

PERFECT 7

Weekly Current Affairs

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS



1 India and Bangladesh

50 Years of Ties

- | | |
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| 2 Manual Scavenging and Indian Women | 5 Women's Participation in Swachh Bharat Mission |
| 3 Universalisation of Education in India and Related Challenges | 6 First Quad Summit and India |
| 4 New Plan of Afghan Peace Process and India's Interest | 7 Diplomatic Potential of India's Knowledge Economy |

DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION



Vinay Kumar Singh
Founder & CEO

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

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



Q.H. Khan
Managing Director

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

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION



Kurban Ali
Chief Editor

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

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



Ashutosh Singh
Managing Editor

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

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

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

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

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



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

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PREFACE



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

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

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

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

Omveer Singh Chaudhary

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

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

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

Rajat Jhingan

Editor
Dhyeya IAS

PERFECT 7

Weekly Current Affairs

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS

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

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

India and Bangladesh: 50 Years of Ties

- ♦ “I believe political boundaries should not become physical barriers to trade.” – Sheikh Hasina

Why in News?

- ♦ On 7 March 2021, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has virtually inaugurated 1.9km long ‘Maitri Bridge’ over the Feni River at Sabroom in south Tripura. This bridge connects Sabroom in South Tripura to Ramgarh in Bangladesh.

About the Bridge

- ♦ The name ‘Maitri Setu’ symbolises growing bilateral relations and friendly ties between India and Bangladesh.
- ♦ The 1.9 km-double lane bridge, which also includes approach roads, was constructed at a cost of Rs 133 crore by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), a government-owned company under the road transport and highways ministry.
- ♦ It is being developed as a corridor for trade and commerce between India's North-East and Bangladesh.



Significance of the Bridge

- ♦ With the opening of the Feni Bridge, Agartala will become the first Indian city closest to an international sea port-- Chittagong International Seaport in Bangladesh. The bridge

would also benefit south Assam, Manipur and Mizoram to flourish in trade and tourism. At the same time it will also create opportunities in Bangladesh. Further, the entire region is being developed as a kind of trade corridor between eastern, north-eastern India and Bangladesh.

- ♦ The Maitri bridge is rightly being called the “gateway of Northeast” as it will connect the landlocked region with Chittagong port in Bangladesh, unlocking the untapped markets of other east and south east economies.

About Feni River

- Feni River demarcates international boundary between India and Bangladesh. The Feni River, which forms part of the India-Bangladesh border, originates in the South Tripura district, passes through Sabroom town on the Indian side, and meets the Bay of Bengal after it flows into Bangladesh.

- ♦ It would serve as a new trade corridor between the two countries, helping the Northeast states grow. It will enhance people-to-people contact.
- ♦ Besides improving connectivity between the people of India and Bangladesh, this bridge has created new opportunities for tourism, trade and port-led development. Subroom and its adjoining areas will become a very big centre of international trade due to its connectivity with the port.

India - Bangladesh Relations: A Brief Introduction

- ♦ The year 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the Bangladesh Liberation War and of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh. India has highlighted Bangladesh's importance to India as a "key partner" not just in South Asia but in Delhi's Look East policy, and in the wider Indo-Pacific region.
 - ♦ "Look East Policy" of India was launched by the former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1991 to shift the country's trading focus from the west and neighbors to the booming South East Asian countries. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi upgraded it to "Act East Policy". The main objective of 'Act East Policy' is to increase the interaction of the North Eastern Indian states with other neighbouring countries.
- ♦ Prime Minister of India is likely to visit to Dhaka on March 26, for the centenary celebrations of Father of the Nation, Mujibur Rehman. The two countries underscored the

BANGLADESH INDIA RELATIONS TOWARDS THE NEXT 50 YEARS



importance of the year 2021 in the context of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh, the 50th year of bilateral diplomatic ties as well as the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Economic

- ♦ Bangladesh is now India's largest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second largest trade partner of Bangladesh. Close to 30% of India's total development partnership outlays are committed to Bangladesh. India has extended concessional credits amounting to almost USD 10 billion to Bangladesh. These include three of its largest bilateral Lines of Credit.
- ♦ India and Bangladesh sealed seven agreements to expand cooperation in diverse areas including energy, development projects and agriculture, and restored a cross-border rail link that had not been operational since 1965. The railway line from Haldibari in Cooch Behar to Chilahati in northern Bangladesh had been defunct after rail links between India and the then East Pakistan were snapped in 1965.

Vaccine

- ♦ India has provided three tranches of Covid related assistance to Bangladesh. Over 2 million doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Bangladesh in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Defence

- ♦ The year 2020 witnessed significant strides in defense cooperation between India and Bangladesh. Various Joint exercises of Army (Exercise Sampriti) and Navy (Exercise Milan) take place between the two countries.
- ♦ The Indian army band also for the first time performed at the national parade of Bangladesh during Victory Day celebration.
- ♦ India and Bangladesh bonhomie attained a new height with the participation of the 122-member strong tri-services contingent from Bangladesh in this year's Republic Day parade on 26th of January.
- ♦ The India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) came into force following the exchange of instruments of ratification in June 2015.

Cultural Link

- ◆ Cultural co-operation Agreement (1972) between government of India and Bangladesh provides more areas to develop for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and University of Dhaka, Dhaka signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on May 12th, 2011 for establishment of ICCR's Long Term Tagore Chair at the University.

Bone of Contentions

Water Dispute

- ◆ Despite several initiatives and agreements, water still remains difficult issue between two countries. India and Bangladesh have been engaged in a long-standing dispute over water-sharing in the Teesta.

Border Dispute

- ◆ The border remains sensitive. In spite of Section 11 (11) of the India-Bangladesh Coordinated Border Management Plan --- which says, "Neither side will resort to the use of lethal weapons except in self-defence against terrorists or smugglers". According to the sources, a total of 51 Bangladeshi nationals were killed by the BSF in 2020, while the forces have killed 334 Bangladeshis since 2011 and have committed other instances of severe abuse.

CAA and NRC Issue

- ◆ India's controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC)

have created a negative impression in Bangladesh of India's intent, which the Bangladesh Prime Minister termed "unnecessary". Syed Muazzem Ali, the late Bangladesh high commissioner to India and recipient of the Padma Bhushan, once said, "Bangladeshis are not interested to migrate to India; they would rather go to Italy." The NRC and CAA can't be brushed aside as "internal matters" when they have ramifications across the border.

China Factor

- ◆ The China factor also adds another dimension to the ties. Bangladesh is China's second-largest arms export destination. Chinese firms have been outbidding their Indian counterparts in infrastructure projects. Bangladesh is deftly navigating relations with its two biggest neighbours in a neighbourhood in flux. Nepal is increasingly becoming closer to China; Bhutan has withdrawn from the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) initiative, Sri Lanka and the Maldives are playing a balancing act, both rooted in Chinese investments; Afghanistan is increasingly under the Taliban's sphere of influence as the US withdraws troops. In a thaw in relations, Pakistan's high commissioner to Bangladesh recently met the Bangladesh PM as both sides pledged to improve bilateral relations.

Way Forward

- ◆ Today, India and Bangladesh are better connected and goods are transported by road, rail and river routes using Bangladeshi vessels, trucks and railway. Recent agreements allow India to ship goods through Mongla port road, rail, and water routes. If Indo-Bangla relations are to move to "newer heights", then unresolved issues have to be dealt with soon. Any dithering on this, with the region's only trusted partner, may prove costly for India if it wants to avoid the kind of catch-up diplomacy it has been doing in the neighbourhood in the wake of the growing Chinese threat and Beijing's widening influence in South Asia.
- ◆ Further, sustaining India and Bangladesh relationship will require support from all quarters. Recognising its uniqueness while analysing the relationship will contribute immensely in strengthening the bond between the two countries. 

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Q. The year 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh. Critically evaluate.

02

Manual Scavenging and Indian Women

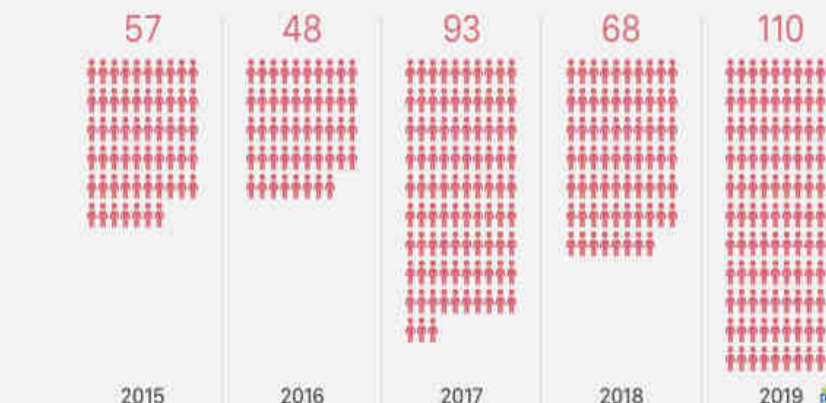
Context

- ◆ In India, even today, many women continue to be engaged in one of the most inhuman and undignified forms of manual scavenging, which involves cleaning of insanitary dry latrines with bare hands, carrying the basket or bucket containing the human faeces on their head, and disposing of it, on a daily basis, despite the practice being forbidden by law.

Introduction

- ◆ Despite the existence of legal frameworks which strictly prohibit the practice of manual scavenging and mandate respectful and lawful rehabilitation of these workers, and the Karnataka High Court having noted this practice as “most inhuman” and violative of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 21, it still continues in pockets across the country.
- ◆ Due to the deep-rooted societal and systemic challenges these women face, most of them are unaware about their entitlements and rights, let alone have the voice to demand them. On the occasion of International Women’s Day, as the world commits to “Choose to Challenge”, it is critical to acknowledge the historical neglect and apathy these women have faced, understand their harsh realities, and prioritise action to support them.

MANUAL SCAVENGER DEATHS IN INDIA IN LAST 5 YEARS



Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

#BanegaSwasthIndia | ndtv.com/swasthindia



Manual Scavenging and Women

- ◆ Manual scavenging is a term used mainly in India for "manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling, human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or sewer or in a septic tank or a pit". They have to use bare hands to scavenge the excreta using the tools as baskets, tin plates, broom and then have to disposed it miles away.
- ◆ It is a practice that was used in old times, but despite the modern achievement in Sanitation technology. It is seen both in rural as well as urban areas as in slums. While the practice itself is derogatory, it is linked with caste issues and due to its nature of sanitation and low labour intensive work; women are more engaged in it than male counterparts.
- ◆ However, most of us don't realise that women, too, work as manual

scavengers, and while they may not face an imminent risk of death like men, the daily humiliation, health hazards, and lifelong neglect they are subjected to are no less excruciating.

Present Status

- ◆ According to the survey of manual scavengers in 2018 was conducted by the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) at the behest of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the number of manual scavengers dropped to 42,303 in 2018 from 770,338 in 2008.
- ◆ As far as women scavengers is concerned, there's a lack of clear government estimates of the number of women engaged in manual scavenging, owing to which we have limited understanding on the extent of women's engagement in this practice as well as their socio-

economic vulnerabilities. However, estimates by several organisations suggest that more than 75 per cent of manual scavengers are women.

- ◆ Such women are usually from Dalit caste groups including those referred to as Bhangi, Valmiki, Mahar, Mehtar. A considerable number of women have started to leave this work in recent years, as a result of increasing awareness, as well as due to the success of large-scale sanitation drives under the Swachh Bharat Mission. However, in absence of a viable alternative income source, they struggle for the basic necessities. The double burden of discrimination they experience — as women and as members of the most marginalised social groups — adds to their woes.
- ◆ The Covid pandemic has heightened their distress. In the absence of dedicated institutional arrangements to support these women, the question of who would take the lead in ensuring their empowerment and rehabilitation remains unanswered.

Legal Measures

- ◆ India has several legal mandates, government programmes and institutional structures to support manual scavengers.
- ◆ The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 punishes the employment of scavengers or the construction of dry (non-flush) latrines with imprisonment for up to one year and/or a fine of Rs 2,000.

- ◆ The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 prohibits the employment of manual scavengers, the manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks without protective equipment, and the construction of insanitary latrines and seeks to rehabilitate manual scavengers and provide for their alternative employment.

- ◆ Further, the subsequent orders by the Supreme Court of India mandate justice, rights and freedom for manual scavengers.

- ◆ Institutions such as the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation, state-level counterparts of these bodies, and district level authorities have been set up for the implementation of these.

- ◆ Furthermore, though there are programmes like the Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS), the budget utilisation is far less than the allocation, indicating implementation gaps.

- ◆ Many recent national-level policy initiatives have shown commitment to this cause, including a proposed inter-ministerial action plan for the elimination of manual scavenging.

- ◆ The Ministry of Urban and Housing Affairs' programmes such as the Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU) and the Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge, and the Odisha government's recent scheme

"Garima" for the safety and dignity of core sanitation workers, are other recent examples.

- ◆ However, in practice, most of the government schemes focus on improving the safety of sewer and septic tank cleaners. While the significance of these programmes cannot be denied, there is a lack of focus on women workers.

Issues Involved

- ◆ Due to the large scale sanitation drives under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the numbers of women have started to leave this work. However, in absence of any alternative source of income they still struggle for basic amenities.

- ◆ In the lieu of declaring the district having open defecation (ODF) status, many local administration neglects any kind of such activities, which left these women out of the government's rehabilitation support and related entitlements.

- ◆ Women who leave the occupation are still not allowed to participate in village functions, religious ceremonies, and are kept at a distance.

- ◆ Programmes like the Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS), have the budget utilization far less than the allocation, indicating implementation gaps.

- ◆ Physical health issues involve rashes, rotting of skin, permanent hair loss, nausea, breathlessness,

palpitations, sore throat, loss of libido, and infections. Scavenging exposes them to noxious gases, impairing their gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, respiratory, cardiovascular, and reproductive organs.

- ◆ Low wages, sexual harassment, caste and gender based discrimination, absences of any healthcare or social services are some other issues involved.

Steps to Improve

- ◆ The definition and guidelines for the SRMS should be revised to include specific schemes, plans, budget and indicators for all categories of work including manual scavenging.
- ◆ All the affidavits, declarations and submissions made in the past by various urban and district authorities, which claim that their area is free of manual scavenging, should be declared as null and void.
- ◆ Fresh identification of specific categories which have been left out should be mandated, with specific instructions for including women currently/ previously engaged in manual cleaning of insanitary dry latrines.
- ◆ A special mandate must be given to the urban and district administration to organise camps

that ensure the enrolment of all these women and their families under schemes for supporting manual scavengers, as well as under other programmes around health, education, nutrition, social welfare, among others.

- ◆ Coverage of women currently or previously engaged in manual scavenging should be ensured under the National Urban and Rural Livelihood Missions. It will ensure at least 10 per cent of the persons covered under the SHGs and other initiatives are the vulnerable urban poor.
- ◆ The enrolment of children of persons engaged in manual scavenging in schools, educational institutions and skilling programmes must be mandated, while also ensuring access to scholarship and other support measures.
- ◆ Special financial incentives must be provided to households with insanitary dry latrines, wherever present, for conversion to sanitary latrines.

Way Forward

- ◆ Acknowledging the existence and challenges of these manual scavengers, especially the women who continue to remain unseen and unrecognised, is a necessary first step towards ensuring that

their rights are recognised and guaranteeing their freedom from this inhuman practice. However, the Union Budget 2020–21 has allocated Rs 28,600 crore for the upliftment of women in the areas of safety, education, and employment. But, it will not be at its fullest work if the implementation of the given schemes will not take place. It is also needed that identification with the role of local leaders should be improved to extirpate such practices as well as making a better life for women involved.



General Studies Paper- I

Topic:

- Role of women and women's organizations, Population and associated issues, Poverty and developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

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.

Topic:

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

Q. Despite the existence of legal frameworks, many women continue to be engaged in one of the most inhuman and undignified forms of manual scavenging. Explain.

03

Universalisation of Education in India and Related Challenges

Context

- ◆ The Union Budget 2021-2022 has allocated only 2.75 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education. It is understandable that education being on Concurrent List needs to be prioritised more in the state budget. But the crunch in allocation is not only about the management of revenues and finances. While, states like Kerala have increased the capital outlay to education and simultaneously decentralised financing of education through local bodies. The per capita expenditure on education is also on a steady rise.
- ◆ Therefore, the given information emphasised that “political will” is more important than the “political economy” to decide the expenditure on education.

Introduction

- ◆ A democratic welfare state ensconced in “liberal” economics cannot defend the steady and continuous fall in public spending on education and levying of education cess on its people. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in Article 26(1) and (2) by the General Assembly of the UN emphasises in clear terms that every individual has the right to education and that it should aim for holistic development which in turn would evolve respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- ◆ Seven decades after the UDHR, 58 million children are out of school globally and more than 100 million



children get eliminated from the schooling system before completing primary education. India tops the list of countries with out-of-school children. The 2011 Census affirmed that 84 million children in the country do not go to school at all and 47 million children get eliminated even before Class 10.

Universal Access to Education

- ◆ Universal access to education is the ability of all people to have equal opportunity in education regardless of their gender, race, class, sexuality or physical or mental disabilities.
- ◆ Education acts as catalyst for social progress. It is a human right. Education is required to reduce poverty, improving health, encouraging peace and democracy and gender equality.

Kerala's Universal Education Model

- ◆ “The state should defray the entire cost of the education of its people in order that there might be no backwardness in the speed of enlightenment among them, that

by diffusing education, they might become better subjects and public servants...”

- ◆ The above statement is neither from any United Nations (UN) declaration nor from the budget speech of any finance minister of a “welfare” state. This is from Kerala’s royal rescript by the regent queen of Travancore, Rani Gouri Parvati Bai in 1817, whose bi-centenary commemorated in 2017.
- ◆ Kerala is known for its highest literacy rate in the country and one hundred per cent enrolment of children in primary and secondary education. With around 46 lakh students, 16,000 schools and 1.69 lakh teachers, the student-teacher ratio and student-school ratio reveal a desirable scenario. With more than 20,000 non-teaching staff, the teachers are not burdened with non-teaching or administrative work and are free to concentrate on their pedagogical roles. Along with another flagship programme for adult education, Athulyam helped Kerala to achieve universalisation of primary education.

- ♦ It is the fruition of the total literacy campaign started by the then Left Front government in 1989. The successful implementation of PRISM (Promoting Regional Schools to International Standards through Multiple Interventions) and whooping allocations to develop one school in each assembly segment to international standards is what can be seen as the reason behind the tectonic shift of 2.35 lakh students from private to public schools. Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has written extensively on the “Kerala Model” of education and attributes Kerala’s economic and social success to the consistency with which school education expanded, based on sustained public policies and action.
- ♦ Successive governments in Kerala have increased the capital outlay to education and simultaneously decentralised financing of education through local bodies. The per capita expenditure on education is also on a steady rise. The Kerala model shows that comprehensive interventions pertaining to nutrition, health, sanitation, and early stimulation can help to achieve sustainable growth in human development.
- ♦ Many reports and available data showed a rise in the privatisation of education with a large number of children being eliminated from the system at early stages, cost of education going up due to systemic inefficiencies and students committing suicide for want of data and laptops.
- ♦ Achieving the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) poses three main challenges:
 - i. Access to basic education for the un-reached segments and social groups;
 - ii. Qualitative improvement in content and processes so as to raise learning achievements, and
 - iii. High drop-out and low retention ratio in primary and upper primary schools.
- ♦ While aiming at providing quality education to all sections of the society, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward communities and minorities are some of the groups, which need special attention.
- ♦ The challenge for providing quality education involves improving the preparation, motivation and deployment of teachers; improving the quality of text books; making education relevant to society needs; improving infrastructural facilities at educational institutions and strengthening management and institutional capacity of the

educational institutions especially at State, district and lower levels.

Way Forward

- ♦ Primary education deserves the highest priority for arising the competence of the average worker and for increasing National productivity. The provision for Universal Elementary Education is crucial for spreading mass literacy, which is a basic requirement for economic development, modernization of social structure and the effective functioning of democratic institution. It also represents an indispensable first step towards the provisions of equality of opportunity to all citizens.
- ♦ Further, some experts argued that, to make education universal the state must find resources to provide ancillary services such as school health, mid-day meals, free supply of text books, writing materials, school uniform etc.
- ♦ As far as Kerala’s universal education model is concerned, this model of education needs to be emulated at a national level.



Challenges

- ♦ India is a signatory to the Incheon Declaration. It expects member states to spend 4-6 per cent of their GDP on education to achieve SDG4. However, the Union Budget 2021-2022 has allocated only 2.75 per cent of the GDP to education.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. In order to achieve universal access to education, Kerala’s universal education model needs to be emulated at a national level. Elaborate.

04

New Plan of Afghan Peace Process and India's Interest

Why in News?

- Recently, the President of United States Joe Biden has proposed a New Peace Initiative (Plan), to the Afghan government and the Taliban, seeking to bring violence to a halt and form an interim government.

Background

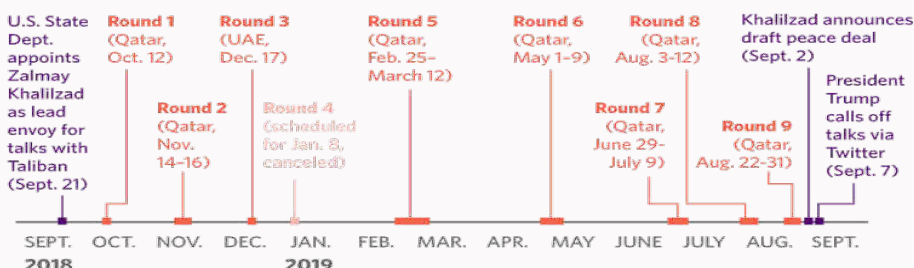
- In February 2020, the US struck a deal with the Taliban, to begin withdrawing its troops in return for security guarantees and a commitment to kickstart peace talks with the Afghan government. Currently, some 2,500 troops are in Afghanistan - are set to leave the country by May 1. The Taliban have warned that if the US troops are not out by the deadline, they will step up fighting. The Taliban and the Afghan government started peace talks in Doha in September last year but reached no breakthrough.
- On the other hand, India is stepping up its support for Afghanistan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Ashraf Ghani recently held talks virtually and the government signed a long pending agreement to build the Shahtoot Dam. The question is what's next - for Afghanistan and its future ties with India?

Key Highlights of the New Initiative

- It urges both Afghan government and Taliban, to reach a consensus on Afghanistan's future constitutional and governing arrangements; find

U.S.-Taliban Peace Talks

For the past year, U.S. and Taliban officials have tried to secure a peace deal in Afghanistan that includes a troop withdrawal and cease-fire. Though President Trump ended talks last month, envoy Zalmay Khalilzad's recent travels abroad point to U.S. interest in rekindling negotiations.



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a road map to a new “inclusive government”; and agree on the terms of a “permanent and comprehensive ceasefire”.

- The new plan has kept open the possibility that the 2500-odd US troops, currently deployed in Afghanistan, might stay on for a while. Under the agreement with the Taliban, the US had promised to withdraw all troops by May 1 this year.
- The new plan is pressing the Taliban to accept an immediate agreement to reduce violence for 90 days that will provide the space for the peace initiative. This would help prevent a decisive spring offensive by the Taliban with the support of Pakistan.
- According to the new plan, US will not dictate terms to the Afghan parties, but facilitate the movement towards an inclusive interim government, an agreement on the “foundational principles” for a new political order, and a “permanent and comprehensive ceasefire”.

- The US is asking Turkey to convene a meeting of the government in Kabul and the Taliban to finalise a peace settlement. This new role for Turkey in the Afghan peace process comes as a surprise for many but Pakistan might welcome it, given the current close ties between Islamabad and Ankara.
- The US has asked the UN to convene a meeting of the foreign ministers from China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, India and the United States to develop a “unified approach” to peace in Afghanistan. The absence of NATO allies from this process is bound to raise European eyebrows.

Afghan Government's Stand

- The Ghani administration has consistently been critical of the US's direct outreach to the Taliban. The Trump administration held direct talks with the Taliban, excluding the government. Later, Washington put pressure on Kabul to release Taliban prisoners as part of an agreement it reached with the insurgents. Even when the Doha talks between the Taliban

and the Afghan government were under way, Mr. Ghani made it clear that he, as elected President, is the only legitimate representative of the Afghan people and he resisted making concessions to the Taliban.

Roadblocks

- ◆ There are elements in the Biden package unacceptable either to Kabul or the Taliban or both.
- ◆ Kabul, which spent so much time and energy persuading the Taliban to accept peace over the last few years, is now convinced that it is a waste of time engaging it. Ghani is not willing to accept power-sharing with the Taliban in an interim arrangement.
- ◆ Therefore, if he rejects the American offer, the war will continue forever. The Taliban have already taken over much of the country's hinterlands and are breathing down the neck of its cities. If he accepts the proposal, he will have to share power with the Taliban and discuss amendments to the Constitution and the future governance framework.
- ◆ On the other hand, the Taliban is even less willing to share power, given its confidence in taking over Kabul the moment the US forces leave. It is certainly not willing to give up its sanctuaries in Pakistan. Nor will it accept any dilution of the strict Islamic system that it wants to enforce.

India's Interest

- ◆ India is finally at the table with five other countries to decide on the roadmap for peace in Afghanistan after six months of hectic behind-the-scenes diplomacy.
- ◆ From Delhi's point of view, the Biden proposals are a huge shift. The US now wants all regional players to discuss a "unified" approach to supporting peace in Afghanistan under UN auspices. Cut out by the Trump Administration and Pakistan, India had no role in the previous process, but was keen not to appear a spoiler, and had declared its support for an Afghan-led process and the talks at Doha.
- ◆ By being part of the team, New Delhi hopes to have a role in setting the terms — especially concerning terrorism, violence, women's rights and democratic values. India's refrain has been that it wants an Afghan-led, Afghan-controlled and Afghan-owned process but ground realities have been such that other players have dictated terms.
- ◆ India has played a key role in the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan, having invested \$2 billion in aid and reconstruction activities in the country.
- ◆ Approximately 150 developmental projects in Afghanistan are underway, as announced by the Indian government in 2020 including the Afghan Parliament, the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, and

the Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam (Salma Dam).

- ◆ Recently, New Delhi and Kabul signed a \$236 million dollar deal for the construction of Shahtoot Dam on February 9. This developmental project would provide safe drinking water to approximately 2.2 million people and boost cross-country irrigation facilities.

Way Forward

- ◆ Ending prolonged civil wars is never easy and certainly not this one, which has seen massive intervention by outside powers. Given the scale of the current divergence between Kabul and the Taliban, the conflicting interests of the regional powers, the declining domestic support in the US for further military involvement in Afghanistan, the Biden Administration has a brief window to force the pace of the peace process.
- ◆ As far as India's interest is concerned, an independent, sovereign, democratic, pluralistic and inclusive Afghanistan is crucial for peace and stability in the region.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Q. The Afghan peace process should be 'Afghan-led, Afghan-controlled and Afghan-owned'. Discuss.

05

Women's Participation in Swachh Bharat Mission

Why in News

- ◆ The department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has released the guidelines, recognising the gender dimensions of sanitation in India. It emphasised not only the need for women's participation in planning and implementation of sanitation interventions but also "their leadership in Swachh Bharat Mission - Grameen (SBM-G) committees and institutions".

Background

- ◆ The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi had launched the SBM –G on 2nd October 2014. On the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (2nd October 2019), Prime Minister had declared the country open defecation-free.
- ◆ The sustainable development goals (Target 6.2) require India by 2030, to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

About SBM –G (Phase II)

- ◆ The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the Phase II of the SBM –G [SBM (G)] till 2024-25, which will focus on Open Defecation Free Plus (ODF Plus), which includes ODF sustainability and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM). The program will also work towards ensuring that no one is left behind and everyone uses a toilet.

- ◆ SBM – G Phase II will focus on sustained behavioral change while embarking on the newer agendas of sustainable solid waste management and safe disposal of wastewater and reuse.
- ◆ Under the program, provision for incentive of Rs.12,000/- for construction of Individual Household Toilet (IHHL) to the newly emerging eligible households as per the existing norms will continue.
- ◆ Funding norms for Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) have been rationalized and changed to per capita basis in place of number of households. Additionally, financial assistance to the Gram Panchayats (GPs) for construction of Community Managed Sanitary Complex (CMSC) at village level has been increased from Rs.2 lakh to Rs.3 lakh per CMSC.
- ◆ The fund sharing pattern between Centre and States will be 90:10 for North-Eastern States and Himalayan States and UT of J&K; 60:40 for other States; and 100:0 for other Union Territories, for all the components.

Women's Participation in Sanitation

- ◆ SBM – G focuses on improvement of ambit of rural sanitation and elimination of open defecation practice and also focuses on improvement of management of solid and liquid waste.
- ◆ The SBM –G Phase I guidelines state that "requirements and sensitivities related to gender, including

dignity and safety issues, are to be taken into account at all stages of sanitation programmes from planning to post-implementation." It emphasized not only the need for women's participation in planning and implementation of sanitation interventions but also "their leadership in SBM-G committees and institutions".

- ◆ Planning, procurement, infrastructure creation, and monitoring are the basic tenets of implementation in Swachh Bharat and the guidelines for the first phase of the mission called for strengthening the role of women. The states were accordingly expected to ensure adequate representation of women in the village water and sanitation committees (VWSCs), leading to optimal gender outcomes.
- ◆ The SBM-G Phase I guidelines specifically recommended that 50 per cent of the members of VWSCs should be women. In several states, the guidelines were strictly adhered to. There were inevitably cases where women were fronts for spouses. This capturing has happened in panchayat seats as well but research has shown that over time, women do pick up the challenge, and if voted back are likely to assume charge.
- ◆ The government has also very effectively used over 8 lakh swachhagrahis, mainly women, who for small honorariums work to push through behavioural change at the community level.

- ◆ Swachhagrahis could be developed and engaged through existing arrangements like Panchayati Raj Institutions, ASHA, Aanganwadi workers and women groups.
- ◆ There are no quick solutions other than adopting concerted approaches to ensure the survival and protection of the girl child through good health from sanitation and nutrition, and provision of water to liberate women from collecting water, and enabling their education.
- ◆ Fortunately, there are spirited instances of women leaders in sanitation:
 - ◆ In Jharkhand, trained women masons have built over 15 lakh toilets in one year, and helped the state to achieve its open defecation free (rural) target.
 - ◆ Uttara Thakur, a differently-abled panchayat head from Chhattisgarh, was determined to improve sanitation services in her village. She went door-to-door to motivate people to use toilets. Her contagious spirit mobilised the whole village to join hands and become open-defecation free.
- ◆ Kunwar Bai, a 106 year old woman from Chhattisgarh became the face of open defecation movement in the state. She sold off her goats, the only sources of earning money, to build two toilets at home. She started counseling people of her village on the importance of having a toilet at home.

Why Active Role of Women is Necessary?

- ◆ The women can tackle their inflexible time by engaging them in social, economic and political activities which otherwise compel them to spend their time in routine and non-productive tasks perpetuating their absence from decision making and other profitable pursuits.
- ◆ We must believe that promoting women's active citizenship and voice in community decision especially the sanitation and hygiene conditions has the lot of potential which need to be still workout for empowerment of women.
- ◆ The India Sanitation Coalition has helped link micro-finance with self-help groups run by women for sanitation needs. Increasingly, interventions with these groups which drive livelihoods can be designed to produce income and well-being impact with water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programmes.
- ◆ There is no doubt that women can help to drive change and bring about lasting change as the jan andolan for swachhta, health and sanitation gains momentum.

Way Forward

- ◆ Information, education, and communication, which aims at

behaviour change of the masses, is key to the success of the SBM- G Phase II.

- ◆ A national monitoring and evaluation system to track and measure gender outcomes in SBM is necessary. Several researchers in this space have commented that gender analysis frameworks have a long history in development practice. We can learn from these frameworks to support design, implementation, and measurement that can bridge the gender equality gap in sanitation.
- ◆ SBM's current focus on the implementation of the infrastructure of water and sanitation could take attention away from the much-needed continuing focus on behaviour change and gender.
- ◆ Further, we will need effective communications and training programmes to build the capacity of stakeholders on gender targeting, both on the supply and demand sides of interventions. <<<

General Studies Paper-I

Topic:

- Role of women and women's organizations, Population and associated issues, Poverty and developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Topic:

- Salient features of world's physical geography.

Q. There is no doubt that women can help to drive change and bring about lasting change as the jan andolan for swachhta, health and sanitation gains momentum. Elaborate.

06

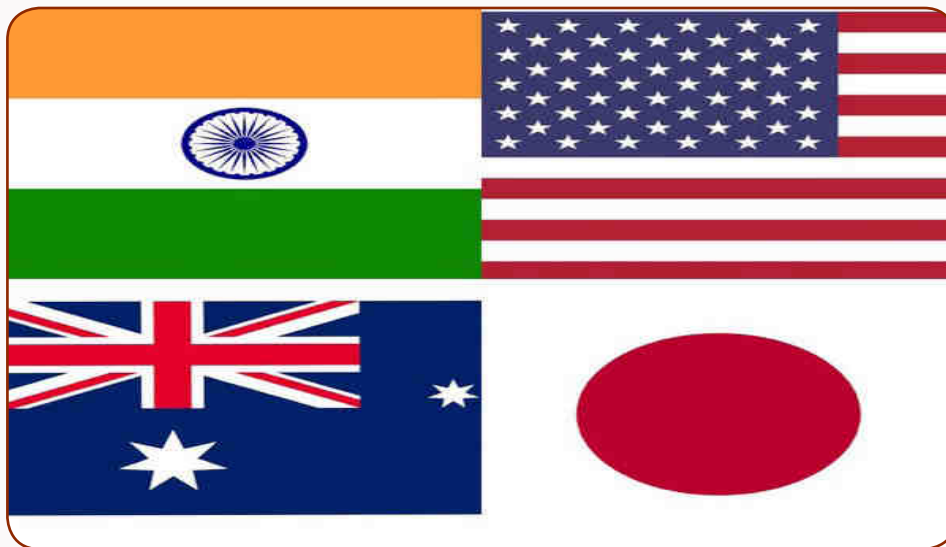
First Quad Summit and India

Why in News?

- ◆ On March 12, 2021, the first-ever leader-level summit of the QUAD (Quadrilateral Framework) was hosted virtually by United States.
- ◆ The virtual meeting marked the most significant upgrade to the 'Quad' format, which began first in 2007 as a tentative grouping of officials from four countries (United States (US), India, Australia and Japan) who had coordinated the disaster relief to the Indian Ocean tsunami and earthquake of 2004.
- ◆ After the first Quad summit, there was also a joint statement, with the poetic title – "Spirit of the Quad".

Key Highlights of Spirit of the Quad

- ◆ Quad countries strive for a region that is free, open, inclusive, healthy, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion. Today, the global devastation wrought by COVID-19, the threat of climate change, and security challenges facing the region summon us with renewed purpose. On this historic occasion of March 12, 2021, the first-ever leader-level summit of the Quad, member countries pledge to strengthen their cooperation on the defining challenges of our time.
- ◆ Quad countries are committed to promote a free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law to advance security and prosperity and counter threats to both in



the Indo-Pacific and beyond and support the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, democratic values, and territorial integrity. Quad countries also reaffirmed their strong support for ASEAN's unity and centrality as well as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Full of potential, the Quad looks forward to the future; it seeks to uphold peace and prosperity and strengthen democratic resilience, based on universal values.

- ◆ Quad countries are pledged to respond to the economic and health impacts of COVID-19, combat climate change, and address shared challenges, including in cyber space, critical technologies, counterterrorism, quality infrastructure investment, and humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief as well as maritime domains.
- ◆ Member countries also agreed to strengthen equitable vaccine access for the Indo-Pacific, with

close coordination with multilateral organizations including the World Health Organization and COVAX. They also called for transparent and results-oriented reform at the World Health Organization.

- ◆ Quad countries will continue to prioritize the role of international law in the maritime domain, particularly as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and facilitate collaboration, including in maritime security, to meet challenges to the rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas.
- ◆ Member countries also reaffirmed their commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions, and also confirm the necessity of immediate resolution of the issue of Japanese abductees. As long-standing supporters of Myanmar and its people, they emphasized the

urgent need to restore democracy and the priority of strengthening democratic resilience.

- ◆ The four Quad countries will ensure emissions reduction based on the Paris accord as well as cooperate on technology supply chains, 5G networks, and biotechnology.

About Quad

- ◆ The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue is an informal strategic forum between the United States, Japan, India and Australia that is maintained by semi-regular summits, information exchanges and military drills between member countries.
- ◆ India's engagement with the Quad goes back to China's expanding footprint in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region over the last few years.
- ◆ Largely as a result of their shared concerns relating to the rise of China, India has been deepening its security ties with the Quad is criticised by China as Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Challenge posed by China

- ◆ Leaders of the US, India, Australia and Japan did discuss the "challenge" posed by China during the first meeting of the Quad, and they made clear that none of them have any "illusions" about Beijing, but today was not fundamentally about China.
- ◆ Issues related to the Chinese aggression at the Line of Actual Control (LAC); Hong Kong, Xinjiang,

Taiwan Strait and coercion of Australia, harassment around the Senkaku; and Chinese cybersecurity incidents in US and India were also discussed.

Challenges

- ◆ Lack of Vision: Despite the potential for cooperation, the Quad remains a mechanism without a defined strategic mission.
- ◆ Maritime Dominated: The entire focus on the Indo-Pacific makes the Quad a maritime, rather than a land-based grouping, raising questions whether the cooperation extends to the Asia-Pacific and Eurasian regions.
- ◆ India's Aversion of Alliance System: The fact that India is the only member that is averse to a treaty alliance system has slowed down the progress of building a stronger Quadrilateral engagement.
- ◆ Consequent Impacts: By affiliating with the US-led maritime coalition, India ignored the principal areas of its security concerns. Asian mainland is still under scepticism as India is partner in Maritime security only. India is the one who shares land border with China, and any more regression by China will have dire impact on India. China has given India a rude reminder that India's security concerns lie in its northern borders, not the west Pacific.
- ◆ Past Actions: US sanctions following the delivery of the Russian S-400 air defense missile system later this year to India would almost grievously damage the India-

U.S. relationship, with further Quad cooperation possibly being collateral damage.

Quad Countries' Dependence on China

- ◆ It would be a mistake, however, to portray the Quad summit as a "throwing down of the gauntlet" to China.
- ◆ The new US government is still exploring its own relationship with China; its first engagement with Beijing's top diplomats is in Alaska recently.
- ◆ For Japan and Australia, China remains the biggest trading partner, a relationship that will only grow once the 15-nation RCEP kicks in.
- ◆ India, given its own ties with China, sensitivities over ongoing LAC disengagement talks, and its other multilateral commitments at the BRICS and SCO groupings, also displayed caution in the Quad engagement, keeping the conversation focused on what Mr. Modi called making the Quad a "force for global good" rather than pushing plans for a militaristic coalition. In that sense, the Quad's new "summit avatar" has given India yet another string to its bow, broadening India's interests on its geopolitical horizons even further.

Significance for India

- ◆ For India, the new terms of the Quad will mean more strategic support after a tense year at the LAC, as also a boost for its pharmaceutical

prowess, opportunities for technology partnerships, and more avenues for regional cooperation on development projects and financing infrastructure, especially in South Asia, where China has taken the lead.

- ◆ For India the Quad is really about addressing the growing power imbalance with China that has manifold consequences for India's security and prosperity as well its regional and international standing. In the event of any chinese aggression on borders, India by cooperation with Quad countries can potentially disrupt chinese trade. This will not only help the India in maintaining geo-political balances but also improving International ties with the major power as US.
- ◆ Also, on the other hand economically it will make the Trade facility more favorable for country.
- ◆ The launch of a Vaccine Initiative is being seen as the most significant deliverable of the summit. Vaccines developed in the US will be made in India, the world's largest producer of vaccines. This initiative will be funded by Japan and the US and will add to India's capacity as the "pharmacy to the world", while Australia will provide logistics support to ship vaccines across the region.

- ◆ The Quad is also expected to launch a new initiative for the refining and production of rare earth metals, the production of which is currently controlled by China.

India's Engagement with China

- ◆ India is nearest to the China geographically. The US's focus on the west Pacific due to aggressive Chinese maritime activity gradually pulled India into the ambit of the Indo-Pacific that views the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean as an integrated geopolitical space. India with Quad countries can check imperialist policies of China in Indian ocean region and ensure Security and growth for all in the region.
- ◆ India can build around collective action in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, monitoring shipping for search and rescue or anti-piracy operations, infrastructure assistance to climatically vulnerable states, connectivity initiatives and similar activities.
- ◆ The rebuilding of ties with China will have to be a priority concern. Though it will take time for trust to be restored, what will help will be for India to dilute its focus on the Indo-Pacific and the Quad and accept that the borders and the Indian Ocean are where its crucial interests lie.

- ◆ The Ladakh experience has highlighted certain deficiencies at home. We need to focus that India's capacity can only be built by united people committed to the National cause.
- ◆ India's foreign policy has often been reactive and short term, reflecting the absence of a broad strategic culture. It is needed to adopt a cohesive strategic vision that can have stable future aspects.

Way Forward

- ◆ It must be noted that diplomacy is about the need and fears, an overarching dependence to the Super-powers for solving regional imbalances especially as US could have long term losses too. In this situation, India should try to enhance its own capabilities with the productive Foreign Policy for the neighbours and Indo-Pacific regions.
- ◆ India should develop a comprehensive vision on the Indo-Pacific which would ideate on the current and future maritime challenges, consolidate its military and non-military tools, engage its strategic partners. The Quad nations need to better explain the Indo-Pacific Vision in an overarching framework with the objective of advancing everyone's economic and security interests.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic

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

Q. The Quad nations need to better explain the Indo-Pacific Vision in an overarching framework with the objective of advancing everyone's economic and security interests.

07

Diplomatic Potential of India's Knowledge Economy

Why in News?

- ♦ The launch of Brazil's Amazonia-1 satellite by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) comes weeks after India allowed the export of COVID-19 vaccine to Brazil, as part of its "vaccine maitri" diplomacy.

Introduction

- ♦ India's current global diplomacy in the fields of space and pharmaceuticals, engaging several countries around the world, is the fruit of 50 years of sustained state support for "atmanirbharta" in both fields. Taken together, these two examples of technological and scientific cooperation draw attention to the diplomatic potential of India's knowledge economy.

Knowledge-based Products and India's Potential

- ♦ The credit for India's competitive pricing of satellite launches and pharmaceuticals exports goes entirely to Indian engineering, scientific and technological talent that has pursued world-class standards at a fraction of the cost incurred in developed economies. The willingness of high-quality Indian scientists, engineers, biotechnologists, pharmacologists and such like to work in India at Indian rates of compensation, not tempted by better paying jobs abroad, has allowed organisations like ISRO and Serum Institute of India to do the work they now do.

LAUNCHING BIG

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ■ PSLV-C51 is the 53rd flight of PSLV and third of PSLV in 'DL' configuration (with two strap-on motors) | ■ This was the 78th launch vehicle mission from SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota | ■ With the Sunday launch , Isro has placed 342 customer satellites from 34 countries in orbit through PSLVs |
|---|---|--|

- ♦ India's demonstrated potential to be a low-cost global provider of knowledge-based products had prompted the developed West, especially the US, to deploy policies aimed at curbing the development of Indian capabilities. Unilateral sanctions were imposed to deny Indian industry access to technology and markets and a multilateral regime for intellectual property rights (IPRs) protection was created, under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation to thwart indigenous technology development. Indian capabilities in space and pharma grew in the face of such constraints.
- ♦ The ability of Indian space and pharma to offer much-needed products to other developing countries goes to the credit of the people who serve in these industries. The Indian familiarity with the English language and the still good quality of teaching in mathematics and statistics has

enabled Indian firms to remain competitive in data processing, business process outsourcing and software services

Knowledge-based Diplomacy and India's Potential

- ♦ India's more broad-based capability for knowledge-based diplomacy has, however, significantly decreased over the past quarter century rather than increased. Consider the fact that as early as in the 1950s, many developing countries looked to India to access development-oriented knowledge. Students from across Asia and Africa sought admission to Indian universities for post-graduate courses.
- ♦ Indian expertise was sought by global organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). The

government of South Korea even sent its economists to the Indian Planning Commission till the early 1960s to be trained in long-term planning. By the 1970s, Korea was beginning to overtake India as a modern industrial economy.

- ◆ There were many other fields in which Indian expertise was sought in the past and where India lags behind today. Railways is one. Rail India Technical and Economic Services (RITES), which incidentally was established in 1974, had acquired a global profile with business in Africa and Asia. The development of India's dairy and livestock economy also attracted global interest. Indian science and technology had something to offer the developing world that the developed economies of the West were either unwilling to provide or did so at much higher cost.
- ◆ Further, the biggest setback in the global appeal of India's knowledge economy has been in higher education. Overseas students were drawn to Indian universities and institutions because they offered good quality education at a fraction of the cost of developed country institutions. The appeal of education in India for overseas students has waned.

- ◆ Even South Asian students, from countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, who preferred to come to India in the 1960s and 1970s no longer do so. Indian institutions attract fewer foreign students not just because the quality of education offered in most institutions is below par, but that the creature comforts provided and the social environment offered here is no longer as cosmopolitan as it used to be. The growing assertion of narrow-minded ideologies only makes Indian campuses even less attractive to overseas students and scholars.

- ◆ The implication for India is clear. To truly have a strong economy, India needs to make sure that on a long term and meaningful level it has knowledge systems that power the economy. And on this count, Indian universities are not able to deliver.
- ◆ Therefore, India lost this leadership in the knowledge economy, barring sectors like space, pharma and information-technology, for two reasons.
 - ◆ First, a flight of Indian talent that began in the 1970s and has since accelerated. This has sharply increased in recent years.
 - ◆ Second, China has emerged as a major competitor offering equally good, if not better

quality, S&T products and services at lower cost. While India has maintained its lead in IT software, China has developed competitive capabilities in space, pharma, railways and several other knowledge-based industries.

Way Forward

- ◆ Space and pharma are at the apex of a narrow pyramid of the knowledge economy. If ISRO's global competitiveness is a tribute to public policy and government support, the global success of the pharma sector is a tribute to private enterprise and middle-class talent in pharmacology and biotechnology. Their global success points to the diplomatic potential of the knowledge industry and to India's "soft power".
- ◆ However, the fact that they are the exception rather than the rule points to the lack of political and intellectual support to the development of India's knowledge base and an inadequate commitment to excellence. 📌📌📌

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. Critically discuss the India's potential in knowledge based diplomacy..

7

IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01

China's First Downstream Dam on Brahmaputra

1. Why in News?

- A draft of China's new Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), which is set to be formally approved on March 11, has given the green light for the first dams to be built on the lower reaches of YarlungZangbo river, as the Brahmaputra is known in Tibet, before it flows into India.



5. About Brahmaputra River

- The Brahmaputra called YarlungTsangpo in Tibet, Siang/Dihang River in Arunachal Pradesh and Luit, Dilao in Assam, is a trans-boundary river which flows through Tibet, India and Bangladesh.
- Its origin in the Manasarovar Lake region, near the Mount Kailash, located on the northern side of the Himalayas in Burang County of Tibet.
- Important tributaries of Brahmaputra in Indian territory are Subansiri, Kameng, Dhansiri, Buri-Dihing, Kopili, Manas, Sankosh, Jaldhaka, Torsa and Teesta.

2. Introduction

- The draft calls for "building a hydropower base on the lower reaches of YarlungZangbo River", along with "clean energy bases" in the upper and lower reaches of Jinsha River (the upper course of Yangtze River in western China).
- The project is also listed along with the Sichuan-Tibet railway and the national water network.
- Other major projects include the construction of coastal nuclear power plants and power transmission channels. It is also mentioned that significant planned investments in infrastructure will serve major national strategies.

3. Concerns

- Degradation of Basin: Blocking of slits and water would impact natural fertility. It will harm the agricultural production in downstream States.
- Security Concerns: China has plan to link its south and north zone of area through canals, aqueducts and linking of major rivers to ensure water security. Development near the border area of the country can have negative impacts as well-established link connectivity from mainland will provide easy and fast movement of resources
- Extremist Activities of China: China, being an upper riparian state in Asia, has been blocking rivers like the Mekong and its tributaries, affecting Southeast Asian countries like Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Even 2019 drought in South East Asia is considered to be caused by China. Despite the above average rainfall in Yunnan province, severe lack of water was found in lower Mekong.
 - ☛ In the similar fashion, India has its deeply rooted concerns too for Brahmaputra.
- Eco-Logical Concerns: It will alter the river ways, which will have impact on flora and fauna as Indo-Gangetic River Dolphins. Dam Constructions can have seismological impact in Himalayan region. It will also impact the local populations and peoples dependent on downstream as of Bangladesh and India.

4. India's Concern

- In 2015, China operationalised its first hydropower project at Zangmu, while three other dams at Dagu, Jiexu and Jiacha are being developed, all on the upper and middle reaches of the river.
- India has long expressed concerns over dam-building on the Brahmaputra. China has blocked a tributary of the Brahmaputra as part of a major hydro-electric project, whose construction began in 2014.
- However, Indian officials have said the dams are not likely to greatly impact the quantity of the Brahmaputra's flows in India because they are only storing water for power generation, and the Brahmaputra is not entirely dependent on upstream flows with an estimated 35% of its basin in India.
 - ☛ Dams on the lower reach and at the Great Bend would, however, raise fresh concerns because of the location across the border from Arunachal Pradesh and the potential impact downstream.

02

Empowering Tribal Women

1. Why in News?

- In order to integrate the tribal population towards mainstream and empowering and upskilling tribal women, Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India (TRIFED) has been implementing many initiatives.

2. About TRIFED

- The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) was established in 1987, under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984.
- TRIFED works for the social and economic development of the tribal people of the country.
- TRIFED also helps tribal people manufacture products for national and international markets on a sustainable basis.
- It also supports the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and imparting training to them.
- It is administered by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.



3. Activities of TRIFED

- Minor Forest Produce (MFP) Development
 - ☛ It include all non-timber, forest produce of plant origin, including bamboo, canes, fodder, leaves, gums, waxes, dyes, resins and many forms of food including nuts, wild fruits, honey, lac, and tussar.
 - ☛ These are a major source of women empowerment. Based on multiple reports, it has been derived that the Minor Forest Products are mainly sold by women across the country.
- Retail Marketing and Development
 - ☛ TRIFED aims to create a business market for the tribal people where they can sell their self-created products.
 - ☛ It has been undertaking to source various handicraft, handloom and natural & food products.
 - ☛ TRIFED has been marketing tribal products through its Retail Outlets located across the country and also through exhibitions.

4. Recent Initiatives

- **Van Dhan Yojana**
 - ☛ An initiative targeting livelihood generation for tribal gatherers and transforming them into entrepreneurs.
 - ☛ The Van Dhan Yojana or Van Dhan Scheme, a component of the 'Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP' was launched on 14th April, 2018.
 - ☛ It has been initiated by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- **Barwani project**
 - ☛ In the Barwani project of Madhya Pradesh, which is being implemented by TRIFED through the district administration, and funded by Bharat Petroleum under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) quota, more than 200 tribal women beneficiaries have been identified.
 - ☛ These local tribals will be imparted training in Bagh, Maheshwari and Chanderi textile traditions so that they learn newer skills and use them to enhance their livelihoods.
 - ☛ A total of 1.88 crores has been allotted to train almost 1000 tribal women in Bagh print, Chanderi and Maheshwar styles over a period of 1 year.
- **Tech for Tribals' Initiative in Odisha**
 - ☛ In collaboration with the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) the plan is to train 25 tribal beneficiaries from each of these 156 VDVks (Van DhanVikasKendras) in various facets of micro-enterprise creation, management and functioning in batches, which will be scaled up to 10,000 beneficiaries gradually. It will engage the local women in large numbers.
- **Trifood Project**
 - ☛ The Trifood project has been launched in Raigad, Maharashtra and Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh, to help in encouraging the tribal entrepreneurship.
 - ☛ It is being implemented by TRIFED in association with Ministry of Food Processing (MoFPI).
 - ☛ It seeks to improve the income of tribals with the help of better utilization of MFPs collected by the tribal forest gatherers.
 - ☛ Being associated with food in nature, it will help tribal women and families.

03 Maratha Reservation

1. Why in News?

- The Supreme Court, while examining the constitutional validity of the Maratha reservation, said that it will look into whether the landmark 1992 decision in *Indra Sawhney v Union of India* (also known as Mandal case) needs to be revisited by a larger Bench.
- This is because the 16% quota for Marathas would take the total reservation in Maharashtra beyond the limit of 50%.



2. More from Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court has also decided that it will hear all the States on the 50% limit on total reservation imposed by the court in the *Indra Sawhney* case (1992).
- Over the years, several other States, including Tamil Nadu, have passed laws that allow reservation going beyond 60%.
- The court is also keen on hearing the views of the States on the 102nd Amendment of the Constitution, by which the National Commission for Backward Classes was given constitutional status.

3. Need for Revision

- A Constitution Bench (which consist of at least five judges of the court) headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan is currently hearing the challenge to the Maharashtra law providing quotas for Marathas in jobs and admissions in the state.
- The Bombay High Court had upheld the constitutional validity of the quota, it said the quota should be reduced from 16% to 12-13%, as recommended by the State Backward Classes Commission.
- The ruling was challenged before a Supreme Court Bench, which referred it to a larger Constitution Bench.

6. Present Issues

- As far as maratha quota law is concerned, there are two main constitutional questions for the court to consider.
- First, is whether states can declare a particular caste to be a socially and educationally backward class.
 - Based on the 102nd Amendment (passed in 2018) to the Constitution, which gives the President powers to notify backward classes, the court will have to look into whether states have similar powers.
 - Also, since this power flows from the Constitution, whether the President is still required to comply with the criteria set by the Supreme Court in the Mandal case.
- The second is whether states can breach the 50% ceiling for "vertical quotas" set by the Supreme Court.
 - With the implementation of the law, the vertical quota in the state could go up to 68% which was earlier 52% before the passing of the law.
 - Since the *Indra Sawhney* verdict gives a pass to breach of the 50% quota rule only in exceptional circumstances, the court will have to test if the law qualifies to be an exception.

4. Background

- In 1979, the Second Backward Classes Commission (Mandal Commission) was set up to determine the criteria for defining the socially and educationally backward classes.
- The Mandal report identified 52% of the population at that time as "Socially and Economically Backward Classes" (SEBCs) and recommended 27% reservation for SEBCs in addition to the previously existing 22.5% reservation for SC/STs.
- In 1990, when the V P Singh led-government set out to implement the Mandal report, it was challenged in court amidst widespread protests against the move. The case came up before a nine-judge Bench and a 6:3 verdict was delivered in 1992.
- The court upheld the office memorandums that essentially implemented the Mandal report. The majority opinion, said the executive orders mandating 27% reservation for backward castes were valid and that the reservation was made not just on the basis of caste, but on the basis of objective evaluation of social and educational backwardness of classes, which is the criteria previously laid down by the court.

5. About Indra Sawhney Case

- The landmark *IndraSawhney* ruling set two important precedents:
 - First, it said that the criteria for a group to qualify for reservation are "social and educational backwardness".
 - Additionally, the court also reiterated the 50% limit to vertical quotas- unless in "exceptional circumstances".
- The relevance of the *Indra Sawhney* criteria is also under question in another case in which the validity of the 103rd Amendment has been challenged.
 - The 103rd Amendment, passed in 2019, provides for 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker section in the unreserved category.

04

Violence against Women: WHO Report

1. Why in News?

- Recently, World Health Organization (WHO) has released 'Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018'.



2. About Women Violence

- The term violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is majorly divided into domestic and family violence, and sexual assaults.

3. Key Finding of the Reports

- About 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.
- Almost one third (27%) of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship report that they have been subjected to some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner.
- The prevalence estimates of lifetime intimate partner violence range from 20% in the Western Pacific, 22% in high-income countries and Europe and 25% in the WHO Regions of the Americas to 33% in the WHO African region, 31% in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region, and 33% in the WHO South-East Asia region.
- Globally, 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners.
- In addition to intimate partner violence, globally 6% of women report having been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner

7. About WHO

- World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations' specialized agency for Health was founded in 1948.
- Its headquarters are situated in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is an inter-governmental organization and works in collaboration with its member states usually through the Ministries of Health.
- The WHO provides leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.
- It began functioning on April 7, 1948 – a date now being celebrated every year as World Health Day.

4. Reasons behind Violence

- Lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts have increased the exposure of women to abusive partners and known risk factors, while limiting their access to services.
- Situations of humanitarian crises and displacement may exacerbate existing violence, such as by intimate partners, as well as non-partner sexual violence, and may also lead to new forms of violence against women.

5. Impact

- Violence can negatively affect women's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, and may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings.
- Children who grow up in families where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioural and emotional disturbances.
- Intimate partner violence has also been associated with higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity.
- Women may suffer isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children.

6. Steps that can be taken

- In 2019, WHO and UN Women with endorsement from 12 other UN and bilateral agencies published RESPECT women – a framework for preventing violence against women aimed at policy makers.
- Each letter of RESPECT stands for one of seven strategies: Relationship skills strengthening; Empowerment of women; Services ensured; Poverty reduced; Enabling environments (schools, work places, public spaces) created; Child and adolescent abuse prevented; and Transformed attitudes, beliefs and norms.
- Prevent recurrence of violence through early identification of women and children who are experiencing violence and providing appropriate referral and support.
- Promoting egalitarian gender norms as part of life skills and comprehensive sexuality education curricula taught to young people.
- Spreading the awareness about the Women Help Programmes and making it comfortable for them to reach out despite the social stigma. It can be done by the use of Media, Public meetings, even ASHA workers.

05 Sounding Rocket (RH-560)

1. Why in News?

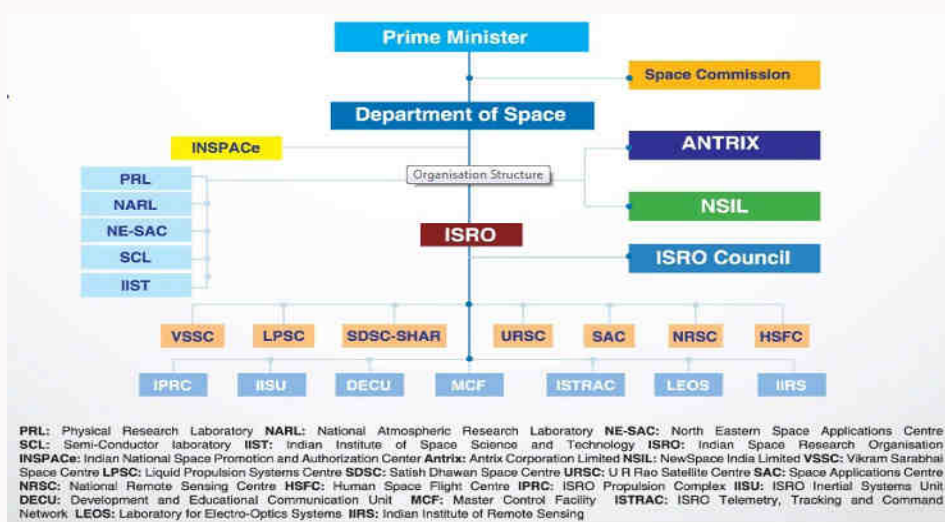
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a sounding rocket (RH-560) to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics.

2. About Sounding Rockets

- Sounding rockets are one or two stage solid propellant rockets used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and for space research.
- They also serve as easily affordable platforms to test or prove prototypes of new components or subsystems intended for use in launch vehicles and satellites.
- Sounding rockets made it possible to probe the atmosphere in situ using rocket-borne instrumentation.
- ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300-Mk-II and RH-560-Mk-II, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm.

3. Background

- With the establishment of the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) in 1963 at Thumba, a location close to the magnetic equator, there was a quantum jump in the scope for aeronomy and atmospheric sciences in India.
- The launch of the first sounding rocket from Thumba near Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on 21 November 1963, marked the beginning of the Indian Space Programme.
- The first rockets were two-stage rockets imported from Russia (M-100) and France (Centaure).
- While the M-100 could carry a payload of 70 kg to an altitude of 85 km, the Centaure was capable of reaching 150 km with a payload of approximately 30 kg.



4. Upcoming Events of ISRO

- On March 28, ISRO will launch GISAT-1.
 - ☛ GISAT-1 is an earth observation satellite that will provide near real-time images of India's borders and also enable quick monitoring of natural disasters.

06

Vaccine Passport

1. Why in News?

- Israel has become the first country to introduce a certification system that allows those who have been vaccinated against Covid-19 to access certain facilities and events.
- Israel's "vaccine passport" is meant for public facilities such as restaurants, gyms, and hotels in the country — but certification of this kind has a bearing on the full resumption of international air travel as well.



2. Idea of Vaccine Passport

- The idea is modelled on the proof of vaccination that several countries required even before the pandemic.
- Travellers from many African countries to the US or India are required to submit proof that they have been vaccinated against diseases such as yellow fever.
- Even though the nomenclature comes from passports, most vaccine passports have been envisaged as digital documents. They are supposed to function as proof that the holder has been vaccinated against COVID-19 and is, therefore, "safe".

3. Versions of Vaccine Passport

- The International Air Transport Association — the global trade body representing airlines — is developing an app called IATA Travel Pass.
- It will provide airlines and other aviation industry stakeholders with a common platform to check for the proof of vaccination and its validity.
- Non-profit Commons Project has been trying out an app called CommonPass, which contains a passenger's vaccination record.

4. Significance

- The primary benefit will be to the tourism and the hospitality industries, which are both seen as being at the heart of COVID-19 spread and are the worst hit by the pandemic.
 - This includes international air travel, which suffered massively because of the outbreak.
- Another key function that vaccine passports will perform is that of digitising vaccination records across countries.
- While some countries have begun accepting proofs of vaccination to bypass quarantine norms, a common and universally accepted version of vaccine passport is yet to emerge.

5. Concerns

- On vaccine passports, the World Health Organisation (WHO) last month batted against the introduction of COVID-19 vaccination proofs as a requirement for international travel.
- In addition, considering that there is limited availability of vaccines, preferential vaccination of travellers could result in inadequate supplies of vaccines for priority populations considered at high risk of severe COVID-19 disease.
- Privacy concerns: These are mainly digital certificates that are accessed by a particular service provider to check for proof of vaccination, there is a possibility that they would be used by authorities to track the movement of their holders.

07

Cooking Energy Access Survey 2020

1. Why in News?

- Recently, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) has released 'Cooking Energy Access Survey 2020'.



2. About the Survey

- The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), in collaboration with the Initiative for Sustainable Energy Policy (ISEP), Johns Hopkins University has conducted the survey across six states — Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- Cooking Energy Access Survey 2020 is a survey of 2,765 urban slum and rural households across the six states.
 - The six states account for nearly a quarter of India's urban slum population.

3. Key Highlights

- Around 16 per cent of households are still using traditional fuels such as firewood, dung cakes, agricultural residue, charcoal, and kerosene as their primary fuel and over a third are stacking LPG with these polluting fuels.
- This increases exposure to indoor air pollution for such households. There are more than 13.7 million people living in slums in India.
- While the number of LPG connections has increased dramatically over the past decade due to Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), exclusive use of LPG is limited to just over half of the total households in urban slums.
- Drawing a direct correlation between poverty and energy access, the study finds the continued use of polluting fuels, and inability of households to transition to LPG, is primarily because of affordability.
- While the government subsidises LPG connections under PMUY, families often cannot afford to buy refills of LPG after the initial subsidy, and fall back on using traditional polluting fuels.
- Deficient infrastructure leads to households either not having access to electricity or not being able to afford it and therefore resorting to polluting fuels for heating in the winter, negating the positive effects of the LPG.

4. About PMUY

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 1st, 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh.
- PMUY has been recognised by World Health Organisation as one of the decisive intervention by the Government to address the Indoor Air Pollution which accounts for nearly 10 lakh deaths in a year in the country.
- PMUY aims at providing clean-cooking fuel to the poor households, which are otherwise vulnerable to various health hazards associated with indoor air pollution and bringing in qualitative changes in the living standards.
- Under PMUY, LPG coverage has increased from 55% to 97.4%. the scheme has acted as one of the biggest catalyst of socio-economic change in the status of women in the country.
- As on 30.11.2020, more than 7.5 Cr PMUY beneficiaries have availed free cylinders under the scheme.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 China's First Downstream Dam on Brahmaputra

1. Consider the following statements:

1. China is building first dam on the lower reaches of YarlungZangbo River.
2. YarlungZangbo River is the tributary of the Brahmaputra River.
3. China has operationalised its first hydropower project at Zangmu, while three other dams at Dagü, Jiexu and Jiacha are being developed.

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

Ans: (C)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. China is building first dam on the lower reaches of YarlungZangbo river, as the Brahmaputra is known in Tibet, before it flows into India.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The Brahmaputra called YarlungTsangpo in Tibet, Siang/Dihang River in Arunachal Pradesh and Luit, Dilao in Assam, is a trans-boundary river which flows through Tibet, India and Bangladesh.

Statement 3 is correct. In 2015, China operationalised its first hydropower project at Zangmu, while three other dams at Dagü, Jiexu and Jiacha are being developed, all on the upper and middle reaches of the river. India has long expressed concerns over dam-building on the Brahmaputra. <>>

02 Empowering Tribal Women

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The Barwani project is being implemented in Rajasthan by TRIFED.
2. Under this project, tribal women entrepreneurs are getting financial assistance through self help groups (SHGs) model.

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

Ans: (d)

Explanation: Both the statements are incorrect. In the Barwani project of Madhya Pradesh, which is being implemented by TRIFED through the district administration, and funded by Bharat Petroleum under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) quota, more than 200 tribal women beneficiaries have been identified.

These local tribals will be imparted training in Bagh, Maheshwari and Chanderi textile traditions so that they learn newer skills and use them to enhance their livelihoods. <>>

03 Maratha Reservation

3. Consider the following statements with respect of IndraSawhney ruling:

1. It said that the criteria for a group to qualify for reservation are "social and educational backwardness".
2. Additionally, the court also reiterated the 50% limit to vertical quotas- unless in "exceptional circumstances".

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

Ans: (c)

Explanation: Both the statements are correct. The landmark IndraSawhney ruling set two important precedents: First, it said that the criteria for a group to qualify for reservation are "social and educational backwardness".

Additionally, the court also reiterated the 50% limit to vertical quotas- unless in "exceptional circumstances".

The relevance of the Indra Sawhney criteria is also under question in another case in which the validity of the 103rd Amendment has been challenged. The 103rd Amendment, passed in 2019, provides for 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker section in the unreserved category. <>>

04 Violence against Women: WHO Report

4. Consider the following statements with respect of violence against women:

- About 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.
- WHO and NITI Aayog have published 'RESPECT women' – a framework for preventing violence against women aimed at policy makers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. Recently, World Health Organization (WHO) has released 'Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018'. About 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

Statement 2 is incorrect. In 2019, WHO and UN Women with endorsement from 12 other UN and bilateral agencies published RESPECT women – a framework for preventing violence against women aimed at policy makers. <<<

05 Sounding Rocket (RH-560)

5. Consider the following statements with respect of 'Sounding rockets':

- Sounding rockets are one or two stage solid propellant rockets used for probing the lower atmospheric regions.
- ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Kalam series.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

Explanation: Both the statements are incorrect. Sounding rockets are one or two stage solid propellant rockets used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and for space research.

ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300-Mk-II and RH-560-Mk-II, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm. <<<

06 Vaccine Passport

Q6. Consider the following statements:

- France has become the first country to introduce a vaccine transport.
- 'Vaccine passport' has been developed for public facilities such as restaurants, gyms, and hotels in the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is not correct. Israel has become the first country to introduce a certification system that allows those who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 to access certain facilities and events.

Statement 2 is correct. Israel's "vaccine passport" is meant for public facilities such as restaurants, gyms, and hotels in the country — but certification of this kind has a bearing on the full resumption of international air travel as well. <<<

07 Cooking Energy Access Survey 2020

7. Consider the following statements with respect of 'Cooking Energy Access Survey 2020':

- Around 16 per cent of households are still using traditional fuels such as firewood, dung cakes, and kerosene as their primary fuel.
- While the government subsidises LPG connections under PMUY, families often cannot afford to buy refills of LPG after the initial subsidy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (C)

Explanation: Both the statements are correct. The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), in collaboration with the Initiative for Sustainable Energy Policy (ISEP), Johns Hopkins University has conducted the survey across six states Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Around 16 per cent of households are still using traditional fuels such as firewood, dung cakes, agricultural residue, charcoal, and kerosene as their primary fuel and over a third are stacking LPG with these polluting fuels.

While the government subsidises LPG connections under PMUY, families often cannot afford to buy refills of LPG after the initial subsidy, and fall back on using traditional polluting fuels. <<<

7 IMPORTANT NEWS

01

'Mera Ration' App

- ◆ In order to offer convenience to the citizens, the Government of India has launched a new ration app called 'Mera Ration'. It will help the users to get friendly with the new 'One Nation-One Ration Card' system.



About App

- ◆ 'Mera Ration' has been launched by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and the app is a part of the government's One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) system.
- ◆ 'Mera Ration' app has been introduced for the benefit of ration cardholders around the country. Now, the users will be able to find the nearest fair price shop with just a tap.
- ◆ The users will also be able to check details of their entitlement and the recent transactions made.

- ◆ According to the government, the new ration app will prove useful to those ration card holders who move to new places for livelihoods.
- ◆ The app is for migrant labourers who have to keep moving for work and ideally need a ration card that should work across states. The app currently covers 32 states and union territories.

About ONORC

- ◆ ONORC is an important citizen centric reform. Its implementation

ensures availability of ration to beneficiaries under National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare schemes, especially the migrant workers and their families, at any Fair Price Shop (FPS) across the country.

- ◆ Seventeen (17) States have successfully operationalised "One Nation One Ration Card system" with Uttarakhand being the latest State to complete the reform.
- ◆ States completing One Nation One Ration Card system reform are eligible for additional borrowing of 0.25 percent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Accordingly, these States have been granted additional borrowing permission of Rs. 37,600 crore by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.



02

Mapping Genomes in the Indian Ocean

- ◆ A 30-member team of scientists and researchers - including six women- from the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) will conduct genome mapping in the Indian Ocean.

Key Highlights

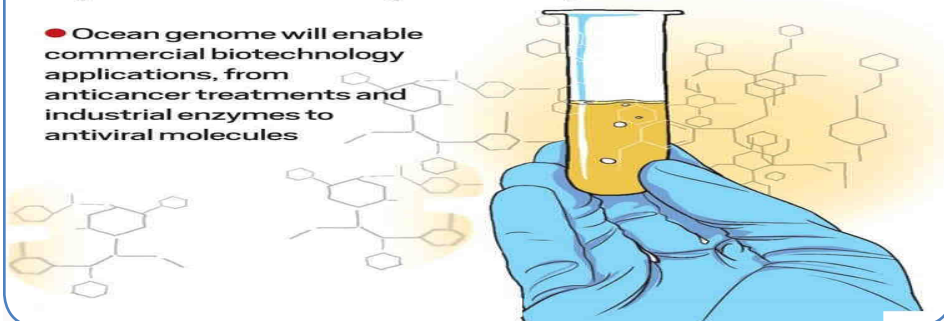
- ◆ Along with team of researchers and scientists, 30 crew members of research vessel Sindhu Sadhana will reveal the internal working of the body of the ocean at a cellular level.

- ◆ The first-of-its-kind research project in the country is aimed at understanding the biochemistry and the response of the ocean to climate change, nutrient stress and increasing pollution. Conceptualised over the last two

HOW WILL THE STUDY HELP

● It will identify the stress factors that control the changes in RNA and DNA in ocean microbes, and how they respond to a lack or excess of minerals and metals present in the water, what the impact is on climate change and food cycles

● Ocean genome will enable commercial biotechnology applications, from anticancer treatments and industrial enzymes to antiviral molecules



to three years, the research project has been undertaken at a cost of Rs 25 crore and will take three years to complete.

- ◆ The researchers will collect samples from various stretches of the ocean at an average depth of about 5 km.
- ◆ Just like gene mapping is carried out on blood samples collected from humans, the scientists will map these in the bacteria, microbes

found in the ocean. The mapping of the Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and Ribonucleic acid (RNA) will show the nutrients present in them, and also those lacking in different parts of the ocean.

Significance

- ◆ The research will enable scientists to identify the factors controlling the changes in RNA, DNA in the oceans, and various stressors impacting them.

- ◆ The ocean has several micronutrients like nitrates, sulphates and silicates, minerals like iron ore and zinc, and trace metals like cadmium or copper. The genome mapping will show the presence of which these microbes have adapted to, in addition to their reaction to atmospheric carbon dioxide. This will help in identifying which part of the ocean has a greater concentration of which mineral or element.

- ◆ Scientists will then use these as tracers to tackle the causative factors for excess or lack of a certain mineral or element and suggest possible solutions for their mitigation.

- ◆ In addition, the large pool of RNA, DNA library of the oceans will be utilised for using the Indian Ocean to human benefit in the future.



03

NISAR

- ◆ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has completed development of a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) capable of producing extremely high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission with the United States (US) space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Key Highlights

- ◆ NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) is a joint collaboration for a dual-frequency L and S-band SAR for earth observation.
- ◆ NISAR will be the first satellite mission to use two different radar frequencies (L-band and S-band) to measure changes in our planet's

surface less than a centimetre across.

- ◆ NASA and ISRO signed a partnership on September 30, 2014, to collaborate on and launch NISAR.
- ◆ The mission is targeted to launch in early 2022 from ISRO's Sriharikota spaceport in Andhra Pradesh.

Contribution by NASA and ISRO

- ◆ NASA is providing the mission's L-band SAR, a high-rate communication subsystem for science data, GPS receivers, a solid-state recorder and payload data subsystem.
- ◆ ISRO is providing the spacecraft bus, the S-band radar, the launch

vehicle and associated launch services for the mission, whose goal is to make global measurements of the causes and consequences of land surface changes using advanced radar imaging.

Work of NISAR

- ◆ NISAR would provide a means of disentangling highly spatial and temporally complex processes ranging from ecosystem disturbances to ice sheet collapses, sea level rise and groundwater, providing information about biomass and natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and landslides.

- ◆ NISAR will observe Earth's land and ice-covered surfaces globally with 12-day regularity on ascending and descending passes, sampling Earth on average every six days for a baseline three-year mission.
- ◆ NISAR will use a sophisticated information-processing technique known as SAR to produce extremely high-resolution images. Radar penetrates clouds and darkness, enabling NISAR to collect data day and night in any weather.
- ◆ Over the course of multiple orbits, the radar images will allow users to track changes in croplands and hazard sites, as well as to monitor ongoing crises such as volcanic eruptions.



04

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi

- ◆ The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) as a single non-lapsable reserve fund for share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess levied under Section 136-b of Finance Act, 2007.
- ◆ In the budget speech 2018, the Finance Minister while announcing Ayushman Bharat Scheme, also announced replacement of existing 3% Education Cess by 4% Health and Education Cess.

ENHANCING ACCESS TO UNIVERSAL & AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE
Creation of Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) Approved

Salient features

- 1. A non-lapsable reserve fund for Health in the Public Account
- 2. Proceeds of share of health in the Health and Education Cess will be credited into PMSSN
- 3. Accruals into the PMSSN will be utilized for the flagship schemes namely:
 - Ayushman Bharat - PMJAY and HWCs
 - National Health Mission
 - PM Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)
 - During health emergencies
 - Any future programme targeted towards achieving SDGs and targets set out in the National Health Policy 2017

Cabinet Decision - 10th March 2018

Key Features

- ◆ It is a non-lapsable reserve fund for Health in the Public Account.
- ◆ Proceeds of share of health in the Health and Education Cess will be credited into PMSSN.
- ◆ Accruals into the PMSSN will be utilized for the flagship schemes of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare namely:
 - Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY);
 - Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs);
 - National Health Mission;
 - Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY);
 - Emergency & disaster preparedness and responses during health emergencies; and
- ◆ Any future programme/scheme that targets to achieve progress towards SDGs and the targets set out in the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017.
- ◆ Administration and maintenance of the PMSSN is entrusted to

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW).

- ◆ In any financial year, the expenditure on such schemes of the MoHFW would be initially incurred from the PMSSN and thereafter, from Gross Budgetary Support (GBS).

Benefits

- ◆ The major benefit will be: enhanced access to universal & affordable health care through availability of earmarked resources, while ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of financial year.



05 The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- ◆ The Rajya Sabha has approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 on 16th March 2021. The Bill was approved in Lok Sabha on 17th March 2020.

Key Features of Amendments

- ◆ Enhancing the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women which will be defined in the amendments to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Rules and would include survivors of rape, victims of incest and other vulnerable women (like differently-abled women, minors) etc.
- ◆ Opinion of only one provider will be required up to 20 weeks of gestation and of two providers for termination of pregnancy of 20-24 weeks of gestation.
- ◆ Upper gestation limit not to apply in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities diagnosed by Medical Board. The composition, functions and other details of Medical Board to be prescribed subsequently in Rules under the Act.



- ◆ Name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated shall not be revealed except to a person authorised in any law for the time being in force.
- ◆ The ground of failure of contraceptive has been extended to women and her partner.

Significance

- ◆ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2021 is for expanding access of women to safe and legal abortion services on therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian or social grounds.
- ◆ The amendments include substitution of certain subsections, insertion of certain new clauses under some sections in the existing Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, with a view to increase upper gestation

limit for termination of pregnancy under certain conditions and to strengthen access to comprehensive abortion care, under strict conditions, without compromising service and quality of safe abortion.

- ◆ It is a step towards safety and well-being of the women and many women will be benefitted by this.
- ◆ Recently several petitions were received by the Courts seeking permission for aborting pregnancies at a gestational age beyond the present permissible limit on grounds of foetal abnormalities or pregnancies due to sexual violence faced by women.
- ◆ The amendments will increase the ambit and access of women to safe abortion services and will ensure dignity, autonomy, confidentiality and justice for women who need to terminate pregnancy. <>>

06 Seabuckthorn Plantations in Himachal Pradesh

- ◆ The Himachal Pradesh government has decided to start planting seabuckthorn in the cold desert areas of the state this year.

Background

- ◆ The seabuckthorn association

wants the forest departments of various Himalayan states/UTs to plant seabuckthorn on arid and marginal lands using compensatory afforestation or CAMPA funds.

- ◆ Recently, the union ministry of

environment, forest and climate change asked these states to submit proposals for taking up such plantations, "especially in the light of reduced water flow from Himalayan glaciers and its impact on ecology".

About Seabuckthorn

- ◆ It's a shrub which produces an orange-yellow coloured edible berry.
- ◆ In India, it is found above the tree line in the Himalayan region, generally in dry areas such as the cold deserts of Ladakh and Spiti.
- ◆ In Himachal Pradesh, it is locally called chharma and grows in the wild in Lahaul and Spiti and parts of Kinnaur.
- ◆ According to the Seabuckthorn Association of India, around 15,000 hectares in Himachal, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are covered by this plant.



Benefits of Seabuckthorn Plant

- ◆ Medicinal Benefit: Seabuckthorn has been widely used for treating

stomach, heart and skin problems. In the last few decades, scientific research worldwide has backed many of its traditional uses.

- ◆ Its fruit and leaves are rich in vitamins, carotenoids and omega fatty acids, among other substances, and it can help troops in acclimatising to high-altitude.
- ◆ Ecological Benefits: Besides being an important source of fuelwood and fodder, seabuckthorn is a soil-binding plant which prevents

soil-erosion, checks siltation in rivers and helps preserve floral biodiversity.

- ◆ In the Lahaul valley, where willow trees are dying in large numbers due to pest attack, this hardy shrub is a good alternative for protecting the local ecology.
- ◆ Economical Benefits: Seabuckthorn also has commercial value, as it is used in making juices, jams, nutritional capsules etc. 📌📌📌

07

EU has been declared an 'LGBTIQ Freedom Zone'

- ◆ In a resolution adopted recently, the European Parliament symbolically declared the entire 27-member bloc as an "LGBTIQ Freedom Zone" – the acronym meaning lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer.
- ◆ The move comes as a response against member state Poland's controversial move to create more than 100 "LGBTIQ ideology-free zones" around the country since 2019, and more generally against the backsliding of LGBTIQ rights in some European Union (EU) countries, particularly in Poland and Hungary.

EU Resolution

- ◆ The resolution reads, "LGBTIQ persons everywhere in the EU should enjoy the freedom to live and publicly show their sexual orientation and gender identity without fear of intolerance,

discrimination or persecution, and authorities at all levels of governance across the EU should protect and promote equality and the fundamental rights of all, including LGBTIQ persons.

- ◆ The declaration is the latest flare-up between Poland and Hungary on one side and the rest of the EU on the other.

Poland and Hungary on LGBTIQ

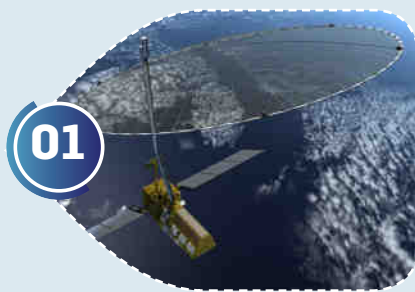
- ◆ A majority of countries in the EU (23/27) recognise same-sex unions, with 16 legally recognising same-sex marriage.
- ◆ Poland is part of the small minority that does not acknowledge such relationships.
 - Poland is also among the countries that bar same-sex couples from adopting children together, although many such couples get

around this rule by applying to adopt as single parents.

- The country has now announced plans to close the loophole by introducing background checks on applicants. Under the proposed law, those found to be applying as a single parent while being in a same-sex relationship will be criminally liable.
- ◆ Like Poland, Hungary has also been pushing forward a conservative Catholic social agenda.
 - In November 2020, the town of Nagykatá adopted a resolution banning the "dissemination and promotion of LGBTIQ propaganda".
 - A month later, the country's parliament adopted a constitutional amendment to further restrict the community's rights. 📌📌📌

7

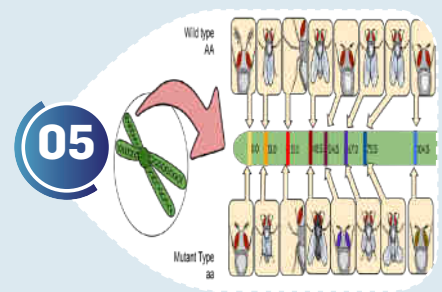
IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS (For Mains)



01



03



05

01

Discuss the key features of NISAR, a Synthetic Aperture Radar, developed by ISRO and NASA.

02

Recently, European Union (EU) has been declared an 'LGBTIQ Freedom Zone'. What does it mean for 'LGBTIQ' community? Discuss.

03

Discuss how projects like Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and Smart Cities Mission, offer an opportunity to mainstream climate risks and nature-based solutions (NbS) into infrastructure.

04

Critically highlight the Quad's importance to India's strategic autonomy.

05

What is genome mapping? What will scientists learn from genome mapping in the Indian Ocean? Discuss.

06

Why did Gandhi call for the march? What was the significance of the Dandi march? Explain.

07

Discuss the concept of 'Vaccine Passports'.

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



01 What is the theme of 'International Women's Day 2021'?

#ChooseToChallenge

02 Which Central American country has become the first country to get malaria free certificate from the WHO?

El Salvador

03 Who has been appointed as the new chief minister of Uttarakhand?

Tirath Singh Rawat

04 Who has won the prestigious 2021 FIAF Award by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)?

Amitabh Bachchan

05 Which badminton player has won the silver medal in BWF Swiss Open Super 300?

P V Sindhu

06 Who has been appointed as the new Chief Statistician of India for a period of two years?

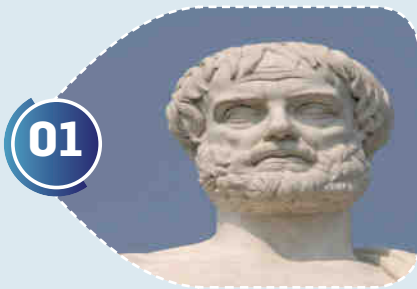
G P Samanta

07 Which Institution has won the prestigious "King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award" of Food and Agriculture Organisation?

Indian Council of Agricultural Research

7

IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01

01

"The whole is greater than sum of its parts."

Aristotle

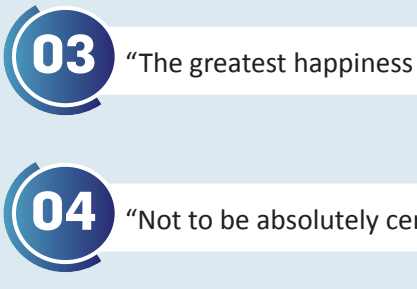


03

02

"One should use common words to say uncommon things."

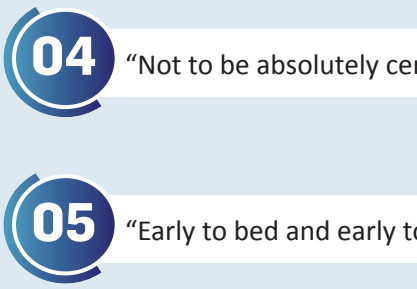
Arthur Schopenhauer



03

"The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of morals and legislation."

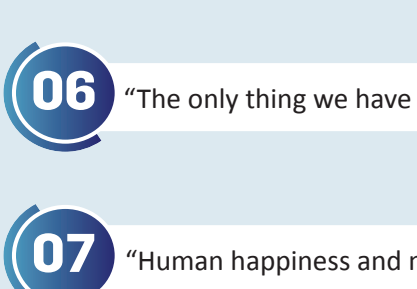
Jeremy Bentham



04

"Not to be absolutely certain, is one of the essential things in rationality."

Bertrand Russell



05

"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

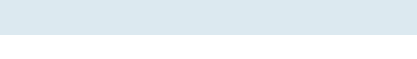
Benjamin Franklin



06

"The only thing we have to fear is the fear itself."

Franklin Roosevelt



07

"Human happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected."

George Washington

AN INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

DSDL Prepare yourself from distance

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

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