Syllabus subtopic: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India’s interests, Indian Diaspora.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the new immigrations system and its features; about its significance for India

News: United Kingdom’s Home Secretary announced the launch of the UK’s new points-based visa system which is inspired by Australia’s points-based immigration system.

Objective

It is aimed at attracting the "brightest and the best" from the world, including from India, and cutting down numbers of cheap, low-skilled workers coming to United Kingdom.

About the new immigration system

- It will award points for specific skills, professions, salaries or qualifications/attributes, and visas will be awarded to those who gain sufficient points. The system will provide simple, effective, and flexible arrangements for skilled workers to come to the UK.

- The new single global system will treat EU and non-EU citizens (including India) equally, giving top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents, including scientists, innovators and academics.

- The minimum general salary threshold will be reduced to £25,600 (approximately Rs.23.8 lakh), down from the previously proposed £30,000.

- The new system will come into force from January 1 2021 at the end of the transition period after the UK’s exit from the European Union (EU) in January 2020, which will formally end free movement of people within the economic bloc for the UK as a non-member.
Other details

- The Home Secretary also announced a reformed Global Talent route. This will include a new fast-track scheme for world-leading scientists, top researchers and mathematicians to come to the UK. This will run alongside the Points-Based Immigration System and will allow a small number of highly skilled workers to come to the UK without a job offer.

- Student visa routes will also be points-based and be opened up to EU citizens from next year. Those wishing to study in the UK will need to demonstrate that they have an offer from an approved educational institution, that they can support themselves financially and that they speak English.

- To address the specific labour concerns of the agricultural sector reliant on seasonal workers from the EU, the Seasonal Workers Pilot will be expanded in time for the 2020 harvest from 2,500 to 10,000 places.

- EU citizens and other non-visa nationals will not require a visa to enter the UK when visiting the UK for up to six months.

- However, the use of national identity cards will be phased out for travel to the UK and the Home Office highlighted that as part of its post-Brexit offer, those EU citizens resident in the UK by December 31 2020 can still apply to settle in the UK through the EU Settlement Scheme until June 2021.

Benefit for Indian nationals

- The new Points-Based Immigration System is great news for Indian nationals looking to work in the UK. It puts Indian applicants on a level playing field, and prioritises those with the greatest skills and talent – something which India has in abundance.

- A lot of Indian students want to put experience to their qualifications, so they would welcome the lower salary threshold for when they have to convert
their visa.

- The lower salary threshold means **skilled Indians** are easily the biggest winner.