



IASBABA'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2018

**ARTICLE 35A: Controversy and Assessment
SC/ST Reservation Issue**

Anti-begging Act and Criminal Tribes

B.N. Srikrishna Committee on Personal Data Protection

Fourth BIMSTEC Summit

Falling Rupee: Reasons and Impacts

Manned space mission before 75th I-Day

Disaster: Kerala Floods

PREFACE

With the present shift in examination pattern of UPSC Civil Services Examination, 'General Studies – II and General Studies III' can safely be replaced with 'Current Affairs'. Moreover, following the recent trend of UPSC, almost all the questions are issue-based rather than news-based. Therefore, the right approach to preparation is to prepare issues, rather than just reading news.

Taking this into account, our website www.iasbaba.com will cover current affairs focusing more on 'issues' on a daily basis. This will help you pick up relevant news items of the day from various national dailies such as The Hindu, Indian Express, Business Standard, LiveMint, Business Line and other important Online sources. Over time, some of these news items will become important issues.

UPSC has the knack of picking such issues and asking general opinion based questions. Answering such questions will require general awareness and an overall understanding of the issue. Therefore, we intend to create the right understanding among aspirants – 'How to cover these issues?'

This is the 39th edition of IASbaba's Monthly Magazine. This edition covers all important issues that were in news in the month of **AUGUST 2018** which can be accessed from <https://iasbaba.com/current-affairs-for-ias-upsc-exams/>

VALUE ADDITIONS FROM IASBABA

- **Must Read and Connecting the dots.**
- **Also, we have introduced Prelim and mains focused snippets and Test Your Knowledge (Prelims MCQs based on daily current affairs) which shall guide you for better revision.**
- **'Must Read' section**, will give you important links to be read from exam perspective. This will make sure that, you don't miss out on any important news/editorials from various newspapers on daily basis.
- Under each news article, **'Connecting the dots'** facilitates your thinking to connect and ponder over various aspects of an issue. Basically, it helps you in understanding an issue from multi-dimensional view-point. You will understand its importance while giving Mains or Interview.

Must Read Articles: We have not included them in the magazine. Those following DNA on daily basis may follow it- <https://iasbaba.com/current-affairs-for-ias-upsc-exams/>

"Tell my mistakes to me not to others, because these are to be corrected by me, not by them."

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HISTORY/CULTURE

Thirty years after the 8888 uprising

Part of: GS Mains I – World History; International

Introduction:

- August 8 marks the **30th anniversary** of the people's uprising in Myanmar.
- The '8888' uprising (or the eighth day of August 1988) is one of Myanmar's most important historic days in the context of **the pro-democracy movement**.

About 8888 Uprising:

- '8888' was a people's movement that challenged the then ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party's grip on political, economic and social affairs which led the country into extreme poverty.
- The protests and the bloody crackdown gave rise to the National League for Democracy (NLD), a political party which paved the way for the current Myanmar State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi's entry into politics and for the pro-democracy movement to continue.
- Myanmar's President Win Myint and Ms. Suu Kyi were political prisoners in the aftermath of the 1988 uprising.
- **The objective of '8888' was two-fold:** to push for the transfer of power from the military to a civilian leadership and a change in the political system from an authoritarian regime to a multi-party democracy.

Significance of 8888 Uprising:

- The past 30 years have seen a change in leadership — from military dictatorship to a military-backed semi-democracy in 2011 and then to a negotiated hybrid regime with power being shared between unelected military personnel and an elected civilian leadership in 2016.
- It keeps alive the spirit of democracy; underscores the need for equality and federalism; and builds an awareness campaign on the role of military.
- But for the country's ethnic minorities, their struggle and political demands still continue. The kind of federalism the ethnic minorities want, based on equality of rights to all citizens, has been denied by the military leadership and the government.

Myanmar in Transition:

- The democratic transition in Myanmar so far has been meticulously designed by the military. The primary objective, which is laid out in the country's 2008 Constitution, is to give the military a dominant role in politics.
- Currently, Myanmar practices 'Burmese way to democracy', parallel to 'Burmese way to socialism'
- Equality and federalism, these issues are today the most discussed in the on-going peace talks between the civilian government, the military and the ethnic armed groups. The success or failure of the peace talks will largely depend on how these two issues are handled and also depends Myanmar's peace, stability and development.

Way Forward for Myanmar:

- In political discussions, the '8888' leaders should look at democratic transitions in other countries. They should share their findings to civil as well as military leadership of Myanmar.
- It should be noted that no democracy can succeed when the military holds the reins and is unaccountable to an elected civilian leadership.
- For democracy to strike deep roots in Myanmar, the role of the '8888' leaders remains important. The people of Myanmar as well as members of the international community want a democracy that respects the rights of all its people, including the minorities

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think, 8888 Uprising has achieved its purpose? In the light of current events in Myanmar explain the significance of such uprisings.



POLITY/GOVERNANCE

123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Indian Polity; Constitutional amendment

In news:

- 123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill seeks to grant constitutional status to National Commission for Backward Classes.
- A constitutional amendment under Article 368 needs to be passed by both Houses separately with a special majority.
- The bill if passed will insert Article 338 B in the Constitution, which provides for a Commission for the socially and educationally backward classes with a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three other members, all of whom shall be appointed by the President of India.

About NCBC

- NCBC was established in 1993 by an act of Parliament. It is a statutory body.
- It considers inclusions in and exclusions from the lists of castes notified as backward for the purpose of job reservation.
- It falls under Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment

Controversy over Article 35A

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Indian polity; Indian Constitution

About:

- We had dealt about Article 35A and controversy surrounding it during June, 2018.
- The Article, which was unknown to the public domain till recent times, has raked up an intense debate in the country when a Kashmiri woman, **Charu Wali Khan** filed a petition to change the constitutional provision as she wanted succession rights in the state though she is settled outside the state.
- An NGO, 'We the Citizens' had also filed a writ petition to strike down Article 35A.
- The NDA Government wants to have a larger debate over the Article 35A challenging the constitutional validity of the clause.

What is Article 35A?

Article 35A of the Indian Constitution is an article that empowers the Jammu and Kashmir state's legislature to define “permanent residents” of the state and confer on them special rights and privileges in public sector jobs, acquisition of property in the State, scholarships and other public aid and welfare.

The provision mandates that no act of the legislature coming under it can be challenged for violating the Constitution or any other law of the land.

It was added to the constitution through a presidential order of 1954 with the then J&K government's concurrence.

Article 35A does not allow people from outside the state of Jammu & Kashmir to work, settle or own property in the state.

In news:

- J&K tense ahead of SC hearing on question of Article 35A.
- Complete shutdown in Kashmir Valley to defend Article 35A.

(For time being, let us remember only this. Analysis part will be dealt in future once we come across any editorials or op-eds after the apex court hearing)

The genesis

A look at Article 35A, whose constitutional validity has been challenged in the Supreme Court

- **Article 35A** was incorporated into the Constitution by a presidential order on the advice of the Cabinet in 1954
- **The order of 1954** followed the 1952 Delhi Agreement between Jawaharlal Nehru and the then J&K Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah, which extended Indian citizenship to the 'State subjects' of J&K
- **Article 35A** bars a non-J&K resident from buying property in the State and ensures job reservation; State decides permanent residents

Pic

link:

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/06/06/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_01/ec87954a_2152744_101_mr.jpg

[Article 35A and Basic Structure](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains – Indian Polity; Constitution; Role of Judiciary; Centre and State Relations

In news:

- Supreme Court to study **whether Article 35A is violative of the basic structure** of the Constitution
- From previous article we know that, Article 35A deals with providing special status to the State and people of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The article empowers the Jammu and Kashmir state's legislature to define “permanent residents” of the state and confer on them special rights and privileges in public sector jobs, acquisition of property in the State, scholarships and other public aid and welfare.

About Basic structure

- Basic structure is a collective term coined by a 13-judge Bench in the historic **Keshavananda Bharati case (1973)**.
- The basic structure doctrine is an **Indian judicial principle** that the Constitution of India has certain basic features that cannot be altered or destroyed through amendments by the parliament.
- It includes a list of fundamental rights, including right to equality, non-discrimination, liberty, life and dignity, enshrined and preserved in the Constitution.
- The basic structure theory plays a useful part in our constitutional jurisprudence.

[Historical Underpinnings of Article 35A](#)

Introduction:

Constitutionality of Article 35A has been challenged in SC. Article 35A, when it was introduced in 1954, instead of giving the state a “special status”, its **purpose was to take autonomy away from Jammu and Kashmir.**

Instrument of Accession:

- Instrument of Accession signed by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1947 which brought the State into the Union of India gave **New Delhi control only over Kashmir’s defence, foreign policy and communications.**
- On all other matters, the State government retained powers.

- India's thin grasp over J&K was further complicated by New Delhi's international commitment to hold a plebiscite in the State to decide its eventual fate.
 - It is because of this weak India-Kashmir constitutional link that;
 - Sheikh Abdullah became "**Prime Minister**" of Kashmir
 - The State had its own **Constituent Assembly and flag**
 - The **Supreme Court did not have jurisdiction** over key issues in the State
 - Srinagar tried to send its **own trade commissioners** to foreign countries
 - Only in the areas of defence, foreign affairs and communications was Jammu and Kashmir put on the same footing as the rest of India.
 - **India's fundamental rights and directive principles were not applicable** in Jammu and Kashmir at all.

The Delhi Agreement

- In **1952** Jawaharlal Nehru invited Abdullah to discuss how India and Jammu and Kashmir could be **more closely integrated**.
- The result was the 1952 Delhi Agreement which, contrary to popular belief, still fell short of the 1954 Presidential Order.
- The **1952 agreement did not finalise financial integration** and required the fundamental rights and citizenship to be granted to the State's residents via the State Legislature.
- Before the Delhi Agreement could be implemented, the **situation was altered radically because of three factors**.
 - **First**, any plans for an immediate Plebiscite were abandoned in 1954, which **strengthened New Delhi's hand**.
 - **Second**, in 1953, Nehru faced a nationwide campaign from the **Hindu right-wing demanding greater integration of Kashmir**.
 - **Third**, in August 1953, **Abdullah was arrested** and replaced by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, who was far more amenable to integration with India.

Presidential Order of 1954 and Birth of Article 35A:

- 1954, New Delhi negotiated a new agreement with Bakshi, which was passed by the Kashmir Constituent Assembly also, and eventually introduced through Presidential Order in May.
- It still left the State with enormous autonomy. All "**residuary powers**" **rested with the State legislature**.
- The State government could detain people who did not enjoy the right to appeal to the Supreme Court.
- It also retained its **controversial land reforms** measures and the final authority over any **alteration of the State's boundaries**.

- **The Article 35A was introduced as part of a larger Presidential Order package**, which made several additions to the Constitution (not just Article 35A).
- The overall **gist of this Order** was to **give the Government of India enormously more powers** over the State than it had enjoyed before.
- First time, **India's fundamental rights and directive principles were applicable** to Jammu and Kashmir and the **State's finances were integrated** with India.
- The Order also **extended the Indian Supreme Court's jurisdiction** over certain aspects of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Just as crucially, the Order had come about only after **the Jammu and Kashmir government had agreed to it and passed** a similar legislation in its own Constituent Assembly, making it clear that rather **Jammu and Kashmir has given her powers to India**.
- At the time of its introduction, **the Order was celebrated in India** as a great step towards further integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union of India.
- Today the **only meaningful "special status" that J&K enjoys is Article 35A**.

Way forward:

- The whole project of federal nation-building requires constant negotiation between the nation state and its components.
- The debate over the Article should be seen as part of this larger decades-long process of the State's integration into India.
- Should Article 35A be removed, it must be removed as an expression of the will of the people, through a political process which includes the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the discussion.
- It has to be remembered that the Article is not some special concession to Jammu and Kashmir but the last fragment of a broken promise that India had made to it decades ago.

Connecting the dots:

- Discuss the historical context behind Article 35A. Also, examine the possible implications of abrogating Article 35A, on the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Should Article 35A be scrapped?

Introduction:

- Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was an integral part of the Dominion of India, according to the Instrument of Accession which was signed by Maharaja Hari Singh on October 26, 1947 and subsequently ratified by the Constituent Assembly of J&K.

- Article 35A of the Constitution is now being vigorously contested with its constitutional validity being challenged before the Supreme Court.

Introducing Article 370

- The Instrument of Accession gave only limited rights to the Centre to interfere with the autonomy of J&K. That is why Article 370 was introduced, to recognise the special status of J&K.
- It said that the power of Parliament to make laws in J&K shall be limited to those matters in the Union List and the Concurrent List which, in consultation with the State government, are declared by the President to correspond to matters specified in the Instrument of Accession.

Explaining Article 35A

- The Instrument of Accession and The birth of Article 35A were explained in detail in IASbaba **DNA of August 10, 2018**.
- The heading of **Article 35A reads: “saving of laws with respect to permanent residents and their rights”**.
- Article 35A declares that **any law enacted by the J&K State Legislature** on the issues of permanent residence, or special privileges and rights, or imposition of restrictions, or employment, acquisition of immovable property and settlement in the State, or aid from the State government **shall not be void on the ground that it is inconsistent with any rights conferred on other citizens of India**.
- In short, such laws granting special rights to permanent residents would not be deemed a violation of the fundamental rights of other citizens.

Arguments against Article 35A

- **The ‘classification’** created by Article 35A has to be tested on the principle of equality as it treats non-permanent residents of J&K as **‘second-class’ citizens**.
- Such persons are not eligible for employment under the State government and are also debarred from contesting elections.
- Meritorious students are denied scholarships and they cannot even seek redress in any court of law.
- Further, the issues of refugees who migrated to J&K during Partition are still not treated as ‘State subjects’ under the J&K Constitution.
- It was inserted unconstitutionally, bypassing Article 368 which empowers only Parliament to amend the Constitution.
- The laws enacted in pursuance of Article 35A are ultra vires of the fundamental rights conferred by Part III of the Constitution, especially, and not limited to, Articles 14 (right to equality) and 21 (protection of life).

Another apprehension: Discrimination against women

- The major sufferers are women who marry outside J&K. Though they retain their Permanent Resident Certificate, their children cannot be permanent residents. This restricts their basic right of inheritance.
- It is for the J&K to decide, according to its laws, on the issue of discrimination against women with regard to property rights.
- Such a law is discriminatory according to the Indian Constitution, and is repugnant to the issue of gender equality.
- But under the Instrument of Accession and the autonomy given to the State of J&K, this will also have to be decided according to laws and the Constitution of the State.

Arguments in favour of Article 35A

- With the issue of **plebiscite under UN auspices** still hanging, India moved to consolidate its relationship with the State by enacting Article 370 on October 17, 1949.
- **Article 370 (1) (d) empowers the President** of India to extend with requisite exceptions and modifications the other provisions of the Indian Constitution to J&K as may be necessary.
- **The Delhi Agreement of 1952** followed Article 370. According to the Clause 2 of the agreement, the State Legislature of J&K was given **power to make laws for conferring special rights and privileges on the 'state subjects'**.
- **Article 35A follows the Instrument of Accession** and the guarantee given to the State of J&K that the State's autonomy will not be disturbed.
- The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order of 1954 contains Article 35A, which empowers the State Legislature to define permanent residents.
- Striking Article 35A down will have implications for other constitutional amendments contained in the 1954 Presidential Order.
- The accession of J&K was conditional to their being given their rights, their **sovereignty** with regard to matters concerning land and settlement, are **preserved**. Therefore, it cannot be challenged on the ground that it violates fundamental rights or the basic structure of the Constitution.
- **Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand** and such other states also have laws which say that **no outsider can buy land**.

Way forward

- Article 35A is recognition of the conditional accession of J&K into India. Kashmir never acceded fully to India. Therefore, it is a quasi-sovereign State. It is not like any other State.

- This matter requires the active participation of all stakeholders. It is necessary to give confidence to the residents of J&K that any alteration in status quo will not take away their rights but will boost J&K's prosperity as it will open doors for more investment, resulting in new opportunities.
- Article 35A, which was incorporated about six decades ago, now requires a relook, especially given that J&K is now a well-established democratic State.
- Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee firmly believed that **the issues relating to J&K could be resolved following the principles of insaniyat (humanity), jamhooriyat (democracy) and Kashmiriyat (Kashmiri values)**. Hopefully, this issue will be resolved using the same principles.

Connecting the dots:

- Article 35 A is against the “very spirit of oneness of India” as it created a “class within a class of Indian citizens”. Critically comment.

Reforming the Civil Services: lateral Entry Scheme

Introduction:

A recent move by the Centre seeking applications from ‘outstanding individuals’ to fill in 10 posts of Joint Secretary, has caused anxiety amongst bureaucrats.

Some apprehensions over lateral entry:

- Many serving IAS officers think this move may cause **threat to their primacy**.
- This move **may end a “neutral and impartial” civil service** with the likely induction of loyalists and politically indoctrinated persons into the system.
- This may mark the **“privatisation of the IAS”**. Private business houses may “plant” their people in order to influence government policies.
- The political leadership, by creating a ‘divide and rule’ mechanism, would further **demoralise the ‘steel frame of governance’**.

How the Secretariat functions?

- The key officials in the secretariat decides on, how an abstract idea is to be given a concrete, implementable shape.
- Higher bureaucracy in the secretariat often has to examine proposals received from specialised departments/corporations.
- With the consultation of other ministries/departments they prepare a cohesive note to facilitate the Minister concerned or the Cabinet to take a final decision.

- The detailed procedures have been formulated for proper functioning which requires both expertise and experience.
- Though the original proposal is often prepared by technical experts, after the file moves through this long internal and hierarchical process, the final decision rests with the higher bureaucracy and finally the Minister/Cabinet.

Generalist v. specialist

Generalist view:

- The **best leadership** is provided by generalists who have a breadth of understanding and experience.
- **Specialists**, no matter how competent, tend to have a **narrow vision** and are not equipped to take a broader view.
- The domain knowledge has to feed into policy-making, but that can be accomplished by **domain experts advising the generalist leader** in decision-making.
- In this view, a good IAS officer can head the Department of Agriculture as competently as she would the Department of Shipping.

Specialist view:

- Specialists like engineers, doctors, agricultural scientists, etc. have always had a substantial say not only in the decision-making process also in its implementation.
- **Secretaries to the Departments** of Atomic Energy, Science & Technology, Scientific and Industrial Research, Health Research, and Agricultural Research have always been scientists of eminence.
- Similarly, in departments like the **Railways, Posts**, etc., all senior positions are manned by Indian Railway or Postal Service officers.
- Generalised bureaucracy is not equipped **to comprehend complex economic and technical issues** in order to properly aid and advise the Minister. For **increasingly complex matrix** of decision-making is, specialists are more efficient than generalists.

How apprehensions can be resolved?

- The government must ensure that only candidates, the likes of whom are not available in the existing system, are appointed.
- If they turn out to be truly outstanding, there should be provisions to induct them permanently in the government, with approval of the UPSC, and consider them for higher postings.
- Ideas have also been advanced for IAS and other officers to gain work experience, for a limited period, in the private sector.

- These fears can be reduced by letting the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) handle the recruitment process, after defining the job requirements more explicitly.

Conclusion:

- The apprehensions on lateral entry are based on perceptions, a reality check is necessary. Also this is a bold decision that should be given a fair trial.
- The lateral entry scheme, if implemented properly, may foster more competitive spirit, break the complacency of the higher civil servants and eventually prove to be a pioneering initiative in public interest.

Connecting the dots:

- Most of the developed countries of the world have the system of lateral entry on the basis of expertise and achievements. Do you agree with the view that drastic reforms are required in Civil Services? Comment.

District name changes and role of Home Ministry

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains – Indian Polity; Centre and State relations; Secularism

In news:

- Rajasthan village name - Miyon ka Bara – was changed to ‘Mahesh Nagar’
- **Reason:** Residents complained that they were not getting matrimonial matches as the name gave an impression that the village was inhabited by Muslims.
- Reflects there is no unity in diversity.

Important value addition

- The **Home Ministry examines the proposal for changing the names of villages, cities and railway stations** once the proposal is received from the State government.
- In other words, **Union Home Ministry approves the change of name** and conveys the decision to the State government.

Do you know?

- Between January 2017 and February 2018, Home Ministry has received 27 proposals from States requesting a change of names of villages, towns and railway stations.
- Earlier, we had read about West Bengal Assembly passing a resolution to change the name of the State as ‘Bangla’.

- Process for changing the name of a state can be initiated by state itself. However, by virtue of article 3, the **parliament has power to change the name of a state** even if such proposal does not come from the concerned state. For more details – [27th July DNA](#)

Dissent and Democracy

Introduction:

In context of recent student Protest; The Bangladesh government clamps down on dissent and democratic challenges. Dissent has been silenced in major democracies of the world including US and India.

What is happening in Dhaka?

- Some students died in a road accident, students started protesting for traffic safety.
- Protests in Bangladesh became a routine; over electricity supply in Kansat; over open-pit coal mining in Phulbari; against a coal plant at the rim of the Sundarbans; against stock market scandals that defrauded millions of small investors; and against quotas in government jobs for the descendants of ‘freedom fighters’ in the 1971 war.
- A journalist from Bangladesh went on Air with an international media house, and opened the Pandora box of other public grievances; the looting of banks, the gagging of the media, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, bribery, and corruption.
- He took on to the social media and exposed brutality of Police and Government.
- He got arrested under Information and Communication Technology Act for “spreading imaginary propaganda against the government.”
- Government is not willing to accept that there is a problem.
- UN, human rights groups and PEN international condemned the Bangladesh Government's dealing in this regard.

Why does the Story of Dhaka matters to India?

- India is facing similar but different situation.
- Gauri Lankesh and some other great journalists who expressed their concerns against either popular beliefs or against certain ideologies were brutally murdered.
- Lynching and Mobviolence became a new normal for petty things.
- Women are facing trolling and threats for expressing their views on social media platform.
- India is one of the largest democracies but freedom is under threat especially for vulnerable sections of the society.

- Sudden resignation of reputed journalists from their respective newsrooms and transfer and resignation of public servants are some of the examples which put a question: Does Democracy in India have place for dissent?

Connecting the dots:

- Freedom should not be absolute but it should not become obsolete. Comment in the light of global examples.

Election and Electoral Reforms

Introduction:

The Lok Sabha passed a Bill that allows 'Proxy Voting' to non-resident Indians (NRIs). The Chief Election Commissioner expressed his views on proxy voting for NRIs, the fake news challenge, electoral bonds, and why EVMs are the best option.

Proxy voting: for NRIs

- Proxy voting is to encourage NRIs to register and vote.
- India have about three crore people of Indian origin settled abroad.
- Half of them are Indian citizens; nearly 10% may be voters.
- The total number of NRIs registered in our electoral rolls is less than 25,000.
- They can now register at the address which is in their passport and opt for proxy.

Proxy voting: Indians residing in India

- For someone in a hospital, EC is making all efforts to facilitate voting by setting up auxiliary voting stations.
- If there is a sizeable number say, 200-300 voters in a hospital then an auxiliary voting station in the same building can be arranged.
- If proxy facility is provided in India, this may become a scandal. It can be abused by parties or candidates to buy votes.

Paid news and fake news:

- In terms of paid news, EC's system has been able to ensure that whenever cases came to them and notices were issued.
- But in case of fake news, have to handle not only social media accounts but even print media.

- Even for VVPAT [Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail] failure, many print media outlets said that EVMs that had never failed in 20 years failed in such a large number. It was fake news.
- EC's Review Committee has engaged with Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms to tell them what exactly is required of them during the conduct of elections — from the day of announcement of polls to the declaration of results, and in the last two days before the conclusion of polls.
- Even the Facebook regional head has agreed to have pre-certified electronic advertisements. And for the last 48 hours, advertisements affecting the election will be removed from the platform.
- Every advertisement will be flagged with the cost paid for it, so that our observers can include the expenditure on that advertisement.
- EC have set up a social media monitoring hub, also meeting Google in this regard.

About EVM and VVPAT: Feasibility of paper ballot

- EC's technical experts committee, which includes professors from IIT Delhi, Mumbai and Bhilai, found solution to VVPAT issues.
- It is not correct to say that Europe has gone back to paper ballot. They [Europe] couldn't devise an EVM which is standalone, which doesn't have connectivity with Wi-Fi or Internet.
- Indian EVM machine is just like a calculator; it is not even connected to a power supply unit.
- EVMs have addressed so many issues, like invalid votes and booth capturing. There is no reason to think that as technology advances, we should be moving backwards.

Electoral Bonds and Transparency in political funding

- The EC discussed this new scheme for campaign financing. EC's worries about electoral financing are mainly the opacity regarding who purchased the bond, who gave to it whom, what is the source of funds.
- All these not being disclosed to the electorate is not healthy for democracy.
- There were some amendments to the Company Law. Earlier, there was provision that only profit earning companies can donate, now, even if the company is dying, it can donate and evaporate from the scene.
- There are apprehensions that some shell companies may be created for siphoning off money from anywhere.

Effectiveness of Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

- The EC's Model Code of Conduct (MCC) comes into effect only after a poll schedule is announced.

- Many believe that the government of the day always has an unfair advantage. Welfare schemes are usually named after the Chief Minister or the Prime Minister.
- The EC through election reforms, cannot reform the whole of governance.
- Whatever influences a voter's mind at the time of elections, EC take care of that.
- Like in Punjab, it was found that ration cards carried photographs of the political executive. The EC ensured that well before the announcement of elections, three months' ration was distributed and then the ration cards were made redundant.
- A democratically elected government can do whatever it wants. In case there is any objection, people can challenge it through public interest litigation.

Hate Speech:

- In case of regular hate speeches by someone that tend to influence the voters, there are MCC provisions to censure the politician.
- All legal provisions exist for substantive offences to be registered in appropriate cases. If they don't relent, the EC debars them from campaigning.
- Our election process is protected from interference under Article 329 of the Constitution.
- Statutory backing is not given to the MCC, but it is agreed upon by all political parties that they will submit to the Code. If they violate it, the EC can derecognise them and can freeze their symbol.

Conclusion:

- Election Commission is one of the bulwarks of Indian Democracy. People of India as well as political parties have great trust in this institution.
- But the new Campaign Financing scheme creates loopholes in terms of money supply during election campaign.
- Similarly rising extremism in politics and hate speeches are driving the people's choices against the spirit of free and fair elections.
- To sustain the autonomy of EC in letter and spirit, electoral reforms along with positive political will is need of the hour.

Connecting the dots:

- Briefly analyse the electoral system in India. Give some suggestions to resolve its flaws.

[Simultaneous elections: Not Soon](#)**Introduction:**

- Chief Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat's view that it is not possible to hold simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies soon.
- It is a humongous task ahead of the Election Commission.

Arguments in favour of simultaneous elections:

- The country is perpetually in election mode, resulting in a lack of adequate focus on governance.
- The second contention is that scattered polling results in extra expenditure.

Reasons compelling postponement of simultaneous elections:

- Along with a legal framework under which the extension or curtailment of the term of any Assembly is constitutionally permissible, simultaneous elections would demand a massive increase in the number of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) units. Ensuring the availability of VVPATs everywhere poses a logistical challenge.
- According to CEC altering the term of an Assembly needs an amendment to the Constitution.
- Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan assemblies are going to end their term between December and January. A new batch of VVPAT units is expected only by the end of November.
- It takes a month for first-level checking, rendering the possibility of using them in the next round of elections remote.
- Simultaneous elections will require the use of 24 lakh EVMs, needing the procurement of 12 lakh EVMs and an equal number of VVPAT units, according to its estimate.
- These figures ought to give pause to the plan to hold simultaneous Assembly elections with the next Lok Sabha polls.

Other issues:

- A wide political consensus, as well as legislative cooperation from various parties at the Centre and in the States, is required for holding simultaneous elections.
- It is natural that parties that control legislatures constituted in recent months or years would resist any curtailment of their tenures, while those in the Opposition may prefer simultaneous polls if it means Assembly elections being advanced.

Conclusion:

- Simultaneous polls pose too big a legal and logistical challenge to be implemented now.
- Given the procedural and logistical challenges that holding of simultaneous elections pose, it would be far more productive for political parties to focus on basic electoral reforms and find ways to curb excessive election expenditure.

Connecting the dots:

- Simultaneous elections in India are still a distant dream. Critically analyse.

SC scraps NOTA option for RS polls

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Indian Polity; Role of Supreme Court

In news:

- Supreme Court scrapped the use of NOTA (none of the above) option for Rajya Sabha polls.

What Supreme Court said?

- NOTA option is meant only for universal adult suffrage and direct elections and not elections held by the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote as done in the Rajya Sabha.
- The option of NOTA may serve as an elixir in direct elections but in the election to the Council of States, it would not only undermine the purity of democracy but also serve the Satan of defection and corruption.
- The court pointed out that in the voting in Rajya Sabha elections, there is a whip and the elector is bound to obey the command of the party. The party discipline... is of extreme significance, for that is the fulcrum of the existence of parties. The thought of cross-voting and corruption is obnoxious.

In crux – the court held that NOTA in an indirect election would not only run counter to the discipline expected from an elector under the Tenth Schedule but also be “counterproductive to the basic grammar of the law of disqualification... on the ground of defection.”

Election Commission cannot sanction the use of NOTA in Rajya Sabha elections by way of mere circulars, which have the effect of overriding the provisions of Article 80(4) — proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote, the provisions of Representation of People Act 1951 and the Conduct of Election Rules 1961.

Where it counts

NOTA:

It allows voters to register their protest if none of the candidates is acceptable to them

IN DIRECT ELECTIONS

NOTA has only symbolic value in a direct election

Regardless of NOTA numbers, candidate polling most votes is elected



IN RAJYA SABHA POLLS

- In this indirect poll, legislators elect candidates to the Upper House
- Single transferable vote involves marking order of preference among candidates
- NOTA will alter outcome, as candidates need a particular number of votes to be elected. If first preference is for NOTA, the vote becomes invalid

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/22/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_10/304407fe_233713_3_101_mr.jpg

Strengthening the federal link

Introduction:

- State finance commission has been created to rationalise and systematise State/sub-State-level fiscal relations in India. But, there has been inadequate appreciation of the significance of this institution by the Union, States as well as the professional community

State Finance Commissions (SFC):

- The State Finance Commission (SFC) is an institution **created by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments**. Its **primary task** is to rectify growing horizontal imbalances in the delivery of essential public services to citizens.
- At a regular interval of **5 years, under Article 243 I of the Constitution**, State Finance Commissions are to be constituted.
- The purpose is to assign it the task of reviewing the financial position of the Panchayats and making recommendations on the sharing and the assignment of various taxes, duties etc.
- It is also to look at **grants-in-aid to be given to the Panchayats** from the Consolidated Fund of the State.

- The Conformity Acts of the Constitution Amendment Act are required to provide for the composition of the Commission, the qualification for its Members and the manner of their selection.

Importance of State Finance Commissions SFCs:

- The task of the SFC to correct horizontal imbalances is extremely onerous as **it has to consider nearly 2.5 lakh local governments** to promote minimum essential services in rural and urban areas.
- An SFC is the institutional agency **to implement the golden rule of cooperative federalism** that every citizen should be assured minimum public goods irrespective of her choice of residence.
- **Article 280(3)** has been amended to add clauses (b) and (c) in order **to take measures to augment the resources of Panchayats and Municipalities** on the basis of the recommendations “made by the finance commission of the state”.
- These sub-clauses affirm the organic link between **local governments and SFCs to fiscal federalism**.
- Articles 243G and 243W give mandate of **planning “for economic development and social justice”**.
- The Constitution treats a local government on a par with a State government, especially when it comes to sharing of financial resources.

Causes of financial inefficiencies at Local level

1. Constitution of finance commission and irregularities

- Article 243I of the Constitution mandated the State Governor to constitute a Finance Commission within one year of the Constitutional Amendment came to force.
- That means, this is to be constituted before April 24, 1994 and thereafter every five years.
- Till date, only Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have submitted their fifth SFC reports. Many States are yet to cross the third SFC stage.
- The seriousness, regularity, acceptance of recommendations and their implementation are conspicuously absent and moreover the composition of SFCs reveals the overwhelming presence of serving and / or retired bureaucrats rather than academics.

2. Problems being faced by SFCs:

- It is important to disabuse the **notion** among several politicians, policymakers and even experts that SFCs and the local governments they deal with have **an inferior constitutional status** when compared to the UFC.
- The SFC is undoubtedly modelled on the UFC created under Article 280 and exemplified in Articles 243I and 243Y.

- SFCs face a crucial problem of reliable data: Unlike the financial reporting system of the Union and States, local governments with no proper budgetary system are in deep disarray.

3. Constitutional Provisions Ignored by the States:

- Articles 243G and 243W talks about planning for economic development and social justice, Article 243ZD mandates that every State constitute a District Planning Committee for spatial planning and environmental conservation at the sub-State level.
- The Constitutional Amendment left the task of adequately empowering the local Govts. to discharge constitutional obligations to the States.

4. Failure of Union Finance Commissions (UFCs):

- UFCs have failed to play a hand-holding role in placing decentralised governance properly in the cooperative federal map of India.
- The hard truth is that no UFC has done its homework in reading and analysing SFC reports.
- Without presenting a consolidated account of the reality at the sub-State level or highlighting which report went wrong, where and how, no UFC can legitimately guide States or contribute to improving the goals of constitutional amendments.

Way Forward:

- All the terms of reference of UFCs (since the 11th) iterate the need for suggesting measures to augment the resources of Panchayats and Municipalities as a core task.
- Both centre and state must sit together to make a concrete approach to redeem the situation and work towards a good local governance system.
- Their well-designed grant scheme to incentivise States was not given a fair trial.
- Till now, SFCs have not been provided with the necessary environment to play their rightful role in Indian fiscal federalism. A great opportunity to build regional equity in India should not be undermined but to enhance the opportunity towards the Fiscal and Cooperative Federalism.

Connecting the dots:

- There must be recognition of the potential of State Finance Commissions in building regional equity. Critically examine the present status of fiscal federalism at state-local government level.

[Odisha's plan calls for a national policy on the utility of a second chamber in States](#)

Introduction:

- Odisha government is planning to create legislative council or upper house. If it does so successfully, it will be eighth such state having upper house.
- The State Cabinet has approved a 49-member Legislative Council, accepting the report of a committee set up in 2015 to study the functioning of the second chamber in other States and make recommendations.

Do you know? (Constitutional provisions about State Legislative Council)

Article 169: Abolition or creation of Legislative Councils in States

- **Parliament** may by law **provide for the abolition or creation** of the Legislative Council of a State, **if the Legislative Assembly of the State passes a resolution** to that effect by a **majority of the total membership** of the Assembly and by a **majority of not less than two-thirds** of the members of the Assembly **present and voting**.

Article 171: Composition of the Legislative Councils

- **The total number of members** in the Legislative Council of a State **shall not exceed one third of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly** of that State, and shall **in no case be less than forty**.

Article 171: Of the total number of members of the Legislative Council of a State—

- One-third shall be elected by electorates consisting of members of municipalities, district boards and such other local authorities in the State
- One-twelfth shall be elected by electorates consisting of persons residing in the State who have been for at least three years graduates
- One-twelfth shall be elected by electorates consisting of persons who have been for at least three years engaged in teaching not lower than secondary schools
- One-third shall be elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State from amongst persons who are not members of the Assembly
- The remainder shall be nominated by the Governor, persons having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of Literature, science, art, co-operative movement and social service.

The advantages of having a bicameral legislature

- An Upper House provides a forum for academicians and intellectuals, who are arguably not suited for the rough and tumble of electoral politics.
- At least on paper, it provides a mechanism for a more sober and considered appraisal of legislation that a State may pass.
- If there was any real benefit in having a Legislative Council, all States in the country should, and arguably would, have a second chamber.

The objections to the second chamber

- Rather than fulfilling the lofty objective of getting intellectuals into the legislature, the forum is likely to be used to accommodate party functionaries who fail to get elected.
- It is also an unnecessary drain on the exchequer.
- The graduates are no longer a rare breed, with dipping educational standards, a graduate degree is no guarantee of any real intellectual heft.
- Why should graduates be privileged as people's representatives in a democracy?
- Legislatures draw their talent both from the grassroots level and the higher echelons of learning. There are enough numbers of doctors, teachers and other professionals in most political parties today.
- The Rajya Sabha's case is different as it represents the States rather than electoral constituencies. It is also a restraining force against the dominance of elected majorities in legislative matters.
- The fact that there are only seven such Councils suggests the lack of any real advantage, apart from the absence of a broad political consensus on the issue.

Conclusion:

Legislative Councils are subject to varied and inconclusive discussions around their creation, revival and abolishment. Given all this, Odisha's proposal may give the country at large an opportunity to evolve a national consensus on Legislative Councils.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think that state legislative councils are relevant in today's modern and educated Indian democracy?

The final frontier of populism? Judiciary and Majoritarianism

Introduction

- Crucial constitutional questions are being fought in the highest courts in the world's largest democracies.
- If a baker refuses to make a wedding cake for a same sex couple citing his religious beliefs, is that an exercise of religious liberty or a case of **discrimination against homosexuals**? The Colorado Civil Rights Commission in the U.S. ruled it was a case of discrimination. **The U.S. Supreme Court** reversed the Colorado commission's order.
- **The Indian Supreme Court** is seized of the conflict between a religious belief and charges of discrimination in a case on **Sabarimala**, the Kerala temple where women of a particular age are not allowed entry.

- When questions such as these come up in the context of executive or legislative action or inaction, it becomes the task of the judiciary to test them against the Constitution.

There is a long-running debate on **how the judiciary should interpret the Constitution**. One school of thought, **the originalists**, believes that the constitutional text ought to be given the original meaning or intent that it would have at the time it was written. **The evolutionists** believe that the Constitution is a living document and the meaning of its text changes over time, as social attitudes change, and that the judges should interpret it accordingly. (Covered in detail: 28 August 2018 DNA)

Tensions in a democracy

- Judges are not impervious to public opinion but they are not meant to be its slaves either. They do not need to win popular votes.
- This one layer of insulation from instant public opinion enables the judiciary to be the guardian of the fundamental values of the society, which too change but over a longer period of time.
- The tensions between the legislative or executive branches and the judiciary are unavoidable, and to some extent desirable, in a democracy.
- Varying degrees of judicial review provide a way to negotiate a balance between public opinion and values in democratic societies.
- In India, the judiciary can review even constitutional amendments.
- When a society is in the midst of conflict over its elemental values, such tensions become more fraught. The legislative and executive branches are quicker in responding to people's will and often, shaping it.
- India also has seen such phase, when the judiciary resisted progressive legislative measures such as land reforms in the early years of the republic.
- Those tensions continued all the way until an equilibrium was reached, with the Supreme Court establishing the concept of the basic structure of the Constitution in the 1970s.
- At the core of the tensions between the judiciary and the more political branches was the search for a balance between justice and liberty, a perennial source of conflict in a democracy.

Conclusion:

- The turbulence within the Indian judiciary and in its relations with the political executive and the legislature could also be seen in the context of the ongoing populist project to reshape the country.

- It is one thing to expect the judiciary to be aware of evolving notions of rights and justice in a society, but quite another to demand the remaking of the judiciary in accordance with a majoritarian agenda.
- A judiciary dismissive of the popular will could disrupt the balance of power among the branches; but a judiciary subservient to majoritarianism will certainly undermine democracy.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think populism in democracy affects judiciary? Elucidate.



SOCIAL ISSUE/WELFARE PROGRAMMES

Misuse of SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

Part of: GS Mains II – Social issue; Welfare; Dalit issue

In news:

- Expressing concern over rampant **misuse of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act**, the Supreme Court had introduced the **provision of anticipatory bail**.
- It had also directed that there would be no automatic arrest on any complaint filed under the law and a preliminary inquiry must be conducted by police within seven days before taking any action.
- The ruling was greeted by a storm of protest from Dalit groups, which said the order diluted the law.
- However, **now Centre has decided to introduce a Bill to restore the original provisions** of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

The **Amendment Bill seeks to insert three new clauses** after Section 18 of the original Act.

1. Preliminary enquiry shall not be required for registration of a First Information Report against any person.
2. Arrest of a person accused of having committed an offence under the Act would not require any approval.
3. Provisions of Section 438 of the Code of Criminal Procedure — which deals with anticipatory bail — shall not apply to a case under this Act.

Quota in promotion for SCs/STs

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains – Dalit issue; Social issue

In news:

- Centre pushes for quota in promotion for SCs/STs
- Centre calls on Supreme Court to revisit 2006 Nagaraj ruling
- If implemented it provides for “accelerated promotion with consequential seniority” for members of the Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs) in public employment.
- Dalit communities have suffered years of deprivation at the hands of society. They had been deprived of access to temples, schools and the basic facilities of life.
- Recent examples - Even today, Dalit grooms cannot ride horses; people denying drinking water to a woman Dalit officer; Temple purified in U.P. after visit by Dalit woman MLA.

2006 M. Nagaraj judgment of the Supreme Court

- Government cannot introduce a quota in promotion for its SC/ST employees unless they prove that the particular Dalit community is backward and inadequately represented, and such a reservation in promotion would not affect the overall efficiency of public administration.

Now the government wants larger Constitution Bench to re-examine and create possible situation for providing accelerated promotions with consequential seniority for the SCs/STs in government services.

2013 Bir Singh versus Delhi Jal Board case: SC Reservation issue

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Reservation and Social issue

In news:

- **Bir Singh versus Delhi Jal Board case** deals with legal question whether a Scheduled Caste person from a State would be accorded the same concessions in employment in another State.
- A five-judge Constitution Bench led by Justice Ranjan Gogoi held that “a person belonging to a Scheduled Caste in one State cannot be deemed to be a Scheduled Caste person in relation to any other State to which he migrates for the purpose of employment or education.”

Do you know?

- As per the constitutional provisions (**Article 341**), the President of India shall prepare the list of such castes and tribes for the first time, in consultation with Governors of States. Parliament has been authorised to make subsequent modifications in such lists as and when required.
- It means the list of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will not be same for all states but differ from state to state depending upon social and educational backwardness of such castes and communities.
- The **Scheduled Caste order, 1950**, issued by the Government of India states and certain castes belonging to **only Hindu and Sikh religion are designated as Scheduled Castes**. Thus, there are no Scheduled Castes outside these two religions.
- The Order was amended in 1990 to accommodate the neo-Buddhists. However, the untouchable convertees to Islam and Christianity continue to remain outside its purview.

Constitution provisions dealing with Scheduled Castes:

1. **Article 15** of the Constitution says the State shall not discriminate on the basis of caste, religion, race, or place of birth.

The above article seeks to check the social isolation and restrictions from visiting common public places that Scheduled Castes were often historically, and still are, subjected to across India.

2. **Article 16** of the Constitution also assures equal opportunity to all citizens for employment in any office under the State, including in promotions, without any discrimination based on caste.
3. Apart from this, **Article 46** of the Constitution also states that the State shall promote the educational and economic interests of weaker sections, namely “Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.”

The Constitution also provides for a proportionate reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in educational institutions and public offices under the State.

4. **Article 243D** provides for reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Panchayats in the same proportion as the population of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes in the village.
5. **Article 243T** promises the same proportionate reservation of seats in Municipalities.
6. **Article 330** promises reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha, once more, on a proportional basis to the total population of SC/STs to overall population.
7. **Article 335** assures that the claims of members of the SC/ST community [to these seats], while ensuring the efficiency of administration, shall be taken into consideration while making appointments to services and posts in connection with the State.
8. **Article 338** establishes the **National Commission for the Scheduled Castes**.
9. **Article 340** gives the President the power to appoint a commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes, the difficulties they face, and make recommendations on steps to be taken to improve their condition. This was the article under which the **Mandal Commission** was formed.
10. **Article 341 – (discussed already above)**

The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** publishes a state-wise list of castes that fall into the schedule, and only those people carrying certificates of caste from the listed states qualify for the protections afforded to members of the SC community.

SC on Adultery law

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Social issue; Polity

In news:

- It was commonly accepted that it is the man who is the seducer and not the woman.
- SC has said that the time has changed and the archaic law which makes adultery an offence punishable only for men and not the consenting women needs to stand the test of right to equality.

Centre's stand on Adultery:

- Adultery should remain in the Indian Penal Code as it ensures the sanctity of the marriage, and is for public good.

Wife as commodity

- **Section 497** in the Indian Penal Code, which **defines adultery**, says that a man could be punished up to five years in jail if he has sexual intercourse with another man's wife. However, it is not an offence if the sexual intercourse is with the "consent or connivance" of the husband of the woman.
- The above IPC Section treats a married woman as "chattel" (a personal possession) of the conniving husband, which is "absurd". When a woman is treated as chattel, her right to dignity is affected, SC said.

Do you know?

- The SC bench seeks to strike down the provisions as unconstitutional (decriminalise adultery) and looking to make its provisions gender neutral.
- Most countries have done away with adultery as a criminal offence, including Bhutan, Sri Lanka, China, South Korea.

Recently, SC bench said -

- Jail term for adultery does not make sense.
- Adultery does not even qualify as a criminal offence and is a civil wrong.
- Adultery has a civil remedy: divorce.

An adulterous relationship is carried on with the consent of the woman and it doesn't amount to an offence.

Anti-trafficking legislation in India: Does the anti-trafficking Bill addresses trafficking?

Introduction:

Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018, was passed in Lok Sabha.

Background:

- On the recommendation of the **Justice Verma Committee**, Criminal Law (Amendment) Act was passed by the Lok Sabha in 2013.
- Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was substituted with Sections 370 and 370A, which defined trafficking and laid out the punishment for it.
- However, mere criminalisation of trafficking is not enough — several laws have not been implemented in letter and spirit in the absence of a comprehensive legislative framework.
- In the case of trafficking, data show that despite the 2013 law, there has been an increase in the number of victims of human trafficking.

Positive aspects of the Bill:

1. multipronged approach

- Approaches to prevention, rescue and rehabilitation to create a robust policy framework against trafficking
- It places at its core the rights and welfare of victims of human trafficking.
- There are aggravated forms of trafficking which have been introduced, such as trafficking for the purpose of begging, or bearing a child, or for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage by administering narcotic drugs, hormones, or chemical substances for the purposes of early sexual maturity, and so on. The prosecution under these offences will be made timely and efficient by special public prosecutors.
- Protection to witnesses and confidentiality of victims by recording their statements through video conferencing and by in camera proceedings
- Time-bound trials and repatriation of victims

2. Rescue and Rehabilitation:

- A rehabilitation fund has been introduced for the first time. This will be used for the physical, psychological and social well-being of victims.
- Capacity building of victims by providing capital, infrastructure, education and skill development to empower them to access justice and to prevent further trafficking

3. National Anti-Trafficking Bureau:

- The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau will coordinate with authorities in foreign countries and international organisations, and facilitate inter-State and trans-border transfer of evidence and materials.
- It will strengthen the intelligence apparatus to improve the collection, collation and dissemination of operational intelligence.
- The Bureau will also coordinate actions and enforcement by various bodies or authorities established under this Bill.
- There will be State and District Anti-Trafficking Committees which will arrange for appropriate training and sensitisation of functionaries of all personnel.

4. Breaking the Network:

- It is crucial to note that trafficking is an organised crime.
- In order to break the organised nexus, at the national and international levels, the Bill proposes attachment and forfeiture of property and to remit the proceeds of crime in the rehabilitation fund.
- It will also freeze bank accounts of those whose funds have been utilised to facilitate trafficking. By doing this, the Bill handicaps the organised trafficking networks.
- The Bureau will also develop and monitor a database on every crime under this Act.
- Systematic surveillance of offenders will, in about three years, not only help prevent trafficking but pre-empt it.

Criticism of the Bill:

The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018, fails in its fundamental purpose, i.e. it does not address the issue of trafficking.

1. Outlaws legitimate activity

- Offence of “trafficking for the purpose of begging”. Employing or causing someone to beg is already a criminal offence under anti-begging laws.
- Similarly, unauthorised immigration of citizens and foreigners is dealt with under the Passports Act, 1967, and the Foreigners Act, 1946, respectively.
- Illegal migration does not involve elements of ‘trade’ in human beings or trafficking. To term it an “aggravated form of trafficking” is questionable in itself.
- The Bill also states that “whoever solicits or publicises electronically, taking or distributing obscene photographs or videos or providing materials or soliciting or guiding tourists or using agents or any other form which may lead to the trafficking of a person shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment.” Means a remote possibility of would be trafficking is sufficient to prosecute persons and shut down websites.

- Such clauses of the Bill have little to do with trafficking and more do to with imposing surveillance and restricting freedoms through punitive overkill.

2. Interplay with existing laws

- Existing laws have not been overruled or repealed. In order to try offences under the Bill, the prosecution will have to first prove the subsections of Section 370, that the victim was received or transferred for the purposes of exploiting her/him by using force, abduction, deception, etc. Only then the provisions of the Bill take effect.
- For the police and the courts, implementing the numerous anti-trafficking laws will be a nightmare. Only persons accused of trafficking will benefit from the legal mess.
- Instead of strengthening the existing anti-trafficking laws, the Bill calls for another law, one that is uncalled-for and sloppily drafted. The Bill clashes with existing laws, which will lead to confusion.
- The term 'victim' appears several times in the Bill but is shoddily defined. A victim is one who is 'rescued' by the raiding police. So, those rescued by NGOs, parents, friends, and so on are not victims.

3. Other Loopholes:

- The Bill is silent on many types of trafficking, such as trafficking for supply chains, commercial surrogacy, clinical trials, human organ trade, intergenerational trafficking, orphanage tourism and sex tourism.
- Traffickers get themselves 'rescued' by the police so that they can keep an eye on the rescued victims and silence them.
- In the absence of clarity, such traffickers who operate hand in glove with the police will be the first to get themselves 'rescued' and claim hefty compensations, rehabilitation, small capital for business, and worse, an absurd immunity for committing serious offences that are punishable.
- No new courts or judges are mentioned to expedite justice. The district courts are neither exclusively dedicated to trafficking cases nor will they address such cases on priority. This move will only undo the gains of the past many decades of evolving more sensitive and specialised courts such as Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act courts, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences courts, and family courts.

Conclusion:

- The Bill is well-intentioned and has many positive features, but need a review on many provisions.
- The anti-trafficking Bill aims to solve an institutionalised socio-economic problem with a 'crime and punishment' model, relying on police stations, courts and jails.

Connecting the dots:

- Critically examine the features of the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018. What are the causes of rise in Human Trafficking in this modern era?

Note: overview of bill: <http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/the-trafficking-of-persons-prevention-protection-and-rehabilitation-bill-2018-5277/>

Poverty, not poor: Decriminalisation of begging

Introduction:

The Delhi High Court has strike down the provisions of the law which sanction punitive action against beggars (including imprisonment) as unconstitutional.

Colonial legacy:

Twenty-five sections of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, which was extended to Delhi and serves as the template for other state laws criminalising begging, are off the books.

These stigmatising provisions recalled the targeting of allegedly “**criminal tribes**” in British colonial territories and should never have been allowed to infest the statute books of a democracy.

Delhi High Court Observations:

- In its observation court has sought to dispel the idea of begging as a disease — which leads to its stigmatisation and criminalisation — and to regard it as a symptom.
- The underlying disease is the failure of the state to protect citizens who fall through the social security net.
- The court has clarified what should have been obvious to generations of policymakers — that criminalising begging attacks the fundamental right of the most vulnerable, the poorest of the poor, to regain access to basic necessities like food and shelter.
- The very real problem of organised begging rackets will have to be addressed by other means, perhaps based on the law of trafficking.
- The ruling has accepted the basic premise of the PIL, that poverty cannot be a crime.

Way forward:

- Poverty is a failing of the state and a civilised society must regard the poor not as criminals to be sentenced, but as candidates for protection.

- There is a need to reduce rising inequalities and establish an egalitarian society.
- The decriminalisation of those who fail usually has positive effects. For instance, Portugal, which decriminalised drug use and possession in 2001, has achieved the lowest rate of drug-related social costs, like death and crime, in the European Union. But part of its solution was to redeploy budgets spent on enforcement to the support of addicts.
- A similar step with regard to beggars — spending aggressively on rehabilitation — would yield similar outcomes, and turn what was regarded as a social problem into a dividend.

Conclusion:

- The Delhi high court’s judgment reinforces the values of inclusiveness and tolerance in Indian society through its references to the principles of equality, liberty and dignity.
- It also reiterates the importance of judicial activism and the fact that courts, constituted as the ultimate interpreter of the constitution, have wide powers to promote dignitary values deeply rooted in our libertarian democracy.

Connecting the dots:

- Instead of penalizing approach, there is a need to build the social and economic capacities of the state, which would care for its poor and marginalised citizens. Discuss, in the light of anti-begging laws in India.

Anti-begging Act and Criminal Tribes: Legacy of injustice

Introduction:

The Delhi High Court has strike down as unconstitutional the provisions of the law which sanction punitive action against beggars, including imprisonment.

Criminal Tribes Act:

- The colonial regime believed that there are groups of communities which are criminal by birth, nature, and occupation.
- The Act unleashed a reign of terror, with its systems of surveillance, police reporting, the separation of families, detention camps, and forced labour.
- More than six decades after independent India repealed the Act and the “denotified tribes” still continue to suffer from stigma.
- It was one example of colonial laws that dehumanised communities and ways of life.
- Nomadic and itinerant communities were labelled Criminal Tribes because, due to their movements and lifestyle were difficult to track, surveil, control, and tax.

- Through such laws the regime attempted to destroy these patterns of life, and coerce communities into settlements and subjecting them to forced labour.

Legacy in free India:

- Despite the birth of a Constitution that promised liberty, equality, fraternity, and dignity to all, our lawmakers continued to replicate colonial logic in framing laws for the new republic.
- Individuals were treated as subjects to be controlled and administered, rather than rights-bearing citizens.
- Criminal Tribes Act was replaced by Habitual offenders Act 1952.
- The Begging Act was passed in 1959 by the State of Bombay, and has continued to exist in as many as 20 States and two Union Territories.

What does the Begging Act do?

- **Definition** of begging in this Act include “soliciting or receiving alms, in a public place whether or not under any pretence such as singing, dancing, fortune telling, performing or offering any article for sale” and “having no visible means of subsistence and wandering about in any public place in such condition or manner, as makes it likely that the person doing so exist soliciting or receiving alms.”
- It gives the police the power to **arrest individuals without a warrant** and to magistrates the power **to commit them to a “certified institution” for years.**
- It strips them of their **privacy and dignity** by compelling them to allow themselves to be fingerprinted.
- The Act also authorises **the detention of people “dependant” upon the “beggar”** (read: family), and the separation of children over the age of five.
- Certified institutions have absolute power over detainees, including the power of punishment, and the power to exact “manual work”.

Prejudice and Stigmatization:

- It is clear that the purpose of the Act is not only to criminalise the act of begging, but to target those whose nomadic patterns of life do not fit within mainstream.
- It is based on philosophy of the poorhouses of 19th century Europe; first criminalise poverty, and then making it invisible by physically removing “offenders” from public spaces.
- It punishes people for the crime of looking poor. For these people, the constitutional guarantees of pluralism and inclusiveness do not exist.

Instances of using of the Begging Act as a weapon:

- On the eve of Common Wealth Games 2010, Delhi government took beggars off the streets lest their presence embarrass the nation in the eyes of foreigners.
- Such operations are also a regular part of preparing for national events, such as Independence Day and Republic Day.
- Recently, a prominent institution put up spikes outside its Mumbai branch, to deter rough sleeping, though they were removed after public outrage.

The judicial view:

- In its judgment (*Harsh Mander v. Union of India* and *Karnika Sawhney v. Union of India*), Delhi HC held that the Begging Act violated Article 14 (equality before law) and Article 21 (right to life and personal liberty) of the Constitution.
- It also held that under Article 21 of the Constitution, it was the state's responsibility to provide the basic necessities for survival to all its citizens.
- Poverty was the result of the state's inability or unwillingness to discharge these obligations. Therefore, the state could not turn around and criminalise the most visible and public manifestation of its own failures.

Way Forward:

- It is as significant and important as a judgment delivered by the same court more than nine years ago, when it decriminalised homosexuality (*Naz Foundation v. NCT of Delhi*).
- Both *Naz Foundation* and *Harsh Mander* recognise that our Constitution is a transformative Constitution, which seeks to undo legacies of injustice and lift up all individuals and communities to the plane of equal citizenship.
- Other High Courts should also question such colonial legacies. A court can strike down an unconstitutional law, but it cannot reform society.
- It is the task of the Legislative Assembly and the government to replace this punitive structure with a new set of measures to rehabilitate and integrate the most vulnerable and marginalised members of our society.

Connecting the dots:

- Colonial legacies in a democratic and republic country like India, paradox in itself. Elucidate with examples.

WOMEN ISSUE

Life after Rescue: Human Trafficking and sex trade

Introduction:

- **Article 23** and **Article 24** of constitution of India provides for **rights against exploitation**.
- **Article 23** of constitution of India specifically **Prohibits trafficking of human being**.
- There are constitutional provisions, still, according to **NCRB data** 8,132 cases has been recorded in the country in the year 2016.

Some Facts: The latest figures of the National Crime Records Bureau, released in 2017

- Total cases of human trafficking registered 8,132 (January to December 2016).
- 3,579 cases (around 44%) were from West Bengal.
- Only one third of registered cases were charge sheeted.

Reason of being easy target of human traffickers:

- Poverty
- Child marriages
- Unemployment
- Lack of education

Problems Faced by victims after Rescue:

- Physical and mental health issues; Trauma
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Social Rejection and living with stigma
- Struggle for Justice and compensation

Examples of organisations working for Rescue and Rehabilitation:

- Shakti Vahini, a Delhi-based NGO
- Utthan, a trafficking survivors' collective
- Birangana Seva Samity, Canning based NGO (West Bengal)

What Government did?

- Compensation awarded by SLSA (State Legal Services Authority)
- Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 passed by Lok Sabha
- POCSO Act

- Provisions Under Criminal Procedure Code
- Help lines and Collaboration with NGOs.

Way forward:

- Speedy justice and immediate compensation
- Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 should be enacted as soon as possible
- Legalising prostitution can be considered to keep record of sex trade and track human trafficking.
- Social security schemes need to penetrate till the last needy person.
- There is need to spread awareness against social stigma towards the survivors.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think sex trade (Prostitution) and human trafficking go hand in hand? Suggest measures to balance between right to profession and right against exploitation.

Kudumbashree: a fine model of community service

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II and III – Self Help Groups; Role of SHGs; Disaster Management

In news:

- Workers of the women empowerment programme (**Kudumbashree**) have so far cleaned more than 1.1 lakh flood-hit houses in Kerala.
- The gesture can be described as a fine model of community service by the self-help group in post-disaster reconstruction.

Important Value Additions

About Kudumbashree

- **Launched by:** Government of Kerala in 1998
- **Aim:** To wipe out absolute poverty from state through concerned community action under the leadership of local self-government

Organization:

- Largest women empowering projects in the country; it covers 50 percent of the households in Kerala.
- A government agency having a budget and paid staff and is responsible to the department of local self-governments.

CHILDREN ISSUE

Child abuse: Discrepancies in Children care homes data

Part of: GS Mains II – Social issue – Child abuse; Role of Judiciary

In news:

- A 2016-17 survey, commissioned by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, shows that 4.73 lakh children reside in care homes nationwide.
- However, the number of children in care homes came down to 2.61 lakh in the data submitted by the Centre before the Supreme Court in March 2018.
- SC shocked at 2 lakh ‘missing’ children
- Data on care homes show big disparity
- Either the childcare homes had given an inflated number of children to get more funds or these children are missing
- Children are subjected to corporal punishment and other abuse in these homes.
- The SC Bench proposed to set up oversight committees at the national and State levels to monitor the functioning of childcare homes.

Do you know?

Provision related to Children in “Constitution of India”

- Article 14 and 15
- Article 21A. The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.
- Article 24. No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.
- Article 39. The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing— that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.
- Article 45. The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.
- Article 51A. It shall be the duty of every citizens of India- who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years]

Audit of child shelters ‘frightening’

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Social/Welfare issue; Child issue

In news:

- National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is carrying out an audit of child care institutions and other bodies such as children homes, open shelters, observation homes, special homes, places of safety, specialised adoption agencies and fit facilities under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and Model Rules.
- The audit is being conducted in compliance with a Supreme Court order on May 5, 2017.

Preliminary contents of a social audit conducted by the NPCR highlighted that –

- Out of a total of 2,874 **children’s homes** surveyed, only 54 institutions could be given positive reviews.
- Out of 185 **shelter homes** audited across the country, only 19 had “all the records of a child that they are supposed to maintain.”
- Of the 203 **special adoption agencies**, only eight deserved positive reviews.
- Similarly, only 16% of the 172 observation homes had all the required records of the children, like case histories and who are residing there.
- Again, out of 80 **special homes/place of safety** only 13% have the complete set of records.

Important Value Additions:

About NCPCR

- NCPCR is a **statutory body** set up in 2007 under Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005.
- NCPCR is country’s apex child rights body.
- Objective of this commission is to **protect, promote and defend the child rights** in India including the rights adopted in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, 1989**, ratified by India in 1992.
- The Chairperson of NCPCR should be a person of eminence who has done outstanding work on promoting the child rights.
- The Commission's Mandate is to **ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms** are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Do you know?

- The Child is defined as a person in the 0 to 18 years age group.

[Speeding up the adoption process: On the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill of 2018](#)

Introduction

In India, adoption procedure between child and the family is done by courts. But courts in India are under the burden of heavy work load. To bring about an alternative procedure parliament is considering amendment bill to juvenile Justice Act, 2015.

The Juvenile Justice Act of 2015:

- The Juvenile Justice Act of 2015 introduces comprehensive provisions for children in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection.
- It was **enacted keeping in view** the standards prescribed in **the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Millennium Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, 1985 (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (1990), the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Inter-country Adoption (1993)** and other related international instruments.
- **Chapter 8 of this Act deals with adoption.** Subsection (1) of Section 56 of the Act says “adoption shall be resorted to for ensuring right to family for the orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children.”
- **Section 63 of the Act states that the adoption is final on the issuance of the adoption order by the court** concerned.
- **Subsection (2) of Section 61** of the Act provides that “the adoption **proceedings** shall be held **in camera** and the **case shall be disposed of by the court within a period of two months** from the date of filing the adoption.”

Need for Amendment to the Act:

- Early this January, **the Supreme Court observed that the “future of the country depends on our children”.**
- An affidavit filed by the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights** shows that **of 203 special adoption agencies audited, merely eight deserved positive reviews.**
- It has been observed that there is an inordinate **delay in issuing adoption orders** by the courts due to the heavy workload.
- As of **July 20, 2018, there are 629 cases for adoption pending** in various courts across the country.

- Due to delay in the issuing of adoption orders by the courts, **children continue to stay in childcare institutions**, even after getting a family.

Proposed Amendment:

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill of 2018 seeks to remedy the situation.
- In the best interest of the child, it **proposes to amend the Juvenile Justice Act to empower the District Magistrate**, instead of the court, **to issue adoption orders**.
- This would ensure timely processing of adoption cases and provide orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children with familial care and protection.

Do you know?

Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a **statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India**.
- It functions as the **nodal body for adoption of Indian children** and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.
- **CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions** in accordance **with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993**, ratified by Government of India in 2003.
- CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.

Conclusion:

Timely proceeding of adoption cases would provide needy children with deserving families. It will be in line with the SC observation; “future of the country depends on our children”.

Connecting the dots:

- Explain in brief the Child adoption procedure in India. Do you think it should be made simpler? Give some suggestions to include street children and beggars into this network.

HEALTH ISSUE

Breast Feeding

Part of: GS Prelims – Health issue

About:

- As many as 6 out of 10 babies born in the country are not able to begin breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
- Despite an improvement in institutional deliveries, due to a lack of supportive work environment, inadequate skills of health care providers as well as caesarean deliveries, most babies not breastfed in their first hour.

Do you know?

- Mother's breast milk within one hour of birth ensures that the infant receives the colostrum or first milk, which is rich in protective factors.
- WHO and UNICEF also recommend exclusive breastfeeding for infants up to the age of six months and thereafter complementary foods with continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond.
- India has made some progress over the years, according to National Family Health Survey (NFHS).
- Early initiation of breastfeeding has improved.
- Govt.-backed mass breastfeeding event was organized in Philippines. The World Health Organisation and the United Nations Children's Fund recommend that children be given breast milk within the first hour of birth and be exclusively breastfed for their first six months.

MAA (Mothers Absolute Affection)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains – Health; Women and Child welfare; Social issue

In news:

- MAA (Mothers Absolute Affection) is a nationwide program to promote breastfeeding **launched by** Ministry of health and family welfare.
- Government of India declared **National breast feeding week** 1st to 7th August 2018

Why Breast Feeding?

- It Promotes brain development

- Provides Optimal nutrition
- Boosts child immunity
- Protects child against pneumonia diarrhoea
- Better bonding between mother and baby
- Reduces risk of non-communicable diseases

Three northeastern States emerge as new HIV hotspots

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Health issue

In news:

- Rise of HIV incidence in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.
- Reasons: attributed to injecting drug users and unsafe sexual practices

Do you know?

- There has been a steady decline in the number of HIV cases in India.
- The bad news is that Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura have emerged as the new hotspots for HIV, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The **HIV Sentinel Surveillance (HSS)**, a biennial study conducted by the **National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO)**, is one of the largest regular studies in the world dealing with HIV in high risk groups of the population.

Important value addition:

- Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) - leads to effectively suppressing the virus and reducing the transmission of HIV from the infected person.
- National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) target is to bring 90% of the 21 lakh people living with the HIV infection in India under ART.

Health issue: Scrub typhus

Part of: GS Prelims – Health issue; Science and Tech

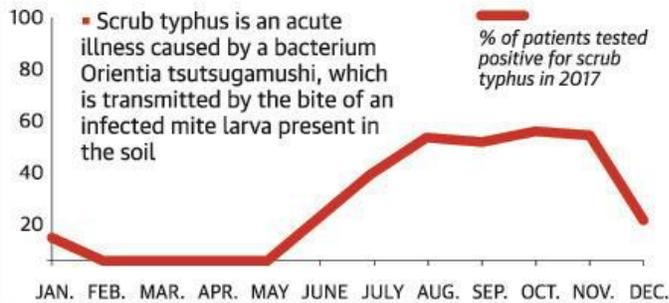
In news:

- About Scrub typhus (definition in pic below)
- Majority of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) patients have scrub typhus.
- Scrub typhus can be treated easily if detected early.

- Mites present in the soil carried *Orientia tsutsugumashi*, the bacterium which causes scrub typhus.

Spike in scrub typhus

Majority of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) patients hospitalised between August and October in the last three years had scrub typhus



Pic:

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[Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Scheme \(AB-NHPS\)](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Government schemes and policies; Health

About:

- PM Modi's ambitious scheme aims to provide coverage of ₹5 lakh per family annually and benefiting more than 10 crore poor families in the country.
- AB-NHPS will subsume the on-going centrally sponsored schemes — Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).

Big push to healthcare

What the National Health Protection Mission offers

Cover: The scheme will have a benefit cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year

Portability: A beneficiary will be allowed to access cashless benefits from any public/private empanelled hospital across the country

Cost control: To control costs, the payments for treatment will be done on package rate (to be defined by the government in advance) basis



Command structure: For giving policy directions and fostering coordination between the Centre and the States, it is proposed to set up a Mission Council at the apex level chaired by the Union Health and Family Welfare Minister

Facilitators: States would need to have State Health Agency (SHA) to implement the scheme

Fund transfer: To ensure that the funds reach SHA on time, the transfer of funds from the Central government to State Health agencies may be done through an escrow account directly

High on IT: In partnership with NITI Aayog, a robust, modular, scalable and interoperable IT platform will be made operational, which will enable a paperless, cashless transaction

SOURCE: AYUSHMAN BHARAT - NATIONAL HEALTH PROTECTION MISSION

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[277_101_mr.jpg](#)

Salient features of the AB-NHPM scheme:

- This scheme has the benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. The target beneficiaries of the proposed scheme will be more than 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database.
- The Rs. 5 lakh per family a year cover will take care of almost all secondary care and most of tertiary care procedures. To ensure that nobody is left out (especially women, children and elderly) there will be no cap on family size and age in the scheme.
- The benefit cover will also include pre- and post-hospitalisation expenses.
- All pre-existing conditions will be covered from day one of the policy.
- A defined transport allowance per hospitalisation will also be paid to the beneficiary.
- Also, benefits of the scheme are portable across the country and a beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public/private empanelled hospital across the country.
- AB-NHPM will be an entitlement based scheme with entitlement decided on the basis of deprivation criteria in the SECC database.

[Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Government schemes and policies; Health issue

In news:

- Yesterday we read about [Ayushman Bharat](#)
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan is also known as Ayushman Bharat or the National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM)
- It will be launched on September 25 (birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay)

Insuring the masses

Key features of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan, to be officially launched on Sept. 25

Launch pad: The project will start on a pilot basis in 80-100 districts. October will see the second phase of expansion

Participants: 28 States/ Union Territories have agreed to join the health insurance scheme. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Odisha, Telangana and Delhi are yet to come on board

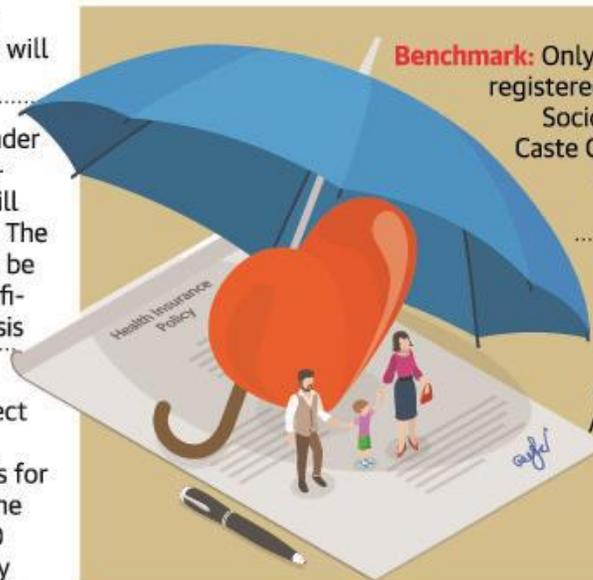
Yearly payments: Under the scheme, all registered beneficiaries will get a sum of ₹5 lakh. The insurance money will be provided to the beneficiaries on a yearly basis

Core centres: The government will select 1.5 lakh healthcare centres and hospitals for implementation of the scheme. with ₹1,200 crore allocated solely to develop and activate such centres

Identification: Beneficiaries will be required to use their registered mobile phone numbers as their ID number

Benchmark: Only individuals registered under the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 of India are eligible

Aadhar angle: Only individuals with a valid Aadhar card will be eligible



WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Only financially weak and underprivileged members of the society will be eligible for the Scheme. A maximum of five members of such a family will get the insurance cover

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[Right to retire](#)

Part of: GS Mains – Health issue

In news:

- Supreme Court recently ruled that – the **State can stop government doctors from taking voluntary retirement** in public interest.

- The fundamental **right to retire is not above the right to save lives** in a country where government hospitals cater to the poorest.
- Qualified doctors did not join the public service, and even if they did so, they chose voluntary retirement and went into lucrative private practice.

Related Constitutional provisions

SC held that -

- The State governments have an obligation “to make an endeavour under Article 47 to look after the provisions for health and nutrition.”
- The doctors, as citizens, have certain fundamental duties under Article 51(A) towards their fellow citizens.
- The right to practise a profession under Article 19(1)(g) is subject to the interest of the general public.

Open Defecation Free Plus

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Health issue; Government schemes and Policies

In news:

Under new norms, cities and towns wanting to be declared ODF+ (Open Defecation Free Plus) must also be free of public urination and not just open defecation.

This is the first time that the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) is officially including the elimination of open urination in its agenda.

The ODF+ and ODF++ protocols (released recently by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs) are the next step for the SBM-U and aim to ensure sustainability in sanitation outcomes.

Difference between ODF protocol, ODF+ and ODF++

- **Original ODF protocol** issued in March 2016, said - “A city/ward is notified as ODF city/ward if, at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating in the open.”
- The **new ODF+ protocol**, issued last week, says that a city, ward or work circle could be declared ODF+ if, “at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well-maintained.”
- The **ODF++ protocol** adds the condition that “faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated, with no discharging and/or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.”

The battle against leprosy: Amendments to laws that discriminate against leprosy patients

Introduction:

- Over 110 Central and State laws discriminate against leprosy patients. These laws stigmatise and isolate leprosy patients and, coupled with age-old beliefs about leprosy, cause the patients untold suffering.
- The biased provisions in these statutes were introduced prior to medical advancements. Now, modern medicine (specifically, multi-drug therapy (MDT)) completely cures the disease.

Do you know? (Some facts about leprosy in India)

- In India, **the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) is the centrally sponsored health scheme Government of India.** The programme is also **supported by WHO, ILEP, and few other** nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).
- From a **prevalence rate of 57.8/10,000 in 1983**, national prevalence brought down to **“elimination as a public health problem” of less than 1/10,000** in December 2005 and even further down to **0.66/10,000 in 2016.**
- India by the end of March 2011–2012 succeeded in achieving elimination at the state level in 34 states/UTs out of the total of 36 states/UTs.
- Only the state of Chhattisgarh and the UT of Dadra & Nagar Haveli were yet to achieve elimination.
- By the end of March 2016, 551 districts (82.36%), out of the total 669 in districts, in India had a prevalence of <1/10,000 population.
- Despite the above successes, **India continues to account for 60% of new cases** reported globally each year and is **among the 22 “global priority countries”** that contribute 95% of world numbers of leprosy.
- In the year 2007, new cases detected in India were 137,685, and nine years later in 2016, the number remained almost the same at 135,485, a significant increase over the 127,326 new cases detected in 2015.
- This increase in new cases is attributed by NLEP to their recent strategy of innovative Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC), which resulted in the detection of 34000 new cases in 2016.

Recommendations of various reports and resolutions:

- India has signed and ratified **the UN General Assembly Resolution of 2010 on the 'Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members'**.
- **National Human Rights Commission** recommended a decade ago to introduce amendments in personal laws and other statutes.
- **The Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions**, in its 131st Report on 'Petition praying for integration and empowerment of leprosy-affected persons', had examined various statutes and desired that concerned Ministries and State governments urgently wipe clean the anachronistic and discriminatory provisions in prevalent statutes.
- **The Law Commission of India, in its 256th Report**, 'Eliminating discrimination against persons affected by leprosy', had also recommended removing the discriminatory provisions in various statutes against leprosy patients.

About the proposed (amendment) bill:

- The Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018, seeks to make a start in amending stigmatising statutes.
- It attempts to end the discrimination against leprosy persons in various central laws: the Divorce Act, 1869; the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939; the Special Marriage Act, 1954; the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act of 1956.
- The Bill eliminates leprosy as a ground for dissolution of marriage or divorce.
- The condition under Section 18 (2) (c) of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, that a Hindu wife is entitled to live separately from her husband without forfeiting her claim to maintenance if the latter is "suffering from a virulent form of leprosy", has been omitted.
- The amendments introduced in the Bill omit the provisions which stigmatise and discriminate against leprosy-affected persons.
- The Bill is meant to provide for the integration of leprosy patients into the mainstream.

Conclusion:

Due to the huge number of population, even incidence of 0.66/10,000 makes a big number. Along with measures at medical and technological levels, there is need of steps to change social behaviour towards the disease. It can be possible through political will and inculcation of scientific temper among members of the society.

Connecting the dots:

- That Leprosy is still a major public health problem. Critically analyse our fight against leprosy.

Note: Website of **National Leprosy Eradication Programme**: <http://nlep.nic.in/>

[NITI Aayog on health](#)

Part of: GS Mains II – Health issue; Social issue

In news:

- NITI Aayog has identified three major sectors -- health, education and children's health - as priority sectors for intervention.
- About 38% of children are malnourished while 50% mothers anaemic.
- NITI Aayog wants to get rid of the malnourishment and anaemia from the country.

[Learning from the past: On medical device pricing](#)

Introduction

- After having brought down the prices of drugs, the government has medical devices on its agenda.
- It will soon announce its decision on the method of rationalizing trade margins for medical devices from the first point of sale.

Findings on Profit margin

- According to the **report of the committee of high trade margins in the sale of drugs**, released by the department of pharmaceuticals in 2016, the price to the distributor for both global and indigenous companies was considered from the first point of sale.
- This report clearly identifies that **it is the margin between the price to the distributor and maximum retail price (MRP) that results in the escalation** of the latter, and recommends that this should be capped.
- The data published by the **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)**—also available in the public domain—shows that margins are indeed skewed towards hospitals.

Rationalizing trade margins:

- The National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Policy, 2012 (NPPP-2012) provides a pointer to understanding which method to opt for when rationalizing trade margins.

- Till 2012, the practice followed by the NPPA was a maximum allowable post-marketing expense (Mape) over standardized manufacturing cost or over landing cost of the product.
- According to the observations documented in NPPP-2012, the manufacturing cost/landing cost methodology of price capping had led to “possible manipulation” of cost data, resulting in entry barriers.
- This was neither good for the patient nor for industry growth, and it impacted “the industry’s ability to invest in enhancing in capabilities”.
- The techniques that were used for knee and stent price capping, failed.
- The idea of price capping based on manufacturing cost/landing cost as per Drug Price Control Order 1995 was an unmitigated disaster.
- The emphasis on price control starting at the bulk drug and formulation stages resulted in drug manufacturing shifting away from notified bulk drugs and formulations under price control. As a result, patients were adversely affected.
- Considering the need for investment in skill development, in-clinic support, innovation and after-sales service of equipment, the scale of investment in pharmaceuticals is less than what it is for the medical device industry.
- If any cost-based price control is imposed for the medical device industry, the magnitude of the adverse effect will be higher.

On the demand side

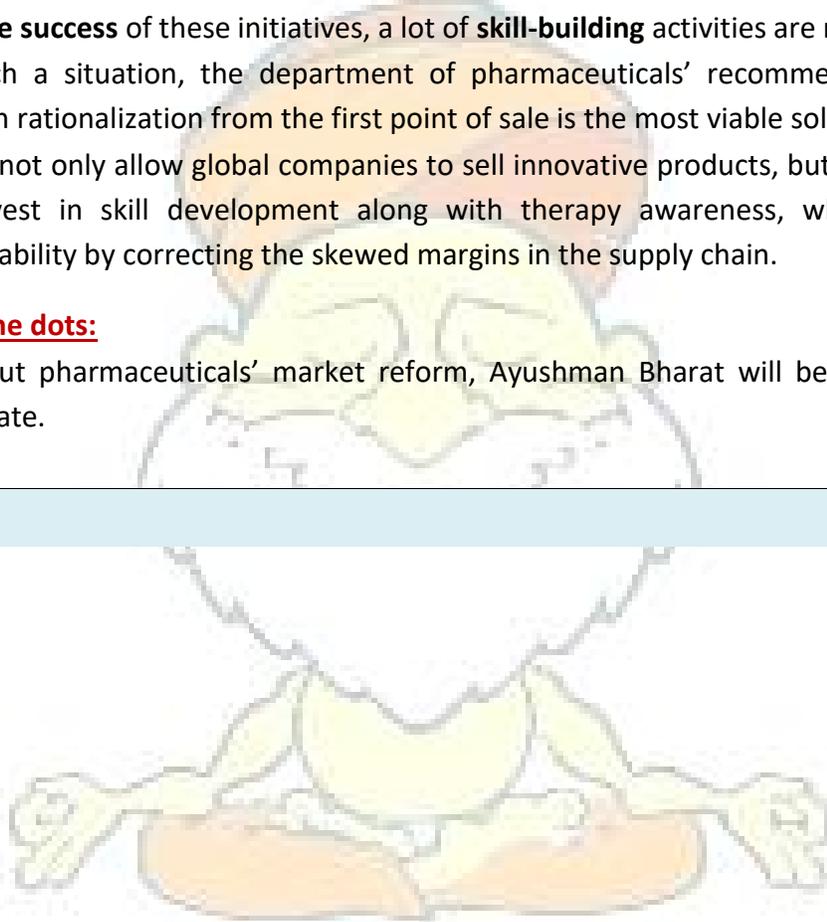
- The demand for medical devices comes from doctors at the primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare levels.
- They need to be aware of the availability of various medical devices for different conditions before treating a patient so that they can guide patients and form an effective referral chain to super-specialty care.
- For this, the global research-based companies need to invest and support clinicians in education and skill building. Every year, around 2.3 million healthcare professionals are trained by these companies. We need to do much more if we are to have universal coverage.
- Who will invest in skill development and therapy awareness if medtech companies and their subsidiaries find margins capped unreasonably from landing cost?
- If a patient feels a certain medication is not effective, he will go back to the doctor to change it, but this is not the case when it comes to medical devices.
- The risk factor is high, as medical devices can’t be replaced without re-operating on patients. So a doctor needs to be well informed about the quality and functionality of the devices for better clinical outcomes.

Way forward:

- The government's previous attempts to cap high trade margins in the sale of drugs show that getting the balance wrong can hurt patients.
- In this Union budget, the government focused on the healthcare sector, launching the world's largest government-funded healthcare programme, **Ayushman Bharat**.
- Besides providing **health insurance to 100 million poor families**, the government also plans to open **150,000 health and wellness centres** to provide comprehensive healthcare with free diagnostics and treatment.
- **For the success** of these initiatives, a lot of **skill-building** activities are required.
- In such a situation, the department of pharmaceuticals' recommendation on trade margin rationalization from the first point of sale is the most viable solution.
- It will not only allow global companies to sell innovative products, but also enable them to invest in skill development along with therapy awareness, while still ensuring affordability by correcting the skewed margins in the supply chain.

Connecting the dots:

- Without pharmaceuticals' market reform, Ayushman Bharat will be a distant dream. Elucidate.



GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Assessment: Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee recommendations on Personal Data Protection

Introduction:

- India is one of the few major democracies in the world without a national privacy and data protection framework.
- 2017 Supreme Court's '**Right to Privacy**' judgment (**K. Puttaswamy v Union of India case**) clarified that we have a fundamental right to privacy, and also, that the state has an obligation to protect this right by enacting appropriate legislation.
- Union government tasked a committee headed by **Justice B.N. Srikrishna** to formulate such a law.

It was created to deal with the judicial concerns triggered by the Union government's arguments against the fundamental right to privacy in the Supreme Court's Aadhaar hearings, as well as concerns about the lack of effective regulation of private sector use, transfer, abuse of data that arose in the Supreme Court hearings on the challenge to the transfer of Indian user data from WhatsApp to Facebook, following its acquisition.

(It is in this context that the below article tries to critically examine the report's recommendations, and its draft Data Protection Bill.)

Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee

- Srikrishna panel submitted a draft "**The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018**"
- It recommended that critical personal data of Indian citizens be processed in centres located within the country.
- Government should notify categories of personal data that will be considered critical.
- The draft bill also provides for penalties for the data processor as well as compensation to the data principal to be imposed for violations of the data protection law.

Analysis:

- The report is just a small step and leaves too many exceptions.
- It has repeatedly focused on ensuring that the government prioritise the interests of the "digital economy" — and the wide loopholes that it leaves — is concerning.
- For example, the model for data protection that the committee has proposed leaves too many exceptions, especially when the government is the data collector and user.

- In doing the so, the report attempts to open the right to privacy to allow the state the most convenient means by which to realise its regulatory agenda.
- It proposes that the basic requirement of notice-and-consent could be lowered or waived altogether for “state functions” or social welfare purposes, among others.

These are broadly-worded carve-outs that can be abused and need to be carefully reviewed.

- One more important issue is about surveillance reform. Any data protection law will be incomplete without considering the vital question of surveillance which, at present, is conducted free of judicial oversight and at the near-arbitrary will of bureaucrats.
- In Puttaswamy ruling, the court cited the global legal standards on privacy, including the International “Necessary and Proportionate” Principles pertaining to communication surveillance, which requires the application of judicial pre-approval for surveilling our protected information.
- Consequently, there is also an urgent need for clear, effective institutions tasked with surveillance oversight.

Conclusion:

The draft and report are steps in the right direction, but they are not giant strides.

The Union government — including the cabinet — must consult all stakeholders, and send a stronger bill to Parliament. It must allow MPs to carefully study, openly deliberate, and finally enact the stronger legal standards on privacy that several of them — and countless Indian citizens, lawyers, and judges — have been demanding.

Connecting the dots:

- The dawn of the information age has opened up great opportunities for the beneficial use of data. However, it has also enhanced the perils of unregulated and arbitrary use of personal data. Discuss. Also examine the need of framing a robust law to protect individual data.

Data Protection: Right to Privacy and National Security

The draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018

- It has provisions to protect personal data as an essential facet of information privacy.
- The objective of the Bill is to balance the growth of the digital economy and use of data as a means of communication.

- The Bill applies to the personal data which have been processed within India, by persons or agencies governed by Indian Law.
- The Bill also brings within its ambit the processing of personal data by data fiduciaries or data processors located abroad in connection with business or profiling of data principals within the territory of India.
- The proposed law defines personal data as information relating to a natural person.
- Breach of personal data involves unauthorised or accidental processing of personal data that compromises the confidentiality, integrity or availability of personal data to a data principal.
- Data fiduciaries should retain personal data “only as long as may be reasonably necessary to satisfy the purpose for which it is processed”.
- The Bill allows processing of personal data for “prompt action” only if it is necessary for any function of Parliament; or any State Legislature to render service or benefit to citizens; or in response to any medical emergency to the data principal; or in cases of epidemic, outbreak of disease, disaster or breakdown of public order.
- The Bill includes the ‘right to be forgotten’, which is the right of a data principal to restrict or prevent continuing disclosure of personal data by a data fiduciary.
- The Bill calls for a copy of user data to be mandatorily localised in India, it will “boost” law enforcement efforts to access data necessary for investigation and prosecution of crimes.

Criticism on Data localization:

- The Indian law enforcement relies on an out-dated Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) process to obtain data stored by U.S. This scenario will not change even after technology companies relocate Indian data to India.
- Localisation can provide data only for crimes that have been committed in India, where both the perpetrator and victim are situated in India.
- Transnational terrorism, cybercrimes and money laundering that the committee rightly highlights will often involve individuals and accounts that are not Indian, and therefore will not be stored in India.

The data protection bill is an opportunity for India to be a partner under the CLOUD Act

What is CLOUD Act?

Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data (CLOUD) Act, passed by the U.S. Congress seeks to demopolise control over data from U.S. authorities.

The law will for the first time allow tech companies to share data directly with certain foreign governments having an executive agreement with the U.S.

Such foreign country have to certify that the state has robust privacy protections, and respect for due process and the rule of law.

Why India need to partner with US?

- The Justice Srikrishna Committee in its report accompanying the draft Personal Data Protection Bill released on July 27 notes that eight of the top 10 most accessed websites in India are owned by U.S. entities.
- The CLOUD Act creates a potential mechanism through with countries such as India can request data not just for crimes committed within their borders but also for transnational crimes involving their state interests.

Conclusion:

The Bill, while recognising principles of legality, necessity and proportionality for data processing in the interest of national security and investigation of crimes, fails to draw procedural rules necessary for actualising these principles. By improving on short comings of our Data Protection policy we can partner with US under CLOUD Act to have access to data stored with and processed by US fiduciaries and other global partners.

Connecting the dots:

- With the increase in debates on right to privacy verses National Security, there is an urgent need of Data Protection Policy in line with global standards.

Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G)

In news:

- WHO report compliments Swachh Bharat's rural component.

Highlights of WHO report

- SBM-G to prevent more than three lakh deaths due to diarrhoea and protein-energy malnutrition between 2014-October 2019 (as per WHO report)
- India's rural sanitation coverage escalated to 89.07%
- 19 States and Union Territories were declared Open Defecation Free (ODF)
- By 2019, the initiative aims to achieve 100% sanitation coverage.
- 14 million Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) can be avoided between 2014 and 2019

Important Value Additions

Fast Recap: Swachh Bharat Mission

We already are aware of the following –

Swachh Bharat Mission was launched on 2nd Oct, 2014. It aims at making India clean by October 2, 2019 with a two-fold objective:

- (i) Making the country 100% free from open defecation
- (ii) Ensuring 100% modern and scientific municipal solid waste management.

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) has two sub-missions – **SBM (Rural)** and **SBM (Urban)**.

The SBM is in sync with the **Goal 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals** which commits the countries of the world to achieve universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and hygiene to all in the next 15 years.

Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)

- Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
- SBM-G seeks to eliminate open defecation in rural areas by 2019 through improving access to sanitation.
- It also seeks to generate awareness to motivate communities to adopt sustainable sanitation practices, and encourage the use of appropriate technologies for sanitation.
- Funding for SBM-G will be through budgetary allocations of the central and state governments, the Swachh Bharat Kosh, and multilateral agencies.
- The **Swachh Bharat Kosh** has been established to collect funds from non-governmental sources.

Major schemes of the central government to improve rural sanitation

- (i) Central Rural Sanitation Programme (1986)
- (ii) Total Sanitation Campaign (1999)
- (iii) Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (2012)
- (iv) Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) (2014)

[New constitution for BCCI](#)

Part of: Mains GS Paper II- Government interventions

Key pointers:

New roadmap

The Supreme Court has approved BCCI's new draft constitution. Some key issues:



Voting rights

Lodha: One State, one vote

SC verdict: Not accepted.

Associations based in Maharashtra and Gujarat will retain full membership

Cooling-off period

Lodha: After one term

SC verdict: After two consecutive terms

Membership in BCCI

Lodha: No full membership to associations with no State entity

SC verdict: Services, Railways & Association of Indian Universities will have full membership

Tenure of post

Lodha: Total of 9 years at the BCCI or State associations

SC verdict: Decision pending

Age cap | Lodha: 70 years | **SC verdict:** Decision pending

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[paper/7po9ao/article24648896.ece/alternates/FREE_660/09-krishnadas-LG574GKUV61jpgjgg](https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/7po9ao/article24648896.ece/alternates/FREE_660/09-krishnadas-LG574GKUV61jpgjgg)

- The Supreme Court has finalised the new Constitution for the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- It rejected the 'one State-one vote' recommendation of the Justice R.M. Lodha Committee and altering the cooling-off period for cricket bosses.
- It disagreed with Justice Lodha that cricket could prosper only if the BCCI was represented by every State and Union Territory. Instead, the court restored full BCCI memberships to three associations in Gujarat and Maharashtra each.

[PM Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech: Highlights](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains

In news:

72nd anniversary of India's Independence

Important Highlights: PM spoke about

1. Passage of the Bill to create an **OBC Commission**

2. **100th anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh massacre**
3. **India's space mission** – In **2022** (on the occasion of India's 75th Independence Day), India to unfurl the tri-colour in the space.
4. **Subramania Bharati vision** of India - Subramania Bharati (great Tamil poet) had said India will not only rise as a great nation, but will also inspire the others. India will show the way to the entire world to unshackle the bonds.
5. **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan** - to be launched on 25th September 2018 (birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay)
6. India's farming sector - 'Beej Se Bazar Tak' approach ; double farmer incomes by 2022
7. On women empowerment - Practice of Triple Talaq to be ended; Women officers commissioned in short service will get opportunity for permanent commission.
8. On government schemes and policies - Thirteen crore 'mudra loans'; Ujjwala and Saubhagya Yojana; GST; Swachh Bharat mission

Forest Rights Act

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II - Government schemes and policies; Social issue; Vulnerable section

Why in news?

- Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (commonly known as Forest Rights Act or ROFR Act) is in news.
- Supreme Court had issued directive asking states to detail about actions taken against the forest rights claimants whose claims have been rejected.
- Forest department has highlighted that there was no provision to act on 'illegal' occupants of forest land or penalise such claimants.

Important Value Additions:

About ROFR Act/FRA

- ROFR Act is also known as Forest Rights Act, the Tribal Rights Act, the Tribal Bill, and the Tribal Land Act.
- The law deals with the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other resources, denied to them over decades as a result of the continuance of colonial forest laws in India.

Do you know?

- India's forests are governed by two main laws, the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The former empowers the government to declare any area to be a reserved forest, protected forest or village forest.
- The latter allows any area to be constituted as a "protected area", namely a national park, wildlife sanctuary, tiger reserve or community conservation area.
- Under these laws, the rights of people living in or depending on the area to be declared as a forest or protected area are to be "settled" by a "forest settlement officer." This basically requires that officer to enquire into the claims of people to land, minor forest produce, etc., and, in the case of claims found to be valid, to allow them to continue or to extinguish them by paying compensation.
- Studies have shown that in many areas this process either did not take place at all or took place in a highly faulty manner.
- Therefore the Forest Rights Act was intended to correct the "historical injustice" done to forest dwellers by the failure to recognise their rights

Eligibility to get rights under the Act

- Eligibility is confined to those who "primarily reside in forests" and who depend on forests and forest land for a livelihood.
- Further, either the claimant must be a member of the Scheduled Tribes scheduled in that area or must have been residing in the forest for 75 years.

Misunderstanding the Act as a land distribution scheme

- A great deal of the debate is fuelled by misunderstandings of the purpose of the Act.
- The most common is that the purpose of the law is to distribute forest land to forest dwellers or tribals, often claimed to be at the rate of 4 hectares per family.
- The Act is intended to recognise lands that are already under cultivation as on 13 December 2005, not to grant title to any new lands.

[Rythu Bima group life insurance scheme](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II - Government schemes and policies; Social issue; Farmers issue

In news:

- Rythu Bima life insurance scheme, introduced by the Telangana government, is being touted as the most unique of life insurance schemes wherein the death of farmers on any reason is compensated within a maximum period of seven days.

Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Education reforms

In news:

- Centre comes up with new annual ranking method for higher educational institutions, based on how they fare in terms of innovation.
- **Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA)** - will be formally launched on **October 15**, the **birth anniversary of former President APJ Abdul Kalam**.
- The first results will be declared on **February 28, 2019, which is also Science Day**.
- ARIIA will work parallel to the overall ranking of institutions captured by the annual **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**.
- ARIIA will focus on: budget expenses and revenues generated; facilitating access to advance centres; ideas of entrepreneurship; innovation ecosystems supported through teaching and learning; and innovative solutions to improve governance of the institution.

Do you know?

- There is slight distinction between Research and Innovation – ‘research produces new knowledge while innovation puts that knowledge to use’.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Problem at the WTO

Introduction:

- After **Second World War**, World economy was completely shaken. With the aims to help rebuild the shattered post-war economy and to promote international economic cooperation, **Bretton Woods conference** was held. This created institutions like **World Bank and IMF**. And **paved way** for establishment of **WTO** in 1994.

History and Evolution of WTO:

- World Bank and IMF are called **Bretton Wood institutions**; they were established at Bretton Wood Conference in 1944.
- The original Bretton Woods agreement also included plans for an **International Trade Organisation (ITO)**
- International Trade Organisation (ITO) was to be created **to establish multilateral rules** for the settlement of trade disputes and **to resist protectionist demands** and provide for greater legal certainty.
- The **ITO never came into existence** as it was eventually rejected by the U.S.
- The **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** came to replace the ITO.
- This ad hoc and provisional mechanism (**GATT**) **was replaced by WTO in 1994**.

U.S.'s ire

- U.S. rejected the idea of ITO, and four decades later herself drove the agenda to establish World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- U.S. has been proven **isolationist and protectionist**. It doesn't embrace those ideas which challenge her **leadership**.
- At the Doha round of trade negotiations the U.S. destroyed the negotiation process in **formulating excessive demands that no country was prepared to meet**.
- Most recent examples of U.S. ire against its very creations NAFTA and TPP, also against NATO and UNESCO are proof of her hard-headed wish for **uncontested leadership against multilateralism**.

Dispute Settlement Crisis at WTO:

- The U.S. has systematically blocked the **appointment of new Appellate Body members** ("judges") and de facto impeded the work of the WTO appeal mechanism.

- With only four working members out of seven normally serving office in July 2018, the institution is under great stress.
- **If no appointment is made, it will simply be destroyed by December 2019**, since the Appellate Body requires a core of three members to decide a dispute.
- The U.S. is not willing to be judged by an independent multilateral quasi-judicial institution.

Other Concerns Related to Dispute Settlement at WTO:

- Over the **politicisation** of the Appellate Body appointment and reappointment process
- The quasi-attribution of permanent Appellate Body seats to the U.S. and the European Union (EU).
- There is **concern that China** may be on its way to having a **permanent seat**.
- The **“Overreaching”** or judicial activism of **United States**.
- The WTO dispute **settlement mechanism** is not a world trade court. The process remains **political and diplomatic**. In trade wars, the objective is not to settle a dispute; it is to win the battle.
- The very existence of **an appeal mechanism** is now paradoxically questioned at a time the global community criticises the **absence of the same mechanism in Investor-State Dispute Settlement**.

Who could be WTO’s saviour?

- China is trying to establish herself by its assertiveness in rule based WTO system.
- China, EU, and to some extent India, and a few others, is now the main supporter of multilateralism.
- The recent EU-China proposal to promote the reform of the WTO is said to combat “unilateralism and protectionism” but might well fail to address unfair trade issues raised against China itself.

Conclusion:

The world has changed and multilateral institutions now have to embed these changes. This WTO crisis might well be the final battle to retain control over a Western-centric organisation. The time has come for the emerging economies and the developing world to have a greater say in how to shape multilateralism and its institutions.

Connecting the dots:

- The Protectionist stand of Developed nations and assertiveness of Developing countries has left the WTO ineffective, Comment.

Pak. troops to get training at Russian institutes

Part of: GS Mains II – International Relations; India and the world; Security issues

In news:

- For the first time, Pakistani soldiers will undergo training at Russian military institutes.
- Both the countries signed an agreement related to it, during Russia-Pakistan Joint Military Consultative Committee (JMCC)

Turkey Crisis and its impact

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II and III – International Relations; Indian Economy

In news:

- Trade wars between Turkey and USA has lead to a currency crisis for Turkish Lira.

Why crisis in Turkey?

- US has doubled steel and aluminium tariffs on Turkey, as US has been pushing for the release of Pastor Andrew Brunson, who was being held by Turkey on terrorism charges.
- Turkey retaliated by increasing import taxes on US goods, such as automobiles by 120 per cent, alcohol by 140 per cent and tariffs on coal, cosmetics and rice.
- The Turkish currency, lira has fell steep (depreciating around 80 percent against the US dollar so far in 2018) – This has rattled investors globally, with the currencies of other emerging markets too coming under pressure.
- High debt - Turkey's economy is grappling with high levels of debt in the private sector and significant foreign funding in the banking system.

Its impact:

- Indian markets along with some Asian markets have seen some volatility due to the Lira crisis.
- This is typical as foreign investors will fear higher risk assets in emerging markets and will dump the local currency for US Dollars.
- In other words, the foreign funds that freely flowed into emerging markets may dry up.
- India is less vulnerable relative to other emerging markets (EMs) in terms of external debt and current account deficit. But if the crisis continues, it could hurt India.
- India's exports would slow down if the global situation deteriorates.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and World Urban Campaign

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – International fora and conventions

About:

- UN-Habitat is the UN agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development.
- Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.
- The mandate of UN-Habitat derives from the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996.
- It runs two major worldwide campaigns – the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, and the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure.
- Through these campaigns and by other means the agency focuses on a range of issues and special projects which it helps implement.
- The twin goals of the Habitat Agenda are adequate shelter for all and the development of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world.

Do you know?

- Most of UN-Habitat's funding comes from voluntary contributions from governmental and intergovernmental donors, while the UN General Assembly provides part of the regular budget.

World Urban Campaign

- It is a global coalition of public, private and civil society partners seeking to raise the urban agenda.
- It is coordinated by UN-Habitat.

Exercise Peace Mission 2018

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II and III – International organization; Multilateral organization; International Relations; Security

In news:

- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Peace Mission 2018 Exercise was held in Chebarkul, Russia.

- Military contingents of the **all eight SCO member nations** (China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, India and Pakistan) participated in this Exercise.
- The Peace Mission Exercise focused on anti-terror operations.

Do you know?

- This was the 5th edition of SCO Peace Mission Exercise.
- India participated for the first time.
- The Russian Army has the major participation of 1700 personnel followed by China with 700 & India with 200 personnel. Pakistan contingent comprised of 110 members.
- The SCO Peace Mission Exercise takes place every two years.
- The previous editions of this exercise were mainly limited to Central Asian nations. But due to the entry of India and Pakistan (in June 2017), SCO's counter-terrorism mission now has been expanded to South Asia.



INDIA AND THE WORLD

India and US: Defense and strategic Relations

Introduction:

- India finally joins the elite group of allies of the US
- Now it is set to get **access to 90 per cent defence technology and equipment, all of them for dual use** from the US
- In other words, Indian defence industry can get licenses to **import sensitive US dual-use items and technology**
- The below article gives the glimpse of **India-US Defense relations** in context of **dual use technology**

History

- Prominent leaders of India's freedom struggle had friendly relations with United States of America which continued well after independence of India.
- Since independence India has been reluctant to maintain close ties with US due to its non-alignment policy (to avoid involvement in the Cold War power-play between the US and Soviet Union) and closed economy.
- **From 1990s**, with the fall of Soviet Union and LPG reforms of Indian economy, India started to develop **closer ties with US**.
- After India's nuclear test in 1998, under George W. Bush India started to build nuclear relations with US, which were further strengthened in 2008 by **123 Agreement** under Barak Obama administration.
- Taking Defense relations to further heights, in **2016 India-US signed Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)**, which subsequently gave India status of **Major Defense Partner** to the United States.

Import of Dual Use Tech from US: Strategic Trade Authorization

- Countries come under Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (**STA-1**) list when US is reasonably sure that technology will not endanger regional stability, does not pose a threat to US national security and has minimum to zero risk of proliferation.
- STA-1 list consists of 36 countries - either they are major US allies or NATO allies or members of all four multilateral export control regimes.
- India is neither ally of US nor of NATO and is a member of only three out of four multilateral export control regimes.
- India will be third Asian country after Japan and South Korea to avail exemptions under Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1) list.

- So far India has been part of STA-2. This list has eight countries. China, Pakistan and Russia are not part of either of the lists.

Benefits for India/Conclusion:

- Companies will be more ready to import and manufacture defence and dual use tech without having to go through complex licencing procedures. Since 90% of the technology is going to be licence free.
- Trade and commerce in defence equipment is likely to go up. This progress will help in not only achieving objectives of Make in India in defence sector but also contribute in making India more self-reliant.
- India's part to this club is reaffirmation of her impeccable record of being responsible member of the concerned multilateral export control regimes.

Connecting the dots

- US is India's one of the most important trade partner with respect to Defence sector, but these strategic relationship should not affect the sovereignty of India.

India and Sri Lanka: Mattala airport

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – India and the world; International Relations

In news:

- India had sought Sri Lanka's cooperation in swift completion of joint ventures
- The two governments have agreed that India, with a 70% stake in the joint venture, will contribute \$225 million to revamp and run the airport, while the Sri Lankan side will invest the balance.
- India will operate the airport on a 40-year lease, as per the draft agreement

India-assisted projects such as –

- joint venture to run the Mattala airport in Sri Lanka's Southern Province;
- an LNG terminal near Colombo, and
- the joint development of the oil storage facility in the eastern port town of Trincomalee

India-UK Concerns: Khalistan movement

Part of: GS Mains II and III – India and the world; International Relations; Internal Security

In news:

- Britain's Green Party had extended its support to controversial pro-Khalistan rally which took place in London.
- The rally is in support of a referendum for an independent Sikh homeland.
- This has heightened tensions between India and the U.K., after Britain said it wouldn't ban the demonstration, despite concerns raised by India, and the issuance of a demarche to take action.
- India had earlier raised concerns about the flag-tearing during such pro-Khalistan rally and received an apology from the British government.
- Sikh Federation U.K. has accused Indian authorities of "overreacting" to the Sikh diaspora and described the "re-establishment of a Sikh homeland" as "inevitable".
- Communist Party of India calls the proposed 'Sikh Referendum 2020' an attempt to disturb the hard-earned peace in Punjab.

Think!

- Is India still a theocratic State?
- Does India face challenges like - Hindutva idea of India; religion-based secessionist movement like that of Khalistan?

[India announces Guru fete - to counter 'Khalistan rally'](#)

Part of: GS Mains II and III – India and the world; International Relations; Internal Security

In news:

- Hours ahead of the pro-Khalistan rally in London, External Affairs Minister announced that all Indian diplomatic missions would celebrate the **550th birth anniversary of the founder of Sikh faith Guru Nanak**.
- The move is seen as a counter to the pro-Khalistan rally, organised by a U.S.-based group.
- India had issued demarche (a political step or initiative) over the 'Khalistani rally,' intended to drum up support for a non-binding referendum on a Sikh homeland in 2020.

Do you know?

- The pro-Khalistan rally, and a counter-rally to support India, took place in **Trafalgar Square**.
- The Khalistan rally was organised by the Sikhs for Justice and supporters from outfits across the U.K. participated in it.

India and UK: India rejects DNA tests for 'illegal migrants'

Part of: GS Mains II – India and the world; International Affairs

In news:

- India rejected UK's proposal to use DNA sampling to establish the nationality of illegal migrants living in UK.
- India refused to sign the final pact citing "privacy issues."
- According to the original pact or MoU, security agencies in India were to verify the antecedents of illegal migrants without documents in the U.K. within 72 days and those with documents within 15 days.

India-UK: Cultural Diplomacy

Part of: GS Mains II – International Relations; India and the World

In news:

- British police returned 12th century bronze Buddha statue to India
- The 12th century icon was stolen from Nalanda museum
- Example of Britain's "cultural diplomacy"

INDIA and AFRICA

Refocusing on Africa: New strategy

Introduction:

Prime Minister recently returned from a tour of Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa that included the BRICS Summit in South Africa and outlining of 10 guiding principles for India's engagement in Africa.

10 guiding principles for India's engagement in Africa

1. Africa will be at the top of India's priorities.
2. India's development partnership will be guided by Africa's priorities.
3. India will keep her markets open and make it easier and more attractive to trade.
4. India's experience with the digital revolution to support Africa's development.

5. Agriculture; Africa has 60% of the world's arable land but only 10% of global output.
6. India Africa partnership will address the challenges of climate change.
7. Cooperation in combating terrorism and extremism; keeping our cyberspace safe and secure; and, supporting the UN in advancing and keeping peace.
8. Work with African nations to keep the oceans open and free for the benefit of all.
9. Make Africa a nursery for the aspirations of Africa's youth.
10. Work together for a just, representative and democratic global order that has a voice and a role for one-third of humanity that lives in Africa and India.

About India's refocused Africa strategy:

- Refocused Africa strategy builds on India's soft power in historical, trade, and cultural links, particularly with the western edge of the Indo-Pacific.
- India aims to secure her foothold on the continent, secure access to resources, build markets for Indian goods and services, and support India's global ambitions.
- The new strategy is also focused on building alliances and differentiating India from China as a development partner, at a time when several countries in the Indo-Pacific have fallen into a debt trap with China.
- India has tried to differentiate itself by engaging with its diaspora and private sector links to build development partnerships, where India has a comparative advantage in English-language training and research.
- India has also initiated a series of India-Africa forums and is working with Japan on an Asia Africa Growth Corridor.
- India has committed about 150 credit lines worth \$10 billion as development fund but with lower disbursement rates than China.

About Rwanda:

- It is an important gateway to Africa with which India has a strategic partnership.
- Rwanda is the present chair of the influential African Union, where common positions are adopted by the continent.
- It is the third-fastest growing economy in Africa.
- Rwanda has been a linchpin of the West's engagement in Africa, giving it an outsized voice in the power corridors of Europe and North America.
- Rwanda has signed on to China's Belt and Road Initiative with 15 huge investment projects.

To solidify this strategic relationship with Rwanda

- India would open a high commission in Rwanda
- Signed seven MoUs, including in defence
- Provided two credit lines of \$100 million each for irrigation works and industrial parks

About Uganda:

- Uganda currently chairs the East African Community, a grouping of six countries with a common market and free trade arrangements with other countries.
- Indian diaspora, whose numbers of 50,000 belie their role in nearly two-thirds of the country's GDP.

India with Uganda:

- Prime minister of India addressed the Ugandan parliament (a first by an Indian prime minister) as well as a business event.
- India committed two credit lines for over \$200 million, and announced several capacity-building and training programmes.
- Also extended cooperation on training between Uganda's military and the Indian Army.

Impediments and way forward:

- India is putting Africa at the top of its priorities and is keen to build partnerships that will liberate its potential rather than constrain its future. Still the questions about the efficacy of tools for implementation remain.
- India's development partnerships are notorious for their low disbursement rates and slow delivery. Only 4% of Indian grants in 2017-18 were committed to Africa.
- Credit lines to Africa have a 40 per cent disbursement rate, and of the \$10 billion in credit promised between 2015-20, only \$1.5 billion have been committed through 2019 and an even smaller fraction disbursed.
- India's new concessional financing scheme, which subsidises private Indian companies bidding on African infrastructure projects, shows no signs of functioning a year after its announcement.
- As India seeks to implement its new strategic partnership with Africa and the is need to convince countries that it can not only commit but also deliver.

Connecting the dots:

- What are the salient features of India's relationship with East African Countries, evaluate in context of India refocused Africa strategy.

[Breaking the Radcliffe barrier: India, China, Pakistan Triangle](#)**Introduction:**

- China's envoy to Delhi visited Punjab. After watching the popular flag-lowering ceremony, he expressed his hope for “peace, friendship and cooperation” between India and Pakistan.
- There are a number of **factors that can lead this triangular relationship in a more positive direction.**

First factor, Beijing’s interest in **making the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC),** the flagship project of China’s expansive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), more **profitable by extending it to India.**

- China has affirmed that CPEC is not an exclusive bilateral project; it can be turned into a more broad-based regional initiative.
- Afghanistan and Iran are eager for such an extension. Whereas, the Central Asian Republics are very much part of the BRI.
- There might be ways in which the political differences between India – China, especially the critical one on CPEC’s transit through Kashmir, can be bridged.
- If China returned to genuine neutrality on the Kashmir question, it would be a lot easier for Delhi to set aside its sovereignty argument on CPEC.
- The differences on economic and other issues in relation to BRI can easily be overcome through focused negotiations on specific projects.

Second factor, the **difficult macroeconomic situation that Pakistan** finds itself in today and the potential role that commercial cooperation with India could play in alleviating it.

- Pakistan should let India export its goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia through Pakistan. That could bring hard currency through transit fees and boost the Pakistani industries.
- Such transit trade could help make Pakistan into a commercial hub between South and Central Asia, including China’s western regions.

Third factor, China’s growing political and economic influence on Pakistan.

- Pakistan has become more dependent than ever on China’s support due to her rapidly deteriorating relations with the US.
- At the same time, China’s stakes in the stabilisation of Pakistan and Afghanistan, given its restive Muslim-majority Xinjiang province, are rising.
- Beijing is playing a more active role in Afghan peace-making and to encourage Pakistan’s reconciliation with India.
- China’s stakes in sub-regional economic integration in the north western marches of India looks real.

Finally, any such sub-regional economic integration must necessarily come down to the Radcliffe Line that divides the Punjab.

- Punjab, which was historically at the heart of trans-regional trade routes, is now a dead end.
- Over the last two decades, repeated efforts were made to change Punjab's economic condition.
- Chief Ministers of both parts of Punjab and the central governments of Delhi and Islamabad tried to negotiate agreements to liberalise cross-border religious pilgrimages and trade in goods and energy. But the barrier at Radcliffe Line remained as daunting as ever.

Conclusion:

- The “new Pakistan,” and the willingness of the Indian Prime Minister to consider a “fresh start” in bilateral relations suggests there might be an opportunity to try and turn the Radcliffe Line into a commercial bridge.
- Chinese ambassador's visit to the India-Pakistan border may just be a random diplomatic event. Or, Beijing may well have realised that it is Punjab that holds the key to unfreezing India-Pakistan relations.

Connecting the dots:

- Overland transit trade between India and Pakistan could be the game changer for both the economies. In unfreezing these trade ties, Punjab holds the key, comment.

Cultural Diplomacy

Part of: GS Mains II – International Relations; India and the World

In news:

- We earlier read about article dealing with cultural diplomacy – Britain Police returning 12th century bronze Buddha statue to India, which was stolen from Nalanda museum.
- ‘Durga Puja diplomacy’ - Chinese artists to put up cultural performances in Kolkata, West Bengal Durga Puja.
- It is significant because it will draw the attention of the Chinese people and promote cultural ties between eastern India and China.
- During the celebrations, a structure representing a Chinese bottle gourd will be built. In Chinese, the gourd is called ‘Hulu,’ which signifies happiness and prosperity and is very popular in China, especially in the Yunnan province.

- Chinese artists to perform Chinese songs, lion dance, acrobatics and martial arts.

Sovereignty and sensitivity: India-Bhutan Relations

Issues in the news:

- The Border Roads Organisation, which helps build Bhutanese roads under **Project Dantak**, decided in July to make reflective stickers on the road sides and railings, in shades of the Indian tricolour, it raised red flags among the Bhutanese on social media.
- Citizens were worried that this was an attempt by India to impose its flag on their countryside. Eventually, the stickers were changed to blue and white.
- In April last year, the Department of Roads had to remove a board which read “Dantak welcomes you to Bhutan” at the Paro international airport.
- On an arterial highway, another board that credited the “Government of India” had to be painted over.

Other Concerns:

- Such incidences are a blip in India-Bhutan relations, but it is a clear indicator of **heightened sensitivities** in the Himalayan kingdom as it heads to its third general election.
- Previous Indian government’s decision **to cut cooking gas subsidy** just before the 2013 elections in Bhutan has often been shown as proof of Indian interference.
- Since then, the **present Indian government’s actions**, indicating a **preference** for one party (Bangladesh) or **antipathy for another** (Sri Lanka), have been **noted closely in Bhutan**.

Sovereignty and self-sufficiency

- The present Bhutanese government achieved the 8% GDP growth, along with a construction and tourist boom in Bhutan.
- They were **successful in stabilising the rupee-ngultrum crises** as well as for economic reforms. But Bhutan **failed to curb the national debt**, owed mostly to India for hydropower loans.
- Competing parties in the forthcoming elections are giving **top priorities to “sovereignty, security and self-sufficiency” of Bhutan**.
- This election comes days after **India-China stand-off** in 2017 in the Bhutan-claimed area of Doklam. Therefore the election **candidates advocate a Bhutanese foreign policy** that is **less dependent** on India.

- Another party has a similarly worded campaign manifesto title: **“For a self-reliant Bhutan: our concern, our responsibility”**.
- It can be concluded that, the concerns over India’s or any other country’s presence in Bhutan’s domestic and foreign policy are not being dismissed.

What India should do?

- India must step lightly and thoughtfully around the upcoming Bhutan's national election.
- The government should keep **high-profile visits at an arm’s length** from the election process; especially given that there will be several such visits after the National Assembly is chosen.
- **Revisiting policies and issues;** The preceding months may also be a useful gape to revise India’s Bhutan policy and address several issues that have come up in the past few years — for example, the hydropower projects where **delays in constructing and commissioning** in Bhutan by Indian companies have led to the **country’s burgeoning national debt**.
- India’s power-surplus status and the advent of other renewable energies like wind and solar power will make it more difficult for Bhutan to ensure that its hydropower sector becomes profitable.
- Unless India finds ways to help, it will be accused of the same sort of **“debt-trapping”** that China is accused of today.
- India also needs to focus on policing **cross-border trade** better. **The goods and services tax** still hurts Bhutanese exporters, and **demonetisation** has left lasting scars on the banking system.

The China question

- Doklam, which has long been discussed as part of a possible “package solution” to the Bhutan-China border dispute, could become a point of India-China land dispute, with Bhutan becoming a hapless spectator in the middle.
- Experts point out that China’s actions since last June, to build a permanent military presence above the stand-off point, mean that Bhutan has a much reduced advantage in any forthcoming negotiations on the issue.

Conclusion:

- Given concerns over Indian influence, New Delhi must exercise caution in the run-up to Bhutan’s elections.
- Empirically, India has advocated and supported sovereignty and right of self-determination of nations across the world. Considering this legacy of Independent democratic India, she should refrain from interfering in sovereign matters of Bhutan.

Connecting the dots:

- Critically comment on the nature of India – Bhutan relationship.

BIMSTEC Summit

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – India and its neighbours; International Relations

In news:

- BIMSTEC - Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
- PM Modi to join a summit of leaders from BIMSTEC countries in Kathmandu on August 30-31 and hold bilateral talks.
- Main focus - speedy conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement within the group
- BIMSTEC countries are yet to finalise and conclude the FTA which was negotiated in 2004.
- BIMSTEC FTA is expected to boost intra-regional trade.
- The visibility of BIMSTEC needs to be enhanced in a region where already a few other regional cooperation groups like ASEAN, SAARC, SASEC are in place.



<http://www.maeshat.in/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Bay-of-Bengal-Initiative-for-Multi-Sectoral-Technical-and-Economic-Cooperation-BIMSTEC.jpg>

About BIMSTEC:

- BIMSTEC is the sub-regional group of seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting contiguous regional unity.
- BIMSTC group is comprising of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.
- It was established on 6 June 1997 through Bangkok Declaration. It is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Objectives of BIMSTEC: Technological and economical cooperation among south Asian and south East Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal.
- It is sector-driven cooperative organization, starting with six sector including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries. In 2008 it was expanded to embrace eight more sectors including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change.

India and BIMSTEC

- India is an active participant of BIMSTEC and is considered an extension of India's Neighbourhood First Policy and Look-East Policy.

Challenges at BIMSTEC**Introduction**

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit in Kathmandu, will be another milestone for India after the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit hosted by it in 2016, as the grouping has gradually emerged as a key vehicle **to take forward India's regional, strategic and economic interests.**

Stagnation of SAARC

- Stagnation of SAARC **limited both, the scope of India's growing economic aspirations as well as the role it could play** in improving regional governance.
- At the 18th SAARC Summit in Kathmandu, in 2014, **India proposed the SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement.** However, this could not progress due to **resistance from Pakistan.**
- This compelled Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (**BBIN**) **to sign the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement in 2015.**
- **Pakistan also opted out of the ambitious SAARC Satellite** project proposed by India, leading to a change in its name to the South Asia Satellite.

- There is a **tendency in some quarters** to see India's interests in **BIMSTEC as part of its strategy to isolate Pakistan** and position BIMSTEC as an alternative to SAARC. The above instances suggest otherwise.

Why BIMSTEC?

- The main motivation for India to push BIMSTEC is thus not Pakistan; rather, **it is in the country's interest to ensure that the region does not lag behind** and that an unstable neighbourhood does not drag its growth.
- **India's desire to link South Asia to the economically dynamic Southeast Asia** is also part of this strategy.
- The rationale behind making the BIMSTEC mechanism work is **to reassure South Asia that the region can work together to achieve common goals** with India playing its due role.

Do you know?

- The BIMSTEC is a regional organization comprising States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- This sub-regional organization **came into being on 6 June 1997** through **the Bangkok Declaration**.
- It constitutes **seven Member States**: five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.
- **The BIMSTEC region is home to around 1.5 billion people** which constitute around **22% of the global population** with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of **2.7 trillion economy**.

A few challenges

- There will be challenges for India from both within and outside. These will pose policy dilemmas.
- India is currently the largest contributor to the BIMSTEC secretariat's budget. India's annual contribution was Rs. 2 crore (or 32% of the total secretariat budget) for 2017-18.
- With the secretariat planning to strengthen its capacity by increasing human resources and the number of officials representing each member state, India may need to consider allocating more resources.
- India's generosity would be a key test of its commitment to the subregional grouping.
- Another issue would be for India to counter the impression that BIMSTEC is an India-dominated bloc, a problem that it faced for a long time in SAARC.

- In reality, the suspicion was mutual in SAARC — while India was wary of the smaller neighbours 'ganging up' against it, the smaller neighbours were worried that closer integration might lead to India's domination.

The China question

- Another strategic challenge for India is that China has long desired to be part of the SAARC grouping.
- Some SAARC members also have their own interests in bringing China into the equation: they want it to balance India's dominance.
- China has observer status in SAARC. When this was given, it only increased the demand to make China a full member of SAARC.

Way forward

- India will have to carefully navigate the emerging regional geopolitics, as many of the elements that made SAARC hostage to political rivalry and turned it into a defunct mechanism can re-emerge in BIMSTEC.
- Today, most of the smaller neighbours are more willing to engage so as to benefit from India's economic rise. Nonetheless, for internal political reasons, the same issue may re-emerge and pose hurdles in the progress of BIMSTEC.
- To moderate such suspicions, India will need to show sensitivity to the concerns of smaller neighbours.

Connecting the dots:

- For India, BIMSTEC is a desirable alternative to SAARC. Comment.

Note: To know more, click here [More About BIMSTEC](#)

[Fourth BIMSTEC summit: Kathmandu Declaration](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – International Relations; India and its neighbourhood relations

In news:

- The **4th BIMSTEC Summit** was concluded in Kathmandu (**Nepal**).
- Theme 2018: '**Towards a Peaceful Prosperous, and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region**'.
- 18-point **Kathmandu Declaration** was signed.
- Signed MoU on Establishment of **BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection**.
- Current chair of BIMSTEC - Nepal PM KP Sharma Oli

- Chairmanship of the next (5th) BIMSTEC Summit - Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena

Kathmandu Declaration

1. Stress on ending poverty from the region by 2030 (in line with UN SDGs)
2. Common ties - agricultural technology exchange, fight against terrorism, gradual reduction of the impact of climate change, increase trade and investment, and ease the visa processing for the people of BIMSTEC member states.
3. Importance of multidimensional connectivity as a key enabler to economic integration for shared prosperity of the region.
4. Importance of trade and investment.

Highlights of PM Modi's speech

- PM Modi reiterated India's commitment to enhance its **National Knowledge Network** in BIMSTEC countries
- BIMSTEC countries invited to participate in the **International Buddhist Conclave 2020 (will be hosted by India)** as the Guests of Honor.
- Establishment of the **Centre for Bay of Bengal Studies** at Nalanda University.

About BIMSTEC

- It was formed in **1997 (Bangkok Declaration)**
- It is an international regional organisation
- It consists of **seven countries** from **South Asia** and **South East Asia** – lying in littoral and adjacent **areas of Bay of Bengal** constituting contiguous regional unity.

South Asia — Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka

South East Asia — Myanmar and Thailand

- BIMSTEC has also established a platform for intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members.
- The region is a meeting point for India's Neighbourhood First, Act East policies.

[Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership \(RCEP\) and India](#)

RCEP in the News

- Negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), among 16 Asian and Pacific Ocean countries, have entered a decisive phase. And it would like to see a "substantive agreement" on the trade deal by the end of this year.

- Most potential member-countries of the grouping comprises the 10 ASEAN members and their Free Trade Agreement partners, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and Republic of Korea.
- At a meeting in Singapore, countries which still have issues with the outline of the agreements reached so far may be told politely to step aside and allow a smaller group to go ahead with finalising the RCEP, with the option to join it at a later date.
- India is among the countries that will have to take a call at this point considering the seriousness of the situation.

Concerns with respect to India and RCEP

- India is the one country that doesn't have an FTA with China. The greater access Chinese goods will have to the Indian market, a problem given India's massive trade deficit.
- To circumvent this, the government has proposed a "differential market access" strategy for China, which others are inclined to accept.
- After the Wuhan summit, India and China have made progress on addressing the trade deficit, with China increasing access for Indian goods such as pharma and agricultural products.
- There are demands by other RCEP countries for lower customs duties on a number of products and greater access to the market than India has been willing to provide.
- The more developed RCEP countries such as Australia and Singapore have been unwilling to accommodate India's demands to liberalise their services regime and allow freer mobility of Indian workers.
- Some of the RCEP countries, including India, are headed for elections next year, a point where governments traditionally turn protectionist.

Way forward

- Despite all the concerns, the government must take into account that either slowing down India's RCEP engagement or walking out of the talks at this stage would cut India out of the rules-making process for the RCEP and give China further space in the regional trade and security architecture.
- At a time when the U.S. has broken from the global consensus on multilateral trade agreements, an Indian walkout would endanger the united message that RCEP countries, which represent 40% of the global GDP, would wish to send out.
- It would also be a sharp departure from India's "Act East" slogan and its extended outreach to ASEAN.

Conclusion:

- RCEP is an opportunity for India to play a greater role in Asia-Pacific, the fastest growing and developing region the globe.

- India must not take the easiest way out on the trade deal and walk out of talks, rather it should move forward and fill the vacuum being created by the protectionism of US.

Connecting the dots:

- India with RCEP, critically examine the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Note: To read more about RCEP, read on: http://asean.org/?static_post=rcep-regional-comprehensive-economic-partnership

India and Maldives

Part of: GS Mains Paper II – India and its neighbours; International Relations

About:

We have already learnt or aware of the following concern areas between India and Maldives –

- **Turbulent Maldivian politics:** Maldives continues its descent into political anarchy with democratic institutions facing an unabated onslaught under the authoritarian regime of President Abdulla Yameen.
- **Maldives growing “closeness” with China:** Both China and Pakistan stepping up their strategic inroads into the Maldives
- **Religious radicalization:** The island-nation (Maldives) is being radicalized by the Saudi funds and influence
- **ISIS threat:** Growing Islamic radicalisation in the tiny island-nation of about four lakh people once known for its tolerant practices has many foreign governments, including India, deeply concerned.
- **No FTA with India:** Maldives and India do not have a Free Trade Agreement. However Maldives and China entered into Free Trade Agreement.
- Yameen government had asked India to remove its Dhruv advanced light helicopters from Maldives (which India had gifted in 2013). Yameen government has alleged that tensions over the presence of the two Indian helicopters in two strategically important locations in the Laamu and Addu atolls have been growing.
- Work permits are not currently being issued to Indian Nationals.

In news:

- Maldives to extend visa of support staff.
- After several rounds of talks, there has been indication from the Maldives on its willingness to keep the two helicopters along with the crew and support staff.

Pieces of the Asian dream: India, China and Asia-pacific

Introduction:

- When the **U.S. and China are caught up in geopolitical rivalry in the Asia-Pacific**, all eyes are towards India, and strategic positioning India is gearing itself.
- In Singapore, **India proclaimed her ambitions** to garner influence in the Indo-Pacific region by **increasing engagement** with the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, developing friendship with **China**, maintaining cordial ties with **Russia**, pursuing interests with **Australia** and engaging more with the **U.S.**

Tug of power

- The tug of power between India and China continues to impact sea lanes and chokepoints, with these two Asian giants **pursuing interests in the littoral states** spread across the Indo-Pacific.
- While **India pursues influence through heightened diplomatic, bilateral and military engagement**, **China** has started to garner influence **through hard investments** in cash-strapped littoral nations suffering from massive infrastructural deficits.

China in Asia Pacific

- The influence of China on certain ASEAN states like **Cambodia** has been such that during the 2016 ASEAN ministerial meeting, it refused to endorse the joint communiqué if it referred to the international court ruling against Beijing.
- China is today Cambodia's largest provider of foreign aid and has invested in dams, oilfields, highways, textile operations and mines.
- **Philippines** have been seeking for harmonious relations with China, especially after 2016, when U.S. legislators blocked the sale of about 26,000 M4 rifles. Beijing provided rifles and guns to the Philippines police to fight against extremists in the city of Marawi.
- **ASEAN's trade with China** far surpasses that with India, and Chinese foreign direct investment in ASEAN is nine times higher than India's.
- **China's heavy investments in ASEAN** nations have brought these nations closer into its orbit of influence to the point where despite an international ruling against its activities in the South China Sea (SCS), **the ASEAN as a bloc agreed to cooperate with China on a Code of Conduct instead of pursuing the international ruling.**
- China's multibillion dollar investments in **Sri Lankan ports and cities** have inched the country much closer to China, and last year Sri Lanka handed over its Hambantota port to China, on a 99-year lease.

- Under its **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, China has over the years promised billions to littoral states in the Indian Ocean Region to build a series of ports, something resource-constrained India will find difficult to match.

India in Asia Pacific

- The **overt-assertiveness of China** has driven many countries in East and Southeast Asia to seek **friendship with India**, and today Indonesia and Singapore are looking to bolster relations with India.
- **ASEAN has a cultural affinity with India** with its shared religious diversity, ancient ties and a sizeable Indian diaspora in countries like Singapore and Malaysia.
- After the U.S., **India enjoys global soft power** through its art, literature, music, dance and cinema.
- India is perceived by many in East Asia as a **friendly democracy**, making the country a safe ally to have in the long run.
- **Japan has significantly increased its engagement with India** and the two countries enjoy robust military ties.
- **India and Australia have initiated the '2+2' dialogue** signalling Canberra's interest in deepening a maritime security partnership with India.
- Although India enjoys cordial relationship with all ASEAN nations, it is unlikely that diplomatic hobnobbing alone will help garner the grouping's support for its Indo-Pacific strategy against China's raw cash power and growing military presence.
- India also has so far **failed to provide any concrete plans for its immediate neighbourhood** in South Asia, with countries like **Nepal and Sri Lanka** demonstrating interest in partnering with China.
- Souring of relations with Nepal due to the 2015 fuel blockade and failed strategic interventions in Sri Lanka have both undermined India's regional leadership.

Recent thaw

- So far, in this year, from the informal **summit at Wuhan** in April to Prime Minister Modi's keynote speech at the **Shangri-La Dialogue** in Singapore, to the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit** in China, a reset of India China relations has been observed.
- At the SCO Summit, China renewed its agreement with India on sharing data on the cross-border flow of waters from the Brahmaputra during the flood season.
- The two countries signed a protocol that would enable all varieties of rice exports from India to China, a demand India has been pressing for quite some time to rectify its adverse balance of payments against China.

- Mr. Xi has also suggested a trade target of \$100 billion by 2020, signalling a gradual thaw in relations.

Way forward

- With China, India can strike a better strategic bargain compared to the smaller states in the region.
- It would be difficult for China to take forward the BRI without participation from India, which has reservations on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- By demonstrating a willingness to join the BRI, India can positively influence China to re-evaluate the details of the CPEC.
- With a strategic partnership with China, India can better pursue its own regional groupings like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) initiative.
- Since India can't match China's resource spending, strategic understanding with China can help streamline regional connectivity projects and help India gain influence in the region.
- India have to develop a strategy to leverage its soft power in South, East and Southeast Asia and optimise its military power to effectively counter China's cash and hard power.

Conclusion:

India is clearly seeking its rightful place in the league of nations by outlining its geopolitical role, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. With the limited resources, India's ambitions will have to play out against a resourceful and assertive China.

Connecting the dots:

- Briefly provide an overview of the geopolitical realities of Asia Pacific and different stakeholders involved, which makes it necessary for India to showcase her diplomatic skills.

[High water discharge from China threatens Arunachal](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II and III – India and its neighbourhood relations; Disaster management

In news:

- **High discharge of water from China**, the highest in 50 years, is threatening to submerge at least 12 villages along the **river Siang in Arunachal Pradesh**.

- Recently there have been incidents of “unusually high” discharge of water – (Reason) due to sudden release of water from **man-made barriers** or a **natural dam** that was formed due to landslides caused by major earthquakes in the Tibetan region of China in November 2017.
- The government needs to come up with effective anti-erosion measures besides talking to China for ensuring safety of downstream areas in India.
- There is a lot of concern at the international, national and local levels about the geologically and strategically important Siang that impacts Bangladesh too.

Do you know?

- Yarlung Tsangpo River is the longest river of Tibet Autonomous Region, China.
- It is the upper stream of the Brahmaputra River.



Pic:

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/31/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_07/4d10b784_235744_1_101_mr.jpg

ECONOMY

RBI raises repo rates

Part of: GS Mains III – Indian Economy; Monetary Policy

In news:

- RBI has cited inflation concerns and raised interest rates (has set repo rate at 6.5%)
- Increase in repo rate will push up the cost of loans for all borrowers, from consumers looking to finance their purchases of homes and cars to businesses looking to meet their capital needs.

Do you know?

What is Repo rate?

- Repo rate is the rate at which the central bank of a country (RBI in case of India) lends money to commercial banks in the event of any shortfall of funds. Repo rate is used by monetary authorities to control inflation.
- RBI increases the repo rate during inflation and decreases it during deflation.

Important value additions:

Let's see what happens when RBI increases and decreases Repo rate –

When RBI increases repo rate

- In order to control excess money supply and inflation in the economy, central bank increases repo rate and lends to commercial banks at a higher rate.
- Now, because of increased repo rate, funds come to commercial banks at a higher cost, so in order to cover those increased costs of acquiring funds, commercial banks increase their lending rates for loans and advances.
- Since, lending rates are increased, people abstain from borrowing and postpone their purchases thereby decreasing demand for products and services, consequently it leads to decrease in money supply in economy and decrease in inflation rate.

When RBI decreases repo rate:

- In order to cure depression and lack of effective demand, central bank decreases repo rates and lends to commercial banks at a reduced rate.
- Because of reduced rates, commercial banks can acquire funds at a lower cost and in order to acquire new consumers and markets they pass their benefit of lower cost to consumers by decreasing their prime lending rates on loans and advances.

- Since, lending rates are reduced by banks, credit is cheap and this induces people to venture in new business activities and purchase of capital goods leading to increased demand for capital goods and increased employment rates.

Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy; Corruption

In news:

- The prosecution of accused persons (of almost 100 confirmed cases) under Benami Act stuck.
- **Reason:** Special courts meant for the purpose have not yet been set up across the country.
- Assets worth more than ₹5,000 crore have been attached by the Income-Tax Department under the law.

Important Value Additions

What is a 'benami' transaction?

- When a transaction is done in name of a person other than the one who finances, is called benami transaction.
- If person A pays the money for Property X, but the property is transferred in name of person B, person B is benamdar and Property X is called benami property. Person A is the real owner

About Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act

- It is an Act to prohibit benami transactions and the right to recover properly held benami.
- It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Act provides that the Central government, in consultation with the Chief Justice of the respective High Courts, will establish special courts.
- Special court is to conclude the trial within six months.

Similar scheme to curb black money: Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015 to catch those with undisclosed foreign assets.

Draft National Policy on e-commerce

Introduction: In India there is no single law or single regulator for multibillion dollar e-commerce business industry. Currently it is being regulated by various laws such as IT Act, 2000 and FEMA, etc.

Why we need National Policy on E-commerce?

- India's e-tail business, estimated to be worth around \$25 billion. Over the coming decade, it is expected to swell to \$200 billion, fuelled by smartphones, cheaper data access and growing spends.
- First eight months of 2017-18, over 50,000 e-commerce grievances were made to the Consumer Affairs Ministry helpline.
- Traditional retailers seeking level playing field.

Provisions under Draft National Policy on E-commerce:

- The draft policy proposes the creation of a single national regulator to oversee the entire industry.
- It also provides for consumer protection norms to guard online shoppers from possible frauds.
- There is a sunset clause on discounts that can be offered by e-commerce firms and restrictions on sellers backed by marketplace operators.
- Foreign direct investment restrictions on players who can hold their own inventory are sought to be lifted, but there must be a majority Indian partner and all products have to be made in India.

Drawbacks:

- Licensing and price controls can depress the sector. Government deciding on who can offer how much discount and for how long, instead of letting consumers exercise informed choices, would be a regressive step for the economy.
- The local procurement diktats that are not easy to meet or monitor, may cause rise in e-tailer costs.
- Stipulating payments via Rupay cards will raise questions from both consumers and firms.

Note: Draft policy is in the nascent stage. Keep following further developments.

Connecting the dots:

- E-commerce should be regulated or should it be left to run on free market mechanism?

Rebooting the system for a skills upgrade

Introduction:

The report of the Standing **Committee** on Labour (2017-18) headed by **Kirit Somaiya**, on the “**Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Skill Development Initiative Scheme**” presents the grim condition of India’s Vocational Education System (ITIs).

History and some facts about vocational education in India:

- ITIs were initiated in the 1950s.
- In a span of 60 years, approx. 1,896 public and 2,000 private ITIs were set up.
- In a 10-year period from 2007, more than 9,000 additional private ITIs were accredited.
- The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) today has more than 6,000 private training centres.

Concerns and Findings of Somiya Committee:

- Number of ITIs increasing rapidly about they disregard norms and standards.
- Due to short-term courses, vocational training centres open and close frequently they are more prone to a dilution of standards.
- With the increase in number of institutes, government has been unable to regulate private institutions for quality.
- Placement in NSDC training has been less than 15%.
- Private sector engagement in skill development has been taken up by private training partners and not employers. The employers could have made the system demand-driven.
- The lack of a regulator for skill development has led to poor quality affiliation, assessment and certification.
- There are instances of responsibility outsourcing, no supervision, illegal activities and an ownership tussle between the Central and State governments.
- The QCI did not follow accreditation norms created by the National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT). The NCVT is just a stamp with no role in actually assessing quality.
- The future of 13.8 lakh students in these substandard ITIs is at risk. If the same exercise were extended to other skill development schemes, the picture would be grimmer.
- Lax provisions of vocational training programs and no scrutiny is a major concern. For example the Standard Training Assessment and Reward scheme spent Rs. 850 crore in 2013-14 with no norms for quality.

- The report also reinforces disturbing findings of a national survey by the research institute (NILERD) of the Planning Commission in 2011 about private ITIs: had fewer classrooms and workshops for practice; and their teachers were very poorly paid.

Way forward:

- Recommendations of the **Sharada Prasad Committee** to rationalise the Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) should be implemented.
- There is a need to establish a **national board for all skill development programmes**. The core work (accreditation, assessment, certification and course standards) cannot be outsourced. Like every other education board (such as the CBSE), a board is required in vocational training that is accountable.
- We should also have a **mandatory rating system** for the ITIs, published periodically.
- A **ranking of the ITIs** on several parameters such as the one done by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council in tertiary education.
- **Talent from the open market** should be encouraged to fill up higher posts in skill development.
- There should be **one system, with one law (as recommended in the 12th Five Year Plan) and one national vocational education and training system**, so that all the concerned partners of the sector can work seamlessly and can learn from, and work with each other.
- The ITIs have internal issues such as **staffing and salaries** that need attention. There is also a critical need to **reskill ITI teachers** and maintain the **student-teacher ratio**.
- **Financial support from NSDC** can be used to upgrade the technology.
- Financing from **corporate social responsibility, multilateral organisations such as the World Bank and the government** can meet the financial needs for skill development.
- **As recommended by 12th Plan Reimbursable industry contribution (RIC)** — a 1-2% payroll tax that will be reimbursed when employers train using public/private infrastructure and provide data.

Conclusion:

With the rise of 4th Industrial revolution, and on-going debates on Artificial Intelligence and automation, there is an urgent need to reboot the vocational education system of India. Also there is need to establish a system which is based on demand and supply rather than present out dated and archaic syllabus of vocational education.

Connecting the dots:

- Skill India mission, to be successful, needs a overhaul of Vocational Education System in India. Examine.

GST Council: GST Reforms for MSME

Introduction:

Latest GST Council meeting held on issues facing micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Do you know?

What are MSME?

MSME are units producing goods and rendering services in terms of annual turnover as follows:

- A **micro enterprise** will be defined as a unit where the annual turnover does not exceed five crore rupees;
- A **small enterprise** will be defined as a unit where the annual turnover is more than five crore rupees but does not exceed Rs 75 crore;
- A **medium enterprise** will be defined as a unit where the annual turnover is more than seventy five crore rupees but does not exceed Rs 250 crore.

What is GST Council?

- Goods & Services Tax Council is a **constitutional body** for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Service Tax.
- The GST Council is chaired by the Union Finance Minister and other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.

(For further details: <http://www.gstcouncil.gov.in/gst-council>)

Recent GST meetings' decisions (Regarding MSME):

- Firms with an annual turnover of less than Rs. 5 crore constitute 93% of the registered taxpayers under the GST. Such businesses need no longer file cumbersome returns every month, but only on a quarterly basis.
- GST Council returned to a consensual approach on decisions.
- There is a proposal to push digital payments by offering a cash-back to consumers using RuPay cards or the UPI platform, final decision will be taken after a detailed system-wide evaluation of such incentives.

Way Forward: GST with respect to MSME

- Further easing of compliance for micro firms with turnover far below Rs. 5 crore is needed.

- There is a need to review the Rs. 50,000 threshold for mandatory use of e-way bills to track movement of taxable goods.

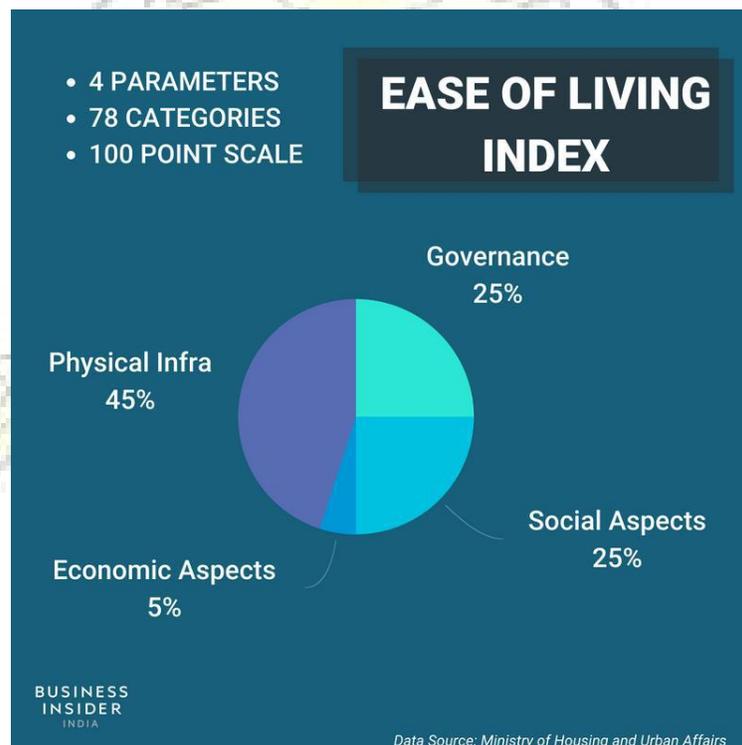
Ease of Living Index: Pune 1st, Navi Mumbai 2nd and Greater Mumbai 3rd

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Governance issues

In news:

- Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry released the results of its survey on the Ease of Living in cities across the country.
- Pune 1st, Navi Mumbai 2nd and Greater Mumbai 3rd.

Parameters considered: institutional (governance), social (identity, education, health, security), economic (economy, employment) and physical (waste water and solid waste management, pollution, housing/ inclusiveness, mixed land use, power and water supply, transport, public open spaces) factors.



Pic: <https://www.businessinsider.in/img/65401899/Master.jpg>

The top three cities were all in Maharashtra; Pune is ranked the highest, followed by Navi Mumbai and Greater Mumbai. The cities which were ranked the poorest were Patna in Bihar, Kohima in Nagaland and Rampur in Uttar Pradesh.

Do you know?

- The index, which was conceived in 2017, is based on information from the 2011 Census.

Why is the rupee falling continuously?

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy and related issues

In news:

- The value of India's currency 'rupee' is continuously falling.
- Its value has declined by 8% between January - July 2018.
- Among the BRICS nations; after the Russian Ruble, the Indian rupee depreciated the most in this period.
- There has been a sharp depreciation in the rupee and it breached the 70 mark for the first time. (Rs.70= 1 dollar)

Important value additions: Knowing the basics

Conversion rate

- The rate at which we can convert one currency into another currency is known as conversion rate between those two currencies.

What is Rupee Appreciation and Rupee Depreciation?

The value of Indian Rupee (or any other currency) is determined by the market. The demand and supply forces in the currency market. If the demand for Indian currency is high, Indian rupee will have high value, and if demand is low, it will depreciate.

Also, understand that a high value for Indian currency means, the exchanged rate of the Indian rupee against US dollar will be less. Or to explain with an example: Rs.40 against 1 US dollar means high value for Indian rupee when compared with Rs.70 against 1 US dollar.

So, if market forces determine the value of a currency, that type of system is called Floating Rate System. India has adopted floating rate system since 1975.

If the government or RBI fix the exchange rate of a currency (and does not allow any variations according to demand and supply forces in the market), such a system is called Fixed Rate system. It is also called Bretton Woods system or Pegged Currency System. India was following this kind of system till 1975 and partial controls till 1993.

Difference between Devaluation and Depreciation

The basic difference between the devaluation and depreciation is that, the devaluation is done by the government of the country deliberately while the depreciation take place because of market forces i.e. demand and supply.

Difference between Revaluation and Appreciation

Revaluation is a term which is used when there is a rise of currency to the relation with a foreign currency in a fixed exchange rate. In floating exchange rate correct term would be appreciation.

Reasons behind the depreciation of the Indian rupee against the dollar currently

1. Increase in the price of the crude oil
2. Tariff war scare (esp. between the USA and China)
3. Increasing trade deficit of India
4. Reduced capital flows to emerging economies
5. Political Uncertainty

[Impact of falling Indian currency](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy and related issues

In news:

- We read why rupee falls and also meanings of terms – appreciation, depreciation, devaluation, revaluation and conversion rate etc. ([Why is the rupee falling continuously?](#))
- Rupee fall inflates crude purchase cost - India's crude oil import bill is likely to jump as the rupee's drop to a record low.
- This will in turn lead to an increase in the retail selling price of petrol, diesel and cooking gas (LPG).
- Rupee depreciation will result in higher earnings for exporters.

What happens when the rupee falls?

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy and issues related to it

Fast recap:

- We already read about Rupee Depreciation, Appreciation, Devaluation and Revaluation. (Read here - [Why is the rupee falling continuously?](#))

Now let us see what happens when the rupee falls?

- Country's **imports become more expensive** and **exports cheaper**.
- It takes more rupees to pay for the same quantum of imports and fewer dollars for a buyer to pay for the same quantity of exports.
- More expensive imports are likely to **drive inflation upward**, especially in India where input products constitute a large part of our imports.
- It impacts the oil import bill since it costs more rupees per barrel of oil, which plays its own part in pushing inflation up.
- **GDP growth** - On the one hand, costlier inputs and the subsequent increase in the prices of finished goods should have a positive impact on GDP. But the consequent **decrease in demand** due to higher prices could nullify this. 'Household consumption of goods and services' plays a big role here.
- **Domestic tourism could grow** as more tourists visit India since their currency now buys more here. In the medium term, export-oriented industries may also create more jobs.

Steel imports from Japan, South Korea surge

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy and related issues

In news:

- India's steel imports from South Korea rose 31% from a year earlier, while those from Japan climbed 30%. (esp. after US imposed tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminium imports)
- The flood of imports is so big that the government in New Delhi is considering measures to control imports. (impose safeguards)
- Under World Trade Organization rules, safeguards are temporary restrictions on imports of a product to protect a domestic industry.

[City-level GDP data soon](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy; Urbanization

In news:

- Centre hopes to bring out city-level GDP data
- Urban India is responsible for an increasingly large share of the national GDP
- This could help both cities and investors make wise decisions
- It helps municipal bodies raise funds for their own infrastructure needs

Do you know?

- By 1951 – urban sector only accounted for 29% of the national GDP.
- By 1981, it was 45%, and by 2011, it had crossed the 60% mark.
- The urban sector is likely to account for three-fourths or 75% of India's GDP by 2020.

Definition of GDP

- Gross domestic product is the best way to measure a country's economy.
- GDP is the total value of everything produced by all the people and companies in the country.
- It doesn't matter if they are citizens or foreign-owned companies. If they are located within the country's boundaries, the government counts their production as GDP.

[Status of MSME sector in India](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy and issues related to it.

About:

- The flow of bank credit to MSME sector which took a hit in the aftermath of demonetization has now picked up.
- GST implementation also adversely impacted MSME exports.
- The sector faces operational problems due to its size and nature of business, and is, therefore, relatively more susceptible to various shocks to the economy.
- MSMEs largely operate in the informal sector and comprise a large number of micro enterprises and daily wage earners.

Significance of MSME sector:

- The MSME sector comprises more than 63 million units and employs about 111 million people.

- The share of MSMEs in GDP is about 30%, with the sector accounting for about 45% of manufacturing output and about 40% of India's total exports.

[NPCI launches UPI 2.0](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy; Cyber Security issues

In news:

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched Unified Payments Interface (UPI) 2.0 with overdraft facility.
- UPI 2.0 will allow linking of overdraft accounts; blocking payment through one time mandate; and sending invoices with payments.
- The expected feature would help the credit industry to pull amounts due and made payments more seamless.

(Just for information)

Over draft account

UPI 1.0 allowed users to link only saving accounts. The upgrade will allow the users (i.e., the merchants) to link their overdraft (OD) accounts to UPI, enabling them to continue withdrawing money even if the account doesn't have sufficient funds. This will allow merchants to take credit through these OD accounts.

One-time mandate

A new addition to UPI is the one-time mandate essentially allowing users to block a certain amount in the customer's account balance. The transaction will go through after the goods and services are delivered.

Invoice in inbox

The new UPI mandate will allow individuals or merchants to send an invoice along with a payment request in the Inbox. This helps create transparency. This helps customers to check the invoice sent by merchant prior to making payment.

Signed intent and QR

Apart from a pre-payment invoice, users can now also verify the merchants through the QR codes.

Do you know?

- NPCI is an umbrella organization for all retail payments in India.
- It was set up with the guidance and support of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks Association (IBA).

[International Labour Organization report on India's Wages](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy and related issues; Inclusive growth

Highlights of the ILO report:

- Real average daily wages in India almost doubled in the first two decades after economic reforms.
- Low pay and wage inequality remains a serious challenge to inclusive growth
- Called for stronger implementation of minimum wage laws and strengthening of the frameworks for collective bargaining by workers.
- Called for actions aimed at bridging the wage gaps between rural and urban, male and female, and regular and casual workers.
- Daily wages in urban areas (₹384) also remain more than twice as high as those in rural areas (₹175), the report said.
- Regional disparities in average wages have actually increased over time, with wages rising more rapidly in high-wage States than in low-wage ones.
- The gender wage gap decreased from 48% in 1993-94 to 34% in 2011-12, but still remains high by international standards.

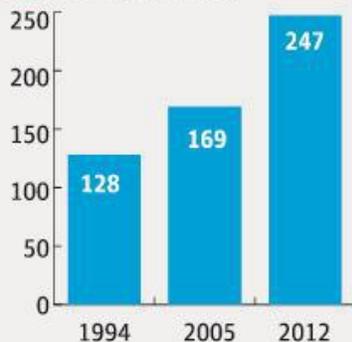
Wage gaps remain

Though daily wages have nearly doubled in absolute terms from 1993-2012 in India, there are significant gaps in urban-rural and male-female wages. A look at the imbalance

Better daily wages

The average daily wage has shown a 92% increase from 1994. The rate at which wages have grown has also increased

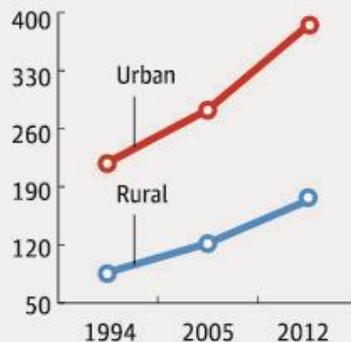
■ AVG. DAILY WAGE (₹)



Urban-rural divide

In 2011-12, an urban worker still earned more than twice of a rural worker. Graph shows average daily wage in ₹

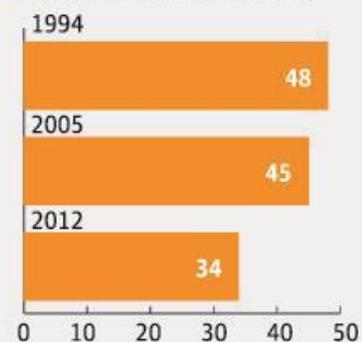
(₹)



Gender gap

While on the decline, the difference between daily wages of men and women is still above the global average of 23%

■ MEN-WOMEN WAGE GAP (%)



Source: International Labour Organization

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/22/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_11/fea9791b_233713_7_101_mr.jpg

About ILO

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) was founded in 1919, its Constitution forming part of the Treaty of Versailles. The ILO became the first specialised agency of the UN in 1946.
- ILO deals with labour problems, particularly international labour standards, social protection, and work opportunities for all.

G20 Digital Economy Ministerial meeting

Part of: GS Mains III and Prelims – Economy; International/Multilateral relations

In news:

- G20 Digital Economy Ministerial meeting was held in Argentina.
- G20 member nations agreed to promote policies that will contribute to bridging all forms of the digital divide, with special attention to the digital gender divide.
- The countries agreed to promote digital government and digital infrastructure, strengthen the digital skills of the workforce, deepen the analysis towards digital economy measurement, and to share experiences and lesson learned.

Redefining India Post

Introduction:

In a world where communication has assumed different forms with the written word being transmitted on mobile phones and the proliferation of private courier services for printed matter or documents, the role of India Post needs to be redefined.

The starting of the **India Post Payment Bank** is pragmatic. Postal services have become less relevant while financial services continue to be important given their under penetration in rural areas.

Concerns:

- Given the reach of the Postal Department, it is not possible for private services to reach the rural areas and even in case they do, there are time issues of delivery. The Postal Department delivers the best.
- Notwithstanding the advantages, the fact that technology and private services are catching up in a big way the threat of loss of business to Whatsapp and courier services is real.

Need of revamping India Post:

- The **number of post offices has come down**. The employees on the rolls appears to be in line with the **declining volume of business**, which has come down by around 7 per cent.
- The **handling of the savings pie has increased**. It consists of small savings that is contributed more by the middle- and lower-income groups with a strong rural bias. However, here too the compound growth rate of around 6.8 per cent is much lower than bank deposits which have grown at almost double the rate.
- The **losses of the department have increased** by over nine times. The department has been run as an essential service which is primarily used by the weaker sections especially in the rural areas. As a result it becomes very difficult for the government to increase the postage rate given that it is uniform across the country.
- The losses have been mounting as several costs like administration, maintenance, salary, etc. move with inflation while transportation costs keep moving up more than proportionately. Therefore, with the volume of each business coming down, these fixed costs increase the cost per unit of business.

Way forward:

The creation of the India Post Payments Bank is a good step and though the progress of these banks has been slow, there is scope for this venture to succeed given its reach. But there are reforms which can be implemented for the other services.

- The pricing structure has to be revamped as heavy losses cannot be sustained. Differential pricing based on location can be considered with the rural areas getting a subsidy. The other centres would have to be made to pay the full cost. Hence an inland letter can be priced at Rs. 4 if sent from a rural post office and Rs. 10 from others.
- Post office spaces should be leveraged to earn rent. As financial inclusion includes also non-banking products, these can be sold in post offices by the mutual funds or their agents.
- The existing staff can be trained to sell financial products like insurance and mutual funds in rural areas and a commission earned by the department.
- The post offices can be integrated with the eNAM initiative where terminals can be kept in these offices for use by farmers. Further, *dak sewaks* can be used to also form a link with the agricultural markets (eNAM) as they have direct interface with farmers and can be given the responsibility of spreading awareness as well as be the link with the market prices.

There is considerable scope to leverage the present strengths of India Post to not just make it financially sustainable but also maximise the utilisation of the infrastructure to link it with other goals of the government to create a virtuous cycle.

Connecting the dots:

- The role of India Post needs to be redefined. The strengths of India Post must be leveraged to make it financially viable. Analyze.

AGRICULTURE

Fall Armyworm

In news:

- Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has sounded the alarm after the invasive agricultural pest, Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), was discovered in Karnataka.
- Fall Armyworm is a major maize pest in North America, arrived in Africa in 2016. Since then, it has threatened the continent's maize crop.
- The Karnataka finding is the first report of the pest in Asia.
- Scientists warn the insect could spread throughout Asia to become a major threat to global food security.
- The discovery is more worrisome because the pest feeds on around 100 different crops, such as vegetables, rice, and sugarcane.



https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/09/CNI/Chennai/TH/5_10/68b99940_23_06151_101_mr.jpg

Pink Ballworm and Fall Armyworm

About:

- Earlier we had read about - [Fall Armyworm](#)

Fast recap:

- ICAR had sounded alarm after the invasive agricultural pest, Fall Armyworm was discovered in Karnataka.
- Fall Armyworm is a major maize pest.
- It can also feed on around 100 different crops, such as vegetables, rice, and sugarcane.

In news:

- The pink bollworm is an insect known for being a pest in cotton farming.

[NABARD All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey 2016-17](#)**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy and Agriculture**Highlights:**

- More than half the agricultural households in the country have outstanding debt.
- Their average outstanding debt is almost as high as the average annual income of all agricultural households.
- NABARD found that 52.5% of the agricultural households had an outstanding loan.
- For non-agricultural households in rural India, that figure was 10 percentage points lower, at only 42.8%.
- The average debt of an indebted agricultural household stood at ₹1,04,602 in comparison to ₹76,731 for indebted non-agricultural households.
- According to the survey, the average annual income of an agricultural household is ₹1.07 lakh.
- Only 10.5% of agricultural households were found to have a valid Kisan Credit Card.
- Households who had the card utilised 66% of the sanctioned credit limit.

Mapping farm debt

Among other things, the NABARD survey measured incidence of indebtedness (IOI), the proportion of households reporting outstanding debt



• Incidence of indebtedness as per the survey is **52.5%** for agricultural households and **42.8%** for non-agricultural households. All India IOI taking all rural households together is **47.4%**

• Average amount of outstanding debt (AOD) for indebted agricultural households is ₹1,04,602

• Outstanding debt for indebted non-agricultural households is ₹76,731. Overall extent of indebtedness taking all households combined is ₹91,407

• 43.5% agricultural households reported to have borrowed any money from some source or the other

• 60.4% of agricultural households borrowed from institutional sources alone

• 30.3% borrowed from only informal sources and 9.2% of agricultural households borrowed from both sources

• 56.7% of non-agricultural households and 58.6% of all households borrowed from institutional sources

SOURCE: NABARD, SURVEY REFERENCE YEAR: 2015-16

https://d39gegkjaquduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/20/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_11/c12877da2332558_101_mr.jpg

Big data for farmers

Introduction

Aadhaar card became an instrument of large scale and precise service delivery to the masses. On the similar lines government should consider to expand the applicability of Soil Health Card, to fulfil its commitment of doubling the farmers income by 2022.

Background:

- When the Government of India introduced the Multipurpose National ID Card (MNIC) scheme in the early 2000s, it had a limited scope.
- The MNIC was meant to be an ID card to “verify the citizenship of Indians and secure our borders”. In six years, the project was able to provide ID cards to a mere 12 lakh people.
- Then came Aadhaar, a paradigm shift, which re-imagined what a country can do with an ID system at scale — from targeting government subsidies to driving start-up business models.
- Aadhaar is today universal, transforming service delivery and spurring innovation.

Can we think of a similar paradigm shift in the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme?

- The SHC scheme, that was introduced in 2015, intended that every farmer receive a health card for their soils that tells them the status of the nutrients in it, and, as a result, guide them about the fertilisers they should apply to maximise their yields.
- The entire government agriculture extension and research system galvanised itself, collected samples, analysed them for 12 soil chemical parameters, recommended fertiliser dosages and printed these on the SHCs, which were given to farmers.
- The scheme delivered on the basic promise — as of June, 2.53 crore samples had been collected, and SHCs distributed to 10.74 crore farmers.

The well-intentioned scheme is falling short at three levels:

First, operational challenges plague the system.

- The current “census” approach, where soil samples are collected from every 2x2 hectare parcel of land in irrigated areas (10x10 hectare in dry areas), and transported en masse for analysis in a dated network of wet chemistry labs, has put tremendous strain on the system, and the quality of soil analysis has suffered.
- Studies conducted have shown a low correlation between the results generated by the SHC scheme and those generated by gold standard labs.
- For instance, a Harvard study in Gujarat last year found accuracy issues in 300 of the 800 plots tested. On the field, such stories abound.

Second, the scheme’s current design

- It oversimplifies the nutrient recommendations — for example, if the health card shows that a farmer’s soil is deficient in zinc, it recommends topping up zinc.
- However, increasingly, research is showing that a crop’s “yield response” to a nutrient is far more complex than this.
- It is determined not only by the deficiency of that nutrient, but also other variables — rainfall, production practices, the presence of other nutrients, soil acidity, and temperature, to name a few.
- The correct yield response can be predicted from a model with data on the above parameters, a system that the scheme currently does not use.
- The simplistic recommendation based on deficiency of that nutrient alone is often sub-optimal, and can exacerbate the farmer’s problem, rather than solve it.

Third, the scheme underestimates its own potential

- Because of its large-scale collection of soil data, it sees little use outside of filling out a physical card.
- This vast repository of data, painstakingly aggregated from millions of samples, remains largely isolated from researchers, start-ups and even state governments.

- These shortcomings, however, present a remarkable opportunity for Indian agriculture.

What if? (Way forward)

- What if we could move to a sampling-based soil information system that reduces the need for the tens of millions of samples that strain our lab capacity, and produces better results four times faster, at half the cost?
- What if we could develop predictive models using big data to provide recommendations to farmers that account for all the factors that affect a crop's yield response?
- What if we could go beyond health cards the way we went beyond mere identity cards with Aadhaar and re-imagine how to structure and use the vast repositories of agriculture-related data that currently reside within silos — soil, rainfall, cropping patterns, temperature, irrigation?
- Can we make these datasets available through an open API platform?

Integrating SHC with other stake holders

- It could help **start-ups** to combine soil health card data with rainfall and irrigation data and **deliver precision irrigation advisories** to our farmers on their mobile phones.
- **Fertiliser companies**, building upon such a platform, leveraging soils data, weather data, and farmer demand patterns, **can shape the distribution of fertiliser blends in different districts.**
- Such a platform **can catalyse a wave of innovations in agriculture**, in much the same way as IndiaStack has done in financial services.

Some examples: application big data in agriculture

- In data starved **Tanzania**, a version of such a platform already exists — **the Africa Soil Information Service uses machine learning** to bring together various pieces of data (soil, climate, production practices) to enable the government and fertiliser companies determine what blended fertilisers could improve soil nutrition.
- In India, states like **Andhra Pradesh and Bihar** have begun to go down this path.
- **Andhra Pradesh**, for example, is currently bringing together years' worth of cropping pattern data, precipitation data, temperature readings, irrigation information and SHC data, and combining them with farmer production practices to determine what impact different nutrients have on yield.
- As a first step, this will act as a decision support system to do more targeted extension, and produce more customised fertiliser blends. Eventually, it can be used to offer recommendations to farmers to help improve yields.

Conclusion:

- Stories of farm distress make headlines almost every day. Farm data and intelligent digital platforms that build on the SHC programme and leverage big data analytics can be a solution.
- Incorporating all factors that affect crop yields into Soil Health Cards will make them a comprehensive guide for farmers.

Connecting the dots:

- What are the causes of agriculture stagnation and farmers' distress in India? Suggest some solutions for making "doubling the farmers' income by 2022" possible.



ENVIRONMENT

Rajasthan first State to implement National Biofuel Policy

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Environment and Ecology; Pollution; Clean Energy

In news:

- Rajasthan has become the first State in the country to implement the national policy on biofuels.
- National Policy on Biofuels was unveiled by the Centre in May 2018.
- Rajasthan to lay emphasis on increasing production of oilseeds and establish a Centre for Excellence in Udaipur to promote research in the fields of alternative fuels and energy resources.

Do you know?

The Policy categorises biofuels as –

- **"Basic Biofuels"** viz. First Generation (1G) bioethanol & biodiesel and
- **"Advanced Biofuels"** - Second Generation (2G) ethanol, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to drop-in fuels, Third Generation (3G) biofuels, bio-CNG etc. to enable extension of appropriate financial and fiscal incentives under each category.

Salient features:

- Seeks to promote biofuels in the country
- Seeks to help farmers dispose of their surplus stock in an economic manner
- Seeks to reduce the country's oil import dependence
- Expanded the scope of raw material for ethanol production by allowing use of sugarcane juice, sugar containing materials, starch containing materials and damaged foodgrains like wheat, broken rice and rotten potatoes for ethanol production.
- Encourage women's self help groups to explore the scope for additional income through the supply of biodiesel.

Important Value Additions:

- A biofuel is a fuel that is produced through contemporary biological processes, such as agriculture and anaerobic digestion, rather than a fuel produced by geological processes such as those involved in the formation of fossil fuels, such as coal and petroleum, from prehistoric biological matter.

- Earlier Bio-fuel policy had proposed indicative target of 20% blending of biofuels, both for bio-diesel and bio-ethanol, by 2017.

Saving Dal Lake

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains - Environment and Biodiversity; Conservation of lakes

In news:

- J&K Governor seeks Navy's assistance to save Dal Lake
- Assessments show that the size of the water body has come down by half
- Encroachments of water channels and clogging have diminished the circulation and inflows into the lake, leading to the extensive growth of hyacinth.

Important lakes in Jammu and Kashmir

- Dal lake
- Pangong Tso
- Wular lake
- Tso moriri

Clean Ganga Fund: Donors can contribute funds from ATM

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains – Environment and Pollution; National

In news:

- Donors can contribute funds to the Clean Ganga Fund from ATMs.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is in talks with SBI and other banks.

About NMCG and CGF

- NMCG (under Union Water Resources Ministry) is executing the government's ₹20,000-crore commitment to clean the Ganga.
- CGF is a separate corpus made up of donations from corporates and individuals.
- At present it has ₹250 crore in its kitty, which is being managed by the NMCG.
- Donations to the CGF qualify for income tax exemption.
- We had recently read that - as of now, about 90% of the CGF comes from State and Central government public sector units

Do you know?

- The Clean Ganga Fund (CGF) was created in 2014 and envisioned as a source of funds from private companies, individuals and institutions.
- Clean Ganga Fund is for pooling money to be used for cleaning up Ganga river.

[A climate for green funds](#)

Introduction:

A recent HSBC Global Research report found **India to be the most vulnerable of the 67 countries assessed** for their vulnerability to and preparedness for climate change risks. The need to address the challenge of climate change is more urgent than ever.

India's Efforts:

- India is making big efforts in that direction. But more needs to be done.
- The India aims to source **175 GW of power from renewables by 2022** and for nearly **57 per cent of total electricity capacity** to come from **non-fossil fuels by 2027**.
- India's other **INDCs and national, federal steps** towards climate change and resilience building cannot be ignored.

Climate Financing:

Need:

- A climate-resilient economy cannot be a priority only for the government. Companies, regulators, banks and financial institutions need to be part of the effort.
- It has been estimated that approximately \$100 trillion of additional investment will be required between 2016 and 2030 to sync the imperatives of global development with that of addressing the challenge of climate change.
- Financing clean energy infrastructure, sustainable transport, energy efficiency and waste management are among the key imperatives today.
- Knowledge sharing across regions and institutions is critical to ensure that initiatives that are successful in one location get replicated expeditiously. All of this will require billions of dollars worth of investments.

Who can Finance?

- Banks and financial institutions are key intermediaries between investors who are keen to put more of their cash into low-carbon, sustainable projects and those requiring capital.

- Globally, green finance is gaining prominence as a medium to raise funds for environment-friendly and climate-resilient projects.
- The appetite for green investment opportunities is growing with European and US investors, in particular, committed to increasing their climate-related holdings.
- In India the concept of green financing is nascent. Take the green bond market. Green bond issuance in India rose sharply last year — to more than \$4 billion from \$1.3 billion in 2016.
- While this is a welcome development, it is just a drop in the ocean against India's climate change-related investment needs.

What India should do to receive climate financing?

- Measures to encourage green-bonds could help raise finances needed to “green” India's economy.
- These could include steps to reduce some of the regulatory constraints that currently hamper international investments as well as local pools of capital.
- There is scope for guidelines asking provident funds, pension funds and insurance companies to invest a portion of their assets under management in green bonds.
- The government could offer tax incentives to encourage mutual fund and other onshore investors to invest in local green bonds.
- Currently, there is no incentive for onshore investors to buy labelled green bonds or make green investments.
- India could also look at issuing a sovereign green bond, like France did to great effect last year. This would help push climate-change considerations into the limelight and provide a welcome market benchmark.
- Allowing banks to claim “priority sector benefits” on their green investments would also help.
- These steps could help India to draw in more of foreign capital — this would be especially welcome given that global investors are increasingly factoring climate change into their assessments of a country's overall economic performance.

Conclusion:

- Amid all the issues that concern us — poverty, education, employment, health — it is easy to forget that global warming is one of the most critical challenges we face. We need to do a lot more and a lot sooner or risk an environmental crisis.

Connecting the dots:

- Considering the vulnerability of India, there is a need to build a strong green finance ecosystem. Comment.

Educating people about climate change

Introduction:

Climate change has the potential to disrupt and reshape lives. There are several alarming predictions about its impact. Vulnerable populations should be made aware of the potential risks and how to cope with them.

Global findings and India

- The UN Sustainable Goals Report, 2018 notes that climate change is among the key factors in rising hunger and human displacement.
- The World Health Organisation estimates that climate change will cause an additional 250,000 deaths per year between 2030 and 2050, due to malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.
- Much of this loss will be accounted for by low-income groups in developing nations, including India.
- The World Bank projects that climate change could cost India 2.8% of its GDP, and diminish living standards for nearly half the population, in the next 30-odd years.

Need of awareness

- Do vulnerable groups know the manifestations of climate change, and are they aware that it could potentially affect the health, livelihoods and lives of their families and communities, of present and future generations?
- Is there sufficient awareness about its causes, especially about anthropogenic contributions?

Various initiatives: to create awareness about climate change; how to mitigate and adapt

- In 1991, the Supreme Court directed the Central government and all State governments to provide compulsory environmental education to all students in schools and colleges.
- This directive was reiterated in 2003 (M.C Mehta v. Union of India).
- Corporate organisations, research and education institutes, NGOs and foundations have committed themselves to educating people about climate change and providing the know-how for mitigation, adaptation and resilience building.
- These initiatives target urban and rural populations including school going children.
- Their thrust ranges from inculcating the concept of environmental sustainability to driving home the impact of climate change on food, water, nutrition and health.

Effectiveness of initiatives

- Climate change seems to find low weight in everyday lives and conversations.
- Most of the country's plans for vulnerable populations are directed towards poverty alleviation, improving living standards, enhancing access to education, sanitation, healthcare and ensuring human rights. Climate change finds little mention.
- It must receive greater prominence because the lives of a large number of the population are at risk. It is important that they know how to address and minimise the risks they face.

So, what more can be done? (The way forward)

- At present, climate change does not find specific mention in Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013.
- If it were to be articulated and specified as an activity for corporate social responsibility **(CSR), schedule VII (of Companies Act 2013)** would then need to be amended to include climate change as an area for investment.
- Rather than be implied in the umbrella term of environmental sustainability, organisations may be encouraged to view it **with increased importance and clarity and lend more weight to creating awareness, mitigation and resilience-building.**
- **Scaling up** current initiatives of the corporate and social sectors **to regional or national levels** would be an early, albeit challenging, solution.
- The National CSR Data Portal reports corporate spends on environment, animal welfare and conservation of resources to be Rs. 801 crore in 2014-15 and Rs. 912 crore in 2015-16. It shows that the business organisations are willing to invest in issues related to the environment.
- Similarly, **the film industry** could consider ways to incorporate key aspects of climate change in films, **writers** could introduce climate change in adult and children's literature, and **gaming companies** could develop games on this theme.

Conclusion:

Given the startling forecasts about the impact of climate change, it is the need of the hour to educate and equip both rural and urban communities to build resilience against natural disasters, adapt to environmental changes, and manage potential risk.

Connecting the dots:

- India's efforts at addressing climate change and the wider issues of environmental governance, has been far from convincing. Critically examine.

Pulling back from the brink: Climate Change

Introduction

- A group of scientists have published a paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences deliberating on how the planet might move into a high temperature “hothouse earth” pathway from where there would be no return.
- The paper identifies a threshold beyond which the earth’s systems are no longer able to stabilise at intermediate rises in temperature.
- The authors point out that technology trends and decisions taken in the next decade or two will determine the path of the earth system over the next hundreds of thousands of years.

Background:

- The Holocene, which began about 12,000 years ago, is the stable epoch during which Homo sapiens settled and developed agriculture and other technological innovations.
- These led to social and economic transformations, which have brought the world to this juncture.
- Human activity, supported by the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, led to an increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are now causing global warming.
- This time period, the epoch when humans play a dominant role in shaping the earth systems, is being referred to as the Anthropocene.

Earth’s equilibrium

- The delicate equilibrium of the biosphere/earth system has to do with processes that amplify or dampen warming.
- For instance, melting of Greenland ice increases open waters that absorb more sunlight and then increase warming and cause further melting. This is a positive feedback.
- With the increase in carbon dioxide (CO₂), chemical-weathering increases and removes CO₂ from the atmosphere over geological time — an example of a negative feedback.
- When positive feedbacks become stronger than the negative ones, the system may change abruptly and get pushed out of equilibrium.
- The earth and its systems have shifted between alternative states through long-term processes over its geological history. Now, it appears we are approaching some critical thresholds.

Tipping point

- Many feedbacks respond either continuously or show abrupt change. **A geophysical tipping point is a threshold beyond which a system moves from one stable state to another.**
- This study indicates that crossing a threshold (roughly determined to be about 2° Celsius warmer than pre-industrial times) would lead to the tumbling of a series of tipping points, like a set of dominoes.
- The destruction of the Amazon forest due to wildfires, the loss of permafrost with warming, the weakening of CO₂ absorption by the oceans or the melting of polar ice caps, among many other slow-moving catastrophes, are examples.
- Even if the Paris Agreement of 2015 is implemented and we managed to keep warming below 2° C or even 1.5° C, the risk of a cascade of feedbacks that pushes the earth into the hothouse path may be unavoidable.
- In order to stabilise the earth, we would have to recognise and then carry out deliberate, sustained action to secure earth systems and also adapt to a warmer world.

Conclusion

- Given history and the state of the biosphere, some scientists are not hopeful about avoiding the hothouse path. Others believe that it could still be avoided and the earth could stabilise at a rise below 2° C through infrastructural, societal and institutional transformations.
- Incremental changes along with increasing contributions from renewables and improvements in energy efficiencies would not be sufficient. **Technological solutions alone are insufficient.**
- To deal with climate change, **Fundamental shifts in social values and economic customs are essential.**

Connecting the dots:

- To deal with the climate change, technological solutions alone are insufficient. Elucidate.

Ban on Diwali Firecrackers

Part of: GS Mains III – Pollution and Environment

In news:

- Centre rules out the idea of complete national ban on firecrackers.
- It suggested other steps to curb pollution – such as production of “green crackers”; community fireworks events etc.

- Centre called for working with institutions such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, National Environment Engineering Research Institute and Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) to reduce pollution.
- It suggested setting up of raw material characterisation facilities to check the presence of high content of unburned material, partially combusted material or poor quality of raw material in fire crackers.

Reason behind ban:

- The bursting of firecrackers releases a heavy dose of carcinogens in the atmosphere, presenting a public health challenge for the entire nation.
- This is similar to smoking at public places—a regulated activity—but different from consumption of liquor, which harms the individual.
- A regulation is thus required as it is clear that bursting of firecrackers by one person presents a health challenge to another.
- Noise pollution: unprotected exposure to sound levels greater than 100 dB (a firecracker generates about 125 dB) should be limited.

[NGT on e-Waste](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Environment and Ecology; Role of Judiciary

In news:

- National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to submit an action plan on e-waste management within three months.
- NGT's direction is against unauthorised "recycling, collection, dismantling, burning, selling" of e-waste and other solid waste on roadsides and riverbanks.
- NGT noted that it was in violation of E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016, and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Do you know?

- Electronic waste accounts for 40% of lead and 70% of all heavy metal found in landfills.
- Burning and selling of e-waste and other solid waste results in groundwater contamination and air pollution.

[‘The Urban Commute and How it Contributes to Pollution and Energy’ Report](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Environment and Pollution

In news:

- The report titled ‘The Urban Commute and How it Contributes to Pollution and Energy’, compiled by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), was released recently.
- An analysis of 14 Indian cities, including six megacities and eight metropolises, on how they fare when it comes to pollution and energy consumption from urban commuting.

Result:

- Kolkata - top-performing megacity.
- Bhopal leads the list on the lowest overall emissions.
- Delhi fares the worst on the two counts.

Do you know?

- Road transport was the sector showing the highest increase in emission of greenhouse gases.
- According to the report, though metropolitan cities scored better than megacities due to lower population, lower travel volume and lower vehicle numbers, they were at risk due to a much higher share of personal vehicle trips.

[Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act \(CAF Act\), 2016 and Forest Rights Act](#)

CAF Act and FRA were in news. Just remember the following basics for now.

About CFA Act, 2016:

- The legislation provides an institutional mechanism to ensure utilization of amounts realised in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forest purpose. The amount is used to mitigate impact of diversion of such forest land.

About FRA, 2006:

- The law concerns the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other resources, denied to them over decades.

Trouble in the hill

Introduction:

- The catastrophic monsoon floods in Kerala and parts of Karnataka have revived the debate on whether political expediency trumped science?
- Kerala is a part of Western Ghats, spread over 1,29,037 sq km according to the Gadgil Panel estimate and 1,64,280 sq km as per the Kasturirangan panel.

Western Ghats and reports:

- Seven years ago, the **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel** issued recommendations for the preservation of the fragile western peninsular region.
- Madhav Gadgil, who chaired the Union Environment Ministry's WGEEP, has said the recent havoc in Kerala is a consequence of short-sighted policymaking, and warned that Goa may also be in the line of nature's fury.
- The State governments that are mainly responsible for the Western Ghats — Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Maharashtra — must pay heed to the reports of both the Gadgil Committee and the **Kasturirangan Committee**, which was set up to examine the WGEEP report.
- The entire system is globally acknowledged as a biodiversity hotspot. But population estimates for the sensitive zones vary greatly, based on interpretations of the ESZs.
- In Kerala, for instance, one expert assessment says 39 lakh households are in the ESZs outlined by the WGEEP, but the figure drops sharply to four lakh households for a smaller area of zones identified by the Kasturirangan panel.

Challenges before:

- The task before western states is to initiate correctives to environmental policy decisions.
- This is not going to be easy, given the need to balance human development pressures with stronger protection of the Western Ghats ecology.
- The issue of allowing extractive industries such as quarrying and mining to operate is arguably the most contentious.
- Another issue is the calculation of what constitutes the sensitive core and what activities can be carried out there.

Way forward:

- The goal has to be sustainable development for the Ghats as a whole.
- The role of big hydroelectric dams, built during an era of rising power demand and deficits, must now be considered afresh and proposals for new ones dropped.

- Other low-impact forms of green energy led by solar power are available.
- A moratorium on quarrying and mining in the identified sensitive zones, in Kerala and also other States, is necessary to assess their environmental impact.
- A way out could be to create the regulatory framework that was proposed by the Gadgil panel, in the form of an apex Western Ghats Ecology Authority and the State-level units, under the Environment (Protection) Act, and to adopt the zoning system that it proposed.
- This can keep incompatible activities out of the Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZs).
- Public consultation on the expert reports that includes people's representatives will find greater resonance now, and help chart a sustainable path ahead.

Connecting the dots:

- What are Hotspots? Suggest some measures to conserve Western Ghats, in the light of Gadgil Committee report.
- Economic development and environment conservation, evaluate the Kasturirangan Committee report's recommendation.

India's most polluted: 30% have no clean up plan

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Environment and Pollution

In news:

- There are concerns as good numbers of India's most polluted cities have failed to clean up their act.
- **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** had asked polluted cities (or '**non-attainment' cities**) to implement 42 measures aimed at mitigating air pollution - as part of the **National Clean Air Campaign (NCAP)**.
- These included steps such as implementing control and mitigation measures related to vehicular emissions, re-suspension of road dust and other fugitive emissions, bio-mass, municipal solid waste burning, industrial pollution, and construction and demolition activities.
- However, prominent non-attainment cities such as Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Nagpur and Jaipur are yet to submit their plans.

Do you know?

- The non-attainment cities are those that have fallen short of the **National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)** for over five years.

- Recently, World Health Organisation said that Delhi and Varanasi were among 14 Indian cities that figured in a global list of the 20 most polluted cities in terms of PM2.5 levels.
- Other Indian cities with very high levels of PM2.5 particulates were Kanpur, Faridabad, Gaya, Patna, Lucknow, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur, followed by Ali Subah Al-Salem in Kuwait and some cities in China and Mongolia.

Objective of NCAP

- The NCAP aspires to overcome the deficits of the ongoing government initiatives targeted towards air pollution control.
- It lays down a comprehensive strategy framework for enhanced management of air quality.
- Augmentation of existing air quality monitoring network by increasing number of existing manual and continuous monitoring stations, introducing rural monitoring stations, identifying alternative technology for real-time monitoring network and augmenting capabilities of existing monitoring stations to measure PM2.5 concentration, are integral components of the strategy framework.

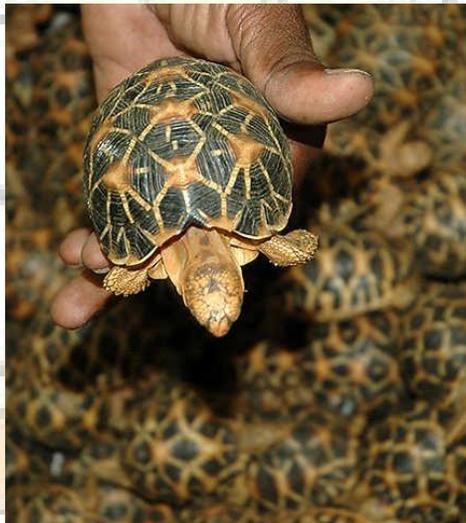
ANIMALS/NATIONAL PARKS IN NEWS

Animal in news: Indian star tortoise

Part of: Prelims - Environment and Biodiversity; Animal Conservation

In news:

- 1,125 Indian star tortoises seized from train passengers. They were to be smuggled to Bangladesh.
- IUCN: Vulnerable
- The Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*) is a threatened species of tortoise found in dry areas and scrub forest in India and Sri Lanka.
- This species is quite popular in the exotic pet trade, which is the main reason it is endangered.
- The species is listed in the Schedule IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and prohibited from export under the Foreign Trade Policy. The species are liable for confiscation under the Customs Act, 1962.



https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/06/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_05/f69b5bad_230037_7_1_mr.jpg

Animal in news: Humboldt penguin

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Environment and Biodiversity; Animal conservation

In news:

- Mumbai's Byculla zoo gives India its first baby penguin (Humboldt penguin).
- Humboldt penguin is a South American penguin that breeds in coastal Chile and Peru.
- The penguin is named after the cold water current (Humboldt current) it swims in.
- IUCN status: Vulnerable

Impact of proposed water aerodrome on Chilika's biodiversity

Part of : GS Mains III – Environment and Biodiversity

In news:

- The Airports Authority of India's move to set up a water aerodrome in Odisha's Chilika Lake has stirred a controversy.
- Green activists and fishermen in Chilika have all opposed the proposal to set up an aerodrome in one of **Asia's largest brackish water lagoons**, asserting that it would impact the lake's biodiversity.
- **Prafulla Samantara**, winner of the **Goldman Environmental Prize**, has accused the Centre and the State governments of tinkering with the biodiversity of the lagoon, which is designated a **Ramsar site – wetland of international importance** under the **Ramsar Convention**.
- The endangered Irrawaddy dolphins found in Chilika are sensitive to sound pollution.
- Migratory birds in Chilika lake may also be affected.

National Park/Sactuary in news: Nauradehi sanctuary

Animal in News: Cheetah

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Environment and Ecology; Biodiversity/Animal Conservation

In news:

- **Nauradehi sanctuary**, Madhya Pradesh
- Madhya Pradesh forest department has written to the National Tiger Conservation Authority to revive the plan to reintroduce cheetahs in the State's Nauradehi sanctuary.

Do you know?

- Cheetah — is the fastest land animal.

- India was once home to many cheetahs, but the last of them was killed in 1947 (in Chhattisgarh) and the cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952. It is the only large mammal to have been declared extinct in our country in recorded history.
- NTCA is a **statutory body** under the Union Environment Ministry.
- The **Wildlife Institute of India at Dehradun** had prepared a ₹260-crore cheetah re-introduction project six years ago.
- According to the earlier action plan, around 20 cheetahs were to be translocated to Nauradehi from Namibia in Africa. The Namibia Cheetah Conservation Fund had then showed its willingness to donate the felines to India.
- However, the State was not ready to finance the plan contending that it was the Centre's project.
- Reintroducing this beautiful animal will ensure the restoration of our natural heritage. Most importantly, it will contribute towards the conservation of the dryland (grassland, scrubland and open forest) ecosystems that the cheetah inhabits.

IUCN status – In the 2015 update of the IUCN Red List, the Asiatic cheetah is considered regionally extinct in Iraq, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

The Asiatic cheetah has been listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List since 1996.

[Bombay Natural History Society \(BNHS\) and avifauna observatory](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Environment and Ecology; Biodiversity/Animal Conservation

In news:

- BNHS is one of India's premier avian research institutes.
- It will start operating its regional centre on the campus of Wetland Research and Training Centre near Chilika Lake from Monday.
- The avifauna observatory will be inaugurated by BNHS.
- The centre will carry out research on avian disease by collecting samples and monitor the Nalabana Bird Sanctuary.

About BNHS:

- **BNHS-India**, a pan-India wildlife research organization, has been promoting the cause of nature conservation for the past 133 years, since 1883.
- **BNHS Mission:** Conservation of Nature, primarily Biological Diversity through action based on Research, Education and Public Awareness

- **BNHS Vision:** Premier independent scientific organization with a broad based constituency, excelling in the conservation of threatened species and habitats.
- BNHS is headquartered in the specially constructed 'Hornbill House' in southern Mumbai.

Map work:

Locate and mark the following location on your Atlas/Outline map of Orissa state

1. Simlipal National Park.
2. Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.
3. Chilika Wildlife Sanctuary.
4. Satkosia Tiger Reserve.
5. Ushakothi (Badrama) Wildlife Sanctuary.
6. Bhitarkanika National Park.

Animal in news: Nilgiri tahr

National Park at news: Mukurthi National Park

Part of: Prelims – Environment and Biodiversity; Animal Conservation

In news:

- Recent census has revealed that the population of the **Nilgiri tahr** at the **Mukurthi National Park** has grown by an impressive 18% in the last two years, from 480 to 568.
- **Mukurthi National Park** (MNP) is protected area located in the western corner of the **Nilgiris Plateau** west of **Ootacamund hill** station in the northwest corner of **Tamil Nadu** state in the **Western Ghats mountain range** of South India.

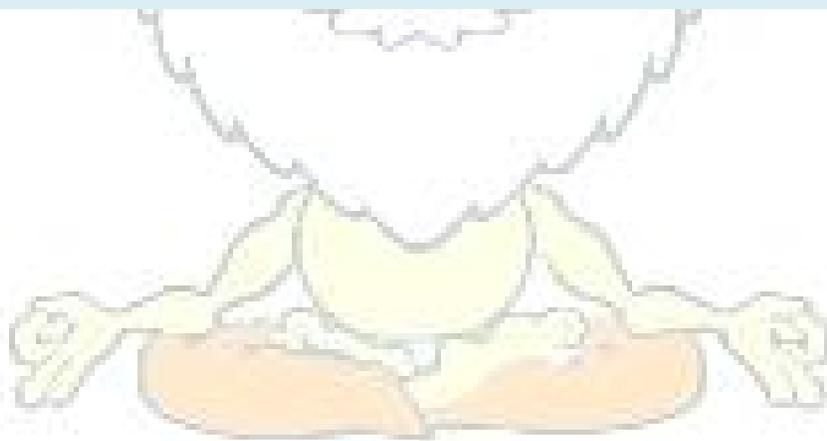
Key pointers:

- IUCN Status: **Endangered**
- The present distribution of the Nilgiri tahr is limited to approximately 5% of the Western Ghats in southern India, in Kerala and Tamil Nadu in southern India.
- It is **found only in high altitudes** in India's Western Ghats
- The endangered wild goat could lose approximately 60% of its habitat, starting from the 2030s. (due to Climate change)
- Largest of the 3 tahr species
- State animal of Tamil nadu.
- Threats – habitat loss, overgrazing, illegal hunting



Pic:

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/31/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_01/6255c6c2_2357433_1_mr.jpg



INFRASTRUCTURE/ENERGY

Zero imports of telecommunications equipment by 2022

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Infrastructure

In news:

- India aim at net zero imports of telecommunications equipment by 2022
- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recommended the setting up of a ₹1,000 crore fund for promoting research and innovation in the sector.
- TRAI recommendations aim at enabling Indian telecom equipment manufacturing sector to transition from an import-dependent sector to a global hub of indigenous manufacturing.

Ethanol blending in petrol: Saving forex

Part of: Mains GS Paper II, III- Government interventions, Energy security

Key pointers:

- India expects to make foreign exchange savings of up to Rs. 12,000 crore every year after four years through the ethanol blending programme.
- India has set course to produce nearly 450 crore litres of ethanol in the coming four years.
- Ethanol blending in petrol increased from 38 crore litres in the ethanol supply year 2013-14, to an estimated 141 crore litres in 2017-18.
- The government has also approved the National Policy on Biofuels in June.
- The Centre is pushing to bring more agricultural produce and waste to be converted to ethanol.

Note:- PM Modi has launched a web portal PARIVESH, a single window for environmental, wildlife, forest and Coastal Regulation Zone clearances.

'RUCO' initiative

Part of: Mains GS Paper II- Government interventions

Key pointers:

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched **RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil)**, an initiative that will enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to bio-diesel.
- The initiative has been launched nearly a month after the food safety regulator notified standards for used cooking oil.
- FSSAI may also look at introducing regulations to ensure that companies that use large quantities of cooking oil hand it over to registered collecting agencies to convert it into biofuel.
- Under this initiative, 64 companies at 101 locations have been identified to enable collection of used cooking oil.
- The regulator believes India has the potential to recover 220 crore litres of used cooking oil for the production of biodiesel by 2022 through a co-ordinated action.

[Blue stickers for petrol, CNG; orange for diesel](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Environment; Pollution; Energy

In news:

- Soon, vehicles will have hologram-based coloured stickers which indicate the nature of the fuel used in them.
- Supreme Court agreed to a proposal of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)
- Light blue colour for petrol and CNG-run vehicles
- orange colour would be placed on diesel vehicles
- The date of registration of the vehicle would also be printed on these stickers

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chandrayaan-2 proposed

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Science and Tech; Space programmes

In news:

- Chandrayaan-2: India's second moon mission
- Chandrayaan-2 to be delayed till January 2019
- It will be ISRO's first time attempt to land a rover

Recent launches by ISRO

- Earlier this year, the ISRO had launched **GSAT-6A**, a military communication satellite.
- Launch of **GSAT-11** from Kourou, French Guiana
- **PSLV- C39** mission, carrying the IRNSS-1H navigation satellite - failed after the heat shield refused to open and release the satellite.

Do you know?

- GSAT-6A, the second predominantly S-band communications satellite, was launched.
- It will complement GSAT-6, which has been orbiting since August 2015 at 83 degrees East longitude.

TRAI's nod for 5G Spectrum

Part of: GS Mains III – Science and Tech

In news:

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recommends the auction of spectrum for offering 5G services for the first time in the country.

About 5G

5G is a wireless communication technology. It is the next generation mobile networks technology after 4G LTE networks. The final standard for 5G will be set up by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Advantages of 5G

- As per the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) Committee on Digital Economic Policy, 5G technologies rollout will help in increasing GDP, creating employment and digitizing the economy.

- The 5G technology will offer far greater upload and download speed available today.
- This will help cloud systems to stream software updates, music, and navigation data to driverless cars. In other words, it will help aid incorporate Artificial Intelligence in our lives.
- It will enable Smart devices to exchange data seamlessly providing the ecosystem for Internet of Things (IoT).

ISRO set to launch its TV channel

- ISRO to launch its dedicated TV channel
- Channel to showcase space applications, developments and science issues, targeting young viewers and people in remote areas in their language.
- The move is to commemorate Vikram Sarabhai centenary celebration.
- ISRO's tributes to Sarabhai start with **naming the first Indian moon landing spacecraft of the Chandrayaan-2 mission 'Vikram'**. The mission is planned for early 2019.

About Vikram Sarabhai

- Sarabhai, the architect of the Indian space programme, the first ISRO chief and renowned cosmic ray scientist, was born on August 12, 1919.



Loaded years ahead: ISRO Chairman Dr. K. Sivan gestures during the unveiling of a bust of Vikram Sarabhai, in Bengaluru on Sunday. • PTI

Sky is the limit

ISRO has identified as many as 50 missions in the next three years. A lowdown of missions in the next nine months:

SEPTEMBER 2018: NovoSAR-S & SSTL-S1 (on PSLV-C42 rocket)	DECEMBER 2018: EMISAT (PSLV-C44), GSAT-31 (by Arianespace)
OCTOBER 2018: HYSIS + 30 small foreign satellites (PSLV-C43)	JANUARY-MARCH 2019: Chandrayaan-2 (GSLV-Mk3)
NOVEMBER 2018: GSAT-11 (launch by Arianespace), GSAT- 7A (GSLV-F11)	JANUARY 2019: RISAT-2B (PSLV-C45)
	MAY 2019: GSAT-30 (by Arianespace)

ALSO IN 2019:
Solar mission Aditya-L1 (PSLV)
Navigation satellite IRNSS-1J (PSLV)
Fixed or Geostationary Earth Imager GISAT (GSLV)

Pic:

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/13/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_07/b87dc4f2_2317115_101_mr.jpg

[RISECREEK: Project Shakti](#)

Part of: GS Prelims – Science and Tech; Indigenous Technology

In news:

- RISC-V Workshop in Chennai, India, hosted by IIT Madras, achieved a significant milestone by booting Linux on its first ever **RISC-V based silicon chip processor named Shakti**.
- The team (which is partly **funded by MeitY**, GOI as part of the India Microprocessor development project) aims to create a critical mass of CPU architects in India.
- According to industry analysts, **RISC-V** based chips such as Shakti could be major players in IoT, and AI with an extensive ecosystem is in place.
- The initial batch of 300 chips named **RISECREEK**, produced under Project Shakti, have been fabricated free at Intel's facility at Oregon, U.S., to run the Linux operating system.

About MeitY

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
- To promote e-Governance for empowering citizens, promoting the inclusive and sustainable growth of the Electronics, IT & ITeS industries, enhancing India's role in Internet Governance, adopting a multipronged approach that includes development of human resources, promoting R&D and innovation, enhancing efficiency through digital services and ensuring a secure cyber space.

[Gaganyaan: human space flight programme](#)

In news:

- **Gaganyaan**, the human space flight programme was green-flagged and is set for 2022 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ISRO said the mission is achievable, as most of the critical technologies are ready
- The mission is estimated at ₹9,000 crore.

Do you know?

- When it achieves the mission, India would be the fourth nation to circle Earth after the Soviets, the Americans and the Chinese.
- In 1984, India's first astronaut Wing Commander (retd.) Rakesh Sharma orbited Earth as part of a Soviet mission.
- Department of Space and ISRO are directly under the Prime Minister.

2022: India's space odyssey

What is the Human Space Flight Project all about?

- In 2022, 3 Indian astronauts, mostly flight test pilots from the IAF, will circle earth for seven days from a distance of 300-400 km
-
- They will travel in a 7,000-kg crew capsule. A GSLV-MkIII launch vehicle will lift them to their orbit
-
- The flight will take off from a refurbished launchpad at Sriharikota
-
- The entire project could cost roughly between ₹7,000 to 9,000 crore



ALSO PROPOSED

- Food, suits and other life systems for crew
-
- Astronaut selection & training
-
- Two unmanned trials, the first in two years
-
- A new command & tracking centre at ISTRAC, Bengaluru
-
- Improved launchpad at SDSC, Sriharikota

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/16/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_11/f03944e2_2323004_101_mr.jpg

Bringing up a science: Research and Education in Evolution biology

Introduction:

- The lack of research and education in evolutionary biology in India has justifiably been a matter of concern for some time.
- Evolutionary biology is important in understanding multi-drug resistance in microbes, for instance.
- **The Nipah virus outbreak**, which was traced to the habitat destruction of fruit bats, is also a study in ecology and evolutionary biology.

More about Evolutionary Biology:

- **Darwinian medicine or Evolutionary medicine** is the modern application of evolutionary theory to understanding health and disease.

- It is poorly researched in India as compared to other countries. The only example from recent studies is work of Milind Watve who studied diabetes from this perspective.
- Host-range expansion is a classic evolutionary biology concept where, owing to climate change or other reasons, a pathogen moves from one host to another.
- In the Indian context, it sadly remains untapped as an approach to diseases that spread from animals to humans.
- In education, too, evolutionary biology is at a disadvantage. For one, there are no postgraduate departments of evolutionary biology in any university.
- DNA fingerprinting is a technology that has now caught the popular imagination.
- Using DNA fingerprinting and DNA statistics for forensics requires a nontrivial understanding of molecular population genetics.
- But we do not have sufficient numbers of researchers working on these areas and training future generations.

The Way ahead

- A group of evolutionary biologists have recently established the Indian Society of Evolutionary Biologists (ISEB). This is a significant development.
- If India wishes to effectively leverage scientific understanding to address problems of public health, environment, agriculture and societal breakdowns, it cannot be done without greatly enhancing our appreciation of the importance of an evolutionary perspective in attacking these problems.

Connecting the dots:

- WHO Zika virus alert and then Nipah outbreak in Kerala, do you think India is ready for such public health emergencies? Comment in the light of Medical education and R&D in Health Sciences in India.

[Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory \(LIGO\) project](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Science and Technology; Space Programmes

In news:

- Gravitational wave observatory, LIGO - may come up in Maharashtra's Hingoli district
- A new gravitational wave detector to measure ripples in the fabric of space and time is set to be built in India by 2025
- Environment Ministry has allowed scientists to test the suitability of land in Maharashtra's Hingoli district to host the LIGO project.

- The new Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) detector will add to the two already operational in the US.

Do you know?

- Three American physicists Rainer Weiss, Kip Thorne and Barry Barish won the Nobel Prize for their contribution towards Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory, or LIGO, experiment.
- Currently LIGO operates three gravitational wave detectors-One is at Livingston in Louisiana and other two are at Hanford in Washington and the detectors are located about 3,000 km apart in L shape. The overall project is funded by National science foundation.

About LIGO

- It is a large scale physics experiment observatory established in 2002 to detect gravitational waves.
- The present telescopes could detect objects which emit electromagnetic radiations like X-ray, gamma rays etc. However, merger of black holes and many other cataclysmic events do not emit electromagnetic waves rather gravitational waves.
- Thus, LIGO was established to unfold the many unknown phenomenon in universe through the gravitational waves detection.

India and LIGO

- Indian participation in the LIGO Scientific Collaboration, was done under the umbrella Initiative –IndIGO, which is a consortium of Indian gravitational-wave physicists.
- Bala Iyer of the Raman Research Institute has made immense contribution towards setting up of this consortium.
- The consortium especially under Bala Iyer facilitated international collaborations in gravitational-wave- physics and astronomy and initiating a strong experimental gravitational-wave research program in India.
- Hosting such a detector in India, scientists have said, will improve the odds of detecting more such phenomena.
- The proposed LIGO-India project aims to move one Advanced LIGO detector from Hanford to India. The LIGO-India project is an international collaboration between the LIGO Laboratory and three lead institutions in the LIGO-India consortium: Institute of Plasma Research, Gandhinagar; IUCAA, Pune; and Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology, Indore.
- The project, piloted by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Department of Science and Technology (DST), reportedly costs ₹1,200 crore and is expected to be ready by 2025.

Community Radio Station: Sangham Radio

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Role of Technology; Self Help Groups; Innovation

In news:

- **Sangham Radio, India's first community radio station**, is struggling to stay alive.
- It is owned and run by 5,000 poor, mostly **Dalit women** in one of India's most underdeveloped areas.
- The radio station, an initiative of the **Deccan Development Society (DDS)**, a local grassroots organisation, was started in 1998 in Machanoor village in Telangana's Sangareddy district.
- It **caters to the Sanghams (self-help groups)** of underprivileged, rural women.
- It got its licence to broadcast in 2008, and has been in operation for 10 years. The programme content is generated entirely by the 5,000-odd women, largely agricultural workers.
- The radio station's financial crisis stems in large part from the unpaid dues from the government for advertisements aired on the station.

Role of Science and Technology in human development

Introduction:

On our 72nd Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced some important initiatives –

1. Passage of the Bill to create an **OBC Commission**
2. **100th anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh massacre**
3. **India's space mission** – In **2022** (on the occasion of India's 75th Independence Day), India to unfurl the tri-colour in the space.
4. **Subramania Bharati vision** of India - Subramania Bharati (great Tamil poet) had said India will not only rise as a great nation, but will also inspire the others. India will show the way to the entire world to unshackle the bonds.
5. **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan** - to be launched on 25th September 2018 (birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay)
6. India's farming sector - 'Beej Se Bazar Tak' approach ; double farmer incomes by 2022

7. On women empowerment - Practice of Triple Talaq to be ended; Women officers commissioned in short service will get opportunity for permanent commission.
8. On government schemes and policies - Thirteen crore 'mudra loans'; Ujjwala and Saubhagya Yojana; GST; Swachh Bharat mission

Among the above, one important announcement was the **vision of Tricolour to be unfurled in space by 2022.**

Concerns:

However, on the other hand the following had made headlines –

- The country facing flooding, partly due to water released from dams following exceptional rain.
- News articles on lynching, mostly over a wide swathe of north India from Uttar Pradesh to Jharkhand but not entirely absent in the south.
- Mobocracy - Mobs had attacked persons either on their own or in small groups, with the victims in every case having been unarmed and acting without any provocation and who usually belong to Dalits and Muslims (marginalised sections of the country)

These incidents don't augur well in a democratic nation. Emphasising a space programme as an objective while failing to highlight the multiple failings of public policy in India makes a mockery of the democratic project. (According to the author)

Therefore, the primary focus or objective should be to create enabling conditions for a valuable life, by –

- protecting natural capital,
- building public goods in the form of physical infrastructure,
- providing a public education and health service, and
- creating institutions that support individual aspirations.

Need for an effective science and technology policy

The pursuit of high science by the Government of India had started quite early after 1947 when it embarked on a **programme of harnessing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.**

The **Atomic Energy Commission was formed** and treated with reverence.

- However, it is not clear how much difference this has made to the power situation in the country.
- Independent experts at the Indian Statistical Institute point out that nuclear power is costly.

Key alternative to burning coal (fossil fuel) or nuclear power is the need to rely on non-renewable energy such as sunlight and wind power which is abundant in India.

With the cost of generating solar power is reducing rapidly due to advances in storage technology, it would be wise to have a science policy that is focussed enough to monitor and exploit these trends and a government machinery that is both motivated and adept at facilitating a mass transition to cleaner fuel.

India's science and technology policy should now be re-oriented to improve the lives of Indians.

Role of Science and Technology

An example of such a role for science was the **launching of the Green Revolution** in the mid-1960s. In a matter of less than a decade a precarious economy the size of a subcontinent was transformed into one self-sufficient in food.

The Green Revolution was achieved through a rare combination of scientific leadership in the agricultural sector, administrative ability and political acumen, but above all by the genius of India's farmers.

We have not seen national will on a similar scale since. This when we urgently need an agricultural initiative comparable in its transformative capacity today. Indian agriculture has performed more erratically than usual in the past decade.

Given the scale of the public science and technology apparatus in India, especially of agricultural research institutions, **there is a visible lack of response to this situation**, if not crisis.

Development economists recognise that the 'food problem' does not cease once a country is able to produce food in sufficient quantity. It is necessary to produce food at a cost that is affordable to the mass of the population. It may be emphasised that this is fully compatible with a prosperous farming population. What is needed is an **increase in the productivity of land**.

Despite the Prime Minister's claims in his speech of his government having delivered on farm price support, a rise in farm productivity requires more than the price mechanism; technology and extension services would matter.

Today we are paying the price for a policy that generally neglected the majority of the rural Indians who more than anything else needed public services.

Equipped with capability — through good health and awareness — the once marginalised would be vulnerable no more. Promising the moon by courting high science while ignoring human development leaves some Indians at the mercy of the mob and India's democracy diminished in our own estimation.

Connecting the dots:

- India's science and technology policy should be re-oriented to improve the lives of Indians. Do you agree? Discuss. Also with suitable examples examine how Science and Technology has played huge role in human development.

In search of greatness: Brain Drain

Introduction:

In most of the international recognitions and awards, Indian origin persons of talent are able to make their place. But Indians residing and working in India are not able to get significant global recognition.

Some Examples:

- **The Fields Medal**, popularly seen as the equivalent of a Nobel Prize, **is awarded once in four years** to two-four **mathematicians below the age of 40**. In its long history, no **woman** had won this medal until 2014 when an **Iranian, Maryam Mirzakhani**, won it for the **first time**.
- **No Indian** has yet won it although it was also in 2014 that for the first time an **Indian-origin** Canadian-American mathematician, **Manjul Bhargava**, was awarded.
- In the recently announced prize for **2018**, an Australian mathematician, **Akshay Venkatesh**, was awarded. He too happens to be of **Indian origin**.
- It is the **same case with respect to the Nobel Prizes in science**. Indian-origin scientists have won the Nobel in physics, chemistry and medicine, but post-Independence, work done in India has not led to a science Nobel.

Other fields in which India have produced world beaters:

- Chess and badminton are examples, youngsters not only took to these sports, but under intense, and many time brutal, competition succeeded in coming to the top.
- There is a systematic creation of groups of individuals who are reaching the pinnacle in these sports.
- Similarly, we have global leaders in music, arts and literature.

Unpleasant questions

- Some Indians might take pride in the ancestry of these latter two winners, but has the country contributed anything to their growth as mathematicians?
- Would Prof. Bhargava and Prof. Venkatesh have produced the work that won these prizes if they had studied and worked in India?
- Is it that we are embarrassed about greatness and much prefers to deal with mediocrity and ordinariness?
- As an institutional culture, is it that we prefer to discover greatness 'outside' rather than acknowledge it amongst ourselves?

Reasons for mediocrity in science education

- The revolution in chess and badminton was possible through great personal sacrifices of the players and their families.
- In many cases, securing even minimal funds from government or the private sector was difficult and the perseverance of parents, as well as the hard work of the children and the coaches, made this revolution possible.
- In contrast, the training for science begins from a state-sponsored and socially sanctioned education system right from primary school.
- At every step there are numerous scholarships, cash awards and incentives given to students to excel in these subjects.
- Although achieving greatness in science is not like that in sports or music, it is nevertheless important to understand why our contribution in science does not match this enormous cultural capital.
- **Three main reasons** that contribute to this culture of mediocrity, the nature of school education, the state of science administration, and our cultural response to the idea of excellence.

1. Nature of school education

- While all over the world, children are becoming more independent in terms of their intellectual practices, our students are becoming more and more like little soldiers marching from one class to other and from one to other tuition.
- Science education is not egalitarian and is designed to keep people out rather than embrace diversity and multiplicity of background, language and talents.
- This is done in the name of merit, and yet it is precisely this merit that we lack on the global stage.

2. The state of science administration

- Given the amount of support from successive governments, it is remarkable that very little has changed.
- Government funding agencies and a host of others which disburse hundreds of crores of rupees for research in science are not held **accountable to the results**.

- So many projects worth crores end up with some minor publications.
- Scientists know best how personal contacts and networks are still so important in securing funds and other incentives in science in India today.

3. Cultural response to the idea of excellence

- The school system as well as science administration are both linked together by a common problem: the inability to understand and deal with excellence.
- In academic institutions across the country, it is far more difficult for a person to stand out in terms of high quality work since the system has little support for excellence.
- Part of the reason is that we do not have confidence in our own judgment of quality.

An evaluation of 'greatness' in India

- Great work in any domain is not produced in isolation. Greatness is deeply cultural and arises from a particular attitude and not subject competence alone.
- For great work to be possible in science, the larger society has to produce great work in art, literature, humanities and so on.
- But we have produced a science ecosystem which does not seem to understand this, nor recognise how this insularity has only contributed to mediocre science.
- Our education system has reduced the notions of competence and merit only to that of science, thereby denying the greatness inherent in so many other domains.
- Children who could have excelled in so many other disciplines and activities end up being forced to do science or being in education systems which put very little premium on other disciplines.
- At the same time, countless artists and musicians struggle to survive in spite of creating great work.
- As long as this myopic vision of science, the hegemony of science education and the unprofessional cult of Indian science administration continue, we are not going to win Fields medal or Nobel prizes in science any time soon.

Do you know?

Government has taken many steps to control and capitalise the Brain drain from India:

- **Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme** and **Ramanujan Fellowship** of the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)
- **Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship** of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT)
- **INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship** of the Department of Science and Technology (DST)

Conclusion:

If Indians studying and working abroad can have a great impact, then obviously the problem has to do with our systems of education and research. There is a need to do fundamental changes

to not only our education system, but also our social and political approach towards creative environment and culture of greatness.

Connecting the dots:

- India is having the third largest scientific manpower in the world. But its creative contribution to science has been way below par. Critically comment.

Manned space mission before 75th I-Day: ISRO chief

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Science and Technology

In news:

- Gaganyaan - India's ambitious manned spaceflight mission
- ISRO aims to launch three Indians into space by an Indian rocket (before the 75th Independence Day).

Do you know?

- ISRO began work on the manned mission in 2004 and some of these technologies have been demonstrated successfully through various tests — Space Capsule Recovery Experiment, Crew module Atmospheric Re-entry Experiment and Pad Abort Test.
- The total programme is expected to cost less than ₹10,000 crore.

DEFENCE

Strategic Partnership model

Part of: GS Prelims and mains III – Defence and Security

In news:

Major step towards boosting private sector participation in domestic defence manufacturing:

- **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** had approved the implementation of Strategic Partnership guidelines.
- **Strategic Partnership model** aims to revitalise defence industrial ecosystem and progressively build indigenous capabilities in the private sector to design, develop and manufacture complex weapon system for future needs of armed forces.
- The SP model has four segments — submarines, single engine fighter aircraft, helicopters and armoured carriers/main battle tanks — which would be specifically **opened up for the private sector**.
- Under this policy one Indian private company would be selected in each segment which would **tie-up with shortlisted global equipment manufacturers** to manufacture the platforms in India under technology transfer.
- However, foreign companies say there is still some clarity required on crucial legal, liability and technology transfer issues.

Do you know?

- For the first time, under the SP model, Indian private companies will get to tie up with global original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and build major defence platforms in India under technology transfer. So far, it was defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs) which played the lead role.
- All procurements under the SP model would be executed by specially constituted empowered project committees (EPC) to ensure timely execution.

Salient features

The Strategic Partnership (SP) policy is intended to promote Indian private sector participation in defence manufacturing. It came into effect on May 31, 2017

Four segments were identified for acquisition under this route:

- Fighter Aircraft
- Helicopters
- Submarines
- Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) / Main Battle Tanks (MBTs)



- It enables participation of private Indian firms in 'Make in India' in defence
- Policy acknowledges Indian private sector's "limited experience in defence manufacturing"

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/27/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_11/b8d0dfdd_2348057_101_mr.jpg

Exercise Peace Mission 2018

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II and III – International organization; Multilateral organization; International Relations; Security

In news:

- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Peace Mission 2018 Exercise was held in Chebarkul, Russia.
- Military contingents of the **all eight SCO member nations** (China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, India and Pakistan) participated in this Exercise.
- The Peace Mission Exercise focused on anti-terror operations.

Do you know?

- This was the 5th edition of SCO Peace Mission Exercise.
- India participated for the first time.
- The Russian Army has the major participation of 1700 personnel followed by China with 700 & India with 200 personnel. Pakistan contingent comprised of 110 members.
- The SCO Peace Mission Exercise takes place every two years.

- The previous editions of this exercise were mainly limited to Central Asian nations. But due to the entry of India and Pakistan (in June 2017), SCO's counter-terrorism mission now has been expanded to South Asia.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Disaster: Kerala Floods

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Disaster Management

In news:

- Heavy rainfall in Kerala due to low pressure area developed in the Bay of Bengal.
- National Disaster Response Force was deployed in Kerala.

Important Value Additions:

About National Disaster Response Fund:

- NDRF is defined under the Disaster Management Act, 2005
- It is a fund managed by the Central Government for meeting the expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation due to any threatening disaster situation or disaster.
- Sources of Financing NDRF - NDRF is financed through the levy of a cess on certain items, chargeable to excise and customs duty, and approved annually through the Finance Bill
- The requirement for funds beyond what is available under the NDRF is met through general budgetary resources.
- NDRF is located in the "Public Accounts" of Government of India under "Reserve Funds not bearing interest"

Do you know?

- Department of Agriculture and Cooperation under Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) monitors relief activities for calamities associated with drought, hailstorms, pest attacks and cold wave /frost while rest of the natural calamities are monitored by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Kerala reels under its worst floods

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains I and III – Indian Geography and Disaster Management

In news:

- The 2018 Kerala floods were a result of the unusually severe amount of southwest monsoon rains.
- It is the first time in its history all five gates of the Idukki Dam were opened at the same time and also 35 out of 39 reservoirs in the state were opened.

Concern:

- There is no proper flood water warning system in place, people also lack awareness in various disaster management procedures is also a major concern.
- Local authorities should have inspected and given warnings in several hilly regions, where various land slide deaths could have been prevented.

What do you mean by “Flood”?

It is a temporary inundation of large regions as a result of an increase in reservoir, or of rivers, flooding their banks because of heavy rains, high winds, cyclones, storm surge along coast, tsunami, melting snow or dam bursts.

Types of Floods

Flash floods:

- It is defined as floods which occur within six hours of the beginning of heavy rainfall , and are usually associated with cloud bursts, storms and cyclones requiring rapid localized warning and immediate response if damage is to be mitigated. In case of flash floods, warning for timely evacuation may not always be possible.

River floods:

- Such floods are caused by precipitation over large catchment areas. These floods normally build up slowly or seasonally and may continue for days or weeks as compared to flash floods.

Coastal floods:

- Some floods are associated with the cyclonic activities like hurricanes, tropical cyclone etc. Catastrophic flooding is often aggravated by wind-induced storm surges along the coast.

Causes of Flood:

- Excessive rainfall in river catchments or concentration of runoff from the tributaries and river carrying flows in excess of their capacities
- Back movement of water in tributaries at their confluence with the main river
- Synchronization of flood peaks of the main rivers and tributaries
- Landslides causing obstruction to flow and change in the river course
- Poor natural drainage
- Cyclone and very intense rainfall
- Intense rainfall when river is flowing full
- Climate change is responsible for abrupt rainfall and a high variability in rainfall.
- Melting of glacier due to increase in mean global temperature.

Approach to Flood Management/Prevention**Structural Measures: Attempts to Modify Flood**

- (a) Dams and Reservoirs
- (b) Embankment
- (c) Drainage Improvements
- (d) Channel Improvements
- (e) Diversion of Flood Waters
- (f) Using Natural Detention Basin

Non- Structural Measures: Attempts to modify susceptibility of Flood

- (a) Flood plain zoning: – It aims to regulate the developments in the flood plains, so that it is compatible with Flood Risk. It recognises the basic fact that the flood plains are essentially the domain of the river, and as such all developmental activities must be compatible with the flood risk involved
- (b) Flood forecasting :- Involves observing and collecting hydrological and meteorological data, transmission and then processing the data with a view to work out the likely level to be achieved at a particular site, i.e. to give advance warning
- (c) Flood Proofing:- It is essentially a combination of structural change and emergency action without evacuation. A programme of the flood proofing provides the raised platforms for flood shelter for men and cattle and raising the public utility installations above flood levels.
- (d) Attempts to modify loss burden by way of Disaster relief, Flood fighting, Flood insurance

Main Mitigation Strategies for Flood Disaster Management

- Mapping of flood prone areas is a primary step involved in reducing the risk of the region.
- Historical records give the indication of flood inundation areas and the period of occurrence and the extent of the coverage.
- The basic map is combined with other maps and data to form a complete image of the flood-plain.
- Warning can be issued looking into the earlier marked heights of the water levels in case of potential threat. In the coastal areas, the tide levels and land characteristics will determine areas liable to inundation.
- Flood hazard mapping will give the proper indication of water flow during floods.

Government Policy response:

1. Enactment of National disaster management act 2005 and NDRF
2. Setting up of National Flood commission and Task Force on Flood Management/ Erosion Control to study India's flood control measures.
3. Central Water Commission (CWC) –apex body for flood and water management
4. National Water Policy (1987/ 2002/2012)

The **Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction(2015-2030)** must be implemented completely involving adopting integrated and inclusive institutional measures so as to work towards preventing vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery and strengthen resilience by inclusion of private sector and local population to prevent such mishaps in the future.

[Kerala floods: Rescue and Relief operations](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Disaster management

In news:

- National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) chaired by Cabinet secretary P.K. Sinha is reviewing the rescue and relief operations in Kerala.
- Central assistance of ₹600 crore was released to the Kerala government.
- Centre has also approved 89, 540 tonnes of additional grains for Kerala (apart from 1.18 lakh tonnes of foodgrains what Kerala receives under the National Food Security Act)

Do you know?

- Under the National food security Act, 52.3% of the rural population and 39.5% of the urban population receive subsidised foodgrains — wheat is sold at ₹2 per kg and rice at ₹3 per kg.
- Centre has granted tax exemption on relief items from abroad.
- UAE has offered ₹700 crore to Kerala. It contrasted to the ₹600 crore given by the Indian government so far for relief and rehabilitation process.
- India had declined the aid offer of the U.S. after the tsunami hit the southern coasts in 2004. The then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said India was capable of managing the domestic crisis as well as help other tsunami-hit countries.
- Maldives and Saudi Arabia have also pledged to help. Ministry of External Affairs yet to respond whether India accepts the relief fund from other countries.

What are the classifications of disasters, and how does this affect funding?

- According to the National Disaster Management Policy, the State governments have to provide disaster relief from their respective State Disaster Response Funds (SDRFs), and only for a “**calamity of severe nature**”, will additional assistance be provided from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).
- There is, however, no provision in the law or rules for the government to designate a disaster as a “national calamity”.

How are the NDRF and the SDRFs funded?

- The NDRF is funded through a **National Calamity Contingent Duty** levied on pan masala, chewing tobacco and cigarettes, and with budgetary provisions as and when needed.
- A provision exists to encourage any person or institution to make a contribution to the NDRF. However, this source of funding has not been tapped so far, according to the government.
- The 14th Finance Commission recommended changes to this structure once the cess was discontinued or subsumed within the Goods and Services Tax. However, the government, instead, decided to continue with the National Calamity Contingent Duty even in the GST regime.
- The SDRF corpus is contributed by the Union government and the respective State governments in a 75:25 ratio for general category States and 90:10 for Special Category States.
- The allocation of the SDRF for each State is done by the Finance Commission, and the Centre contributes its specified share each financial year. The Central share of SDRF is released in two equal instalments, in June and then in December.

What has been the trend in budgetary allocations to the NDRF and SDRFs?

- The Union government has maintained a steady flow of funds to the NDRF each year, ranging from ₹5,690 crore in 2015-16 to a budgeted amount of ₹2,500 crore for the current financial year.
- In addition, the Centre has also been contributing to the SDRFs every year, amounting to ₹8,374.95 crore in 2016-17 and ₹7,281.76 crore in 2017-18.

How have NDRF funds been allocated to States in the recent past?

- In 2017-18, up to December 27, 2017, the Union government released NDRF funds to nine States — Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana — over and above its contributions to their respective SDRFs. The recipient of the highest amount was Karnataka, which got ₹913 crore that year.
- Over the four years till December 27, 2017, the Centre has released the most cumulative funds to Maharashtra (₹5,244.69 crore), Karnataka (₹5,122.45 crore), Uttar Pradesh (₹4,949.04 crore), Tamil Nadu (₹3,115.31 crore), and Madhya Pradesh (₹1,958.93 crore).
- For specific calamities, the Centre released ₹1,365.67 crore for the Chennai floods of 2015 and ₹218.76 crore after Cyclone Vardah in 2016. Andhra Pradesh received ₹400 crore and ₹230 crore after Hudud ravaged Visakhapatnam.

National Disaster Management Plan

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Disaster Management; International relations

In news:

- **National Disaster Management Plan**, brought out by the Central government in May 2016, deals with **taking voluntary aid from other nations**.
- In other words, the plan states that any voluntary offer of assistance from other countries can be accepted.
- UAE has offered ₹700 crore to Kerala. It contrasts with the ₹600 crore given by the Indian government so far for relief and rehabilitation process. Maldives and Saudi Arabia have also pledged to help.
- The Kerala government has asked the Centre to go by the 2016 NDM Plan to accept ₹700 crore UAE offer or compensate the state.

Do you know?

- The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, is required to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs, which is primarily responsible for reviewing foreign offers of assistance and channelising the same.
- India has said a polite 'no' to offers of foreign assistance to the Kerala flood victims.
- MEA clearly indicated India's preference for domestic resources over foreign assistance.

Kerala Flood: Issue over accepting foreign aid

Part of: GS Mains III – Disaster Management

In news:

- After UAE, Pakistan offers help to flood-hit Kerala.
- Government and MEA's action, which declined foreign aid for relief and rehabilitation work in the State, has attracted criticism.
- India said it would depend on "domestic resources" for providing short and long term help in Kerala.
- MEA indicated that the current decision was taken on the lines of decision taken in 2004 to avoid foreign support in the context of the deadly tsunami that affected a large number of countries in the Indian Ocean region.

Do you know?

- The Central government clarified that the ₹600 crore fund released for relief works in flood-hit Kerala was only the advance assistance and that additional funds would be released from the National Disaster Response Fund on assessment of damages.

A people's campaign to rebuild Kerala

Introduction

- The material loss due to the Kerala floods has been estimated at Rs. 26,000 crore, but beyond this there has been an immense loss of natural, human, and social capital for which no estimates are available.
- The immediate task in the State is relief and rehabilitation, but it is crucial to simultaneously identify the root causes of the havoc.

The root causes

- There is no doubt that the **short-sighted attempts in building man-made capital** (buildings in hilly forests, encroachments on wetlands and rivers, and stone quarries) **while ignoring the attendant degradation** of natural, human and social capital have played a significant role in exacerbating the problem.
- The root causes prevail throughout the Western Ghats and, indeed, the rest of the country.
- **The first is the flouting of laws** that have been established to safeguard natural capital. **The Shah Commission inquiring into illegal mining in Goa** observes that mining beyond permissible limits has caused serious damage to water resources, agriculture and biodiversity.
- **The Second, ignoring serious degradation of human capital** in terms of health and employment. In the case of the **Plachimada panchayat** in Palakkad district, **overuse and pollution of water resources by the Coca Cola factory** has resulted in losses to the tune of Rs. 160 crore.
- **Third, scientific knowledge and advice has been continually disregarded.** In the case of the **proposed Athirappilly hydroelectric project**, an analysis by the River Research Centre showed that the project document had seriously overestimated the availability of water.
- **Fourth, there has been serious erosion of social capital.** For instance, **Anoop Vellolippil**, a staunch **anti-quarry activist** engaging in a peaceful demonstration, **was killed** by those allegedly employed by quarry owners.

The right of local communities

- It must be acknowledged that it is **local communities that have a genuine stake** in the health of their ecosystems and an understanding of the working of the same.
- The current system of protecting natural resources through negative incentives in the hands of a coercive and corrupt bureaucracy must give way to **positive incentives that can be monitored in a transparent fashion by all concerned citizens.**
- **Gadgil panel proposes several such incentives** — for example, payment of conservation service charges for protecting important elements of biodiversity such as **sacred groves (called Sarpa Kavus in Kerala)**, and payment towards soil carbon enrichment by switching to organic farming.

Way forward

- The government must reassure its people that it will no longer continue the policies of development and conservation by exclusion, and that it **will respect the right of local communities** to decide what kind of development they want and what kind of conservation measures they would like to see put in place.

- The government **must implement the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments in letter and spirit.**
- **It must empower local bodies** at the ward, gram panchayat, and town and city levels **to prepare reports on the status of the environment** and to decide on how a substantial portion of the budget should be spent on the basis of these reports.
- **It must set up Biodiversity Management Committees of citizens** and empower them to document the status of the local ecosystems and biodiversity resources, and regulate their use.
- They must be given **powers to levy collection charges for access to biodiversity** as well as to **intellectual property** relating to community knowledge.
- In particular, it must accord the **Biodiversity Management Committees a central place in the preparation of environmental impact assessments** and ensure that these assessments begin to reflect the true state of affairs instead of being the uniformly fraudulent documents that are being submitted today.
- It must **fully implement the Forest Rights Act** and empower not only tribal, but all traditional forest dwellers to control, manage and market non-timber forest produce.
- It must stop distortion and suppression of all environment and development-related information and **begin uploading information suo-moto on websites**, as the Right to Information Act demands.
- It must initiate **building a public and transparent database on environmental parameters** drawing on the environment status reports, People's Biodiversity Registers, community forest management working schemes, and environmental education projects undertaken by students.
- Equipped with this information and all pertinent documents such as from the **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, the Kasturirangan Committee, and the Oommen V. Oommen Committee**, the State government should ask local bodies about the levels of ecological sensitivity in different parts of the landscape on the basis of topography, hydrology, land use and vegetation, regardless of ownership of the land.
- The local bodies should provide suggestions on appropriate management regimes for regions of different levels of sensitivity.
- The government should begin to **proactively use modern technologies, including smartphones, in a user-friendly** manner so that all the inputs from the various local bodies are transparently available to all citizens.
- Citizens can then assist in the task of integrating all this information and come up with appropriate conservation and development plans that are properly fine-tuned to locality- and time-specific ecological and social conditions.

Conclusion

- A new approach is needed that enhances the sum total of man-made, natural, human and social capital.
- This will be a broad-based inclusive approach to conservation and development, and will be in the spirit of the **People's Plan Campaign of the 1990s** in Kerala, which was spearheaded by the State Finance Minister, Thomas Isaac.
- There is need to renew the spirit of the People's Plan Campaign rather than seek to bury it. Only then can the people rebuild nature and society and assure for themselves a sustainable and safe future.
- If such a progressive approach was embraced, then we will be much better equipped in the years to come to moderate, if not fully prevent, the kind of havoc that visited Kerala recently.

Connecting the dots:

- Briefly analyse the role of local communities in environment protection and disaster management.

High water discharge from China threatens Arunachal

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II and III – India and its neighbourhood relations; Disaster management

In news:

- **High discharge of water from China**, the highest in 50 years, is threatening to **submerge** at least 12 villages along the **river Siang in Arunachal Pradesh**.
- Recently there have been incidents of “unusually high” discharge of water – (Reason) due to sudden release of water from **man-made barriers** or a **natural dam** that was formed due to landslides caused by major earthquakes in the Tibetan region of China in November 2017.
- The government needs to come up with effective anti-erosion measures besides talking to China for ensuring safety of downstream areas in India.
- There is a lot of concern at the international, national and local levels about the geologically and strategically important Siang that impacts Bangladesh too.

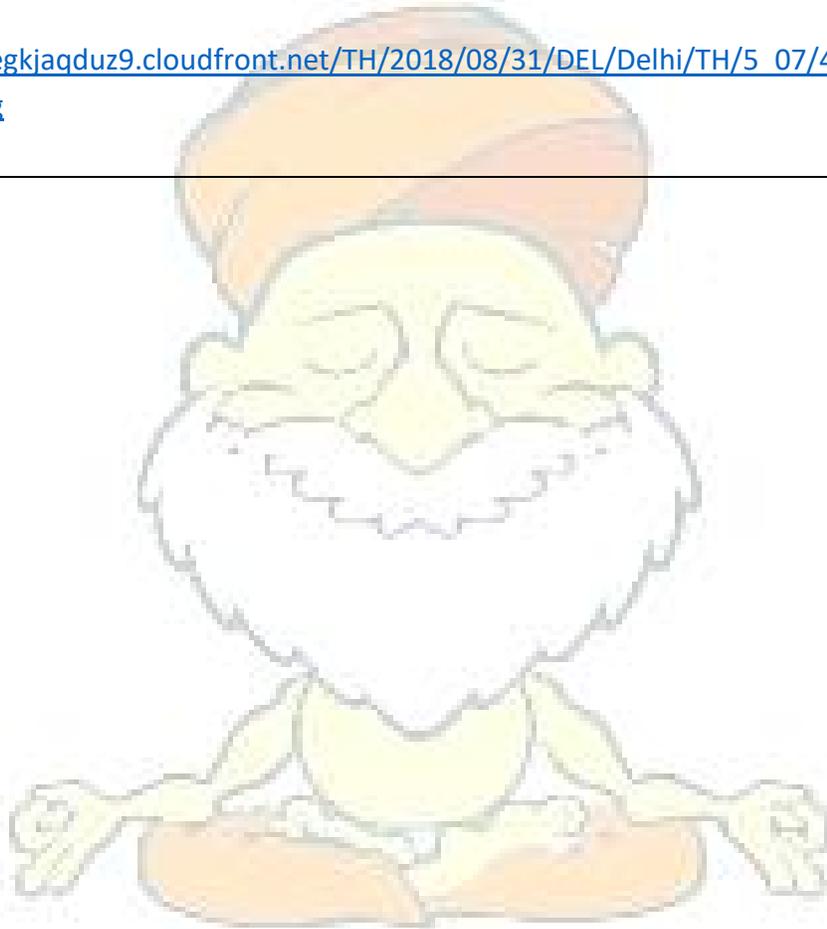
Do you know?

- Yarlung Tsangpo River is the longest river of Tibet Autonomous Region, China.
- It is the upper stream of the Brahmaputra River.



Pic:

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/31/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_07/4d10b784_235744_1_101_mr.jpg



INTERNAL SECURITY/SECURITY

National Register of Citizens (NRC)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II and III – Welfare and Social issue; Internal Security

About NRC

- It is the register containing names of Indian Citizens. It was prepared first in 1951 after the conduct of the Census of 1951.
- It is used to identify who is a bona fide Indian citizen and those who fail to enlist in the register will be deemed illegal migrants.

Why is the National Register of Citizens (NRC) is being updated in Assam?

- The demands to update the NRC of 1951 were first raised by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and Assam Gana Parishad more than three decades ago.
- Since 1950s, there is lot of controversy regarding migration and citizenship issues. Original inhabitants of Assam always fear that migrants from Bangladesh would compete them with jobs, land and eventually hamper their culture.
- Therefore, in 1970s, All Assam Students' Union spearheaded a massive drive, popularly known as the Assam Agitation calling for the detection, deletion and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi migrants.
- However, for a very long time, the provisions in the Assam accord were not implemented.
- In 2013, the Supreme Court finally ordered to complete the exercise by December 31, 2017, leading to the present updation of NRC in Assam.

In News:

DRAFT NRC

- Over 40 lakh out of 3.29 crore applicants were left out of draft NRC in Assam
- The five year exercise was completed at a cost of ₹1,220 crore.
- The draft NRC was released in Guwahati by Registrar General of India and NRC State Coordinator.
- The remaining 40,007,707 applicants, whose names didn't figure in the list will be given ample opportunity through a process of claims and objections till September 28, and their citizenship status will not be questioned till the final, error-free draft is prepared.
- Supreme Court directed authorities not to initiate any 'action' against those 40 lakh persons left out of the draft NRC.

Citizenship crisis in Assam after NRC release

About:

From previous news, we are aware that –

- Over 40 lakh of the 3.29 crore applicants have been excluded from Assam's draft National Register of Citizens (NRC).
- This has sparked concerns about their future and has triggered a nationwide political row.
- Supreme Court has directed authorities not to initiate any 'action' against those 40 lakh persons left out.

Even though political leaders and the Supreme Court have assured everyone that this is only a draft and everyone will be given an opportunity to prove his or her citizenship, it has not succeeded in instilling confidence in people.

The below article deals with the roots of this NRC process and about the role of Supreme Court.

Roots of the NRC process

1. NRC was prepared first in 1951 after the conduct of the Census of 1951. It is used to identify who is a bona fide Indian citizen and those who fail to enlist in the register will be deemed illegal migrants.
2. The NRC which was framed in 1951 and its subsequent iterations were recognised to be faulty. Therefore, in 1970s, All Assam Students' Union and Assam Gana Parishad demands for up gradation of NRC list.
3. Reason - Original inhabitants of Assam always feared that migrants from Bangladesh would compete them with jobs, land and eventually hamper their culture. Therefore, **Assam Agitation** (which was started by All Assam Students' Union) called for the detection, deletion and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. (**Assam Accord**)
4. However, for a very long time, the provisions in the Assam accord were not implemented.
5. In 2009, public interest litigation (PIL) was filed in the Supreme Court by **Assam Public Works** seeking the removal of "illegal voters" from the electoral rolls of Assam. It also demanded for preparation of the NRC as required under the Citizenship Act, 1955 and its rules.
6. In 2013, the Supreme Court finally ordered to complete the exercise of updating NRC list by December 31, 2017 (and later to July 31, 2018) - leading to the present updation of NRC in Assam.

Concerns:

- All 3.3 crore residents of Assam were required to submit documents from a list prescribed by the government to prove that they were indeed citizens of India. The process of adding person to NRC list was too complex and confusing.
- There were instances of arbitrary rejection of the gram panchayat certificates.
- The process was riddled with legal inconsistencies and errors.
- Supreme Court's monitoring of the process would have ensured fairness and transparency.
- Robust non-transparent "family tree verification" process resulted in numerous instances of parents being on the draft list but children being left out.
- Each person who is left out will now have to prove not only his or her linkages afresh, but also the documents themselves before the appropriate forum.

Role of the top court

This ongoing crisis over the NRC is largely the creation of the Supreme Court.

1. Supreme Court was more inclined and concerned about preparation of NRC within a deadline.
2. It failed to ensure legal clarity over the manner in which the claims of citizenship could be decided.
3. Court failed to recognize what next after this exercise and what will be the status of the several lakh individuals who would have suddenly lost Indian citizenship with no recourse in sight?
4. SC also failed to analyze - What action can the government take against those who are unable to prove that they are Indian citizens?

Conclusion:

As of now, there are some unanswered questions –

- Will the government adopt crude, communal rhetoric doing the rounds on social media and "push them out"?
- Will Supreme Court take responsibility for the protection of the basic rights of those who have been rendered stateless and defenceless? Or will it wash its hands of the whole matter?

Do you know?

- During the Constituent Assembly debates, **B.R. Ambedkar** remarked that the provision relating to citizenship in the Constitution caused the Drafting Committee the most headache.
- **Vallabhbhai Patel** had then said, India's Constitution-making process, and especially its citizenship clause, was going to be scrutinised all over the world.

Seventy years later, India's approach to citizenship is once again going to be scrutinised by the world.

South Asia has seen many crises over citizenship. The Supreme Court must ensure there isn't another one in Assam.

Connecting the dots

- The draft of Assam's National Register of Citizens has sparked concerns and faces many challenges. Discuss these concerns and challenges.

Checking the new abnormal: Lynching

Fast recap:

From previous articles, we are aware of the following key points -

- India is witnessing increasing number of cases of lynching
- What may have started out as isolated acts by fundamentalist right-wing groups has now become a widespread malaise

Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India (July 17, 2018) verdict -

- The apex Court condemned the recent spate of lynchings as "horrendous acts of mobocracy" and told Parliament to make lynching a separate offence.
- It directed the Parliament to draft a new legislation to effectively deal with incidents of mob lynching.
- It also directed the police to register an FIR under Section 153A of the IPC and do everything in their power to ensure that social order was maintained.
- Taking law in own hands ushers in anarchy, chaos, disorder and, eventually, there is an emergence of a violent society.

Rajiv Gauba Committee:

- High-level committee headed by Rajiv Gauba, had been constituted to check cases of "mob lynching".

Do you know?

As per the Constitution, 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects and State governments are responsible for controlling crime, maintaining law and order and protecting the life and property of the citizens.

Solution: Prevention is better than cure

- The preventive guidelines require every State to designate a senior police officer, not below the rank of Superintendent of Police, as the Nodal Officer in each district.
- A special task force should be constituted to collect intelligence on persons likely to commit such crimes.
- Nodal Officers should take step to prohibit instances of dissemination of offensive material through different social media platforms or any other means.
- Both the Central and State governments have been directed to broadcast public notifications on radio, television and other media platforms.
- Speedy trials and justice: investigation and prosecution of such cases is strictly carried out, the charge sheet filed within the prescribed time period, and the trial concluded through fast-track courts within six months.
- Strict punishment and various offences be awarded.
- Executive should immediately implement the directions of the Supreme Court. There is a need for an anti-lynching law.

Conclusion:

We need more than just laws to deal with the deep-rooted hate which appears to have set in below the surface.

Most cases of lynching have the appearance of premeditated acts of violence. There appears to be an attempt to change the social and cultural fabric of India forever, deepening the divide between 'us' and 'them'.

Fundamentalist agenda cannot be fought by court directives, legislation and police procedures alone. It must be fought politically.

Connecting the dots:

- "Morality cannot be legislated, but behaviour can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless." Do you agree? Bring out what does the statement mean to you in the present context of mob violence and lynching. (GS IV Ethics perspective)
- Mob violence and lynching are emerging as a serious law and order problem in India. Analyze how making law would not be enough and why effective enforcement machinery is the need of the hour?

[Rajiv Gauba Committee on incidents of lynching](#)

Part of: GS Mains III – Internal Security; Violence

In news:

Panel headed by Rajiv Gauba has submitted its report on measures to check incidents of lynching.

According to the report,

- In May and June, more than 20 people were lynched based on fake posts or rumours floating on various social media platforms.
- Social media platforms needed to act in a “time-bound” manner.
- Social media platforms should be made accountable for not blocking malicious posts and videos when brought to their notice and an “FIR could be lodged against their country heads” for not complying with government orders and they could be prosecuted under law.
- Creation of a portal where people can report such videos and content and that will be forwarded by the National Crime Records Bureau [the nodal body] to the States concerned for appropriate action.
- Officer in each district at the level of Superintendent of Police and special task force to be set up to gather intelligence, and closely monitor social media contents to prevent mob attacks on people on the suspicion of being child-lifters or cattle smugglers.

[The DNA Technology \(Use and Application\) Regulation Bill, 2018](#)

Introduction:

The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2018 has been introduced in the Parliament, with a view **to creating a national DNA database for solving crimes and identifying missing persons.**

About the Bill:

- The purpose of the bill is to expand the application of DNA-based forensic technologies **to support and strengthen the justice delivery** system of the country.
- By providing for the **mandatory accreditation and regulation of DNA laboratories**, the Bill seeks to ensure that the DNA test results are reliable and the data remain protected from misuse or abuse in terms of the privacy rights of our citizens.

- Bill's provisions will enable the cross-matching between persons who have been **reported missing** on the one hand and **unidentified dead bodies** found in various parts of the country on the other, and also for establishing the **identity of victims in mass disasters**.
- The Bill includes provisions for the **destruction of DNA samples and removal of innocent people's DNA profiles** from the database.

Criticism on DNA bill:

- Creating large databases is often not a cost-effective way to solve more crimes, and limited resources must be targeted effectively.
- Using DNA effectively during criminal investigations requires proper crime scene examination, trained and reliable policing, a trusted chain of custody of samples, reliable analysis, and proper use of expert evidence in court. Without these prerequisites, a DNA database will worsen rather than solve problems in the criminal justice system (false matches or misinterpretation or planting of evidence, etc.).
- The Bill's proposed DNA Regulatory Board is still too powerful and insufficiently transparent or accountable.
- There are provisions which give the government or the Board the power to amend aspects of the safeguards in the Bill, and to avoid accountability in court.
- A number of other privacy protections are also missing — the need to restrict DNA profiling so that it uses only non-coding DNA, a commonly used international standard for one.
- There is no attempt to assess the cost effectiveness of these provisions or to estimate the database's likely size.

Way Forward:

- Consideration should be given to **an independent forensic science regulator**.
- An independent **ethics board** should be set up.
- The Board's responsibilities for **privacy protections** need an independent regulator.
- **Privacy or data protection bill** should be adopted first.
- Any **international sharing of DNA profiles** should also be covered by a privacy or data protection law, and **meet international human rights standards**.
- There should be **separate the databases** for missing persons and for criminals set up by the Bill, so that people who volunteer their DNA to help find their missing relatives are not treated as suspects for criminal offences.
- It is needed to specify that volunteers must be **fully informed** about future storage and uses of their genetic information before they give **consent**.

- International evidence shows that the success of a DNA database is driven primarily by the number of crime scene DNA profiles loaded on to it, not by the number of DNA profiles from individuals, so proper **crime scene analysis should be the top priority.**

Conclusion:

In short, important safeguards and a cost-benefit analysis are still lacking for this Bill, which needs full parliamentary scrutiny.

Connecting the dots:

- The DNA technology (use and application) Bill, 2018 can establish a balance between right to privacy and right to justice. Evaluate with suggestions.

Manipur extra-judicial killings

Part of: GS Mains II and IV – Role of Judiciary; Security issues; Ethics

In news:

- Supreme Court had directed CBI to file chargesheets against Army officers involved in the Manipur extra-judicial killings.
- There were allegations that innocents were killed branded as insurgents.
- The court is monitoring the CBI probe and cases number up to over 1,500.
- Armed forces personnel are plagued by doubts whether performing their duty to fight enemies would expose them to prosecution and land them in jail.
- Supreme Court's orders and the resultant CBI action against Army personnel had made soldiers jittery.

THINK!

- Are armed forces personnel being persecuted for doing their duty in insurgency-hit areas?

Rohingya in India

Part of: GS Mains III - Internal Security

In news:

- Union Home Ministry has advised state govts to enumerate, observe and collect biometric data of Rohingya migrants living in India.
- The Ministry has received reports of their involvement in illegal activities.
- The government also made it clear that **Rohingya were “illegal migrants” and not “refugees.”**

Do you know?

- **Rakhine**, the **province in Myanmar** - is from where the Rohingya hail.
- India is not signatory to the **1951 UN Refugee Convention** and its **1967 Protocol**, which help define the legal obligation of states to protect refugees.
- The **Foreigners Act (1946)** and the **Registration of Foreigners Act (1939)** currently govern the entry and exit of all refugees. Both these legislations treat refugees as foreigners without due consideration of their special circumstances.

Cyber attack: Pune-based Cosmos Cooperative Bank

Part of: GS Mains III – Challenges to internal security through communication networks; Cyber Security

In news:

- Recent incident of cyber attack in Pune-based Cosmos Cooperative Bank caused ₹90-crore loss.
- There has been rising menace of financial frauds.
- Cyber security is an important arena of internet when the country is moving forward towards a cashless society and digitization.
- Security becomes a challenge as now privacy is a fundamental right as per SC verdict and the rise in cybercrimes can lead to violation of private space and liberty of expression.

Do you know?

- Global Conference on Cyberspace (GCCS) was conducted in India for first time where the theme for the conference was **Cyber4All: A Secure and Inclusive Cyberspace for Sustainable Development**.
- The IT act is not sufficient to deal with cyber security.
- The government is yet to bring a digital payment bill to strengthen legal framework and enhance surveillance to check cybercrimes in finance sector including frauds, targeting cards and e-wallets.

For mindmap on Cyber security - <https://iasbaba.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Cyber-Security-IASbaba.jpg>

Stricter directions to service providers

In news:

- Centre asks Supreme Court to get tough with FB, YouTube
- It is aimed to curb circulation of online videos of sexual violence against women and children.
- Legal provision involved – certain sections of IT Act
- Service providers will be asked to employ agencies for identification and removal of sexually violent content, particularly videos relating to child pornography and rape, besides deploying “proactive monitoring tools.”
- Time taken for content removal reduced from 36 hours to less than 10 hours.

Nailing a menace

What the Centre is seeking vis-à-vis curbing of perverse graphic videos on Facebook, Youtube and WhatsApp



FAST TRACK:
Reducing the time taken by service providers

(FB, Youtube) to accede to content removal requests to less than 10 hours from about 36 hours at present

SPOT AND KILL:
The Centre wants service providers to engage

agencies to spot and remove sexually violent content, especially those related to child pornography and rape

TRACING THE ROOTS:
The Centre also wants service providers to be able to identify the origin of such content

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/08/24/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_01/13108d1e_2341472_101_mr.jpg

ETHICS

Religion versus Ethics

Introduction:

In the light of recent incidences such as Sabrimala Temple entry, child trade by missionaries and observance of practices like Triple Talaq, Nikah Halala or Confession before priest, question arises, whether religion and morality goes hand in hand?

Recent Observations:

- Temple washed by Ganga Jal after visit by a Dalit woman leader
- Women raped by church priest, when she confessed her past in front of him as a religious practice
- Muslim woman got death threats when she filed a case against Nikah halala and instant triple talaq.

Judicial Interventions:

- Ban on instant triple talaq
- Reserves the order that the bar on entry of women aged between 10 and 51 in Sabrimala temple was a violation of their fundamental right.

Government enactments:

- Hindu marriage Act
- Hindu Succession Act
- Triple Talaq Bill

Debate: whether government should interfere in religious customs and matters?

- Article 25 (1) of the constitution of India provides for freedom of religion and Conscience.
- Article 25 (2) of the Indian constitution provides for regulation (by the government) of secular activities related to religious practices.
- Government can enact rules and regulations to protect the religious and conscience freedom of vulnerable section of the society (women, SC/ST, etc) as well as under provisions of Article 25 (2).

Why Religion should be regulated?

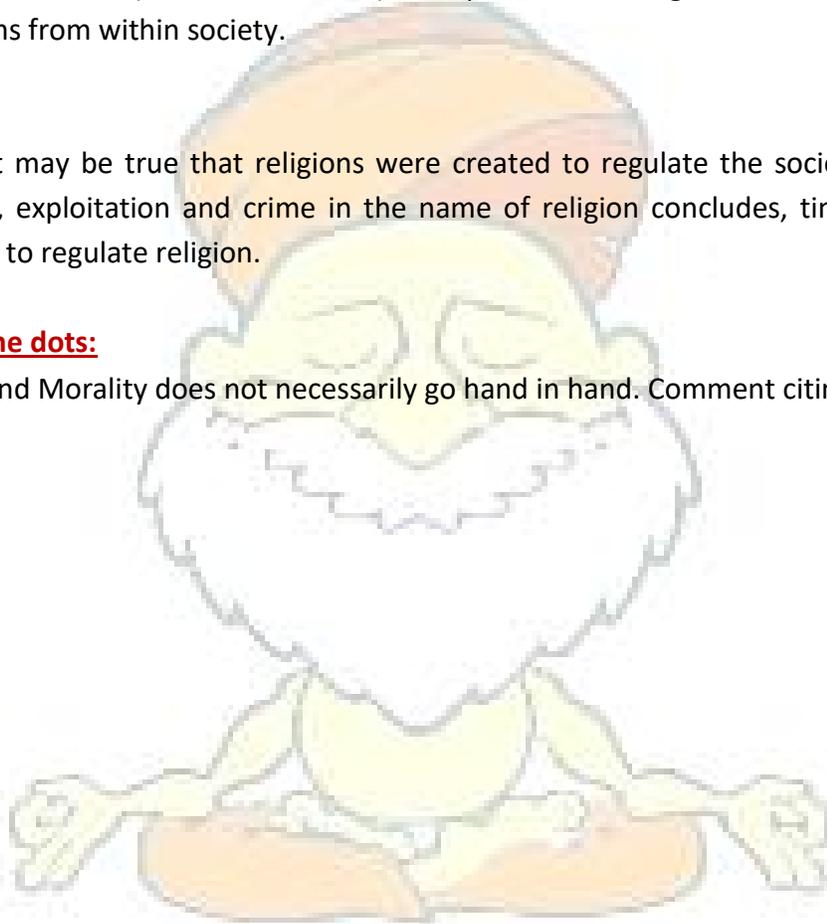
- Empirical evidences suggest that, with the passage of time, religious practices become biased and unfavourable towards vulnerable section of the society.
- In India too, sati, child marriage, deprivation of education for women and specific castes of the society were some of the evils which were evicted from the society with the help of government legislation and various schemes and policies.
- Bhakti Movement in medieval and socio-religious reform movements in modern Indian history are evident that religions need reforms with the change in society.
- Current events (mentioned above) also push hard for government intervention and reforms from within society.

Conclusion:

Historically, it may be true that religions were created to regulate the society, but the rising radicalisation, exploitation and crime in the name of religion concludes, time has come that society needs to regulate religion.

Connecting the dots:

- Religion and Morality does not necessarily go hand in hand. Comment citing examples.



PERSON IN NEWS

Person in news	Description
1. Vijay Maruti Pingale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vijay Maruti Pingale, a 2004 batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, joined the civil services because he wanted to reform governance from within the system. • But after 14 years of trying, he has now decided to resign and hopes to pursue his goal of governance reform by joining an NGO. • Despite cracking down on corrupt road contractors, Vijay Pingale was shifted from Chennai Corporation. • Dr. Pingale had also unearthed a scam in the maintenance of public toilets in Chennai and initiated action against those who had illegally collected money from residents. • With his departure, the TN state and the nation will lose a very good IAS officer.
2. Gopalkrishna Gandhi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rajiv Sadbhavana Award for Gopalkrishna Gandhi (Former West Bengal) • For promoting communal harmony and peace • The award carries a citation and a cash award of ₹10 lakh. • The award will be presented on August 20, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. • It was instituted to “commemorate the lasting contribution made by him to promote peace, communal harmony and fight against violence.”
3. Akshay Venkatesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akshay Venkatesh, Indian-origin mathematician among Fields Medal winners • Fields Medal is often described as the Nobel Prize of mathematics. • Akshay Venkatesh, Caucher Birkar, Alessio Figalli and Peter Scholze were the recipients • The Fields medal is perhaps the most famous mathematical award. It was first awarded in 1936 and since 1950 has been presented every four years to up to four mathematicians who are under 40. As well as the medal, each recipient receives prize money of 15,000 Canadian dollars (£8,750).
4. Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Indians Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk are among six who have been declared winners of 2018 Ramon Magsaysay

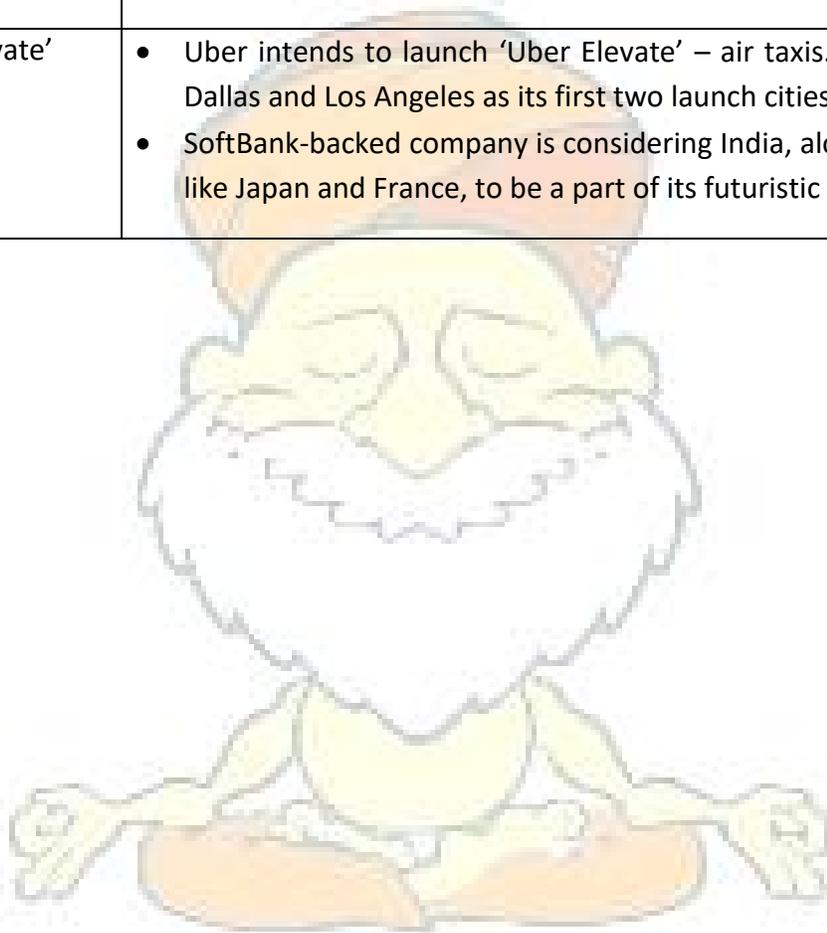
	<p>Award, often referred to as Asian version of the Nobel Prize.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonam Wangchuk, a 51-year-old educational reformer from Ladakh, widely regarded as the inspiration for Aamir Khan's character, Phunsuk Wangdu in the film '3 Idiots,' is one of two Indians named for the 2018 Ramon Magsaysay Awards. • The other is Bharat Vatwani, a psychiatrist who works for mentally ill street people in Mumbai.
5. Hima Das	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hima Das, 18-year-old athlete from Assam, won World Under-20 championships gold at Tampere in Finland. • It is a remarkable achievement as Indians have never done well in sprints on the global stage, even if athletes such as P.T. Usha dominated the 400 m at the Asian level. • Hima's under-20 title was the country's first-ever gold in a track event at any IAAF World event. <p>Do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hima Das (53.21 seconds, 400mtrs) • Manjit Kaur hold National Record - 51.05 s (400mtrs)
6. Indra Nooyi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indra Nooyi to step down as PepsiCo CEO after 12 years • She is considered one of the most powerful women in the world
7. M. Karunanidhi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Karunanidhi – who was five-time Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president for nearly 50 years, died. • He was also called as Kalaignar (artiste and man of letters) • He was considered as the stalwart of the Dravidian movement
8. Nobel laureate V.S. Naipaul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nobel laureate V.S. Naipaul passed away • He was known for his literary works. He documented the migrations of peoples, the unravelling of the British Empire, the ironies of exile and the clash between belief and unbelief in more than a dozen unsparing novels and as many works of non-fiction.
9. 18th Asian Games: Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia is hosting the Games for the second time. • Neeraj Chopra – 20 year old Javelin thrower • Manu Bhaker – 16 yr old 10m air pistol (shooter)
10. Prafulla Samantara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Nobel prize winner environmental activist Prafulla Samantara has opposed the proposed water aerodrome project

	in Chilika lake.
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Miscellaneous

In News	Description
1. Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary	Location: Karnataka
2. 'Tebori'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a century-old Japanese method of tattooing by hand with a needled rod. • It is gaining popularity.
3. Jatayu sculpture in Kerala	World's largest bird sculpture, Jatayu sculpture, will be inaugurated in Kollam, Kerala.
4. indiascience.in and India Science Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vigyan Prasar launches Internet-based channel to highlight India's achievements in science and tech • Department of Science and Technology (DST) has launched India Science (indiascience.in)
5. ISRO 'Vikram' Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISRO to launch its dedicated TV channel • Channel to showcase space applications, developments and science issues, targeting young viewers and people in remote areas in their language. • The move is to commemorate Vikram Sarabhai centenary celebration.
6. 10 major ideologies have shaped the world	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) nationalism, 2) democracy, 3) liberalism, 4) capitalism, 5) evolutionary socialism, 6) revolutionary socialism, 7) feminism, 8) environmentalism, 9) nuclear pacifism and 10) globalism. <p>Try to know the definition of all the above terms.</p>
7. 'Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code name of rescue operations in Kerala

Karuna'	
8. Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AMCA is India's next indigenous fighter• It is expected to make its first flight by 2032.
9. Rudrasagar lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is an artificial lake about 50 km from Agartala
10. Vostok 2018 drills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia, China set to launch joint military exercises - Vostok 2018 drills. Mongolia will be the third country participating in the drills.
11. 'Uber Elevate'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uber intends to launch 'Uber Elevate' – air taxis. Uber had named Dallas and Los Angeles as its first two launch cities in the U.S.• SoftBank-backed company is considering India, along with countries like Japan and France, to be a part of its futuristic dream.



(TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE)

Model questions: (Answers are provided at the end)

Q.1) 'Rakhine State' has been in the news for quite some time for large scale exodus of migrants and severe human right violations. In which of the following countries does it exist?

- a) Palestine
- b) Syria
- c) Yemen
- d) Myanmar

Q.2) 'Rohingyas' are

- a) Muslim refugees from eastern Sri Lanka settled in Tamil Nadu
- b) An anti-communist political group in Syria
- c) A political group fighting for autonomy in Catalonia
- d) Muslim refugees migrating from Myanmar to Bangladesh

Q.3) Rohingya refugee issue is related to which of the following countries

- a) Myanmar and Bangladesh
- b) North Korea and South Korea
- c) Thailand and Cambodia
- d) Myanmar and Thailand

Q.4) Consider the following statements regarding 'Refugees'

1. India has recently signed the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees
2. World Refugee Day is celebrated on 20th June

3. The 1951 Convention the only instrument relevant to the rights of refugees

Select the *incorrect* code

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

Q.5) The nine judge constitution bench has declared that 'Right to Privacy' is a Fundamental Right in Constitution. According to SC, Right to Privacy is an intrinsic part of

- a) Right to freedom of Speech and Expression
- b) Right to Life and Personal Liberty
- c) Right to Equality
- d) Right against exploitation

Q.6) K. Puttaswamy v Union of India case deals with –

- a) Right to Privacy
- b) Reservation
- c) LGBT rights issue
- d) Labor Reforms

Q.7) Consider the following statements with reference to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

1. It was enacted to give effect to provisions of Article 17 of the Constitution.
2. It extends to whole of India except Jammu and Kashmir.
3. It is applicable to both public servants and private individuals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q.8) Which of the following is/are not a Fundamental Duty as mentioned in Indian constitution

1. to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India
2. to provide alms to beggar and the needy poor
3. to prevent atrocities committed against dalits
4. to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture

Choose the correct answer from the codes given below

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q.9) Which of the following is correct about 'Repo Rate'?

- a) It is the rate charged by the central bank for lending funds to commercial banks.
- b) It is the rate at which scheduled banks can borrow funds overnight from RBI against government securities.
- c) It is the rate at which banks lend funds to RBI.
- d) It is the rate at which RBI borrows from its clients generally against government securities.

Q.10) 5G is a wireless communication technology and the next generation mobile networks technology after 4G LTE networks. Consider the following regarding this:

1. 5G will help aid incorporate Artificial Intelligence in our lives.
2. It will create the ecosystem for Internet of Things (IoT).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None

Q.11) For which of the following conditions the term parallel economy is used?

- a) Online movement of money and transactions
- b) Economy of a neighboring country
- c) Black market economy
- d) Barter System economy

Q.12) Which of the following steps has been recently taken by the government with the aim to fight Black Money?

1. GST
2. Demonetisation
3. Voluntary Disclosure scheme
4. No acceptance of party fund in cash over Rs 2000

Select the code from following:

- a) 1,2 and 3
- b) 2, 3 and 4
- c) 1,3 and 4
- d) All of the above

Q.13) Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code is concerned with

- a) Offences Relating to Marriage
- b) Criminal Breach of Contracts of Service
- c) Benami Transactions
- d) Offences affecting the Human Body

Q.14) Which of the following Commissions fall under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment?

1. National Commission for SCs
2. Central Social Welfare Board
3. Central Commissioner for Disabled Persons
4. National Commission for Backward Class

Select the code from below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3
- b) 1, 3 and 4
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.15) The Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill, 2017 was recently in news. It seeks to

- a) Grant constitutional status to the National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC)
- b) Grant constitutional status to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)
- c) Grant constitutional status to the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)
- d) Grant constitutional status to the National Commission for Tribal Areas (NCTA)

Q.16) Which one among the below given bodies is not a statutory body?

- a) National Commission for SCs/STs
- b) National Commission for Women
- c) National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
- d) National Commission for Backward Classes

Q.17) Consider the following statements about National Commission for Backward Classes Act:

1. It extends to the whole of India including Jammu and Kashmir.
2. Backward classes means such backward classes of citizens other than the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes as may be specified by the Central Government in the lists.

3. The Commission shall examine requests for inclusion of any class of citizens as a backward class in the lists.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Q.18) The name - "Jewel in the crown of Kashmir" or "Srinagar's Jewel" - is associated with

- a) Dal lake
- b) Pangong Tso
- c) Wular lake
- d) Tso moriri

Q.19) 2006 M. Nagaraj judgment of the Supreme Court deals with

- a) Offences Relating to Marriage
- b) Criminal Breach of Contracts of Service
- c) Benami Transactions
- d) Quota in promotion for its SC/ST employees

Q.20) The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is in sync with which of the following 'Goals of the Sustainable Development Goal'?

- a) Goal 1
- b) Goal 3
- c) Goal 7
- d) Goal 6

Q.21) Chronologically arrange the following events happening during election process.

- 1. Total Sanitation Campaign
- 2. Central Rural Sanitation Programme
- 3. Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan
- 4. Swachh Bharat Mission

Select the correct code

- a) 2-3-4-1
- b) 2-1-3-4
- c) 3-4-2-1
- d) 3-2-4-1

Q.22) India's proposed joint venture to run the Mattala airport is in –

- a) Myanmar
- b) Sri Lanka
- c) Bangladesh
- d) Madagascar

Q.23) Consider the following statements about Article 35A

- 1. It is a part of original constitution.
- 2. The provision discriminates against a woman's right to property.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.24) Consider the following statements

- 1. Article 35A was added to the Constitution as a testimony of the special consideration the Indian government accorded to the

'permanent residents' of Jammu and Kashmir

2. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution is a 'temporary provision' which grants special autonomous status to Jammu & Kashmir

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

Select the correct statements

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

Q.25) Consider the below statements with regard to Indian star tortoise:

- a) The species is listed in the Schedule IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and prohibited from export under the Foreign Trade Policy.
b) IUCN status is Vulnerable

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

Q.26) Which of the following is/are INCORRECTLY matched?

- Navigation Satellites- INSAT Series and GSAT series
- Earth Observation Satellites- CARTOSAT, RESOURCESAT, OCEANSAT
- Geostationary Satellites- GAGAN and IRNSS

Select from the given code:

Q.27) Aditya L-1 mission is associated with

- a) Sun
b) Moon
c) Mars
d) Jupiter

Q.28) Consider the following statements about Mangalyaan, launched by ISRO:

- It is also called the Mars Orbiter Mission
- It made India the second country to have a spacecraft orbit the Mars after USA
- It made India the only country to be successful in making its spacecraft orbit the Mars in its very first attempt

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.29) Consider the following statements regarding Bretton Woods Conference

- It was held in 1944 formally known as United nations monetary and financial order.
- It created IBRD in order to promote stability of exchange rates and financial flows.
- It created IMF to speedup reconstruction after second world

war and to lend for building infrastructure.

4. It recommended for International Economic cooperation.

Choose the correct statement/s

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 4
- d) All of the above

Q.30) Bretton Woods Conference is one of the most historic event post Second World War. Which of the following is correct?

- a) The UN Monetary and Financial Conference held post Second World War established the international trading regime called General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs.
- b) WTO is part of whole set up of UNO and thus is guided by the actions its member bodies.
- c) IMF follow voting by consensus pattern by which each member gets to ensure their idea is considered.
- d) WTO doesn't have weighted voting as the World Bank or the IMF and goes by the system of one member one vote.

Q.31) Supreme Court for the first time laid down a new doctrine of the 'basic structure' (or 'basic features') of the Constitution in -

- a) Shankari Prasad case
- b) Golak Nath case
- c) Kesavananda Bharati case
- d) Minerva Mills case

Q.32) Which of the following are the elements of 'Basic Structure' of Constitution

- 1. Judicial review
- 2. Freedom and dignity of the individual
- 3. Unity and integrity of the nation
- 4. Effective access to justice
- 5. Principle of reasonableness

Select the correct code given below:

- a) 1, 3, and 4 only
- b) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

Q.33) In which of the following landmark judgements was it declared that Preamble is a part of the Constitution?

- a) Keshavananda bharti case
- b) Vishakha Vs State of Rajasthan
- c) Menaka Gandhi Vs Union of India
- d) Minerva mills case

Q.34) Consider the following statements:

- 1. Process for changing the name of a state or its district/villages can be initiated by state only.
- 2. Formation of new states, altering boundary and name is not considered as Constitutional Amendment under Art 368.
- 3. Parliament has power to change the name of a state or its districts and villages.

Which of the statements provided above is/are correct?

- a) 2 only

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

Q.35) Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is concerned with

- a) AIDS/HIV Virus
- b) Tuberculosis
- c) Blood Cancer
- d) Leprosy

Q.36) Viral Load Testing is available for which of the following?

- 1. HIV
- 2. Hepatitis B
- 3. Cytomegalovirus

Select the correct code:

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

Q.37) Government has recently announced National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and Sexually transmitted infections. Which of the following are the aims of this program?

- 1. To eliminate mother to child transmission of HIV and Syphilis by 2020
- 2. To eliminate HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination by 2020
- 3. To eradicate HIV/AIDS by 2030

Select the code from following:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.38) GST Council consist of which of the following members?

- 1. Prime Minister
- 2. Union Finance minister
- 3. Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance
- 4. Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States or any other minister nominated by State Government

Select the Code from the following:

- a) 1, 2 and 3
- b) 1, 2 and 4
- c) 2, 3 and 4
- d) All of the above

Q.39) Which of the following vector borne diseases are covered under National Vector Borne Disease Control Program?

- 1. Malaria
- 2. Yellow Fever
- 3. Scrub typhus
- 4. Dengue

Select the correct answer using code below

- a) 1 and 4
- b) 1,3 and 4
- c) 1,2 and 4
- d) 1,2,3 and 4

Q.40) Health Ministry has recently launched a flagship program MAA to generate awareness for:

- a) Iron deficiency in mothers
- b) Reduce AIDS cases in new born
- c) Promote breast feeding
- d) Primary childcare

Q.41) He was an Indian scientist who worked in the field of DNA fingerprinting technology in India, where he was popularly known as the "Father of Indian DNA fingerprinting".

- Lalji Singh
- Meghnad Saha
- Satyendra Nath Bose
- Venkatraman Radhakrishnan

Q.42) An alien species is a species that is established outside of its natural past or present distribution, whose introduction and/or spread threaten biological diversity. Consider the following invasive alien species,

- Fall Armyworm
- Papaya Mealy Bug
- Cotton Mealy Bug
- Amazon Sailfin Catfish

Which of the above is/are found in India?

- 3 only
- 3 and 4 only
- 1 and 3 only
- All the above

Q.43) Consider the following statements about National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMG)

- It acts as implementation arm of National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga
- National Ganga Council is under the chairmanship of Prime Minister of India

Select the correct statements

- 1 Only
- 2 Only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.44) Which of the following is true regarding draft National Health Stack project.

- The national health registry can only be used by the centre and not states.
- One of the components of the proposed project is to store every Indian's Personal Health Records (PHRs).
- Individual health records will be logged through the Health and Wellness Centres in rural areas, and corresponding primary health care in urban areas.

Which of the following above statement is/are correct?

- Only 1 and 2
- Both 1 and 2
- Both 2 and 3
- All statements are correct

Q.45) Which of the following recommendations given by Lodha committee regarding BCCI have been rejected?

- 'One State-one vote'
- BCCI should be represented by every State and Union Territory.
- No full membership to associations with no state entity.

Choose right option:

- a. Only 1 and 2
- b. Both 1 and 2
- c. Both 2 and 3
- d. All statements are correct

Q.46) Which of the following is true regarding 'RUCO' (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil) initiative.

1. The initiative has been launched by Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
2. It will enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to bio-diesel.
3. Various companies have been identified to enable collection of used cooking oil.

Which of the following above statement is/are correct?

- a. Only 1 and 2
- b. Both 1 and 2
- c. Both 2 and 3
- d. All statements are correct

Q.47) Which of the following is true regarding 'PARIVESH' portal?

- a. It is a single window for environmental, wildlife, forest and Coastal Regulation Zone clearances
- b. It is web portal where common people can file complaints regarding environment pollution.
- c. It is a portal to disseminate information regarding government steps taken towards environmental protection and regulation.
- d. None of the above.

Q.48) Which of the following factors act as a 'Push' factor for migration at the place of origin?

1. Better employment opportunities of that place
2. War
3. Natural disaster
4. Poor living conditions

Select the code from below:

- a) 1,2 and 3
- b) 2,3 and 4
- c) 1,3 and 4
- d) All of the above

Q.49) Sendai Framework, which was in news recently, is related to:

- a) Convention on Disaster Risk Reduction
- b) Convention on Migratory Species
- c) Convention on Chemical and Biological Weapons
- d) Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment

Q.50) In India, the Prime Minister is the chairman of which of the following institution/organisations?

1. National Integration Council
2. Inter-State Council
3. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
4. National Board for Wild Life
5. NITI Aayog

Select the correct code

- a) 1, 2 and 5 only
- b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- c) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Q.51) Consider the following statements:

1. Ministry of Home Affairs relief activities for calamities associated with drought, hailstorms, pest attacks and other natural calamities.
2. The ministry of Environment and Forest is the nodal ministry for the management of Chemical disaster.

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

Q.52) 'Navika Sagar Parikrama' is a voyage of circumnavigation of Globe by an India crew. What is special about it?

- a) It is first ever attempt to circumnavigate the globe by an Indian crew.
- b) It is the first time an indigenous ship is being used to circumnavigate the globe.
- c) This is the first-ever Indian circumnavigation of the globe by an all-women crew.
- d) This is the first ever circumnavigation of globe attempted in History.

Q.53) The below given places are frequently in news. Select the incorrect pair/s from the following:

1. Trafalgar Square : : Egypt
2. Tiananmen Square : : China

3. Tahrir Square : : Israel
4. Red Square : : Russia

Select the appropriate code

- a) 3 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 2 and 4 only

Q.54) 'Karamay Declaration' is associated with which of the following?

- a) INSTC
- b) TAPI
- c) SCO
- d) CPEC

Q.55) Consider the following statements:

1. Ease of Living Index is released by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
2. Governance has largest weight age among the 4 parameters used in the index.

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

Q.56) Which of the following agencies releases "Ease of living index"?

- a) World Bank
- b) World Economic forum
- c) IMF
- d) OECD

Q.57) Consider the below statements with regard to Depreciation and Devaluation:

1. Devaluation refers to a change in value of a money that has its value set by the country's government.
2. Depreciation refers to a change in value of a money that has its value determined by market forces generated in the open money market.

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

Q.58) If a country devalue its currency against other foreign currencies then it may lead to:

1. Increase in exports
2. Increase in inflow of foreign exchange
3. Increase in import of goods

Select the code from below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.59) Consider the following statements with reference to depreciation

1. It is a situation where exchange rate of a domestic currency is cut down by its government against any foreign currency.
2. It means an asset losing its value due to, either its use, wear and tear or due to other economic reasons.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.60) Consider the following statements with reference to depreciation of a currency

1. It is a fall in the value of domestic currency with respect to other currencies
2. It is done by deliberate government intervention

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Q.61) Which Ramsar Convention sites in India are under Montreux Record?

1. Keoladeo National Park
2. Chilika Lake
3. Loktak Lake
4. Chandertal Wetland

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q.62) Consider the following statements about "Chilika Lake"

1. The lake is of estuarine character in an ephemeral environment.
2. It has been designated as wetland of International importance under the Ramsar Convention.
3. It is the largest coastal lagoon in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.63) Consider the following statements with reference to the Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Scheme (AB-NHPS)

1. The scheme will provide a cover of Rs.5 lakh per family per year.
2. Only hospitalization expenses will be a part of the cover.
3. It will subsume Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q.64) Which of the following are the potential impacts of climate change on water situation in India?

1. Increased summer flows in river streams.
2. Frequent changes in river courses.
3. Changes in rainfall pattern.

Select the correct answer using code below

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

Q.65) Gaganyaan is associated with which of the following agencies?

- a) DRDO
- b) CSIR
- c) ISRO
- d) Clean Ganga Mission

Q.66) Consider the following events:

1. Kheda Satyagraha
2. Champaran Satyagraha
3. Jallianwala Bagh Massacre
4. Non Cooperation

Their correct chronological sequence is

- a) 2 – 1 – 3 – 4
- b) 1 – 2 – 4 – 3
- c) 2 – 4 – 1 – 3
- d) 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

Q.67) What is the purpose of 'evolved Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (eLISA)' project?

- a) To detect neutrinos
- b) To detect gravitational waves
- c) To detect the effectiveness of missile defence system
- d) To study the effect of solar flares on our communication systems

Q.68) The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO)-India is a planned advanced gravitational-wave observatory to be located in India as part of the worldwide network. Where is it going to be located?

- a) Theni, Tamilnadu
- b) Hingoli, Maharashtra
- c) Tumkur, Karnataka
- d) Sriharikota, Odisha

Q.69) Consider the following statements:

1. **Assertion (A)** – Devaluation of money will decrease the exports of a country.
2. **Reason (R)** – Price of country's products will fall due to devaluation in the international market.

Select the code from following:

- a) A is wrong but R is correct
- b) A is correct but R is wrong
- c) Both A and R are incorrect
- d) Both A and R are correct and R is the correct explanation of A

Q.70) Which is called as umbrella organisation for all retail payments in India?

- a) Unified Payment Interface (UPI)
- b) Aadhaar Payments Bridge System (APBS)
- c) National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
- d) National Financial Switch (NFS)

Q.71) Which of the following services is not offered by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)?

- a) Unified Payment Interface (UPI)
- b) Cheque Truncation System (CTS)
- c) Aadhar Payment Bridge System (APBS)
- d) National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT)

Q.72) Google TEZ is associated with

- a) Digital Payments
- b) Rural internet connectivity
- c) 3D Mapping
- d) Self-driving car project

Q.73) Which of the following statements are 'NOT' correct about 'Gross Domestic Product' (GDP)?

1. It is the total value of final goods produced and services provided in a country during specific time.
2. It depicts the inequalities present in the economy of a country.
3. GDP is a measure of economic development of a country.

Select the code from following:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 only
- c) 2 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.74) With reference to Wetlands International, consider the below statements:

1. It is an intergovernmental organization formed by the countries which are signatories to Ramsar Convention.

2. It works at the field level to develop and mobilize knowledge, and use the practical experience to advocate for better policies.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Q.75) The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. Ramsar is located in

- a) India
- b) Cambodia
- c) Pakistan
- d) Iran

Q.76) Consider the following statements about Particularly Vulnerable Tribal groups (PVTG)

1. They are centrally recognized special category from among the Scheduled Tribes
2. Forest Rights Act, 2006 provided scope for the recognition of the PVTGs' forest and habitat rights for the first time.

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

Q.77) Consider the following statements about 'Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006'

1. It grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwelling communities, partially correcting the injustice caused by the forest laws
2. It gives the community the right to protect and manage the forest
3. It provides for rights to use and/or collect the following 'Minor forest produce'

Select the correct statements

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

Q.78) With reference to the role of UN-Habitat in the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future, which of the statements is/are correct?

1. UN-Habitat has been mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities to provide adequate shelter for all.
2. Its partners are either governments or local urban authorities only.
3. UN-Habitat contributes to the overall objective of the United Nations system to reduce poverty and to promote access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q.79) Consider the following statements regarding UN-Habitat

1. It is the United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development
2. It was established in 1978 as an outcome of the First UN Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development
3. It is headquartered at Athens, Greece

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

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

Q.80) Consider the following statements with regard to National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Funds (SDRFs):

1. NDRF is funded through a National Calamity Contingent Duty levied on all basic consumption goods and with budgetary provisions.
2. National Calamity Contingent Duty is continued even in the GST regime.
3. The allocation of the SDRF for each State is done by the Finance Commission

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.81) Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC) includes

- a) Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand
- b) Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand
- c) Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand
- d) Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand

Q.82) Consider the following statements regarding National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013

1. NFSA marks a shift from rights based approach to welfare based approach.
2. The act legally entitles up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of urban population to receive subsidized food grain under TPDS.
3. NFSA is established as per the explicit provision of right to food under the Constitution of India

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Q.83) Consider the following statements about Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

- 1. It is associated with ASEAN
- 2. All the members of RCEP are members of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
- 3. Cambodia is the only land-locked country among RCEP members

Select the INCORRECT statements

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

Q.84) Which of the following countries is/are NOT a part of RCEP?

- 1. India
- 2. Russia
- 3. China
- 4. Japan

Select the appropriate option using the code below

- a) 2 only
- b) 1 and 4 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 2 and 4 only

Q.85) With reference to the 'None of The Above' (NOTA) option, consider the following statements:

- 1. It gives the citizens to exercise their right to reject.
- 2. NOTA are counted, but are considered 'invalid votes'

Select the correct statements

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

Q.86) Supreme Court has banned fireworks manufacturers from using five substances that stoke air and noise pollution. Which of the following are those substances?

- 1. Lithium
- 2. Antimony
- 3. Mercury
- 4. Arsenic
- 5. Lead

Select the correct code:

- a) 3, 4 and 5 Only
- b) 1, 3, 4 and 5
- c) 1, 3, 4 and 5
- d) All of the above

Q.87) Consider the following statements about Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO).

- 1. The PESO tests samples of crackers for adherence to the sound limit of 125 decibels at a distance of four meters.
- 2. It functions under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- None

Q.88) World Employment and Social Outlook report is released by

- International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- World Trade Organisation (WTO)
- Amnesty International

Q.89) Which of the following are UN specialized agencies?

- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)

Select the correct code:

- 1, 2 and 3
- 2, 3 and 4
- 1, 3 and 4
- All of the above

Q.90) Consider the following statements:

- National Disaster Management Plan does not allow State Governments to take voluntary aid from other nations.

- National Disaster Management Authority is an agency of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.91) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the E-Waste Management Rules, 2016 in supersession of the e-waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2011. Which of the following statements are correct regarding e – Waste?

- e – Waste includes CFLs and other lamps containing mercury.
- Producers have been made responsible for collection of E-waste and for its exchange.
- A provision for penalty for violation of rules has been introduced.

Select the code from below:

- 1 and 2
- 2 and 3
- 1 and 3
- All of the above

Q.92) The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing— children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against

exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

The above provision is provided under -

- a) Article 45
- b) Article 51A
- c) Article 39
- d) Article 42

Q.93) Which among the following protocol deals with the condition that "faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated, with no discharging and/or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas?"

- a) Open Defecation Free Plus
- b) Open Defecation Free
- c) Open Defecation Free Plus Plus
- d) Open Urination Free

Q.94) Consider the following

1. Yaws
2. Polio
3. Tetanus-Maternal and Neonatal
4. Leprosy

The list of diseases which India is free from are:

- a) 1, 2 and 3
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1, 2 and 4
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q.95) Consider the following statements with reference to Leprosy in India

1. National Leprosy Eradication Program looks after the detection

and treatment of leprosy cases in India.

2. India accounts for more than half of global burden of leprosy.
3. India has achieved elimination of leprosy as a public health problem.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q.96) Consider the following statements about 'Article 35A' of the Constitution of India

1. It empowers J&K legislature to define state's "permanent residents" and their special rights and privileges.
2. It was added by a 1954 presidential order issued under Article 370

Select the correct statements

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

Q.97) Which among the following constitutes Photochemical pollutants?

1. Ozone
2. Oxides of nitrogen
3. Ethylene
4. Chromium
5. Benzene

Select the correct code given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3

- b) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- c) 1, 3 and 5
- d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Q.98) Which of the following statement [s] is/are correct with reference to India's Air Quality Index (AQI)?

1. The index is launched under Swacch Bharat Abhiyan
2. PM10 , PM 2.5 and Lead are considered in calculating the value of Air Quality Index
3. Both Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Board administer National Air Monitoring Program

Choose the appropriate code

- a) 2 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3
- d) None of the above

Q.99) Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is constituted under the

- a) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- b) Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- c) Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
- d) Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981

Q.100) Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) have been set up under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016. The Objective of CAMPA is

- a) To ensure expeditious and transparent utilization of amounts

realized in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forest purpose.

- b) To ensure competitive market price of the forest produce to the Tribal communities.
- c) To relocate tribal communities to similar geographical locations and provide them constant income for sometime in case a public project has come up in the native area.
- d) None of the above

Q.101) Consider the following statements about National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

1. Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 provides for creating the National Tiger Conservation Authority
2. It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
3. Project Tiger is administered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority

Select the correct statements

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

Q.102) Which of the following big cats can roar?

1. Leopard
2. Lion
3. Tiger

4. Cheetah

Select the code from following:

- a) 1, 2 and 3
- b) 2, 3 and 4
- c) 1, 3 and 4
- d) All of the above

Q.103) With reference to Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), consider the following statements

1. It is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Environment and Forests.
2. It strives to conserve nature through action-based research, education and public awareness.
3. It organizes and conducts nature trails and camps for the general public.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.104) Consider the following statements about Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)

1. It is the partner of BirdLife International in India.
2. It is selected as an ENVIS Centre for avian ecology and inland wetlands.

Select the correct statement

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only

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

Q.105) Which of the following statements are correct regarding the river Indus?

1. Indus has the second largest drainage basin in India after Ganga.
2. It originates in Tibet near Mansarover lake.
3. Satluj, Chenab, Beas, Ravi and Jhelum are its right bank tributaries.

Select the code from below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.106) Indus Water Treaty is considered to be one of the most successful river water sharing treaties of the World. Which of the following are correct provisions of IWT?

1. The water of Jhelum and Chenab is allocated to Pakistan and water of Ravi, Beas and Satluj is allocated to India.
2. India is allowed to use 20% water of Indus.
3. The Disputes regarding water sharing and breaching of treaty are World Bank.

Select the code from below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.107) Consider the following statements

1. It is the largest tributary of Indus.
2. It is also known as Chandrabhaga.
3. It flows for more than 1000km before entering into Pakistan.

Choose the river which best suits the above statements

- a) Jhelum
- b) Chenab
- c) Satluj
- d) Beas

Q.108) Consider the following statements regarding the Eastern Hills and mountains

1. Khasi hills and Mizo hills are part of Patkai Range.
2. Khasi hills are also known as Lushai hills in local language.
3. Phawngpui or 'Blue Mountain' is the highest point of Mizo hills.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

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

Q.109) Cherrapunji and Mawsynram of Meghalaya which receives highest rainfall are in

- a) Garo hills
- b) Khasi Hills
- c) Jaintia Hills
- d) None of the above

Q.110) Which of the following statements are NOT correct regarding the 'International Criminal Court' (ICC)?

1. It is primary Judicial Branch of The United Nations.
2. It has the jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.
3. India became first country ever to leave the ICC.

Select the code from below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.111) With regard to National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Consider the following statements.

1. As defined by the commission, child includes those up to the age of 18 years.
2. Chairperson of the commission is ex-officio member of National Human Rights Commission

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None

Q.112) Consider the following statements with reference to the National commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

1. It is a statutory body established under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.
2. It defines a Child as a person in the 0 to 18 years age group.
3. The commission works under the administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q.113) Air quality of Indian cities is a major concern these days. Which of the following pollutants are considered in India to make the Air Quality Index?

1. Carbon di Oxide
2. PM 2.5
3. Ozone
4. Lead

Select the code from following:

- a) 2 only
- b) 2, 3 and 4
- c) 1, 2 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.114) Consider the following statements about National Air Quality Monitoring Programme:

1. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has been executing a nationwide Programme of ambient air quality monitoring known as

National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP).

2. Annual average concentration of SO_x levels are within the prescribed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
3. The NAAQS has undertaken 5 pollutants only.

Which if the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.115) Consider the following about O-SMART:

1. It is a mission to promote millet cultivation 'as we move towards climate-smart agriculture in the wake of frequent droughts'.
2. The mission is being piloted by the Union earth sciences ministry.
3. Implementation of O-SMART will help in addressing issues relating to Sustainable Development Goal-14

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Q.116) Exercise Peace Mission 2018 is concerned with which of the following?

- a) BRICS

- b) SCO
- c) India and Russia
- d) UN

Q.117) Which of the following statements are correct regarding Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS)?

1. It is a permanent organ of BRICS
2. It serves to promote cooperation against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Select the code from following:

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

Q.118) Which of the following countries is not member of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?

- a) Kazakhstan
- b) India
- c) Tajikistan
- d) Afghanistan

Q.119) Which of the following countries is not a member of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)?

- a) Myanmar
- b) Maldives
- c) Afghanistan
- d) Bhutan

Q.120) Consider the following statements:

1. 4th BIMSTEC Summit and International Buddhist Conclave was held in Nepal.
2. 2018 Theme is 'Towards a Peaceful Prosperous, and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region'.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

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

Q.121) Consider the following statements:

1. BIMSTEC was formed in 1997 (Bangkok Declaration)
2. It consists of all countries from South Asia and South East Asia

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

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

Q.122) Mukurthi National Park was in news recently. The national park is located in -

- a) Tamil Nadu
- b) Kerala
- c) Arunachal Pradesh
- d) Odisha

Q.123) Consider the following statements about 'Nilgiri Tahr'

1. It is widely distributed along the Western Ghats from Gujarat to Tamil Nadu
2. It is listed as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List

Select the correct statements

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

Q.124) Consider the following statements with reference to the Siang River

1. Brahmaputra River is called Siang in China.
2. The river is called Padma in Bangladesh.
3. Kanchenjunga Mountain is the highest elevation of the river basin.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.125) 2013 Bir Singh versus Delhi Jal Board case deals with -

- a) Landmark judgment which declared that Preamble is part of the Constitution.
- b) Landmark judgment which played the most significant role towards the

transformation of the judicial view on Article 21 of the Constitution of India so as to imply many more fundamental rights from article 21.

- c) Legal question whether a Scheduled Caste person from a State would be accorded the same concessions in employment in another State.
- d) Enforcement of the fundamental rights of working women under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India.

Q.126) Consider the following statements:

1. Only Hindu and Sikh religion are designated as Scheduled Castes in India.
2. Untouchable convertes to Islam and Christianity continue to remain outside its purview.
3. Article 340 gives the President the power to appoint a commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

2018 AUGUST MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs SOLUTIONS

1 d	33 a	65 c	97 a
2 d	34 a	66 a	98 c
3 a	35 a	67 b	99 c
4 c	36 d	68 b	100 a
5 b	37 d	69 a	101 d
6 a	38 c	70 c	102 a
7 d	39 a	71 d	103 c
8 b	40 c	72 a	104 c
9 a	41 a	73 c	105 a
10 c	42 d	74 a	106 a
11 c	43 c	75 d	107 b
12 b	44 c	76 c	108 c
13 a	45 d	77 c	109 b
14 b	46 c	78 b	110 c
15 a	47 a	79 a	111 a
16 a	48 b	80 b	112 c
17 b	49 a	81 a	113 b
18 a	50 d	82 a	114 a
19 d	51 d	83 b	115 c
20 d	52 c	84 a	116 b
21 b	53 d	85 b	117 b
22 b	54 d	86 d	118 d
23 b	55 d	87 a	119 a
24 c	56 a	88 b	120 b
25 c	57 c	89 d	121 a
26 c	58 a	90 b	122 a
27 a	59 b	91 d	123 d
28 c	60 a	92 c	124 c
29 c	61 b	93 c	125 c
30 d	62 a	94 d	126 c
31 c	63 b	95 d	
32 d	64 d	96 c	

