“Children shouldn’t work in fields, but on dreams” - ILO Theme on World Day against Child Labour, 2019

Child labour

As per International Labour Organisation (ILO), child labour is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development.

Child Labour in India and its Elimination

Child labour is a major socio-economic problem faced by India. It is a multi-dimensional problem with grave consequences for the country, impacting whole of the Indian society. As per 2011 census, the number of working children in the age group of 5-14 years has been reduced to 43.53 lakh or 5% in 2011 from 3.6% in 2001.

Child labour is a major hindrance in the path of development of our country. ILO 2016 data indicates that there are 152 million working children in the world between 5-17 years, of which 23.8 million children are in India. Therefore, 16% of the working children (or every 6th working child) in this age group is in India. It has also been found that the issue of child labour is more prevalent in rural areas because of more vulnerability and lack of efficient mechanisms. Child labour is both a cause and effect of poverty. It impedes children from gaining the skills and education during early childhood and it also denies them the opportunity of decent work as an adult.

Constitutional Stance on Child Labour

Fundamental Rights:

Article 21A - Right to Education - The State shall provide free and compulsory
Article 24 of the Indian Constitution prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 in factories, mines, and other hazardous employment.

**DPSP:**

**Article 39** - The state shall direct its policy in securing that the health and strength of workers, men, and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.

**Legislative provisions**

India has passed a number of laws on child labour since Independence to strengthen its resolution to solve the problem of child labour.

- Government formed the first committee called Gurupadswamy Committee in 1979 to study the issue of child labour and to suggest measures to tackle it. The Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act was enacted in 1986 based on the committee’s recommendation. The Act prohibited the employment of children in certain specified hazardous occupations and processes and charted out the regulations for the working conditions in others.
- The Act was recently amended in 2016. Its various provisions are:
  - A complete prohibition on employment of children below 14 years in all occupations and processes
  - Linking the age of the prohibition of employment with the age for free and compulsory education under Right to Education Act, 2009
  - Prohibition on the employment of adolescents (14 to 18 years) in hazardous occupations or processes
  - Making stricter punishment for the employers contravening the provisions of the Act
- The 1986 Act also resulted in the formulation of a National Policy on Child labour in 1987 for a holistic approach towards the issue of child labour.
- In 1996, the need to identify working children and rehabilitate them was re-asserted by the Supreme Court of India in MC Mehta v/s State of Tamil Nadu case.
In 2017, PENCIL portal was launched to implement the National Child Labour Project in 1988.

**International Co-operation**

India is an active member of International Labour Organisation. India also became the first country to join IPEC (International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour) in 1992.

In 2017, India had set a landmark in the direction of eliminating child labour by ratifying 2 ILO conventions - no. 138 - minimum age convention and no. 182 - worst form of child labour convention. Convention 138 or Minimum Age Convention requires the ratifying states to design and implement a national policy to ensure abolition of child labour and to progressively raise the minimum age for admission to employment while convention 182 or Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention requires the country to take immediate action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. India is also committed to the Sustainable development goals and Target 8.7 of the SDGs call to end child labour in all its form by 2025.

**What needs to be done?**

Child labour in India is a result of multitude of factors including inequality, lack of educational opportunities, slow demographic transition and wide income gaps. Age, sex, ethnicity, caste and deprivation affect the type and intensity of work performed by the children. As major child labour employment is in the agriculture and informal sector - decentralised actions are bound to yield better results against child labour.

According to ILO, stable economic growth, respect for labour standards, decent work, universal education, social protection, recognizing the needs and rights of the children - can together help tackle the root causes of child labour.

India known for its demography throughout the world, needs to give more attention to trace children out of child labour and direct them towards formal education and skilling. Relief and rehabilitation mechanism for the trafficked and
vulnerable children must be strengthened. Awareness should be created and strict action must be taken against people employing child labour. Labour laws must be enforced with more rigour involving equal empathy and responsiveness from the society.

**The CRUX:**

- Decline in number of working children – 5% in 2001 to 3.9% in 2011
- SDG goal 8.7 – To end child labour in all forms by 2025

**Need:**

- To invest in research, surveys and assessments on child labour.
- To build a strong nexus between the discourse on SDGs and on eliminating child labour
- Involving the private sector to ensure that child labour is effectively eliminated in their supply chains

Source: The Hindu

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**Agreement to Speed up Talks on Border Issues**

**Background**

Recently, India and China agreed to expedite the dialogue on the India-China boundary issue, to secure a “fair” solution

**India-China Bilateral Relations**

India and China’s relation dates back to 1949 when India became the second non-communist country to recognise China after its proclamation. A major turn came in Sino-India relations when Panchsheel agreement was signed between Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Chinese premier Zhou Enlai which has formed the basis of Indo-China relations since then.
India-China Border Disputes

The major bone of contention between India and China is the border issues. They have their origin in the times when Britishers used to rule the territory.

The disputed area can be divided into 3 sectors:

1. **Western Sector** - It comprises of the Aksai Chin sector. The sector was originally a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir but it is claimed by China to be a part of its autonomous Xinjiang region. After the 1962 war, its administration was taken up by China. The western sector, also includes Shaksgam valley. Despite being an Indian territory, it was gifted by Pakistan to China.

2. **Central Sector** - It includes the area near Sikkim. China has accepted India’s sovereignty over the territory but recently, there was a stand-off at Doklam.

3. **Eastern Sector** – It includes the territory of Arunachal Pradesh, formerly known as the North-East Frontier Agency. During the 1962 war, it was occupied by the People’s Liberation Army. After the war, China announced a unilateral ceasefire in the region but it has continued to assert its claim over the territory.

**Recent Development**

India and China's bilateral relations have been becoming complex in the recent times. Both India and China have tried to assert their influence regionally. China's Belt and Road Initiative and India's opposition to it have also formed the basis of their relations bilaterally as well as on multi-lateral platforms. Added to it are the border issues which led to an escalation of tension between India and China after the Doklam issue in 2017. With the breakdown of talks for sometime, India and China tried to improve their relations by holding the first informal meet, popularly known as the Wuhan Summit in 2018.

The current announcement of having a dialogue on India-China border issues highlight the importance both the countries are paying on improvising their relations. In the backdrop of growing protectionism by some countries and trade
wars with USA, better relations between India and China can give better bargaining power to the region.

The CRUX:

- India and China agreed to expedite dialogue on India-China border issue
- Met in Kyrgyzstan on the sidelines of SCO summit
- Both leaders agreed to have a "constructive" approach towards it.
- China highlighted need for regional cooperation and connectivity like BMIC economic corridor

Source: The Hindu

India to have its own space station

GS Paper - III | 14 June, 2019

Background

ISRO Chief K Sivan recently announced that India plans to have its own space station. The modalities for the same will be worked out after the launch of Gaganyaan Mission

What are Space Stations?

Space stations are also called as orbital stations. Just like other satellites, they orbit around Earth. Space stations are designed to be placed in Earth’s orbit and provide a space for astronauts to live in it and conduct their research. They act as space environment research laboratory and observatory.

History of Space Stations

ISS is the 9th space station to be inhabited by crews. Till 2018, there were only two space stations orbiting the Earth - ISS and Tiangong-1. Though Tiangong-1 is
operational but it has not been permanently inhabited like the ISS.

The current announcement is in alignment India’s vision of establishing itself as a leader in Space Technology.

Source: The Hindu
Headline: Two Tankers Attacked in Gulf of Oman

Headline: IndiGO announces flight on Buddhist Circuit

Buddhist circuit is a part of India’s Swadesh Darshan Scheme

Swadesh Darshan scheme

- A flagship scheme of Ministry of tourism
- To develop thematic circuits in the country in a planned and prioritised manner
- Aim: To develop quality infrastructure in the country
- Objective: To provide better experience and facilities to the visitors and also boost the economic growth of the country
- 100 percent centrally funded scheme
- CPSUs and Corporate sector can utilise their CSR under this scheme
- Consists of 13 Thematic Circuits

Buddhist Circuit

India is home to seven of the eight Buddhist sites, yet receives less than 1% of the Buddhist pilgrims in the world. Therefore, to boost international tourism and economic growth, the Buddhist circuit is declared as India’s first trans-national tourist circuit spanning India, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Source: The Hindu

India to impose Retaliatory Tariffs on American goods

GS Paper II | 15 June,2019
The CRUX:

- India's decision to impose retaliatory tariffs on goods imported from U.S.
- Tariffs will apply to $220-290 million worth of goods, same impact as the tariffs imposed by the US.
- It was initially decided in June 2018 in response to the US's decision to impose higher tariffs on Indian aluminium and steel.
- Till now, negotiations were going on, thus extending the deadline.

Background

U.S. has withdrawn India's name from its GSP list. As a result, India has announced its decision to put retaliatory tariffs on American goods.

India-US trade Relations

India and US view each other as important strategic partners to advance common interests regionally and globally. Both the countries are known to have strong trade relations even in the past. Bilateral trade between India and U.S. in goods and services is 2% of U.S. world trade, and has been increasing in recent years. On the other hand, US has been the second largest export market for India, having a share of 16% of total exports from India in 2017. Thus, US-India bilateral trade is highly consequential for India.

The on-going economic policy of protectionism follower by US is also bearing its brunt on India. There have been year-on-year trade deficits between India and US but it drew sharp attention and criticism from Trump government in the recent times. U.S. has been criticising India for “unfair” trade practices.

Various trade related Issues between India and U.S.

1) U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)

Recently in March 2019, US terminated India’s GSP eligibility.

It was a decision taken on the backdrop of review of India’s market access practices and the petitions by U.S. medical device and dairy industry. India was
GSP’s largest beneficiary. In 2018, GSP represented 11% ($6.3 billion) of U.S. merchandise imports from India, such as chemicals and auto parts.

2) Services and Investment

India and US, both the countries have a stronghold in the services sector. That makes them competitive in certain service industries. To protect its domestic players, India at times imposes certain barriers like limit on foreign ownership and local presence requirement. A key issue for India is U.S. temporary visa policies, which affect Indian nationals working in the United States. India has challenged U.S. fees for worker visas in the WTO. India is also closely monitoring U.S. action to revise the H-1B (specialized worker) visa program. US is also affected by India’s new e-commerce policy.

3) Agriculture

India has recently shifted its focus on diversification of agricultural products and boost India’s agricultural exports with National Agriculture Export Policy 2019. In a bid to boost agricultural export and bring down the imports, India has put Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) barriers in India.

4) Intellectual Property (IP)

Because of a lack of well-designed IP regime in India, India was placed on US Trade Representatives “Special 301” Priority Watch List for 2018. It was based on concerns such as treatment of patents, infringement rates and protection of trade secrets.

5) “Forced” Localization

US seem to be concerned about the increasing emphasis on indigenous production by India. It includes India’s initiatives to grow its manufacturing base and support jobs including requirements for in-country data storage, domestic content and domestic testing in some sectors. Adding to U.S. concerns are India’s new data localization requirements for electronic payment service suppliers (e.g., MasterCard, Visa).

6) Defence Trade

India has been increasing its investments in trade in the recent past. It has increased our trade with the US. India major anticipated purchase includes 24MH-60 Seahawk multi-role naval helicopters and a potential commercial sale of AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. As a part of a rigorous defence policy, India is
eager for more technology-sharing and co-production. In the meantime, United States is urging more reforms in India’s defence offsets policy and higher FDI caps in the defense sector.

**Conclusion**

The announcement made by the US regarding withdrawal of GSP status has made India fast-track its decision to impose retaliatory tariff on imports from the US. With the US policy of protectionism, India’s bid for Make in India and boost in exports and backdrop of recent US-China trade war, the US and India needs to look into their trade policies before the situation escalates and affects the health of the economy of both the countries.

Source: The Hindu

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**Technology Reform in education â€“ What went wrong?**

**GS Paper 2 | 15 June, 2019**

**The CRUX:**

*Technology is supposed to enable people to solve their own problems and feel that they can manage the machine on their own.*

A separate policy on technology is a part of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, which led to the setting up of a new unit on educational technology.

**Associated Problems:**

- Instead of being together, technology and teachers have been placed in a state of conflict.
- Smart classes are equipped with *industrially-manufactured* lessons and tests.
- **Loss of intellectual autonomy and dignity** of the teachers.
- Surveillance gadgets to monitor teachers.
- **Marginalization of teachers**.
- Another major issue arises due to unhindered access to the internet to the children and flooding of information on it, even unauthenticated. Thus, children tend to create
two separate repertoires of knowledge – one for personal conviction and the other for doing well at school.

According to Ms. Mulay, communication technology is a double-edged sword – It has the potential to generate common causes to create new communities but it has enabled globally dominated corporate power to discourage intellectual autonomy.

Solutions:

- Learning at school must promote “a sense of discernment”

{ Vocabulary check - discernment – the ability to judge well }

- Working with teachers, giving them status and experience of taking decisions

**Topic: Technology Reform in education – What went wrong?**

**Introduction**

With an increasing focus on the reforms in the education sector, there has been a discussion on the various aspects of education, including technology. Technology is known to have improved the quality of life for many people but the same technology is a double-edged sword. If not utilized carefully and in harmony with the human resource, it can have a deteriorating impact, as is seen in the education sector. Better policies are, thus, needed to generate optimum results.

**Background**

Using technology for classrooms can be greatly helpful for the children, but it can cause a disruption in the traditional guru-shishya oriented teaching.

**Education in India**

India has a huge demographic dividend and to utilize the dividend, there is a need to focus on sectors like education, health and skill development. Schools act as the learning space for the young minds and are the most reliable source to impart knowledge to children; therefore education sector plays a dominant role in enhancing the quality of human resources in a country.
India is the land that gave the concept of Gurukul to the world. Indian education system started with imparting knowledge in applicative subjects with utmost focus on value-based learning, but with the formalization of education, there was the introduction of new subjects and the pattern of teaching also changed. It was not until the 2000s that things again changed with the advent of technological reforms in education.

**Technology and education**

Due to the rapid scale of development and increasing international standards, a need was generated to bring about changes in the traditional methods and thus, more emphasis on the role of technology in the education system is now given.

A tech-savvy world requires equally competent human resource which led India to introduce technology in the classrooms. A policy on technology was mooted by Ms. Vijaya Mulay which also became a part of the National Curriculum Framework, 2005.

Since then, many steps have been taken to improve the quality of and access to education. Aimed at expanding access to quality education, new premier higher education institutions have been opened across the country, marking the highest ever such expansion in the history after Independence.

**Initiatives taken by the Government:**

- A National Mission in Education through ICT was launched in 2009 to leverage the potential of ICT, in teaching and learning process for the benefit of all the learners in Higher Education Institutions in any time anywhere mode. It planned to focus on appropriate pedagogy for e-learning, providing facility of performing experiments through virtual laboratories, online testing and certification, online availability of teachers to guide and mentor learners, utilization of available Education Satellite (EduSAT) and Direct to Home platforms, training and empowerment of teachers to effectively use the new method of teaching-learning, etc.
- Other initiatives include:
  - Integration of all levels of education up to 12th class, known as “Samagra Siksha” with a major focus on ICT and e-pathshala initiative by NCERT have all been steps in the direction of inculcation of technology in school education. Some other initiatives are:

  - **SWAYAM MOOCs portal** ( (Study Webs of Active learning for Young Aspiring Minds) - an indigenous portal that provides high quality curriculum courses- anyone,
anytime, anywhere at no cost. Upto 20 % credit transfer into the academic record of students, is allowed now, for the courses taken on the SWAYAM portal.

- **SWAYAM Prabha** programme -32 DTH channels to enhance the reach of high quality educational content to the most backward areas using satellite communication.
- **National Digital Library (NDL)** - a virtual repository of learning resources with a single window search facility to support all academic levels including researchers and life-long learners, all disciplines, all popular form of access devices and differently-abled learners.
- **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA)** - to make use of the knowledge base in the higher educational institutions for plugging technology gaps in the rural areas. It aims at customising existing technology as per local needs and also by improving the implementation of existing government schemes.
- **Smart India Hackathon** initiative - to promote innovation in the students by encouraging out of the box solutions for common problems faced by the society at large.

Recently, there has been a move to make the classrooms technology-friendly by introducing smart-boards and smart-classes. Its expected outcomes included making the child comfortable with technology and at the same time, aiding the teachers in the teaching process. To align the policy with the on-going drive of converting traditional classrooms into smart classes, Ministry of Human Resource Development has come up with “Operation Digital Board” to introduce digital boards from Class 9th onwards in all government and government-aided schools all over the country. It aims at facilitating bending and flip-class learning.

### Conclusion

Though technology is known for making life easier, it has created a bit of a problem in the lives of the teachers. Instead of being an aid at their disposal, it has become a burden by taking away their intellectual autonomy. Technology does allow for innovation and imparts new skills to the students but the same technology must complement the work of teachers. With the new reforms, teachers are not given the flexibility to teach in their own manner and have to rely on the industry-made courses. There is a need to involve teachers in the process of crafting the courses. All students cannot be comfortable with the regulated pace of digital classes, so the teacher must be given more flexibility while teaching through these courses. Thus, manual teaching and digital teaching must be
synchronized to generate the best results. The challenge remains to convey technology into the depiction in ways that translate into good teaching and learning.

Source: The Hindu

The Importance of Being Neighbourly
GS Paper 2 | 15 June, 2019

The CRUX:

- Continued importance is given to our neighborhood
- Earlier, focus on SAARC, now an eastward shift - towards BIMSTEC
- New elements inducted in the policy matrix –
  - Focus on pro-active measures instead of expecting reciprocity, to incentivize cooperation in the neighbourhood
  - Focus on quick impact projects that bring socio-economic benefits to the people
  - Introducing trilateral development partnership involving India and Japan in a neighbouring country.
- As BIMSTEC is seen as a mix of “energy, mindset, and possibility”, the emphasis would be strengthened on it and efforts will be made to include the Maldives into it, even as an observer.

India’s neighbourhood policy

Having a prominent presence in the South Asian region, India has always been conscious of its role it can play in the regional polity. Since its independence, India has paid great emphasis on maintaining good ties with the neighbouring countries.

Background

The recent change in the international relations between the various Asian countries along with the increasing role of China in the region has made India to re-think its foreign policy towards its neighbourhood.
Recent Advancements

In the past, India’s equation has undergone dramatic changes with countries like the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Maldives’ former President Abdulla Yameen was known for his pro-China approach, thus straining India-Maldives relations but with the change in government in the Maldives, it has again aligned its policies towards India. To this, India reverted by signing agreements on co-operation in fields ranging from Indian Ocean surveillance to terrorism and extending an LoC of $200mn – thus asserting its commitment to strengthening bilateral ties.

With its new policy matrix, India has made known the direction of its policies for the next term of the newly elected government. The government plans to put more emphasis on BIMSTEC as unlike 2014’s swearing-in ceremony of the Prime Minister, where SAARC members were invited. This year saw the presence of the BIMSTEC member countries at the ceremony. India also proposes to initiate an effort to make Maldives an observer at the BIMSTEC.

**SAARC Nations**

**BIMSTEC**

**Conclusion**

With the sudden spark of China fading away from the region, India is set to come up as a more co-operative neighbour with keeping the focus on socio-economic development in the region. With the backdrop of South Asia being a low ranking region in many development indicators, this change in the policy has the potential to again build confidence among our immediate neighbours and strengthen India’s position in the Indian Ocean Region.
Discrepancies in the Estimation of GDP Growth Rate
GS Paper 3 | 15 June, 2019

The CRUX:
Recent research by Former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian has highlighted discrepancy with the estimation of India’s GDP growth since 2011.

About GDP Estimation
A country’s economic growth rate can be measured in terms of its GDP. It is the annual rate of change at which a country’s GDP increases or decreases.

Change in the methodology
In 2011, the methodology of calculation of the GDP growth rate in the country changed. Earlier, GDP growth was calculated on the basis of the volume of goods produced.
Post-2011, the growth rate is calculated on the basis of the value of goods and services.

Problems identified by Mr. Subramanian:

- The difference in the methods of estimation
- Measurement of the informal sector using formal sector proxies

Suggestions:

- Growth needs to be restored to high-levels
- Quality and integrity of data needs to be improved
- Restoring the reputational damage suffered to data generation across the board
- Creation of a task-force to re-visit the entire methodology and implementation of GDP estimation
Analysis –

What is GDP?

GDP is the sum total of the value of the goods and services that are produced in an economy in a year. It is an important indicator of the economic health of a country. It is an economic indicator based on the computation of the production data in the country.

The growth rate over the years is used to determine the trend of economic growth, thus accurate estimation of GDP growth gives us a clear picture of the outcome that is generated over the year.

Recent controversy

An issue has been raised with the discrepancy in the estimation of GDP. This finds its root in the changes that were made in 2011 in the method followed to calculate the GDP growth rate. Earlier, the GDP growth was estimated using the volume of the good produced but since 2011, the value of the goods and services being produced is used to calculate the GDP growth. It has been claimed to be in line with the international standards of accounting the GDP growth rate.

International Standards

SNA is the latest version of the international statistical standard for the national accounts, adopted by the United Nations. In the absence of data, alternate proxy sources or statistical surveys are used to estimate the contribution of various sectors to the GDP/GVA.

Source: The Hindu

Goverment to set up Defence Space Research Agency

GS Paper 3 | 15 June, 2019

The CRUX:
Setting up of Defence Space Research Agency (DSRA) – scientists to work in close coordination with tri-services integrated Defence staff officers.

Objectives:

- To create a space warfare weapon system and technologies.
- To provide research and development support to the Defence Space Agency.

Concept

Defence Research Space Organisation:

To enhance the capabilities of the armed forces to fight wars in space, the Cabinet Committee on Security has approved the setting up of a new agency which will develop sophisticated weapon systems and technologies. The government cleared the setting up of the Defence Space Research Agency (DSRO) which will be entrusted with the task of creating space warfare weapon systems and technologies. The agency will be provided with a team of scientists that will work in close coordination with the tri-services integrated Defence staff officers. It will provide the research and development support to the Defence Space Agency (DSA) which comprises members of the three services.

Defence Space Agency:

In April 2019, the government established the Defence Space Agency, or DSA, to command the space assets of the Army, Navy and Air Force, including the military’s anti-satellite capability. The agency is tasked to formulate a strategy to protect India’s interests in space, including addressing space-based threats. It is being set up in Bengaluru under an Air Vice Marshal-rank officer. It also seeks img on space as a domain of warfare from the Indian Space Research Organisation and the Defence Research and Development Organization.

India’s existing military space agencies — including the Defence Imagery Processing and Analysis Centre, located in New Delhi, and the Defence Satellite Control Centre, located in Bhopal — will also be merged with DSA.

Source: The Hindu
The CRUX:

According to an official document, Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) has found 25 batches of drugs of 18 pharmaceutical companies to be of substandard quality since January 2018. Out of these 18 companies, one is a public sector unit, the Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited.

Analysis

Affordable healthcare is a major component of National Health Policy, 2017.

National Health Policy, 2017

Earlier Policies

Earlier, the National Health Policy of 1983 (during the regime of Indira Gandhi) and 2002 (during the regime of Atal Bihari Vajpayee) were formulated during the Five-year Plans.

But due to changing socio-economics conditions in India, some changes have been observed:

- Changes in pattern of diseases: There has been outbreak of some infectious disease.
- Due to changing lifestyle, an increased prevalence of non-communicable diseases.
- More share of private industries in the healthcare sector and sub-standard services in the public hospitals, increase the out-of-pocket expenditure for the people, thus contributing to poverty.

In this context, the government came up with a new National Health Policy in 2017 to reach everyone in a comprehensive and integrated way to move towards wellness.

Aim: To achieve universal health coverage and deliver quality healthcare services to all at affordable cost. It also aims to attain the highest possible level of health and well-being for all at all ages, through a preventive and promotive healthcare orientation in all developmental policies and bringing down the cost of healthcare delivery.

Key policy principles guiding the NHP 2017 include professionalism, integrity and ethics,
along with patient-centred and quality care. NHP 2017 is also guided by affordability, universality, equity and inclusive partnership amongst other principles.

Some of the specific goals and objectives are:

1. Life Expectancy and healthy life
   - Increase Life Expectancy at birth from 67.5 to 70 by 2025
   - Establish regular tracking of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) Index by 2022
   - Reduction of TFR to 2.1 at national and sub-national level by 2025.

2. Mortality by Age
   - Reduce Under-5 Mortality to 23 by 2025 and MMR from current levels to 100 by 2020
   - Reduce infant mortality rate to 28 by 2019
   - Reduce neo-natal mortality to 16 and still birth rate to “single digit” by 2025.

3. Reduction of disease prevalence/incidence
   - Achieve global target of 2020 which is also termed as target of 90:90:90, for HIV/AIDS i.e., - 90% of all people living with HIV know their HIV status, 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV infection receive sustained antiretroviral therapy and 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.
   - Achieve and maintain elimination status of Leprosy by 2018, Kala-Azar by 2017 and Lymphatic Filariasis in endemic pockets by 2017
   - To achieve and maintain a cure rate of >85% in new sputum positive patients for TB and reduce incidence of new cases to reach elimination status by 2025
   - To reduce the prevalence of blindness to 0.25/1000 by 2025 and disease burden by one third from current levels
   - To reduce premature mortality from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory diseases by 25% by 2025.

Health Systems Performance

1. Coverage of Health Services
   - Increase utilization of public health facilities by 50% from current levels by 2025
   - Antenatal care coverage to be sustained above 90% and skilled attendance at birth above 90% by 2025
   - More than 90% of the newborn are fully immunized by one year of age by 2025
   - Meet need of family planning above 90% at national and sub national level by 2025
   - 80% of known hypertensive and diabetic individuals at household level maintain "controlled disease status" by 2025.

2. Cross Sectoral goals related to health
Relative reduction in prevalence of current tobacco use by 15% by 2020 and 30% by 2025.

Reduction of 40% in prevalence of stunting of under-five children by 2025.

Access to safe water and sanitation to all by 2020 (Swachh Bharat Mission).

Reduction of occupational injury by half from current levels of 334 per lakh agricultural workers by 2020.

National/State level tracking of selected health behaviour.

**Health Systems strengthening**

1. **Health finance**
   - Increase health expenditure by Government as a percentage of GDP from the existing 1.15 % to 2.5 % by 2025.
   - Increase State sector health spending to > 8% of their budget by 2020.
   - Decrease in proportion of households facing catastrophic health expenditure from the current levels by 25% by 2025.

2. **Health Infrastructure and Human Resource**
   - Ensure availability of paramedics and doctors as per Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS) norm in high priority districts by 2020.
   - Increase community health volunteers to population ratio as per IPHS norm, in high priority districts by 2025.
   - Establish primary and secondary care facility as per norms in high priority districts (population as well as time to reach norms) by 2025.

3. **Health Management Information**
   - Strengthen the health surveillance system and establish registries for diseases of public health importance by 2020.
   - Establish federated integrated health information architecture, Health Information Exchanges and National Health Information Network by 2025.

Certain existing issues in the Healthcare sector in India:

- Poor financial decentralisation to better manage prevalence of infectious diseases as well as non-communicable diseases. It makes India as a fifth of the world’s disease-burdened country.
- Lack of trust between patients and doctors and erruption of incidences such as the on-going issues of strike by Doctors in West Bengal.
- Inadequate health professionals.
- The health data must not be fragmented and that should be inclusive of all the private sector and other commercial entities providing health services.

Reference: Vikaspedia.com
The CRUX:

Bhutan's Prime Minister Lotay Tshering, in his first public comment on Doklam issue, said "no side" should do anything near the trijunction point between India, China and Bhutan "unilaterally", so as to maintain peace and tranquility in the region.

- Still, no diplomatic relations will be established between Bhutan and China as per Bhutan's policy.
- He also said that it is "too early" to call unviable. He called on Sri Lanka and Nepal to revive the SAARC.
- Bilateral co-operation between India and Bhutan: Mangdechhu hydropower project, South Asia Satellite programme.

The topic: India-Bhutan Relations and Bhutan's stance on Doklam and SAARC

Introduction:

India-Bhutan Bilateral Relations

Though not frequently in news, Bhutan makes an important neighbour for India. India and Bhutan share geographical, cultural and religious ties. Small in size but high in spirit can be best used to describe Bhutan and its commitment towards sustainable development. It makes the relation between India and Bhutan as one of commitment and constructive partnership.

India has been a supporter of Bhutan since it got independence. India also supported Bhutan's membership at the United Nations. The basic framework of India-Bhutan relationship is the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949 and revised in 2007. Formally, diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1968 with the establishment of a special office of India in Thimphu, Bhutan. Before that, the bilateral relations were looked after by a Political Officer in Sikkim. Since decades, India has been assisting Bhutan in maintaining its position in the global scenario, either through strengthening it by extension of bilateral cooperation and also on various multilateral regionally and global platforms.

Bilateral co-operation between India and Bhutan

There are a number of institutional mechanisms between India and Bhutan in areas such as
security, border management, trade, transit, economic, hydro-power, development cooperation, water resources. There have been regular exchanges at the Ministerial and officials’ level, exchanges of parliamentarian delegations to strengthen partnership in diverse areas of cooperation.

Background:

Bhutanese Prime Minister Mr. Lotay Tshering said China must maintain status quo on Doklam. He also said that it was “too” early to call the SAARC unviable.

Doklam Issue

Bhutan shares a contiguous border of around 470 km with China but does not have official diplomatic relations with it because of its policy of not establishing ties with any permanent member of the UN Security Council. An attempt to construct a permanent military establishment near Doklam again has brought to the surface, the border issue between Bhutan-China and India. In the backdrop of India and China’s agreement to resolve border issues, such a statement from Bhutanese Prime Minister becomes relevant. It throws light on the regional aspiration of Bhutan and its insecurity of being ignored in such talks. Thus, there is a need for tri-lateral diplomatic talks to solve the prevailing border issues.

“Too” Early to call SAARC unviable

Being a regional group for the South Asian region, SAARC holds importance but it seems to be losing it because of worsening India-Pakistan conflict. Even, recently India came up with its new foreign policy where it has made clear its stance of shifting focus from SAARC to BIMSTEC.

SAARC was first envisioned in the late 1970s by Gen. Ziaur Rahman, the military dictator of Bangladesh. Initially, India was apprehensive about SAARC because it perceived the grouping to be an attempt by its smaller neighbours to unite against it in the backdrop of the Cold war and India was closer to Soviet Union and this was looked as an attempt influenced by the West. But eventually, India agreed to join SAARC due to the interest expressed by the neighbouring countries. Since its 1st meeting in 1985, there have been 18 summits till date. However, the organisation has not had a smooth run. In the 30 years of its history, annual SAARC summits have been postponed 11 times for political reasons, either bilateral or internal.

While SAARC has established itself as a regional forum, it has failed to attain its objectives. Numerous agreements have been signed and institutional mechanisms established under SAARC, but they have not been adequately implemented.

Reasons for SAARC’s failures include the following:

- Lack of trust between member countries, specially India and Pakistan
The asymmetry between India and other member countries in terms of geography, economy, military strength and influence in the global arena make the smaller countries apprehensive.

SAARC does not have any arrangement for resolving disputes or mediating conflicts. Disputes among the member countries often hamper consensus building, thus slowing down the decision-making process.

Increasing bilateral ties amongst the SAARC countries has rendered it un-useful as a regional grouping.

SAARC faces a shortage of resources, and countries have been reluctant to increase their contributions.

Reforms are needed to re-structure and revive SAARC. Such reforms must be brought after consensus is met between its member countries.

From SAARC to BIMSTEC

In recent years, BIMSTEC has gained popularity among South Asian countries as a platform for regional cooperation. It connects the littoral countries of the Bay of Bengal and the Himalayan ecologies. BIMSTEC’s gaining popularity can be attributed to the cordial relation shared between its members.

However, some observers of regional affairs in South Asia question the legitimacy of BIMSTEC as an alternative to SAARC because of the lack of tangible achievements by the organization.

Conclusion

The two organisations—SAARC and BIMSTEC—focus on geographically overlapping regions. However, this does not make them equal alternatives. SAARC is a purely regional organisation, whereas BIMSTEC is interregional and connects both South Asia and ASEAN. Insofar as their regions of interest overlap, SAARC and BIMSTEC complement each other in terms of functions and goals. BIMSTEC provides SAARC countries a unique opportunity to connect with ASEAN.

The countries, therefore, are closely tied in their sociopolitical state as they face similar threats and challenges. For example, most of the countries in the region have to deal with terrorism. To face such challenges, the South Asian countries must cooperate. The European and ASEAN experience is testimony to the contribution of regional cooperation in the economic growth of the countries. The success of BIMSTEC does not render SAARC pointless; it only adds a new chapter in regional cooperation in South Asia.

Reference: SAARC vs BIMSTEC: The search for the ideal platform for regional cooperation by Joyeeta Bhattacharjee
### Turtle in Assam

**Context:**

Rare black softshell turtle that went extinct into wild are being re-introduced in the wild from Ugratara temple. A similar re-introduction of 11 hatchlings of the equally endangered Indian roofed turtle (Pangshura tecta) and the Indian tent turtle (Pangshura tentoria) was organised at the Hayagriv Madhab Temple in Hajo.

**Concept:**

Black soft shell turtle (*Nilssonia nigricans*)

- Freshwater turtle that is found in India and Bangladesh.
- Of the 29 species of freshwater turtles identified in India, 20 are found in Assam, and temple ponds are known to house a dozen species.
- Omnivorous, with a diet ranging from aquatic plants to aquatic insects and carrion.
- In IUCN Red List as “extinct in the wild” since 2002.
- Threats: Consumption of turtle meat and eggs, silt mining, encroachment of wetlands and change in flooding pattern.

Indian Roofed Turtle

- Protected under Schedule 1 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and on CITES Appendix I
- “Least Concern” in the IUCN list of threatened species.
- Found in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. In India, it is found in Ganges, Brahmaputra and Indus River drainages.
- The protected areas in Jalpaiguri is known for protecting this species. It is also found in Lota devi temple located on the basin of River Karala in Jalpaiguri.

Source: The Hindu
The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and its summit in 2019

GS Paper II | 17 June, 2019

The CRUX:

- Major themes of 2019 SCO summit: Terrorism, regional cooperation and future of Afghanistan
- SCO is also a platform of co-operation on energy security, connectivity and trade.
- With India’s shift in inclination from SAARC to BIMSTEC, SCO provides the only platform for India’s proximity to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organization which was preceded by the Shanghai Five mechanism (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

With the membership of India and Pakistan in 2017 at Astana, the total members of SCO has increased to eight, namely the Republic of India, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

It also has four observer states, namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Belarus, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Mongolia.

The SCO has six dialogue partners, namely the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, the Republic of Turkey, and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

(Source: bilaterals.org)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed during the St. Petersburg SCO Heads of State in 2002. It is a Eurasian political, economic, and military organisation whose main goals:

- Strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states;
- Promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture, as well as in education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas;
- Making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region
- Moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.
SCO's internal policies are based on the principles of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultations, respect for cultural diversity, and a desire for common development, while its external policy is conducted in accordance with the principles of non-alignment, non-targeting any third country, and openness.

Organisation of SCO:

- **Heads of States Council (HCS)** - It is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO. It meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organisation. (SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.)
- The organisation has two permanent bodies — the **SCO Secretariat** based in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure** (RATS) based in Tashkent.

**Recent SCO Summit**

19th Annual Summit of SCO was held at Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic in June, 2019. The 2019 Summit majorly focused on terrorism, regional co-operation and future of Afghanistan. In the same context, the major decisions taken at the summit are:

**Anti-terrorism and enhanced security**

The Member States condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They urged the international community to strengthen global cooperation against terrorism in line with the UN Charter and the principles of international law, without politicisation and double standards, while respecting the sovereignty and independence of all states. The declaration also pressed for consensus regarding the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. The member countries ensured the earliest possible enactment of a protocol on security guarantees to the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone.

**Regional Cooperation**

The members agreed to expand and deepen regional cooperation in trade, finance, investment, transport, energy, agriculture, innovation, cutting-edge technology, etc. The members also agreed to increase the share of national currencies in mutual financial transactions and settlements. The SCO Member States look forward to promote exchange of experiences and further developments of international cooperation in countering corruption. They will also promote the development of technology parks and business incubators in the region.

**Future of Afghanistan**

The member countries also resolved to support the work in Afghanistan to restore peace and ensure the country's sustained development.

**Others**
The countries agreed on the need to keep the outer space free from weapons and importance of peaceful use of outer space. They also discussed the need to address the illegal cultivation, production, circulation, sales and dissemination of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors.

Source: The Hindu
The CRUX:

Issue: Death of sanitation workers after inhaling toxic fumes while cleaning septic tanks. Again, a demand rose for machines instead of manual cleaning of sewer lines and septic tanks.

Manual Scavenging in India

Who is a manual scavenger?

According to the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, a manual scavenger is a person who is engaged or employed by an individual or a local authority or an agency or a contractor for manual cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit into which the human excreta from the insanitary latrines is disposed of, or in railway track or other spaces as notified by the government. The National Human Rights Commission has termed manual scavenging as one of the “worst violations” of human rights.

Law Prohibiting Manual Scavenging

Manual scavenging is regulated by the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. Important features of the Act are:

- No person, local authority or agency should engage or employ people for hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- Prescribed mechanised cleaning of septic tanks.
- Prohibition of the construction of insanitary latrines, occupiers of already constructed insanitary latrines are responsible to convert or demolish them at their own cost.
- Safety gear must be provided in case, human intervention is unavoidable.
- Punishment to violators with two years of imprisonment or fine or both.
- The District Magistrate and the local authority shall be the implementing authorities.

Source: The Hindu

Association issues:

Neither contractors nor municipalities are providing the equipment and logistical and medical support mandated by the law. There is, thus, a need of proper implementation of the law for bringing about changes in the ground realities. The penalties must also be uniformly enforced.

There is an urgent need of technological innovations in this field, to protect people from being illegally employed for manual scavenging. Recently, the first manhole cleaning robot Bandicoot
was tested in Gurugram, Haryana. There is a need to identify more such solution-oriented and viable innovations and scale them up by providing sufficient funds.

Also, Swachh Bharat should be made to emphasise more on manual scavengers and there should be provisions where the toilets build under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan do not generate the need to employ manual scavengers. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation had acknowledged that in rural areas, mechanical pumps to clear septic tanks are not available.

Inhumane working conditions, indignified work and repeated instances of death associated with it, calls for an urgent action in this direction.

Source: The Hindu

**GM Crops**

**The CRUX:**

GM crop – Bt Brinjal grown in Haryana illegally. Bt Brinjal is an insect resistant crop.

**Facts:**

No evidence from Ministry of Agriculture that Bt Brinjal will benefit farmers.

A report by National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy, anticipates that if Bt brinjal performs as Mahyco proposes, brinjal output will increase and retail prices will fall, benefiting consumers far more than farmers but ignores the scenario that companies might charge premium prices for Bt brinjal seeds, in which case farmers may not benefit at all.

**Opinions:**

Deepak Pental (Professor, Delhi University) – In favour of release of Bt Brinjal.
Madhav Gadgil (ecologist) – Warned of contamination of India’s diverse brinjal varieties.

Government’s task force on Biotechnology (2004) – No GM crop should be allowed in biodiversity-rich areas.

Experts appointed by SC (after PIL over GM crops) – Recommended a ban on genetic modification of the crops that have India as their centre of origin or diversity, including Bt Brinjal.

Other Issues:

- Many health researchers have argued that Bt Brinjal pose risk to human health.
- Even M.S. Swaminathan called for long-term (chronic) toxicity studies independent of Mahyco, before taking any decision on Bt Brinjal
- In states, Kerala and Uttarakhand have asked for a ban on GM crops.
- Even states with substantial brinjal cultivation, like Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal opposed it suggesting rigorous, extensive testing.
- In 2017, Committee on Agriculture appointed to assess GM controversy - it was so alarmed by the irregularities in the assessment of Bt brinjal, that it recommended a thorough probe by a team of eminent independent scientists and environmentalists”. It also recommended labelling GM foods to protect consumer’s right to know.

Conclusion

Therefore, there is no scientific consensus on safety and efficacy of Bt Brinjal.

Bt Brinjal does not seem to be a sustainable option because it is pest resistant and it has been found from earlier experience that a GM-based strategy for pest control is unsustainable because the pest tends to become resistant as is seen in the case of Bt cotton crop. To prevent such cases, farmers need to grow refuge crop, but due to paucity of land, they are not able to do so.

{Vocabulary check – paucity - a falling short of an essential or desirable amount or number}

Now, alternative strategies such as organic and zero budget natural farming,
which do not need GM seeds is gaining ground.

Solutions:

Government must:

- Detail the steps it has taken since 2010 to address the scientific lacunae
- Clarify precisely how Bt Brinjal will benefit farmers
- Put the labelling infrastructure into place
- Demonstrate how Bt brinjal can fit with sustainable farming and biodiversity conservation

Topic: GM Crops

What are GM crops?

According to WHO, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) can be defined as organisms (i.e. plants, animals or microorganisms) in which the genetic material (DNA) has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination.

GM crops are produced by “recombinant DNA technology” or “genetic engineering”. It allows selected individual genes to be transferred from one organism into another, also between nonrelated species. Foods that are produced using GM organisms are often referred to as GM foods.

Possible benefits of GM crops

Pest Resistance

GM crops provide resistance to insect/pest attack. Crops can be made resistant to a particular insect or a group of pests. Bt Cotton is one of the GM crops that provide resistance to pests, thus reducing the demand of pesticides.

Disease resistance

Crops can also be modified genetically to become resistant to bacterial, fungal or viral infestation.

Environment-resilient Crops
Crops can be made environment resilient. Genes that confer protection against environmental stresses can be introduced in crops. Thus, they can be made to withstand environmental stresses. This benefit outshines others in the current scenario of climate change.

**Herbicide tolerance**

Herbicides are the chemicals used to kill weed (unwanted plants) in the field. As herbicides are extensively used in large fields, herbicide tolerance gives an added advantage to the main crop. GM soyabean is modified to become herbicide tolerant.

**Biopharmaceuticals**

Crops can be genetically modified to produce vaccines and other medicines. Plant-based vaccine against dengue and rabies viruses have been reported to be produced in Lactuca sativa (Lettuce) and Zea Mays.

**Improved nutritional value**

Crops can be genetically modified to contain additional nutrients that need to be added in diet. Golden rice is a modified form of rice that contains enhanced levels of b-carotene, to prevent deficiency of Vitamin A.

**Biodiesel Production**

Plants that are used to produce biodiesel can be modified to increase their production, so as to increase the output enormously from limited land area.

**Associated Problems**

- There is a lack of data on the potential threats of GM crops on the environment and human health.
- There are chances of cross-pollination between GM and non-GM crops, it can also have unknown effects on other organisms like micro-organisms.
- It can lead to a loss of flora and fauna biodiversity.
- There is a domination of a few companies in GM crop production
- It makes the developing countries more dependent on the developed countries. It may also widen the gap between rich and poor countries.
- It may lead to biopiracy
Some of the ethical issues being highlighted in the context of GM Crops include interference with nature, by transferring genes from one species to another and ignoring the intrinsic value of organisms and trying to alter them.

**Note:** International Trade in GM Crops is guided by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety which regulates trans-boundary movements of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs). GM foods are within the scope of the Protocol only if they contain LMOs that are capable of transferring or replicating genetic material.

**Conclusion**

Instead of fast-tracking steps in the direction of GM crops, India should focus on adopting sustainable approach. Government should focus on research in the direction and revive traditional methods of agriculture to boost agricultural production and productivity.

Source: The Hindu

India to host UNCCD Meet - About UNCCD and Land Degradation Neutrality

**The CRUX:**

For the first time, India will host the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Ahead of the COP-14, Union Environment Minister launched a flagship project, part of a larger international initiative called the Bonn challenge – to enhance India’s capacity for forest landscape restoration (FLR)

About the new programme:

Implement a three and a half years pilot phase in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Karnataka.

**Aim:** to develop and adapt the best practices and monitoring protocols for the country and build capacity
Issue: India faces a severe problem of land degradation or soil becoming unfit for cultivation.

According to ISRO 2016 report, in 2011-13, about 29% of India's land was degraded, with an increase of 0.57% increase from 2003-05.

At the previous edition of COP (COP-13), India committed to restore 13 mn hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2020 and an additional 8 mn hectares by 2030.

What is Bonn challenge?

Global effort to bring 150 million hectares of world’s deforested and degraded land under restoration by 2020, and 350 mn hectares by 2030.

What is Land Degradation Neutrality?

Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) has been defined by the Parties of UNCCD to the Convention as:

A state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.

LDN represents a paradigm shift in land management policies and practices. It is a unique approach that counterbalances the expected loss of productive land with the recovery of degraded areas. LDN is a way of land use planning with major focus on conservation, sustainable management and land restoration.

Conclusion

As land is a finite natural resource, there is a constant struggle to control more land and capitalize the flow of goods and services from the land. Such kind of struggles are potent enough to cause social and political instability, fuel poverty, conflict and migration. For this reason, the implementation of LDN requires multi-stakeholder engagement and planning across scales and sectors, supported by national-scale coordination that utilizes existing local and regional governance structures.

Source: unccd.int
Unleashing the potential of Urban India
GS Paper I | 18 June, 2019

The CRUX:

- According to Global Metro Monitor 2018, 36% employment growth and 67% GDP growth were contributed by the 300 largest global metros, with those in emerging economies outperforming those in advanced economies.

Metropolitan areas are characterised by concentration and acceleration of wealth. They show agglomeration of scale due to higher-level economic functions.

9 Indian metros feature in top 150 ranks of the economic performance index. By 2030, India is expected to have 71 metropolitan cities, out of which seven would have a population of more than 10 million.

Satellite image of India at night, with major cities denoted
Image: NASA

Constitutional Provision

Article 243P(c) of the Constitution defines ‘metropolitan areas’ as those having “population of ten lakhs [a million] or more, comprised in one or more districts and consisting of two or more Municipalities/Panchayats/ other contiguous areas, specified by the governor through public notification to be a metropolitan area”. It recognises metropolitan areas as multi-municipal and multi-district entities.

It mandates the formation of Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) to prepare draft plans, considering common interests between local authorities, objectives and priorities set by Central and State governments, and investments likely to be made in the area by various agencies.
It is also mandated that at least two-thirds of the members of the committee must be elected by and among the elected members of the municipalities and chairpersons of the Panchayats in the metropolitan areas, proportionate to the ratio to their respective populations.

- Size and manner of filling the seats – left to State’s discretion
- Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) is expected to lay framework for metropolitan governance

Janaagraha’s Annual Survey of India’s City Systems (ASICS) 2018 found that only nine out of 18 cities mandated to form MPCs have constituted them. Even where they are constituted, their functionality is questionable with the limited role of local elected representatives raising questions on democratic decentralisation.

UK’s "City deals" model

- Agreement between the Union government and a combined authority of each city economic region
- Based on “competition policy style” model
- “Combined authority” – is a statutory body set up through national legislation. It enables a group of 2 or more councils to collaborate their decisions. Headed by a directly elected mayor
- Benefit: can reduce fragmented governance, drive economic prosperity, job growth, etc.
- “City deals” – to be region-specific budgets to promote “economic growth” across regions.
- UK has established 9 such combined authorities.
- Australia has also adopted this model and has signed 4 city deals till date.
- China is also envisioning 19 seamlessly connected super city clusters.
- India – yet to begin a discourse on a governance framework for the future of metropolises. It is yet to come up with regional-level solutions.

According to the World Bank, despite the emergence of smaller towns, the underlying character of India’s urbanisation is “metropolitan”, with towns emerging within the proximity of existing cities.

Way Forward

It is time India envisions the opportunities and challenges from a “city” level to “city-region” level. Central government must create a platform to build consensus among State governments. Some direction can be provided by the Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2018. It proposes for a Greater Bengaluru Authority headed by a directly elected Mayor, responsible for the overall planning of Greater Bengaluru with powers for international
agency coordination and administration of major infrastructural projects across the urban local bodies within the area.

Source: The Hindu

PT 2020 Special: 18th June 2019
Prelims GS Paper I | 18 June, 2019

Conceptual: *Cyberchondria*

Heat, rain delay leave *rice* growers worried

**Growing conditions for rice:**

**Temperature:** 20°C and 35°C

**Rainfall:** Well-distributed rainfall of about 100 cm

**Climate:** Warm, and humid climate

**Soil:** Clay loams are most suited (eg. – fertile soil of Delta and valley)

**Rice Production data:**

As per the 3rd Revised Advance Estimates, the estimated production of rice during 2018-19 is 115.63 million tonnes. (record) Total production of *Rice* during 2018-19 is estimated at record 115.63 million tonnes. Production of rice has increased by 2.87 million tonnes than the production of 112.76 million tonnes during 2017-18. It is also higher by 7.83 million tonnes than the five years’ average production of 107.80 million tonnes.

Source: NCERT
Promise and delivery: **MGNREGS**

**Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme**

- Provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.
- Implemented by Ministry of Rural development in association with the state governments.

Aim: To improve the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living below poverty line in rural India.

It attempts to bridge the gap between the rich and poor in the country. Roughly one-third of the stipulated work force must be women.

Key **features** of the program:

- Guarantees hundred days of wage employment in a financial year, to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- Individual beneficiary oriented works can be given to SC/ST.
- **Within 15 days** of submitting the application or from the day work is demanded, wage employment will be provided to the applicant.
- **Right to get unemployment allowance** in case employment is not provided within fifteen days of submitting the application or from the date when work is sought.
- Receipt of wages **within fifteen days** of work done.
- It also focuses on the economic and social empowerment of women.
- It provides “Green” and “Decent” work.
- Social Audit of MGNREGA works is mandatory.
- MGNREGA works address the climate change vulnerability and protect the farmers from such risks and conserve natural resources.

India to actively curb "**conflict diamonds**"
The 4Cs [cut, clarity, colour and carat] of diamond may soon be expanded to 5Cs with the fifth C being ‘conflict-free’. And the 5Ps of diamond marketing [precious, popular, prestige, priceless] will include ‘peace’ diamonds.

Reference: Investopedia, kimberleyprocess.com

Source: The Hindu
From the columns of *The Hindu*

1. BJP MP from Rajasthan, Om Birla is elected as the 17th Speaker of Lok Sabha
2. A Joint Monitoring Program report (on drinking water) is released by UNICEF and WHO.
3. Delhi zoo has written to Thailand for giraffe under an animal exchange program.
4. 4 get life term for Ayodhya terror attack.
5. Usage of ENDS (Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems) has become a problem for Haryana Food and Drugs Administration (because they are difficult to seize as they are hard to detect).
6. SC defers on doctor’s plea for security by saying that there is no urgency in the matter as their strike has been called off.
8. Information and Broadcasting Ministry warned all private satellite TV channels to avoid showing children in an indecent, suggestive and inappropriate manner on dance reality shows and other such programmes.

News for UPSC Mains 2019:

**India to be most populous by 2027: UN**


([http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/40507890](http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/40507890))

**U.S. deploys more troops to West Asia**

**Facebook launched its new global currency – Libra**

Import of cotton in the 2018-2019 cotton season is expected to be 22 lakh bales

From the columns of *The Indian Express*

IIT Bombay has emerged to be India’s best university for second time in a row, according to 2019, QS World University Ranking

5 professors quit to protest “caste slur” on woman teacher by students

Death of children in Muzaffarpur due to AES, a preventable disease shows that malnutrition needs to be addressed urgently

Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry asked firms to submit their concerns over the draft e-commerce policy

FY20 Wind Capacity Addition likely to rise 3.5-4.0GW

**Note:**
1. Population and associated issues

2. The Cryptocurrency Link
(Context: Libra is Facebook’s Cryptocurrency)

3. Problem of Malnutrition in India
(Context: Deaths caused by Acute Encephalitis Syndrome in Bihar’s Muzaffarpur)

4. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan: Government’s Steps towards a cleaner India
(Context: Uptick for India for sanitation in UN report)

5. US-Iran Relations and its Impacts on India
(Context: U.S. decided to deploy more force in West Asia)

Stay tuned for more updates.

Jai Hind

Keep Studying

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express
The CRUX:

Note: It is based on data from the Joint Monitoring Programme report by UNICEF and WHO, released by the UN and imgs from the Government of India.

- India has made great gains in providing basic sanitation facilities

According to the UN Report, South Asian region accounted for 3/4th of the population who stopped defecating in the open between 2000 and 2017 and out of the 2.1 bn people who gained access to basic sanitation services over time globally, 486 mn live in India. Thus, India’s Swachh Bharat Mission – became an example for other countries. Nigeria even sent a delegation to study the programme.

According to the government, the four reasons for the success of the programme are:

- Political leadership
- Public financing
- Partnerships
- People’s participation

Associated problem: The millions of new toilets are producing large amounts of solid and liquid wastes that India does not has the ability to treat and dispose of safely.

UN Report: Only 30% of the countries wastewater is treated at plants with secondary treatment facility (against the global average of 80%). According to the Government, it is a focus of Swachh Bharat Phase-2.

Major issue: Not basic sanitation but accessibility to piped drinking water

UN Report: Absolutely no growth in the population with access to piped water facilities with a large rural-urban gap. It states that the percentage of India’s population with access to a protected drinking water source less than 30 minutes away has increased from 79% in 2000 to 93% in 2017 but the percentage of households getting piped water is stagnant at 44% over the 17-year period.
According to the government, drinking water is now the highest priority of the development agenda for the government. A new scheme named Nal se Jal is being drafted.

The report also states that human right to sanitation implies that people not only have a right to a hygienic toilet but also have a right not to be negatively affected by unmanaged faecal waste. This is most relevant to poor and marginalised groups who tend to be disproportionately affected by other people’s unmanaged faecal sludge and sewage.

**Topic: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**

Towards realising, “Cleanliness is next to godliness”.

**About Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:**

- Most significant cleanliness campaign by the Government of India launched in 2014.
- Aim: To fulfill Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of a clean and hygienic India
- PM Narendra Modi gave the slogan of “Na gandagi karenge, na karne denge”
- Behavioural change has been identified as the primary and fundamental tool for the achievement of ODF outcomes. It has already become a “Jan Andolan”.
- 6 major focus area under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan are:
  - Household toilets, including conversion of insanitary latrines into pour-flush latrines
  - Community toilets
  - Public toilets
  - Solid waste management
  - Public Awareness through Information, Education and Communication
  - Capacity building

2 components of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan are:

**Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)**

- Formed by the restructuring of the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan.
- Aim: To make India an open defecation free (ODF) country by 2nd October 2019 by making the Gram Panchayats clean, sanitized and ODF.
- To improve the levels of cleanliness in rural areas through waste management activities (both solid and liquid)
- Features:
  - A dedicated fund for the construction of toilets.
Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)

- **Aim:** Complete sanitation for all of India’s 4041 statutory towns.
- **Features of the program:**
  - Building of community toilets in residential areas where it is difficult to construct individual household toilets
  - Construction of public toilets in designated locations such as tourist places, markets, bus stations, railway stations, etc.

**Initiatives under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**

1. **Swachh Survekshan Report** – It is the world's largest cleanliness survey in which 4237 cities are covered. It is a completely digitized and paperless survey that is completed within 28 days. It rates the cities on the basis of GFC star rating, ODF, ODF+, and ODF++. Geotagged photos are captured from various locations and it also involves active citizen participation.

   ![Source:NDTV.com](https://www.ndtv.com)

2. **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Swachhh Offices** – It is released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. It lays out the infrastructure norms, assessment and inspection procedures and checklists for sanitation and waste management best practices to be followed in all the offices under the Central Government, across India. It may also be utilized by various state and local governments for their offices.

3. **Swachh Bharat, Swachh Vidyalaya** – It is a national campaign to improve cleanliness in the school premises. The campaign aims to ensure that every school in India has a set of functioning and well-maintained water, sanitation and hygiene facilities that are necessary to produce a healthy school environment and to develop appropriate health and hygiene behaviour.

4. **Rashtriya Swachhata Kosh** – It is a fund that was set up to facilitate and channelize individual and CSR contributions to achieve the objective of Swachh Bharat.
The allocation from the Kosh is used to supplement and complement departmental resources for various activities. Even, tax rebates are provided to encourage contributions.

5. **Swachhata Pakhwada** – It is an initiative to engage all Union Ministries and Departments in Swachhata-related activities. It was launched in 2016 and is a fortnight event.

6. **Namami Gange** – It is an inter-ministerial initiative that aims to make villages on the bank of river Ganga ODF.

7. **Swachhata Action Plan (SAP)** – Again an inter-ministerial programme, it is led by all Union Ministries to ensure annual planning and implementation of sanitation-related activities. Separate budget provisions will be earmarked by all Union Ministries/Departments under this programme.

8. **Swachh Iconic Places (SIP)** - It focuses on the cleanliness in 100 locations across the country, that are considered to be “iconic” due to their heritage, religious and/or cultural significance. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation is its nodal ministry and it works in association with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Culture. The places can receive financial and technical support from PSUs and corporates.

9. **GOBAR-dhan Scheme** – Launched in 2018, GOBAR-dhan (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resource dhan) Scheme aims to keep villages clean and increase the income of farmers and cattle owners by promoting local entrepreneurs to convert cattle dung, and other organic resources, to biogas and organic manure.

10. **Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS)** – It is an awareness campaign under which shramdaan activities were undertaken by dignitaries like Shri Amitabh Bachchan, Shri Ratan Tata, and Sadguru, among others. It also saw participation from the Union Ministers, MLAs, MPs, iconic celebrities of India, sports stars, inter-faith leaders, corporates, etc.

11. **Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention (MGISC)** – It was a forum in which international specialists in the sanitation sector were present. They shared sanitation success stories and best practices. It also acted as a platform for the other countries to learn from the experience of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

12. **Swajal** – It is a community demand-driven programme for all the aspirational districts identified by NITI Aayog. It is aimed to provide villages with piped water supply.
powered by solar energy. The programme would also sustain the ODF status. It will be implemented by district-level officials and monitored by an Integrated Management Information System (IMIS).

13. Swachh Shakti - It is a national event that aims to bring in to focus the leadership role played by rural women in Swachh Bharat Mission. It aims to showcase rural women as a change agent to mobilize the community and lead from the front. It was launched in Gandhinagar, Gujarat in 2017.

Associated Problems

As India approaches the deadline of 2nd October 2019 for its ambitious mission towards cent percent sanitation coverage, it becomes essential to look at the success that has been achieved by the programme and also look for the lacunas that still stay.

- Though toilet coverage has increased but the utility and utilization still remain a big question. Construction of toilets has not promised its usage as well.
- The definition for ODF and ODF+ needs to be altered so as to increase the authenticity of the title given under the Swachh Survekshan.
- As India looks forward to a situation of water scarcity, the model of toilets built under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan remains a problem. It has solved a problem but created others. It has increased the need for water. Even, caste-based discrimination in the provision of water aggravates the problem.
- New toilets are also creating a need for scavenging at many places, thus increasing exploitation. Therefore, the maintenance of toilets remains an issue.
- Attitudinal change still remains a barrier in a few places.

Conclusion

A Swachh Bharat is the need of the hour. Swachhta has the potential to bring about dramatic changes in the socio-economic lives of the population of our country. It can improve the quality of life for all and improve the efficiency and efficacy of the people. It supports the clarion call for sustainable development. It can boost tourism in the countries, thus reducing the country’s current account deficit. Therefore, focus on cleanliness is a much-needed demand for a sustainable society as well as the growth of our country.

Reference: vikaspedia, swachhbharatabhiyan.gov.in, ndtv.com
India to be the most populous by 2027: UN

The CRUX:

According to the World Population Prospects 2019 Report,

- India is set to overtake China as the most populous country by 2027. It will have almost 1.64 billion inhabitants by 2050. China, on the other hand, is expected to become smaller, dropping from its current 1.43 billion to approx. 1.4 billion by 2050.
- Though India will have the highest increase in absolute numbers, its rate of growth is slowing.
- South Asia’s opportunity to reap the “demographic dividend” will peak by 2047.
- Central and southern Asia – expected to see a 25% increase in population between now and 2050.
- Globally, the fastest growing age-group – above 65 years – therefore, more pressure on social protection systems but in India, working-age population is still growing faster than other groups, creating an opportunity for accelerated economic growth.
- The highest rate of population growth – in Saharan Africa (Fertility rate = 4.6 births/woman). It is expected to double its population by 2050. Nigeria – to add 200 mn people and overtake the USA and will become the third most populous region.
- Therefore, there is a need for India to rush to invest in education and health.
- By 2050, one in six people will be above 65 years, compared with one in 11 people in 2019.
- In 2018, for the first time in history, people above 65 outnumbered children less than five years of age.
- Major focus: Potential impact of ageing population: Impact on labour market, economic performance, increasing fiscal pressure and a need to maintain public systems of health care, pensions and social protection for older persons.

Remaining points from The Indian Express news article:
The report projects some 9.7 billion population by 2050, but the overall growth rate will continue to fall.

India is among the 3 countries that are expected to show the biggest increase, others being Nigeria and Afghanistan.

Fall in fertility rates: Average number of births per women globally – 3.2 in 1990 to 2.5 in 2019 and expected to fall to 2.2 births by 2050.

By 2050, there will be more than twice as many persons above 65 as children under 5, also they will surpass the number of adolescents and youth aged 15-24.

Overall life expectancy in the world is expected to increase from 64.2 years in 1990 to 77.1 years in 2050 but the life expectancy in poorer countries is projected to lag behind.

Reasons: high child and maternal mortality rates, conflict and insecurity and the continuing impact of the HIV epidemic.

55 countries to witness a decrease in population by 1% or more – because of sustained low levels of fertility and in some places, high rates of emigration.

Migration: It has become a major reason for population change in certain areas, like India’s neighbouring countries of Nepal and Bangladesh.

Topic: Population and Associated Issues

Introduction

High population has characterized India, ever since its history - initially being a major site for Indus Valley civilization and then becoming the perfect ground for population growth due to its fertile land, moderate climate, and sufficient monsoonal rainfall. India has historically been a land of abundance but that is not equally distributed, which has caused inter-regional and inter-state disparities in population densities within the country.

India is the second most populated country in the world with nearly a fifth of the world's population.

In spite of the fact that the population policies, family planning and welfare programmes undertaken by the Govt. of India have led to a continuous decrease in the fertility rate, yet the actual stabilization of population can take place only by 2050.

Reasons for the growth of population in India

The main reasons behind a high population in India are:

1- Geographical Reasons: Availability of fertile land, sufficient food, and water in certain regions of India has led to a huge population growth rate.

2 - Historical reasons: India has been a land of trade and wars, thus more men were required for these functions and it necessitated the need of the huge population, that too gender-specific. The high death rate was also one of the reasons that mandated a high birth rate for quite some time. It was due to extreme living conditions, lack of healthcare and absence of proper nutrition.
3 - Religion v/s family planning – India is a land of many religions and different religions mean different beliefs. Many of these beliefs are inclined towards having more children and consider children to be God’s gift, bringing us to second major reason, i.e. lack of education. That is why people of certain belief systems prefer to have more children than others.

4 - Lack of education – Still, many people are not educated enough to understand the need and benefits of family planning. Even the lack of education to girls makes them more vulnerable and less empowered to take independent and rational decisions. Education not only empowers a girl but also makes her take wise decisions and become an asset for the family as well as the society.

5 - Marriage at low age – Still, there are certain places and communities in which child marriages take place. Even, there are cases of child trafficking in which female girl is trafficked and is forced to marry.

6 - Lack of willingness to use contraceptive methods

7 - Preference to sons – Though there has been a reduction in this trend the change is seen only in a few urban areas. Majority of the Indian society still thinks of a son to be the caretaker of the family and thus, parents produce children till a male child is born.

8 - Illegal migration – This has more importance in the Indian context because India has porous borders with its neighbouring countries and it has also experienced certain waves of immigration in the past years.

Effects of the high population on India

Though India is in the 3rd stage of the Demographic Transition Model of population growth, but due to the relative crunch of resources, a high population growth rate has caused many problems such as:

Social effects:

1. Poverty: High population leads to high demand for resources and when such demands are not met, it leads to inequality in the society with the availability of resources to only a few people. It results in less saving and low rate of capital formation. Hence improvement in production technique becomes impossible. It means low productivity of labour. Therefore, some people become poor and some rich, which also results in the creation of inequality in society.

2. Compromised quality of life: People living in developing countries with a high population density generally suffer from a comparatively lower quality of life.

3. Health issues: People living in areas of huge population density are more vulnerable to infectious diseases and other communicable and lifestyle disease. Thus, such areas are more prone to epidemics.

4. Unemployment: More population creates the need for more opportunity and if demand is not met, it leads to large scale unemployment, thus creating dissent. It can also lead to protests and conflicts in society, thus disrupting peace and harmony in society. It may also lead to aggravation of other social problems such as robbery, beggary, kidnapping, murder, etc.

5. Migration: High population growth leads to migration, which may be internal or external. Due to high pressure on resources, people are required to move out of their niche in order to search for work and a decent source of livelihood. People also migrate to a high quality of life. Thus, migration can itself lead to population growth, or can even be caused by high population growth.
6. **Urbanisation:** Large scale migration to the limited number of urban centers causes the problem of urbanisation that is characterised by unhygienic living conditions, inadequate housing infrastructure, lack of water supply, the problem of sanitation and waste management, etc. Overcrowding, traffic congestions, frequent accidents and pollution in big cities are the direct result of over-population.

7. It adversely affects maternal health.

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**Economic Effects:**

1. Fiscal deficit: A huge population and lack of adequate resources means more people under the poverty line and in a country that follows the mixed economy model of economic planning – it is the responsibility of the state to look after the basic necessities of the vulnerable and affected population, thus increasing the fiscal deficit and much of the taxes collected by the government goes into the welfare schemes.

2. Increase in the Investment Requirement: To increase the per capita income of the country

3. The problem of Capital Formation: High birth rate and low expectancy of life mean a large number of dependents in the total population, thus a decreased capacity for the formation of capital.

4. Food security: Shortage of food grains hampers economic development in two ways: People do not get food, thus affecting the food security of the citizens and as the country is not able to export more foodgrains, it also affects the foreign exchange reserves of the country.

5. Increased Burden of Unproductive Consumers: It includes a large number of children, old persons above the age of 65 and many more in the age group of 15-59 do not find employment.

6. Increased pressure on land: Thus, the per capita availability of land decreases and the problem of sub-division and fragmentation of land increases.

7. Pressure on Environment: Population explosion leads to environmental degradation. Higher birth rate brings more pollution and more toxic wastes to the biosphere. Thus, dramatic population growth hinders economic development. It should be controlled effectively.

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**Steps to Control Population in India**

- The Government of India, politicians, policymakers should initiate a bold population policy so that the economic growth of the country can keep pace with the demands of a growing population:
  - Strict condemnation of child marriage
  - Increasing the welfare and status of women and girls
  - Economic empowerment of women
  - Spread of education
  - Providing social security to the affected population
  - Increasing awareness for the use of contraceptives and family planning methods
  - Sex education
  - Encouraging male sterilization and spacing births
  - Free distribution of contraceptives and condoms among the poor
  - Promoting adoption
Encouraging female empowerment
More health care centers for the poor
Increasing livelihood opportunities

Conclusion

Poverty is both the cause and effect of the population growth. Having produced many children for sons to combat one’s family’s growing needs, the children stay out of school to supplement their household income. It is projected that India is to have the maximum population in the world by 2027 so the major challenge remains to convert that population burden into optimum population so as to reap the best benefits of the growing population size. In order to do so, India needs to speed up its efforts in the direction of the 3Es – Education, Employability and Employment. A special focus must be placed on children and youth as they will decide the future of the country. India ranks second after China in total population. Its population has grown 20% per decade, leading to problems that include food deficits, sanitation deterioration, and pollution. Although economic growth numbers look promising, the living standards of most citizens are not changing. Malnutrition is a severe problem in India that cases childhood stunting, anaemia in women of reproductive age, and overweight adult women. Only 6% of India's poor have access to tap water versus 33% of the non-poor. Sanitation is a massive ongoing problem that the government has been unable to address.

Thus, there is a need to adopt a comprehensive multi-pronged strategy to limit population growth and turn the population into potential human resources.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express

US â€“ Iran Relations and its impact on India

GS Paper - II | 20 June, 2019

U.S. decided to deploy more force in West Asia

The CRUX:
The US said that it will deploy 1000 more troops to West Asia. It is in the backdrop of the 10-day warning given by Iran on turning down its commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal. The US is blaming Iran for last week’s attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman. Iran insisted that it would “not wage war against any nation.”

**Topic- US – Iran Relations and its impact on India**

**Background**

There have been increasing tensions between US and Iran since US President Donald Trump declared its decision to come out of the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal that was signed between Iran and P5 +1(Permanent UNSC member countries + Germany).

**Historical Relations**

US and Iran are known to have a long-standing difference amongst them. The overthrow of Iranian government run by popular Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh by US agency CIA and the restoration of power to the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi is one of the initial instances of conflict between US and Iran. This 1953 incidence is considered to be the main reason for the initiation of the deep-rooted US-Iran conflict.

**The world that revolved around oil**

The 1953 incidence of overthrowing a democratically elected Prime Minister and putting in place a monarch, had a negative impact on the psyche of Iranians. The incidence took place to protect the interests of the US and UK by preventing the nationalization of Iran’s oil assets.

But later in 1957, it was the US that paved the way for Iran to build its first nuclear program. The 1957 agreement provided for technical assistance from the US and allowed for the lease of enriched uranium to Iran. Iran’s own capacity grew gradually in the next two decades.

But, the relations worsened by the 1979 revolution (popularly known as the Islam revolution) that took place in Iran. As a result of which the CIA was overthrown and the US embassy in Iran was taken by the Iranians. They took the staff members of the embassy as their hostage for more than a year.

Other reasons for the tussle between the US and Iran are Iran’s alleged support for terrorism and Iran’s nuclear program. Iran's first nuclear reactor at Bushehr which began construction with the help of Russian technicians prompted strong objections from the US. The US accused Iran of an illicit nuclear weapons programme with two nuclear sites under construction at Natanz and Arak. The International Atomic Energy Agency IAEA concludes that the nuclear sites at Natanz and Arak are indeed under construction but designed solely to provide fuel for future power plants. As part of the nuclear deal, Iran agreed to tougher UN inspections of its nuclear facilities and to suspend its uranium enrichment.
US sanctions on Iran

Though the US and Iran did not share amicable relations earlier also, the US started imposing sanctions against Iran only in the 1980s responding to Iran’s support to terrorism and extremism. In 1996, sanctions were put to isolate Iran from non-U.S. energy companies as well, thus giving rise to the concept of secondary sanctions.

The major target of sanctions were foreign investments in Iranian oil and gas development. Since then, the US has tried to discourage the development of nuclear capabilities by Iran, even leading up to 2015 Nuclear deal where Iran agreed to provide access to IAEA to its nuclear facilities. According to data, the US had put maximum sanctions on Iran in 2018 under the Donal Trump administration.

What is JCPOA or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action?

- It is known as the Iran Nuclear Deal 2015 (https://www.aspireias.com/currentaffairs/details/233)
- It was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which was adopted on 20th July 2015.
- It is the responsibility of International Atomic Energy Agency to look into the compliance of the nuclear-related provisions of the deal by Iran.
- October 2025 is set to the termination day for Resolution 2231 and Iran's file with UNSC.

US Withdrawal from JCPOA

President Donald Trump was a fierce critic of the nuclear deal. He announced the decision to withdraw from the deal, accusing the Iranian regime of pursuing a regional agenda of harming core US interests in the Middle East. He termed the Iranian regime as “the leading state sponsor of terror” and argued that Tehran “exports dangerous missiles, fuels conflicts across the Middle East, and supports terrorist proxies and militias such as Hezbollah, Hamas, the Taliban, and al Qaeda.” He also termed the JCPOA as “defective at its core” since it would have allowed Iran to eventually acquire nuclear weapon capability even if Tehran were to fully comply with its provisions.

Iran, on the other hand, continued to abide by the JCPOA but recently it has given a timeline to the E3 countries that it would breach its limit if other countries didn't abide by the deal. The statement attracted criticism from European countries that wish the remaining parties to continue abiding by the agreement.

Broadly, the major issues are:

**Iranian nuclear issue**

While Iran has always maintained that its nuclear programme is for civilian and peaceful purposes, the US and its allies in the region refuse to believe that Iran’s programme is only meant for producing electricity or for medical purposes. However, no independent international agency including IAEA has corroborated the US-Saudi-Israeli fears in this regard. In fact, in February 2019, IAEA verified the use of Iran nuclear site for the mentioned use only.

**Iran’s missile programme**
Iran has a robust military establishment which has developed medium- and long-range ballistic missile capabilities. Even after signing the JCPOA, Iran continued to develop and test ballistic missiles like Qadr medium-range ballistic missile in March 2016 and Khoramshahr medium-range ballistic missile in January 2017. According to Iran, its ballistic missile programme is meant for national security and is not in violation of UNSC Resolution 2231 since the missiles are not capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

**Iran’s regional military expansionism** and support for non-state actors including Hezbollah, Hamas, Ansar Allah, Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Unit (PMU) and Shia militias in Syria. The US and its regional allies see such expansionism as a threat to their national security and regional interests.

**Its Impacts on India:**

- Iran is India’s third-largest oil supplier behind Iraq and Saudi Arabia, thus completely winding off trade relations with Iran is a challenge. India-Iran also is close allies, they are traditional partners.
- Even, India is Iran’s top oil importer of Iranian oil after China.
- Iran oil sale terms are the most attractive for Indian refiners - besides a liberal credit period, it also shipped the oil to India for nominal ocean freight.
- Though Iran understands the ‘challenges’ India faces on the energy front, the former has threatened to end “special privileges” for India if she tried to replace Iranian crude oil with supplies from Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the United States.
- India’s decision on procuring Iran oil is more strategic rather than economic.
- If it rejects U.S. pressure, it risks sanctions as well as incurring the displeasure of its all-powerful friend and defense partner. It would also hamper the developing strategic partner relations between the two countries.
- Iran is a part of important international trade routes for India and also provide it access to Afghanistan through the Chabahar port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

**Conclusion**

Thus, India needs to deal with the US pressure and simultaneously work to secure its interests vis-à-vis Iran. As there are other countries that are sailing in the same boat, India must look for the solution to this problem in the various multilateral platforms. India can also go ahead and join the European alliance that has created Instex. Instead of showing fear to the US, India must take a prudent step tp protect its energy security demands and at the same time, respect the traditional ties with Iran without hurting our relationship with the US. With the recent announcement of US to withdraw GSP status from India and India’s decision to put retaliatory tariffs on American good highlights the need for India and US to hold bilateral talks regarding the various trade-related issues so as to avoid any long-term impact on their relationship.

Source: The Hindu
Daily News Updates for 21st June 2019

From the columns of The Hindu

1. Kerala offers to send 20 lakh litres of water by rail to Tamil Nadu
2. President Ram Nath Kovind bats for simultaneous polls in the Parliament
3. 4.8-magnitude earthquake rattles Satara
4. ‘Polavaram project will be completed by 2021’. Earlier, it was anticipated to be completed by 2020
5. India’s first solar cruise vessel to be rolled out soon.
6. 14th Century idol found inside temple tank in Kancheepuram
7. Sudden shower’s break Chennai’s dry spell
8. Changes to IT Act to come soon into effect
9. Pompeo’s India visit to begin on June 25

News for UPSC Mains 2019:

Misplaced priorities
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/misplaced-priorities/article28089082.ece

Protectors of real news
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/protectors-of-real-news/article28088992.ece

What yoga can teach us
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/what-yoga-can-teach-us/article28089068.ece
Is India overestimating its economic growth?

Tension in the Persian Gulf
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/tension-in-the-persian-gulf/article28089437.ece

Navy to build 6 submarines
https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/navy-plans-to-build-6-submarines/article28089357.ece

Himalayan glaciers are melting twice as fast since 2000: study

WHO writes new prescription to prevent misuse of antibiotics

From the columns of The Indian Express
Focus on national security, triple talaq, water conservation

http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/40586741

“Starting Insulin early check complications”

http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/40584573

Promise of a new science

http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/40584935

Food delivery by drones: tech still being tested, rules waiting to evolve

http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/40583853

Resolution of steel companies under IBC yields higher recovery

http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/40581088

The next structural change (on simultaneous polls)

http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/40544654

Iran: Will not give Europe more time to save nuclear deal
Note:

News Analysis for the following topics will be updated by evening today:

1. **National and International Initiatives to promote yoga**
   (Context: What Yoga can teach us)

2. **Issue of Antibiotic Resistance in Health**
   (Context: WHO writes new prescription to prevent misuse of antibiotics)

3. **Make in India in Defence**
   (Context: Navy to build 6 submarines)

4. **Superconductivity in Science and Technology**
   (Context: Superconductivity in Science and Technology)

5. **PT 2020 Special Updates**
Stay tuned for more updates.

Jai Hind

Keep Studying

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express
21st June 2019

The Hindu

What yoga can teach us

The CRUX:

- Word yoga: first mentioned in the 'Rigveda'
- Yoga philosophy, science and grammar were first provided by Patanjali in ‘Patanjali Yoga Sutra’.
- Yoga - taken to the West by Indian gurus - They started centers where people practiced yoga and realised its benefits.
- Now, yoga creates a business of approximately $40 billion worldwide which is set to grow with the rising popularity of yoga. Now, yoga widely accepted across the world.

About yoga

The human persona comprises of a body, a mind, an intellect, and a soul. Yoga is an attempt to harmonize all of them. It helps a person attain a healthy body, a sharp intellect, and a focused mind that can realise the unity between personal consciousness, and the universal or cosmic consciousness.

Yoga teaches us to recognise the fundamental unity between human beings and humankind, humans and the environment, and ultimately recognise a total interconnectedness of everything. It gives an integral or holistic approach.

Modern developments of physical sciences - seems to take us back to the ancient truths which were discovered long ago in India by great seers and scientists of higher knowledge. Now, a new vision of reality is emerging from the new physics. Old philosophy, just like old physics was mechanistic and divisive. It divided the world into two - the world of matter and the world of the mind. It was the age of the physicist, Isaac Newton and the philosopher, Descartes.

But a hundred years ago, a brilliant Indian physicist, Jagadish Chandra Bose, demonstrated to the scientific world that there was no fundamental division between plants, animals and
Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy – He talked of the evolution from mind to supermind. In fact, he reversed the entire process of evolution and points out that the real evolutionary force is not material but supramental in character, and that matter itself is nothing but a mode of the supermind. He thus bridged the three great oceans of existence — the inconscient, conscient, and superconscient. This is extremely refreshing, and one feels a kind of rejuvenation of thought and life.

**Need for an alternative paradigm**

Globalisation has attempted to integrate nations through the concept of the world as one market, but that is a mechanistic concept and has turned out to be divisive, exclusivist and fragmentary. It has also not helped in resolving any of the conflicts, it has instead created many, thus deepening the imbalance.

Therefore, there is a need for enlightened global minds to think about an alternative paradigm.

**Yoga: a path to the new paradigm**

*We should do this [yoga] before every negotiation so that we can work with a calm mind.*

-Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Yoga is a holistic tenet and if international negotiations are based on such tenets, the UN would be able to use its time for good purposes. This can pave the way to possibly a new culture of conducting world affairs and international relations might evolve in the future.

Present international imbalance can be attributed to the inability of existing socio-economic institutions and political structures to deal with the current impasse. Problem with it is the belief that every problem can be solved by technology.

Enlightened global minds should seriously ponder on such a probability. Apart from emphasizing the normal benefits of yoga, International Yoga Day should be utilized to think about how a peaceful transition can be achieved for peace, harmony, and happiness.

**Topic: National and International Initiative to Promote yoga**

**Introduction**
India is the land where yoga originated. Yoga is as old as the Indus Valley Civilisation. As per Yogic scriptures, the practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body, Man & Nature. The aim of Yoga is Self-Realization, to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation'. This is one of the oldest sciences of the world, which originated in India. Yoga is very useful for preserving and maintaining one's physical and mental health and also for 'spiritual evolution'. The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization.

The term Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘YUJ’, that means ‘to join’ or ‘to yoke’ or ‘to unite’. It is an Art and Science of healthy living. It can be considered to be a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science, which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. It has an immense effect on the mind and body and known for disease prevention and promotion of health.

**Yoga got 'global'**

Humankind has witnessed great changes during the evolution ever-since the adoption of agriculture. But the most revolutionary change was brought by the industrial revolution – it just not made a mark in history but it continues to impact our present. It is this industrialization, along with urbanization that has changed the socio-economic equation forever. It has set a clock in motion that moves with great speed and this great speed has brought about “stress” in everyone’s life. Increasing population and decreasing resource base have led to more competition in the society, thus the need for a peaceful life was never felt so strongly before.

Currently, yoga has become popular across the globe, not just because of its efficacy in the management of some diseases, but also of its strength in providing relief to its practitioner, from mental and emotional distress and providing a feeling of well-being. Thus, yoga has become the mantra for a healthy life for many.

**Salient features of yoga**

**Yoga as a universal practical discipline**

Yoga is universal in character for practice and application irrespective of culture, nationality, race, caste, creed, sex, age, and physical condition. Only regular practice (sadhana) creates a pattern in body and mind to uplift them. It requires a keen desire on the part of the practitioner to experience the higher states of consciousness through training.
Yoga as an evolutionary process

Yoga is an evolutionary process in the development of human consciousness. Evolution of total consciousness does not necessarily begin in any particular man rather it begins only if one chooses it to begin. In Yoga, it is not a question of the psychology of man rather it is a question of higher consciousness. It is not also the question of mental health, rather, it is a question of spiritual growth.

Yoga as a soul therapy

All paths of Yoga (Japa, Karma, Bhakti, etc.) have healing potential to shelter out the effects of pains. However, one especially needs proper guidance from an accomplished exponent, who has already trodden the same track to reach the ultimate goal. The particular path is to be chosen very cautiously in view of his aptitude either with the help of a competent counselor or consulting an accomplished Yogi.

Benefits of yoga

Types of yoga
UPSC "PT" DNA (Daily News Analysis)

TOP 10 TYPES OF YOGA

#1 HATHA YOGA
Hatha Yoga is the most widely practiced forms of yoga and is often referred to as basic yoga. It's a simple, slow-paced style of yoga and because of this, it's ideal for beginners.

The focus of Hatha Yoga is on physical and mental strength and it is designed to stimulate the mind-body connection. It does this through a combination of breathing exercises and postures.

#2 BIKRAM YOGA
Bikram Yoga is often referred to as Hot Yoga and was created by the yoga guru Bikram Choudhary. It is practiced in a hot room with an average temperature of 35-38 degrees Celsius (95-100 degrees Fahrenheit) and includes 26 poses which are focused on proper alignment. The heat lubricates your joints and enhances the flexibility of your muscles.

#3 ASHTANGA YOGA
Ashtanga Yoga is a dynamic, free-flowing yoga style that builds your stamina and energy levels. It is one of the most physically demanding styles of yoga and a great choice if you want to lose weight or boost your overall fitness levels.

#4 VINYASA YOGA
Vinyasa Yoga is a style of yoga that focuses on flow. It emphasises the sun salutation and aims to synchronise your body movements with your breathing. Vinyasa Yoga movements are very smooth and each pose connects to the next with either an inhale or an exhale.

#5 POWER YOGA
Power Yoga is very similar to Ashtanga Yoga but does not have a strict sequence of poses and is performed in a faster, more intense style. It's a top choice if you want to build strength and flexibility but if you're interested in the spiritual side of yoga, other styles may suit you better.

#6 KUNDALINI YOGA
Kundalini Yoga focuses on the ‘Root Chakra’. Fertility Yoga was developed by the registered around the lower spine and involves lots of core nurse and yoga instructor Sherry Long. It avoids work. It is one of the more any poses that could strain the body and uses spiritual styles of yoga it gently poses that are designed to reduce and involves plenty of stress and stimulate blood flow to the pelvic breathing exercises, a area. It’s a great choice if you want to find chants and meditations, inner peace or boost your fertility.

#7 FERTILITY YOGA
Anusara Yoga was created by John Friend in 1997 and is designed to open up the heart. It's probably the most spiritual of all styles of yoga and is an excellent choice if you want to boost your amount of time to ensure that you master it mental fitness and become with both your body and your mind, calmer and more peaceful.

#8 IYENGAR YOGA
Iyengar Yoga is a perfect choice if you enjoy using props such as blankets, blocks, cushions, harnesses and straps. It is a very methodical style and focuses heavily on proper alignment. Each pose is held for a set amount of time to ensure that you master it mental fitness and become with both your body and your mind, calmer and more peaceful.

#9 ANUSARA YOGA
Anusara Yoga was created by John Friend in 1997 and is designed to open up the heart. It’s probably the most spiritual of all styles of yoga and is an excellent choice if you want to boost your amount of time to ensure that you master it mental fitness and become with both your body and your mind, calmer and more peaceful.

#10 RESTORATIVE YOGA
Restorative Yoga is often referred to as yoga for lazy people and focuses heavily on relaxation. It incorporates simple poses along with props such as blankets, cushions and eye pillows to promote complete relaxation. This style of yoga allows you to rest your body and cleanse your mind and is a perfect choice if you want to feel fully refreshed and rejuvenated.
Major initiatives are taken by India

National Efforts:

- Yoga is a major focus of the Ministry of AYUSH which was formed in 2014.
- Yoga was also recognized as a sports discipline by the ministry of youth affairs and sports – thus attributing its great importance in the school curriculum. It was also placed under the “priority” category under Sports.
- A committee on Yoga Education in Universities was formed by the government of India under the chairmanship of Prof. HR Nagendra. It recommended seven programs on yoga to be introduced in universities.
- Yoga Education has also been made compulsory by National Council for Teacher Education.
- Yoga is also a component of our current National Health Policy (NHP, 2017)
- In a major bid to promote tourism, yoga programmes in India have been included in the permissible list of items for a tourist visa and e-tourist visa.
- Also, to promote yoga in rural and tribal areas of the country, various yoga training programs are undertaken.
- On the second international day of Yoga, the Prime Minister announced two yoga awards - one national and one international to recognise and felicitate individuals or organisations who have made a significant impact on the society for a sustained period of time by way of promotion and development of yoga.

International Initiatives:

- 21st June was declared as the International Day of Yoga by the United Nations under resolution 69/131 on 11 December 2014 with an aim to create awareness worldwide of the many benefits practicing yoga.
- International yoga fest has been organized every year since 2016.
- Yoga has also been included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage that is prepared by UNESCO. It became the 13th such heritage from India.
- Recently, India signed a Memorandum of Collaboration with Kyrgyzstan where an attempt will be made to understand the physical and mental picture of the soldier system at high altitude and mitigate them using yoga practices along with other things.

Conclusion

In a world that is divided into various lines, there is a strong need for institutions that can bring back the faith in humanity and aim to the world together. Yoga is just the exact institution – being an age-old technique, it has survived the tests of time and now seeing a boost in the number of its followers. There is a need for people to demarcate the difference between spirituality and religion. Yoga has the capability to embrace all. It must be used
for a healthy life and a healthy living environment. It helps us to have an “inside-out” approach in which we are better able to understand ourselves and become an asset for the society.

Yoga is not just important for personal growth but we need to realize its relevance for society and the economy. Thus, soft diplomacy is the need of the hour, as highlighted by the author of the abovementioned article.

“When you find peace within yourself, you become the kind of person who can live at peace with others.”

Source: The Hindu

Make in India in Defence

The Hindu

Navy to build 6 submarines

The CRUX:

- Indian Navy - issued an ‘Expression of Interest’ to shortlist potential strategic partners for the construction of six conventional submarines P-75 (I) submarines costing nearly ?45,000 crores.
- Second such project to be undertaken under the latest Strategic Partnership (SP) Model (first was the procurement of 111 naval utility helicopters (NUH)).
- Provide a major boost to the indigenous design and construction capability of submarines in India, in addition to bringing in the latest submarine design and technologies as part of the project.
- Approval was given by Defence Acquisition Council.
- SPs in collaboration with OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) - mandated to set up dedicated manufacturing lines for these submarines in India with an aim to make India the global hub for submarine design and production.
- In addition, the Navy will have the option to manufacture six more submarines under the project.
- Benefits:
  - Boost in the core submarine and the shipbuilding industry
  - Enhancement of the manufacturing, industrial sectors, especially the medium, small and micro enterprises, by the development of an industrial eco-system for the manufacture of associated spares, systems, and equipment related to submarines.
  - Encourage self-reliance and aligning the defence sector with the ‘Make in India’ initiative of the government
  - Indian companies - to be shortlisted based on their capability for integration of systems, expertise in shipbuilding domain and the financial strength.
  - OEMs - to be shortlisted primarily based on their submarine design meeting the Indian Navy’s Qualitative Requirements and qualifying the Transfer of Technology and Indigenous Content [IC] criteria.
About Make in India Initiative

Background - 2013 saw an unprecedented decrease in India's growth, falling to its lowest level in a decade. What India experienced back then was a major economic setback but with a strong resolve to bring back the economic growth on track and re-structure the industrial sector, attention was focussed on to the manufacturing sector in India, amongst other sectors.

Make in India is a highly ambitious initiative launched in September, 2014.

Aim: To transform India into a global design and manufacturing hub.

Features:

It is a comprehensive strategy to boost manufacturing in India - by specifically targetting all the stakeholders including domestic manufactures, foreign investors and most importantly, government at both the Centre and State level.

The initiative was in line with India's tenet of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance". It changes the role of government as an issuing authority to a business partner.

Its target is to draw in ventures from over the globe and reinforce India’s assembling segment.

Some of the major achievements under the Make in India initiative (till 2018) are:

- Six industrial corridors are being developed across various regions of the country. Industrial cities will also come up along these corridors.
- India has become a net exporter of electricity - 7203 MU exported to Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar during 2017-18.
- One of the world's largest 648-MW solar power plant was commissioned in Tamil Nadu.
- Asia’s largest MedTech Zone (AMTZ) was set up in Andhra Pradesh.
- 88 cold chain projects have been completed - thus, adding an additional capacity of 3.9 lakh tonnes of food processing.
- Three textile mega clusters in Bareilly, Lucknow, and Kutch are being set up.
- The capacity of some of the major ports of India has been increased.

Make in India in Defence

Due to its strategic importance, the defence manufacturing sector was earlier reserved only for the government, but with the growing demand and a large amount of capital that is required for it, it has been included as an important component of the Make in India.

The various measures taken up by the Government of India to promote indigenous design, development and manufacture of defence & aerospace equipment in the country are:

- Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) was in 2016
  - Introduction of special provisions to stimulate growth of the domestic defence industry.
  - Introduction of a new category of procurement ‘Buy (Indian-IDDM (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured))’ - to promote indigenous design and development of defence equipment. It is assigned the top most priority for procurement of capital equipment.
  - Also, more preference is now accorded to ‘Buy (Indian)’ and ‘Buy and Make (Indian)’ categories of capital acquisition over ‘Buy (Global)’ & ‘Buy & Make (Global)’ categories.
- ‘Strategic Partnership (SP)’ Model - It envisages the establishment of long-term strategic partnerships between the global Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) with Indian entities through a transparent and competitive process. It aims to seek technology transfers to set up domestic manufacturing infrastructure and supply chains.
- "Make" procedure for defence manufacturing has been simplified with provisions in which 90% of the development cost...
of the project will be borne by the Government of India (not exceeding 10 cr. rupees)
• Announcement of ‘Make-II’ - It has a different procedure containing many industry-friendly provisions such as relaxation of eligibility criterion, minimal documentation, and consideration of proposals suggested suo-moto by industry/ individual.
• 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is allowed in the defence sector - automatic route up to 49% automatic route and government route above 49%.
• Changes in the industrial licensing regime:
  ◦ Change have been made for Indian manufacturers under IDR (Industries (Development and Regulation)) Act, 1951 has been liberalised and most of the components/ parts/ sub-systems have been taken out from the list of defence products requiring Industrial Licence. It has reduced entry barriers for new entrants in this sector, particularly SMEs.
  ◦ The initial validity of Industrial Licence under the IDR Act has been increased from 3 years to 15 years with a provision to further extend it by 3 years on a case to case basis.
• Changes in the Offset Clause:
  ◦ Offset guidelines have been made flexible by allowing change of Indian Offset Partners (IOPs) and offset components, even in signed contracts.
  ◦ Foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) are now not required to indicate the details of IOPs and products at the time of signing of contracts.
  ◦ ‘Services’ as an avenue of discharge of offset have been reinstated.
• Process for export clearance has been streamlined and made transparent & online.
• Defence Investor Cell is established within the Ministry to act as a point of contact for the interested investors.
• To promote innovation in defence sector, iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) scheme has been launched.

In the Budget Speech of 2018-19, Government has announced setting up of two Defence Industrial Corridors for promoting defence manufacturing under ‘Make in India’ initiative of the Government. Subsequent to the announcement, Government has decided to set up two Defence Industrial Corridors, out of which one corridor is planned to be set up in State of Uttar Pradesh, spanning across Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi, Chitrakoot, Kanpur and Lucknow.

Source: The Hindu

Daily News Updates for 22nd June 2019

From the columns of The Hindu

1. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019, also known as the triple talaq Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 21st June 2019
2. Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP), claimed to be the world’s largest multistage and multipurpose lift irrigation scheme was inaugurated in Telangana.
3. SC halts road works through Rajaji and Corbett tiger reserves
4. U.S. is keen to accelerate ties in wake of huge Modi mandate
5. Iran insists U.S. drone violated air space, vows to defend borders
6. North Korea lauds friendship with China as Xi wraps up trip
7. No renegotiation of Brexit, says EU
FATF warns Pak., but keeps it off the blacklist

Global chocolate maker Mondelez, which owns the Cadbury brand, is experimenting with products with lower sugar content to balance indulgence with wellness.

News for UPSC Mains 2019:

Over 12,000 suicide deaths by farmers in three years: Deshmukh


Smart diplomacy in five moves

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/smart-diplomacy-in-five-moves/article28102993.ece

A stable planet

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/a-stable-planet/article28102991.ece

(Related Article: https://www.aspireias.com/currentaffairs/details/241)

Why South Asia must cooperate

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/why-south-asia-must-cooperate/article28103001.ece

(Related Article: https://www.aspireias.com/currentaffairs/details/226)

FATF warns Pak., but keeps it off the blacklist


‘Coming global slowdown may impact IT firms’
India placed on "Tier 2" in human trafficking report

From the columns of *The Indian Express*

India's entry into nuke club not on agenda of NSG meet: China

August Easing?

No horn, please

India seeks 'clear roadmap' from China to ramp up export of pharma products

Note:

News Analysis for the following topics will be updated by evening today:

1. **Loan to Farmers: Issues associated with farmer's suicide**
   (Context: Over 12,000 suicide deaths by farmers in three years: Deshmukh)

2. **Issue of fiscal slippage**
   (Context: August Easing?)
3. India's bid to enter into NSG: A Critical Analysis

(Context: India's entry into nuke club not on agenda of NSG meet: China)

4. Issue of Human Trafficking in India

(Context: India placed on "Tier 2" in human trafficking report)

5. India-China Trade Relations

(Context: India seeks 'clear roadmap' from China to ramp up export of pharma products)

Stay tuned for more updates.

Jai Hind

Keep Studying

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express
The CRUX:

Case study: Farmer's suicide in Maharashtra

Despite spending over 19,000 crore on farm loan waiver, a total of 12,021 farmers have died in the State due to suicide between 2015 and 2018.

The first three months of 2019 saw 610 deaths of farmers.

Estimated: Over 50 lakh farmers would benefit from the loan waiver scheme and 24,000 crore will be spent for this. Actual: 43.32 lakh farmers have actually received benefits worth 19,000 crore.

Despite the loan waiver scheme and increasing expenditure on the agriculture sector, the farmer deaths in the state have not stopped.

Norms to decide whether the person committing suicide was a farmer were changed in 2006 to give compensation to the deceased. “The person committed suicide is considered a farmer, even if any person in the family has a name on farmland documents. Also the deceased person is considered eligible for compensation in case the person or any member of the family has availed loan from nationalised or cooperative banks, cooperative credit societies or licensed money lenders,” it added.

In January 2019, Jeetendra Ghatge, a social activist had filed an application under the Right to Information Act (RTI) seeking details of farmers who committed suicides from year 2014 to 2018.

Topic: Loan to farmers: Issues associated with farmer’s suicide

Farmers’ welfare in India

Farmers form a major portion of the rural population but due to changing lifestyle, decreased returns and vanishing rural-urban divide, there has been a reduction in the number of farmers. Farming is no longer seen as a sustainable livelihood option, that is hurting India’s economy badly.

Agriculture and Indian Economy

Agriculture, with its allied sectors, is unquestionably the largest livelihood provider in India. It also contributes a significant figure to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). But recently, a decreasing trend of the contribution of agriculture in GDP has decreased.

Sustainable agriculture, in terms of food security, rural employment, and environmentally sustainable technologies such as soil conservation, sustainable natural resource management and biodiversity protection, are essential for holistic rural development. Indian agriculture and allied activities have witnessed a green revolution, a white revolution, a yellow revolution and a blue revolution.

The situation now has turned grim. According to 2011 Census data, only 54.6 per cent of total workers in India were a part of the agriculture sector with a decline of 3.6 per cent as compared to 2001. There has also been an increase in the number of agricultural labourers, which can be attributed to the falling size of land holdings over time.

As per the census of 2011, 263 million people are engaged in the agriculture sector and over half of them are now agricultural labourers, a trend observed for the first time in the past 40 years.

The Agrarian Crisis

A study report “State of Indian Farmers” by the Centre for Study of Developing Studies in 2018 found that given an option majority of farmers in the country would prefer to take up some other work. Thus, the trend of migration that was reflected in...
Census 2011 is still a prevailing trend.

Reasons for such a migration are - poor income, bleak future and stress. Some of the farmers would prefer to be employed in cities because of better education, health and employment avenues there. A major reason cited by the farmers is repeated losses.

Farm loans

It was in the background of the green revolution that the need of huge capital investment in the agriculture arose. Before the Britishers, subsistence agriculture was practiced and it was the Britishers who started out scientific assessments of land and turned agriculture into a profitable business but more emphasis was given to commercial crops.

After independence the scenario was set to change realising India's incapacity to feed its population. Together the steps led to a revolutionary increase in the production of food grains from agriculture but the various methods used in it required high investment to purchase HYV seeds and fertilisers. It also increased the need of farm machinery and above all, irrigation facilities.

Current Scenario

Agriculture, though in a better state now has its own

Conclusion

In the prevailing crisis faced by the agriculture sector, there is a need to boost agricultural infrastructure. Government's initiatives towards processing of

Reference: Downtoearth.org,

Source: The Hindu

Issue of Fiscal Slippage

GS Paper III | 23 June, 2019

The CRUX:

- In its last meeting, the monetary policy committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India agreed to decrease repo rate by 25 bps and shift policy stance from neutral to accommodative.
- There is a risk of food inflation and a likely fiscal slippage.
- Tax collection data - shows that CGST would have to grow by 34 % in FY20 and income tax collections to rise by 35% to meet FY20 interim budget targets.
- High expenditure targets >> Minor fiscal slippage >> Higher government borrowings >> Crowding-out effect
Topic: Issue of Fiscal Slippage

Fiscal slippage is a condition in which the expenditure increases from the expected expenditure. It can occur at any time but is more prevalent during periods of higher volatility.

Fiscal slippage is thus a condition in which the fiscal deficit increases its target for the year.

Reasons:

Fiscal slippage can result if the revenue projections in the budget do not materialise or if the expenditure increases above the projected value.

Significance:

- It can cause significant threat to inflation management and macro economic stability.
- Fiscal indiscipline can derail India's ambitious fast-paced growth.
- It can be debilitating debt and balance of payments difficulties.
- If State borrowings are also taken into consideration, it leads to higher government borrowing and damage growth by curbing private sector investment.

Source: The Indian Express

Daily News Update for 23rd June 2019

From the columns of The Hindu

1. India told Pakistan that it expects Pakistan to show progress on curbing terror financing by September 2019
2. Indian carriers to skip Iran's airspace amid increasing tension between Iran and the
3. In a bid to improve attendance in schools, the Odisha government has decided to give transportation cost to students who stay more than a kilometer away from their schools.

4. J&K Governor said that Hurriyat (separatist) leaders have offered to talk

5. Chief Justice of India urges PM to increase the strength of judges and raise the retirement age of High Court judges to 65

6. Amid increasing tensions in West Asia, Indian Navy teams to escort crude carriers

7. Tea Association seeks curbs on the extension of teagrowing areas

8. Biovet to invest 200 cr. rupees in animal vaccines

9. Logistics sector seeks tax sops for digitisation and skill building

10. Sports: Shami’s hat-trick seals it for India in a sensational finish

11. Indian hockey team qualified for Tokyo Olympics finals

News for UPSC Mains 2019:

**Odisha uses satellite imagery to create unique flood hazard atlas**


**Increase number of judges, CJI urges PM**

Navy teams to escort crude carriers

**Why is the litchi toxin causing death?**

Libra unveiled

https://www.thehindu.com/business/libra-unveiled/article28111631.ece

How will Jet's insolvency process play out?

Why did wooly rhino, mammoth go extinct?

Bhubaneswar becomes 0.5 degree C hotter due to urbanisation

Remotely sensed indices unreliable in informing elephant forage

ASEAN vows to tackle ocean waste

From the columns of *The Indian Express*

One Nation, One Poll

Indian Carriers to Avoid Flying in Affected Areas of Iran Airspace

Note:

Let's take a break and REVISE. On Sunday, we will not be uploading any news analysis but from next Sunday onwards (30th June 2019), we will upload 5 Enrichment Materials from the various Government Sites to boost your preparation.

Also, due to some technical issues, some articles were not uploaded earlier. It would be available on our website by Monday (24th June 2019) evening.

Stay tuned for more updates.
Jai Hind

Keep Studying

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express
Daily News Updates for 24th June 2019

From the columns of *The Hindu*:

1. Southwest monsoon’s current rainfall deficit is 38%, says IMD
2. Cancer incidences are increasing in Rajasthan, majorly head and neck cancer among men and breast cancer among women.
3. In a landmark verdict, Assam court gave 7-year jail term for killing mongoose, birds, dear and hare inside Manas National Park under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
4. With onset of rain, AES cases die down in Bihar.
5. CJI writes to PM for removal of Allahabad High Court judge
6. Plea in SC seeks protection for non-Nagas in Dimapur
7. Sirisena calls for repealing law clipping presidential powers

News for *UPSC Mains 2019*:

*Scientists decode genome of ‘miracle plant’*

*ILS develops antibodies against Chikungunya infection*
https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/ils-develops-antibodies-against-chikungunya-infection/article28119103.ece
Reimagining the NITI Aayog
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/reimagining-the-niti-aayog/article28118992.ece

Walking a diplomatic tightrope
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/walking-a-diplomatic-tightrope/article28118994.ece

Lacklustre meet
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/lacklustre-meet/article28118982.ece

A dialogue of civilisations
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-dialogue-of-civilisations/article28118168.ece

Creating sanctuaries of hope for migrant workers
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/creating-sanctuaries-of-hope-for-migrant-workers/article28118160.ece

GST’s performance versus promise
https://www.thehindu.com/business/gsts-performance-versus-promise/article2811816.ece

Plants may be spreading superbugs to humans
https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/plants-may-be-spreading-superbugs-to-humans/article28118407.ece
'Heat, Humidity, Malnutrition make Muzaffarpur Susceptible'

Plan to bar begging at 10 religious sites

Call of New India

Many nations offer India GSP benefits, but US move will affect competitiveness

MUDRA Bad Loans Rise in FY19, Even as NPAs Decline Across Banking System

Record Temperatures: Trend Projected to Continue, What it will take to Check it

Mars Rover Detects Puff of Gas that Hints at Possibility of Life
Note:

News Analysis for the following topics will be updated by evening today:

1. Genome and its relevance in bio-technology
   (Context: Scientists decode genome of ‘miracle plant’)

2. NITI Aayog in India
   (Context: Reimagining the NITI Aayog)

3. Problem of Migrant Workers
   (Context: Creating sanctuaries of hope for migrant workers)

4. Indian and International Missions on Mars
   (Context: Mars Rover Detects Puff of Gas that Hints at Possibility of Life)

5. PT 2020 Special
   Stay tuned for more updates.
   Jai Hind
   Keep Studying

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express
The CRUX:

- Scientists at Kerala University – decoded the genome for *Trichopus zeylanicus* (Arogyapacha)

- Also known as a ‘miracle plant’

- Highly potent medical plant endemic to the Agasthya hills

- Traditionally used by Kani tribal community to combat fatigue

- Also Known for a range of pharmacological properties such as anti-oxidant, aphrodisiac, anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, anti-tumour, anti-ulcer, anti-hyperlipidemic, hepato-protective and anti-diabetic. (In short, beneficial for immune system, liver and against diabetes)

{Vocabulary Check – pharmacology – it is the branch of biology concerned with the study of drug or medication action}

- The project was undertaken to study its secondary metabolism, genetic breeding, and comparative studies.

- The manuscript has been accepted for publication in G3: Genes, Genomes and Genetics.

**Topic: What is genome?**

A genome is defined as an organism’s complete set of DNA, including all of its genes. Each genome contains all the information needed to build and maintain that organism. In humans, a copy of the entire genome is contained in all cells (inside the nucleus). Genome is thus a repository of biological information.
There are 2 kinds of genome sequencing – Whole genome sequencing (WGS) and genotype screening. Whole genome sequencing looks at the entire DNA at once while in genotype screening, only a panel of desired genes present at the chosen fragments of the genome are sequenced. Genome sequencing is often compared to the “decoding” of the message coded by the DNA of an organism.

**Benefits of genome sequencing**

Sequencing the genome is an important step towards understanding it. A genome sequence represents a valuable shortcut that helps scientists find genes more easily and quickly. It contains clues about where genes are.

Some of the major benefits of genome sequencing are:

1. It helps scientist to understand how genes work together to direct the growth, development and maintenance of an entire organism.

2. As genes account for less than 25 per cent of the DNA in the genome, it helps scientists study the parts of the genome outside the genes which includes the regulatory regions that control how genes are turned on an off, as well as long stretches of "nonsense" or "junk" DNA:

3. It helps to obtain information of medical value for future care.

4. It can provide information on genetic variants that can lead to disease or can increase the risk of disease development.

5. It increases the capability of the medical sciences in treating the diseases.

6. It provides information regarding drug efficacy or adverse effects of drug use can be obtained.

7. It can also provide information about the heritage background, non-health related trait information, or information with indirect medical impact, such as a predisposition to obesity can also be obtained

8. Genomic knowledge enables an individual to take preventive steps to minimize disease risks, and thus provides personal empowerment.

9. Last of all, it paves a way for easier transition to the revolutionary concept in medicines, known as the personalised medicine.
History of Genome Sequencing

The first organism to get its genome sequenced was Bacteriophage MS2 in 1976. After that, many genome sequencing projects were taken by geneticists worldwide. The first yeast to be sequenced was Saccharomyces cerevisiae (Baker’s yeast) which is used in wine making, baking and brewing and Arabidopsis plant was the first plant to get its genome sequenced in 2000. In 2000s only, many organisms like mice, mosquito, chimpanzee, etc. were sequenced.

Human Genome Sequencing

The first attempt at genome sequencing of humans was undertaken by the Human Genome Project. It was formally launched in 1990 and was complete in 2003. As a result, the human genome was decoded by 2003 but it was not able to sequence all the DNA found in human cells. It sequenced only euchromatic regions of the genome, which make up 92% of the human genome. The other regions, called heterochromatic, are found in centromeres and telomere,, and were not sequenced under the project.

Genome Sequencing in India

With a sharp increase in efforts in the R&D field, scientists in India are making good progress in the field of biotechnology and setting a foot internationally.

Major efforts in the field of genome sequencing taken up in India are:

1. In 2009, CSIR for the first time sequenced the genome of an Indian, making India one of the 6 countries to achieve that.

2. India is planning to a major mission to sequence the genes of a “large” group of Indians — akin to projects in the United Kingdom, China, Japan and Australia — and use this to improve health as well as buck a global trend of designing ‘personalised medicine’.

3. A team of scientists from IISER Bhopal became the first one to sequence the complete genome of peacock.

4. Recently, a one-of-its kind indigenous mapping effort was taken up by CSIR in which genome sequencing for 1,000 rural youth was planned. It aimed at educating a generation of students on the “usefulness” of genomics. It is a part of a larger
government-led programme to study country’s population diversity.

5. Genome sequencing of Asiatic Lion was undertaken by CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad.

International News: Recently, genome sequencing was taken up for koala bears. The research was published in Nature Genetics.

Associated Challenges

1. High cost of establishing and maintaining a sequencing facility
2. Lack of skilled personnel
3. Limited access to tools for genomic data manipulation and analysis
4. Under-utilisation of biotechnology technologies in research laboratories and educational institutions.
5. Limited availability of resources of genome sequencing in developing countries.
6. Weak or absence of a regulatory framework
7. Internet access limitations and limited access to up-to-date scientific literature
8. Low quality of outsourcing services
9. Issue of big data management – storage and analysis of the data of human genome sequencing is an issue
Conclusion

India is on a path of growth, not only economic but also scientific. It is setting its feat globally in many spheres of technology, including bio-technology. Genomic sequencing is one such tool seems to promise a better healthcare regime for the future. It ushers a new era of personalised medicines. By allowing the entire genome of a person to be sequenced, every gene can be turned into digital data for analysis.

Thus, there is a need to increase the amount of fund allocated for genomic research. There is also a need to establish centre of excellences at regional levels for genomic research. India must also strengthen international collaborations in the field of genomic research and support initiatives like 100K genome Asia project. India should encourage more innovations in the field of biotechnology.

To gain fully from the genomics revolution, India needs to collect information about the genetics of its population and train manpower capable of interpreting it. The information that is needed has to come from a large and sustained collection of data — fully sequenced individual genomes along with medical histories for the individuals who volunteer for this effort. India has already begun its own genomics revolution as a result of its scientific leadership, in medicine and in industry.

Source: The Hindu

NITI Aayog in India
GS Paper II | 25 June, 2019

The CRUX:

- Context: Need to revisit India’s fiscal federalism and propose redesign it around its four pillars.
- Federations face vertical and horizontal imbalances.
- Vertical imbalance – Tax revenue collected by the Central government is more than the state governments but the share in public expenditure of the States is more (60%).
- Horizontal imbalance – difference in the levels of attainment by the States due to
differential growth rates and their developmental status in terms of the state of social or infrastructure capital. It further involves 2 types of imbalances –

- Type I related to the provision of basic public goods and services.
- Type II - due to growth accelerating infrastructure or the transformational capital deficits. The latter are known to be historically conditioned or path dependent.

Removing these two imbalances clearly comprises two distinct policy goals and calls for following the

- To remove these two imbalances, there is a need to follow the Tinbergen assignment principles - which are two different policy instruments.
- Proposal – to redesign fiscal federal structure into 4 pillars – 1\(^{st}\) – Finance Commissions
- 2\(^{nd}\) – NITI Aayog 2.0
- Planning Commission used to give grants to the States as conditional transfers using the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula.
- NITI Aayog - primarily a think tank with no resources to dispense – thus, cannot bring about “transformational” intervention.
- Thus, finance commission should focus on Type I imbalances while type II imbalances should be focussed by the NITI Aayog.
- Though, Finance Ministry can be the other alternative to deliver the goods but it is ill-suited for the same as its primary duty is to concern itself with the country’s macro-economic stability and the proper functioning of the financial system rather than be an instrument of growth at the sub-national level.

Suggestions:

- NITI Aayog 2.0 should receive significant resources (say 1% to 2% of the GDP) to promote accelerated growth in States that are lagging, and overcome their historically conditioned infrastructure deficit, thus reducing the developmental imbalance.
- It should be engaged with the allocation of “transformational” capital in a formulaic manner, complete with incentive-compatible conditionalities.
- It should also be mandated to create an independent evaluation office which will monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the utilisation of such grants.
- It must be also accorded a place at the high table of decision-making as it will need to objectively buy-in the cooperation of the richer States as their resources are transferred to the poorer ones.
- Also, there is a need to translate the changes below the States to the third tier of government to decrease intra-State regional imbalances.
- Thus, the third pillar should be decentralisation – The missing local public finance must be birthed by creating an urban local body/panchayati raj
Further, the State Finance Commissions should be accorded the same status as the Finance Commission and the 3Fs of democratic decentralisation (funds, functions and functionaries) vigorously implemented. This will strengthen and deepen our foundational democratic framework.

- And the 4th pillar should be the “flawless” or model GST – The present GST regime needs further simplification and extended coverage.
  - There is a need to quickly achieve the goal of a single rate GST with suitable surcharges on “sin goods,” zero rating of exports and reforming the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) and the e-way bill.
  - The GST Council should adopt transparency in its working, and create its own secretariat with independent experts also as its staff to enable it to undertake further reforms in an informed and transparent manner.

**Topic: NITI Aayog in India**

**Planning in India**

Planning Before Independence

Even before India got independence, various attempts were made to formalise economic planning in India. Some of them are:

![Fig: Economic Planning Before Indian Independence](image)

When India got independence, one of the major challenges in front of it is to consolidate itself – economically, socially as well as politically. For this consolidation and growth, the concept of planning was utilised. For the purpose of this planning, a Planning Commission was formed in the centre.

**Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission was set up by a Resolution of the Government of India in March 1950.
It was in pursuance of declared objectives of the Government to promote a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people by efficient exploitation of the resources of the country, increasing production and offering opportunities to all for employment in the service of the community.

Its major functions were the assessment of all resources of the country, augmenting deficient resources, formulating plans for the most effective and balanced utilisation of resources and determining priorities. Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Chairman of the Planning Commission and it came up with the five-year plans.

A brief summary of the Five-year Plans

The first Five-year Plan was launched in 1951 and two subsequent five-year plans were formulated till 1965, when there was a break because of the Indo-Pakistan Conflict. Two successive years of drought, devaluation of the currency, a general rise in prices and erosion of resources disrupted the planning process and after three Annual Plans between 1966 and 1969, the fourth Five-year plan was started in 1969.

The Eighth Plan could not take off in 1990 due to the fast changing political situation at the Centre and the years 1990-91 and 1991-92 were treated as Annual Plans. The Eighth Plan was finally launched in 1992 after the initiation of structural adjustment policies.

For the first eight Plans the emphasis was on a growing public sector with massive investments in basic and heavy industries, but since the launch of the Ninth Plan in 1997, the emphasis on the public sector has become less pronounced and the current thinking on planning in the country.

NITI Aayog

NITI Aayog was instituted by a government resolution in 2014 by replacing the Planning Commision. It was done to better serve the changing needs and aspirations of the citizens of India. It was set up as a think tank for the government to provide directions for policy-making. It aimed at improving the coordination between the Centre and the states and promote best practices across the country. It also has to respond to the changing and more integrated world that India is part of. One of the major features that was imparted to the NITI Aayog was to zero in on the international influence on policy-making and adopt a Bharatiya approach for development.
Objectives of NITI Aayog

Composition of NITI Aayog

Reference: PIB
Source: The Hindu

Daily News Update 25th June 2019
GS Papers | 25 June, 2019

Daily News Updates for 25th June 2019

From the columns of The Hindu

1. RBI Deputy Governor Viral Acharya resigns
2. ASI carries out restoration of Mughal era parts of Red Fort
3. Early showers bring relief to parched Marathwada
4. A PIL has been filed to curb loud music on public transports
5. Aadhaar Bill introduced amid Opposition protests
6. Passports with advanced security features like chip will soon be introduced
7. Pak. blacklisting absolutely a possibility: FATF president
8. Modi, Xi and Putin to have trilateral summit at G20
9. RBI unveils online portal for filing grievances

News for UPSC Mains 2019:
It’s premature to count India out of RCEP: Centre

Basic needs, basic rights
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/basic-needs-basic-rights/article28128689.ece

A war of masks between Iran and the U.S.

Upgraded planes in tough skies
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/upgraded-planes-in-tough-skies/article28128586.ece

A sound foundation
https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-sound-foundation/article28127434.ece

Pak. blacklisting absolutely a possibility: FATF president
https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/pakistan-blacklisting-absolutely-a-possibility-fatf-president/article28129739.ece

Modi, Xi and Putin to have trilateral summit at G20
From the columns of *The Indian Express*

**Bill to amend Aadhaar Act moved in Lok Sabha**

**Paving a Green Path**

**Why World is Debating Data Flow**

**Farmers in 7 Paddy-growing Districts Agree to switch to Maize under Govt. Scheme to save Groundwater**

**Nurturing a Friendship**
Power Play

Differences in Panel: Majority against Touching past RBI Reserves

US Imposes New Sanctions on Iran

'India's Crude Steel Output Grows 5% in May'

Note:
News Analysis for the following topics will be updated by evening today:

1. ASEAN and RCEP
(Context: It’s premature to count India out of RCEP: Centre)

2. Terror Financing and FATF
(Context: Pak. blacklisting absolutely a possibility: FATF president)

3. Electricity Distribution in India
(Context: Power Play)

4. Need for Industrial Decarbonisation
5. PT 2020 Special

Stay tuned for more updates.

Jai Hind

Keep Studying

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express

PT 2020 Special - 25th June 2019

PT Pointer 2

RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership)

(Context: Centre said that it's premature to count India out of RCEP)

Standing Committee on Finance

(Context: The Standing Committee on Finance has shied away from estimating the quantum of black money in and outside India.)

About the Standing Committee on Finance:

It is a department related committee constituted by the Parliament of India

- It consists of 31 members – 21 Elected by Lok Sabha + 10 Elected by Rajya Sabha.
- Members are nominated from the respective house by the respective leader of the houses (i.e, the
PT Pointer 2

Archeological Survey of India (ASI)

(Context: ASI carries out restoration of Mughal-era parts of Red Fort)

About ASI:
It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham who also became its first Director-General.

It is an attached office in Ministry of Culture.

It is a premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.

Functions:
- Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- Regulation of all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the following acts:
  - Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958
  - Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959 and its (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010
  - Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972
- Conduction of archaeological research projects through its Circles (whole country is divided into 24 circles), Museums, Excavation Branches, Prehistory Branch, Epigraphy Branches, Science Branch, Horticulture Branch, Building Survey Project, Temple Survey Projects and Underwater Archaeology Wing.

PT Pointer 3

Special Category Status to States

(Context: Centre sticks to its guns on Special Category Status)

In 1969, the 5th Finance Commission for the first time sought to provide certain disadvantaged states with preferential treatment in the form of central assistance and tax breaks. Thus, the concept of a special category state was first introduced in 1969.

Initially SCS granted only to 3 states - Assam, Nagaland and Jammu & Kashmir.

Later, 8 more states have been added: Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand

Rationale: certain states, because of inherent features, have a low resource base and cannot mobilize resources for development.

Some of the features required for special status are:

1. hilly and difficult terrain
2. low population density or sizeable share of tribal population
3. strategic location along borders with neighbouring countries
4. economic and infrastructural backwardness
5. non-viable nature of state finances

PT Pointer 4
Nagzira Lake – located inside Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary in Maharashtra. Nagzira is also a Tiger Reserve.

PT Pointer 5

Nehru Trophy Boat Race

- It is held at Punnamada Lake near Alappuzha, Kerala
- It is held on the second Saturday of August every year and is the most competitive and popular of the boat races
- Its 67th Edition will be held in August, 2019, 1st time it was conducted in 1952
- The major attraction of the boat race is the competition of snake boats chundanvallams or snake boats
- They resemble European namesakes

PT Pointer 6

Mains Mania

Data on Access to Drinking Water and Sanitation Facilities

PT Pointer 6

Source: The Hindu
The CRUX:

1. Context: Recent statement by Malaysian PM Mr. Mahathir Mohamad that he would prefer to go ahead with a formulation of 13 countries that are willing to go ahead immediately, and allow outliers India, Australia, and New Zealand to join the pact at a future date.
2. Unresolved Issues:

- There has been a delay in the formulation of a final declaration on RCEP last year, the delay was because elections were due to be held in India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Australia between March and May this year.
- In its recent Bangkok declaration, ASEAN leaders stated their “strong commitment” to concluding RCEP negotiations, adding that ASEAN partners like India must “prioritise RCEP negotiations and work with ASEAN to conclude the RCEP negotiations within this year.”

TOPIC: ASEAN and RCEP

ASEAN or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

- It is a regional grouping that was found on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand (under the Bangkok Declaration).
- Founding Members of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.
- Other member countries:
  - Brunei Darussalam - joined in 1984,
  - Viet Nam – joined in 1995
  - Lao PDR and Myanmar – joined in 1997
  - Cambodia – joined in 1999

Guiding Principles:

The guiding principles of ASEAN are contained in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia of 1976. They are as follows:

1. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations
2. The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion
3. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another
4. Settlement of
or disputes by peaceful manner
5. Renunciation of the threat or use of force
6. Effective cooperation among themselves

Aims of ASEAN:

1. To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavors in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations
2. To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter
3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields
4. To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres
5. To collaborate more effectively for the greater utilisation of their agriculture and industries, the expansion of their trade, including the study of the problems of international commodity trade, the improvement of their transportation and communications facilities and the raising of the living standards of their peoples
6. To promote Southeast Asian studies
7. To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.

ASEAN at Present

ASEAN is now guided by its Vision 2020 document which was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders on its 30th Anniversary. During the meet, the ASEAN members agreed on a shared vision of ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability, and prosperity bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies.

About RCEP

RCEP or Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership is a proposed Free Trade Agreement which aims to create a free trade zone of 10 ASEAN nations with Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand. Negotiations under the RCEP started in May 2013. Since then, it has undergone 25 rounds of expert analysis and 13 Ministerial meetings.
PT Pointer

**RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership)**

It is a proposed mega-regional Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between 16 Asia-Pacific countries including the 10-member ASEAN countries, China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, thus containing three biggest economies of Asia.

If realised, RCEP will become the largest trade bloc in terms of population with nearly 3.5 billion people. Also, it will have 40% of world’s GDP and dominating 30% of global trade.

Launched at Phnom Penh Summit of ASEAN + 6 (China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand)

**Objective:** To achieve a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN’s FTA Partners.

It will cover trade in goods, trade in services, investment, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property, competition, dispute settlement and other issues.
Features:

- A zero-custom duty zone that contributes to 34% of global GDP and 40% of the world trade.
- The region is also home to half of the world’s population.

RCEP and India

India is one of the members having Free Trade Agreement with ASEAN and it is one of the 6 non-ASEAN countries that is a member of RCEP negotiations.

Benefits of RCEP Agreement for India:

- It is expected to provide market access for India’s goods and services exports
It will encourage greater investments and technology into India.
It will also facilitate India’s MSMEs to effectively integrate into the regional value and supply chains.
It will improve India's trade relations with other members of RCEP.
It will also provide an opportunity to deepen and strengthen economic and technological cooperation amongst APEC member countries.

Associated Issues:

RCEP is set to become the world’s largest trading bloc but there are certain challenges that are faced by the ASEAN + 6 countries during the negotiations for the same. Some of which are:

- RCEP members want India to eliminate or significantly reduce customs duties on the maximum number of goods it traded with them.
- It is anticipated that India has much to lose because when enforced, China would get more market access in India and our trade deficit with China can increase further.
- Increased competition for Indian industries
- On the other hand, India wants a strict country of origin norm to prevent Chinese goods from flooding the country through member countries that may have lower or no duty levels. But this idea is opposed by as many as 13 out of the total 16 countries that a part of this negotiation. As India has a trade deficit with 11 out of the 16 RCEP countries, India is being cautious of losing its market to international manufacturers, particularly from China. Even NITI Aayog and domestic aluminum and copper industries are wary of imports from China. India says that the highest value addition with the help of indigenous imgs must be done in the country from which a product is exported to prevent China from sourcing its manufactured goods from other countries of the RCEP into India. Globally, the average threshold for domestic content to get originating status for a product is 40-60%.

Conclusion

India is moving ahead on a path of economic growth and with ambitious targets for the future, India is planning to utilize its demographic dividend and the technological advancements to its fullest. In this age of increased globalization and increased international cooperation, it becomes important for India to become a part of a regional grouping like RCEP. Instead of staying away from RCEP fearing the increase in the trade deficit, India must focus its attention on strengthening the manufacturing base in India through programs like Make in India and not only become self-sufficient but become surplus in the production of goods and services, thus focusing on exports to earn greater forex. RCEP can provide a platform for India to better negotiate economically in the region. It can act as a strategic platform for India to improve relations with other relations. As India is politically moving its stance from SAARC to
the BIMSTEC, there is a need for India to look rationally at the economic developments in the region and act accordingly.

Reference: Economic Times

Source: The Hindu

Daily News Updates
GS Papers | 26 June, 2019

Daily News Updates for 26th June 2019

From the columns of The Hindu

1. Odisha to focus on agriculture development and farmers' welfare to bring poverty below 5% over the next five years.
2. Central Water Management Authority directs Karnataka to release 9.19 tmcft Cauvery water to T.N.
3. War of words between U.S. and Iran intensifies
4. Sri Lanka is gearing to hang drug offenders.
5. Cash in Circulation fell post note ban: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman
6. Foreign e-commerce firms warned against steep online discounts.
7. U. K. Sinha led RBI committee proposes 5000 crore rupees stressed asset fund for MSMEs

News for UPSC Mains 2019:

No State has sought NDRF aid, govt. tells RS

Joint effort to conserve wildlife at Bandipur


Kerala tops the list for best performing State in health


31.4% of Indian children will stunted by 2022: report


The future of parliamentary democracy

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-future-of-parliamentary-democracy/article28138347.ece

Lynching redux

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/lynching-redux/article28138336.ece

The state of Indian prisons


From the columns of *The Indian Express*

Why govt. wants to bank DNA
What is Parole?

Atomic clock, green fuel, ashes: what's aboard Falcon Heavy, what for

Revisiting the Emergency

Reserve Bank panel proposes 5k-cr rupees 'distresses asset fund' for MSMEs

'Gross NPAs of banks may shrink to 8% by March 2020'

Note:

News Analysis for the following topics will be updated by evening today:

1. Problem of Drought in India
2. Efforts to conserve biodiversity

(Context: Joint effort to conserve wildlife at Bandipur)

3. Nature of Indian Polity

(Context: The future of parliamentary democracy)

4. Issue of Mob Lynching in India

(Context: Lynching redux)

5. All about the DNA Regulation Bill

(Context: Why govt. wants to bank DNA)

6. PT 2020 Special

Stay tuned for more updates.

Jai Hind

Keep Studying

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express
About the Index

- It is a useful tool for systematic measurement of annual performance across States and UTs
- Published as a part of the report "Healthy States, Progressive India" - the 1st edition of this report was published in 2018
- Prepared by NITI Aayog, with technological assistance from the World Bank and in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- It ranks states and UTs on their year-on-year incremental change in health outcomes, as well as, their overall performance.
- Ranking is categorized as Larger States, Smaller States and Union Territories (UTs), to ensure comparison among similar entities.
- Health Index is a weighted composite Index based on 23 indicators grouped into the domains of Health Outcomes, Governance and Information, and Key Inputs/Processes.
- To generate the values of Index and ranks, data is submitted online and validated by an Independent Validation Agency (IVA)

PT Pointer 2:

- "Impressive" tortoise discovered in Arunachal
- Impressed Tortoise (Manouria impressa) - found in Yazali area
- 1st record of this tortoise in India
- It is a non-marine Chelonian

- There are only 2 species of tortoise under the Manouria genus.
- India - was known to be a home of only the Asian Forest Tortoise (Manouria emys) until the discovery of the Impressed Tortoise.

Mains Mania

Data on Language use in Northeast India
Economics Concept: Bond Vigilante

Source: The Hindu
The CRUX:

Despite several States reeling under the severity of drought and consequent crop failure, none of them has sought financial aid from the National Disaster Relief Fund in 2019-20.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change said according to the Indian Meteorological Department no drought prediction system was currently in place.

Also, according to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, no studies had been conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on the impact of drought on the environment so far.

Indian Network for Climate Change Assessment has conducted study which provides assessment of the impact of climate change in 2030 on four key sectors of the economy, namely agriculture, water, forests and human health, in four climate sensitive regions of India, viz, the Himalayan region, the Western Ghats, the Coastal region and North Eastern Region.

Topic: Problem of Drought in India

Context: According to the Indian Meteorological Department, there is no drought prediction system in place.

What is drought?

Geographically, India experiences monsoonal climate. It is the geographical variations in India and the erratic nature of rainfall that leads to rainfall deficiency and water shortage. This leads to a situation of drought.

According to the rainfall distribution on All India Scale:

A year is declared to have an All India drought when the rainfall deficiency is more than 10% and when 20-40% of the country is under drought conditions. On the other hand an All India Severe drought year is characterised by more than 10% and when the spatial coverage of drought is more than 40%.

According to the 2010 guidelines for Management of Drought issued by the National Disaster Management Authority, drought is a natural hazard which has a slow onset, evolves over months or even years, affects a large spatial extent, and cause little structural damage.

Features of drought:

Slow onset
Causes little structural damage
Onset and severity are difficult to determine
Most common in arid and semi-arid regions
Changing regional distribution, attributed to climate change.

Types of droughts:
Meteorological Drought

Meteorological drought is defined as a situation when there is significant decrease from normal precipitation over an area (i.e. more than 10%).

Agricultural Drought

It is a situation when soil moisture and rainfall are inadequate to support healthy crop growth.

Hydrological Drought

It results from prolonged meteorological drought resulting in depletion of surface and sub-surface water resources.

Socio-economic Drought

Drought can also be classified on the basis of time of onset as early season, mid season and late season.

Declaration of drought:

Drought is declared by the respective State Governments taking into account rainfall situation, crop growth, etc.

Source: The Hindu

Efforts to conserve biodiversity

GS Paper III | 27 June, 2019

The CRUX:

Context: An inter-State meeting of senior forest personnel in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala at Bandipur in Karnataka recently decided to make concerted effort to conserve wildlife in the region.

Various issues discussed:

Invasion of invasive plants in the forest areas

Steps for vulture conservation

Movement of radio-collared higher mammals such as tiger and elephants

Steps to mitigate man-animal conflict

Decisions taken:

- To intensify joint efforts to eradicate invasive plants such as Senna Spectabilis which caused a major threat to the wildlife habitat in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve
- To ensure inter-State coordination in conserving the endangered vulture population in the region - Kerala and Tamil Nadu regularly monitor their vulture population by Karnataka need to strengthen its ongoing conservation efforts.
- To execute SOP of NTCA for the conservation of the big cats
What is biodiversity?
Biodiversity is the diversity of living organisms present on Earth.

Need to conserve biodiversity
Steps taken by India to conserve biodiversity

International Efforts

Conclusion

Source: The Hindu
Source: The Hindu

Issue of Mob Lynching in India
GS Paper II | 27 June, 2019

The CRUX:

Context: Death of a 24-year-old man in Jharkhand days after he was brutally beaten by a mob.

Issue - Crowd forced him to shout "Jai Sri Ram" and "Jai Hanuman" - confirming that vigilante justice and mob lynching mentality are guided by a sectarian motive.

Moreover, the conduct of police guided by official apathy and tacit acceptance of mob justice.

Lynching is a consequence of vigilantism, communal bigotry and dissemination of hate messages and rumours on social media.

In 2018, Supreme Court noted that "rising intolerance and growing polarisation expressed through [a] spate of incidents of mob violence cannot be permitted to become the normal way of life or the normal state of law and order".

It directed States to take specific preventive, punitive and remedial measures. It mooted a special law to deal with lynching and the appointment of a nodal officer in each district to combat the threat.

Source: The Hindu

Daily News Update for 27th June 2019
GS Papers | 27 June, 2019

Daily News Updates for 27th June 2019

From the columns of The Hindu
1. 54 nations including Pakistan and China supported India's bid for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council
2. A survey was conducted on the newly mooted "SMART" policing survey - Satara, Maharashtra topped the list (SMART refers to Strict and sensitive, Modern and mobile, Alert and accountable, Reliable and responsive, Techno-savvy and trained)
3. Upto 75 tiny satellites built by students of Indian universities could fly to space as India turns 75 under the Seventy-five by 75 project of Indian Technology Congress Association
4. Centre set to roll out ‘Jal Shakti’ scheme for water-starved areas
5. Lok Sabha cleared the Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2019
6. RBI has started monitoring the liquidity position, asset-liability gap and repayment schedules of housing finance companies (HFCs) on a daily basis after the liquidity crisis hit these firms.
7. RBI reiterated that the payment system providers need to store entire payments data in a system only in India
8. U.S. - China Trade War may reduce global growth rate

News for UPSC Mains 2019:

54 Nations Back India for UNSC non-permanent seat

India and U.S. Resolve to Work Through Their Trade Differences

Police Station in Satara Tops SMART Police Survey

1.02 Lakh More People Excluded From Assam NRC
Negotiating the forks in the road of diplomacy

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/negotiating-the-forks-in-the-road-of-diplomacy/article28159380.ece

Scoring on health

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/scoring-on-health/article28159373.ece

(Reference: About composite health
Index: https://www.aspireias.com/currentaffairs/details/261)

RCEP next steps

https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/rcep-next-steps/article28159375.ece

(Reference: ASEAN and RCEP: https://www.aspireias.com/currentaffairs/details/259)

From the columns of The Indian Express

Rain Check: Large Area, Low Amount

India Seat Endorsed: How Are Countries Elected?
Small Steps Forward

Greener Pastures

How the States Scored in NITI Health Index: Top and Bottom 3 in Key Indicators

US wants India to Embrace Fair & reciprocal' trade, lower barriers

Note:

News Analysis for the following topics will be updated by today's evening:

1. Role of Primary Healthcare Centres in India
   (Context: Scoring on health: on Health Index 2019)

2. Important International Institutions: United Nations
   (Context: 54 nations backed India for UNSC non-permanent seat)

3. NRC in Assam
   (Context: 1.02 lakh more people excluded from Assam NRC)

4. Anti-defection Law in India
5. PT 2020 Special

Stay tuned for more updates.

Jai Hind

Keep Studying

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express
Daily News Updates for 26th June 2019

From the columns of *The Hindu*

1. Ministry of Electronics and IT plans to come up with a National Mission on Language Translation
2. Centre's move to cut 600 cr. rs in its annual borrowing limit for the current financial year has put Kerala on the verge of a grave financial crisis
3. New Supreme Court roster allows top five judges to hear PIL matters
4. Lok Sabha passed the Homeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill 2019
5. Due to the credit-related events that put investors SEBI tightens norms for mutual funds investments
6. According to the RBI, NBFC crisis separated good from the bad
7. Commerce and Railways Minister Piyush Goyal has asked the various transport Ministries to find ways to reduce logistic costs in the country to 9% of GDP by 2022 from the current 14%

News for UPSC Mains 2019:

**National Mission on Natural Language Translation Soon**

**New Supreme Court Roster Allows Top Five Judges to Hear PIL Matters**

At the High Table
A Policy to Regulate Coaching Centres

Prudent Prescription

BIMSTEC, A Viable Option

SEBI Tightens Norms For MF Investments

NBFC Crisis Separated The Good From the Bad, says RBI

Cut Logistics Cost to 9% of GDP, Goyal tells States

NPAs Down, Credit Growth Picking Up: RBI

Will the idea of 'one nation, one poll' work in India?
From the columns of *The Indian Express*

**Why Diptheria is a Concern: Long-time Vaccine, Yet Rising Recent Numbers**

**Europeans Brace For a Heatwave, and It's Likely the New Normal**

**NRC: Add, Delete & What Next**

**The Right Convergence**

**NPA Cycle 'turned around', Bad Loans May Fall to 9% by March 2020:**

**RBI**

**Note:**
News Analysis for the following topics will be updated by evening today:

1. **Financial Stability Report by RBI**
   
   (Context: NPA Cycle 'turned around', Bad Loans May Fall to 9% by March 2020: RBI)
   
   GS Paper III

2. **Heatwave and its global impact**
   
   (Context: Europeans Brace For a Heatwave, and It's Likely the New Normal)
   
   GS Paper I

3. **NBFC Sector Crisis**
   
   (Context: NBFC Crisis Separated The Good From the Bad, says RBI)
   
   GS Paper III

4. **Logistics Sector in India**
   
   (Context: Cut Logistics Cost to 9% of GDP, Goyal tells States)
   
   GS Paper III

5. **PT 2020 Special**

   Stay tuned for more updates.

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Source: The Hindu
The CRUX:

According to the report,

- Gross NPA in the banking systems have declined for the second consecutive year
- Credit growth rate has increased
- Public Sector Banks have shown a noticeable improvement in their Capital Adequacy Ratio due to recapitalisation.
- An improvement in the asset quality is also observed.

Topic: Financial Stability Report

About the Financial Stability Report

- Financial Stability report is a half-yearly report published by the RBI.
- It is a report for the collective assessment of the Sub-committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on risks to financial stability, as also the resilience of the financial system. The Report also discusses issues relating to development and regulation of the financial sector.

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Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)

It was formed in 2010 by a notification of the Government of India.

It replaced the High Level Coordination Committee on Financial Markets

The Finance Minister of India act as the chairman of the council.

Its members include the heads of the financial sector regulatory authorities (i.e, Securities and Exchange Board of India, Insurance Regulatory and Development
Authority, Reserve Bank of India, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority and Forward Markets Commission, Finance Secretary and/or Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (Ministry of Finance), Secretary, (Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance) and the Chief Economic Adviser.

Function:

- To monitor macro prudential supervision of the economy, including the functioning of large financial conglomerates.
- To address inter-regulatory coordination issues and thus facilitate financial sector development.
- To focus on financial literacy and financial inclusion.

Financial Stability Report for June 2019

It is the 19th Issue and it highlighted that the financial system remains stable as the resilience of the banking sector is increasing.

Highlighted Macro-financial Risks:

Adverse geopolitical developments and trade tensions are gradually but predictably taking a toll on business and consumer confidence. There has been an increased pressure on the domestic economy because of decreased private consumption, new investments and a widened Current Account Deficit. Therefore, a key challenge is to revive private investment demand.

Other highlights:

The report highlighted that the insolvency and bankruptcy board of India is showing steady progress in the resolution of stressed assets. Also, SEBI has come up with guidelines for Enhanced Disclosures by the Credit Rating Agencies to enhance the quality of the same.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express
Topic: Heatwave and its global impact

What is a Heatwave?

Globally, a heatwave is considered to be an extended period of hot weather relative to the expected conditions of the area at that time of year, which may be accompanied by high humidity. While according to the World Meteorological Organisation, a heat wave is said to be a period of five or more consecutive days during which the daily maximum temperature exceeds the average maximum temperature by five degrees Celsius.

In India, a heatwave is considered when the maximum temperature at a grid point is 3°C or more than the normal temperature, consecutively for 3 days or more. Indian Meteorological Department of India provides following range and validity of time forecast:

Causes of heatwave

- Heatwave can occur when a system of high atmospheric pressure moves into an area. The longer the system stays in an area, the hotter the area becomes.
- The main reason behind the heatwave in Western Europe is an abnormal high-pressure weather system sitting over Europe. It is because Europe is currently under a historically strong upper ridge (vast area that is affected by high-pressure air, which has trapped warm air in place.).
- As a result, warm winds blowing northward from the Mediterranean and North African Sahara are getting forced Earthward by the high-pressure air and held in place.
- Usually the warm air rises into the atmosphere and moves horizontally after reaching a particular height but the air in a high-pressure system is dense, so it pushes less
dense air down, preventing the usual mixing.

- In this absence of mixing, the air on the ground just gets hotter leading to a further rise in temperature. It results in persistent dry and settled weather.

- Such systems are also known as anti-cyclones because of the downward spiral of air opposite a cyclonic circulation in which the air moves in a generally upward direction.

- When anticyclones are in place they do not allow the regular weather systems to progress. So, the formation of localised low-pressure systems or convections which can bring down the heat become less likely.

- Thus, high pressure prevents the formation of clouds and thus rainfall and so heatwave type conditions are more likely in the summer months.

**Heat Wave and Global Warming**

There has not been any scientific confirmation of the link between heat wave and global warming. A 2016 report from the National Academy of Sciences linked extreme heat in general to climate change. One study has suggested that climate change made European heat wave of 2003 twice as likely.

According to a research paper published in the *Current Climate Change Reports*, one of the possible reasons for such a disruption is global warming especially in the Arctic region which disrupts the major jet stream over Earth’s North Pole. If this system gets disturbed, it impacts all other jet streams in lower latitudes which then form high pressure systems.

**Heatwave in Europe**

According to a meteorologist, there has never been a high pressure system over Europe that matches the current one. According to France's national weather agency, the number of heat waves in the country has doubled in the past 34 years and is expected to double again by 2050. 16 years ago, in 2003 Western Europe experienced a similar trend in which
15000 people in France died due to the severe summer heat wave and the death toll rose to 70,000. UK also experienced heatwave in 2018. Currently, Western Europe is experiencing a severe heat wave.

Harmful Effects of Heatwave:

- It can cause lose of lives
- It has adverse effects on mental health
- In can cause infrastructural damage
- It can even trigger devastating wildfires
- It leads to unusually High Levels of Electricity Consumption, leading to power outages

Conclusion

Heat wave is a condition of increased atmospheric temperature and as it is potent enough to cause damage to lives and livelihood, it is considered as a disaster. The increase in the frequency of the occurrence of such incidences has bring into the light another ill-effect of the climate change and global warming. It re-asserts the need to take the challenges posed by the global warming seriously and enhance international collaboration to save precious lives.

Source: The Indian Express, Down to Earth
In 2008, the first G20 Leaders’ Summit was held, and the group played a key role in responding to the global financial crisis. Its decisive and coordinated actions boosted consumer and business confidence and supported the first stages of economic recovery. It then introduced billions of dollars in fiscal stimulus packages worldwide, which saved or created millions of jobs that would otherwise have been destroyed.

- It now comprises of 19 countries plus the European Union
- Each G20 president invites several guest countries each year
- G20 leaders meet annually
- In addition, Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meet regularly during the year to discuss ways to strengthen the global economy, reform international financial institutions, improve financial regulation and implement the key economic reforms that are needed in each member economy
- Its summit in 2019 is being held at Osaka, Japan

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A National Mission on Natural Language Translation

- Identified by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)
- To be launched by Ministry of Electronics and IT
- Aim - To make science and technology accessible to all by facilitating access to teaching and researching material bilingually - in English and in one’s native Indian language
- With the help of machine translation and human translation
- By involving the Centre, State agencies and start-ups
- Can generate employment for educated unemployed

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(For more information, refer https://www.aspireias.com/currentaffairs/details/242)

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UPSC "PT" DNA (Daily News Analysis)

Vespersaurus paranaensis - a desert-based carnivorous dinosaur

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(For more, refer https://www.aspireias.com/currentaffairs/details/272)

Source: The Hindu
Daily News Updates for 29th June 2019

From the columns of *The Hindu*

1. President’s rule extended for 6 more months in Jammu and Kashmir
2. Farmers to support GM crops - they are set to defy laws by sowing seeds of banned herbicide-tolerant Bt cotton
3. An innovative "SHE" (Safety, Health and Environment) team is launched in Odisha. It is to ensure safety and security of young girls and women
4. Centre plans to launch a "One nation, one ration card" scheme
5. Centre released a five-year vision and action plan to transform higher education by doubling employment and employability, addressing inequalities of access and revamping governance and funding mechanisms
6. France registered its highest temperature in record. Western Europe continues to face the heatwave
7. China has successfully tested JL-3 0 its submarine-launched ballistic missile
8. RBI has allowed the assets reconstruction companies to buy financial assets from other such entities.
9. Trade war makes India a haven for aluminium scrap dumping

News for UPSC Mains 2019:

Even Central Banks Need 'Capital' Infusion

Things To Do To Avoid Another Water Crisis
On 5G and Data Storage, India Aligns With Developing Nations

Centre Releases Action Plan on Higher Education

France Roasts In Record Heatwave

Fiscal Deficit At 52% Of Full Year Target

RBI Allows ARCs To Buy Financial Assets From Peers

Trade War Makes India a Haven For Aluminium Scrap Dumping

NASA to Send A Drone To Saturn's Largest Moon

Crocodiles Went Through A Vegetarian Phase: Study
From the columns of *The Indian Express*

**India Refuses to Sign Declaration on Free Flow of Data Across Borders**

**State of Stability**

**Payment Security Mechanism for Private Power Plants Launched**

**Rethink Poverty and Policy**


'Need to push up savings rate to achieve new growth trajectory'

**Note:**

News Analysis for the **following topics** will be updated by today's evening:
1. All about State Emergency in Jammu and Kashmir

(Context: President's Rule for 6 more months in J&K)

2. India's move towards Electric Vehicles (EVs)

(Context: 'Proposal on electric vehicles in well-thought-out')

3. Fiscal Deficit in India

(Context: Fiscal Deficit At 52% Of Full Year Target)

4. PT 2020 Special

Stay tuned for more updates.

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Source: The Hindu