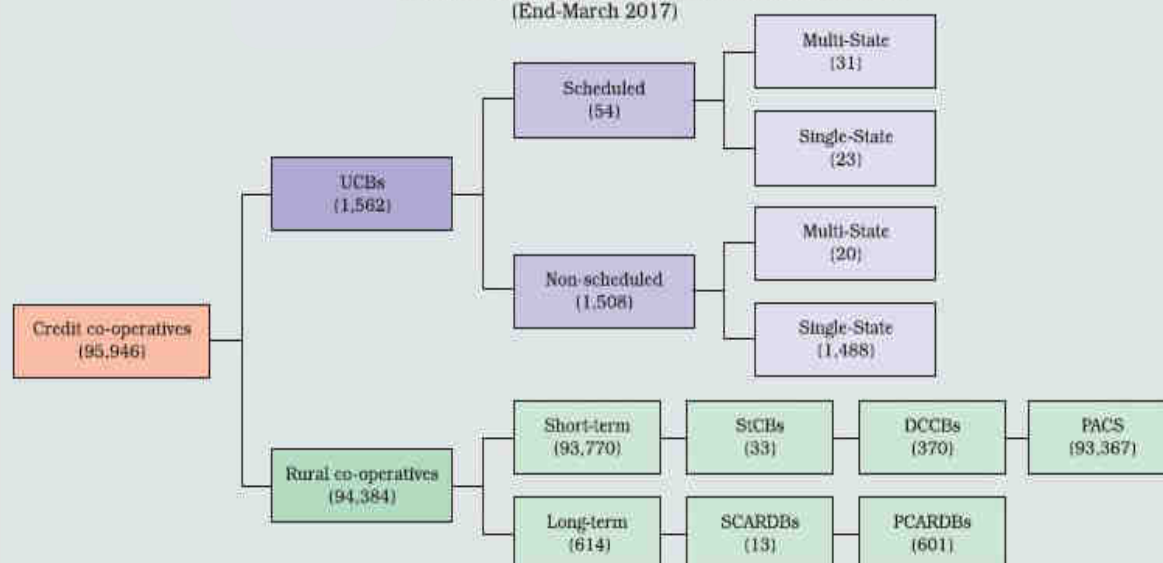
cheque, draft, order or otherwise. Merely by the fact that lending of money is limited to members, they cannot be said to be out of the purview of banking. They perform commercial functions. A society shall receive deposits and loans from members and other persons. They give loans also, and it is their primary function. Thus, they are covered under 'banking' in Entry 45 of List I."

The Judgment

- ◆ The case had been referred to the constitution bench after earlier conflicting decisions on this issue emerged in the cases of Greater Bombay Coop. Bank Ltd. v. United Yarn Tex (P) Ltd and Union of India and Anr. v. Delhi High Court Bar Association.
- ◆ The court held that recovery was an essential part of banking. Cooperative banks come within

the definition of "Banking Company" under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and Parliament can enact a law as the activity of banking done by cooperative banks is within the purview of Entry 45 of List I of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Structure of Co-operative Credit Institutions in India
(End-March 2017)



StCBs: State Co-operative Banks; DCCBs: District Central Co-operative Banks; PACS: Primary Agricultural Credit Societies; SCARDBs: State Co-operative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks; PCARDBs: Primary Co-operative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks.

Notes: 1. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of institutions at end-March 2017 for UCBs and at end-March 2016 for rural co-operatives.

2. For rural co-operatives, the number of co-operatives refers to reporting co-operatives.

- ◆ The judgment has remedied the “malady of inordinate delay” in recovery of dues through civil courts and cooperative tribunals. By declaring that the banks would come under the purview of the SARFAESI Act, the apex court has put a judicial stamp on the quicker recovery of dues by these banks.
 - ◆ Apex court also says cooperative banks involved in banking activities are covered u/s 5(c) & 56(a) of the Banking Regulation Act.
 - ◆ The apex court rejected the stand of defaulters that Parliament lacks legislative competence to regulate financial assets related to the nonbanking activity of a cooperative society as they are expressly excluded from the purview of Entry 43 of List I. They had argued SARFAESI Act, which is the central legislation, was not applicable to cooperative banks formed under state law, as there already was a mechanism for recovery under those state legislations. Also, the Act was applicable to a company engaged in banking, and not a cooperative society engaged in banking.
 - ◆ The ruling was given by a bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra. The other judges on the bench that delivered recent’s judgment include Justice Indira Banerjee, Justice Vineet Saran, Justice MR Shah and Justice Aniruddha Bose.
- Advantages to Cooperative Banks**
- ◆ Prior to this, cooperative banks had to approach civil court or tribunals for recovery of dues. The SARFAESI Act brought a procedure through which recoveries could be made by banks without the intervention of the court/tribunal.
 - ◆ The apex court’s judgment notes that the aim behind this move was to remove the delays caused by going through the civil court or summary procedure under the Cooperative Societies Act.
- Way Forward**
- ◆ Recognizing that cooperative banks can have SARFAESI rights should enable cooperatives get better control over handling defaults and on the negotiation table with defaulters. It was an unnecessary handicap on an important part of the credit system.
- ◆ In 2013, the Gujarat High Court had, while hearing a challenge to the amendment of Banking Regulation Act of 1949, to include cooperative societies as financial institutions, ruled it null and void. The Delhi High Court had, on the other hand, ruled that the cooperative banks and societies were for all purposes banks and financial institutions and thus were allowed to use SARFAESI to make recoveries against defaulters.
 - ◆ In this latest judgment, the apex court held that all such cooperative banks involved in the activities related to banking are covered within the meaning of ‘banking company’. Thus the confusion over the status of Cooperative Banks being settled and the question over the legislative power of parliament on state list is also put to rest. 🔄🔄🔄

General Studies Paper- III

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

Q. What is the significance of the recent judgment of Supreme Court with respect to extending SARFAESI Act of 2002 to Cooperative Banks?

05

A More Resilient Economy : An Opportunity by COVID-19

Why in News?

- ◆ When complex systems come to catastrophes, i.e. critical points of instability, they re-emerge in distinctly new forms, according to the science of complex systems.
- ◆ The COVID-19 global pandemic is a catastrophe, both for human lives and for economies. Economists cannot predict in what form the economy will emerge from it. It has provided humanity an opportunity to create a more resilient economy and a more just society.

Introduction

- ◆ The pandemic of COVID is a watershed moment in the way we look at the world. Truly, the future vocabularies will consist of 'Pre COVID world' and 'Post COVID world'. Undoubtedly, the economic system shall be deeply affected by the COVID wave.
- ◆ In April 2020, India's manufacturing and services sectors recorded the sharpest contraction among the world's top 10 economies.
- ◆ The purchasing managers' index (PMI) for services, a popular reading released by London-based IHS Markit, stood at 5.4 last month, down from 49.3 in March. A PMI reading below 50 means contraction.
- ◆ The PMI for the manufacturing sector fell from 51.8 in March to 27.4 in April.
- ◆ The steep drop in services activity, which accounts for 52% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is particularly worrying.
- ◆ Historical comparisons with GDP data suggest that India's economy contracted at an annual rate of

15% in April. It is clear that the economic damage of the COVID-19 pandemic has so far been deep and far-reaching in India

- ◆ The composite PMI Index, which combines services and manufacturing activities, dropped to a record low of 7.2 in April, compared with 50.6 in March.
- ◆ The focus of this article is to redesign our economy through new 7 golden rules in the aftermath of COVID-19. As we read these ideas we also come across the faults that lie at the bottom of the present system. This is our opportunity to design a resilient and just system.

Seven Golden Rules

- ◆ The COVID-19 catastrophe has challenged the tenets of economics that have dominated public policy for the past 50 years. Here are seven radical ideas emerging as pathways to build a more resilient economy and a more just society.

i) **De-Growth-** The obsession with GDP as the supreme goal of progress has been challenged often, but its challengers were dismissed as a loony fringe. Now, Nobel laureates in economics (Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and others) are calling upon their profession to rethink the fundamentals of economics, especially the purpose of GDP. A five-point 'de-growth' manifesto by 170 Dutch academics has gone viral amidst the heightened Internet buzz during the lockdown.

ii) **Boundaries between Countries are Good-** Boundary-lessness is a mantra for hyper-globalisers. Boundaries, they say, impede flows of trade, finance, and people.

Therefore, removing boundaries is good for global growth. However, since countries are at different stages of economic development, and have different compositions of resources, they must follow different paths to progress. According to systems' theory, sub-systems within complex systems must have boundaries around them, albeit appropriately permeable ones, so that the sub-systems can maintain their own integrity and evolve.

iii) **Government is Good-** Ronald Reagan's dictum, "Government is not the solution... Government is the problem", has been up-ended by COVID-19. Even capitalist corporations who wanted governments out of the way to make it easy for them to do business are lining up for government bailouts.

iv) **The "Market" is not the Best Solution-** Money is a convenient currency for managing markets and for conducting transactions. Whenever goods and services are left to markets, the dice is loaded against those who do not have money to obtain what they need. Moreover, by a process of "cumulative causation", those who have money and power can acquire even more in markets. The "marketization" of economies has contributed to the increasing inequalities in wealth over the last 50 years, which Thomas Piketty and others have documented.

v) **"Citizen" Welfare, not "Consumer" Welfare-** It must be the objective of progress. In economies, human beings are consumers and producers. In societies, they are

citizens. Citizens have a broader set of needs than consumers. Citizens' needs cannot be fulfilled merely by enabling them to consume more goods and services. They value justice, dignity, and societal harmony too.

vi) Competition must be Restrained-

Collaboration is essential for progress. Faith in "Darwinian competition", with the survival of only the fittest, underlies many pathologies of modern societies and economies. From school onwards, children are taught to compete. Companies must improve their competitive abilities. Nations too. Further progress, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for example, will require collaboration among scientists in different disciplines, and among diverse stakeholders, and collaboration among sovereign countries. Improvement in abilities to share and govern common resources have become essential for human survival in the 21st century.

vii) Intellectual Property belongs to the Public-

The Earth's resources must be conserved. We are living in an era of knowledge. Just as those who owned more land used to have more power before, now those who own knowledge have more power and wealth than the rest. Intellectual property monopolies are producing enormous wealth for their owners, though many were developed on the back of huge public investments.

Purpose behind Economic Activities

- ◆ The paradigm shift necessary after the crisis will not be easy. There will be resistance to shifts in social, economic, and political power towards those who have less from those who have more within the present paradigm.
- ◆ The financial crisis of 2008 was a crisis of liquidity in the system. Recovery was achieved by putting more fuel into the system. The system then moved on; in basically the same shape it was before. COVID-19 has revealed structural weaknesses in the global economy. Putting fuel in the tank will not be sufficient. The vehicle must be redesigned too. While global attention understandably is focused on relief and recovery, this is the time to design for resilience.
- ◆ The economic system cannot be redesigned by domain experts devising solutions within their silos. Such as, trade experts recommending new trade policies, intellectual property experts recommending reforms of intellectual property rights, and industry experts recommending industry policies. All the pieces must fit together. Most of all, they must fit into the new paradigm, which will be very different to the one in which the experts had developed their domain knowledge.

- ◆ Innovations are required at many levels to create a more resilient and just world. Innovation is essential in the overall design of the economy. Innovations will be required in business models too, not just for business survival but also to move businesses out of the 20th century paradigm that "the business of business must be only business". Changes will also be necessary in our life patterns, our work and consumption habits, and in our personal priorities.

Way Forward

- ◆ Countries are aiming for recovery while providing relief from COVID-19. This is the time to imagine the shape in which we want our economies and societies to emerge. Without a vision, economies will merely regain their old forms, with all their fragilities and inequities. Post-covid, one can envision capitalism morphing into socialism; governance moving from the global to the national and local levels; and a realization of the power of communities. ⏪ ⏩ ⏴ ⏵

General Studies Paper- III

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

Q. "The COVID-19 pandemic has been a catastrophe both for human lives and economies. It has provided humanity an opportunity to create a more resilient economy and a more just society." Comment.

06

Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan : Turning Crisis into Opportunity

Why in News?

- The government of India has rolled out Rs. 20,00,000 crore stimulus package, labelled 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', aimed at spurring growth and building a self-reliant India.
- The Union Finance Minister has further spelt out the whole package into five tranches.

Introduction

- The programme encompasses earlier packages announced by the government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), adding that bold reforms are needed to make the country self-reliant so that crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic can be overcome in future.
- The package will focus on land, labour, liquidity and laws, and will cater to various sectors including the cottage industries, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the working class, middle class and industry, among others. The package will also focus on empowering the poor, labourers and migrant workers, both in the organised and unorganised sectors. It will seek to increase efficiency and ensure quality.
- Initiatives unveiled by the Finance Minister targeting key sectors of MSME, discoms and real estate as part of the 'Stimulus Package 2.0' will enable them to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus crisis. The measures will infuse liquidity in the market and inject a fresh lease of life in distressed MSMEs.
- This is further strengthened by the boost given to Non-Banking Financial Institutions (NBFCs)/ housing finance companies and micro-finance institutions wherein they have been permitted to buy

Existing and Revised Definition of MSMEs

Existing MSME Classification			
Criteria : Investment in Plant & Machinery or Equipment			
Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Mfg. Enterprises	Investment < Rs. 25 lac	Investment < Rs. 5 cr.	Investment < Rs. 10 cr.
Services Enterprise	Investment < Rs. 10 lac	Investment < Rs. 2 cr.	Investment < Rs. 5 cr.
Revised MSME Classification			
Composite Criteria : Investment And Annual Turnover			
Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Manufacturing & Services	Investment < Rs. 1 cr. and Turnover < Rs. 5 cr.	Investment < Rs. 10 cr. and Turnover < Rs. 50 cr.	Investment < Rs. 20 cr. and Turnover < Rs. 100 cr.

debt payable documents under full guarantee from the Government of India.

- As a result, it will not only provide liquidity but generate jobs and enable the journey towards realisation of 'atmanirbhar bharat' motto.

The Package

First Tranche - Business including MSMEs

- The first tranche of an economic relief plan whose primary focus was to alleviate the sweeping distress in the MSMEs sector that lies at the heart of the industrial ecosystem and employs an estimated 11 crore persons, including much of the country's migrant workforce.
- While the 16 specific announcements announced in the first tranche cut across sectors that range from MSME and Non Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) to real estate and power distribution and the salaried, the overarching theme was that of infusing liquidity. And engineering a pass-through effect that ultimately puts more disposable funds in the hands of both entrepreneurs and employees.
- Collateral free loans will be offered to MSMEs. The loans

worth Rs 3 lakh crore will be given that have turnover of over Rs 100 crore. These loans will have 4-year tenure and a total of 45 lakh MSME units will benefit from the same. For the first 12 months, there will be no principal repayment for this loan.

Change in MSME Definition

- For micro units, the investment limit has been raised to Rs 1 crore from Rs 25 lakh. Turnover limit has been introduced at Rs 5 crore.
- Businesses with investment of up to Rs 20 crore and turnover of up to Rs 100 crore will be termed as medium enterprises.
- Companies with investment of up to Rs 10 crore and turnover of up to Rs 50 crore will be termed as small enterprises.

Second Tranche— For Poor, Migrants and Farmers

- Second tranche has focused on three measures for the distressed migrant workers. Firstly, migrant workers, who are neither National Food Security Act (NFSA) nor State Card beneficiaries in the state they are stationed, will be provided 5 kg of grains per person and 1 kg Chana per family per month free for two months.

- ◆ Union Finance Minister also announced the 'One Nation One Ration card' scheme under which migrants will be enabled to access Public Distribution System from any Fair Price Shop in the country by March 2021. This is part of the PM's Technology-Driven System Reforms.

Third Tranche - Agriculture

- ◆ Union Finance Minister has announced 11 measures for the agriculture sector. However, most of these measures are either in place already or the government has been discussing these for several years.
- ◆ Out of the 11 announcements, three concern governance and administrative reforms, including amendment of the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955, and agriculture marketing reforms through a Central law. These have been part of successive Union Budgets under the government.
- ◆ The government also announced the setting up of a Rs 1 lakh crore Agri Infrastructure Fund; the formalisation of Micro Food Enterprises, with an outlay of Rs 10,000 crore; a vaccination drive against food and mouth disease among cattle; extension of the Operation Greens from tomatoes, onion and potatoes to all fruits and vegetables; help for fishermen through the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana; a Rs 15,000-crore Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund; Rs 4,000 crore for promotion of herbal cultivation; and a Rs 500 crore scheme to promote beekeeping.

Fourth Tranche – New Horizons of Growth

- ◆ The fourth tranche of economic package were either a new push to old reforms proposals or an aggregation of earlier decisions. The latter includes: commercial coal mining; coal gasification projects; building a hub for aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO); privatisation of airports, and optimisation of Indian airspace.
- ◆ The renewed push for commercial mining is a proposal over two years old. A way to auction coal mines/blocks for sale of coal under the provisions of the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015, and the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, it was approved by the government in early 2018 and an order was issued on February 27, 2018. Subsequently, the Coal Ministry said it had identified "15 large coal blocks" for the pilot round of bidding in December that year.

Fifth Tranche- Government Reforms and Enablers

- ◆ The Centre has devolved ₹46,038 crore of taxes in April to states even though actual revenue shows unprecedented decline from Budget Estimates.
- ◆ Revenue deficit grants of ₹12,390 crore were given to states on time in April and May despite the Centre's stressed resources.
- ◆ Also, advance release of the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) of ₹11,092 crore happened in first week of April, she said adding that a release of over ₹4,113 crore from

the health ministry for direct anti-COVID activities was also released.

- ◆ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased Ways and Means Advance limits of states by 60 per cent. Also, the number of days state can be in continuous overdraft has been increased from 14 days to 21 days and the number of days state can be in overdraft in a quarter has been increased from 32 to 50 days.
- ◆ Further, the Centre has agreed to raise the borrowing limit of states from 3 per cent of gross state domestic product (GSDP) to 5 per cent in 2020-21, to make available an extra of ₹4.28 lakh crore.

Way Forward

- ◆ The Government has made a bold move. It is a make or break opportunity for the country. The challenge facing the country has made us witness politically difficult labour reforms being also undertaken at the state level. A 10% of GDP stimulus package, if implemented well, can transform the face of India.

General Studies Paper- II

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

General Studies Paper- III

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

Q. What are the major steps taken by government for MSME sector in order to spurring growth and building a self-reliant India by 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan'?

07

Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 : An Analysis

Why in News?

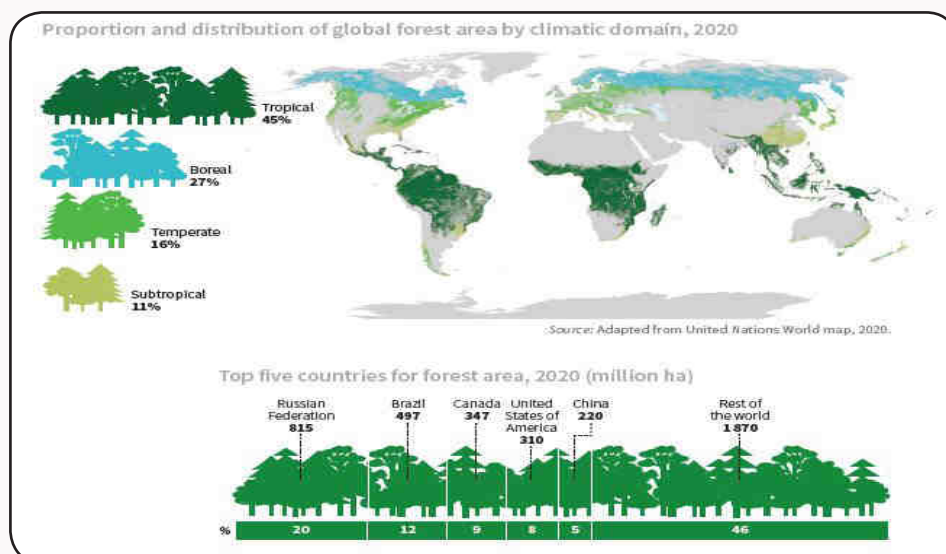
- Globally deforestation continues, albeit at a slower rate, with 10 million hectares a year being converted to other uses since 2015, down from 12 million hectares a year in the previous five years, according to the key findings of a flagship report, Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 (FRA 2020), that is conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) every five years.
- The key findings of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 (FRA 2020) have been released together with an interactive publication called "A Fresh Perspective: Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020."

About FRA

- The FRA 2020 has examined the status of, and trends in, more than 60 forest-related variables in 236 countries and territories in the period 1990–2020.

Forest Carbon Stock

- Most forest carbon is found in the living biomass (44 percent) and soil organic matter (45 percent), with the remainder in dead wood and litter. The total carbon stock in forests decreased from 668 gigatonnes in 1990 to 662 gigatonnes in 2020; carbon density increased slightly over the same period, from 159 tonnes to 163 tonnes per ha.



- FRA is the mechanism for collecting data on two forest-related indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 2015. Specifically, data submitted to FRA contribute to reporting on SDG indicator 15.1.1 (forest area as a proportion of total land area in 2015) and indicator 15.2.1 (progress towards sustainable forest management).

Deforestation

- FAO defines deforestation as the conversion of forest to other land uses (regardless of whether it is human-induced). "Deforestation" and "forest area net change" are not the same: the latter is the sum of all forest losses (deforestation) and all forest gains (forest expansion) in a given period. Net change, therefore, can be positive or negative, depending on whether gains exceed losses, or vice versa.

Key Highlights

Total Forest Area

- The world's total forest area was 4.06 billion hectares (bha), which was 31 per cent of the total land area. This area was equivalent to 0.52 ha per person.
- While forest area has declined all across the world in the past three decades, the rate of forest loss has declined due to the growth of sustainable management.

Forest Loss

- The world lost 178 mha of forest since 1990, an area the size of Libya, according to the report.
- Decline in Rate of Forest Loss
- The rate of net forest loss decreased substantially during 1990–2020 due to a reduction in deforestation in some countries, plus increases in forest area in others.

through afforestation and the natural expansion of forests.

- ♦ The rate of net forest loss declined from 7.8 mha per year in the decade 1990–2000 to 5.2 mha per year in 2000–2010 and 4.7 mha per year in 2010–2020.
- ♦ The rate of forest loss in 2015–2020 declined to an estimated 10 million hectares (mha), down from 12 million hectares (mha) in 2010–2015.

Regions with Forest Loss

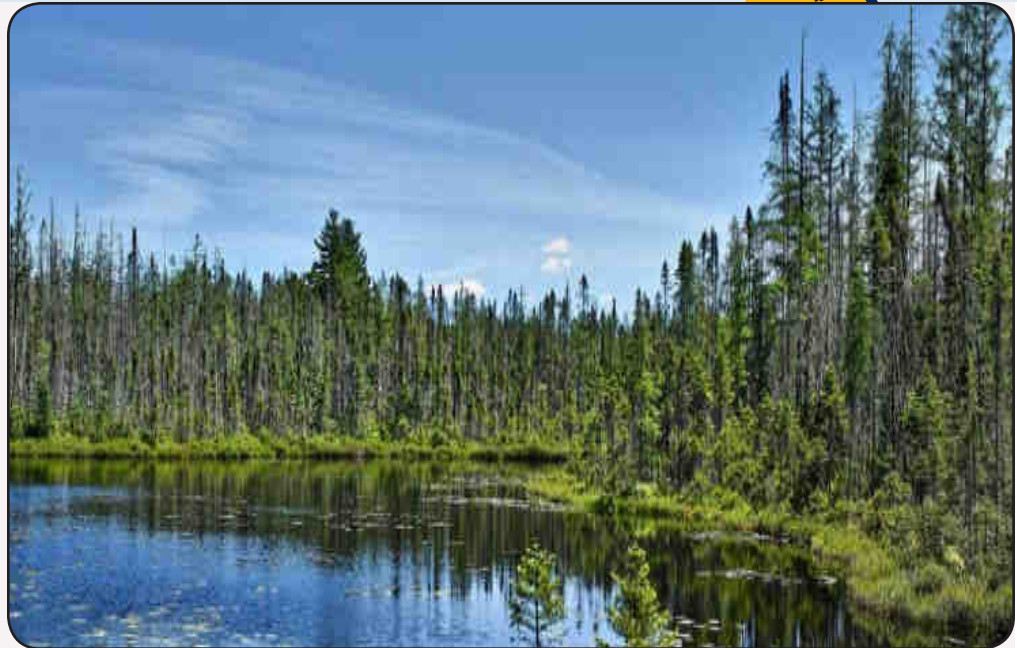
- ♦ Among the world's regions, Africa had the largest annual rate of net forest loss in 2010–2020, at 3.9 mha, followed by South America, at 2.6 mha.

Regions with Forest Gain

- ♦ Asia had the highest net gain of forest area in 2010–2020, followed by Oceania and Europe.
- ♦ However, both Europe and Asia recorded substantially lower rates of net gain in 2010–2020 than in 2000–2010.
- ♦ Oceania experienced net losses of forest area in the decades 1990–2000 and 2000–2010.

Plantation Forests

- ♦ Plantation forests cover about 131 mha — three per cent of the global forest area and 45 per cent of the total area of planted forests, the report said.
- ♦ The highest per cent of plantation forests were in



South America while the lowest were in Europe.

Protected Forest Area

- ♦ There are an estimated 726 mha of forests in protected areas worldwide. South America had the highest share of forests in protected areas, at 31 per cent.
- ♦ The area of forest in protected areas globally increased by 191 mha since 1990, but the rate of annual increase slowed in 2010–2020.

Types of Forest Loss

- ♦ The largest proportion of the world's forests were tropical (45 per cent), followed by boreal, temperate and subtropical.
- ♦ More than 54 per cent of the world's forests were in only five countries — the Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United States of America and China.
- ♦ The area of naturally regenerating forests

worldwide decreased since 1990, but the area of planted forests increased by 123 mha. The rate of increase in the area of planted forest slowed in the last ten years.

Forests and Social Services

- ♦ An area of 186 million ha of forest worldwide is allocated for social services such as recreation, tourism, education research and the conservation of cultural and spiritual sites. The area designated for this forest use has increased at a rate of 186 000 ha per year since 2010.

Deforestation

- FAO defines deforestation as the conversion of forest to other land uses (regardless of whether it is human-induced). "Deforestation" and "forest area net change" are not the same: the latter is the sum of all forest losses (deforestation) and all forest gains (forest expansion) in a given period. Net change, therefore, can be positive or negative, depending on whether gains exceed losses, or vice versa.

Forests and Climate Change

- ◆ When forests are cleared, humans are knocking out one of the planet's best allies in capturing greenhouse gasses, and creating additional emissions by cutting down trees. When trees are felled, they release all the carbon they have been storing back into the atmosphere, contributing to the global problem of climate change.
- ◆ In a special report on climate change and land use by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), protecting forests—especially tropical forests is listed as one of the most important strategies for climate change mitigation.
- ◆ In addition to the global problem of climate change, deforestation also has warming consequences that hurt local populations

State of Forests in India

- ◆ India is among few countries in the world where forest cover is consistently increasing. According to the 'State of Forest Report', 2019 released by Forest Survey of India, the total forest and tree cover of the country is 80.73 million hectare which is 24.56

percent of the geographical area of the country.

- ◆ As compared to the assessment of 2017, there is an increase of 5,188 sq. km in the total forest and tree cover of the country. Out of this, the increase in the forest cover has been observed as 3,976 sq km and that in tree cover is 1,212 sq. km; range increase in forest cover has been observed in open forest followed by very dense forest and moderately dense forest and the top three states showing increase in forest cover are Karnataka (1,025 sq. km) followed by Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km) and Kerala (823 sq km).
- ◆ Area-wise Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra. In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are Mizoram (85.41%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.63%), Meghalaya (76.33%), Manipur (75.46%) and Nagaland (75.31%).
- ◆ The Mangrove ecosystems are unique & rich in biodiversity and they provide numerous ecological services. Mangrove cover has

been separately reported in the ISFR 2019 and the total mangrove cover in the country is 4,975 sq km. An increase of 54 sq Km in mangrove cover has been observed as compared to the previous assessment of 2017. Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are Gujarat (37 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (16 sq km) and Odisha (8 sq km).

Way Forward

- ◆ Indeed, healthy forests are one of those critical ecosystems that human civilization cannot live and thrive without. Forests are among the most productive carbon sinks, they store water and help regulate weather, they are a source of food and medicine, and they help clean the air in cities and across whole land masses. A growing body of research also highlights they improve our health and well-being.



General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Q. Discuss various reasons for the declined rate in global deforestation and the impact of deforestation on climate change.

7

IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01 World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2020

1. Why in News?

- Since 1969, we celebrate the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD), which marks the founding of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on 17 May 1865 when the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in Paris
- The theme this year is: "Connect 2030: ICTs for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".



2. Background

- The purpose of WTISD is to help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide.
- Now in a situation like COVID-19 pandemic, the use of information technology becomes even more important to stay updated on the news and getting to know about your loved ones in the absence of any physical connection with them.

4. India's MIETY

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is an executive agency of the Union Government carved out of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology on 19 July 2016 as a standalone ministerial agency responsible for IT policy, strategy and development of the electronics industry.
- MIETY serves the vision of e-Development of India as the engine for transition into a developed nation and an empowered society.
- **Objectives of MIETY**
 - **e-Government:** Providing e-infrastructure for delivery of e-services.
 - **e-Industry:** Promotion of electronics hardware manufacturing and IT-ITeS industry.
 - **e-Innovation / R&D:** Implementation of R&D Framework - Enabling creation of Innovation/ R&D Infrastructure in emerging areas of ICT&E/Establishment of mechanism for R&D translation.
 - **e-Learning:** Providing support for development of e-Skills and Knowledge network.
 - **e-Security:** Securing India's cyber space.
 - **e-Inclusion:** Promoting the use of ICT for more inclusive growth.
 - **Internet Governance:** Enhancing India's role in Global Platforms of Internet Governance.

3. Connect 2030 Agenda

- The Connect 2030 Agenda is a shared global vision for the development of the telecommunication/ICT sector. Under its five strategic goals – Growth, Inclusiveness, Sustainability, Innovation and Partnership.
- The SDGs recognize that the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress and to bridge the digital divide.
- Targets under Goal 3: Sustainability, directly relate to the management of challenges resulting from telecommunications and ICT development:
 - **Target 3.2:** By 2023, increase the global e-waste recycling rate to 30%.
 - **Target 3.3:** By 2023, raise the percentage of countries with an e-waste legislation to 50%.
 - **Target 3.4:** By 2023, net telecommunication/ICT-enabled Greenhouse Gas abatement should have increased by 30% compared to the 2015 baseline.

02 India Opposes Joining RCEP

1. Why in News?

- As the deadline for a response to a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Package of India rejoining negotiations on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) -led trade RCEP ran out, there have been hints that indicated that global post Coronavirus concerns over China had strengthened India's opposition to the grouping.



2. India Pulls Out

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced India's decision to quit the grouping, citing lack of protection for India's agricultural and other sectors.
- After pulling out of the grouping, India skipped at least two separate meetings it was invited to, including one in Bali in February, and a virtual RCEP meeting in April.
- India has a trade deficit with 11 of the 15 RCEP countries.
- India's experience of trade pacts in the past was that they had "hollowed out" manufacturing in the country, and would hamper the government's renewed commitment to the 'Make in India' policy.

3. RCEP Package

- Members of the RCEP have offered India a package to return to the negotiating table, taking into account the country's concerns over tariff base rates and special trade safeguards.
- Members of the trade bloc also urged India to convey its initial response to the package by May 15 as the Indo-Pacific region braces for a post-Covid-19 economic order.
- The package comes after RCEP members said last month they would welcome India's return to the negotiating table for entering the regional trade bloc.
- The RCEP package recognises India's preference to use more recent most-favoured nation tariff rates than the 2014 base rates.

5. About RCEP

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a trade deal that is currently under negotiation among 16 countries.
- They include the 10 ASEAN members (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and the six countries with which the bloc has free trade agreements (FTAs) — India, Australia, China, Korea, Japan, and New Zealand.
- RCEP aims to create an integrated market with 16 countries, making it easier for products and services of each of these countries to be available across this region. The negotiations are focused on the following: trade in goods and services, investment, intellectual property, dispute settlement, e-commerce, small and medium enterprises, and economic cooperation.

4. Counter Point

- If India did want to rejoin the RCEP negotiations, there would be no better time than now, because it would send a signal to the world that not only is India an attractive place to invest, but also, its potential of being a global manufacturing hub as envisaged by the government's 'Make in India' policy was realizable.
- Australia and Japan have been at the forefront of efforts to convince India to rejoin the RCEP as a possible counterweight to China
- The proponents would welcome updated market access offers from India using 2019 MFN tariffs on a limited number of products of concern to India to be negotiated bilaterally with RCEP Participating Countries. This is offered on the understanding that the outcome on market access, which will be achieved through bilateral negotiations, will remain balanced and that India's tariff commitments will be acceptable to all.
- India does not have free trade agreements with Australia, China and New Zealand. These three RCEP members remain committed to negotiating a mutually satisfactory outcome with India on special safeguards that preserves the interests of all members, according to the package.
- India has much to contribute, not only in terms of its huge market, but also its participation in regional affairs as a whole.
- COVID-19 demonstrated India's contribution in terms of active pharmaceutical ingredients and the medical capacity to support others, as well as technical and medical research.
- A world that will be more digital in the future will rely on India's pool of engineers. India, too, needs the region as it cannot reach its vision and ambition without win-win cooperation with its neighbours in the Indo-Pacific.

03 Herd Immunity

1. Why in News?

- The COVID-19 virus is part of the same coronavirus family that caused the early-2000s SARS outbreak, so scientists have had a jump start. Sweden which opted for the 'Herd Immunity' strategy was not able to meet its target because it needed 70-90 per cent of the population to be infected with COVID-19 to create herd immunity.
- India, a developing country had successfully flattened the curve, but it is not feasible to put the economy in lockdown for a longer period of time. Looking for herd immunity could be one of the possible solutions.



2. About Herd Immunity

- When most of a population is immune to an infectious disease, this provides indirect protection—or herd immunity. Herd immunity is also called community immunity and herd or group protection.
- This can happen in two ways:
 - Many people contract the disease and in time build up an immune response to it (natural immunity).
 - Many people are vaccinated against the disease to achieve immunity.
- Herd immunity requires at least 60% to 70% of people to achieve immunity, though some believe a 90% rate is needed.
- The herd's immunity will help protect those without immunity. When an infected person would mostly come in contact with immune, stopping more infections.

3. Global Scenario

- Based on data from many countries that have done serosurveys, it is clear that only a small proportion of 5%-10% people have been exposed to this virus. It will be difficult to achieve herd immunity without a vaccine, the number of people who get ill or die may be unacceptably high.
- Serosurvey is a collection and testing of serum (or proxy such as oral fluid) specimens from a sample of a defined population over a specified period of time to estimate the prevalence of antibodies against a given specific infectious pathogen as an indicator of immunity.

4. Developing Herd Immunity

- People who have experienced even mild coronavirus disease develop neutralising antibodies primed to seek and destroy the Sars-CoV-2 virus that leads to COVID-19 and protect them against reinfection.
- Half the cases are before the peak and half are after. It's a mirror image, and herd immunity is not achieved at the peak, but when the curve hits the X-axis after numbers decline.
- Serological or blood tests can be done at the point of care for mass testing of people at risk, including health workers, to identify those who are already immune, so they can be deployed to care for infected patients to minimise the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in hospitals.

5. Case for India

- National Institute of Virology in Pune developing an Elisa-based rapid test to detect IgG (Immunoglobulin G) antibodies for surveillance, it is possible to scale up antibody testing to determine the extent of the pandemic. India so far is only testing for the virus, and not antibodies.
- Elisa-based IgG kit can test 90 plus samples in one go, so it's an excellent tool for surveillance
- Multiple asynchronous epidemics are happening in India, so the peaks will vary, but there could be peak in end July-early August.
- Apart from surveillance to detect asymptomatic cases, antibody tests help screen healthcare workers and others in essential services to determine if they have developed antibodies and can continue or return to work.
- Herd immunity will not happen till the infection peaks and falls, so until we have a vaccine, masks, hygiene, and social isolation are the only protection from infection.

04 Cyclone Amphan

1. Why in News?

- Cyclone Amphan (pronounced as UM-PUN) ripped through Eastern India on May 20, killing more than 86 people in West Bengal and Odisha, destroying thousands of homes and uprooting innumerable trees.
- This is the second pre-monsoon cyclone to hit India in two years and has been anticipated as one of the worst storm over Bay of Bengal in decades. The first one was Cyclone Fani.
- The pre-monsoon period is generally considered to be unsupportive for the formation of tropical cyclones.



2. Intensity of Amphan

- Amphan would be only the third super cyclone to form in the Bay after 1990, after the Andhra Pradesh super cyclone (May 4-9, 1990, no name) and the Bangladesh super cyclone (April 24-May 2, 1991, Gorky). The former had hit the Machilipatnam coast in Andhra Pradesh and claimed 967 deaths, while the latter rammed into Chittagong, Bangladesh, killing an estimated 1.38 lakh people.
- Unlike previous cyclones in South Asia, one of the biggest challenges this time is how to protect people from getting infected by the coronavirus while they are packed inside emergency shelters.
- Amphan is the equivalent of a Category 5 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale.

3. Rebuilding Lives

- In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, displaced people need food, shelter, security and healthcare.
- However, it has to be kept in mind that they also need support to rebuild their houses and restart their livelihoods. For this, there is a need for long-term support to build climate resilience.
- In 2019, Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi announced a global Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), at the UN Climate Action Summit.
 - Developed through consultations with more than 35 countries, CDRI envisions enabling measurable reduction in infrastructure losses from disasters, including extreme climate events.
 - CDRI thus aims to enable the achievement of objectives of expanding universal access to basic services and enabling prosperity as enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals, while also working at the intersection of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Climate Agreement.

4. Cyclones

- The word cyclone has been derived from Greek word 'cyclos' which means 'coiling of a snake'. The word cyclone was coined by Heary Piddington who worked as a Rapporteur in Kolkata during British rule.
- The terms "hurricane" and "typhoon" are region specific names for a strong "tropical cyclone". Tropical cyclones are called "Hurricanes" over the Atlantic Ocean and "Typhoons" over the Pacific Ocean.
- The name Amphan is given by Thailand.
- Water vapor analysis of tropical cyclones tells forecasters how much potential a storm has to develop. Water vapor releases latent heat as it condenses into liquid. That liquid becomes clouds and thunderstorms that make up a tropical cyclone. Temperature is important when trying to understand how strong storms can be. The higher the cloud tops, the colder and the stronger the storms.

05 Drifting North Magnetic Pole

1. Why in News?

- According to the recent study of the European Space Agency (ESA), the magnetic North Pole is drifting fast from the Canadian Arctic and towards Russia.
- It described the theory of “tussling magnetic blobs deep below Earth’s surface” at the root of the phenomenon of rapid magnetic pole drift since the 1990s.



2. Three Poles

- Earth has three poles at the top of the planet.
 - A geographic pole which is where the planet's rotation axis intersects the surface.
 - The geomagnetic pole is the location which best fits a classic dipole (its position alters little).
 - North Magnetic, or dip, Pole, which is where field lines are perpendicular to the surface. It is this third pole that has been doing all the movement.
- Our magnetic field exists because of an ocean of superheated, swirling liquid iron that makes up the outer core. Like a spinning conductor in a bicycle dynamo, this moving iron creates electrical currents, which in turn generate our continuously changing magnetic field.

3. Shifting Poles

- The Earth's north magnetic pole was first discovered by an explorer named James Clark Ross back in the 1830s. At that time, it was centered over the Nunavut territory in Canada.
- Since then the magnetic North Pole has been moving across the Canadian Arctic towards Russia, and has moved hundreds of miles over the last several decades.
- Scientists have now realised the pace of this movement has suddenly increased, quite significantly, from about 14-15 km per year till the 1990s to about 55 km per year in the last few years.
- The movement of the pole has garnered interest because it forces changes to navigational systems and smartphones that use its location as a focal point.

4. The Theory

- A team, led from Leeds University, says the behaviour is explained by the competition of two magnetic "blobs" on the edge of the Earth's outer core.
- Changes in the flow of molten material in the planet's interior have altered the strength of the above regions of negative magnetic flux.
- This change in the pattern of flow has weakened the patch under Canada and ever so slightly increased the strength of the patch under Siberia.
- This is why the North Pole has left its historic position over the Canadian Arctic and crossed over the International Date Line. Northern Russia is winning the 'tug of war'.

5. Consequences

- The entire transportation sector, especially aviation and shipping, depends on correctly knowing the position of magnetic north to chart out their navigation paths.
- Similarly, it is crucial for militaries, who need to know this for firing their missiles or for other purposes.
- Knowing the magnetic north is vital for a number of civilian applications as well.
 - The compasses that are used in modern instrumentation are much more sophisticated, digital and more accurate.
 - This is the reason why they need to be recalibrated to reflect the change in the magnetic North Pole.

06

The 'Travel Bubble'

1. Why in News?

- Recently, the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania started what is being referred to as a 'travel bubble' to help put their economies back on track post-Covid lockdowns.
- With the pandemic throwing both international and domestic trade and travel out of gear since earlier this year, such 'travel bubbles' are now being recommended to keep at least parts of the global economy afloat.



2. What is a Travel Bubble?

- Creating a travel bubble involves reconnecting countries or states that have shown a good level of success in containing the novel coronavirus pandemic domestically.
- Two or more countries that have successfully curtailed COVID-19 agree to create a bubble. People who live inside the bubble could then travel freely and avoid a mandatory self-quarantine requirement. Such a move would cut red tape so people can cross borders with minimum hassle.
- Such a bubble would allow the members of the group to rekindle trade ties with each other, and kickstart sectors such as travel and tourism.
- According to a report in The Economist, potential travel bubbles among better-performing countries around the world would account for around 35 per cent of the global GDP.
 - Such arrangements are especially being favoured by smaller countries, who are likely to benefit after being able to trade again with larger partners.

3. Estonia-Latvia-Lithuania Travel Bubble

- The three European Union (EU) states, who have launched this measure, have so far remained comparatively unscathed by the virus, recording less than 150 combined COVID-19 deaths as of May 17.
- In the Estonia-Latvia-Lithuania travel bubble, residents would be able to travel freely by rail, air, and sea without quarantine measures. All three are sparsely populated (Lithuania- 28 lakh, Latvia- 19.2 lakh, Estonia- 13.3 lakh people) and have been fairly successful at managing the outbreak.
- Those wanting to enter this corridor from countries outside would first have to go into isolation for 14 days. To be able to freely travel in the zone, one should not have travelled outside the three countries in the past 14 days, should not be infected with coronavirus, and should not have come in contact with anyone who has been coronavirus infected.

4. Other Travel Bubbles

- Australia and New Zealand reached an agreement to form a travel bubble between the two countries once it becomes safe to operate flights between them. Both have had success in suppressing the pandemic domestically. Once it opens, the trans-Tasman zone will allow travel without a quarantine period.
- China and South Korea, who have also enjoyed success in containing the outbreak, have launched a fast track channel for business travellers.
- In the US, travel bubbles are being suggested to group states who are faring well against the pandemic, but constitutional challenges are also being cited as a possible roadblock for such plans.
- Both Finland and Poland have also been approached to join the Baltic travel bubble.
- Estonia and Finland have eased travel for business and education already, as have Poland and Lithuania.

07

Endemic Disease

1. Why in News?

- According to World Health Organization (WHO), like HIV, the novel coronavirus could become endemic and “may never go away”, and urged for a “massive effort” to contain the spread of COVID-19.



2. About Endemic Disease

- According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a disease is endemic when its presence or usual prevalence in the population is constant. When the cases begin to rise, it is classified as an epidemic. If this epidemic has been recorded in several countries and areas, it is called a pandemic.
- Endemic is the constant presence of a disease or infectious agent within a given geographic area or population group; may also refer to the usual prevalence of a given disease within such an area or group.
- Some examples of endemics include the chicken pox and malaria, where there are predictable number of cases every year in certain parts of the world.

3. What Happens When a Disease Becomes Endemic?

- When epidemics become endemic, they become “increasingly tolerated” and the responsibility of protecting against it shifts from the government to the individual. This means, rather than government agencies actively engaging in tracking and identifying cases, the individuals themselves will be responsible for managing risk from the disease and seeking care.
- The sociopolitical response to the disease may also change, with investment in the disease becoming institutionalised along with the disease-inducing behavioural changes in people. Once people become aware of the risks of infection, they will alter their behaviour and mitigate the consequences.
- Epidemic diseases typically have higher mortality and morbidity than endemic diseases, owing to lack of clinical experience and knowledge, as well as innate pathogenicity. Over time, effective prevention and treatment interventions emerge.

6. Indian Perspective of Tackling Coronavirus Going Forward

- With strict guidelines, in the first phase to eventually easing the guidelines in next phases, PM announced that now is the time when people have to start living with the viral outbreak and move ahead in their lives.
- Going forward, with resumption of work in service and industrial sectors, the guidelines issued by the government majorly focus on measures that can be taken by the companies and people to ensure that there is reduction in Coronavirus transmission.

4. When Does a Disease Become Endemic?

- One mathematical modelling published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health states that if R_0 , which is the rate at which the virus is transmitted is equal to 1, then the disease is endemic.
 - R_0 (pronounced “R-naught”) is the rate at which a virus is transmitted.
 - Also called the basic reproduction number, it indicates the average number of people who will contract the virus from a person who has already been infected, in a population that does not have immunity for the said disease.
 - R_0 is the division of the number of new infections by the number of existing infections, or the average number of new infections over an infectious period ($R_0 = \text{new infections} / \text{existing infections}$).
- When $R_0 > 1$, it implies that the cases are increasing and that the disease will eventually become an epidemic.
- If $R_0 < 1$, it implies the number of cases of the disease are decreasing.

5. Indications of Coronavirus Becoming an Endemic

- Even if a place is witnessing decline in number of cases or has flattened out its COVID-19 curve, the cases are likely to return after some time.
- Pandemic is expected to peak again in winters in some areas. Therefore, it can take a long time (maybe years) before the Coronavirus is completely eliminated.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2020

Q. With reference to the 'World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2020', consider the following statements:

1. The theme this year is: "Connect 2030: ICTs for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".
2. The Sustainability Development Goal 3 (SDG3) is directly relate to the management of challenges resulting from telecommunications and ICT development.

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. Since 1969, we celebrate the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD), which marks the founding of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on 17 May 1865 when the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in Paris. The theme this year is: "Connect 2030: ICTs for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

The SDG goal 3 recognize that the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress and to bridge the digital divide. Targets under Goal 3 are sustainability, directly relate to the management of challenges resulting from telecommunications and ICT development.



02 India Opposes Joining RCEP

Q. Consider the following statements with reference to the 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership':

1. India has rejoined the regional trade bloc.
2. Other members of the bloc are the 10 ASEAN members and Australia, China, Korea, Japan, and New Zealand.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced India's decision to quit the grouping, citing lack of protection for India's agricultural and other sectors. After pulling out of the grouping, India skipped at least two separate meetings it was invited to, including one in Bali in February, and a virtual RCEP meeting in April.

Statement 2 is correct. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a trade deal that is currently under negotiation among 16 countries. They include the 10 ASEAN members (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and the six countries with which the bloc has free trade agreements (FTAs) — India, Australia, China, Korea, Japan, and New Zealand.



03 Herd Immunity

Q. With reference to the 'herd immunity', consider the following statements:

1. Herd immunity requires at least 60% to 70% of people to achieve immunity, though some believe a 90% rate is needed.
2. This can happen by natural immunity only.
3. Sweden has achieved the herd immunity against the COVID-19.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. Herd immunity requires at least 60% to 70% of people to achieve immunity, though some believe a 90% rate is needed. The herd's immunity will help protect those without immunity. When an infected person would mostly come in contact with immune, stopping more infections.

Statement 2 and 3 are incorrect. This can happen in two ways: Many people contract the disease and in time build up an immune response to it (natural immunity). Many people are vaccinated against the disease to achieve immunity.

Sweden which opted for the 'Herd Immunity' strategy was not able to meet its target because it needed 70-90 per cent of the population to be infected with COVID-19 to create herd immunity. 

04 Cyclone Amphan

Q. With reference to the 'Cyclone Amphan', consider the following statements:

1. The name 'Amphan' has been given by Bangladesh.
2. It was a pre-monsoon cyclone formed over Bay of Bengal.
3. The pre-monsoon period is generally considered to be supportive for the formation of tropical cyclones.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

- c) 2 only
- d) 3 only

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. The name 'Amphan' is given by Thailand.

Statement 2 is correct. This is the second pre-monsoon cyclone to hit India in two years and has been anticipated as one of the worst storm over Bay of Bengal in decades. The first one was Cyclone Fani.

Statement 3 is incorrect. The pre-monsoon period is generally considered to be unsupportive for the formation of tropical cyclones. 

05 Drifting North Magnetic Pole

Q. With reference to the 'drifting north magnetic pole', consider the following statements:

1. The magnetic North Pole is drifting fast from the Russia and towards Canadian Arctic.
2. The movement of liquid iron and other metals in the outer core of the Earth is known to influence the magnetic field.
3. The changes in position of North Pole affects the entire transportation sector as well as military operations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. According to the recent study of the European Space Agency (ESA), the magnetic North Pole is drifting fast from the Canadian Arctic and towards Russia.

Statement 2 and 3 are correct. The movement of liquid iron and other metals in the outer core of the Earth is known to influence the magnetic field, but this movement is chaotic and turbulent.

The entire transportation sector, especially aviation and shipping, depends on correctly knowing the position of magnetic north to chart out their navigation paths.

Similarly, it is crucial for militaries, who need to know this for firing their missiles or for other purposes. Knowing the magnetic north is vital for a number of civilian applications as well. 

06 The 'Travel Bubble'

Q. With reference to the 'travel bubble', consider the following statements:

1. Creating a travel bubble involves reconnecting countries or states that have shown a good level of success in containing the novel coronavirus pandemic domestically.
2. People who live inside the bubble could then travel freely and avoid a mandatory self-quarantine requirement.

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. Creating a travel bubble involves reconnecting countries or states that have shown a good level of success in containing the novel coronavirus pandemic domestically.

Two or more countries that have successfully curtailed COVID-19 agree to create a bubble. People who live inside the bubble could then travel freely and avoid a mandatory self-quarantine requirement. Such a move would cut red tape so people can cross borders with minimum hassle. 

07 Endemic Disease

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. When epidemics become endemic, they become "increasingly tolerated" and the responsibility of protecting against it shifts from the government to the individual.
2. Endemic is the constant presence of a disease or infectious agent within a given geographic area or population group.
3. Some examples of endemics include the chicken pox, polio and malaria, where there are predictable number of cases every year in certain parts of the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 and 2 are correct. When epidemics become endemic, they become "increasingly tolerated" and the responsibility of protecting against it shifts from the government to the individual. This means, rather than government agencies actively engaging in tracking and identifying cases, the individuals themselves will be responsible for managing risk from the disease and seeking care.

Endemic is the constant presence of a disease or infectious agent within a given geographic area or population group; may also refer to the usual prevalence of a given disease within such an area or group.

Statement 3 is correct. Some examples of endemics include the chicken pox and malaria, where there are predictable number of cases every year in certain parts of the world. 

7 IMPORTANT NEWS

01

J&K has Defined Rules for Domicile Certificates

- ◆ The Jammu and Kashmir administration has issued a notification defining the rules for issuing domicile certificates in the Union territory.

Background

- ◆ On March 31, the Centre had issued the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order 2020, under which it defined domicile as any person “who has resided for a period of 15 years in the UT of J&K or has studied for a period of seven years and appeared in class 10th/12th examination in an educational institution located in the UT of J&K”.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The ‘J&K Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules 2020’
- ◆ The grant of the certificate will be subject to “such enquiry as the



will provide the basis for issuing domicile certificates to those who meet the conditions as stated in the Centre’s gazette notification that introduced the domicile clause through an amendment to the Jammu And Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralisation And Recruitment) Act, 2010.

competent authority may deem fit” and on the basis of documents furnished by the individual in his appeal for the certificate.

- ◆ The document will be critical in securing jobs in the Union territory. As a result of the new rules and procedure, West Pakistan Refugees (WPRs), Safai Karamcharis and children of women married outside Jammu and Kashmir who were earlier deprived shall also be now eligible for Domicile Certificate.
- ◆ The domicile status also applies to children of such residents of J&K who reside outside J&K in connection with their employment or business or other professional or vocational reasons but their parents should fulfil any of the conditions provided.



02

Additional Measures for Strengthening the Economy by RBI

- ◆ RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has announced yet another set of nine measures to smoothen the flow of finance and preserve financial stability in the turbulent and uncertain times ushered in by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Measures

- ◆ In order to enable increased
- ◆ The Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) is an investment window

supply of affordable credit to small industries, the RBI had, on April 17, 2020, announced a special refinance facility of ₹15,000 crore to SIDBI at RBI’s policy repo rate for a period of 90 days. This facility has now been extended by another 90 days.

provided by RBI to Foreign Portfolio Investors, which provides easier rules in return for a commitment to make higher investments. The rules stipulate that at least 75% of the allotted investment limit be invested within three months; considering the difficulties being faced by investors and their custodians, the time limit has now been revised to six months.

- ◆ The maximum permissible period of pre-shipment and post-shipment export credit sanctioned by banks to exporters has been increased from the existing one year to 15 months, for disbursements made up to July 31, 2020.
- ◆ The Governor has announced a line of credit of ₹15,000 crore to the EXIM Bank, for financing, facilitating and promoting India's foreign trade. The loan facility has been given for a period of 90 days, with a provision to extend it by one year.
- ◆ The time period for import payments against normal imports (i.e. excluding import of gold/diamonds and precious stones/jewellery) into India has been extended from six months to twelve months from the date of shipment. This will be applicable for imports made on or before July 31, 2020.



- ◆ The RBI has extended the applicability of certain regulatory measures announced earlier, by another three months from June 1, 2020 till August 31, 2020. These measures will now be applicable for a total period of six months (i.e. from March 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020). The aforesaid regulatory measures are: (a) 3-month moratorium on term loan instalments; (b) 3-month deferment of interest on working capital facilities; (c) easing of working capital financing

requirements by reducing margins or reassessment of working capital cycle; (d) exemption from being classified as 'defaulter' in supervisory reporting and reporting to credit information companies; (e) extension of resolution timelines for stressed assets; and (f) asset classification standstill by excluding the moratorium period of 3 months, etc. by lending institutions.

- ◆ The Consolidated Sinking Fund is being maintained by state governments as a buffer for repayment of their liabilities. The rules governing withdrawal from this Fund have now been relaxed, in order to enable states to enable them to repay their borrowings from the market, which become due in 2020-21.



03

Sonic Boom

- ◆ The 'loud sound' heard in Bengaluru recently, which puzzled lakhs of city dwellers, was revealed to have emanated from an IAF test flight involving a supersonic profile. The sound effect caused due to such high-speed flights is known as 'sonic boom'. The sonic boom was probably heard while the aircraft was decelerating from supersonic to subsonic speed between 36,000 and 40,000 feet altitude.

What is a 'Sonic Boom'?

- ◆ Sound travels in the form of waves which are emitted outwards from its source. In air, the speed of these waves depends on a number of factors, such as the temperature of the air and altitude.
- ◆ From a stationary source, such as a television set, sound waves travel

outwards in concentric spheres of growing radii.

- ◆ When the source of sound is moving – e.g., a truck – the successive waves in front of the truck get closer together, and the ones behind it spread out. This is also the cause of the Doppler effect – in which bunched waves at the front appear at a higher frequency to a stationary observer, and spread out waves that are behind are observed at a lower frequency.
- ◆ As long as the source of the sound keeps moving slower than the speed of sound itself, this source – say a truck or a plane – remains nested within the sound waves that are travelling in all directions.
- ◆ When an aircraft travels at supersonic speed – meaning faster than sound (>1225 kmph at sea level) – the field of sound waves

moves to the rear of the craft. A stationary observer thus hears no sound when a supersonic flight approaches, since the sound waves are at the rear of the latter.

- ◆ At such speeds, both newly created as well as old waves, are forced into a region at the aircraft's rear called a 'Mach cone', which extends from the craft and intercepts the Earth in a hyperbola-shaped curve, and leaves a trail called the 'boom carpet'. The loud sound that is heard on the Earth when this happens is called a 'sonic boom'.
- ◆ When such aircraft fly at a low altitude, the sonic boom can become intense enough to cause glass to crack or cause health hazards. Overland supersonic flights have thus been banned in many countries.



04

International Day for Biological Diversity 2020

- ◆ The International Day for Biological Diversity is observed on 22nd May every year to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. The theme of this year is "Our solutions are in nature."

Key Highlights

- ◆ As the global community is called to re-examine our relationship to the natural world, one thing is certain: despite all our technological advances we are completely dependent on healthy and vibrant ecosystems for our water, food, medicines, clothes, fuel, shelter and energy, just to name a few. The theme "Our solutions are in nature" emphasizes hope, solidarity and the importance of working together at all levels to build a future of life in harmony with nature.



- ◆ 2020 is a year of reflection, opportunity and solutions. It is expected, from each of us, that we will "Build Back Better" by using this time to increase the resilience of nations and communities as we recover from this pandemic. 2020 is the year when, more than ever, the world can signal a strong will for a global framework that will "bend the curve" on biodiversity loss for the benefit of humans and all life on Earth.

- ◆ 2020 will witness the final period of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan on Biodiversity and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the UN Decade on Biodiversity, leading to the transitional phase for the start

of other new pivotal biodiversity-related decades for the period 2021-2030: the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; and the UN Biodiversity Summit, in order to highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework.



05

General Financial Rules

- ◆ The government has notified amendments to General Financial Rules (GFR) 2017 to ensure that goods and services valued less than Rs 200 crore are being procured from domestic firms, a move which will benefit micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs.)

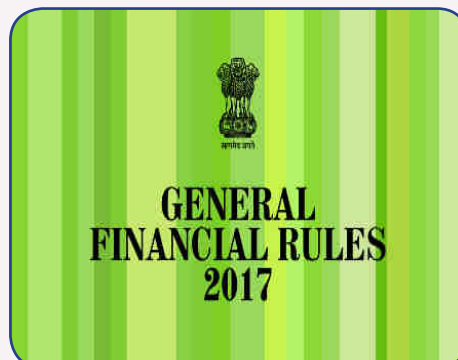
Benefits

- ◆ The amendments ensure that henceforth global tenders will be disallowed in government procurement up to Rs 200 crore, as announced in the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Package.
- ◆ Around two lakh businesses would benefit from a Rs 20,000 crore

subordinate debt for stressed or loan defaulting MSMEs. Adding a fund of funds for MSMEs is also being created, which will infuse Rs 50,000 crore equity in units that have growth potential.

Background

- ◆ The government had last week



announced an economic support package for MSMEs, which includes disallowing global tender for government procurement up to Rs 200 crore. It also comprised Rs 3 lakh crore of collateral-free loans, which would benefit about 45 lakh small businesses.

- ◆ Also the definition of MSMEs has been changed from a pure investment-based one to that provides for higher investments and turnover for companies to remain as small businesses, and avail financial and other incentives.

What are General Rules?

- ◆ General Financial Rules (GFRs) are a compilation of rules and orders

of Government of India to be followed by all while dealing with matters involving public finances. These rules and orders are treated as executive instructions to be observed by all departments and organisations under the government and specified bodies except otherwise provided for in these Rules.

◆ GFRs were issued for the first time in 1947 bringing together in one place all existing orders and instructions pertaining to financial matters. These have subsequently been modified and issued as GFRs 1963 and GFRs 2005.

◆ Further, they lay down the general rules applicable to ministries / departments, and detailed instructions relating to procurement of goods are issued by the procuring departments broadly in conformity with the general rules, while maintaining flexibility to deal with varied situations. 

06

Textiles Committee

- ◆ Textiles Committee, Mumbai too will now test and certify personal protection equipment (PPE) body coveralls required for healthcare workers and other COVID-19 warriors. This will make it the 9th laboratory to test and certify PPEs.

What is PPE?

- ◆ Personal protective equipment (PPE) refers to protective clothing, helmets, gloves, face shields, goggles, facemasks and/or respirators or other equipment designed to protect the wearer from injury or the spread of infection or illness. PPE is commonly used in health care settings such as hospitals, doctor's offices and clinical labs. When used properly, PPE acts as a barrier between infectious materials such as viral and bacterial contaminants and your skin, mouth, nose, or eyes (mucous membranes). The barrier has the potential to block transmission of contaminants from blood, body fluids, or respiratory secretions.



Benefits

- ◆ It will catapulting India into the world's second largest manufacturer of body coveralls, next only to China.
- ◆ It will help in overcoming the challenges of non-availability of domestic manufacturers of PPE testing equipment.

About Textiles Committee

- ◆ The Textiles Committee is a statutory body established in 1963 through an Act of Parliament and is under the administrative

control of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. It has been formed to ensure the quality of textiles and textile machinery both for internal consumption and export purpose.

- ◆ The Committee is tasked with the functions of establishing laboratories for the testing of textiles and textile machinery and providing for their inspection and examination, besides other functions which flow from the main objective of ensuring quality of textiles products and textiles machinery. 

07

Dr Harsh Vardhan as WHO Executive Board Chairman

- India would now be playing a more prominent role at the World Health Organisation (WHO), with Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan took charge as chairman of the WHO Executive Board. Vardhan would succeed Dr Hiroki Nakatani of Japan, currently the Chairman of the 34-member WHO Executive Board. India is a member state of the South East Asia Region at the WHO. Last year, the bloc had unanimously decided that India's nominee would be elected to the executive board for a three-year term beginning May.

The WHO Executive Board

- The WHO is governed by two decision-making bodies — the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board. The agency's headquarters are located at Geneva in Switzerland.
- According to the WHO website, the Board is composed of 34 members technically qualified in the field of health, with members being elected for three-year terms. The Health Assembly is



the WHO's decision-making body, and consists of 194 Member States.

- The Board chairman's post is held by rotation for one year by each of the WHO's six regional groups: African Region, Region of the Americas, South-East Asia Region, European Region, Eastern Mediterranean Region, and Western Pacific Region. The Board meets at least twice a year; the main meeting is normally in January, with a second shorter meeting in May, immediately after the Health Assembly.
- The main functions of the Board are to give effect to the decisions and policies of the Health Assembly, to advise it and

generally to facilitate its work. The Board and the Assembly create a forum for debate on health issues and for addressing concerns

raised by Member States.

- Both the Board and the Assembly produce three kinds of documents — Resolutions and Decisions passed by the two bodies, Official Records as published in WHO Official publications, and Documents that are presented "in session" of the two bodies.

India at the WHO

- India became a party to the WHO Constitution on 12 January 1948. The first session of the South East Asia Regional Committee was held on October 4-5, 1948 in the office of the Indian Minister of Health, and was inaugurated by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister.



7

IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS (For Mains)



02



04



06

01

"COVID-19 pandemic may create opportunities to deepen India's engagement with Africa." Do you agree? Give reasons.

02

Indian farmers are the sufferers of the exploitative procurement and marketing of farm produce. So that they deserve the freedom to market their produce at a place of their choice. Discuss.

03

What is heat wave? Why the present heatwave in North India is unusual? Discuss.

04

"In Indian conditions, online education must supplement, not replace, physical sites of learning." Explain.

05

What are the basic principles of public life? Illustrate any three of these with suitable examples.

06

Elaborate the initiatives taken by the Government of India to meet the challenges coronavirus pandemic.

07

Discuss the role of biodiversity for the benefits of humans and all life on Earth.

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



01



03



05

01

Which Indian origin scientist has created 'Fifth state of matter' while working from home during coronavirus lockdown?

Dr. Amruta Gadge

02

What is the theme of the 'Hunar Haat' which will be restarting from September 2020?

"Local to Global"

03

Which Indian cricketer is nominated for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna 2020 ?

Rohit Sharma

04

Who is the Indian American physician who has been appointed as a member in New Yorks Commission to jumpstart the economy. He is also the winner of Pulitzer Prize?

Siddhartha Mukherjee

05

What is the name of the Indian economist appointed by World Bank as Practice Manager for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management for South Asia?

Abhas Jha

06

What is the new name of NASA's WFIRST (Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope)?

Nancy Grace Roman Spcae
Telescope

07

What is the name of 18 year old treaty from which US President Donald Trump has announced to withdraw?

Open Skies Treaty

7

IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01



03



05

01

"Talent hits a target no one else can hit. Genius hits a target no one else can see".

Michio Kaku

02

"Our virtues and our failings are inseparable, like force and matter. When they separate, man is no more".

Nikola Tesla

03

"Consistency is the playground of dull minds".

Yuval Noah Harari

04

"The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom".

Isaac Asimov

05

"We live in a society exquisitely dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology".

Carl Sagan

06

"You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him discover it in himself".

Galileo

07

"Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change".

Stephen Hawking

AN INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

DSDL Prepare yourself from distance

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

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