

PERFECT 7

**Weekly
Current Affairs**

An Initiative of **Dhyeya IAS**



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A Question to be Answered

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Needs Reform

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Food Security Act, 2013

DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION



Vinay Kumar Singh
Founder & CEO

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

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



Q.H. Khan
Managing Director

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

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION



Kurban Ali
Chief Editor

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

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



Ashutosh Singh
Managing Editor

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

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

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

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

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



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

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PREFACE



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

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

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

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

Omveer Singh Chaudhary

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

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

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

Rajat Jhingan

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

PERFECT 7

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An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS

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(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

Same Sex Marriage in India : A Question to be Answered

Why in News?

- Recently, the central government submitted before the Delhi High Court that a same sex couple cannot claim fundamental right for their marriage — despite the Supreme Court decriminalizing homosexuality in 2018 — saying that marriage in India is a “bond between a biological man and a biological woman”.

Background

- The government said any interference by a court in the marital statute based on personal laws will create “havoc” in society and will run afoul of the intent of Parliament in framing the laws. It said a fundamental right cannot be an “untrammelled right” and can’t override other constitutional principles.
- In an affidavit filed before a bench comprising justices Rajiv Sahai Endlaw and Amit Bansal, the government opposed pleas seeking legalization of same-sex marriages and said the laws mandate that “marriage is a bond between a biological man and a biological woman”.
- The institution of marriage has a sanctity attached to it and in major parts of the country it is regarded as a “sacrament”, the government argued. It said that in India, despite

statutory recognition of the relationship of marriage between a biological man and a biological woman, marriage depends on age-old customs, rituals, practices, cultural ethos and societal values.

- These petitions demand recognition of same-sex marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; Special Marriage Act, 1954 and Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. The petitioners say that denial of gay marriage is a violation of fundamental rights. These petitions said that the Special Marriage Act and the Foreign Marriage Act should be interpreted in such a way that they can also apply to gay marriage.
- The petitioners state that the LGBTQ + communities are not exercising all the constitutional rights conferred by the Constitution like other citizens. According to the petitioners, the non-recognition of gay marriage makes it a violation of following articles- 14 (Equality before law), Article-15 (Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth), Article-19 (freedom of expression), and Article-21 (Right to life and personal freedom).

Government Approach

- The Centre is of view that seeking a declaration for solemnisation or registration of marriage has more

ramifications than simple legal recognition. The government has opposed allowing gay marriage. The government said that living and having sex as partners of gay couples cannot be compared to the Indian family unit.

- The Central Government in its affidavit stated that in September 2018, the Supreme Court in Navtej Johar vs Union of India suit had removed homosexuality from the category of crime. Accordingly, homosexual relations formed between two adults by mutual consent will not be considered a crime. But this does not mean that gay marriage should be allowed.
- Government favors that the fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution is subject to the procedure established by law and cannot be expanded to include the fundamental right to gay marriage. Homosexual marriages “are not recognized or accepted by any individual statute or under any statutory statute.”
- Government favors that marriage in India is considered a “sanctity” bond and that the relationship between a “biological man” and a “biological woman” is “centuries-old customs.” (age-old customs), rituals, cultural ethos and social values “(societal values).

- ◆ The government in its affidavit stated that Legitimate State Interest exists in limiting the recognition of marriages of persons of the opposite sex and that it is the job of the Legislature to consider the validity of such marriages keeping in mind the "social morality" (Societal Morality).
- ◆ Meanwhile, the Delhi government had filed its response to one of the petitions moved by two women seeking to get married under the SMA and challenging provisions of the statute to the extent it does not provide for same-sex marriages. It has said that there was no provision in the SMA under which the two women can be married and their marriage be registered.

Supreme Court on Same Sex Marriage

- ◆ Hindu marriage does not allow same-sex marriage. In such a situation, it is necessary to understand that gay marriage should not be seen as a crime and gay marriage is given legal status under the Hindu Marriage Act. For this, the Special Marriage Act will have to be made separate. For example, marriages of non-Hindus are not registered in the Hindu Marriage Act, but in the Special Marriage Act. In the same way, an alternative could be to make a law for which the answer to the question is, when the gay relationship is justified, then under what law will their marriage be justified. Because the Supreme Court has excluded homosexual relationships from the purview of crime. But nothing has been said about the marriage of gay couples.
- ◆ In the year 2018, in the case of Shafeen Jahan v. Asokan K. M.

and others, the Supreme Court held that the right to choose a life partner is recognized by the Constitution. When two adults choose each other as spouses, it is an expression of their choice that is recognized under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution. However gay marriage does not come under it.

- ◆ The Supreme Court had clearly emphasized the change in the attitude of society and people and said that homosexuality is a biological fact and any kind of discrimination with members of such a sexual orientation community is a violation of their fundamental rights.

Ethical and Social Issues related to Same Sex marriage

- ◆ Some analysts believe that only women can give birth to a child according to the laws of nature, but couples are naturally infertile in gay marriages. If a gay couple wants a child, it is likely that this may give a boost to the surrogacy market.
- ◆ In the case of a homosexual marriage, the development of children is affected. They either find the love of the mother or the support of the father. If they do not get the love of parents together, it affects their development.
- ◆ Gay marriage is not valid in India, so gay people are deprived of the right of succession. Similarly, gay couples cannot write their spouses' names even in mediclaim insurance and other documents. Overall, a gay couple cannot make each other a family even if they have any attachment to each other.
- ◆ After the decision of the Supreme Court, the members of the gay and transgender community may

have got the right to live dignified lives, but the struggle is not over. Still, people of this community have to fight a legal struggle to stay together or get married and then get the marriage registered.

Way Forward

- ◆ While a marriage may be between two private individuals having a profound impact on their private lives, it is submitted that marriage, as a public concept, is also nationally and internationally recognised as a public recognition of relationship with which several statutory rights and obligations are attached. Same-sex marriage is more of a social issue than being a legal one. This is so because, the Apex Court has already decriminalized homosexuality, but marriage is a social concept which is regulated by the legislature. Thus, there is need for more discussions, debates and interchange of ideas at a social level which can be further reflected in the laws of the land.
- ◆ The question as to whether such a relationship be permitted to be formalised by way of a legal recognition of marriage is essentially a question to be decided by the legislature and can never be a subject matter of judicial adjudication. ☒☒☒

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Q. The issue of gay marriage in India has been very complex, in such a way, throw light on the moral and social issues related to gay marriage.

02

Anti-Defection Law in India : Needs Reform

Why in News?

- ♦ The fall of the V Narayanasamy-led Congress government in Puducherry recently has highlighted, yet again, the absurdity of the anti-defection law.

Background

- ♦ In the present case, Narayanasamy resigned ahead of the confidence vote in the Assembly with the coalition ministry reduced to a minority due to a spate of resignations of party Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) recently.
- ♦ It has now become the standard operating procedure, several MLAs from the treasury benches resigned, lowering the numbers required for a no-confidence motion to succeed. This formula has been seen recently in other States such as Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

About Anti-defection Law

- ♦ The anti-defection law was included in the Indian Constitution as the Tenth Schedule in 1985 to combat the “evil of political defections”. The main purpose was to preserve the stability of governments and insulate them from defections of legislators from the treasury benches. The law stated that any Member of Parliament (MP) or that of a State legislature (MLA) would be disqualified from their office if they voted on any motion contrary to the directions issued by their party.

- ♦ The provision was not limited to confidence motions or money bills (which are quasi-confidence motions). It applies to all votes in the House, on every Bill and every other issue. It even applies to the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils, which have no say in the stability of the government. Therefore, an MP (or MLA) has absolutely no freedom to vote their judgement on any issue. They have to blindly follow the direction of the party. This provision goes against the concept of representative democracy.

➤ The 10th Schedule says that if there is a merger between two political parties and two-thirds of the members of a legislature party agree to it, they would not be disqualified. But today, as it is difficult to get two-thirds to move as a block, political parties get the dissenters to resign promising them tickets and other lolly once they are in power.

Broken Accountability

- ♦ Look at the contrast with other democracies. For example, in the recent vote on the impeachment of former U.S. President Donald Trump, seven members from his party in the U.S. Senate, the Republicans, voted to convict him. Such a decision does not have any legal repercussion. Of course, the party may take action (it did not). Also, voters may decide to reject the legislator for re-election — and that is the core design element of representative democracy. The

legislator is accountable to voters, and the government is accountable to legislators.

- ♦ In India, this chain of accountability has been broken by making legislators accountable primarily to the party. This means that anyone from the party having a majority in the legislature — which is, by definition, the party forming the government — is unable to hold the government to account. Further, all legislators have a ready explanation for their voting behaviour: they had to follow the party’s direction. This negates the concept of them having to justify their positions on various issues to the people who elected them to the post.

➤ There are two broadly accepted roles of a representative such as an MP in a democracy. One is that they are agents of the voters and are expected to vote according to the wishes and for the benefits of their constituents. The other is that their duty to their constituents is to exercise their judgement on various issues towards the broader public interest. In this, they deliberate with other MPs and find a reasonable way through complex issues. The anti-defection law turns the concept of a representative on its head. It makes the MP neither a delegate of the constituency nor a national legislator but converts them to be just an agent of the party.

Legislatures and Anti-defection Law

- ♦ An important consequence of the anti-defection law is the hollowing

out of our legislatures. If an MP has no freedom to take decisions on policy and legislative proposals, what would be the incentive to put in the effort to understand the different policy choices and their outcomes? The core role of an MP to examine and decide on policy, Bills and budgets is sidelined. Instead, the MP becomes just another number to be tallied by the party on any vote that it supports or opposes.

- ◆ The anti-defection law empowers political parties to force their views on MPs elected on their ticket. Any disagreement with the party can result in MPs losing their seat in the legislature. So they have a choice — voice the views of their parties and continue their parliamentary tenure or speak their mind and risk losing their seat in Parliament.

Toolkit to Weaken Stability

- ◆ The noble purpose of the anti-defection law is to bring stability to governments. So it stands to reason if it was limited to votes deciding the fate of a government. But the law allows political parties to disqualify legislators for voting against the party line inside the legislature and anti-party conduct outside it. The law is even applicable to Rajya Sabha MPs, who have no mandate to vote out a government.
- ◆ Over the years, parties have also used the anti-defection law as part of a toolkit to weaken their opposition or topple a government. If a political party has a fewer

'FINISH PROCEEDINGS IN 3 MTHS'

➤ SC sets **three months as the outer limit** for Speakers to **conclude disqualification proceedings** against defectors

➤ Recommends that Parliament should amend Constitution to set up a permanent tribunal to decide cases. Tribunal can be **headed by retired SC judge or HC CJ**

➤ SC emphasises that **ensuring purity of anti-defection law** under

the 10th Schedule is vital to democracy's functioning

➤ SC decision came in a case related to **Manipur Congress MLA T Shyam Kumar**, who switched to BJP and became a minister after the party formed govt in 2017

➤ A dozen pleas seeking Shyam's disqualification were filed but Speaker sat over them. SC asks Speaker to **decide in four weeks**

number of legislators in a state, a larger party lures two-thirds of its MLAs into its fold — a practice permitted under the anti-defection law. If that fails, some MLAs are convinced to support a government and pressure is exerted on Vidhan Sabha Speakers to delay their disqualification. The trend these days is to convince legislators to resign.

- ◆ The Constitution was amended to ensure that any person disqualified for defecting cannot get a ministerial position unless they are re-elected; the way around this has been to resign rather than vote against the party. In other instances, the Speaker — usually from the ruling party — has delayed taking a decision on the disqualification. This has led to strange situations such as members who continue to be part of the main Opposition party becoming Ministers (Andhra

Pradesh in the term of the last Assembly).

- ◆ The Supreme Court has tried to plug this by ruling that the Speaker has to take the decision in three months, but it is not clear what would happen if a Speaker does not do so. The premise that the anti-defection law is needed to punish legislators who betray the mandate given by the voters also seems to be flawed. If voters believe that they have been betrayed by the defectors, they can vote them out in the next election. However, we have seen many of the defectors in States such as Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh being re-elected in the by-polls, which were held due to their disqualification.

Various Recommendations for the Law

- ◆ Dinesh Goswami Committee on electoral reforms, 1990, suggested that disqualification should be limited to cases where (a) a

member voluntarily gives up the membership of his political party, (b) a member abstains from voting, or votes contrary to the party whip in a motion of vote of confidence or motion of no-confidence.

- ◆ The Halim Committee on anti-defection law (1998) recommended that the words 'voluntarily giving up membership of a political party' be comprehensively defined and restrictions like prohibition on joining another party or holding offices in the government be imposed on expelled members.
- ◆ The Law Commission, in its 170th report in 1999, suggested that provisions that exempt splits and mergers from disqualification to be deleted, pre-poll electoral fronts should be treated as political parties under the anti-defection law and political parties should limit issuance of whips only to instances when the government is in danger.
- ◆ The Constitution Review Commission, 2002, went even further. It suggested defectors should be barred from holding public office or a remunerative political post for the duration of the remaining term. Also, more importantly, the vote cast by a defector to topple a government should be treated as invalid.



Sandeep Joshi

- ◆ National Commission to review the working of the constitution (NCRWC) have recommended that rather than the Presiding Officer, the decision to disqualify a member should be made by the President (in case of MPs) or the Governor (in case of MLAs) on the advice of the Election Commission.

Way Forward

- ◆ The anti-defection law has been detrimental to the functioning of our legislatures as deliberative bodies which hold the executive to account on behalf of citizens. It has turned them into fora to endorse the decision of the government on Bills and budgets. And it has not even done the job of preserving

the stability of governments. Therefore, there is a need to reform the Tenth Schedule to the Indian Constitution. ☒☒☒

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Topic:

- Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Q. The anti-defection law has been detrimental to the functioning of our legislatures as deliberative bodies which hold the executive to account on behalf of citizens. Do you agree? Give reasons.

03

Promotion of SDG 9 in North Eastern Region

Context

- ♦ The role of infrastructure development in promoting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9 is immensely important for North Eastern Region (NER) of India.

Introduction

- ♦ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries — developed and developing — in a global partnership. Among its 17 SDGs, SDG-9 aims to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.
- ♦ India's NER has nine percent of India's geographical area and contributes three percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). However, given its rich natural resource base and strategic location, the NER has the potential to become a "powerhouse" in terms of trade and investment.
- ♦ The NER is unique in terms of the economic opportunities it offers. About 98 per cent of the region's borders form India's international boundaries; it shares borders with China, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar. Given its strategic location, the NER serves as a geographical base for India's growing economic linkages not only with the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) but also with neighbouring countries in South Asia, namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.

- ♦ However, one of the major constraints holding back the development in Northeast India is inadequate infrastructure. The investment potential considerably goes up in the NER when one considers its geographical proximity to Southeast and East Asian markets. The major challenges faced today in order to strengthen the internal connectivity in Northeast India are lack of awareness of the common people about the benefits of greater economic engagement between Northeast India and Southeast Asia.



Much Needed Infrastructure

- ♦ The topography, climatic conditions of North East make it vulnerable and thus resilient infrastructure is essential. However, a lot of effort is being made to build infrastructure and enhance connectivity in the region. Three state capitals in the region are being connected through the railways and a train connecting Agartala to Delhi was also launched. By March 2023, Aizawl will be linked to India's railway grid, making Mizoram the fourth of the eight north-eastern States to get railway

connectivity. A big road project called SARDPNE, i.e. (special accelerated road development programme in the northeast) has been ongoing in the region for the past few years to build a Trans Arunachal highway.

- ♦ Surrounded by international borders, infrastructure development — both internal and international — could be the best choice for inclusive development in India's Northeast. International infrastructure, which is also termed as connectivity, may help the NER to become more economically engaged with neighbouring countries. India's Act East Policy presents an opportunity to unlock the region's trade potential.
- ♦ Building resilient infrastructure also requires development of the border in Northeast India and facilitation of border trade. The border is seen as a connector and as an economy-building asset rather than a deterrent.
- ♦ The states of Northeast India must complete ongoing rail, road, Inland Water Transport (IWT) and aviation projects on a fast-track basis and also improve border infrastructure with adequate storage facilities, testing labs, etc. In parallel, governments must work together to bring synergy in trade procedures with Bangladesh and Myanmar and build express corridors for special goods.
- ♦ India has ratified the TIR convention (Transports Internationaux Routiers), whereas, Bangladesh and Myanmar are yet to sign it. Signing the TIR would facilitate seamless trade and transportation in the region.

- ◆ The states of Northeast India may also undertake projects on their own to strengthen infrastructure linkages across borders. For example, the NER states may consider signing MoUs between their own state industrial development corporations with their counterparts in Myanmar, Thailand and Japan; opening handlooms and showcasing through exhibitions in Southeast Asian countries; promoting joint ventures in horticulture, floriculture packaging and other allied industries; setting up cultural networks and educational exchange programmes with the Southeast Asian countries and Japan.

Development So Far

- ◆ The UNDP India Country Programme Document (2018-2022) signed with government of India, stresses on “systems strengthening as the single most important innovation to achieve last mile impact”. For over a decade now, UNDP has been working in the North East region in the areas of promoting sustainable development through institutional and systems strengthening, equitable and inclusive growth through strengthening of, sustainable livelihoods, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), clean energy and environment, disaster risk reduction and community resilience.
- ◆ In recent years, India’s trade with Bangladesh and Myanmar witnessed a steep rise in growth, which indirectly suggests the existence of a large trade potential. However, supply-side

constraints, among others, inhibit the two-way trade across the borders with India’s two neighbours.

- ◆ Enhancing Northeast India’s existing level of trade and economic linkages between Bangladesh and Myanmar would need infrastructure and institutional support, which would facilitate growth and remove the region’s economic isolation.

Challenges

- ◆ Northeast India is prone to natural calamities. Therefore, the government of India along with state governments has to develop technology that can deal with the climate, terrain and needs of the region for expediting construction. About 50 percent of the land mass in the Northeast India is covered with forest. Suitable amendments in the relevant legislations may be considered to accommodate developmental needs. At the same time, we need to digitise the land records of the entire Northeast India.
- ◆ Low private investment is another big challenge to overcome. Providing an enabling environment for private investment would pave the way for engagement with Southeast and East Asia.
- ◆ The states of Northeast India must complete ongoing rail, road, Inland Water Transport (IWT) and aviation projects on a fast-track basis and also improve border infrastructure with adequate storage facilities, testing labs, etc. In parallel, we must work

together to bring synergy in trade procedures with Bangladesh and Myanmar and build express corridors for special goods. Paperless trade and interoperability of single window clearance should be taken up.

Way Forward

- ◆ The present institutional linkages are no doubt improving, but these have to be strengthened further to support connectivity projects between India and Southeast Asia. Therefore, to fulfil SDG 9, infrastructure development has a strong catalytic role to play in Northeast India. Finally, policy responses should then focus on strengthening infrastructure linkages, facilitating trade, investment and tourism, developing human resources, and protecting the environment and promoting the sustainable use of shared natural resources in India’s North Eastern Region. ☒☒☒

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

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.

Q. Critically discuss the role of infrastructure in promoting SDG 9 in India’s North Eastern Region.

04

Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship : An Introduction

Why in News?

- ♦ The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under its “Waste to Wealth” Mission launched the “Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship” to recognize students, community workers/ self-help groups, and municipal/ sanitary workers who are engaged in tackling the enormous challenge of waste management, scientifically and sustainably. The Waste to Wealth Mission is one of the nine national missions of the Prime Minister’s Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).

Background

- ♦ India is projected to surpass China as the world’s most populous country by 2027 and by 2050, India’s urban population will nearly double to reach 814 million.
- ♦ Waste generation in urban areas of India will be 0.7kg per person per day in 2025, approximately four to six times higher than in 1999. According to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India currently generates 62 million tons of waste (both recyclable and non-recyclable) every year, with an average annual growth rate of 4%. Solid waste, plastic waste and E-waste are the principal waste materials.
- ♦ Air Pollution in India is also a serious health issue. Of the most polluted cities in the world, 22 out of 30 were in India in 2018. As per a study based on 2016 data, at least

140 million people in India breathe air that is 10 times or more over the WHO safe limit.

- ♦ In converting waste to wealth, participation is needed from all the frontiers of age groups and overall population too.

About Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship

- ♦ The fellowship is an initiative to empower young innovators who are engaged in community work of waste management/awareness campaigns/waste surveys/studies, etc. as Swachhta Saarthis and implement actions to reduce waste for a greener planet.
- ♦ The role of young students from schools and colleges, and citizens working in the community through Self Help Groups (SHGs), or in independent capacity, is key in sensitizing the communities towards waste management and offer innovative solutions for conversion of waste to value.
- ♦ This fellowship is aimed to empower interested students and citizens to continuously engage in their attempts to reduce waste in cities and rural areas.
- ♦ The Swachhta Saarthi Fellowships will recognize exemplary people from any walk of life who go beyond the call of duty in tackling waste and manage it scientifically and sustainably.
- ♦ The fellowships will target the very grassroots of Indian community participation and recognise efforts made by citizens to make India a zero-waste nation.”

Awards under Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship

- ♦ Targeted to encourage community participation, the Swachhta Saarthi Fellowships invites applications from students and community workers who have done previous work or are currently engaged in waste management activities, including awareness campaigns, surveys & studies. The three categories of awards under the fellowships are as below:
 - ♦ **Category-A:** Open to School students from 9th to 12th standards engaged in waste management community work.
 - ♦ **Category-B:** Open to College students (UG, PG, Research students) engaged in waste management community work.
 - ♦ **Category-C:** Open to Citizens working in the community and through SHGs, municipal or sanitary workers working beyond specifications of their job requirement/descriptions.

Modern methods of waste management

- ♦ **Concept of 3-R (3-R):** 3-R ie Reuse, Reduce and Recycle. This is an important method of solid management.
- ♦ **Zero Waste System:** To play an important role in this work, by simplifying the work of waste management by the industries and by centralizing their waste management.
- ♦ **Extended Producer Responsibility:** EPR - Under this, producers manage waste. Actually EPR is a strategy to

conserve the environment. Under this principle, it is believed that if the responsibility of managing the waste of products polluting the environment will be given to the producing companies, then they will be encouraged to produce environmentally friendly products.

- ♦ **Collection of Waste:** Dry and wet waste should be stored separately, so that they can be disposed of through proper process.
- ♦ **Physical Recycling:** The popular meaning of recycling refers to the extensive collection and reuse of daily waste materials such as empty beverage containers, newspapers and glass bottles, etc. All items are collected and recycled.
- ♦ **Solid Waste in the form of Energy:** Energy is obtained from solid waste of energy plant at Okhla, Delhi Thermal Treatment and the waste is converted into carbon dioxide, water vapor and ash. It is a means of recovering energy from waste.
- ♦ **Biological treatment methods:** In this, microbes are used to decompose the biodegradable components of waste, it has two types of processes –
- ♦ **Aerobic:** It occurs in the presence of oxygen, including windrow composting and in pot composting and vermiculture.
- ♦ **Anaerobic:** occurs in the absence of oxygen, including landfill and open dumping.

PM-STIAC

- ♦ The Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC), is an overarching Council that facilitates the Principal Scientific Adviser's

Office to assess the status in specific science and technology domains, comprehend challenges in hand, formulate specific interventions, develop a futuristic roadmap and advise the Prime Minister accordingly. The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India coordinates to facilitate and ensure the implementation of significant interventions by concerned government departments, agencies, and ministries.

- ♦ The PM-STIAC Secretariat is based at Invest India and provides support to the Office of the PSA on project management and monitoring of the aforesaid interventions and national missions.

♦ Missions Under PM-STIAC

1. **Natural Language Translation:** Using a combination of machine and human translation, the mission will eventually enable access to teaching and researching material bilingually – in English and one's native Indian language.

2. **Quantum Frontier:** This mission aims to initiate work in the understanding and control of quantum mechanical systems with a large number of degrees of freedom as one of the great contemporary challenges in fundamental science and technology.

3. **Artificial Intelligence:** The Artificial Intelligence (AI) mission focuses on efforts that will benefit India in addressing societal needs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, smart cities and infrastructure, including smart mobility and transportation.

4. **National Biodiversity Mission:** comprehensive documentation of India's biodiversity with the potential for cataloguing and mapping all lifeforms in India

5. **Electric Vehicles:** The mission aims to develop vehicle sub-systems and components specific to Indian requirements. It is to assist speedy adoption of electric vehicles by making their use viable.



Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser
to the Government of India


WASTE TO WEALTH
Sustainable Growth through Waste Recycling


INVEST INDIA.GOV.IN

Chronic Waste Management Problem

77% of India's waste is disposed in open dumps



Apply for

Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship for students from schools, colleges, universities/institutions and to community workers and Self Help Groups (SHGs)



Last date to apply: March 19th, 2021

6. Bioscience for Human Health:

The primary goal of the mission is to construct comprehensive reference maps of genomes and to understand the dynamics of how exposure to different environments impact our bodies.

7. Waste to Wealth: Swachh Bharat, Unnat Bharat mission

set up under the Prime Minister's Science, Technology & Innovation Advisory Council, is an initiative by the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor that aims to leverage global technological capabilities to create socio-economic benefits for more than a billion Indians by addressing the issues of waste disposal, deteriorating air quality and increasing river pollution.

8. Deep Ocean Exploration:

The purpose of this mission is to scientifically explore the deep oceans towards improving our understanding of the blue frontier. The information from this mission will address issues arising from long term changes in the ocean due to climate change.

9. AGNIi:

This mission aims to support the national efforts to boost the innovation ecosystem in the country by connecting innovators across industry,

individuals and the grassroots to the market and helping commercialise innovative solutions.

India's Three Frontiers of Action

♦ Policy Framework:

- ♦ To promote and support the goals of the Swachh Bharat Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules 2016, Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules, 2016 and the E-waste (Management) Rules, 2016 have been notified.

♦ Technology Advancement:

- ♦ In addition to providing a conducive policy framework and promoting responsible behaviour, technological advancement is an important factor that can drive effective waste management in India. Use of emerging technologies such as blockchain can transform the current waste management scenario in India.

♦ Other Initiatives:

- ♦ Government of India has undertaken multiple large-scale national initiatives such as 'Swachh Bharat Mission', 'National Water Mission' and 'Waste to Energy' as a part of its commitment to effective waste & pollution management in India.
- ♦ Emphasis has also been laid on setting up Centres of Excellence to implement sustainable,

scientific and technological solutions for waste management. On these lines, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was recently signed between The Office of the PSA and IIT-Delhi to establish a 'Centre of Excellence' at IIT-Delhi.

Way Forward

- ♦ Government of India needs a suitable policy for waste management, through which both short-term and long-term goals of waste management can be achieved.
- ♦ In addition, awareness about waste management should also be spread to ensure common man's participation. Provision of tax-benefits and other positive reinforcements should be made with legal provision on industries, hospitals etc. regarding waste management. ☒☒☒

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. Government of India needs a suitable policy for waste management, through which both short-term and long-term goals of waste management can be achieved. In this context discuss the efficacy of Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship scheme.

05

Reviving the Iran Deal : Possibilities and Challenges

Why in News?

- ◆ The Biden administration has recently taken a major step, joining with European partners in offering to begin talks with the Iranians for the first time in four years.

Background

- ◆ The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was the result of prolonged negotiations from 2013 and 2015 between Iran and P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States (US) and the European Union, or the EU).
- ◆ Under the agreement, which came into force in January 2016, Tehran agreed to limit its nuclear program in return for relief from crippling economic sanctions imposed by the UN, US and the EU.
- ◆ The deal limited the number of centrifuges Iran could run and restricted them to an older, slower model. Iran also reconfigured a heavy-water reactor so it couldn't produce plutonium, and agreed to convert its enrichment site at Fordo into a research centre. It granted more access to inspectors from the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and allowed it to look at other sites.
- ◆ The deal allowed Iran to purchase commercial aircraft and reach other business deals. It also unfroze billions of dollars Iran held overseas.

- ◆ As part of the agreement, restrictions on Iran's uranium enrichment and stockpile size will end in 2031, 15 years after the deal.
- ◆ In 2016, the IAEA acknowledged that Iran met its commitments under the nuclear deal, and most sanctions on Iran were lifted. The country slowly re-entered the global banking system and began selling crude oil and natural gas on the international market.
- ◆ Mr. Trump had never hidden his dislike for the JCPOA, calling it a "horrible, one-sided deal that should have never, ever been made". After ranting about it for a year, he finally pulled the plug on it in May 2018 and embarked on a policy of 'maximum pressure' to coerce Iran back to the negotiating table. The US decision was criticised by all other parties to the JCPOA (including the European allies) because Iran was in compliance

with its obligations, as certified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

- ◆ The five other JCPOA participants, however, continued to be parties to the deal, thereby weakening the impact of US sanctions.
- ◆ For the first year after the US withdrawal, Iran's response was muted as the E-3 (France, Germany, the U.K.) and the EU promised to find ways to mitigate the US decision. But by May 2019, Tehran's 'strategic patience' was wearing out as the anticipated economic relief from the E-3/EU failed to materialise. As the sanctions began to hurt, Tehran shifted to a strategy of 'maximum resistance'.

Strategy of 'Maximum Resistance' of Iran

- ◆ Beginning in May 2019, Iran began to move away from

Changes agreed under Iran deal to limit nuclear programme



JCPOA's constraints incrementally: exceeding the ceilings of 300kg on low-enriched uranium and 130 metric ton (MT) on heavy-water; raising enrichment levels from 3.67% to 4.5%; stepping up research and development on advanced centrifuges; resuming enrichment at Fordow; and violating limits on the number of centrifuges in use.

- ◆ Finally, in January 2020, following the drone strike on Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Gen. Qasem Soleiman, Tehran announced that it would no longer observe the JCPOA's restraints, though its cooperation with the IAEA would continue.

Steps towards Restoration of Deal

- ◆ Donald Trump's policy may have provided comfort to Israel's leader Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, but it failed to bring Iran back to the negotiating table and only strengthened the hardliners. Iran has suffered and there is no appetite for more negotiations.
- ◆ However, the Biden administration has made a good start by appointing Robert Malley as the US Special Envoy for Iran. Positive steps along multiple tracks are necessary for creating a conducive atmosphere.
 - ◆ Release of European and American nationals currently in custody in Iran would help.
 - ◆ Clearing Iran's applications to the International Monetary

Fund for COVID-19 relief and for supply of vaccines under the international COVAX facility can be done relatively easily.

- ◆ The E-3/EU need to fast track deals worth several hundred million euros stuck in the INSTEX pipeline, with a visible nod from the US. If not with Iran, the U.S. should share with the E-3/EU a 45-60 day time frame for progressive restoration of sanctions relief.
- ◆ Meanwhile, Iran needs to refrain from any further nuclear brinkmanship. The IAEA and the E-3/EU should work on a parallel reversal of steps taken by Iran to ensure full compliance with the JCPOA. Brussels has long wanted to be taken seriously as an independent foreign policy actor; it now has the opportunity to take a lead role.

Impact on India

- ◆ If restoration of JCPOA takes place in coming months, it will be beneficial for India in many ways:
 - ◆ Before the US sanctions, India was the second biggest buyer of Iranian crude oil after China. It bought some 24 million tonnes of crude oil from Iran in the fiscal ended March 31 (2018-19). Iran supplied more than a tenth of its oil needs. The restoration of JCPOA will help India to procure of crude oil and energy requirements.
 - ◆ During the Maritime India Summit 2021, India has proposed

the inclusion of Chabahar port in the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) route, and expressed hope that member states involved with the INSTC will agree on expanding membership of this project. Therefore, removing sanctions may revive India's interest in the Chabahar option, Bandar Abbas port, and other plans for regional connectivity. This would further help India to neutralize the Chinese presence in Gwadar port, Pakistan.

Way Forward

- ◆ If the U.S. waits for Iran to return to full compliance before lifting sanctions or Iran waits for the U.S. to restore sanctions relief before returning to full compliance, it can only lead to one outcome — the collapse of the JCPOA with Iran going nuclear like North Korea; an outcome that would create major reverberations in the region and beyond. Only good intentions will not be enough to overcome this impasse. ☒☒☒

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Topic:

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

Q. Discuss the geopolitical implications of America's intention to revive the Iran deal.

06

Operation Greens : TOP to TOTAL

Why in News?

- Recently the finance minister has proposed to extend 'Operation Greens', under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries to add more items for which value chains could be created.

Background

- India which is a food surplus country needs to fix missing links in the farm-to-fork value chain and also reduce food wastage. The operation aims to replicate the success of the increase in production of milk in India through the implementation of Operation Flood. The operation will also aid in India's goal of doubling farmer's income by the year 2022.
- For the promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), agricultural logistics, processing facilities and business management, a new scheme "Operation Greens" was announced in the Union Budget 2018-19 with an outlay of Rs 500 crores on the lines of "Operation Flood".
- Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) on 11th June 2020 extended the Operation Greens Scheme from Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) to all fruits & vegetables (TOTAL) for a period of six months on pilot basis as part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
 - Items added during the pilot project: Mango, Banana, Guava, Kiwi, Lichi, Papaya, Citrus, Pineapple, Pomegranate, Jackfruit; Vegetables: - French beans, Bitter Gourd, Brinjal, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Chillies (Green), Okra, Onion,

Potato and Tomato. Any other fruit/vegetable can be added in future on the basis of recommendation by Ministry of Agriculture or State Government

- During the Union Budget of Financial Year 2021-2022, India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman expanded Operation greens (OG) beyond TOP (Tomatoes, Onions, and Potatoes) to 22 perishable commodities. It reflects the intention of the government to create efficient value chain for the perishables.
- The speed of the Operation Green Plan is very slow in terms of achieving its objectives of price stabilization, at which speed the objectives of the plan cannot be achieved.

Objectives of Operation Greens

- Increase in the value to the top producing farmers by targeted interventions to strengthen TOP production clusters and their FPOs and link them to the market.
- Reasonable production planning in top clusters and price stabilization for producers and consumers by including dual-use varieties.
- Creation of infrastructure at the farm level, development of appropriate agro-logistics, creation of proper storage capacity and reduction of post-harvest losses by linking with consumption centers.
- Increase in food processing capacity and value addition in the top value chain with strong linkage with production clusters.
- Establishment of a market intelligence network to collect and collate correct data regarding demand and supply and price of top crops.

Implementation and Progress

- The design and strategy followed so far are that the OG scheme is housed in the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) under a Joint Secretary.
- MoFPI has invited some programme management agencies to see its implementation. Out of the Rs 500 crore from its initial outlay, Rs 50 crore were reserved for the price stabilisation objective, wherein NAFED was to intervene in the market wherever prices crashed due to a glut, to procure some excess arrivals from the surplus regions to store them near major consuming centres.
- Another Rs 450 crore has been reserved for developing integrated value chains projects. Such projects are given 50 per cent grants-in-aid with a maximum limit of Rs 50 crore per project. This subsidy goes up to 70 per cent in case the project is of a Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO).
- As of February 23, six projects worth Rs 363.3 crore have been approved for the scheme, of which Rs 136.82 crore has been approved as grant-in-aid.
- But so far, a mere Rs. 8.45 crore has been actually released, which may be because the scheme envisages the payment of subsidy on a reimbursement basis.

Lessons from Operation Flood

- If OG has to deliver on its objectives, there may be some basic principles it can learn from Operation Flood (OF) that transformed the dairy sector, making India the world's largest milk producer, almost

crossing 200 million tonnes production. Although OG will be more challenging than OF—each commodity under OG has its own specificity, its own production and consumption cycle, unlike the homogeneity of milk as one commodity—there are some important lessons from OF

- ♦ The results are not going to come in 3-4 years. One has to have patience. OF lasted for almost 20 years before milk value-chains were put on the track of efficiency and inclusiveness. If this is the horizon needed for OG, we need a different structure and strategy than the one followed currently. There has to be a separate board to strategise and implement the OG scheme, on the lines of the National Dairy Development Board, keeping itself at arm's length from the government's control.
- ♦ Need for an expert to head such a board or institution with a considerable autonomy from the government. That person will have to be given, at the least, a five-year term and ample resources while he/she is made accountable for delivering results.
- ♦ The criteria for choosing clusters for TOP crops under OG is not very transparent and clear. The reason is while some important districts have been left out from the list of clusters, less important ones have been included.

➤ **Example:** Nashik, a well-known tomato growing region with one of the largest tomato mandis (in Pimpalgaon) has been left out, while less important districts from states like Odisha (Kendujhar and Mayurbhanj), Gujarat (Sabarkantha, Anand and Kheda) and West Bengal have been included. Similarly, Nalanda in Bihar was included in the onion cluster, but Aurangabad district in Maharashtra (an important white onion growing region) was left out. For potato, Punjab was finally included after Punjab CM Amarinder Singh's request for the addition of their districts as clusters.

- ♦ What is needed is quantifiable and transparent criteria for the selection of commodity clusters, keeping politics away.
- ♦ The subsidy scheme will have to be made innovative with new generation entrepreneurs, startups and FPOs.

Slow Implementation

- ♦ A closer examination of the scheme in terms of achievement of the objectives of price stabilisation or ensuring a larger share of farmers in consumers' rupee, reveals that OG is in a slow-motion mode and nowhere near achieving its objectives.
- ♦ Research at ICRIER reveals that price volatility remains as high as ever, and farmers' share in consumers'

rupee is as low as 26.6% in the case of potatoes, 29.1% in the case of onions, and 32.4% in the case of tomatoes (see graphic).

- ♦ This is reflective of the malice in the horticulture sector.

Way Forward

- ♦ The Government of India has set a target of doubling the income of farmers by the year 2022. To achieve this goal, the success of schemes like Operation Green is very important. The announcement to create additional 10,000 FPOs along with Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and the new farm laws are all promising but need to be implemented fast. The MSP regulation has a key role to play here. The announcement to set minimum support price of all kharif crops at 1.5 times the cost of production will increase the farmers' income and for consumers, tax incentives will be given under Operation Greens. ☒☒☒

General Studies Paper- III

Topic

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

Q. Critically examine the role of 'Operation Green' in government's vision of doubling the income of farmers.

07

Proposed Revision in the National Food Security Act, 2013

Why in News?

- ◆ The NITI Aayog recently circulated a discussion paper on a proposed revision in the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.

Key Highlights

- ◆ Government think tank NITI Aayog has recommended lowering the coverage of both rural and urban population under the National Food Security Act, 2013, to save up to Rs 47,229 crore annually.
- ◆ According to the report, the recommendation, which is part of a discussion paper, suggests reducing the coverage to 60% from the current 75% of the rural population, and to 40% from the current 50% of the urban population. Overall, the National Food Security Act currently covers 67% of the country's total population.
- ◆ The NITI Aayog discussion paper estimates that if the rural-urban coverage ratio remains the same, i.e. 75:50, in current population levels, then number of people under the coverage of the Act will expand to 89.52 crore, from the existing 81.35 crore. On the other hand, if it is reduced to the recommended ratio of 60:40, the number of beneficiaries will come down to 71.62 crore.
- ◆ Therefore, apart from reducing the coverage, the NITI Aayog has also recommended updating the population level which is currently based on Census 2011.

- ◆ The discussion paper has reportedly noted two other scenarios also – revising the state/Union Territory-specific coverage ratios and identifying eligible beneficiaries.

Recommendations So Far

- ◆ In the past, the Shanta Kumar Committee, which submitted its report in January 2015 on “Reorienting the role and restructuring of Food Corporation of India”, had recommended reducing the coverage ratio from 67% of the country's population to 40%.
- ◆ The Economic Survey for 2020-21 had also recommended a revision of the Central Issue Prices (CIP) of foodgrains released from the central pool, observing that the food subsidy, at its current level of Rs 4,22,618 crore, is becoming “unmanageably large”.

About Food Security Act

- ◆ The NFSA provides a legal right to persons belonging to “eligible households” to receive foodgrains at subsidised price— rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg and coarse grain at Rs 1/kg — under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). These are called central issue prices (CIPs).
- ◆ A revision of CIPs is one of the issues that have been discussed. The other issues are updating of the population coverage under the NFSA, and beneficiary identification criteria.

- ◆ Under sub-section (1) of Section 3 of the Act, the term “eligible households” comprises two categories — “priority households”, and families covered by the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY). Priority households are entitled to receive 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month, whereas AAY households are entitled to 35 kg per month at the same prices.
- ◆ Under Schedule-I of the Act, these subsidised prices were fixed for “a period of three years from the date of commencement of the Act”. While different states began implementing the Act at different dates, the deemed date of its coming into effect is July 5, 2013, and the three-year period was therefore completed on July 5, 2016.
- ◆ However, the government has yet not revised the subsidised prices. The government can do so under Schedule-I of the Act, after completion of the three-year period. To revise the prices, the government can amend Schedule-I through a notification, a copy of which has to be laid before each House of Parliament as soon as possible after it is issued.
- ◆ The revised prices cannot exceed the minimum support price for wheat and coarse grains, and the derived minimum support price for rice.

Reasons behind Proposed Revision

- ◆ The Act has prescribed the coverage under “eligible households” — 75%

of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population. On the basis of Census 2011 figures and the national rural and urban coverage ratios, 81.35 crore persons are covered under NFSA currently. This overall figure has been divided among the states and Union Territories, based on the NSSO Household Consumer Expenditure Survey 2011-12.

- ◆ The number of NFSA beneficiaries was frozen in 2013. However, given the population increase since then, there have been demands from the states and union territories to update the list by ensuring an annual updating system under NFSA.
- ◆ It was in this context that the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution had asked the NITI Aayog to suggest an alternative methodology for “covering beneficiaries under NFSA, including prospective beneficiaries”.

Implications

- ◆ If the national coverage ratio is revised downward, the Centre can save up to Rs 47,229 crore (as estimated by the NITI Aayog paper). However, the move may be opposed by some of the states.
- ◆ On the other hand, if the rural-urban coverage ratio remains at

DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

Ensuring Food Security for more than 80 Crore People



Food security ensured in all the **36 States/UTs** as against 11 states in May 2014



As on 3rd December, 2018

75-50, then the total number of people covered will increase from the existing 81.35 crore to 89.52 crore —an increase of 8.17 crore. This estimate by the NITI Aayog is based on the projected 2020 population, and, according to the paper, will result in an additional subsidy requirement of Rs 14,800 crore.

Way Forward

- ◆ According to the United Nations, India shares a quarter of the global hunger burden and nearly 47 million children not meeting their full potential due to malnutrition. While the Indian government has taken various steps to eliminate hunger through schemes such as the Food Security Act, 2013, the revised coverage ratio will have

a huge impact on many rural and urban families.

- ◆ The government must adopt a well-detailed plan to cautiously examine the suggestions of NITI Aayog taking into consideration the number of households that depend on food rations to survive. Their future cannot be compromised. ☒☒☒

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. The NITI Aayog has recently proposed revision in the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013. What is the implication of the revision for the Centre and the states? Discuss.

7 IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01 Agalega Island

1. Why in News?

- The Island of Agalega located in the Indian Ocean is being rapidly transformed into a strategic outpost by the Indian Army. The island has been leased by Mauritius to the Indian Army.



2. About Agalega Island

- Agalega Island is an outlying island of Mauritius located in the Indian Ocean, about 1,000 kilometers (620 mi) north of Mauritius.
- Mauritius has leased the Indian Army to develop Agalega Island as a strategic outpost.

3. Strategic Importance of Agalega Island

- India received the Island of Agalega from Mauritius in 2015 to develop it as an air and naval base to monitor the southwestern Indian Ocean.
- India is developing its military base here, similar to other countries like UK-US military base Diego Garcia.
- A military base at Agalega Island will strengthen India's hold in the Indian Ocean region.
- With the increasing hold of neighboring country China in the Indian Ocean, there are increasing challenges for India, so it can become a major strategic advantage for India.
- India is pursuing development activities in the island at a very fast pace. In this military base to be built in Mauritius, India can deploy its fleet of naval P-8I aircraft through which Chinese activities can be controlled in the southwestern Indian Ocean.
- From here India can operate joint patrolling with France (Reunion Island).
- This military base will also facilitate maritime patrols on the Mozambique Channel to India, which is a popular route for large commercial vessels, especially oil tankers.
- This military base will enable the Indian Navy to inspect shipping routes around southern Africa, these routes are responsible for a significant portion of China's energy imports.
- In addition, the island will provide a useful location for communications and electronic intelligence facilities.
- Agalega military base as a whole will strengthen India's presence in the southwestern Indian Ocean and shape the vision of the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

5. About Mauritius

- Mauritius is an island country in the African continent located in the Indian Ocean and is also a member of the African Union.
- It has a population of about 12.8 lakhs of which about 48% people are followers of Hindu religion.
- The capital of Mauritius is Port Louis and the currency here is the Mauritius Rupee.

4. About SAGAR Vision

- SAGAR is India's policy or doctrine of maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, launched in 2015.
- Under the SAGAR vision, India is also trying to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.
- One of the objectives of this policy is to advance the blue economy along with the small and insular countries of the Indian Ocean.

02

Maritime India Summit-2021

1. Why in News?

- The summit was organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) jointly with FICCI as Industrial Partner and EY as Knowledge Partner.
- Denmark was the partner country of the Summit 2021.



2. Key Highlights

- Prime Minister has released e-book of 'Maritime India Vision-2030'. Maritime India Vision 2030 is aiming to make the Indian Maritime Industry at par with top global benchmarks in next 10 years.
- Prime Minister also unveiled the e-plaque of 'Sagar-Manthan': Mercantile Maritime Domain Awareness Centre (MM-DAC). It is an information system for enhancing maritime safety, search and rescue capabilities, security and marine environment protection.
- India will invest USD 82 billion in port projects by 2035, raise share of clean renewable energy source in maritime sector, develop waterways and boost tourism around lighthouses as part of port-led development.
- More than 574 projects costing USD 82 billion or Rs 6 lakh crore have been identified for implementation between 2015 and 2035 under the Sagarmala Project. The government is also looking to operationalise 23 waterways by 2030.
- The government of India is also planning to develop tourism on land adjacent to 78 out of 189 lighthouses on Indian coastline.
- The capacity of major Indian ports has increased from 870 million tonnes in 2014 to 1550 million tonnes now.
- Indian ports now have measures such as: Direct port Delivery, Direct Port Entry and an upgraded Port Community System (PCS) for easy data flow.
- Indian ports have reduced waiting time for inbound and outbound cargo. Mega ports with world class infrastructure are being developed in Vadhavan, Paradip and Deendayal Port in Kandla.

3. Indian Ports: Current Status

- **Sagarmala project:** Under the Sagarmala project, more than 574 projects have been identified for implementation during 2015 to 2035 at a cost of about Rs 6 lakh crore.
- **Domestic waterways:** The government of India aims to commission 23 waterways by 2030. Additionally, steps are also being taken by the government to introduce urban water transport systems in major states and cities such as Kochi, Mumbai, Gujarat and Goa.
- **Lighthouse:** At present there are about 189 lighthouses on the vast coastline of India. The government of India has prepared a programme to develop tourism on the land around 78 lighthouses. The main objective of this initiative is to develop the existing lighthouses and the areas around them into specific maritime tourist destinations.
- **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways:** Recently, the government of India has expanded the scope of the maritime sector by renaming the Ministry of Shipping to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways so that the sector can grow in a holistic manner. It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has prepared a list of about 400 investable projects. These projects have an investment potential of \$ 31 billion or Rs 2.25 lakh crore.
- **Domestic shipbuilding and ship repairing market:** To encourage domestic shipbuilding, the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy for Indian Shipyards has been approved. Ship repairing clusters will be developed along both coasts (eastern and western) by 2022.
- **Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Center:** Recently the Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Center has also been started by the government. It is an information system for promoting maritime security, search and rescue capabilities and marine environmental protection.
- **Wealth from west:** Government of India is also promoting domestic ship recycling industry for creation of 'Wealth from West'. India has implemented the Ship Recycling Act, 2019 and agreed about the Hong Kong International Convention.
- **Overall development of island infrastructure and ecosystem:** Government of India is focusing on the overall development of island infrastructure and ecosystem.
- **Renewable energy in the marine sector:** The government is making significant efforts to promote the use of renewable energy in the marine sector. The government is in the process of installing solar and wind-based power systems at all major ports of the country. The government aims to have more than 60 percent of the total energy consumed at all ports in India by renewable energy by 2030.

03 India and European Union

1. Why in News?

- India and the European Union have agreed to strengthen the multilateral system together. Both sides have recognized that multilateralism is more needed in international relations today. Building strong ties with the European Union can help India in manufacturing as well as exports.
- India and the European Union (EU) have held talks on re-opening dialogue on a trade and investment pact that has been in discussion for many years.



2. Need for Better India-EU Trade Relations

- The negotiations between India and the EU on a free trade agreement have been stalled since May 2013, when both sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, including data security status for the IT sector. The negotiations were launched in June 2007.
- On 8th February 2021, EU's office in India releases a statement expressing the likelihood of the conclusive FTA between India and EU this year.
- The EU side provided an update on the ongoing review of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences, which expires end of 2023, and on the work towards EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism under the European Green Deal, while the Indian side provided an updated on the 'Make in India' and 'Self-Reliant India' initiatives.
- Atmanibhar Bharat Program and Budget 2021-22 have emphasized exports to strengthen supply chains and achieve self-sufficiency. To realize the vision of a self-reliant India, India will have to boost supply chains, with strategic partners such as the European Union (EU), through phase-wise reductions of investment tariffs and import duties.

3. Trade Relations: India and EU

- The EU is India's largest trading partner, accounting for €80 billion worth of trade in goods in 2019 or 11.1% of total Indian trade, on par with the USA and ahead of China (10.7%).
- The EU is the second-largest destination for Indian exports (over 14% of the total) after the USA.
- India is the EU's 10th largest trading partner, accounting for 1.9% of EU total trade in goods in 2019, well behind the USA (15.2%), China (13.8%) and the UK (12.6%).
- Trade in goods between the EU and India increased by 72% in the last decade.
- Trade in services between the EU and India increased rapidly from €22.3 billion in 2015 to €29.6 billion in 2018.
- The EU's share in foreign investment inflows to India more than doubled from 8% to 18% in the last decade, making the EU the first foreign investor in India.
- EU foreign direct investment stocks in India amounted to €68 billion in 2018, which is significant but way below EU foreign investment stocks in China (€175 billion) or Brazil (€312 billion).
- Some 6,000 European companies are present in India, providing directly 1.7 million jobs and indirectly 5 million jobs in a broad range of sectors.

5. India and EU: Points of Concern

- The Free Trade Agreement between India and the European Union hangs. In addition, the European Union and India are also embroiled in an extremely bitter trade dispute in the World Trade Organization.
- India had increased the duty on imports on certain items of information and communication technology (ICT) from 7.5 percent to 20 percent. After which the European Union has challenged this step of India in the Dispute Settlement Organization of the World Trade Organization.
- India is ready for a preferential trade agreement (PTA) with the European Union.

4. Export Potential

- India has an untapped export potential of \$39.9 billion in the EU and Western Europe. The top products with export potential include apparel, gems and jewellery, chemicals, machinery, automobile, pharmaceuticals and plastic.
- India benefits from tariff preferences under the EU's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for several of these products. In fact, India is among the major beneficiaries of the EU's GSP, with exports under the GSP valued at nearly \$19.4 billion in 2019, accounting for nearly 37% of India's merchandise exports to the EU.

04 Path to Peace in Ethiopia

1. Why in News?

- Ethiopia is in the grip of civil war due to military violence in its Tigray region.
- The conflict in Tigray began in late 2020. When Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched an aggressive campaign to oust the ruling party of the province's Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). It is noteworthy that the Ethiopian government wants to take control of Tigray's capital Mekele.
- Significantly, during an ethnic violence in Ethiopia in December 2020, at least 102 ordinary civilians were killed in an alleged massacre. The attack took place a day after Prime Minister Abi Ahmed traveled there. Only then did he allow the army to take action to deal with the rebels.



2. Key Points

- Internal conflict in Ethiopia resulted in the deaths of 52,000 people and displacement of over 2 million, of which more than 60,000 people have taken refuge in Sudan's eastern border. This has led to the influx of military personnel from Sudanese and Eritrea along the northern frontier of Ethiopia.
- Currently, Ethiopia is attempting to deal with its domestic emergency. At this stage, the challenge is to achieve a military conflict-free environment, address increased displacement, support basic needs for civilians in the face of the risk of famine, and intensify humanitarian aid in conflict-prone areas.
- Cities in Northern Gondar Zone, such as Welkait, which have been under the control of TPLF forces for decades, will need social, economic revival support after the conflict.

3. TPLF: Background

- TPLF was established in the year 1975 as a military organization. The TPLF is reportedly fighting against the dictatorial government of Ethiopia to protect the interests of the people living in the Tigray region.
- Most people in Tigray are Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Christians have been living here for 1,600 years. The predominant language here is Tigrinya. This is the Semitic dialect, which is spoken by at least 7 million people worldwide.
- TPLF waged an armed struggle against the then military government of Ethiopia in the year 1991, which resulted in the removal of the military dictatorial government from power. It received huge support in Ethiopia only after this development.
- TPLF leader Meles Zenawi took over as Interim President in 1991 and became the first elected Prime Minister in 1995. Meles Zenawi remained in power until 2012 and is largely seen as the architect of the country's ethno-federal system.

4. Horn of Africa

- It is the easternmost extension of African land, including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.
- It is noteworthy that all these countries are not only geographically identical but they also have cultural similarities.
- Ethiopia is a landlocked country.

5. Way Forward

- Peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction and transitional justice are not possible in this country without a clear framework. The civil war in Ethiopia affects the Horn of Africa region, which already has low-level conflicts, uneven economic development, border disputes, continued food insecurity, climate change, a precarious political situation and a dire refugee crisis.
- Ethiopia's Tigray region needs both political and economic reforms to begin post-conflict reconstruction work. The country's humanitarian crisis gives rise to long-term concerns. In such a situation, it is very important for the United Nations and its partner organizations to have free, safe and unhindered access to Ethiopia to meet security and human needs.

05 Non-compoundable Crime

1. Why in News?

- Recently, a Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde asked the rape accused during the hearing of Mohit Subhash Chavan v. Government of Maharashtra whether he would marry the victim or not?
- Though rape is non-compoundable crime, this incident has led to a furore among the civil society which has questioned the judicial wisdom in handling of such case.



2. Implications of Supreme Court's Stance

- The words uttered by the judges of the Supreme Court have great influence in the society. They have the power to extend the constitutional rights of citizens and protect them from the unequal value systems of tribal, caste, and patriarchy.
- In such a case, the Supreme Court's comment, submitting marriage proposals in exchange for the trauma of rape is a highly offensive and regressive consideration for the victim as well as the society as a whole.

3. Supreme Court's Past Judgments

- In recent years, in case of rape by some high courts, it has been argued that since there is a compromise between the victim and the offender, the punishment is justified.
- The Madhya Pradesh High Court had changed the sentence given by the Guna Sessions Court under Section 376 (misdemeanor) to Section 354 (molestation). In such a case, the decision given by the Supreme Court in July 2015 in Madhya Pradesh vs Madanlal case is a milestone. The Supreme Court has clearly stated in the rape cases that it cannot compromise the punishment given to the culprit in any way.
- The Supreme Court had given strict comments that many times the courts interfere at the appellate level and suffer such prejudices and write judgments that in particular the soul of the criminal justice system dies.
- It is worth noting that earlier in its decision in Haryana v. Shimbhu case (2014), the Supreme Court had said that in the interest of justice and to protect the victim from unnecessary pressure and harassment, it is necessary that the agreement between the parties should not take place. Be given. Giving judgment in Haryana v. Shimbhu case, the judge clarified that the concept of compromise cannot be thought of under any circumstances in the case of misdemeanor or attempted rape. Rape is not a case that should be left to both sides for reconciliation and compromise.
- In Haryana v. Shimbhu case (2014), the apex court stated that the highest importance is respect for the woman, against whom no compromise or settlement can be reached. Many times an offender attempts to console the victim by marrying them, while the reality is that the victim is indirectly pressurized to do so. Due to such reasons in courts, softness towards the guilty cannot be shown at all. The court said that there is no statutory permission for any kind of liberal attitude or thinking of arbitration.

4. Criminal and Inevitable Crime

- Section 320 of the Indian Penal Code deals with offenses in which compromise can be done without the permission of the court and there are some cases in which the agreement is with the permission of the court.
- The offenses in which agreement is reached between two parties are called compoundable offences and the offenses which do not reach agreement between the two parties are called Non Compoundable Offences.
- The offenses in which the agreement can be reached without the permission of the court are given in Section 320(1) of CrPC. However, this agreement has to be given to the police. The cases in which the consent of the court can be compromised are given in Section 320(2) of CrPC.

06 Arctic Island and Mining Magnets

1. Context

- The world's biggest island has huge resources of metals known as 'rare earths,' used to create compact, super-strong magnets which help power equipment such as wind turbines, electric vehicles, combat aircraft and weapons systems.



2. Background

- In the tenth century, Erik the Red, a Viking from Iceland, was so impressed with the vegetation on another Arctic island he had found he called it "the green land."
- Today, it's Greenland's rocks that are attracting outsiders - superpowers riding a green revolution.

3. Mining Magnets

- As Greenland's ice sheet and glaciers recede, two Australia-based mining companies - one seeking funding in the United States, the other part-owned by a Chinese state-backed firm - are racing for approval to dig into what the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) calls the world's biggest undeveloped deposits of rare earth metals.
- Each Greenland mine would cost about \$500 million to develop.
- The Greenland sites are less than 16 km (10 miles) from each other at the southern tip of the island.
- The country may ultimately back either project, both, or neither, but for those Greenlanders open to mining, the two proposals boil down to a choice between one mine that would not produce radioactive material, and another that would.
 - The first mine, a private initiative from an Australian geologist, would not involve nuclear material.
 - ❖ It has won preliminary environmental approval, but it needs cash and a processing plan.
 - The second one has already spent more than \$100 million preparing to mine, has proven processing technology through its Chinese partner, and won initial political support from Greenland's coalition government.
 - ❖ But its plans include exporting uranium, a nuclear fuel, and it recently ran into strong opposition, including from residents of the nearby town of Narsaq.

4. Greenland's Economy

- Greenland, a self-governing territory of the Kingdom of Denmark, has a gross domestic product of around \$3 billion - similar to Andorra and Burundi.
- With its people living mostly on fishing and grants from Copenhagen, capital of Denmark.
- Greenland's position near the eastern flank of the United States makes it a sensitive location.

5. Can be a Curse

- China is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, so it can import uranium from Greenland. But since the fuel is used in nuclear weapons, that would be sensitive.
- Neither of the Greenland projects would be pollution-free. Both plan for mined rock to be locally crushed and separated into concentrates to send for final processing.

07

Assam's Red Rice: Bao-dhaan

1. Why in News?

- In a major boost to India's rice exports potential, the first consignment of 'red rice' was flagged off recently to the United States of America (USA).
- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has been promoting rice exports through collaborations with various stakeholders in the value chains.



2. About Rice

- Iron-rich 'red rice' is grown in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, without the use of any chemical fertilizer.
- The rice variety is referred as 'Bao-dhaan', which is an integral part of Assamese food.
- Bao-dhaan is generally grown in areas having higher land submergence that are unsuitable for other varieties of paddy.

3. Significance

- The export of 'red rice' would enhance the incomes of farming families of the Brahmaputra flood plains.
- Government of India aims to double farmers' income by 2022. To achieve this goal, it is very important to increase the export of such agricultural products.
- It is important to note that the northeastern states of India form a major part of the Act East policy of India. Therefore, the government of India is paying major attention in the development of these states.
- The development of agriculture sector will also remove the problem of hidden unemployment in India.

4. About APEDA

- APEDA was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the Parliament in December, 1985.
- The government had set up the Rice Export Promotion Forum (REPF), under the aegis of the APEDA.
- REPF has representations from the rice industry, exporters, officials from APEDA, the ministry of commerce and directors of agriculture from major rice-producing states including West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

5. Export of Rice: Status

- The non-basmati rice exports were Rs 26,058 crore (3506 US\$ Million) during April-January, 2021 against Rs 11,543 crore (1627 US\$ Million) reported during April-January, 2020 period.
- The exports of non-Basmati witnessed a growth of 125 per cent in Rupee terms and 115 per cent Dollar terms.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 Agalega Island

1. Consider the following statements with respect of 'Agalega Island':

1. The Island of Agalega located in the Indian Ocean.
2. India is developing its military base here, with the help of Israel.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Both the statements are correct.

Agalega Island is an outlying island of Mauritius located in the Indian Ocean, about 1,000 kilometers (620 mi) north of Mauritius. Mauritius has leased the Indian Army to develop Agalega Island as a strategic outpost.

India is developing its military base here, similar to other countries like UK-US military base Diego Garcia. A military base at Agalega Island will strengthen India's hold in the Indian Ocean region. 

02 Maritime India Summit-2021

2. Consider the following statements:

1. Maritime India Vision 2025 is aiming to make the Indian Maritime Industry at par with top global benchmarks in next 5 years.
2. The government of India is looking to operationalise 25 waterways by 2030.

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: (d)

Explanation: Both the statements are incorrect. Prime Minister has released e-book of 'Maritime India Vision-2030'. Maritime India Vision 2030 is aiming to make the Indian Maritime Industry at par with top global benchmarks in next 10 years.

More than 574 projects costing USD 82 billion or Rs 6 lakh crore have been identified for implementation between 2015 and 2035 under the Sagarmala Project. The government is also looking to operationalise 23 waterways by 2030. 

03 India and European Union

3. Consider the following statements:

1. The European Union is the largest destination for Indian exports (over 14% of the total) followed by the USA.
2. On 8th February 2021, European Union and India has signed a free trade agreement (FTA).

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: (d)

Explanation: Both the statements are incorrect. On 8th February 2021, EU's office in India releases a statement expressing the likelihood of the conclusive FTA between India and EU this year.

The EU is the second-largest destination for Indian exports (over 14% of the total) after the USA. India is the EU's 10th largest trading partner, accounting for 1.9% of EU total trade in goods in 2019, well behind the USA (15.2%), China (13.8%) and the UK (12.6%). 

04 Path to Peace in Ethiopia

1. Consider the following statements:

1. Horn of Africa is the westernmost extension of African land, including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.
2. Ethiopia is a landlocked country.
3. Ethiopia is in the grip of civil war due to military violence in its Tigray region.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. Horn of Africa is the easternmost extension of African land, including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

Statement 2 and 3 are correct. Ethiopia is a landlocked country. Ethiopia is in the grip of civil war due to military violence in its Tigray region. The conflict in Tigray began in late 2020. When Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched an aggressive campaign to oust the ruling party of the province's Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). It is noteworthy that the Ethiopian government wants to take control of Tigray's capital Mekele.

05 Non-compoundable Crime

5. Consider the following statements with respect of non-compoundable offence:

1. The offenses in which agreement is reached between two parties are called compoundable offences.
2. The offenses which do not reach agreement between the two parties are called non-compoundable offences.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both the statements are correct. The offenses in which agreement is reached between two parties are called compoundable offences and the offenses which do not reach agreement between the two parties are called Non Compoundable Offences.

06 Arctic Island and Mining Magnets

6. Consider the following statements:

1. Greenland, a governing territory of the United States, has a gross domestic product of around \$3 billion - similar to Andorra and Burundi.
2. Greenland's position near the eastern flank of the United States makes it a sensitive location.

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. Greenland, a self-governing territory of the Kingdom of Denmark, has a gross domestic product of around \$3 billion - similar to Andorra and Burundi. With its people living mostly on fishing and grants from Copenhagen, capital of Denmark.

Statement 2 is correct. Greenland's position near the eastern flank of the United States makes it a sensitive location.

07 Assam's Red Rice: Bao-dhaan

7. Consider the following statement with reference to the Assam's Red Rice – Bao Dhaan:

1. Zinc-rich 'red rice' is grown in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, without the use of any chemical fertilizer.
2. Bao-dhaan is generally grown in areas having higher land submergence that are unsuitable for other varieties of paddy.

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. Iron-rich 'red rice' is grown in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, without the use of any chemical fertilizer.

Statement 2 is correct. Bao-dhaan is generally grown in areas having higher land submergence that are unsuitable for other varieties of paddy.

7 IMPORTANT NEWS

01

Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet

- ◆ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully carried out a flight demonstration based on Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology from Integrated Test Range Chandipur off the coast of Odisha on March 05, 2021.

About Technology

- ◆ SFDR technology is a missile propulsion system based on the concept of Ramjet Engine principle. The system utilises a solid fuelled air-breathing ramjet engine.
- ◆ Ramjet engine takes up oxygen from the atmosphere during flight. Thus, it is light in weight and can carry more fuel.
- ◆ A ramjet is a form of air-breathing jet engine that uses the vehicle's forward motion to compress incoming air for combustion without a rotating compressor. Fuel is injected in the combustion chamber where it mixes with the hot compressed air and ignites. A ramjet-powered vehicle requires an assisted take-off like a rocket assist to accelerate it to a speed where it begins to produce thrust.



- ◆ A scramjet engine is an improvement over the ramjet engine as it efficiently operates at hypersonic speeds and allows supersonic combustion. Thus it is known as Supersonic Combustion Ramjet, or Scramjet.
- ◆ India is the fourth country to demonstrate the flight testing of a Scramjet Engine.

Significance

- ◆ Successful demonstration of Solid Fuel based Ducted Ramjet technology has provided DRDO with a technological advantage which will enable it to develop long range air-to-air missiles.

- ◆ At present, such technology is available only with a handful of countries in the world. During the test, air launch scenario was simulated using a booster motor. Subsequently, the nozzle-less booster accelerated it to the required Mach number for Ramjet operation.
- ◆ The performance of the missile was monitored using the data captured by Electro Optical, Radar and Telemetry instruments deployed by ITR and confirmed successful demonstration of the mission objectives. ☒☒☒

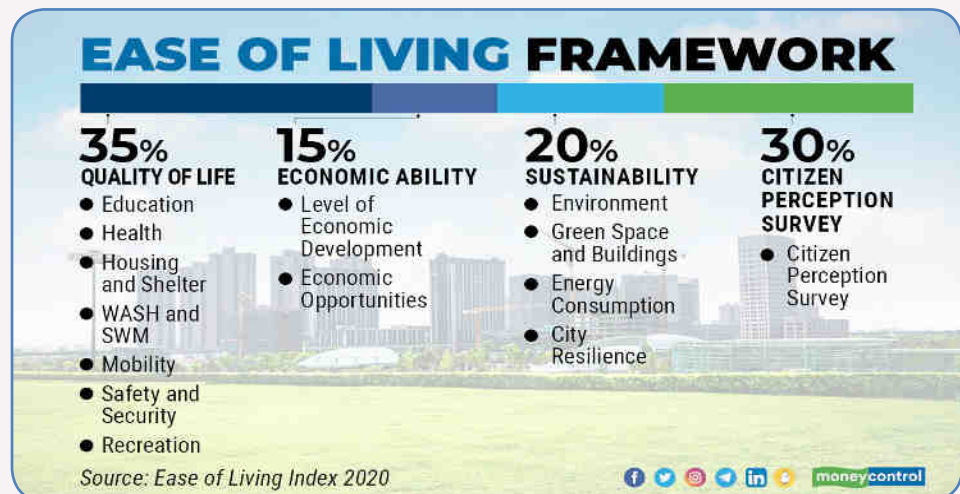
02

Ease of Living Index 2020

- ◆ Ministry of State (Independent Charge), Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri has announced the release of the final rankings of Ease of Living Index (EoLI) 2020 and the Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020.

Key Highlights of Ease of Living Index 2020

- ◆ The EoLI 2020 strengthens its scope by consolidating the framework with the addition of a Citizen Perception Survey in the index, holding a weightage of 30%. It, therefore, examines the outcomes that lead to existing living conditions through pillars of Quality of Life, Economic Ability, Sustainability, spanning across 13 categories of -Education, Health, Housing and Shelter, WASH and SWM, Mobility, Safety and Security, Recreation, Level of Economic Development, Economic Opportunities, Environment, Green Spaces, and Buildings, Energy Consumption, and City Resilience, that account for 70% of the overall outcome.
- ◆ The Citizen Perception Survey (CPS) was undertaken to help validate citizens' experience of their city in terms of service delivery. The assessment was conducted from 16th January 2020 till 20th March 2020. A total of 32.2 lakh citizens from 111 cities participated in the survey. Bhubaneswar had the highest CPS score, followed by Silvassa, Davangere, Kakinada, Bilaspur and Bhagalpur.
- ◆ The rankings under Ease of Living Index 2020 were announced for cities with a population of more



than a million, and cities with less than a million people.

- ◆ The analysis categorises them into Million+ populated cities (those with a population of more than a million) and Less than Million populated cities (those with a population of less than a million) along with all the cities under the Smart Cities Program.
- ◆ Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in the Million+ category, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore, and Greater Mumbai.
- ◆ In the Less than Million category, Shimla was ranked the highest in ease of living, followed by Bhubaneswar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Davangere, and Tiruchirappalli.

Key Highlights of Municipal Performance Index 2020

- ◆ Expanding the scope for the EoLI framework in order to make it more robust, a Municipal Performance Index assessment was also undertaken for the first time in the country.

- ◆ The framework covers 20 varied sectors vis. Education, Health, Water & Wastewater, SWM & Sanitation, Registration & Permits, Infrastructure, Revenue Management, Expenditure Management, Fiscal Responsibility, Fiscal Decentralisation, Digital Governance, Digital Access, Digital Literacy, Plan Preparation, Plan Implementation, Plan Enforcement, Transparency & Accountability, Human Resource, Participation and Effectiveness.
- ◆ The assessment framework under MPI 2020 has classified municipalities based on their population- Million+ (municipalities having over a million population) and Less than Million Population.
- ◆ In the Million+ category, Indore has emerged as the highest ranked municipality, followed by Surat and Bhopal.
- ◆ In the Less than Million category, New Delhi Municipal Council has emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and Gandhinagar. ☒☒

03

Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph & Camera

- ◆ Indian scientists have indigenously designed and developed a low cost optical spectrograph named as Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph & Camera (ADFOSC).
- ◆ It has been successfully commissioned on the 3.6 m Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT), the largest in the country and in Asia, near Nainital in Uttarakhand.

Key Highlights

- ◆ ADFOSC can locate sources of faint light from distant quasars and galaxies in a very young universe, regions around supermassive black holes around the galaxies, and cosmic explosions.

- ◆ ADFOSC, indigenously designed and developed by Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital, is about 2.5 times less costlier compared to the imported ones and can locate sources of light with a photon rate as low as about 1 photon per second.
- ◆ The spectrograph is the largest of its kind among the existing astronomical spectrographs in the country.

Significance

- ◆ This instrument, a backbone of the 3.6 m DOT for observations of

extremely faint celestial sources, uses a complex arrangement of several lenses made of special glasses that are polished to better than 5nm smoothness to produce sharp images of the celestial sky.

- ◆ Photons coming from distant celestial sources, collected by the telescope, are sorted into different colours by the spectrograph and are finally converted into electronic recordable signals using an in-house developed charge-coupled device camera cooled to an extremely low temperature of -120°C. 

04

Exercise Desert Flag VI

- ◆ The Indian Air Force (IAF) is being participated in the Exercise Desert Flag-VI along with the air forces of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United States (US), France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain for the first time. The exercise is scheduled from March 3 to 21 at the Al-Dhafra airbase in the UAE.
- ◆ According to reports countries including Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan and Greece are expected to be the "observers" for the three-week war games which are going to be coordinated by the Air warfare Centre of the Al-Dhafra air base.

About Exercise

- ◆ The Exercise Desert Flag is an annual multi-national large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the UAE Air Force.
- ◆ The aim of the exercise is to provide operational exposure to the

participating forces while training them to undertake simulated air combat operations in a controlled environment. The participating forces will get an opportunity to enhance their operational capabilities along with mutual exchange of best practices.

Participation of IAF

- ◆ Besides the maritime cooperation with the Gulf countries, India has also been focusing on enhancing cooperation in the air Force as well as the Army level.
- ◆ The IAF has the experience of operating in different terrains like the deserts of Rajasthan or the mountainous terrains or plains and the Indian Ocean Region.
- ◆ The IAF is participating with six Su-30 MKI, two C-17 and one IL-78 tanker aircraft. C-17 Globemaster will provide support for induction/ de-

induction of the IAF contingent. Su-30 MKI aircraft will undertake long range ferry, routing direct from India to the exercise area with aerial refueling support from IL-78 tanker aircraft.

Significance

- ◆ To provide operational exposure to the participating forces while training them to undertake simulated air combat operations in a controlled environment.
- ◆ The air forces from other countries will also get a chance to boost their operational capabilities and also mutual exchange of best practices.
- ◆ Participating in such a drill which will have diverse fighter jets will help provide the IAF a unique opportunity to enhance its interoperability and operational capabilities, as well as exchange knowledge, and experience. 

05

Himalayan Serow

- ◆ A Himalayan serow has been sighted for the first time in the Himalayan cold desert region, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh.

About Himalayan Serow

- ◆ A biologist has described a Himalayan serow as resembling a cross between a goat, a donkey, a cow, and a pig. It's a medium-sized mammal with a large head, thick neck, short limbs, long, mule-like ears, and a coat of dark hair.
- ◆ There are several species of serows, and all of them are found in Asia. The Himalayan serow, or *Capricornis sumatraensis* thar, is restricted to the Himalayan region. Taxonomically, it is a subspecies of the mainland serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*).

- ◆ Himalayan serows are herbivores, and are typically found at altitudes between 2,000 metres and 4,000 metres (6,500 to 13,000 feet). They are known to be found in eastern, central, and western Himalayas, but not in the Trans Himalayan region.

- ◆ Spiti lies in the cold mountain desert region of the western Himalaya, and its valley floor has an average elevation of 4,270 metres above sea level.

- ◆ Serows are generally not found at this altitude, and never before has a serow been seen in the Himalayan cold desert. Wildlife officials believe this particular animal may have strayed into the Spiti valley from the Rupin Bhaba Wildlife Sanctuary in adjoining Kinnaur.

Status

- ◆ According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Himalayan serows have experienced significant declines in population size, range size and habitat in the last decade, and this is expected to continue due to intensive human impact.
- ◆ Previously assessed as 'near threatened', the Himalayan serow is now been categorised as 'vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- ◆ It is listed under Schedule I of The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which provides absolute protection. 🇮🇳

06

India's Humanitarian Assistance to Drought-hit Madagascar

- ◆ Recently, India has sent a consignment of 1,000 metric tonnes of rice and 100,000 hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) tablets to Madagascar in response to the east African country's appeal for assistance to deal with a humanitarian crisis triggered by a severe drought. The humanitarian assistance delivered by Indian naval ship 'Jalashwa'.

Scope of the Problem

- ◆ The southern part of Madagascar has been facing drought for the last three years.
- ◆ The drought has wiped out harvests and hampered people's

access to food and COVID-19 compounded the locals' suffering. Hunger is on the rise in southern Madagascar due to consecutive years of drought.

- ◆ In January, the World Food Programme (WFP) said that "famine-like conditions" in southern Madagascar have doubled the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance compared with last year, to more than 1.3 million.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The supplies of food assistance and support for capacity building to the friendly countries of Madagascar

and Comoros is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of SAGAR and India's time-tested role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region.

- ◆ This reinforces India's credentials as an early responder in crises in the Indian Ocean region and as a regional power. In the past few years, India has stepped up its interaction with countries in the Indian Ocean region including the Maldives, Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros and Madagascar.
- ◆ The government of India has also delivered 1,000 tonnes of rice to Comoros.

- ◆ In September 2018, another 1,000 tonnes of rice were delivered by an Indian naval ship to Madagascar. The Indian Navy was also the first to respond when Cyclone Diane struck Madagascar in January 2020.
- ◆ In March 2020, INS Shardul visited the port of Antsiranana and delivered 600 tonnes of rice as HADR assistance to Madagascar from India for dealing with heavy floods in the Northern region of Madagascar.

About SAGAR Vision

- ◆ SAGAR, India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)



was launched in 2015. The key relevance of SAGAR emerges when seen in conjunction with India's other policies impacting

the maritime domain like Act East Policy, Project Sagarmala, Project Mausam, focus on Blue Economy etc.



07

'Sindhu Netra' Surveillance Satellite

- ◆ In a boost for the country's surveillance capabilities to monitor activities of both military warships and merchant shipping in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched 'Sindhu Netra', a satellite developed by the DRDO.
- ◆ The satellite was launched using the ISRO's PSLV-C51. In the first dedicated mission of its commercial arm NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), the ISRO successfully launched Brazil's earth observation satellite Amazonia-1 and 18 co-passengers, including five built by students.

Key Highlights

- ◆ Sindhu Netra can also monitor military and merchant navy ships in

the IOR, critical to India's strategic and commercial interest.

- ◆ India and France have also signed an agreement to build constellations of satellites for maritime surveillance intended to identify and track ships in the Indian Ocean.
- ◆ The satellite, if required, can also help in carrying out surveillance in specific areas such as the South China Sea or the pirate-infested areas near the Gulf of Aden and the African coast.
- ◆ Sindhu Netra is one of the first in the series of satellites that would help the nation in enhancing its surveillance capabilities on land in areas such as the Ladakh region with China and the border areas with Pakistan.

- ◆ Along with the setting up of the Defence Space Agency, the government also created a defence space research organisation to look after the ability to protect space assets from being attacked by adversaries there. The space arm of the defence forces would also be bolstered significantly in near future.

Need

- ◆ Seeking to keep a closer eye on the activities of the Chinese military both near the Indian territory as well as in its depth areas all along the 4,000 kilometre Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Indian security agencies feel there is a requirement of four to six dedicated satellites which can help them keep a check on the adversary's moves.

7

IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS

(For Mains)



01

03

05

01

“Women are equal stakeholders in India’s development.” Elaborate.

02

In order to recognise the gender dimensions of sanitation in India, there is a need for women’s participation in planning and implementation of sanitation interventions but also “their leadership in SBM-G committees and institutions”. Discuss.

03

What are the main constraints in transport and marketing of agricultural produce in India?

04

What are the salient features of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan launched by the Government of India for water conservation and water security?

05

Suggest measures to improve water storage and irrigation system to make its judicious use under depleting scenario.

06

What are the key features of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) initiated by the Government of India?

07

Discuss the recent measures initiated in disaster management by the Government of India departing from the earlier reactive approach.

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



- 01 Who won the 'CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award'?
Narendra Modi
- 02 Which country has agreed to conduct marine spatial planning in Lakshadweep and Puducherry with India?
Norway
- 03 Which state has launched the country's maiden Engineering Research & Development (ER&D) Policy?
Karnataka
- 04 Which species has recently included in the list of critically endangered species?
Caracal
- 05 What is the theme of 'World Wildlife Day' for the 2021?
'Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet'
- 06 Which International company has developed the world's first pilotless, fighter-like jet prototype?
Boeing, United States
- 07 Which Union Ministry has launched the City Innovation Exchange (CiX) platform?
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

7

IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01

"There might be different perspectives, opinions, and ways of doing the same thing. But when it comes to ethics, there can be no two ways of looking at it."

Mallika Srinivasan

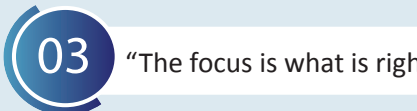


03

02

"If you do not build your dream, someone else will hire you to help them build theirs."

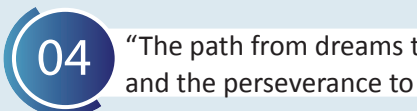
Nita Ambani



03

"The focus is what is right before you – to give it your best. It sows the seeds of tomorrow."

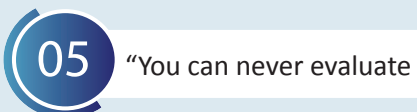
Kiran Bedi



04

"The path from dreams to success does exist. May you have the vision to find it, the courage to get on it and the perseverance to follow it."

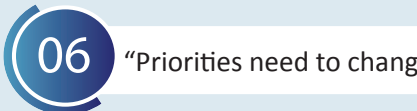
Kalpana Chawla



05

"You can never evaluate anything standing from outside; you have to evaluate yourself first."

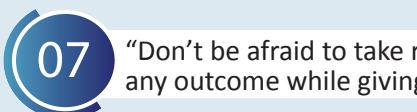
Aruna Roy



06

"Priorities need to change at different stages of life if we want to grow and evolve."

Apurva Purohit



07

"Don't be afraid to take risks. In risks, will come your biggest opportunities. Be realistic and be prepared for any outcome while giving your best at whatever you do."

Kirthiga Reddy

AN INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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