

PERFECT 7

**Weekly
Current Affairs**

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS



1 Outer Space Territory

Needs Global Governance

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|---|---|
| 2 The Role of Digital Divide in Digital Education | 5 India's Alignment towards NAM |
| 3 India-China 5 Point Action Plan: An Understanding | 6 The State of the Young Child in India Report : An Introduction |
| 4 Militarisation of the Quad to Ensure Freedom of Navigation | 7 Legacy Waste Problem in India and Its Management |

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

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OUR TEAM

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

Content Office



DHYEYA IAS
most trusted since 2003

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



Contents

➤ 7 Important Issues & Subjective Questions Based on Them	01-21
➤ Outer Space Territory: Needs Global Governance	
➤ The Role of Digital Divide in Digital Education	
➤ India-China 5 Point Action Plan: An Understanding	
➤ Militarisation of the Quad to Ensure Freedom of Navigation	
➤ India's Alignment towards NAM	
➤ The State of the Young Child in India Report : An Introduction	
➤ Legacy Waste Problem in India and Its Management	
➤ 7 Important Brain Boosters	22-28
➤ 7 Important MCQs (based on Brain Boosters)	29-31
➤ 7 Important News	32-36
➤ 7 Important Practice Questions (for Mains)	37
➤ 7 Important Facts (for Prelims)	38
➤ 7 Important Quotes (for Essay and Answer Writing)	39

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

7 IMPORTANT ISSUES

01

Outer Space Territory: Needs Global Governance

Why in News?

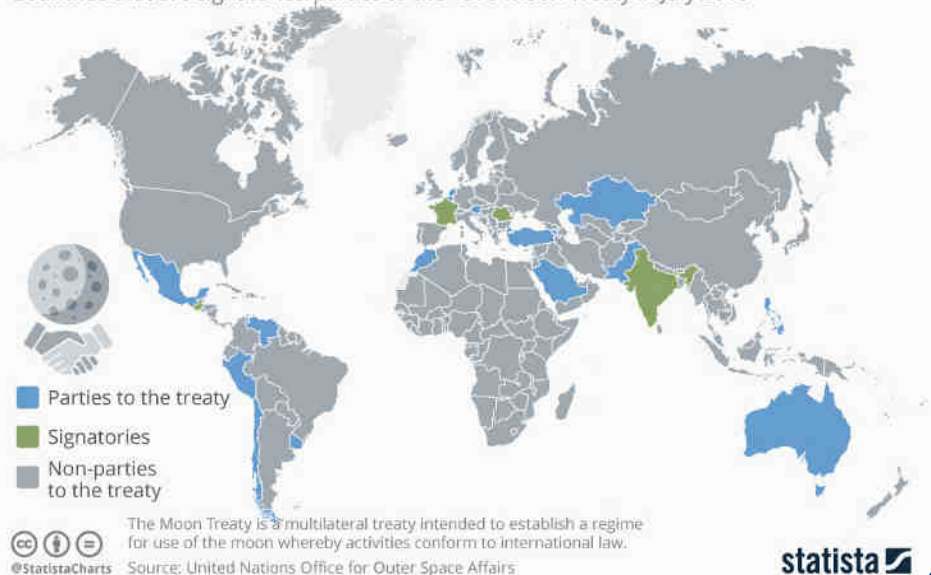
- ◆ Several space events planned well in advance have proceeded amidst the COVID-19 pandemic without much attention.
- ◆ The launch of missions to Mars by China and the United States (US) along with the United Arab Emirates (UAE's) Mars orbiter; the first astronaut trip to orbit on a commercial enterprise built by Space X; the completion of the Chinese 'BeiDou' satellite navigation system; and the US Space Command statement that Russia conducted a "non-destructive test of a space-based anti-satellite weapon" all portray a trend that outer space is witnessing a welter of new activity.

Introduction

- ◆ Work in the space industry has always continued even under the most difficult circumstances. Missions take years to plan and launch. The global space industry has, out of necessity, always embraced uncertainty. Innovation will not stop. International cooperation is still strong. Missions are continuing.

The Countries That Signed The Moon Treaty

Countries that are signatories/parties to the 1979 Moon Treaty in July 2019



- ◆ Outer space is the expanse that exists beyond Earth and between celestial bodies.
- ◆ Outer space is not empty but contains a low density of particles (predominantly a plasma of hydrogen and helium) as well as electromagnetic radiation, magnetic fields, neutrinos, dust, and cosmic rays.
- ◆ The Karman line at an altitude of 100 km above sea level, is conventionally used as the start of outer space in space treaties and for aerospace records keeping.
- ◆ The framework for international space law was established by the Outer Space Treaty, which entered into force on 10 October 1967.
- ◆ Despite the drafting of United Nations (UN) resolutions for the peaceful uses of outer space, anti-satellite weapons have been tested in Earth orbit.

Space Economy

- ◆ The space sector has emerged as one of the most attractive sectors due to advancement in technologies and increasing use

of space technology in public life. The major factors favouring space economy are:

- ◆ Increased Cost Efficiency: The price tag for reaching low Earth orbit has declined by a factor of 20 in a decade. NASA's space shuttle cost about \$54,500 per kg; now, SpaceX's Falcon 9 advertises a cost of \$2,720 per kg.
- ◆ Increased Market: According to a Bank of America Report, the \$350 billion space market today will touch \$2.7 trillion by 2050. In a decade, 80,000 such satellites could be in space compared to less than 3,000 at present
- ◆ Increased Participation by Private Players leading to fast paced innovation
 - ◆ Starlink, the constellation being constructed by SpaceX to provide global Internet access, plans more than 10,000 mass-produced small satellites in low Earth orbit.
 - ◆ US Federal Communications Commission gave approvals for more than 3,000 micro-satellites to Amazon's Project Kuiper.
 - ◆ These missions hope to transcend the digital divide and provide everyone, everywhere access to services such as distance education and telemedicine.
 - ◆ Companies such as Planet, Spire Global and Iceye are using orbital vantage points to collect and analyse data to deliver fresh insights in weather forecasting, global logistics, crop harvesting and disaster response.

United Nations Space Legislations

- ◆ The United Nations General Assembly adopted five declarations and legal principles:

1. The Outer Space Treaty (1967):

The Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies forms the basis of international space law.

- ◆ It prevents any claims of national sovereignty and permits all states to freely explore outer space.
- ◆ It entered into force on 10 October 1967. India signed it in 1967.
- ◆ As of June 2020, 110 countries are parties to treaty including the US, Russia, China, and India.

2. The Rescue Agreement (1968):

Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

3. The Liability Convention (1972):

Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects.

4. The Registration Convention (1976):

Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

5. The Moon Agreement (1984):

Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Concerns

1. Outdated Space Laws

- ◆ Multilateral framework for Space governance is becoming outdated for present context as Space laws were a product of a golden age of two decades — the 1960s and 1970s.

- ◆ The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 enshrines the idea that space should be “the province of all mankind” and “not subject to national appropriation by claims of sovereignty”. The Rescue Agreement, Space Liability Convention, and the Space Registration Convention expanded provisions of the Outer Space Treaty.

- ◆ As the outer space becomes democratised, commercialised and crowded, the multilateral framework for its governance is becoming outdated.

- ◆ Space laws do not have a dispute settlement mechanism.

- ◆ The Moon Treaty of 1979 was not ratified by major space-faring nations.

- ◆ The laws are silent on collisions and debris and offer insufficient guidance on interference with others' space assets.

- ◆ These gaps heighten the potential for conflict in an era of congested orbits and breakneck technological change.

2. Diversity amongst Space Players

- ◆ The problem the international community now faces is that the use of space is changing dramatically and rapidly. There are more satellites than ever – well over 1,000 – and more owners of satellites – almost every country uses information generated from space. Increasingly, however, those owners are not countries, militaries or international organizations but the commercial sector. Very soon, the owners will even include individuals.

- ◆ Small 'mini-satellites' or 'cube-sats' are poised to be deployed in space. These can act independently or in 'swarms', and are so small that they piggy-back on the launching of other satellites and so are very cheap to launch. This is changing the cost-benefit equation of satellite ownership and use. Developing countries are increasingly dependent on space for communications, the internet and information on, for example, weather systems, coastal activities and agriculture.
- ◆ Another major development is the advent of asteroid mining. Asteroids contain a wide range of metals and minerals – some asteroids are more promising than others, and some are closer to Earth than others. Several companies have been set up and registered around the world to begin the exploitation of asteroids for precious metals (such as platinum) and compounds (such as rare-earth minerals).

3. Weaponising the Space

- ◆ The 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST) is the mainframe for space law. It recognizes the importance of the use and scientific exploration of outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all countries. It also prohibits national sovereignty in space, including of the Moon and other celestial bodies.
- ◆ The OST prohibits all weapons of mass destruction in space – in orbit or on other planets and moons – and does not allow the establishment of military

infrastructure, manoeuvres or the testing of any type of weapon on planets or moons. As the treaty makes clear, outer space is for peaceful purposes only. Except of course, it is not – nor has it ever been so.

- ◆ The very first satellite, Sputnik, was a military satellite which kicked off the Cold War space race between the US and the USSR. The militaries of many countries followed suit, and space is now used for military communication, signals intelligence, imaging, targeting, arms control verification and so on.
- ◆ The space arms race is difficult to curb since almost all space technologies have military applications.

Need for space legislation

- ◆ Despite concerns about military activity in outer space for long, not much progress has been made in addressing them.
- ◆ The current geopolitics doesn't seem to address the concerns of a space arms race.
- ◆ India has invested enormous resources in its space programme through the Indian Space Research Organisation.
- ◆ India has proposed involvement of private players and created an autonomous body Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) under the Department of Space for permitting and regulating activities.

- ◆ The space environment that India faces requires to go beyond meeting technical milestones.
- ◆ We need space legislation with coherence across technical, legal, commercial, diplomatic and defence goals.

Way Forward

- ◆ As ambitious space missions are proliferating with advances in commercial space flight, there are concerns about possible 'indiscriminate space mining', 'interplanetary contamination' and 'militarisation of outer space'.
- ◆ A cross-regional group of like-minded countries (for example Algeria, Canada, Chile, France, India, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Sweden, the UAE and the UK) should link up with UN bodies, including the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), COPUOS and ITU, and key private-sector companies to kick-start a new process for a global code of conduct to establish norms and regulate behaviour in space. 🔄🔄🔄

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

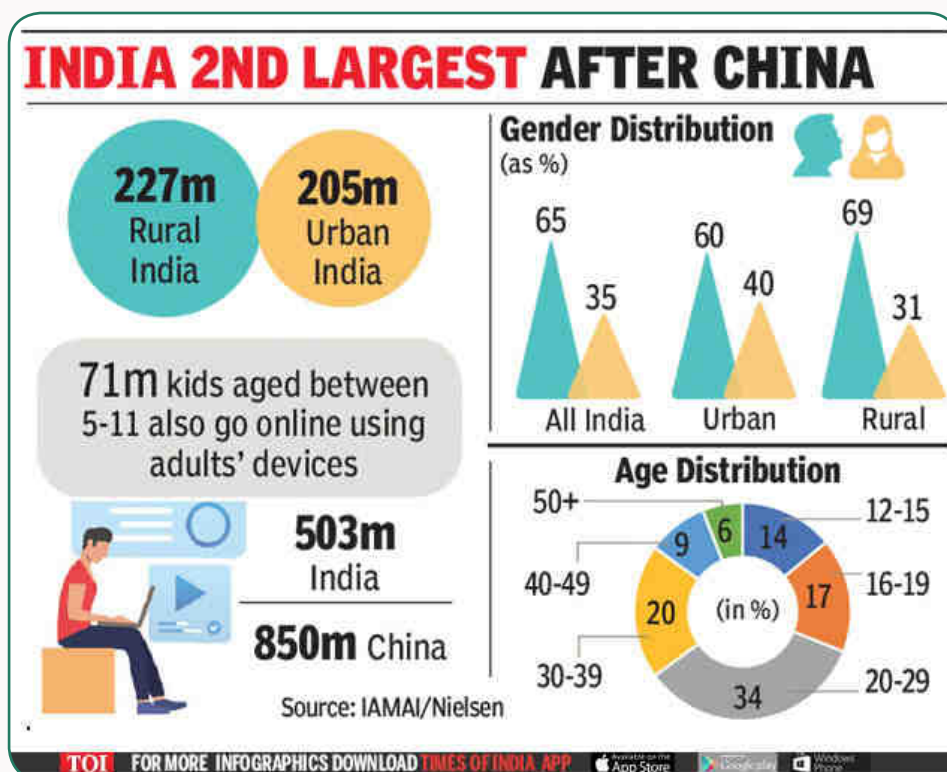
Q. With more and more nations participating in space activities, there is growing need for new age space laws that have not just wide ambit but also addresses concerns of new information age. Discuss.

02

The Role of Digital Divide in Digital Education

Why in News?

- ◆ National Statistical Organisation (NSO) has released the findings of the survey on household social consumption related to education, as part of the NSO's 75th round, conducted from July 2017 to June 2018.
- ◆ Schools across the country are closed for six months due to COVID-19. This means vastly different things for different people like many who have access to digital resources are getting online education, those who do not have such resources are devoid of education.



Background

- ◆ States across the country have been forced to jump onto the digital education bandwagon over the last four months due to the interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ◆ Education, as a result, has largely moved online. The World Economic Forum reports a surge in the use of language apps, virtual tutoring, video conferencing tools, and online learning software in the last three months. India, too, is witnessing an e-learning boom. Classes on Zoom, WhatsApp and Skype are becoming the norm for students, parents and teachers. Yet, this abrupt transition to online hardly compensates for the absence of the classroom experience.

- ◆ Although 'Digital India' has become a necessity during the COVID-19 lockdown, the question is also being asked if we are ready with requisite infrastructure for online education. If the students belonging to every section of society are equipped to avail of online education?
- ◆ A survey on 'Household Social Consumption: Education' was conducted in NSS 75th round (July 2017-June 2018). A sample of 64,519 rural households from 8,097 villages and 49,238 urban households from 6,188 blocks was surveyed all over India.

Highlights of the Report

- ◆ The report showed just how stark the digital divide is, across States, cities and villages, and income groups.

- ◆ Across India, only one in 10 households have a computer — whether a desktop, laptop or tablet. However, almost a quarter of all homes have Internet facilities, accessed via a fixed or mobile network using any device, including smartphones. Most of these Internet-enabled homes are located in cities, where 42% have Internet access.
- ◆ In rural India, however, only 15% are connected to the Internet.
- ◆ The national capital has the highest Internet access, with 55% of homes having such facilities.
- ◆ Himachal Pradesh and Kerala are the only other states where more than half of all households have Internet.
- ◆ Odisha has the least Internet-enabled homes.

- ◆ For the child in urban Himachal Pradesh, where Internet penetration is higher than 70%, it likely means online schooling, Zoom classes and digital textbooks.
- ◆ For the child in rural Odisha, where less than 6% of households have Internet facilities, such options are out of the question.
- ◆ Even as digital literacy is likely to grow during this pandemic, concerns remain about basic literacy.
- ◆ Over the last decade, literacy rates have increased from 71.7% to 77.7%, with the highest gains coming among rural women.
- ◆ The biggest divide is by economic status, which the NSO marks by dividing the population into five equal groups, or quintiles, based on their usual monthly per capita expenditure.

Finer Details

1. **Access to Computers and Internet:** Almost 25% of all homes

have Internet facilities, accessed via a fixed or mobile network using any device, including smartphones.

2. **Urban-Rural Divide:** Most of the Internet-enabled homes are located in cities, where 42% have Internet access. In rural India, however, only 15% are connected to the internet.
3. **Access and Utilization Gap:** 20% of Indians above the age of 5 years had basic digital literacy, just 40% in the critical age group of 15 to 29 years, which includes all high school and college students as well as young parents responsible for teaching younger children.
4. **Regional Disparity:** The national capital has the highest Internet access, with 55% of homes having such facilities. Himachal Pradesh and Kerala are the only other states where more than half of all households have Internet. Odisha is at the bottom with only one in ten homes having Internet. There is less than 20% Internet

penetration, even in States with software hubs such as Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

5. **Disparity due to Economic status:** The biggest divide is by economic status, which the NSO marks by dividing the population into five equal groups, or quintiles, based on their usual monthly per capita expenditure. Even in Odisha, almost 63% of homes in the top urban quintile have Internet facilities. In the poorest quintile of rural Odisha, however, that figure drops to an abysmal 2.4%.
6. **Intra-state Inequality:** Kerala shows the least inequality with more than 39% of the poorest rural homes having Internet, in comparison to 67% of the richest urban homes. Himachal Pradesh also fares well, with 40% of the lowest rural quintile having Internet. Assam shows the starkest inequality, with almost 80% of the richest urban homes having the Internet access denied to 94% of those in the poorest rural homes in the State.

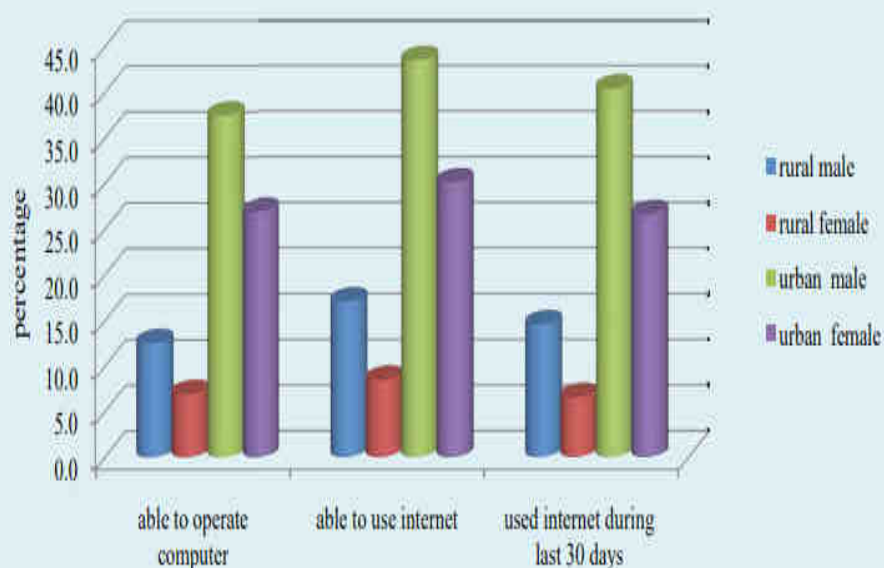
NSO Criteria to Determine Computer Proficiency

- Ability to operate computer among persons of age 5 years and above: If a person of age 5 years and above was able to carry out any of the tasks given below using a computer, he/she was considered as able to operate computer:
 - Copying or moving a file or folder;
 - Using copy and paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document;
 - Sending e-mails with attached files (e.g. document, picture, and video);
 - Using basic arithmetic formulae in a spreadsheet;
 - Connecting and installing new devices (e.g. modem, camera, printer);
 - Finding, downloading, installing and configuring software;
 - Creating electronic presentations with presentation software (including text, images, sound, video or charts);
 - Transferring files between a computer and other devices; and
 - Writing a computer program using a specialised programming.

Measures and Solutions

- ◆ However, the rural-urban digital divide is quite wide, and threatens to translate into an educational divide. The NSO's Household Social Consumption on Education survey shows that just 4% of rural households had, between June 2017 and June 2018, access to computers, compared with 23% of urban households. And, just 15% of rural households had internet access as compared to 42% of urban households.

Percentage of person of age 5 years and above who are able to operate computer, able to use internet and used internet



- ◆ This shows a reliance on online, without ensuring access to digital devices and internet, means the bulk of rural students will get left behind, with urban students less so (though still in significant numbers). The government needs to subsidise low-cost devices and roll out BharatNet in full steam. But, that too will address only a part of the problem. Research on learning outcomes ties students' backgrounds to their actual learning levels. Parents' education levels, how digital-savvy they are, etc., will play an important role in how well a student adapts to online/digital learning.
- ◆ The government—both the Centre and the states—will need

to quickly roll out solutions to these challenges. Else, COVID-19 may not just mean a lost year for crores of students, it could mean lost years, which would eventually translate into another generation from the vulnerable section of the population trapped in poverty.

- ◆ The Centre has directed State Education Departments to map the online access available to all their students in order to adequately plan curriculum and teaching methods that can reach such students.
- ◆ Although much of the focus has been on digital platforms, television and radio are also being used to deliver lessons

Way Forward

- ◆ To begin with, we need to promote and ensure digital literacy among the masses, primarily uninterrupted Internet connectivity and mobile network signals in rural areas.
- ◆ The implications of school closures in the country are not just about education; they are manifold. An unprecedented social disaster can be avoided if more entities - government and private - pitch into short-term and long-term futures of the children in this digital divide. 📡📶📱

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. COVID-19 has pushed education on online platforms, but India's digital divide threatens to catapult the education crisis into education divide. Discuss.

03

India-China 5 Point Action Plan: An Understanding

Why in News?

- India and China have agreed on a five-point course of action to disengage and reduce tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Background

- A bloody skirmish at Galwan on June 15 and rapid build-up on both sides led to steep escalation in which 40,000 People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers stand deployed with almost an equal number on the Indian side. However, the situation remained regulated by talks at the military-diplomatic and political levels.
- India's counteraction at Chushul by way of the occupation of Kailash Range on August 29-30 took the escalation to a higher level, but well below the threshold of conflict.
- Technically, the conflict situation consists of actions such as building fortifications, clashes between patrolling parties, laying of mines, air intrusions alongside certain provocative political actions.
- The de-escalation process starts with gradual disengagement of troops alongside the dismantling of war-waging infrastructure, pulling back, and finally withdrawal to the designated locations.

Consensus Building

- The consensus was reached during talks between external affairs minister S Jaishankar and

WHY LAC OFTEN FLARES UP

23 "disputed and sensitive" areas along the unresolved 3,488-km-long LAC witness aggressive patrolling & face-offs between troops from the two sides

FLASHPOINTS INCLUDE:



his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the margins of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meet in Moscow.

- A joint statement was also issued which said that:
 - The foreign ministers agreed "both sides should take guidance from the series of consensus of the leaders on developing India-China relations, including not allowing differences to become disputes".
 - They further agreed "the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side", and "therefore... the border troops of both sides should continue their dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions".
 - They also agreed both sides "shall abide by all the existing

agreements and protocols on China-India boundary affairs, maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas and avoid any action that could escalate matters".

- The two sides will continue communications through the Special Representatives mechanism, and meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs will continue.
- The ministers agreed that "as the situation eases, the two sides should expedite work to conclude new confidence-building measures to maintain and enhance peace and tranquillity in the border areas".

Agreeing on Five Points

- The process of dialogue between

the nations is vital especially when the two are neighbours with strained relations.

- ◆ This meeting between the two foreign ministers was an attempt to break the state of impasse as series of talks have taken place at multiple levels without yielding any results. It was also good optics especially for China as the Communist leadership was keen to showcase its sincerity to resolve the issues through dialogue.
- ◆ It is in keeping with the Chinese policy of 'talking and fighting simultaneously' (yi bian dan-yi bian da). Besides, it also lent credence to the role of Moscow in setting up the stage for the talks. Some experts have termed these talks as stepping back from the brink of war which it is not. The current situation is well below the threshold of conflict if we talk of the escalatory ladder.
- ◆ The 'Five Points' agreed by India and China are:
 - ◆ Both sides should take guidance from the consensus of the leaders on developing India-China relations, including not allowing differences to become disputes.
 - ◆ The current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side and therefore the border troops of both sides should continue their dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions.
 - ◆ The two sides shall abide by all the existing agreements

and protocols on China-India boundary affairs and maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas and avoid any action that could escalate matters.

- ◆ The two sides will continue communications through the Special Representatives mechanism, and meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on border affairs will continue.
- ◆ As the situation eases, the two sides should expedite work to conclude new confidence-building measures to maintain and enhance peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

Significance of Five-point Action Plan

- ◆ It reiterates the process of dialogue, disengagement, and easing of the situation. All this was comprehensively dealt with in the previous five agreements given below:
- ◆ The 1993 'Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility Agreement' forms the basis of all followup agreements.
- ◆ 1996 'Confidence Building Measures' denounced the use of force.
- ◆ 2005 'Standard Operating Procedures' and patrolling modalities.
- ◆ 2012 'Process of Consultation and Cooperation'
- ◆ 2013 'Border Cooperation Agreement', signed as a sequel to Depsang intrusion by PLA

- ◆ There is no requirement of additional agreements. The moot point is their implementation as these have been violated by the PLA in pursuit of its "Nibble and Negotiate" strategy. In fact, all these agreements have only helped China to consolidate its claims over a period of time by waging a 'bullet-less' war.
- ◆ The mechanism of strategic guidance evolved at Wuhan and later reconfirmed at Mamallapuram between PM Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping has not delivered despite the fact that Xi is the commander-in-chief of PLA.

India's Diplomatic Faultline

- ◆ Successive governments have put more faith in diplomacy than the armed forces in achieving security objectives. Diplomacy can accomplish little in the absence of strategic vision and resolve or adequate leverage.
- ◆ The diplomatic blunders of 1948 (Kashmir dispute's internationalisation), 1954 (Panchsheel Agreement's acceptance of the "Tibet region of China"), 1960 (Indus Waters Treaty), 1966 (Tashkent) and 1972 (Shimla) have imposed enduring costs.
- ◆ Today, with China's multi-thrust aggression, history is repeating itself, underscored by a common Indian refrain that Beijing has betrayed India's friendship. China's latest "stab in the back" raises key questions, not about Beijing (which consistently employs deception, concealment and surprise in peacetime), but about India.



- ♦ What explains India's "hug, then repent" proclivity over the decades? Why has India repeatedly cried betrayal, not by friends, but by adversaries in whom it reposed trust?
- ♦ One reason history repeats itself is that virtually every prime minister, although unschooled in national security at the time of assuming office, has sought to reinvent the foreign-policy wheel, rather than learn from past blunders.
- ♦ Another reason is that intellectuals and journalists shrink from closely scrutinising foreign policy moves. Overselling outcomes of summit meetings with China from 1988 to 2019 for leadership glorification has led to India's worst China crisis after the 1962 war. For example, five separate border-management agreements were signed at summits between 1993 and 2013, with each accord hailed in India (but not China) as a major or historic "breakthrough".
- ♦ China is showing it is a master in protracting negotiations to buy time to consolidate its territorial gains, while exploring the limits of its adversary's flexibility and testing its patience. For Beijing, any agreement is designed to bind not China but the other side to its terms. It is seeking fresh CBMs to make India respect the new, Chinese-created territorial status quo and to restrict India from upgrading its border infrastructure.

Way Forward

- ♦ China has not been able to achieve

its aims either politically or militarily due to India's firm and resolute response. This will definitely reflect upon Xi Jinping's iron man image. Given China's record, going simply by words will not be a wise option. India will need to mirror China's actions to safeguard its interests.

- ♦ The force level deployed by China in Aksai Chin with two strike divisions (4 Motorised Division in the Chushul sector and 6 Mechanized Division in Depsang) and 150 frontline fighter aircraft positioned on the forward bases belies Chinese intent to de-escalate. Therefore, India must continue its proactive posture not only in Ladakh but across the complete length of LAC. After all, it's the position on the ground which will decide the trajectory of talks on the negotiations table.
- ♦ In November, Mr. Modi and Mr. Xi are expected to attend the G-20 summit in Saudi Arabia, which will be the first time the two leaders, who have not yet spoken to each other during the stand-off, could meet.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Q. India-China relationship is at 'crossroads', the Indian side maintained that there cannot be "business as usual" unless the trust between the two countries is rebuilt and the "peace and tranquility" at the border is fully restored. Talks and agreements must translate into concrete actions. Discuss.

04

Militarisation of the Quad to Ensure Freedom of Navigation

Why in News?

- ◆ In what will be seen as a significant shift of the government's posture towards the India-U.S.-Australia-Japan Quadrilateral (Quad), Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat stated in early September 2020, that India believes the Quad would be a "good mechanism" to "ensure Freedom of Navigation Operations" (FONOPs) in the Indian Ocean and surrounding oceans including the Indo-Pacific.

Introduction

- ◆ Starting from Quadrilateral Security Dialogue's initial pitch in 2007, its subsequent lull and subsequent revival as Quad 2.0, the anticipation over the mini-lateral grouping has come a full circle. Given China's recent assertiveness during the coronavirus pandemic, conversations over the Quad biting the bullet on confronting Chinese assertiveness have re-emerged.
- ◆ Each of the 'Quad' countries have specific security concerns that emanate from a belligerent, expansionist and increasingly provocative China. However, the 'Quad' has so far remained in the realm of strategic dialogues, white papers and occasional drills.
- ◆ It is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA,

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and the Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific idea expands the conceptual region of Asia-Pacific to include India and the Indian Ocean. The QSD translates this understanding into strategy, envisaging the two oceans as a single security space, which includes India and Japan, is bridged by Australia, and is undergirded by U.S. maritime dominance to balance against the Western Pacific's rising power, China.



Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a "free, open and prosperous" Indo-Pacific region.

- ◆ The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- ◆ In November 2017, India, the US, Australia and Japan gave shape to the long-pending "Quad" Coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (especially China).

India's Evolving Stance

- ◆ India's Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat has hinted an increased role of

Quad in maintain the maritime order in the Indo-pacific region. His suggestion is that India is prepared to join Quad military patrols.

- ◆ This marks a departure from India's earlier reticence and public statements by the leadership.
- ◆ The Indian Navy has not taken part in any joint patrols outside the Indian Ocean.
- ◆ In terms of the engagement with the Quad, India has not yet announced a decision to include Australia in the annual Malabar exercises (Malabar exercises are held with the U.S. and Japan) although it is expected to do so.
- ◆ However, the move from conducting exercises together to joint operations would take time, something that makes the CDS's assertion significant.

- ◆ It is easy to surmise that his contention that the Quad operations are needed to ensure there is no “fear of any other nation singularly trying to dominate the oceans”, is a veiled reference to China.

Possible Outcomes

- ◆ It is clear that the LAC tensions and clashes, as well as the PLA's refusal to implement border agreements, have convinced New Delhi that new strategies will be required to deal with Beijing-
- ◆ is convinced that it needs new strategies to deal with Beijing because of,
 - I. The Line of Actual Control tensions and clashes,
 - II. The PLA's refusal to implement border agreements.
- ◆ Still India continues to engage China diplomatically.
- ◆ India's External Affairs Minister and Defence Minister have spoken of the importance of a resolution through talks.
- ◆ But, an outcome of the tensions will be a strengthening of India's ties with global powers as well as formations like the Quad. An indication of this is the government's plans to host a ministerial-level meeting in the next month, possibly when the India-US “2+2” meet of Foreign and Defence Ministers is held.

Quad in Practical

- ◆ China sees the Quad as a stepping stone for an Asian NATO that is designed to contain it. The

members of the Quad deny that the grouping is to contain China or any other. The Quad cannot become an Asian NATO for the following reasons: -

- ◆ Driving force behind the grouping are Japan, India and Australia who are most threatened by China's rise and are uncertain of America's role in the region although it is part of the Quad.
- ◆ Japan and Australia which are treaty allies of the US, don't trust its security guarantee.
- ◆ Japan has shed its pacifist constitution giving more power to its military and increased its defence budget. In fact, US President Donald Trump has indicated his support for Japan developing its own nuclear weapons than rely on the US.
- ◆ Similarly, Australia doesn't think the US will remain the most powerful country in the world. Australian PM Malcolm Turnbull in his introduction to the new foreign policy white paper wrote that “Australia must be sovereign not reliant”.
- ◆ India has historically been averse to any military alliance directed against any other country.
- ◆ A NATO style article 5, is unlikely. The US is increasingly seen as an unreliable ally. Furthermore, none of the countries of the Quad are likely to fight on behalf of the other. Japan is not going to help India if a war breaks out with China and vice versa.

- ◆ There can be greater cooperation in terms of weapons supply, intelligence sharing, diplomatic pressure and posturing.
- ◆ Three, the Quad's goal is to keep the sea lanes of the Indo-Pacific free and open for inclusive and prosperous region. This does not require a NATO style military alliance.
- ◆ None of the other members of the Quad are capable of individually or collectively shaping the events around the Indo-Pacific.

India and the Quad

- ◆ While India considers its options, it is necessary to remember some of the reasons for its reticence in terms of militarising the Quad in any way.
- ◆ In 2018, Prime Minister said that India sees the Indo-Pacific as a “geographical concept”, not a “strategy or a club of limited members”.
- ◆ It would be important to know whether that formulation has changed.
- ◆ India is the only Quad member not already tied in a treaty alliance with the others.
- ◆ External Affairs Minister's statement that India would never be part of any alliance system would run counter to what the CDS suggests.

China's Malacca Dilemma

- ◆ An invaluable piece of geography is China's worst nightmare of a doomsday ‘choke point’ at



the Malacca Straits. This ultra-narrow (1.5 kilometres wide at its narrowest point), unavoidable and regime-sustaining straits account for the life-sustaining movement to-and-fro from the Chinese mainland that sustains the Chinese juggernaut and funds its hegemonic instincts.

- ◆ Unfortunately for China, the Malacca Straits opens at the lower tip of the undisputed Indian waters, afforded by the outpost of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 1,200 kilometres away from the Indian mainland.
- ◆ This is a jugular that has only been partially tapped by India, as it has a limited Tri-Services Command, further up the island chain. While the straits meander the Malaysian and Indonesian waters, the mouth opens up just below the sovereign Indian waters and the landmass of the

southern tip of Nicobar Islands.

- ◆ This historically led to an acute sense of vulnerability in China, owing to its own restive and unpredictable relations with Malaysia and Indonesia, let alone India. This vulnerability is said to borne alternative supply chain hyper-projects like the Belt and Road (or its arterial arm, China Pakistan Economic Corridor), Pearl Ports, 'debt-trapping' Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka, eyeing Coco Islands, Maldives, Bangladesh etc — however, all these efforts have run aground recently, owing to Chinese incorrigibility that barely masks its real intent.
- ◆ Towards evolving, militarising and basing the 'Quad' sensibilities, this peach of a geographical real-estate does unto China, what China repeatedly does and intimidates its neighbourhood

with. Even a notional 'Quad-Port on call' without necessarily blowing it into a Quad Military Base, does the needful.

- ◆ Aimed ostensibly at ensuring free and open sea lanes of communication and navigation, the Quad, in reality is a united naval show of force by democratic states to contain an expansionist China in the Indo-Pacific region.

Conclusion

- ◆ India is the only Quad country that shares a land boundary with China. It is unclear how the militarisation of the Quad in Indo-Pacific waters would alleviate the territorial threat it faces. However, if India's view of its Quad engagement has shifted, clarity and an expansion of General Rawat's statement are essential.



General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

- India and its neighborhood-relations.

Topic:

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

Q. Militarisation of QUAD will not alleviate the territorial threat India faces from China. Analyse the statement.

05

India's Alignment towards NAM

Why in News?

- India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, has stated recently that non-alignment as a foreign policy was a concept of relevance in a specific era and a particular context (Cold War era), though the independence of action enshrined in it remains a factor of continuity in India's foreign policy.
- This statement seems to strengthen the growing perception that India has abandoned the policy of non-alignment.

Background

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was formed during the Cold War, largely on the initiative of then-Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought to remain independent or neutral.
- The basic concept for the group originated in 1955 during discussions that took place at the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference held in Indonesia. Subsequently, a preparatory meeting for the First NAM Summit Conference was held in Cairo, Egypt from 5-12 June 1961.
- NAM has sought to "create an independent path in world politics that would not result in member States becoming pawns in the struggles between the major



powers." It identifies the right of independent judgment, the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, and the use of moderation in relations with all big powers as the three basic elements that have influenced its approach. At present, an additional goal is facilitating a restructuring of the international economic order.

- NAM does not have a formal constitution or permanent secretariat, and its administration is non-hierarchical and rotational. Decisions are made by consensus, which requires substantial agreement, but not unanimity.

Objectives of India's Geo-strategy

- Two significant aspects of India's foreign policy have been to secure its economic and security interests in the Indo-Pacific space and also to ensure

strategic influence and security along the continental landmass to its north and west.

- As part of its Indo-Pacific outreach, India has adopted the Act East policy of bilateral and multilateral engagements in Southeast Asia and East Asia and the Pacific.
- India has been trying to establish connectivity and cooperation with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Emerging Challenges

- India's primacy in the Indian Ocean is being challenged by the growing presence of the Chinese navy in the Indian Ocean region and China's deepening relations with the Indian Ocean littoral countries.
- Given that India shares its northern and western border with two hostile and nuclear-armed

neighbours, India has not been able to establish its influence in the continental landmass. India has been busy addressing the security aspects along its borders. This has also limited India's access to Central Asian economies.

- ♦ The growing cooperation between Pakistan and China also raises the threat of a two-front war for India.
- ♦ China has been making inroads into India's neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Chinese influence has been growing at the cost of India's strategic depth in these countries.

India Tilting towards US

- ♦ In the wake of the border tensions with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and China's increasing assertiveness, there have been calls for India's foreign policy to make a decisive shift towards the United States (US) to counter China.
- ♦ Shared India-US interests in dealing with the challenge from China in the maritime domain have been a strategic underpinning of the bilateral partnership between India and the US since the early 2000s.
- ♦ The trade war between the US and China and the deteriorating ties between the two superpower nations have brought India and the US on a common platform to counter Chinese assertiveness.

Effect on India-Russia Relations

- ♦ While partnering with the US, India must also consider further broad basing its relations with Russia beyond the traditional defence and energy pillars.
- ♦ India should build a strong relationship with Russia to try to exploit Russia's reluctance to be a junior partner of China.

Challenges with India's Convergence toward US

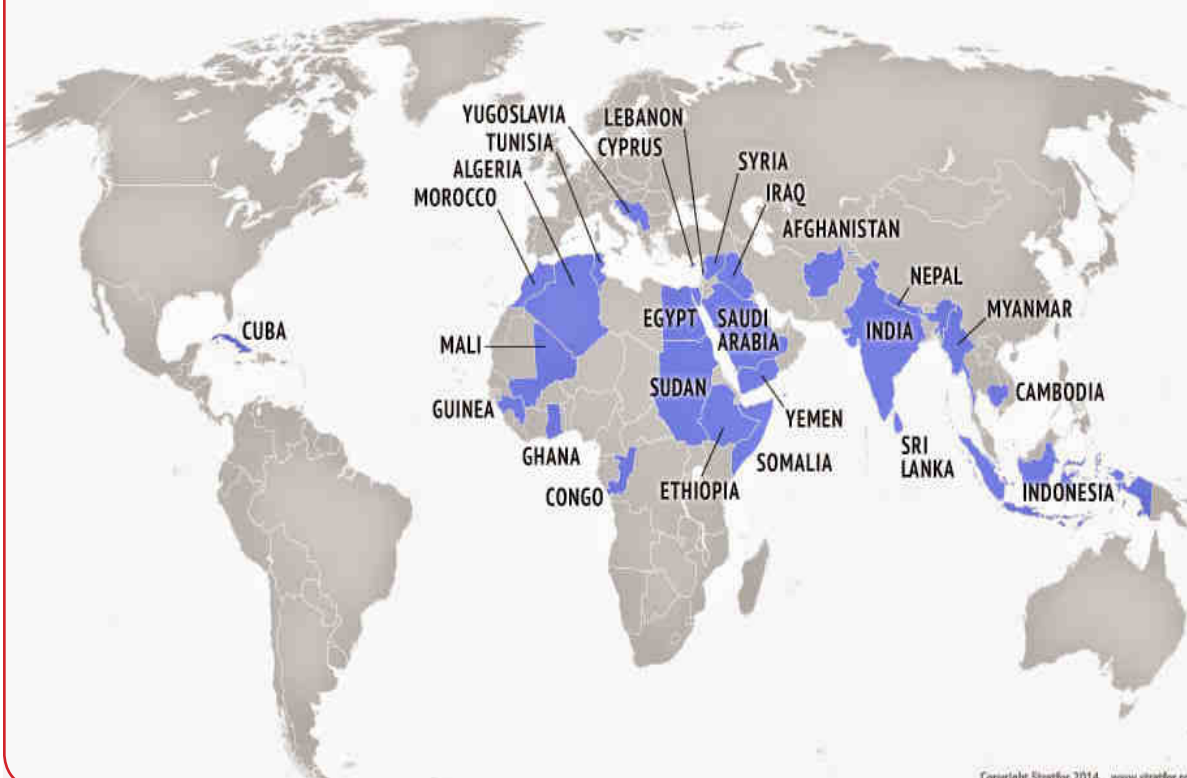
- ♦ In the immediate-term, Indian and US perspectives are less convergent in India's continental neighbourhood.
- ♦ While India is keen on engagement with Iran and Russia to help increase its connectivity in the region, the US on account of its deteriorating ties with Iran and Russia has pressed on India to reduce its interactions and dependency on these nations.

Changing Dynamics

- ♦ External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in October 2019 at NAM summit in Baku, Azerbaijan had said, "the world today has moved on from what the NAM founding leaders faced in Bandung in 1955. The scales of global geo-political balance have shifted, and continue to do so, propelled by forces of globalisation and transformational technological progress. Long-held assumption and alignments rooted in the legacies of colonialism and the ideology of the Cold War are making way for new configurations and partnerships."

- ♦ Later in addition to this in July 2020, he furthered his argument by ensuring that, India will never be a part of an alliance system, but also reemphasised that NAM is an old concept.
- ♦ Speaking about the consequences of global shifts, including the US and the assertiveness of China, he said they were opening spaces for middle powers like India, Japan, the European Union and others. And said, "a democratic, effective, flexible, credible, transparent and representative, multilateral order – "reformed multilateralism", if you will – is a 21st century imperative"
- ♦ Finding relevance for any institutional body just because India had been one of its founding members is not a sound logic. National priorities in accordance with changing international environment must be analysed. Organisations are built to serve the purposes and not vice versa.
- ♦ The Indian foreign policy vis-a-vis its international relationships should be driven primarily by the objective to advance prosperity and influence of India.
- ♦ Given that China poses the single largest threat to India in the current circumstances, India's options should be guided by the intent to neutralize this threat posed by the Chinese.
- ♦ The countries in the Asia-Pacific region have to face an assertive China in the South China Sea.

ORIGINAL 1961 NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ATTENDEES



Way Forward

◆ NAM as a body can be utilised to raise the voice of the third world and India can play a leadership role there. But the changing power politics in the international environment has forced new changes.

◆ In previous cold war, India had no direct tensions with both cold war

parties be it US or Russia. But in this new cold war between US and China, there is direct confrontation between India and China. Thus, staying non-aligned could not be a working solution. <<<

These countries are reluctant to define China as a strategic adversary, because of their economic engagement with it and the huge military asymmetry. Deepening India's engagement with such countries might play to India's advantage.

- ◆ Given the current circumstances, it might seem that a decisive shift in the form of increased convergence with the US is a viable option for India.
- ◆ India should see its ties with the US as a joint venture and not as an alliance. The two countries should pursue shared objectives

for mutual benefit and accept the differences of perspectives and try to address them.

- ◆ The US should acknowledge that India's development of trade routes through Iran would also serve its strategic interest of finding routes to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan and Russia, respectively.
- ◆ As the US confronts the challenge to its dominance from China, the classical balance of power considerations would dictate a modicum of accommodation with Russia.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Q. New US-China cold war and India's direct confrontation with China does not allow India to remain neutral or non-aligned to any party. Discuss.

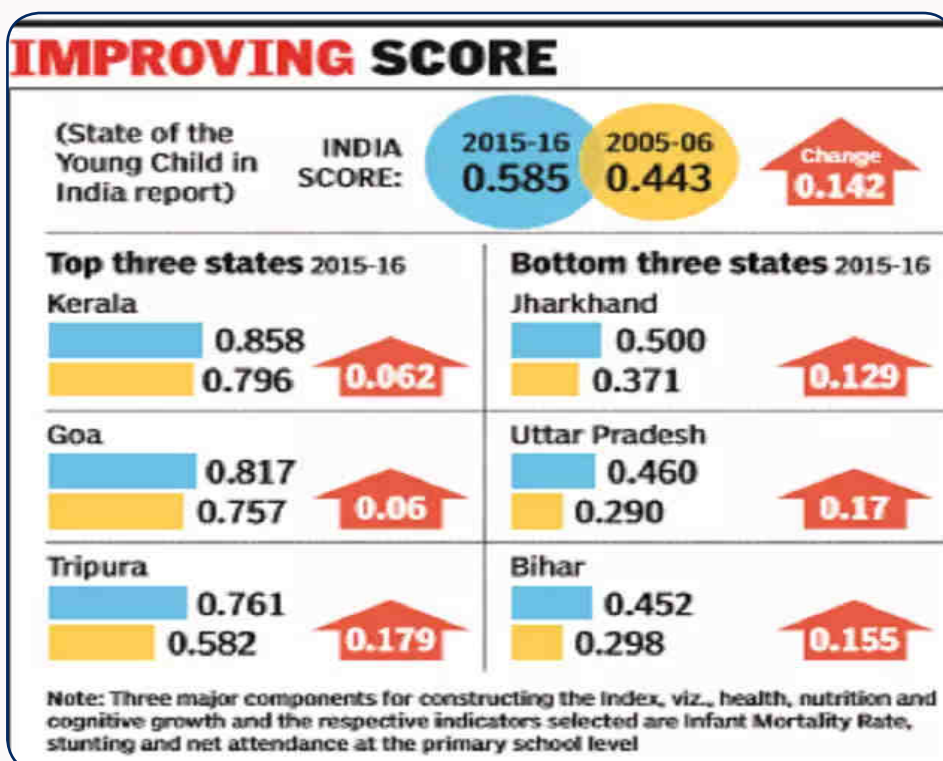
06 The State of the Young Child in India Report : An Introduction

Why in News?

- Child development should be the foundation of our development architecture, the Vice President said while releasing 'The State of Young Child in India' report, a comprehensive account of the challenges related to early child development in India.
- He also called for a well-strategized collective action on multiple fronts to ensure well-being of young children for India to take full advantage of demographic dividend.

Introduction

- Early childhood, the age group from birth to the age of 6 or 8 years, is the first and arguably the most important stage in human development. Research in neurosciences has bolstered the claim of child development experts that early childhood establishes the foundation for a healthy, well-integrated individual gives the next generation a better start and contributes to economic growth and sustainable development.
- A child has been defined by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as a person from birth to the age of 18 years. The development discourse and policy often sideline the exceptional vulnerability of the young child due to age, in combination with aggravating



- factors such as gender, caste, class, abilities and residence. Infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers are subsumed together with school-going age children and adolescents within the broader category of children.
- Children under 6 years of age formed 13.1% (158.79 million) of India's total population in 2011. The neglect of this age group is evident in the country's weak performance in ensuring child survival, optimal care and development, and protection.
- In 2015–2016, 21% children below age 5 in India were undernourished, 91.4% of children aged 6–23 months did not receive an adequate diet, one in three (38%) of children under 5 years of age were stunted, one in five (21%) of the children were

wasted, 36% were underweight, 58% of children between 6 months–5 years were anaemic and 38% had not received full immunisation.

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) is an integrated concept that cuts across multiple sectors—including health and nutrition, education and social protection—and refers to the physical, cognitive, linguistic and socio-emotional development of the young child.

The Index

- The State of the Young Child in India report is prepared with the aim to bring the young child at the center of policy dialogue, borne out of the conviction that each child has an inalienable right to opportunities to develop

her full potential. With a focus on children aged under 6 years, it presents key aspects of their wellbeing and development.

- ◆ The report has been prepared by Mobile Creches a policy advocacy organization which works with the underprivileged children across India.
- ◆ The 'Young Child Outcomes Index' measures health, nutrition and cognitive growth with the help of indicators such as infant mortality rate, stunting and net attendance at the primary school level. The index is part of the 'State of the Young Child' in India report.

◆ The index has been constructed for two time periods (2005–2006 and 2015–2016) to enable inter-State comparisons as well as provide an idea of change over time.

◆ It identifies eight States that have scores below the country's average: they are Assam, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

◆ Kerala, Goa, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Mizoram are among the top five States for well-being of children, according to a report.

◆ The report has also developed another index called the young child environment index to understand the policy and environment enablers that influence a child's well-being. According to the environment index, Kerala, Goa, Sikkim, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh secured the top five positions.

◆ The environment index was constructed for 2015–2016 only due to limitations of data availability. The eight States that have a below average score on the outcomes index also fared poorly on this one.

◆ It uses five policy enablers that influence child well-being outcomes, including poverty alleviation, strengthening primary healthcare, improving education levels, safe water supply and promotion of gender equity.

Main Recommendations of the Report

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a national priority: The State must assume greater responsibility to ensure the young child's well-being.
- Increase allocations for ECD: Budget outlays for ECD to be quadrupled. The annual child budget to be Rs. 1.25 trillion (20% of social sector outlay).
- Overhaul of ICDS services: ICDS needs to be restructured and recalibrated to reach the most marginalised and its spending enhanced to Rs. 800 billion.
- Crèche services and complementary childcare: Well-equipped crèches under the ICDS as psychosocial support and care to children under-3 years.
- Phased conversion of anganwadi into anganwadi-cum-crèches: A phased process of conversion is recommended to provide holistic care.
- Universal provision of quality ECCE: All children in the 3–6 years' age group must have a right to quality and holistic Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).
- Professionalise the ECD workforce: A full-time, professional AWW cadre is fundamental to the vision of ECD programmes as a national priority.
- Urgent response to violence against the young child: A support-group structure led by frontline workers to monitor the child's social environment.
- Fundamental revamping of child database and monitoring systems: Creation of credible and freely available multidimensional disaggregated data on children.

Initiatives

- ◆ Government of India has introduced several comprehensive policies and flagship programmes like the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and the national nutrition mission (Poshan Abhiyaan).
- ◆ The Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) is an important initiative for early identification and intervention for children from birth to 18 years to cover 4 'D's — Defects at birth, Deficiencies, Diseases and Development delays including disability.
- ◆ Similarly, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) is equally important to ensure protection, education and empowerment of the girl child.

No kidding!

The index score was computed using indicators such as poverty rate, immunisation coverage, female literacy, sex ratio and percentage of households with protected water supply. India's average score was **0.585**

Best-performing States

State	Index score (2015-16)
Kerala	0.858
Goa	0.817
Tripura	0.761
Tamil Nadu	0.731
Mizoram	0.719

Worst-performing States

State	Index score (2015-16)
Bihar	0.452
Uttar Pradesh	0.46
Jharkhand	0.5
Madhya Pradesh	0.526
Chhattisgarh	0.555

- ◆ The recently unveiled National Educational Policy rightly states that “the overarching goal will be to ensure universal access to high-quality early childhood care and education across the country in a phased manner.

Public Spending

- ◆ The report calls for an increase in public spending on children. According to its analysis on expenses towards child nutrition, healthcare, education and other necessary protection services, India spent Rs. 1,723 per child in 2018–2019, an amount that is insufficient and fails to reach the entire eligible population.

- ◆ The report points out that while the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Women and Child Development has seen a year-on-year increase, all the additional funds have been allocated towards nutrition delivery under the ICDS.

- ◆ While the population of children under six years of age is 158.8 million, the ICDS covers only 71.9 million children as calculated from the total number of beneficiaries across States.

Way Forward

- ◆ India has been making conscious efforts to meet the international commitments like the UN

Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), and more importantly the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

- ◆ It is important for all stakeholders, including the government, policy makers and civil society organizations to intensify their efforts in ensuring the well-being of the young child through better policies and effective programmatic interventions.
- ◆ In other words, there should be well-strategized collective action on multiple fronts. Ensuring the well-being of the young child assumes greater importance if India has to take full advantage of its demographic dividend. <><>

General Studies Paper- II

Topic:

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

Topic:

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

Q. Despite, India's earnest efforts for children specially in the field of early childcare and education, there are still glaring lacunae which needs to be addressed Discuss.

07

Legacy Waste Problem in India and Its Management

Context

- India faces major environmental challenges associated with waste generation and inadequate waste collection, transport, treatment and disposal.
- Current systems in India cannot cope with the volumes of waste generated by an increasing urban population, and this impact on the environment and public health. The challenges and barriers are significant, but so are solutions.

Introduction

- With rapid urbanisation, the country is facing massive waste management challenge. Over 377 million urban people live in 7,935 towns and cities and generate 62 million tonnes (MT) of municipal solid waste per annum. Only 43 MT of the waste is collected, 11.9 MT is treated and 31 MT is dumped in landfill sites.
- Solid Waste Management (SWM) is one among the basic essential services provided by municipal authorities in the country to keep urban centres clean. However, almost all municipal authorities deposit solid waste at a dumpyard within or outside the city haphazardly. Experts believe that India is following a flawed system of waste disposal and management.
- Years of neglect, lack of foresight and complete absence of urban planning has left India staring at mountains of waste-landfills,

LANDFILLS OF DELHI



	Year of Estbd.	Year of Saturation	Waste Dumped Everyday	Height of Garbage
Ghazipur	1984	2002	1800-2000 MT	65 m
Bhalswa	1994	2009	2000-2200 MT	62 m
Okhla	1995	-	1800 MT	40 m

* According to South Delhi Municipal Corporation Okhla landfill's lifespan depends on the height of the waste and maximum limit is 35-40 meters

Source: East Delhi Municipal Corporation, North Delhi Municipal Corporation and South Delhi Municipal Corporation

waste-choked drains, water bodies and rivers. This is called "legacy waste", a cumulative consequence of decades of neglect and lack of foresight.

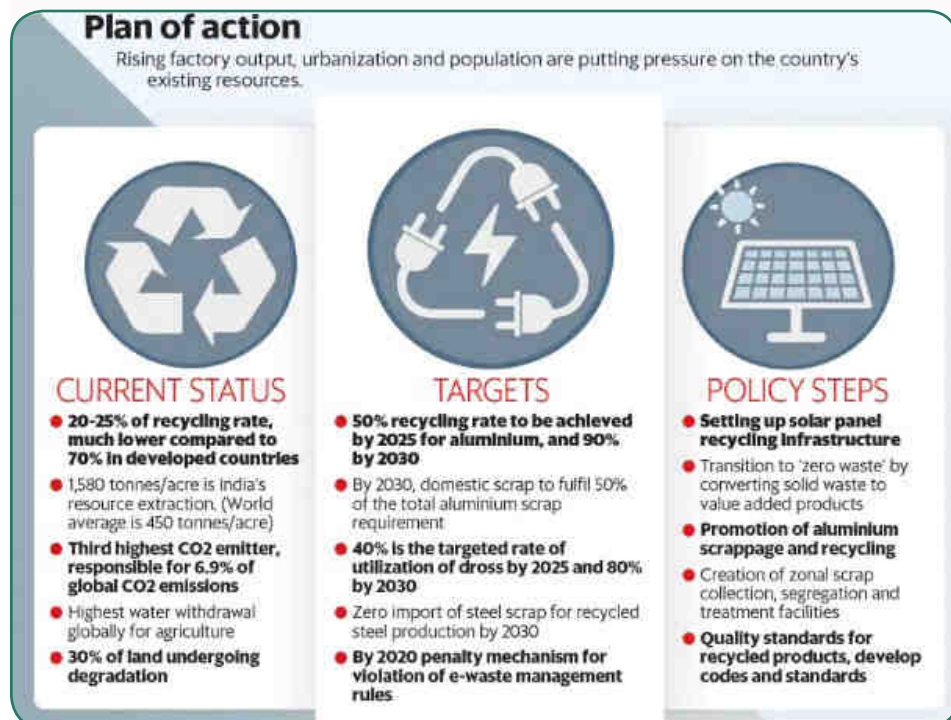
- There are about 48 recognised landfills across India, together covering nearly 5,000 ja
- of land, with a total land value of about Rs 100,000 crore.
- Drains and water bodies, emptying out into Indian rivers, also carry with them an unimaginable amount of waste. The Ganga is among the top 10 polluted rivers in the world, together accounting for 90% of the total ocean plastic pollution.
- India faces a seemingly insurmountable challenge of treating and getting rid of the legacy waste, with simultaneous and continuous accumulation of fresh everyday waste. India

generates the most waste globally, and if urgent measures are not put into place, by 2050, our waste generation will double.

- Central, state, city and municipal governments, over decades, have not been able to prevent this situation, nor deal with its scale. For a country the size of India, there are about 92 large waste-to-energy (WTE) plants. Of these, only a small fraction is operational, and the plants that are operational, run at suboptimal capacity. State governments have, so far, invested an estimated Rs 10,000 crore in such plants.

Legislative Steps

- Waste management rules in India are based on the principles of "sustainable development", "precaution" and "polluter pays".



- ◆ These principles mandate municipalities and commercial establishments to act in an environmentally accountable and responsible manner—restoring balance, if their actions disrupt it.
- ◆ The increase in waste generation as a by-product of economic development has led to various subordinate legislations for regulating the manner of disposal and dealing with generated waste are made under the umbrella law of Environment Protection Act, 1986 (EPA).
- ◆ Specific forms of waste are the subject matter of separate rules and require separate compliances, mostly in the nature of authorisations, maintenance of records and adequate disposal mechanisms.
- ◆ Right from prime minister's 'Swachh Bharat' mission to Plastic Waste Management rules in 2016 (PWM 2016), E-Waste (Management

Rules, 2016 and the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, the government is leaving no stone unturned to mechanize an effective waste management system across the geography.

Gloomy Implementation

- ◆ The Global E-waste Monitor 2017 report by United Nations University (UNU) has marked India as a major attributor to waste management on account of the e-waste legislation adopted by the nation in 2016. When most of the other Asian countries are still struggling with the policy frameworks, India has risen as a leader amongst them. However, implementation is equally important as legislation and on this particular front, India is still walking on tightropes.

Covid Related Waste Issues

- ◆ The Biomedical Waste Management Rules, 2016,

define biomedical waste as “any waste that is generated during the diagnosis, treatment or immunisation of human beings or animals or research activities pertaining thereto or in the production or testing of biological or in health camps.” Therefore, broadly, any waste generated from treating patients comes under the ambit of biomedical waste.

- ◆ As per available data, India produced approximately 600 tonnes of biomedical waste per day before the coronavirus first hit. However, ever since COVID-19 showed up on our shores, the amount of biomedical waste produced in India has increased exponentially.
- ◆ There have already been multiple instances of COVID-19 infected waste being dumped in public places including in Delhi and Vijayawada. In addition to this, due to the rapid and sustained increase in biomedical waste due to COVID-19, most biomedical waste treatment centres (BMWTCs) are running out of capacity to handle the waste.

The Action Plan

- ◆ Municipalities need to have access to affordable technology which has been piloted and validated under Indian conditions.
- ◆ Today, most of the technology/equipment needed for waste management is imported, expensive and often not suited in our varied local situations.

- ◆ India needs affordable, decentralised, customised solutions for its land-constrained complex city matrix.
- ◆ Indigenisation of design and manufacturing of such equipment for smaller drains and water bodies is essential.
- ◆ Robotic long-hand scavenging machines to unclog drains, booms which filter and prevent waste in our drains entering a larger water body are some examples, where Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) needs to kick in immediately.
- ◆ Ease of Procurement of Technology
 - ◆ Evolving a less cumbersome process for the procurement of technology and equipment is imperative.
 - ◆ State governments are hit by a double whammy due to lack of technology and an immutable and rigid procurement system.

Policy Change

- ◆ A direction which can accelerate the removal of waste exponentially is needed.
- ◆ One way, used internationally, is to unlock the land value under landfills.
- ◆ Allowing agencies, companies or industry that clear waste, to own

the land (fully or partially as per mutually agreed terms) can fund the clean-up.

- ◆ A land payback can be a major incentive to recover the estimated 5,000 acres of prime land taken up by landfills.
- ◆ Rough calculations suggest that the value of the 77 acres of land under the Ghazipur landfill is worth at least Rs 1500 crore. These calculations ignore the socio-economic benefits of cleaning a site which harbours disease and is a pernicious source of pollution to land, water and air.

Training

- ◆ Development of skilled and trained professional personnel to operate and maintain the waste management chain, right from collection, operation and maintenance of waste-handling plants.

- ◆ This needs to be done with full use of mechanisation.

Move to a Zero-waste Society

- ◆ India was traditionally a society where little was wasted and everything could be reused and recycled.
- ◆ Central, and integral to success,

is design. Design in the collection, of centralised and decentralised waste treatment plants, and of the equipment used.

- ◆ Design of waste management should be the bedrock of a well-planned smart city, town or village.

Way Forward

- ◆ Waste Management in India is due for a paradigm change. Landfills and mountains of garbage are a looming crisis for a nation embarking on urbanisation spur. Modern industries and households generate waste which must be handled in a non-traditional manner.
- ◆ Science and technology must be the fulcrum to provide solutions to the waste challenges faced by the country, a challenge which is both urgent and important, and can be ignored at our own peril. <<<

General Studies Paper- III

Topic:

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

Q. Waste management in India needs a major shift from traditional approach to one, based on science and technology. We need to align the policies for waste management with the changing needs. Explain.

7

IMPORTANT BRAIN BOOSTERS

01

Indian Brain Templates

1. Why in News?

- The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS) has developed new Indian Brain Templates (IBT) and a brain atlas to scan brain structure of the patients.



2. About IBTs

- The neuroscientists have studied over 500 brain scans of Indian patients to develop five sets of IBT and a brain atlas for five age groups covering late childhood to late adulthood (six to 60 years).
- The age groups are divided in the 6-11 years (late childhood), 12-18 years (adolescence), 19-25 years (young adulthood), 26-40 years (adulthood) and 41-60 years (late adulthood).
- The idea of studying the scans of brains in various age groups was because “there is a period of remarkable change that occurs from early adolescence to young adulthood (till about 25). It is a process called pruning. The thickness of the cortex starts reducing. Till about 5 to 6 years, the size of the brain increases. As exposure to various kinds of environment increases, the grey matter gets pruned, then stabilises and very gradually starts reducing,
- The complete product is freely available for clinicians and researchers across India and the world.

3. About Montreal Neurological Index

- The Montreal Neurological Index (MNI) template that we currently use is based on Caucasian brains.
- The MNI template was made by averaging 152 healthy brain scans from just a small slice of the city’s population in North America. But Caucasian brains are different from Asian brains.
- While some countries have their own scale to measure the brain, we are still dependent on the Caucasian brain template.

4. Significance

- When most brain scans (MRI) are taken, they need to be compared to a standard brain template — a model or standard for making comparisons from a group of individual brain scans. This helps researchers identify parts of the brain.
- A challenge for researchers is that brain size and shape differs across ages, and across regions and ethnicities, and even greatly within any population.
- While the vast majority of these differences are structural and are not associated with intelligence or behaviour, they do present a practical challenge of matching up similar regions across people, which is necessary for accurate measurements.
- These new population- and age-specific Indian brain templates will allow more reliable tracking of brain development and ageing, similar to how paediatricians monitor a child’s height or weight, for example, using a growth chart.
- Validation experiments and comparisons with existing international templates found that using the NIMHANS IBTs for Indian brains significantly improved the accuracy of alignment and thereby noticeably reducing distortions, errors or biases in final reports of brain structure and function.
- The templates and atlas will provide more precise reference maps for areas of interest in individual patients with neurological disorders like strokes, brain tumours, and dementia.
- These templates and atlas will also help pool information more usefully in group studies of the human brain and psychological functions, aiding our understanding of psychiatric illnesses like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autism, substance dependence, schizophrenia, and mood disorders.

02 Height of Mount Everest

1. Why in News?

- According to the Nepali Times, almost a year after China and Nepal together decided to re-measure the elevation of the world's highest mountain, the two countries are soon expected to announce its latest official height.

2. Need to Re-measure

- Everest's current official height— 8,848m— has been widely accepted since 1956, when the figure was measured by the Survey of India.
- The height of the summit, however, is known to change because of tectonic activity, such as the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Its measurement over the decades has also depended on who was surveying.
- Another debate is whether the height should be based on the highest rock point or the highest snow point.
- For years, Nepal and China disagreed over the issue, which was resolved in 2010 when China accepted Nepal's claim of the snow height being 8,848m, while the Nepali side recognised the Chinese claim of the rock height at 8,844.43m.
- Then in 2019, when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Nepal, the two countries agreed to remeasure Everest's height and announce the findings together.
- According to the Nepali Times, a reason behind the joint effort is that previous measurements of the mountain were by Indian, American or European surveyors, and that the joint effort represents national pride for Nepal and China who will now come up with their own figure.



3. Measurement Underway

- A team from Nepal completed its task last year, and China carried out its expedition in May 2020, amid the coronavirus pandemic. Both teams are using different points of reference for sea level — China using the Yellow sea and Nepal using a point close to the Bay of Bengal coast.
- Nepal has completed its calculations, and is waiting for China to complete its part of the task. A date for the joint announcement has been pushed back because of the pandemic.
- The mission to measure the world's highest peak was taken up on a serious note in 1847, and culminated with the finding of a team led by Andrew Waugh of the Royal Surveyor General of India. The team discovered that 'Peak 15' — as Mt Everest was referred to then — was the highest mountain, contrary to the then prevailing belief that Mt Kanchenjunga (8,582 m) was the highest peak in the world.
- That survey, based on trigonometric calculations, is known as the Great Trigonometric Survey of India.

4. About Mount Everest

- Mount Everest or Sagarmatha, Earth's highest mountain above sea level, is located in the Himalayas between China and Nepal — the border between them running across its summit point.
- Its current official elevation — 8,848m — places it more than 200m above the world's second-highest mountain, K2, which is 8,611m tall and located in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- The mountain gets its English name from Sir George Everest, a colonial-era geographer who served as the Surveyor General of India in the mid-19th century.
- Considered an elite climbing destination, Everest was first scaled in 1953 by the Indian-Nepalese Tenzing Norgay and New Zealander Edmund Hillary.

03

Five Star Villages Scheme

1. Why in News?

- The Department of Posts has launched a scheme called 'Five Star Villages', to ensure universal coverage of flagship postal schemes in rural areas of the country.



2. About Scheme

- The scheme seeks to bridge the gaps in public awareness and reach of postal products and services, especially in interior villages.
- All postal products and services will be made available and marketed and publicized at village level, under the 'Five Star Villages' scheme.
- Branch offices will function as one-stop shop to cater all post office - related needs of villagers.
- The schemes covered under the 'Five Star' scheme include
 - Savings Bank accounts, Recurrent Deposit Accounts, NSC / KVP certificates;
 - Sukanya Samridhi Accounts/ PPF Accounts;
 - Funded Post Office Savings Account linked India Post Payments Bank Accounts;
 - Postal Life Insurance Policy/Rural Postal Life Insurance Policy; and
 - Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana Account / Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana Account.
- If a village attains universal coverage for four schemes from the above list, then that village gets four-star status; if a village completes three schemes, then that village get three-star status and so on.

3. Scheme Implementation Team

- The scheme will be implemented by a team of five Gramin Dak Sevaks who will be assigned a village for marketing of all products, savings and insurance schemes of the Department of Posts.
- This team will be headed by the Branch Post Master of the concerned Branch Office. Mail overseer will keep personal watch on progress of team on daily basis.
- The teams will be led and monitored by concerned Divisional Head, Assistant Superintendents Posts and Inspector Posts.
- Required training and infrastructure, covering all schemes, would be provided to all branch offices in identified villages. The scheme progress and target achievement will be closely monitored at Circle, Regional and Divisional levels. Monthly progress will be reviewed by the Chief Post Master General.

4. Campaign

- The team of Gramin Dak Sevaks will conduct door-to-door awareness campaign on all schemes, covering all eligible villagers. Wide publicity will be given by displaying the information on notice board of Branch Office.
- Prominent places of targeted villages like Panchayat Offices, schools, village dispensaries, bus depots, and markets will also be used for advertising and pamphlets will be distributed. Small melas will be organized, considering COVID-19 safety guidelines.
- The scheme progress and target achievement will be closely monitored at Circle, Regional and Divisional levels.
- Monthly progress will be reviewed by the Chief Post Master General.

04

First World Solar Technology Summit

1. Why in News?

- The First World Solar Technology Summit (WSTS) was organized by the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) to bring the spotlight on state-of-the-art technologies as well as next-generation technologies which will provide impetus to the efforts towards harnessing the solar energy more efficiently.



2. The Summit

- The objective of the event is to showcase and deliberate on ways to bring the spotlight on the state-of-the-art technologies as well as next-generation technologies which will provide impetus to the efforts towards harnessing solar energy more efficiently.
- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has signed an MoU with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the World Bank to design a plan for implementing 'One Solar One World and One Grid' (OSOWOG).
- The ISA also signed an MoU with India's largest power generator, NTPC Limited, for implementing solar energy projects in 47 member countries of ISA.
- ISA's technology journal, 'Solar Compass 360' was launched during the summit.

3. OSOWOG

- The idea of "One Sun, One World, One Grid" (OSOWOG) or a trans-national electricity grid supplying solar power across the globe, was first floated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018 during the first assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy then came out with a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire consultants for converting this idea into policy.
- Several policy experts cited it as part of India's answer to China's One Belt One Road infrastructure initiative which entails investment in close to 70 countries.
- According to the draft plan prepared by the MNRE, the ambitious OSOWOG will connect 140 countries through a common grid that will be used to transfer solar power.
- The vision behind the OSOWOG mantra is "the Sun never sets" and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.
 - ☛ With India at the fulcrum, the solar spectrum can easily be divided into two broad zones viz. far East which would include countries like Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Lao, Cambodia and far West which would cover the Middle East and the Africa Region.

4. International Solar Alliance

- The launch of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was announced by the Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi, and former President of France, Mr Francois Hollande, on 30th November 2015, at the CoP21 in Paris, France.
- The Paris Declaration establishes ISA as an alliance dedicated to the promotion of solar energy among its Member Countries.
- The major objectives of the organization include deployment of 1000GW of solar capacity and mobilisation of US\$ 1000 billion of investment in solar energy sector by 2030.

05

Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems

1. Why in News?

- The Results of the second edition of Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems were released by Minister of Commerce & Industry and Railways Shri Piyush Goyal on 11th September 2020, through a virtual felicitation ceremony.
- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) conducted the second edition of the States' Startup Ranking Exercise with the key objective to foster competitiveness and propel States and Union Territories to work proactively towards uplifting the startup ecosystem.



2. States Startup Ranking - Classifications

- The States' Startup Ranking Framework 2019 has 7 broad reform areas consisting of 30 action points ranging from Institutional Support, Easing Compliances, Relaxation in Public Procurement norms, Incubation support, Seed Funding Support, Venture Funding Support, and Awareness and Outreach.
- To establish uniformity and ensure standardization in the ranking process, States and UTs have been divided into two groups.
- While UTs except Delhi, and all States in North East India, except Assam are in one group, all other states are placed in the other group.
- A total of 22 States and 3 Union Territories participated in the exercise.
- The 'ranking' has been envisioned as a capacity development exercise to encourage mutual learning among all states and to provide support in policy formulation and implementation.
- For the purposes of Ranking, States are classified into 5 Categories: Best Performers, Top Performers, Leaders, Aspiring Leaders and Emerging Startup Ecosystems. Within each category, entities are placed alphabetically. States are also recognised as Leaders in 7 reform areas of support to startups.

4. Action Plan for Startup India

- Compliance Regime based on Self-Certification
- Startup India Hub
- Rolling out of Mobile App and Portal
- Legal Support and Fast-tracking Patent Examination at Lower Costs
- Relaxed Norms of Public Procurement for Startups
- Faster Exit for Startups
- Providing Funding Support through Fund of Funds with a Corpus of Rs. 10,000 crores
- Credit Guarantee fund for Startups
- Tax Exemptions on Capital Gains
- Tax Exemptions to startups for 3 Years
- Tax Exemption on Investments above Fair Market Value
- Organizing Startup Fests for Showcasing Innovation and Providing a Collaboration Platform
- Launch of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)
- Harnessing Private Sector Expertise for Incubator Setup
- Building Innovation Centers at National Institutes
- Setting up of 7 New Research Parks Modelled on the Research Park Setup at IIT Madras
- Promoting Startups in the Biotechnology Sector
- Launching of Innovation Focused Programs for Students
- Annual Incubator Grand Challenge

3. Key Results

- Gujarat was the Best performer in Category X followed by Karnataka and Kerala. Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu occupied the lowest positions.
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands was the Best performer in Category Y. Sikkim secured the bottom place.
- Gujarat had secured the Best Performer position previous year as well.

06

Law Ministry Panel and Virtual Courts

1. Why in News?

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice has recommended that virtual courts, set up in view of COVID-19, should continue to function even after the pandemic, saying “digital justice is cheaper and faster” and would address “locational and economic handicap”.
- The panel, led by BJP MP Bhupender Yadav, is of the view that the court is “more a service than a place” and that advocates must “keep up with the changing times” as technology will “emerge as a game changer”.



2. Virtual Courts

- The Supreme Court had resorted to virtual hearings on 23 March, a day before the lockdown was imposed by the government.
- On 6 April, a bench led by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde issued orders under Article 142 to allow all courts to switch to the virtual mode, giving legal sanctity to digital courts.
- MP Bhupender Yadav presented an interim report on the “Functioning of the Virtual Courts/Court proceedings through video conferencing” to Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu.
- This is the first report to be presented by any parliamentary panel on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The parliamentary panel strongly pitched for virtual courts stating that digital justice is cheaper and faster besides addressing locational and economic handicaps; ensures safety of vulnerable witnesses providing testimony; expedites processes and procedures and are an improvement over traditional Courts as they are most affordable, citizen friendly and offers greater access to justice.

3. Merits

- The digital transformation of the judiciary has important implications for clearing the significant backlog of cases the judiciary is burdened with.
- Technology may, in fact, be a catalyst for simplifying processes and making manual process redundant.
- It will make justice accessible and affordable to a large section of the population and help in overcoming physical and logistical barriers which prevent many litigants from seeking justice.
- Committee pointed out that if the international arbitration is allowed to be conducted digitally, there will be “hardly any requirements for real time travel to distant locations” which will make proceedings less expensive.
- The report said “transfer of certain categories of cases from regular Court establishments to Virtual Courts will reduce the pendency of cases which has been clogging the wheels of Justice for decades”.
- It added that to begin with, the judiciary may identify categories of cases that can be tried by virtual courts. The report pointed out that the Department of Justice had suggested that traffic challan cases, petty offences where summons can be issued under Section 206 of CrPC., cases under section 138 of Negotiable Instruments Act and Motor Accident Claim Petition cases can be allotted to virtual courts.

4. Challenges

- The committee recommended the Ministry of Electronics and IT to employ globally tried and tested tools to make virtual hearings more life-like and engaging.
- It also recommended computer curriculum in law courses.
- On grievances made by lawyers about connectivity issues, the committee said the communications ministry should “step up efforts to ensure timely implementation of National Broadband mission...so that the services provided by indigenous communication satellites are fully harnessed and the goal of Universal broadband access is achieved”.
- A representative of the Bar had earlier opposed virtual court hearings on the ground that almost 50 per cent lawyers, particularly in the district courts, do not have laptops or computer facilities.
- There were also concerns that virtual courts will compromise privacy of data as well as confidentiality of discussions and court proceedings.
- Currently, third-party software applications such as Webex, Cisco and Jitsi are being used in India for conducting hearings through video-conferencing. Third-party software is not only an unviable option but also poses a major security risk as such software programs and applications are prone to hacking and manipulation.

07

New Grievance Redress System in J&K

1. Why in News?

- Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha has launched the Jammu and Kashmir Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JK-IGRAMS) in early September 2020, in a bid to create an interface with the public and focus on governance issues in the Union Territory.



2. About JK-IGRAMS

- The system is being launched on a pilot basis in three districts — Jammu, Srinagar, and Reasi — and will gradually be rolled out in the remaining districts by October 2.
- It will replace the current portal that was launched in 2018.
- District Collectors and Deputy Commissioners will be the primary nodes for receiving, disposing and monitoring grievances.
- It will be available round the clock with applicant OTP authentication, acknowledgement to applicant at each stage, feedback by complainant, and grievance submission through call centre by making a phone call between 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on all days except Sunday.
- JK-IGRAMS will be linked with Union Government's Centralized Public Grievance Redress And Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). This will make J&K the first union territory to have its grievance redressal mechanism linked with center's CPGRAMS.
- There will be a minute by minute status update of the grievances on the portal.
- Action will follow if any delay or callousness is found while addressing people's grievances.

3. Significance

- The move comes at a time when a sense of disconnection and alienation has been growing among the people, especially in the Kashmir Valley, which has remained on edge ever since J&K's special status was revoked last year.

5. About CPGRAMS

- CPGRAMS is an online web-enabled system over NICNET developed by NIC, in association with Directorate of Public Grievances (DPG) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
- The main objective of this system is to receive complaints from the public, filter them according to seriousness and urgency, sending them to the concerned government departments or agencies and coordinating with the immediate process of redressal.
- All grievances relating to State Governments / Union Territory Administrations and Government of NCT Region of Delhi, are sent to the State/ UT/ NCT Government concerned. Citizens may take up matter regarding pendency of their grievances directly with the State Government concerned also.
- In September 2019, there were reforms in CPGRAMS. The reforms were meant to allow reduction in grievance disposal time and improved quality of redressal.
 - The new upgraded version, CPGRAMS 7.0, provides for grievances filed on CPGRAMS to be directly sent to field level grievance officers by providing user IDs to all field level functionaries.

4. Other Announcements in J&K

- Mr. Sinha has also directed district Superintendents of Police and Deputy Commissioners to be present for people in their offices from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. five days a week.
- The LG also announced the launch of Ayushman Bharat health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh for every single resident of the J&K. The cover will be for the people suffering from fatal diseases and others as well.
- Earlier, Mr. Sinha had also announced the 'Back to Village' campaign, wherein officers will visit villages and address public grievances.

7 MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

01 Indian Brain Templates

Q1. With reference to the Indian Brain Templates, consider the following statements:

1. Recently developed Indian Brain Templates is based on Montreal Neurological Index (MNI).
2. The MNI template that we currently use is based on Caucasian brains and Asian brains.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Both statements are incorrect. The neuroscientists have studied over 500 brain scans of Indian patients to develop five sets of IBT and a brain atlas for five age groups covering late childhood to late adulthood (six to 60 years). Therefore, recently developed IBT is based on the Indian brains.

The Montreal Neurological Index (MNI) template that we currently use is based on Caucasian brains. The MNI template was made by averaging 152 healthy brain scans from just a small slice of the city's population in North America. But Caucasian brains are different from Asian brains.



02 Height of Mount Everest

Q2. China and Nepal are measuring the height of Mt Everest again. With this regard, consider the following statements:

1. Both teams are using different points of reference for sea level – China using the Yellow sea and Nepal using a point close to the Bay of Bengal coast.

2. The height of geographical features like Mt Everest is not fixed or stays permanent.
3. Mt Everest is located in the Himalayas at a trijunction point of China and Nepal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Statements 1 and 2 are correct. A team from Nepal completed its task last year, and China carried out its expedition in May 2020, amid the coronavirus pandemic. Both teams are using different points of reference for sea level – China using the Yellow sea and Nepal using a point close to the Bay of Bengal coast.

Everest's current official height– 8,848m– has been widely accepted since 1956, when the figure was measured by the Survey of India. The height of the summit, however, is known to change because of tectonic activity, such as the 2015 Nepal earthquake.

Statement 3 is incorrect. Mount Everest or Sagarmatha, Earth's highest mountain above sea level, is located in the Himalayas between China and Nepal -- the border between them running across its summit point.



03 Five Star Villages Scheme

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to the 'Five Star Village Scheme':

1. It has been launched jointly by NITI Aayog and India Post Payment Bank.
2. The scheme seeks to bridge the gaps in public awareness and reach of postal products and financial inclusion services, especially in interior villages.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Both statements are incorrect. The Department of Posts has launched a scheme called 'Five Star Villages', to ensure universal coverage of flagship postal schemes in rural areas of the country. The scheme seeks to bridge the gaps in public awareness and reach of postal products and services, especially in interior villages.

The schemes covered under the 'Five Star' scheme include Savings Bank accounts, Recurrent Deposit Accounts, NSC / KVP certificates; Sukanya Samridhi Accounts/ PPF Accounts; Funded Post Office Savings Account linked India Post Payments Bank Accounts; Postal Life Insurance Policy/Rural Postal Life Insurance Policy; and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana Account / Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana Account.



04 First World Solar Technology Summit

Q4. With reference to the first 'World Solar Technology Summit', consider the following statements:

1. The first 'World Solar Technology Summit' was organized by the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).
2. The ISA also signed an MoU with India's largest power generator, NTPC Limited, for implementing solar energy projects in 47 member countries of ISA.
3. ISA's technology journal, 'Solar Compass 360' was also launched during the summit.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: All statements are correct. The first World Solar Technology Summit was organized by the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Federation of Indian Chambers of

Commerce & Industry (FICCI) to bring the spotlight on state-of-the-art technologies as well as next-generation technologies which will provide impetus to the efforts towards harnessing the solar energy more efficiently.

The ISA also signed an MoU with India's largest power generator, NTPC Limited, for implementing solar energy projects in 47 member countries of ISA.

ISA's technology journal, 'Solar Compass 360' was launched during the summit.



05 Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems

Q5. Consider the following statements with reference to the Ranking of States Support to Startup Ecosystems 2019:

1. Gujarat was the Best performer in Category X followed by Karnataka and Kerala.
2. Andaman and Nicobar Islands was the Best performer in Category Y.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. Gujarat was the Best performer in Category X followed by Karnataka and Kerala. Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu occupied the lowest positions. Andaman and Nicobar Islands was the Best performer in Category Y. Sikkim secured the bottom place. Gujarat had secured the Best Performer position previous year as well.



06 Law Ministry Panel and Virtual Courts

Q6. Consider the following statements with reference to the virtual courts started during Covid crisis:

1. Digital courts are not legal courts per se, they are meant only to act as facilitators of judicial procedures during the lockdown.
2. There is a possibility of reduction in backlog cases if virtual courts are implemented.

3. Virtual courts were established during the national lockdown. If continued, they can bring efficiency in judiciary and also be more effective in bringing affordable justice.

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) None of the Above

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. The Supreme Court had resorted to virtual hearings on 23 March, a day before the lockdown was imposed by the government. On 6 April, a bench led by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde issued orders under Article 142 to allow all courts to switch to the virtual mode, giving legal sanctity to digital courts.

Statement 2 and 3 are correct. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice has recommended that virtual courts, set up in view of COVID-19, should continue to function even after the pandemic, saying "digital justice is cheaper and faster" and would address "locational and economic handicap".

The report said "transfer of certain categories of cases from regular Court establishments to Virtual Courts will reduce the pendency of cases which has been clogging the wheels of Justice for decades".



07 New Grievance Redress System in J&K

Q7. Consider the following statements:

- 1. The Union Territory of J&K is the first UT to have its grievance redressal mechanism to be integrated to national grievance mechanism.
- 2. Jammu and Kashmir Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JK-IGRAMS) will have District Collectors and Deputy Commissioners as nodal officers.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both the statements are correct. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha has launched the Jammu and Kashmir Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JK-IGRAMS) in early September 2020, in a bid to create an interface with the public and focus on governance issues in the Union Territory.

District Collectors and Deputy Commissioners will be the primary nodes for receiving, disposing and monitoring grievances. JK-IGRAMS will be linked with Union Government's CPGRAMS. This will make J&K the first union territory to have its grievance redressal mechanism linked with center's CPGRAMS.



7 IMPORTANT NEWS

01

Minimum Support Prices for Six Rabi Crops of 2020-21

- ◆ The government has announced recently minimum support prices (MSP) for six rabi crops of 2020-21, to be marketed in rabi marketing season 2021-22. The wheat MSP has seen an increase of just 2.6 per cent — the lowest increase in 11 years. The MSPs for the other crops — barley, gram, lentil (masur), rapeseed and mustard, and safflower — too have seen a lower hike compared to last year.
- ◆ The wheat MSP for the rabi crop of 2020-21 has been fixed at Rs

1,975 per quintal—2.6 per cent higher than Rs 1,925 in 2019-20. In percentage terms, the increase in wheat MSP is the lowest in 11 years. In 2009-10, wheat MSP was hiked by only 1.85 per cent—Rs 1,100 per quintal in 2009-10 against Rs 1,080 in 2008-09.

What is MSP?

- ◆ The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) in the Ministry of Agriculture recommends MSPs for crops.

The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers, and is based on a calculation of at least one and a half times the cost of production incurred by farmers.

- ◆ The CACP is supposed to consider various factors while recommending the MSP for a commodity, including cost of cultivation. It also takes into account the supply and demand situation for the commodity; market price trends (domestic and global) and parity vis-à-vis other crops; and implications for consumers (inflation), environment (soil and water use) and terms of trade between agriculture and non-agriculture sectors.
- ◆ The CACP further projects three kinds of production cost for every crop, both at state and all-India average levels. 'A2' covers all paid-out costs directly incurred by the farmer — in cash and kind — on seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, hired labour, leased-in land, fuel, irrigation, etc. 'A2+FL' includes A2 plus an imputed value of unpaid family labour. 'C2' is a more comprehensive cost that factors in rentals and interest forgone on owned land and fixed capital assets, on top of A2+FL.

Hike in Minimum Support Prices for Rabi Crops 2021-22



* Includes all paid out costs

Source: Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs

KBK Infographics

02

Solar Cycle 25

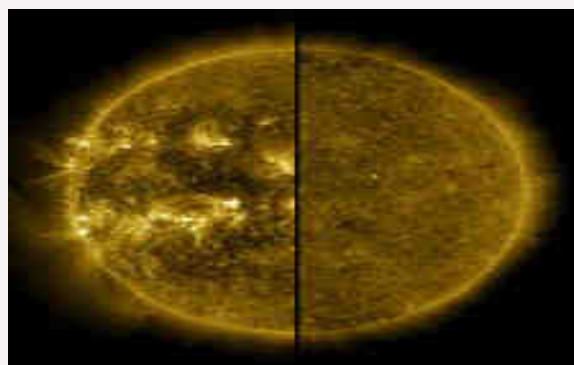
- Recently, NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has jointly released a consensus statement announcing the commencement of solar cycle 25.

What is Solar Cycle?

- Like seasons on Earth, the Sun follows a cycle of 11 years, during which solar activities fluctuate between solar minima and maxima. Depending on the number of sunspots detected on the Sun, scientists term it as solar maxima (highest number of sunspots) or solar minima (lowest number of sunspots).
- Sunspots are small and dark, yet cooler areas formed on the solar surface, where there are strong magnetic forces. They start appearing at Sun's higher latitudes and later shift towards the equator as a cycle progresses. In short, when the Sun is active,

there are more sunspots in comparison to fewer sunspots during the lesser active phase. Maxima or minima is not a specific time in the 11-year cycle, but is a period that can last for a few years.

- A new cycle commences when the Sun has reached its lowest possible minima phase. Every time the cycle changes, the Sun's magnetic poles reverse. Since the Sun is a highly variable star, data of sunspot formation and its progress need close monitoring. Data of six to eight months are required to confirm whether the star has undergone a minima phase. A Solar Cycle Prediction Panel comprising solar physicists, led by NASA and NOAA, along with an international community, release a consensus statement once a decade.



Effect of Solar Activities on Earth

- Solar activities include solar flares, solar energetic particles, high-speed solar wind and Coronal Mass Ejections (CME). These influences the space weather which originates from the Sun. Solar storms or flares can typically affect space-dependent operations like Global Positioning Systems (GPS), radio and satellite communications, besides hampering flight operations, power grids and space exploration programmes.

03

Vaccine for Brucellosis

- Department of Biotechnology (DBT), facilitated Transfer of Technology of novel Brucella vaccine viz. Brucella abortus S19 delta per vaccine recently.

Key Highlights

- This vaccine was developed by ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute (ICAR-IVRI), Izatnagar, Uttar Pradesh through a Network project on Brucellosis supported by DBT in which a gene was knocked out from Brucella abortus S19 strain.

- This vaccine has confirmed protection against virulent challenge in experimental mice model conducted at IVRI, Izatnagar and in buffalo calves conducted at National Institute of Animal Health, an institute of Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- The developed vaccine is also found to have DIVA compatible. Brucella abortus S19 delta per vaccine can play an important role in National Brucellosis Control Programme initiated by Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.

About Brucellosis

- Brucellosis is a zoonotic disease which causes production losses in livestock. The disease induces abortion at the last stage of pregnancy, infertility and other reproductive problem which causes losses in production of milk and meat.
- Globally the disease is reported in approximately half a million human population every year. In India huge population involved in dairy farming is directly affected with the Brucellosis.

04

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020

- Recently, the Parliament has passed the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020, making it mandatory for office bearers of Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide their Aadhaar numbers while registering among other changes.

Key Highlights

- The Bill will amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010. The Act regulates the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution by individuals, associations and companies. Foreign contribution is the donation or transfer of any currency, security or article (of beyond a specified value) by a foreign source.
- According to the amendments to the Bill, no public servant henceforth can receive foreign contributions.

- Foreign contributions are to be used by their original recipient and cannot be transferred to any other entity or person. Aadhaar Card is mandatory for all officials belonging to the recipient organisation.
- Though foreign contributions can be spent for administrative purposes, their limit has been reduced to 20 per cent from the earlier 50 per cent.
- Further, there won't be an automatic renewal of permissions granted for receiving such funds; authorities can now probe the functioning and purpose of the recipient organisation.

Issues

- Many NGOs at the forefront of helping marginalised communities and working for environmental and social causes claim that the

amendments will only stigmatise the good work being done by grassroots organisations and make it harder for them to make a positive difference.

- The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has observed that the Bill is incompatible with international law and would hamper the work of civil society. The legislation fails to comply with India's international legal obligations and constitutional provisions to respect and protect the rights to freedom of association, expression, and freedom of assembly.
- The ICJ stressed that the Bill's provisions would impose arbitrary and extraordinary obstacles on the capacity of human rights defenders and other civil society actors to carry out their important work. <<<

05

Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)

- According to the government sources, the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) being constructed by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI) is expected to get commissioned by October 2022. On completion of commissioning, PFBR will be adding 500 MW of electrical power to the national grid.
- Dr. Homi Bhabha, the father of the Indian nuclear programme, envisioned a three-stage plan. The first stage was the Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) which Indian nuclear scientists and engineers have mastered. The second stage is the PFBR technology.

What is PFBR?

- The PFBR will be a sodium-cooled, pool-type reactor with a 500 MWe capacity and a lifespan of 40 years. The PFBR will use a mixed oxide of plutonium-239 – derived from reprocessed spent fuel from the thermal pressurised heavy water reactors – and uranium-238 as fuel to generate energy in a nuclear reaction. This reaction will also produce – or 'breed' – more plutonium-239. This is possible because the reaction converts both uranium-238 in the fuel mix as well as a blanket of depleted uranium surrounding the core into plutonium.

- This plutonium will then be processed and used as nuclear fuel in a chain of commercial fast breeder reactors (FBRs) that constitutes stage II of the nuclear programme. The stage will also include FBRs that will use thorium-232, mined in India, as a blanket. Thorium will get converted to uranium-233, which will serve as the fuel for advanced reactors in stage III. Ultimately, these reactors will burn uranium-233 and convert thorium-232 to more uranium-233, creating a self-sustaining cycle of nuclear power generation. <<<

06

World Rhino Day 2020

- ◆ World Rhino Day is observed on September 22 every year to raise awareness and build a safe natural habitat for this incredible species. The World Rhino Day was announced by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2010.

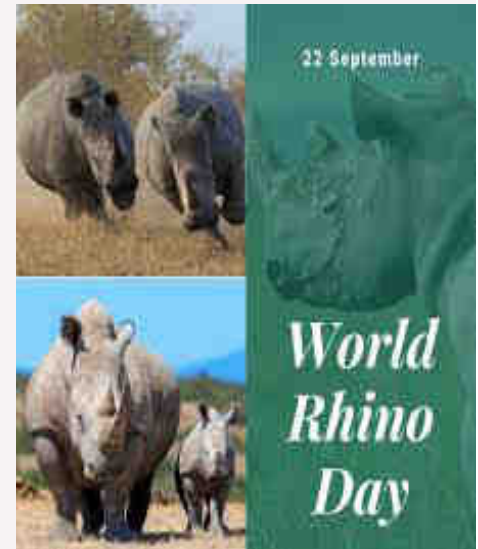
Key Highlights

- ◆ There are five species of rhino – white and black rhinos in Africa, and the greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran rhino species in Asia.
- ◆ One of the five rhinoceros species living in Africa and Asia have been declared 'critically endangered'. These species are- Javan Rhinos, Sumatran rhinos and black rhinos. The White Rhinos have been declared 'near threatened' while one-horned rhinos are said to be vulnerable to extinction.

- ◆ The main reason for the loss of the rhino population is poaching, climate change, and the destruction of their natural habitat.

Rhinos in India

- ◆ India is home to the largest number of Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros in the world with its population in the range of 3000 animals in the States of Assam, West Bengal & UP.
- ◆ The National Rhino Conservation Strategy for India was launched last year to conserve the greater one-horned rhinoceros. This is a first of its kind for the species in India which aims to work for the conservation of the species under five objectives. The objectives include strengthening protection, expanding the distribution range, research and monitoring, and adequate and sustained funding.



- ◆ One horned rhino was close to extinction with a population of less than 200 in the beginning of the 20th century. It is the only large mammal species in Asia to be down-listed from endangered to vulnerable in the International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN Red list in 2008. 

07

First Anniversary of the Fit India Movement

- ◆ Prime Minister of India has launched the 'Age Appropriate Fitness Protocols' on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Fit India Movement. Prime Minister also interacted with fitness experts and influencers from across the country.

Key Highlights

- ◆ Within a year, this fitness movement has become a movement of the people, and a movement of positivity. Constant awareness about health and fitness is also increasing in the

country, and activeness has also increased.

- ◆ Fit India movement has proved its influence and relevance in this corona period in spite of the restrictions.
- ◆ World Health Organization (WHO) has made a Global strategy on Diet, physical activity and health. They have issued a global recommendation on Physical activity also. Today many countries like Australia, Germany, Britain and the US have set new goals for fitness and are working on them. A large-scale campaign

is going on in many such countries at the moment and more and more citizens are joining the routine of daily exercise.

About Fit India Movement

- ◆ The government of India has launched 'Fit India Movement' in 2019. Fit India is a people centric movement to be run on voluntary basis with participation of as many citizens as possible. The main objective of Fit India Movement is to create awareness amongst all the citizens of India about fitness and its importance

in daily life through sports, yogasan, walking, cycling, dancing or any other physical activity.

- ◆ Traditional rural and indigenous games generally exist in informal setup and do not have adequate leaders to represent. Government's emphasis on promotion of rural and indigenous games has encouraged leadership and formalization of the same.
- ◆ The following initiatives have been taken by the Government to promote the traditional rural and indigenous games in the country:
- ◆ Mallakhamb, Kalaripayattu, Gatka and Thang-Ta are being supported under the vertical of 'Promotion of Rural and Indigenous/Tribal

Games' under the Khelo India Scheme.

- ◆ Total amount of Rs.10.85 crore have been sanctioned for the year 2019-20 for infrastructure development, equipment support, appointment of coaches, training of coaches and scholarships.
- ◆ Out of 335 Medal Winners of Indigenous Games, 247 recommended athletes by the 04 NSFs are receiving scholarships amounting to Rs.10,000/- per month per athlete.

FIT INDIA MOVEMENT

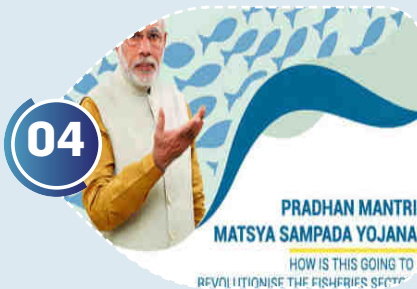


- ◆ Kho-Kho and Kabaddi disciplines were included in Khelo India Youth Games 2020 held at Guwahati. Kabaddi discipline has been included in the first edition of Khelo India University Games being held in Bhubaneswar from February 22nd to 1st March, 2020.



7

IMPORTANT PRACTICE QUESTIONS (For Mains)



01

“Malnutrition remains the predominant risk factor for child deaths in India”. Elaborate.

02

Why is Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) needed? How does it help in navigation?

03

Why is India taking keen interest in the Middle East region? Discuss.

04

Discuss the key provisions of ‘PM Matasya Sampada Yojana’. Also explain the problems and strategies for pisciculture development in India.

05

Appropriate local community level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve ‘Health for All’ in India. Explain.

06

In what ways would the ongoing ‘Abraham Accord Deal’ affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation? Discuss.

07

What do you mean by Minimum Support Price (MSP)? How will MSP rescue the farmers from the low income trap? Discuss it in the context of ongoing debate over MSP issue in India.

7

IMPORTANT FACTS (For Prelims)



01



04



06

01

Which renowned playback singer has passed away recently?

S.P. Balasubrahmanyam

02

Who has been conferred with 55th Jnanpith Award 2019?

Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri

03

Which international space research organization has published the outline for its 'Artemis program'?

NASA

04

Which state government has launched unified 'U-Rise' to guide students in learning, career counseling, employment?

Uttar Pradesh

05

What is the rank of India on the 'World Risk Index 2020'?

89th

06

Which country has witnessed mass stranding of 450 longed-finned whales?

Australia

07

Which Island has been declared recently as world's highest plant diversity hotspot?

New Guinea

7

IMPORTANT QUOTES (For Essay and Answer Writing)



01



03



05

01

"Life should be great rather than long."

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

02

"Doubt everything. Find your own light."

Gautam Buddha

03

"First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, and then you win."

Mahatma Gandhi

04

"The butterfly counts not months but moments, and has time enough."

Rabindra Nath Tagore

05

"Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person."

Mother Teresa

06

"Democracy is a faith in the spiritual possibilities of not a privileged few but of every human being."

Dr. S Radhakrishnan

07

"India is poor because villages of India are poor. India will be rich if villages are rich. Panchayats should be given greater powers, for we want the villages to have a greater measure of swaraj(self-government) in their own villages."

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru

AN INTRODUCTION

Dhyeya IAS, a decade old institution, was founded by Mr. Vinay Singh and Mr. Q.A. 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 dream of building a career for themselves are absolutely less equipped for the fairly tough competitive exam they have to appear in. Several others, who have a brilliant academic career, do not know that competitive exams are vastly different from academic examinations and call for a systematic and scientifically planned guidance by a team of experts. Here you might have got a head start but are ahead of many others who lag behind. Dhyeya IAS is enriched with qualified & experienced faculty besides specially 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 memorize as we are comfortably aware of the fact that you can't teach a person anything you can only help him find it within himself.

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Distance Learning Programme, OSDL, primarily caters the need for those who are unable to come to institute for economic or family reason but have ardent desire to become a civil servant. Simultaneously, it also caters to the need of working professionals, who are unable to join regular classroom to increase in workload or place of their posting. The principal characteristics 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. Overcoming the difficulties faced by aspirants of distant areas, especially working professionals, 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 easy-to-understand nature. To this it is made 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 8-10 books available in the market / library. That means, OSDL study material is undoubtedly the most comprehensive material which will definitely give you added advantage in your preparation as well as exam preparation. 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 online materials available for any student preparing for Civil Services Examination. We adhere to the motto of Distance education.

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