

GS - I

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Printed in India
Printed in India

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Rethinking Social Security

In The News

The Covid-19 crisis has brought to the forefront the glaring loopholes in the social security measures in India.

What does Social security mean?

- Social security is the protection that a society provides to individuals and households to ensure access to health care and to guarantee income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, disability, work injury, maternity or loss of a breadwinner.
- **Importance of social security-**
 - It provides older people with **income security** in their sickness, unemployment and retirement years.
 - Children benefit from social security programmes designed to help their families **cope with the cost of education**.
 - For employers and enterprises, social security helps maintain **stable labour relations** and a productive workforce.
 - And social security can contribute to social cohesion and to a country's overall growth and development by **bolstering living standards**, cushioning the effects of structural and technological change on people and thereby providing the basis for a more positive approach toward globalization.
- **Examples of Social security measures in India:**
 - Enactment of **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** which entitles upto 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population to receive subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System.
 - **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** aims to enhance livelihood security in rural

areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to unskilled workers.

- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017** provides women in the organized sector with paid maternity leave of upto 26 weeks.
- **Atal Pension Yojana** encourages the workers in unorganised sector to voluntarily save for their retirement.

Issues highlighted by COVID-19 crisis in India's Social security measures

- **Large exclusionary errors in schemes:** A considerable section of needy population is left out of their purview in the process of enumeration, identification and authentication due to absence of strong, decentralized and responsive administrative capacity.
 - Prescribed ration under Food Security Act, 2013 could not reach a major section of people who were in dire need of food for survival, mostly due to the lack of adequate documentation.
- **Top down approach of policy formulation:** Policymakers are often unaware of harsh ground realities that create hurdles in efficient delivery of intended benefits.
 - Poor assessment of the scale and specific requirements of efforts needed during COVID-19 led to shortages and quality issues in the public distribution system.
 - Directives for maintaining social distancing, in order to curb the spread of the disease, does not factor ground realities that a large section of people dwells in congested and overcrowded homes where social distancing might be an unachievable idea.

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

- **Ineffective implementation of schemes on ground level:** This can be attributed to factors such as limited administrative capacity, inadequate estimation of needs of vulnerable population, corruption at various levels, weak institutions, lack of training among stakeholders etc.
- **Lack of awareness:** Large sections of vulnerable population are unaware of rights and benefits guaranteed to them under various social security schemes.
 - Labourers engaged in formal work, who were recruited by middlemen, were unaware of their identification numbers or whether they received any contributions from their employers for their provident funds.
- **Apathetic attitude towards marginalized sections:** Vulnerable sections in the population find themselves at the margins of the priority of the governance ecosystem.
 - The lockdown was declared hurriedly without proper assessment of its economic impacts migrant population. Factors such as shortage of food and lack of affordable housing and unemployment benefits led to a mass exodus of migrant workers to their hometowns.

sickness and disablement.

- **Article 42** stands for providing just and human conditions of work and maternity relief.

Way forward

- An approach for **progressive realisation of rights** should be devised through a dialogic process that involves all stakeholders.
- The marginalized need to be **assured of a minimum form of social security and effective disbursement of public entitlements.**
- Formulation of policies should be done in a **decentralized** manner which provides scope and suggestions for handling actual ground realities.
- Administrative capacity needs to be strengthened. **Participants from vulnerable sections** can be involved in effective implementation of schemes through adequate capacity development and training.

Conclusion

The pandemic provides an opportune moment for the social welfare policy regime in India to undergo a paradigmatic shift in its approach towards policy designing as well as its implementation. Only a more inclusive and humane approach towards perceiving the need of social welfare can guarantee an effective way of relieving the suffering of the vulnerable sections of the population.

Constitutional Basis for Social Security in India

- **Article 21** of the Constitution guarantees the **fundamental right to life with basic dignity** to all which includes all the rights that are essential to main human life in a civilized society, such as food, clothes, house, medicine and education.
- Several **Directive Principles of State Policy**, enumerated in Part-IV of the Constitution, provide basis for many social security benefits. Examples-
 - **Article 38** is a mandate to the state to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people.
 - **Article 41** provides for right to work, education and public assistance in certain cases such as unemployment, old age,

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)

In The News

Recently, the **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)** was launched by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), in a pilot mode in six Union territories.

Background

- The genesis of a new digital health infrastructure in India came about in the **National Health Policy (NHP), 2017** which proposed a new **National Digital Health Authority** and envisaged creation of a **digital health technology eco-system** aimed at developing an integrated health information system.
- Based on the NHP, 2017, NITI Aayog proposed a visionary digital framework - **National health stack (NHS)** in 2018.
- In July, 2019 the **National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB)** of the mission was prepared by a panel of MoHFW to create a framework for the NHS.

About National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)

- NDHM is a **voluntary healthcare programme** that aims to reduce the gap among stakeholders such as doctors, hospitals, citizens etc by connecting them in an integrated digital health infrastructure.
- **Vision:** To create a national digital health ecosystem that supports **universal health coverage** in an **efficient, accessible, inclusive, affordable, timely and safe** manner.
- The scheme will be initially rolled out in the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Ladakh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.
- **Features of NDHM**
 - o **Building blocks or digital systems:**
 - ✓ **HealthID** - a repository of all health-related information of a person, such as medical tests, previous prescriptions, diagnosis,

treatments etc. It can be created **voluntarily** by every Indian citizen.

- ✓ **DigiDoctor** – a single, updated repository of all doctors enrolled in nation with relevant details such as name, qualifications, specializations, registration number, years of experience, etc
- ✓ **Health Facility Registry (HFR)** - a single repository of all the health facilities (both public and private) in the country.
- ✓ **Personal Health Records (PHR)** - an electronic record of health-related information on an individual that can be drawn from multiple sources while being managed, shared, and controlled by the individual.
- ✓ **Electronic Medical Records (EMR)** - a digital version of a patient's chart which contains the patient's medical and treatment history from a single health facility.
- ✓ **Consent Manager and Gateway** - The exchange of health information is enabled by the consent manager and gateway where Health records can only be issued / viewed with patient consent.
- o **National Health Authority**, attached office of MoHFW, will **design, build, roll-out and implement** the NDHM.
- o **Federated Architecture:** The Government of India will own, operate and maintain the **core building blocks** of NDHM such as Health ID, Digi-Doctor and HFR.
 - ✓ All other building blocks will be designed to be operated in a federated model that factors **regional, state-level and institution-level** platforms and systems to function independently but in an interoperable manner.
 - ✓ Components, like **PHR and EMR** solutions can be developed by **private players**, in line with the

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

official guidelines issued by the government.

- o **NDHM sandbox** has been setup to enable any **software to integrate** with the digital building blocks and **test their compliance** to the guidelines and digital health standards.
- o NDHM will be developed by adopting **India Enterprise Architecture Framework (IndEA)** notified by MeitY.
 - ✓ IndEA is a set of citizen-centric, efficiency-focused and event-driven architectural patterns, reference models and standards for designing Enterprise Architectures.

Benefits associated with a Digital Health Infrastructure

- **Inclusive Healthcare:** Technological interventions such as telemedicine can bridge the **urban-rural healthcare divide** and achieve **portability** not just for the beneficiaries but also for practitioners.
- **Better utilization of data:** NDHM would facilitate convergence of data and a comprehensive feedback loop between researchers, policymakers, and providers.
 - o **Modern big data analytics and machine learning tools** can utilize the data for health care cost estimation, business opportunities in healthcare market, medical research and preventive healthcare.
- **Effective implementation of schemes and policies:** Access to health data will enable government to strengthen implementation of health programmes and policies through geography and demography-based monitoring and decision making.
- **Enabling citizens to make informed decisions:** Through correct information and sources, citizens can overcome challenges such as finding the right doctors, seeking appointment, payment of consultation fee etc. to avail the best possible healthcare.
- **Improved health care services:** The integrated ecosystem will also enable better continuum of care, faster reimbursements and effective health interventions. A digital

health ecosystem will also help in improving **consumer experience** and **accountability** of healthcare providers

- **Reduced risks for government and healthcare providers:** by improved price discovery mechanism and better fraud detection.
- **Boost to Medical tourism:** A national digital ecosystem can attract a globally competitive healthcare insurance and service provision industry with potential increase in medical tourism.
- **Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** NDHM can be a major stride towards achievement of the SDG 3.8 of Universal Health Coverage, including financial risk protection.

Challenges

- **Federal nature of Healthcare:** Health in India is responsibility of the States which leads to fragmentation of policy formulation, implementation and regulation.
- **Digital divide:** Digital systems can lead to exclusion of digitally illiterate and unconnected remote, hilly and tribal areas.
- **High cost of developing digital infrastructure:** Providing unique ID and encoding data for the use of medical professionals along with developing and securing data network is a costly process.
- **Huge requirement of skilled labour:** India faces shortage of skills in areas such as cyber security, business analysis, clinical resources and software development and systems engineering.
- **Inadequate primary health system:** It faces myriad of issues such as poor data collection, use of obsolete technology, shortage of healthcare facilities, shortage of staff etc.
- **Apprehension among healthcare providers:** due to fear of litigation, use of new technology, increased administrative burden etc.
- **Privacy, security and sovereignty issues:** Health IDs will contain sensitive personal data which can be accessed by a third

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t y

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

party. With involvement of private players from across the globe, safeguarding of medical data will become essential.

- **Way Forward**
- **Ensuring transparency to increase user confidence:** To increase acceptance of new technology, processes involved in utilization of health data should be made transparent and easy to understand.
- **Drawing strict privacy related guidelines:** Data confidentiality, cyber security and ethics are significant for innovation and real-world use of Digital healthcare. Hence, formulation of guidelines on health data of individuals should be protective of rights of patients.
 - A combination of data protection techniques like **anonymization, de-identification and encryption** can be applied.
 - Every access to each record must be done with **explicit consent of the individual** and with a permanent record of the transaction.
- **Maintaining Technical Sovereignty:** by fostering indigenous innovation in health-tech through public and private research institutions and start-ups.
- **Specialized systems** can be designed to reach out to the "unconnected", digitally illiterate, remote, hilly and tribal areas. **Telemedicine** will help in reaching out to such groups to provide them with services of experts.
- **Using the experience of Ayushman Bharat—Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY):** It has successfully used the available public digital infrastructure to provide end-to-end services such as paperless payments. This can be leveraged to expand the reach of digital health to all residents and develop an open and inter-operable health management system.
- **Developing a standardized system for medical record maintenance:** It will ensure uniformity and ease portability of such records. Healthcare professionals

should be trained accordingly.

- **Conclusion**
- India's remarkable macroeconomic performance has yet to translate into the country's health system which lags behind on multiple dimensions including key outcome indicators, public financing for healthcare, level and depth of health insurance coverage, etc. A digital health ecosystem has the potential for pushing towards such transformation.

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
f t YouTube

Telegram
Pulse India 2020
Pulse PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

National Council For Transgender Persons

In The News

The Centre has recently constituted the National Council for Transgender Persons under Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

About the council

- **Composition and structure:**

- o It will be headed by the **Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment** (ex-officio) and Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment will be Vice-Chairperson (ex-officio).
- o The council **will have joint secretary-level members** from the Ministries of Health, Home, Minority Affairs, Education, Rural Development, Labour And Law. In addition, there will be a member from the department of pensions, NITI Aayog, National Human Rights Commission and National Commission for Women.
- o **Representatives from five states or Union Territories**, on a rotational basis, will be members of the commission. The first such clutch comprises Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tripura and Gujarat.
- o **Five representatives from the transgender community and five experts**, from non-governmental organisations.
- o The members of the council other than the ex officio members, shall hold office for a term of three years.

- **Functions:**

- o **To advise** the central government on the formulation of policies, programmes, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons.
- o **To monitor and evaluate** the impact of policies and programmes designed for achieving equality and full participation of transgender persons.

- o **To review and coordinate** the activities of all the departments of Government and other Governmental and non-Governmental Organisations which are dealing with matters relating to transgender persons
- o **To redress grievances** of transgender persons
- o **To perform such other functions** as prescribed by the Centre.

- **Need for the council**

- o Intersex people are often marginalised in the legal and policy discourse. The distinction between gender identity and sex characteristics is also not understood. To bring about changes in the existing governance regime, there was the felt need of a body to work and engage with the system.
- o The council **will help government in identifying the problems faced by the transgender community** members and probable solutions. Various challenges being faced by the transgender community are:
 - ✓ **Discrimination** by their own family members and society leading to barriers in accessing public spaces and shelter.
 - ✓ **Lack of access to educational opportunities** as Indian schools remain unequipped to handle children with alternative sexual identities.
 - ✓ **Lack of employment opportunities** due to hiring biases, on-the-job discrimination, wage inequalities and thus they are forced into professions like prostitution and begging for livelihood.
 - ✓ **Barriers in accessing health care services**, because of the lack of treatment awareness, and incidences of disrespect, harassment and violence. The community is highly vulnerable to sexually transmitted

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

diseases like HIV AIDS and Mental health.

- ✓ **Legal hurdles** in possessing identity documents.

- **Concerns**

- o **Less horizontal and vertical representation:**

- ✓ The council has inadequate community representation for a population of **4.88 lakh**.

- o Indigenous problems of the unrepresented states and of uneducated and poor section of community might also not get adequate representation.

- o **Lack of transparency:** Parameters for selecting members are not disclosed to the general public.

- o The notification contains no provision for **establishing coordination between the National Council with the Transgender Development Boards** set-up post the NLSA judgement in various states.

Conclusion

- The **establishment of National Council for Transgender Persons is a welcome step**. Its **effective functioning must be ensured** to identify the issues faced by the transgender community and accordingly advise the government.
- A **multi-prolonged approach with focus on gender Sensitisation** is needed to eliminate the social stigma associated with the transgender community. This **must be started from the school level** to accept the transgender community integral component of societal life

Other provisions to protect the community

- **Constitutional Safeguards under** Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21 ensures right to equality, and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, caste, religion or place of birth.
- **The Supreme Court Judgments on Transgender Rights:**
 - o The Supreme Court in **NALSA Judgement, 2014** recognized the third gender along with the male and female. It also

- ✓ acknowledged right to choose one's gender identity

under article 21 of the Constitution.

- ✓ directed the state to provide reservations for them in public education and employment.

- ✓ directed the state to make special provisions regarding HIV sero-surveillance for transgender persons and provide appropriate health facilities

- ✓ directed the state to frame social welfare schemes for their all-round development

- o **In 2018, SC decriminalised homosexuality** by partially striking down the colonial era provisions of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

State Level Initiatives:

- **Kerala** became the first state to formulate a **transgender policy in 2015** which is aimed at ending the discrimination and bringing the third sex to the mainstream. The state has also set up a **transgender justice board** to deal with their complaints
- **Maharashtra** is the second state in India to set up a welfare board and the first, to set up a **cultural institute** dedicated to the transgender community.

Tamil Nadu has established Tamil Nadu Transgender Welfare Board (TGWB) and has also been providing welfare schemes for socio-economic upliftment of the community.

About Transgenders

- As per the Act, a **transgender is a person, whose gender does not match the gender assigned to that person at birth** and includes trans-men or trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons having socio- cultural identities such as kinnar, hijras, aravani, and jogta”.

o Intersex variations is defined to mean a person who at birth shows variation in his or her primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones from the normative standard of male or female body.

- As per the Census of 2011, **Transgender**

population in India is 4.9 lakh.

- The **highest proportion (about 28%), has been identified in Uttar Pradesh** followed by Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

Other Provisions of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019:

- **Prohibition against discrimination:** The Bill prohibits the discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to: (i) education; (ii) employment; (iii) healthcare; (iv) access to, or enjoyment of goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public; (v) right to movement; (vi) right to reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property; (vii) opportunity to hold public or private office; and (viii) access to a government or private establishment in whose care or custody a transgender person is.
- **Certificate of identity for a transgender person:** A transgender person may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating the gender as ‘transgender’. A revised certificate may be obtained only if the individual undergoes surgery to change their gender either as a male or a female.
- **Welfare measures by the government:** to ensure the full inclusion and participation of transgender persons in society. Steps must be taken for their rescue and rehabilitation, vocational training and self-employment, create schemes that are transgender sensitive, and promote their participation in cultural activities.
- **Offences and penalties:** Penalties for the following offences vary between six months and two years, and a fine: (i) forced or bonded labour (excluding compulsory government service for public purposes), (ii) denial of use of public places, (iii) removal from household, and village, (iv) physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic abuse.

Tribal Health And Nutrition

In The News

Union Tribal Affairs Minister e-launched Tribal Health & Nutrition Portal “Swasthya”.

More about news

- It is e-portal on tribal health and nutrition which will be providing all health and nutrition related information of the tribal population of India in a single platform.
 - It will curate innovative practices, research briefs etc. collected from different parts of India to facilitate the exchange of evidence, expertise and experiences.
- **Other initiatives launched:**
 - **National Overseas Portal and National Tribal Fellowship Portal** to bring greater transparency and easy information to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students.
 - Online Performance Dashboard “**Empowering Tribals, Transforming India**” under Digital India to work towards empowering STs and will bring efficiency and transparency.
 - e-newsletter on health and nutrition- **ALEKH. Status of tribal population in India**
- According to 2011 census, the tribal population in India is over 104 million which is spread across 705 tribes and accounts for **8.6% of country’s population**.
 - More than 90% of tribal people live in **rural areas**.
- M.P. has highest tribal population followed by Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.
- The socio-economic condition of tribals:
 - **Livelihood status** - 40.6% of tribals live below poverty line vis-a-vis 20.5% non tribals.
 - **Lack of Basic amenities-** The 2011 census data shows that access to tap water, sanitation facilities, drainage facilities and clean cooking fuel is much lower among the tribal population.
- **Education gap-**There is also a stark gap in educational status as 41% of STs are illiterate.
- **Sex ratio** among tribals is 990/1000 as compared to national average of 933/1000.
- **Tribal Health status**
- **Disease burden:** Tribals suffer from a triple burden of diseases
 - **Malnutrition and communicable diseases:** Tribal population share a disproportionate burden of communicable disease like malaria, tuberculosis, HIV, hepatitis, viral fevers etc. e.g. tribals account for 30% of malaria cases and 60% of malaria related mortality, 50% of adolescent tribal girls are underweight, low body mass index and stunting in tribals is more than nontribal population.
 - **Genetic disorders and lifestyle diseases-** like hypertension, diabetes, respiratory diseases etc. Also, genetic disorder in form of sickle cell anemia ranges from 1-40%. G-6-PD red cell enzyme deficiency is reported in tribes like Adiyan, Irula, Paniyan, Gonds.
 - **Mental illness and addictions-** According to NFHS-3, **72% of tribal men in the age of 15-54 use tobacco as compared to 56% of non-tribal men**
- **Other Indicators** - The performance related to life expectancy, maternal mortality, adolescent health, child morbidity, mortality and under five mortality is below national average by 10-25%. Fore.g.:
 - life expectancy of tribals is 63.9 compared to national average of 67 years,
 - under 5 mortality rate is 74 as

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

- against national average of 62
- 50% Adolescent ST girls are underweight and BMI below less than 18.5.
 - About **80 per cent of tribal children are undernourished and suffering from anaemia**. While **40 per cent of under five tribal children in India are stunted**.

Reasons for poor health among tribals

- **Unhygienic and primitive practices:** The chief causes of maternal and infant mortality were found to be **unhygienic and primitive practices for parturition and no specific nutritious diet** with iron, calcium and vitamins is consumed by women.
- **Lack of Health Infrastructure:** Though tribals are heavily dependent on public health services but there is a shortfall of public health centres, sub-centres, community health centres by 27-40% in about half of the states. This has resulted in low access and coverage, low outputs and outcomes in tribal health status.
- **Lack of Human resource:** There are severe shortages in health human resources in terms of PHC doctors (33% shortfall), CHC specialists (84% shortage), health workers, nursing staff, ASHA workers and locally trained youth. The isolated locations with minimal facilities create unwillingness among the health workers.
- **Financing of Tribal Health:** The tribal sub plan (TSP), though started with the noble goal of complementing existing finances for tribal policies, has shown a lackadaisical response. The tribal affairs ministry has no information regarding TSP allocations of various states. Also, there is lack of accounting of actual tribal health expenditure.
- **Lack of Awareness and mistrust on modern medicine:** The tribals are amenable to western systems of medicine and depend on supernatural cures. Hence, vaccination and immunization of Infants and children have been inadequate among tribal groups.
- **Governance Structure-** Lack of population level data, centralized policy formulation and implementation, near absence of tribals from the process, weak state level intervention etc. has accentuated dismal health conditions among tribals.
- **Way forward**
- **Awareness & Education:** Raising awareness of health issues, conduct Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns – such as stressing the importance of hand washing, regular ante-natal checkups, institutional deliveries, immunization etc.
- **Policy and governance:** Creation of National Tribal Health Council and Tribal health research cell to improve tribal health and healthcare system in India.
- **Health Services to Remote Populations:** Mobile medical camps to improve outreach in remote tribal populations would play a major role. Which will make availability of drugs, diagnostic facilities to tribals in remote area.
- **Transportation for Expectant Mothers:** Tribal populations generally have to deal with lack of resources in tough terrains. Provision of emergency transportation for pregnant tribal women to health facilities for obstetric care is one of the major necessities of the tribal women.
- **Health Workers from Tribal Communities:** As tribal populations find it difficult to navigate through the complexities of medical facilities, health workers from tribal communities may become the link between the healthcare facilities and tribal communities.
- **Infrastructure and capacity building:** To help healthcare providers deliver quality healthcare services dealing with complex healthcare scenarios of tribal regions, upgraded infrastructure and capacity building initiatives needs to be in place.

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook YouTube Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Menstrual Leave

In The News

Recently, Zomato announced a new paid period leave policy for employees.

More on news

- The **policy allows up to 10 days of period leave** a year.
- Company employees **can apply for period leave through a human resources portal** and a **sexual harassment team** will be in place to respond to any employees facing harassment for taking the time off.

Menstrual Leave discourse in India

- The **State of Bihar** has **had two extra days of casual leave per month** for women government employees to take time off for periods since 1992.
- In 2017, the **digital media company Culture Machine**, which has offices in five cities in India, put in place a menstrual leave policy independent of vacation and sick days.
- **Menstruation Benefit Bill 2017** (Tabled in Lok Sabha in 2018)
 - The Bill seeks to provide women **working in the public and private sectors two days of paid menstrual leave every month** as well as better facilities for rest at the workplace during menstruation.
 - The benefits would also be extended to female students of Class VIII and above in government recognized schools.
 - The Bill caters to **girls and women across sector/industry/profession/job roles** and not just for women engaged in white collar work.

What is the need for menstrual leave?

- **Age-old taboo:** The policy will be instrumental in tackling an age-old taboo in India by **generating awareness and open discussions** on the issue.
 - According to UNICEF, 71

percent of young women in India remain unaware of menstruation until their first cycle.

- **Addressing the associated shame or stigma:** The policy is intentioned at providing women the freedom to tell people on internal groups, or emails that they are on period leave i.e. normalization of the issue and across the board acceptance for the issue.
- **Spillover to the unorganized sector:** Increased debate and conversation on the issue at national level could lead to recognition of menstrual leave in unorganized sector.
 - For example, there is a large section of women who work in the unorganized labor sector as domestic workers, and almost no houses give them a day off when they have their periods. This conversation could make a difference here.
- **Women's Right:** Workplaces need to accommodate for biological differences between co-workers and it is women's right to have provisions in accordance with that.
 - This is not a choice that women make every month, so if someone finds it difficult to be at the work for conditions not under their control then they should have the **right to rest without being penalized** in any way.
- **Reassertion of reproductive rights:** Women and girls are often excluded from decision-making due to their lower literacy levels and social standing within the family. The policy has the potential to make all women conscious of their reproductive rights irrespective of direct effect of policy on them.
- **Availability of associated infrastructure and menstrual**

products: Provision of sanitary napkins and adequate facilities for sanitation and washing could come into limelight as a result of this policy discussion.

Why talking about menstruation is considered a taboo in India?

- Culturally in many parts of India, **menstruation is still considered to be dirty and impure**. Further, **women are prohibited from participating in normal life while menstruating**. She must be “purified” before she is allowed to return to her family and day to day chores of her life.
- Superstitious and unscientific notions on menstruation have led to following:
 - The **cultural shame attached to menstruation and shortage of menstrual products** (as many as 88% of women who get periods in India resort to using unsafe sanitary methods) stop menstruating women from going to school and working.

Consequently, it is very **difficult to have an open discussion** about it as **people seem to get extremely uncomfortable** and prefer to discuss it behind closed doors.

What are the unintended consequences that the policy may generate?

- **Justify lower salaries and hiring bias:** If we insist that one group or another has an extra set of costs associated with their employment then we’ll end up seeing the wages of that group fall relative to groups that don’t have those associated costs or decreased hiring of that altogether.
 - For example, a research found that 1.1-1.8 million women lost their jobs in 2018-19 across 10 major sectors owing to the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2016 which doubled the paid maternity leave from three to six months.
- **Negative affect on the Gender Equality debate:** The explicit term “period leave” creates a demarcation,
- thereby allowing it to be taken in context where it is used to differentiate between

men and women.

- **Reinforcing the prevalent stereotyping:** The policy risks reinforcing the stereotypes of labeling women as ‘needing extra protection and extra time off’, which in turn might reinforce biases in hiring, promotion and compensation.
- **Negative affect on privacy:** Asking women to inform their employers they’re on their periods forces women to let go of their menstrual privacy. This can be construed as a shade of benevolent patriarchy.
 - Similar to any other health-related information, it should be a person’s right to decide how open they would like to be about their issues.

Case in point: Japan

- Japan’s **1947 Labor Standards Law** inducted the provision of **seirikyuka, or “menstrual leave,”** for painful periods.
- A study shows that from 1960–1981, the number of Japanese women **using the national period leave policy declined to 13% from 20%**, as they increasingly opted to take their regular sick days over facing social stigma from their coworkers.
- This highlights how policy as a singular measure is not enough. As despite the prevalence of the policy for more than 70 years, the associated stigma was not addressed adequately.

Way Forward

As a society, it is our job to make sure that we overcome the aforesaid challenges and make room for one’s

biological needs while not lowering the bar for the quality of our work.

The menstrual leave policy could be structured in such a way that overcomes these challenges. For example, giving all employees enough paid sick leave to account for periods or employers can be encouraged to institute work- from-home policies that allow employees to work remotely for a fixed number of days in a month. These two options can be explored alongside provision of comfortable

spaces within the office premises.

If women need to **tolerate their pain in silence** just to ‘fit’ in and not be outcast, then we surely are **paddling the patriarchy cycle ahead**. The idea of menstrual leave **may be seen as a starting point** for elimination of structural issues associated with menstruation.

ASPIRE IAS

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 14
Page No. 14

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Child Labour

In The News

Convention No. 182- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999, of the International Labour Organization (ILO), has become the first international labour standard ever to **achieve universal ratification** (i.e. all 187 member countries of ILO have now ratified it).

About ILO's Convention no. 182

- It calls for the **prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour**, which includes deployment of children in-
 - **all forms of slavery**: such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced recruitment of children in **armed conflict**;
 - **prostitution**, or pornography;
 - **illicit activities**, such as production and trafficking of drugs;
 - any work which is likely to harm their **health, safety or morals**.
- It is one of the ILO's eight Fundamental Conventions and was adopted in a meeting in Geneva in 1999.
- As ratification rates increased and countries adopted laws and policies, including relating to minimum age to work, the incidence of child labour and its worst forms has dropped by almost **40 per cent between 2000 and 2016**.

About Child Labour

- As per ILO, the term “**child labour**” is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It includes **work that**:
 - is **mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children**; and/or
 - **Interferes with their schooling** by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or

requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

- A combination of many factors gives rise to child labour, such as poverty, social norms condoning it, lack of decent work opportunities for adults and adolescents, migration, and emergencies.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

- ILO is a **tripartite U.N. agency**, formed in 1919 that brings together governments, employers and workers of its member states, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
- India is a **founder member** of the ILO. The **eight ILO fundamental Conventions** are:
 - **No. 29**: The Forced Labour Convention, 1930
 - **No. 87**: The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948
 - **No. 98**: The Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949
 - **No. 100**: The Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951
 - **No. 105**: The Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957
 - **No. 111**: The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958
 - **No. 138**: The Minimum Age Convention, 1973
 - **No. 182**: The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999
- India has ratified **6 out of 8** of these conventions (all except convention number 87 and 98).

Status of Child Labour in India

- India accounts for close to **7.3 per cent** of around 152 million children worldwide engaged in child labour.
- According to census data of 2011, around

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

10.1 million children were engaged in child labour in India.

- **80% of working children live in India's villages**, where most of them work in agriculture.
- Children between 14-17 years engaged in hazardous work account for 62.8% of the India's child labour workforce, 10% of these are hired in family enterprises.
- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh are the states with maximum child labourers.
- Despite various efforts, **certain challenges** hinder India's progress towards eradicating child labour:
 - o **Ineffective enforcement of laws** due to limited administrative capacity.
 - o Some of the **industries exclusively depend on child labor** due to their short stature such as mica mining, bangle-making, beedi-making etc.
 - o Inadequate tracking and rehabilitation of children post rescue.
 - o In low income families, parents and guardians often view their children as “**source of income**”.
 - o **Poor quality of public education** in India limits future employment opportunities for children, forcing them to engage in menial labour at a young age.
 - o India's vast **informal economy** makes it easier for contractors and middlemen to exploit children.

India's efforts against child labour Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 23** prohibits the trafficking in human beings and forced labour.
- **Article 24** prohibits the employment of children below the age of fourteen years in factories.
- **Article 39(e)** makes it a duty of the State to prevent the children from entering into jobs, unsuited to their age.

Legislations

- **Child Labour Amendment (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2016:** It regulates

the employment of children and does not allow children below the age of 14 to work except as a child artist and in a family business.

- **The Factories Act, 1948:** It prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years.
- **The Mines Act, 1952:** It prohibits the employment of children below 18 years of age in a mine.
- **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act, 2000:** It made it a crime, punishable with a prison term, for anyone to procure or employ a child in any hazardous employment or in bondage.
- **The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009:** It mandates free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years.

Schemes

- **National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme:** It seeks to eliminate all forms of child labour through Identification and withdrawal of all children in the Project Area from child labour.
- **PENCIL Portal:** was launched for effective implementation of NCLP.

Active role played by NGOs

- NGOs sensitize stakeholders to end this social evil, and make locals more vigilant to report instances of child labour at businesses. They also work for their rehabilitation.
- Many civil society organizations such as **Bachpan Bachao Andolan** founded by Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi, **Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation**, **Save the Children**, etc. have worked to protect children from this menace.

International conventions

- The ratification of **ILO Conventions 182 and 138** reflect on India's commitment towards the elimination of child labour.

Way Forward

- There should be an **exhaustive and**

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook Twitter YouTube Telegram

Printed March 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

identical definition of child labour for all the industries and working establishment.

- **Rigorous implementation of penal provisions** of the statutes is needed.
- **Rehabilitative and reformatory activities** should be conducted for the children who are found working in hazardous institutions. Provision should be made for ensuring that their mental, emotional and physical health is attained after they are saved from hazardous institutions
- Focusing on grassroots strategies to **mobilize communities and sensitize trade organisations** against child labor to increase reporting of such instances.
- Child labor can be controlled by economic development and making **quality education affordable** across all levels.

Impact of COVID-19 on child Labour

There is a rising concern that COVID-19 pandemic may reverse the progress made in controlling child labour. Millions of children are under the risk of being pushed into child labour due to reasons such as:

- **Rising poverty:** Impact of the crisis on employment opportunities, supply chains in agriculture sector etc will suppress incomes for industrial labour and farmers.
 - According to the World Bank, in India, 12 million people have a chance of slipping below the poverty line due to pandemic-related job losses. Research has indicated that **one percentage point increase in poverty leads to about**

0.7 percent percentage point increase in child labour.

- Households might be forced to sending their children into child labour due to their increased economic vulnerability, shortage of food supplies and trap of debt bondage.
- **Increasing informality:** Post-Pandemic, capital-intensive small enterprises are likely to decline which may result into increase in self-employment producing work especially conducive to child involvement.

- **Dilution of labour laws by some states to mitigate economic effects of COVID-19:** Many employers may exploit these changes to hire “cost-effective” child labour as they have lower bargaining power and are mostly unable to press for their rights.
 - For example, relaxation of rules related to site inspection will open channels for employment of children.
- **Factors that may drive children away from schools and into child labour:**
 - **Declining remittances from migrant workers** due to lockdown measures and business closures from COVID-19 might push children, especially in rural areas, into agricultural labour.
 - **Credit crisis and reduction in household income and savings** might reduce household investment in schooling.
 - **Temporary closure of schools** disproportionately affects education of children with illiterate parents.
 - **Discontinuation of mid-day meals** can increase dropout rates.
 - **Digitization of education** has led to exclusion of children in households with no access to the internet or digital devices.
- **Compounding shocks to health:** The rising number of deaths from COVID-19 is trailed by growing numbers of children left without one or both parents making them particularly vulnerable to child labour, trafficking and other forms of exploitation.
- **Pressure on public budgets:** Governments have taken substantive steps to improve social assistance which results into diminishing child labour. With larger budgetary constraints, due to COVID-19 pandemic, these steps may decline in future.

There is a need to implement a series of measures ranging from universal free distribution of ration, livelihood support, regeneration of rural economy, renewed and more rigorous efforts for child protection, education for all children, and strengthening public health care infrastructure.

Students' Learning Enhancement Guidelines

In The News

Ministry of Education recently released **Students' Learning Enhancement Guidelines**, prepared by NCERT, to address the issues related to gaps and/or loss of learning among students, during and after the lockdown.

Background

- During the COVID-19 crisis and consequent closure of schools, various initiatives have been undertaken to maintain continuity in school education through **digital means**, such as - Alternative Academic Calendar, PRAGYATA Guidelines, Digital Education-India Report, NISHTHA-Online, etc.
- However, concerns from various stakeholders were raised about the learning of **children do not have access to digital resources**. Unequal access to digital education resources raises the concerns of equity and inclusion which can lead to deficiencies in learning of children.
- The guidelines have been formed taking into cognizance diverse challenges and concerns of learning during the COVID-19 period such as- issues faced by children of migrants and students with parents at risk due to their work, accessibility to digital devices, social-emotional aspects of learning etc.
- **About the guidelines**
- The guidelines suggest Learning Enhancement models during COVID-19 for the following three **types of situations**-
- **For students who do not have any digital resources**
 - **School-wise child-wise surveys** need to be undertaken to map the digital devices accessibility for each child.
 - **Specific learning plans**, based on learning outcomes and not entirely dependent on textbooks, need to be prepared separately for children with special needs.
- **Ensure doorstep delivery of** prescribed textbook and other supplementary learning materials such as worksheets, assignments etc.
- Schools can create a **Shiksha Team for helping/mentoring children** to continue their learning process with the help of community members.
- **Special interventions** for learning, clearing doubts, discussing hard spots, etc. may include- toll-free helplines, Mobile schools and mobile libraries etc.
- **For students having limited digital resources or very basic technological devices**
 - **Using Alternative Academic Calendar** developed by the NCERT which includes detailed guidelines about conducting learning outcome-based activities for different classes.
 - **Digital Tools** such as SMS/messages, recorded stories by teachers through smart phones, television, radio, social media and Google meet, etc. can be used.
- **For students having digital resources available for online education**
 - **Arrangements may also be made to record the sessions** so that children can attend classes as and when they have access to mobile or laptop. Social media tools can also be used.
 - **Synchronous classes need to be utilized** for giving guidance on doing self-study and assignment as well as solving queries.
- **Way forward**

- COVID-19 has created a situation which demands transformation in school education and also in the roles of various stakeholders. Though core elements of school education such as curriculum, syllabus, textbooks, assessment, etc. will continue to be there, yet the transaction mechanisms in school education may go through a drastic change. Therefore, school education needs to remodel itself by inducing flexibility and adaptability. Interventions that are needed include:
- Creating **alternative and innovative ways** for summative assessment of students
- Providing support to parents and students on **reducing stress and anxiety**
- **Developing skills among teachers** for using ICT and social media tools
- Creating a **strong network among educators** that reaches out to teachers with plans and strategies
- Strengthening relationship among **teachers, community and parents.**
- **Guiding parents** to bridge the gap between school and home becoming an active participant in child's learning.

Remote Learning Reachability Report

In The News

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has released report titled ‘**Remote Learning Reachability**’ providing analysis of the potential reach of remote learning policies using data from 100 countries.

Key findings of the report

- At least **or 31% (463 million)** of school children worldwide **cannot be reached by remote learning programs**, mainly due to a lack of necessary household assets or policies geared toward their needs.
- Globally, **3 out of 4 students** who cannot be reached by remote learning opportunities come from **rural areas and/or poor households**.
- The share of students who cannot be reached by digital and broadcast remote learning policies is **the highest in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa**.
- In India, only **24% of households** have internet connections to access e-education.
- **Other factors that prevent learning** even when children have the technology and tools: Competing factors in the home including **pressure to do chores, being forced to work, a poor environment for learning and lack of support** in using the online or broadcast curriculum.

Key Recommendations

- **Democratize access to safe and secure remote learning** for all children and young people. Design remote learning programs that are **accessible to all children and can be adapted for households that do not have access to broadcast or digital media**.
- Identify the **best combination of remote learning policies**, develop and provide quality education content.
- **Address the social and gender norms** that in many countries prevent children – **especially girls** – from using computers

and online learning to their maximum potential.

- **Support and train teachers and parents** to effectively manage **remote ‘virtual’ classrooms** and help children learn at home, at all levels of education.
- **Invest in innovation** that supports **real-time monitoring** of remote learning, including **formative learning assessments**.

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Swachh Survekshan 2020

In The News

Swachh Survekshan 2020 awards were announced recently.

About Swachh Survekshan

- It is an annual ranking exercise taken up by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
- It seeks to assess urban areas of country on their **levels of cleanliness and active implementation of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** in a timely & innovative manner.
 - It was **launched in 2016** which is the world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey.
 - It aims to **encourage large scale citizen participation and create awareness** amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together towards making towns & cities a better place to live in.

Highlights of survey

- Swachh Survekshan 2020 is the **5th edition** and covered 4,242 cities, 62 cantonment boards and 92 Ganga towns.
- Ipsos** - a global market research company was selected to undertake the Swachh Survekshan 2020.
- The data collected through many sources for 57 indicators (40 – **Service Level Progress**, 9 – **Direct Observation** and 8 – **Citizen Feedback**) is compiled for ranking the cities.
- Swachh Survekshan gave ranking based on following parameters (each having 25% weightage):
 - Marks of Certifications: ODF & Garbage Free Cities (GFC)
 - Direct Observation
 - Marks of Service Level Progress measured through Swachh Survekshan League 2020.
 - Citizen Feedback
- Indore emerged as the cleanest Indian city** fourth time in a row followed by Surat.

- Cleanest capital city** - New Delhi (Union Territory of New Delhi) and the NDMC.
- Cleanest state with more than 100 cities** – Chhattisgarh.
- Cleanest state with less than 100 cities** – Jharkhand.
- Cleanest Ganga town** – Varanasi.
- Cleanest megacity with more than 40 lac population** – Ahmedabad.

Focus Area of Swachh Survekshan 2020



ODF and GFC Certifications

- Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban introduced certification initiatives like ODF+/ODF++ and Star Rating of Garbage Free Cities (GFC).
- The **ODF guidelines** focus on construction and usage of toilet to stop open defecation.
- ODF+ guideline** was developed to assess sustainable community/public toilet usage so that cities are motivated to improve the standard of operations & maintenance.
- Focus of the ODF++ protocol** is to achieve sanitation sustainability by addressing complete sanitation value chain, ending with safe faecal sludge management.
- The concept of **star rating of cities** is to introduce a certification process to assess the solid waste management progress in the city through a process of desktop assessment of the progress claimed, direct observation and citizen's feedback.

About SS League 2020

- It was introduced with the objective of sustaining the **onground performance of cities along with continuous** monitoring of service level performance when it comes to cleanliness.
- It is a quarterly cleanliness assessment of cities and towns in India and is integrated with 5th edition of Swachh Survekshan 2020.
- It is conducted in 3 quarters:
 - April- June,
 - July – September
 - October- December 2019.
- It has 2000 marks for each quarter evaluated on the basis of monthly updation of Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) online Management Information System by cities along with citizen's validation on the 12 service level progress indicators through outbound calls.
- Ranks have been assigned in two categories of cities with population
 - 1 lakh and above (with two sub-categories, i.e. 1-10 lakh and 10 lakhs and above)
 - less than 1 lakh (under this category, the rankings are given zone and population wise).
 - It includes five zones namely, North, East, Northeast, South and West.

Lingaraj Temple

In The News

Odisha government recently announced to give a facelift to the 11th century Lingaraj Temple, similar to its pre- 350-year structural status.

About Lingaraj Temple

- It was built in 11th century AD by **King Jajati Keshari of Somavanshi** dynasty with later additions by **Ganga dynasty** rulers.
- Its **Deul** (tower) rises to a height of **180 feet** and marks the culmination of the temple architecture in Bhubaneswar which was the cradle of the **Kalinga School of Temple Architecture**.
- The temple can broadly be divided into 4 main halls - **The Garba Griha** (Sanctum Sanctorum), the **Yajana Mandapa** (the hall for prayers) the **Natya Mandapa** (dance and music hall) and the **Bhoga Mandapa** (where devotees can have the prasad/offering of the Lord).
- The exquisite **carvings depicting chores of daily life**, the activity centres, apart from being a place of worship makes the temple a place for social and cultural gathering.
- Lingaraj is referred to as “**Swayambhu**” – (self-originated **Shivling**) and the **Shivling is known as Hari Hara**. It signifies the syncretisation of Shaivism and Vaishnavism sects in Odisha.
- The other attraction of the temple is the **Bindusagar Lake**, located in the north side of the temple.
- **Shivaratri festival** is the major festival celebrated in the temple.
- The temple compound is **not open to non-Hindus**, but there is a **viewing platform** beside the wall offering a good view of the main exteriors. This was originally erected for a visit by **Viceroy Lord Curzon**.

Odisha, West Bengal and northern Andhra Pradesh.

- In this, **Shikhara (called deul in Odisha)** is almost vertical before it curves near the top.
- Shikhara is preceded by a **mandapa (called Jagmohan** or ‘dance pavilion’ in Odisha).
- The style consists of **three distinct types of temples: Rekha Deula, Pidha Deula and Khakhara Deula**.
- The **Rekha Deula and Khakhara Deula** houses the sanctum sanctorum while the **Pidha Deula** constitutes outer dancing and offering halls.
- **Examples of Kalinga architecture:** Rajarani temple (Bhubaneswar); Jagganath Temple, Puri.

Kalinga school of temple architecture

- Kalinga architectural style is a **sub-style of Nagara architecture, flourished in the ancient Kalinga region** - present state of

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Nagara Architecture of Ayodhya's Ram Mandir:

In The News

The grand temple at Rama Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya will follow the Nagara style of temple architecture.

What is Nagara style of temple architecture?

The Nagara style of temple architecture is found in northern India.

- In the Nagara style, the temple is generally constructed on an upraised platform called **jagati**. **Mandapas** are present in front of the **Garbhagriha**. These are adorned with the **Shikhara**, the tallest one being above the **Garbhagriha**.
- Nagara style doesn't usually have elaborate boundary walls or gateways.
- Generally, there is no water tank in the temple premises and the **pradakshina patha** is covered.
- The **garbhagriha** is always located directly under the tallest tower.

main deity placed generally in line of sight from Garbhagriha

Subdivisions:

Nagara school is further subdivided into different schools based on region like Odisha, Khajuraho, Solanki etc.



The basic form of a Hindu temple contains the following architectural elements:

1. **Garbhagriha** - the small room where the principle deity/deities of the temple reside
2. **Mandapa** - the portico or hall at the entrance of the temple generally designed to house a large number of people
3. **Shikhara** - the mountain like spire which can have different shapes from pyramidal to curvilinear
4. **Vahana** - the mount or vehicle of the

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

Cultural heritage of Hyderabad

In The News

Ministry of Tourism recently organised the 50th webinar titled “Cultural heritage of Hyderabad” under DekhoApnaDesh series.

What is DekhoApnaDesh series?

The **Ministry of Tourism** is organizing the DekhoApnaDesh webinars with an objective to **create awareness about and promote various tourism destinations of India** – including the lesser known destinations and lesser known facets of popular destinations.

- It also promotes spirit of **Ek Bharat Sreshtha Bharat**.

Key facts:

- Hyderabad is popularly known as the **"City of Pearls"** and the **"City of Nizams"**, and has been the centre of a vibrant historical legacy, ever since its inception by the QutubShahi dynasty.
- Muhammad QuliQutb Shah established Hyderabad in 1591 to extend the capital beyond the fortified Golconda.
- **In 1687, the city was annexed by the Mughals. In 1724, Mughal governor NizamAsaf Jah I declared his sovereignty and founded the AsafJahi dynasty, also known as the Nizams**
- Hyderabad served as the imperial capital of the AsafJahis from 1769 to 1948.

Important cultural sites of Hyderabad highlighted in the session:

1. **Golconda Fort, Hyderabad:** Built by the Kakatiya dynasty in the 13th century.
2. **Chowmahalla Palace:** Once the seat of the AsafJahi Dynasty. It has bagged the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Merit Award for Culture Heritage Conservation.

3. **Charminar:** The monument was erected when QuliQutab Shah shifted his capital from Golconda to Hyderabad.
4. **Mecca Masjid:** Completed by Aurangazeb in 1693. The bricks used here are believed to be from Mecca, and hence the name.
5. **Warangal Fort:** This fort appears to have existed since at least the 12th century when it was the capital of the Kakatiya dynasty.

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Warli Painting

In The News

With a view to promote Indian folk art, **National Fertilizers Limited (NFL)** a PSU under the Department of Fertilizers has displayed Maharashtra's famous **Warli painting on the outer walls of its Corporate Office in Noida.**

Who are Warlis?

The Warlis or Varlis are an indigenous tribe or Adivasis, living in Mountainous as well as coastal areas of Maharashtra-Gujarat border and surrounding areas.

- They speak an unwritten **Varli language** which belong to the southern zone of the **Indo-Aryan languages.**

Warli Paintings:

- **Maharashtra** is known for its **Warli folk paintings.**
- Its roots may be traced to as early as the **10th century A.D.**
- They bear a resemblance to those created in the **Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka.**
- Scenes portraying hunting, fishing and farming, festivals and dances, trees and animals are used to surround **the central theme of the painting.**
- **Women are mainly engaged** in the creation of these paintings.

Unique features:

A very basic graphic vocabulary like a circle, a triangle and a square are used in these rudimentary wall paintings which are monosyllabic in nature.



Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Onam

Onam is celebrated at the beginning of the month of **Chingam**, the first month of the solar Malayalam calendar (**Kollavarsham**). It falls in August or September each year.

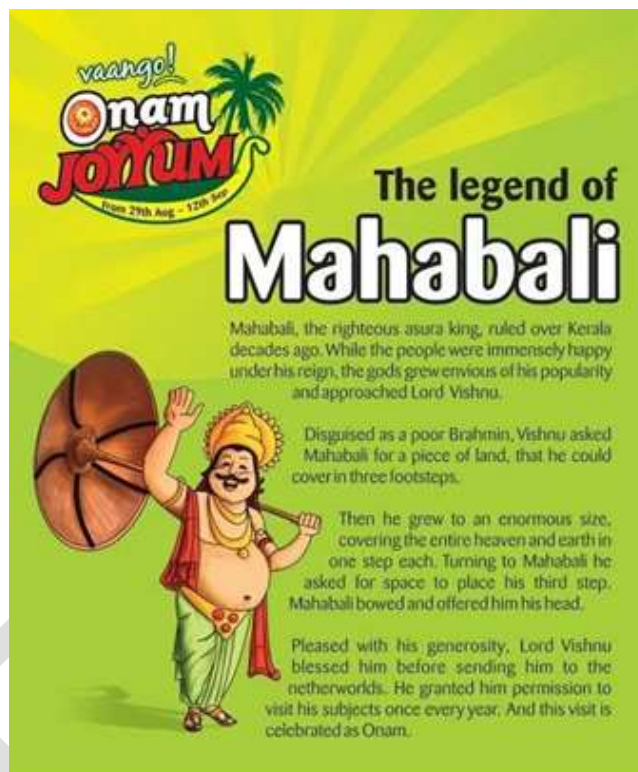
- The festival is spread over 10 days and culminates with **Thiruvonam**, the most important day.

About the festival:

According to a popular legend, the festival is celebrated to welcome **King Mahabali**, whose spirit is said to visit Kerala at the time of Onam. It is also celebrated as **the festival of paddy harvest**.

How is it celebrated?

During the festival, people get dressed in their traditional attire, prepare the Onam Sadhya and take part in a variety of group activities such as **the Pookolam** (rangoli made with fresh flowers), **Vallam Kali** (boat race), **Pulikali** (tiger dance), **Kai Kottu Kali** (Onam dance), **Kummattikali** (mask dance) and various other activities.



Bal Gangadhar Tilak's 100th Death Anniversary

In The News

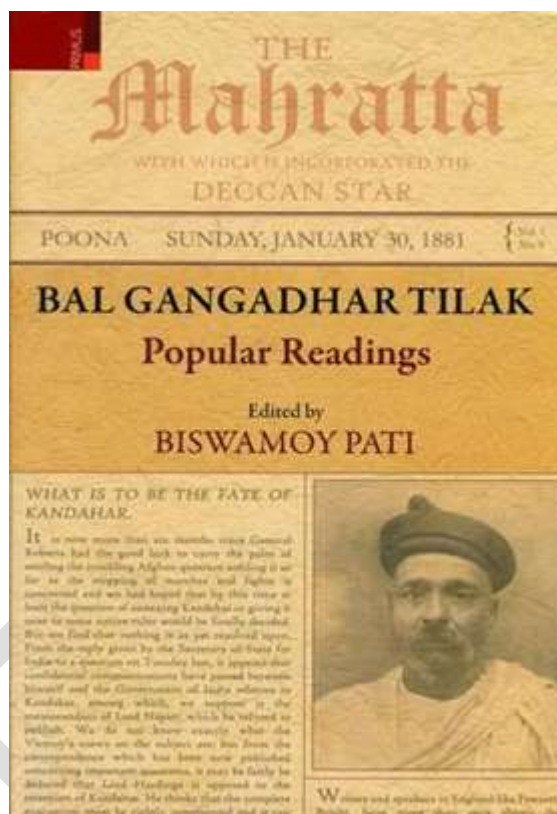
One of the firebrand freedom fighters and the strongest proponent of 'purna swaraj' or 'total self-rule',

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's **100th death anniversary** was observed on August 1st.

Legacy:

- Part of **the Lal-Bal-Pal** (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal) **troika**, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was called '**father of the Indian unrest**' by British colonial rulers.
- Jawaharlal Nehru called him the '**father of Indian revolution**'.
- Mahatma Gandhi described Tilak as '**the maker of modern India**'.

His slogan '**Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it**' caught the imagination of a country fighting to free itself from the colonial rule.



Quit India Movement

In The News

78th anniversary of Quit India movement was observed on August 8th, 2020.

- Every year **8 August** is celebrated in India as **August Kranti Din**.

What is Quit India Movement? Why was it launched?

- **The Second World War had started in 1939** and Japan, which was part of the **Axis Powers** that were opposed to the British in the war were gaining onto the north-eastern frontiers of India.
- **The British had abandoned their territories in South-East Asia** and had left their population in the lurch. This act did not garner much faith among the Indian population who had doubts about the British ability to defend India against Axis aggression.
- **Gandhi also believed** that if the British left India, **Japan would not have enough reason to invade India**.
- Apart from hearing news about British setbacks in the war, **the war-time difficulties** such as high prices of essential commodities fostered resentment against the British government.
- **The failure of the Cripps Mission** to guarantee any kind of a constitutional remedy to India's problems

also led to the INC calling for a mass civil disobedience movement.

After the failure of the Cripps Mission, Gandhiji gave the call **“Do or Die”** in his speech delivered at the **Gowalia Tank Maidan**.

The quit India resolution stated the provisions of the movement as:

1. An immediate end to British rule over India.
2. Declaration of the commitment of free India to defend itself against all kinds of imperialism and fascism.
3. Formation of a provisional

government of India after British withdrawal.

4. Sanctioning a civil disobedience movement against British rule.

Gandhi's instructions to various sections of the public:

1. **Government servants:** do not resign your job but proclaim loyalty to the INC.
2. **Soldiers:** be with the army but refrain from firing on compatriots.
3. **Peasants:** pay the agreed-upon rent if the landlords/Zamindars are anti-government; if they are pro-government, do not pay the rent.
4. **Students:** can leave studies if they are confident enough.
5. **Princes:** support the people and accept the sovereignty of them.
6. **People of the princely states:** support the ruler only if he is anti-government; declare themselves as part of the Indian nation.

Impact of the movement:

- **Several national leaders** like Mahatma Gandhi, Abdul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel were **arrested**.
- The **Congress was declared an unlawful association**, leaders were arrested and its offices all over the country were raided and their funds were frozen.
- The **first half of the movement was peaceful** with demonstrations and processions. The peaceful protest was carried till Mahatma Gandhi's release.
- The **second half of the movement was violent** with raids and setting fire at post offices, government buildings and railway stations. Lord Linlithgow adopted the policy of violence.
- The **Viceroy's Council of Muslims, Communist Party and Americans supported Britishers**.

Aspire IAS

The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Some of the drawbacks were:

- **Use of violent methods** by the volunteers and participants.

The movement was crushed in a relatively short period of time by the British.

Lack of leadership did not lead to well-coordinated guidance and progress of the movement, with the intensity restricted to a few pockets.

- **Some parties did not support the movement.** There was opposition from the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India (the government revoked the ban on the party then) and the Hindu Mahasabha.
- Meanwhile, **Subhas Chandra Bose, organised the Indian National Army and the Azad Hind government** from outside the country.
- As, **C Rajagopalachari was not in favour of complete independence** he resigned from the INC.

Conclusion:

Quit India Movement was a watershed movement in the sense, that it prepared the ground for future politics in India. It is in the Quit India Movement that freedom struggle was owned by 'We the People' who fought for India's freedom.

Pakistan's New Map

In The News

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan recently unveiled a new political map that includes all of Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Sir Creek and Junagadh.

- Pak Foreign Minister said that the new map reflects the aspirations of the people.

India's response:

- India has dismissed the map as an “exercise in absurdity” that made “untenable claims” to territories in India. These ridiculous assertions have neither legal validity nor international credibility.
- India also said that the release of the new map confirms Pakistan's “obsession with territorial aggrandizement” supported by cross-border terrorism.

The timing of the release of new map:

- The map has been released a day before the first anniversary of Indian government's August 5 decisions rolling back special status of J&K and the bifurcation of the state into two UTs.
- The move also appears to be a tit-for-tat for India's inclusion of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir as part of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir, and of Gilgit Baltistan as part of Ladakh in the new map the government released on November 2.

Let us look at the important regions now:

Where is Sir Creek?

Sir Creek is a 96-km strip of water disputed between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch marshlands.

- Originally named Ban Ganga, Sir Creek is named after a British representative.

The Creek opens up in the Arabian Sea and

roughly divides the Kutch region of Gujarat from the Sindh Province of Pakistan.

What's the related dispute?

The dispute lies in the interpretation of the maritime boundary line between Kutch and Sindh.

- Pakistan claims the entire width of the estuary, while India says the demarcation should be in the middle.
- In its support, India cites the **Thalweg Doctrine in International Maritime Law**, which states that river boundaries between two states may be divided by the mid-channel if the water-body is navigable.

What about Junagadh?

Junagadh is in coastal Gujarat. It was a part of the Kathiawar region.

It decided to join India in 1947 and the decision was formalised through a Plebiscite in 1948. This was, however, not accepted by Pakistan then, but was overtaken by the first India-Pakistan war over Kashmir that began at the end of October 1947 and continued for over a year.



GS - II

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Printed in India
Printed in India

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Contempt Of Court

In The News

Recently, Supreme Court has held the lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan as guilty of contempt of court in the context of the comment made on social media, targeting the current Chief Justice of India.

What is contempt of court?

- Contempt refers to the **offence of showing disrespect to the dignity or authority of a court.**
- The **rationale** for this provision is that **courts must be protected** from tendentious attacks that lower its authority, defame its public image, and make the public lose faith in its impartiality.
 - Also, Article 261 says, Full faith and credit shall be given throughout the territory of India to public acts, records and judicial proceedings of the Union and of every State.
- **Constitutional Provisions in relation to contempt:**
 - Contempt of court is one of the **reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(2).**
 - **Article 129 of the Constitution** conferred on the Supreme Court the power to punish contempt of itself.

Article 215 conferred a corresponding power on the High Courts.

- ✓ Every High Court shall have and exercise the same jurisdiction, powers and authority, in accordance with the same procedure and practice, in respect of contempt of courts subordinate to it as it has and exercises in respect of contempt of itself.
- **Article 142(2)** says that when any law is made by the Parliament on the provisions mentioned in clause 1 of this Article, the **Supreme Court has all the power to make an order for securing any person's attendance, production of any documents or has the power to**

give punishment to anyone for its contempt.

- The **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 defines contempt** (the expression contempt of court is **not defined in the constitution**). It divides contempt into civil and criminal contempt.
 - **Civil contempt** refers to the wilful disobedience of an order of any court.
 - **Criminal contempt** means the publication (whether by words, spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representations, or otherwise) of any matter or the doing of any other act whatsoever which
 - ✓ **scandalises or tends to scandalise**, or lowers or tends to lower the authority of, any court and have the effect of undermining public confidence in the judiciary; or
 - ✓ **prejudices, or interferes or tends to interfere** with, the due course of any judicial proceeding; or
 - ✓ **interferes or tends to interfere with**, or obstructs or tends to obstruct, the administration of justice in any other manner.
- **Punishment:** As per Contempt of Courts Act of 1971, punishment is simple imprisonment for a term up to six months and/or a fine of up to ₹. 2,000. The accused may be discharged, or the punishment awarded may be remitted on apology being made to the satisfaction of the court.
- **Period of Limitation:** No court shall initiate contempt proceedings either on its own notions or otherwise **after the expiry of one year** from the date on which contempt is alleged to have been committed.
- **Exceptions to contempt of Court:**
 - **Fair and accurate reporting** of judicial proceedings.
 - **Any fair criticism on the merits** of a judicial order after a case is heard and disposed of.

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

- o If the publication or other act is **merely a defamatory attack on the judge** and is not intended to interfere with the administration of justice, it will not be taken as contempt of court.
- o The Act was amended in 2006 and introduced truth as a valid defence, if it was in public interest and was invoked in a *bona fide* manner.

Issues with contempt of court

- **Stifle with freedom of speech and Expression:** Law of contempt still continues to strike a **fine balance between 'the need to uphold the majesty of the courts and administration of justice' AND 'the non-comprisable fundamental right to freedom of speech protected and guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India'**, subject of course to "reasonable restrictions"
- **Vague and wide jurisdiction:** Definition of criminal contempt in India is extremely wide and can be easily invoked because of the *Suo motu* powers of the Court to initiate such proceedings.
- **Against Natural Justice:** A fundamental principle of natural justice, that no one may be the judge in his or her own case. However, the contempt law enables judiciary to sit in judgement on itself.
 - o In Nand Lal Balwani case, who purportedly hurled a shoe towards the court, the same bench convicted Nand Lal Balwani for contempt and sentenced him to four months imprisonment.
- **Limited right to appeal:** As per the present statutory scheme, a person convicted for the criminal contempt has the right to file a review petition against the judgment and that plea is decided in chambers by the bench usually without hearing the contemnor.
- **Impact Executive functioning:** Court Orders can be sometimes be used to blackmail executive. Fear of contempt of court make misallocation of resources of administration like using of force, logistics etc

- **International practice:** The offence of “scandalising the court” continues in India even though it was abolished as an offence in US, Canada and England.

Way forward

- Under the Indian **Contempt of Courts laws power is discretionary** in nature. To check its abusive use **it should be made more determinate and principled.**
 - o The words 'any other manner' mentioned in section 2 (c) (iii) of the contempt of courts Act, 1971, which is the source of discretionary powers of the courts in criminal contempt of court should either be deleted or some specific guidelines are needed to check this limitless power.
- Judiciary should **balance two conflicting principles**, i.e. freedom of expression, and fair and fearless justice.
- Power to punish for **contempt of court must always be exercised cautiously**, wisely and with circumspection. **There should be an independent panel** to check the misuse of Contempt of Court power
- **Element of ‘mens rea’ may be incorporated** in the act.
 - o ‘Mens rea’ is a legal concept denoting criminal intent or evil mind. Establishing the ‘mens rea’ of an offender is usually necessary to prove guilt in a criminal trial.
- Proceedings may be **according to the Indian evidence act and Criminal procedure code.**
- **Punishment for contempt is inadequate** and is not a sufficient deterrent especially with regard to fine it should be sufficiently enhanced to deal with interference in administration of justice.

Conclusion

It is **necessary to distinguish between constructive criticism and malicious statement** and the test for contempt needs to be evaluated. It should be whether the contemptuous remarks in question actually obstruct the Court from functioning and **should not be allowed to be used as a means to quash reasonable dissent.**

Judicial Decisions to constitute Contempt of Court in India

- **Interference with Administration of Justice:** In **Brahma Prakash Sharma v State of Uttar Pradesh**, the Supreme Court had held that in order to constitute the offence of Contempt of Court, **it was not necessary to specifically prove that an actual interference with administration of justice has been committed**. The Court held that it was enough if a defamatory statement is likely or in any way tends to interfere with the proper administration of justice.
- **Scandalizing the Court:** In the case of **PN Dua v Shiv Shankar and others**, the Supreme Court held that mere criticism of the Court does not amount to contempt of Court.
 - o In the case of **Baradanath Mishra v the Registrar of Orissa High Court** judgement, the court said that in a contempt case the court has to ask whether the vilification is of the Judge as a judge, or it is the vilification of the Judge as an individual. If the latter the Judge is left to his private remedies and the Court has no power to commit for contempt.
- **Interference with due course of Justice:** In **Pritam Lal v. High Court of M.P** the Supreme Court held that to preserve the proceedings of the Courts from interference and to keep the streams of justice pure, **it becomes the duty of the Court, to punish the contemnor in order to preserve its dignity.**

How do judges respond to criticisms in other democracies?

- **England:** Contempt Law in England has now been abolished after the last contempt proceedings occurred in 1930. British Judge Lord Denning had observed in 1969 that even though the **Court has the jurisdiction for contempt, they shall never use it**. This is because in contempt cases, judges do have a **certain amount of personal interest**. This is against the legal principle that one cannot be a judge in their own case.
 - o Lord Denning said “We do not fear criticism, nor do we resent it.”

- **United states:** Justice Hugo Black had observed that **American Public opinion could not be silenced in the pretext of Contempt of Court**. Instead, it contended that the dignity of the Court will not be established and respected if free discussions about the Court were restricted on the pretext of preserving its duty.
- **Canada:** In Kopyto case in 1987, court observed that courts are free to be criticised unless there is any imminent danger to administration of justice.

Contempt of court: A censor on free speech

- **Democratic reform process:** Constructive difference of opinion and suggestions are very important for a democracy to grow. If freedom to express one's opinion is suppressed then there are chances that any constructive debate will diminish. This will be very disastrous for our democracy.
- **Right to differ:** Individual opinion does not mean that an institution is criticised. The constitution has itself allowed difference of opinion to prevail. By censoring freedom of speech, the judiciary seems to indicate that its institution is infallible and they are superior.
- **Self-protective nature:** Contempt of court has been used as a tool to protect own image of a judge. Sometimes, personal difference is considered as rejection of the institution of judiciary. Since the judges are the same ones that are accused of, conflict of interest cannot be ruled out.

Should the provision be retained or not?

In 2018, the Department of Justice asked Law Commission of India to examine Contempt of Courts Act, 1971. **Law Commission** has submitted a report stating that there is no requirement to amend the Act, for the reasons stated below:

- **High number of contempt cases:** High civil and criminal contempt pending in various High Courts and the Supreme Court **justify the continuing relevance** of the Act. Commission stated that amending the

definition of contempt may reduce the overall impact of the law and lessen the respect that people have for courts and their authority and functioning.

- **Source of contempt power:** Courts derive their contempt powers from the Constitution. The Act only outlines the procedure in relation to investigation and punishment for contempt. Therefore, deletion of the offence from the Act will not impact the inherent constitutional powers of the superior courts to punish anyone for its contempt.
- **Impact on subordinate courts:** The Constitution allows superior courts to punish for their contempt. The Act additionally allows the High Court to punish for contempt of subordinate courts. The Commission argued that if the definition of contempt is narrowed, subordinate courts will suffer as there will be no remedy to address cases of their contempt.
- **International comparison: Commission compared the** offence of ‘scandalising the Court’ in Britain and India Commission noted that the United Kingdom had abolished the offence in its contempt laws. However, it says abolishing the offence in India would leave a legislative gap. It warranted a continuation of the offence in India as
 - India continues to have a high number of criminal contempt cases, while the last offence of Scandalising the Court in the UK was in 1931.
 - Offence of Scandalising the Court continues to be punishable in UK under other laws.
- **Adequate safeguards into the Act to protect against its misuse.** Provisions in 1971 act suggest that the courts will not prosecute all cases of contempt. The Commission further noted that the Act had withstood judicial scrutiny, and therefore, there was no reason to amend it.
- **Restrict court power:** 1971 Act was a good influence as laying down procedure, restricts the vast authority of the courts in wielding contempt powers. Amending the definition of contempt will lead to ambiguity.

Sub-Categorization Of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

In The News

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the term extension of the commission to examine the issue of sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

More on News

The Union Government constituted a four-member commission **headed by Justice G. Rohini in 2017 under Article 340** with an aim to **improve the equitability of sharing of benefits among OBCs.**

- o The **article 340** of the Indian Constitution lays down conditions for the appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes.
- Mandate of the Commission:
 - o Examining the **extent of inequitable distribution** of benefits of reservation (I.e. 27 percent reservation in jobs and education) among the castes or communities with reference to the central OBC list.
 - o Work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a **scientific approach for sub-categorization of OBCs.**

Who are OBCs?

- OBC is a collective term used by the Government to classify castes which are **educationally or socially disadvantaged.**
- OBCs are a **vastly heterogeneous group.** There are various jaatis or sub-castes which vary significantly in the societal and economic status.
- o For instance, OBCs include land-owning communities in both north and south India alongside poorer sections of the society living on subsistence labour.

Background: The Mandal Commission

- In 1990, the then Union government announced that Other Backward Classes

(OBCs) would get **27 percent reservation in jobs in central government services and public sector units (under Article 16(4) of the Constitution).**

- The decision was based on **Mandal Commission Report (1980)**, which was set up in 1979 and chaired by B.P. Mandal. The mandate of the Mandal Commission was to identify **socially or educationally backward classes** to address caste discrimination.
- The recommendation for OBC reservations in central government institutions was implemented in 1992 while the

education quota came into force in 2006 (under Article 15(4) of the Constitution).

- To ensure that benefits of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission percolated down to the most backward communities, the **creamy layer criteria** was invoked by Supreme Court in the ruling called the ‘**Indira Sawhney Judgment**’ (1992).
- o A household with an **annual income of Rs 8 lakh or above** is classified as belonging to the ‘creamy layer’ among OBCs and hence is not eligible for reservations.

Idea of sub-categorization

- The First Backward Class Commission report of 1955 had proposed sub-categorization of OBCs into **backward and extremely backward communities.**
- In the Mandal Commission report of 1979, a **dissent note** by member L R Naik proposed sub-categorization in **intermediate and depressed backward classes.**
- In 2015, the NCBC had proposed that OBCs be divided into the following three categories:
 - a. **Extremely Backward Classes (EBC-Group A)** facing social, educational and economic backwardness even within the OBCs, consisting of aboriginal tribes, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes who have been carrying on with their traditional occupations;
 - b. **More Backward Classes (MBC-**

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

Group B) consisting of vocational groups carrying on with their traditional occupations; and

c. **Backward Classes (BC-Group C)** comprising of those comparatively more forward.

- According to the NCBC, **11 states** (Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Puducherry, Karnataka, Haryana, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu) have **subcategorized OBC for reservations** in state-government-owned institutions.

1900 castes from among the central list of 2,633 OBCs.

These 1900 castes constitute about 2-3 per cent of the total seats and won't affect other groups significantly but may create substantial opportunities for them.

- **Sub-categorization to be based on relative benefits among the OBCs and not on social backwardness**, this may help deprived sections to be able to avail of their fair share of the quota.

What is the need for sub-categorization and tentative recommendations of the committee?

- **Benefits of reservations have reached only limited sections:** The Rohini commission highlighted that from about 2,633 central list OBCs, about 1900 castes have not proportionately benefitted.

- o **Half of these 1900 castes have not availed the benefits of reservation at all**, and the other half include those that have availed less than 3 per cent share in the OBC quota.

- o The commission highlighted that **25% of benefits from OBC reservations** have been availed by only **10 sub-castes**.

- o According to the committee, the communities that have got almost no benefits of reservations include profession-based castes such as **Kalaigars**, a community that traditionally polishes tins; and **Sikligars and Saranias**, communities that traditionally sharpen knives; **apart from several other marginalised groups**.

- **Benefits are tilted towards economically stronger sub-sections:** Research suggests that the Mandal Commission recommendations helped the economically better positioned OBCs more than the most backward castes.

Recommendations in this regard

- **A fixed quota of between 8 to 10 percent** within the 27 percent OBC quota for almost

What are the challenges in its implementation?

- **Political sensitivity of the issue:** The move to sub-categorize OBCs **may create agitation in some sections of OBCs** as the benefits get redistributed.

- o OBC reservations have caused political turmoil in the past and its possible effect on the **upcoming Bihar assembly elections** cannot be denied.

- **Use of older and unreliable estimates:** The commission has based its recommendations on quota within quota on the **population figures from the 1931 Census**, and not on the more recent Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011.

- o Since the implementation of the Mandal Commission report, over **500 new castes have been added to the Central list of OBCs**. The 1931 Census does not have the population for these new additions.

- o The 1931 census also **does not have population of princely states** that were **not ruled by the British**.

- **Information unavailability on social and educational status:** There is lack availability of information regarding the social and educational backwardness of various castes.

- It could be a very **difficult exercise statistically** due to following reasons:

- o **Large number of castes:** According to NCBC, there are 2514 OBC castes in the country and scientific sub-categorization by analyzing each caste could be challenging.

- o **Variation from state to state:** There are

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook YouTube Telegram

Printed March 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

significant variations within castes from state to state which implies data collection needs to be larger and more robust.

What more can be done to ensure equitability of benefits?

- **Revising the creamy layer ceiling:** National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) demanded that the income ceiling be further revised as the current limit is not in up to date with the associated purchasing power.
- **Strengthening NCBC:** Expanding the powers and domain of NCBC as envisaged by providing the Commission with a constitutional status.

Demand For Sixth Schedule Status

In The News

Arunachal Pradesh assembly unanimously passed a resolution for the entire state to be included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Background

- State government had demanded to put State under the Sixth Schedule **to protect and safeguard the customary rights of tribal people** regarding ownership and transfer of land and forest products of the state.
 - In 2004 and 2007, State assembly had passed two resolutions for creation of Mon autonomous region (MAR) and Patkai autonomous council (PAC) under the provisions of the 6th Schedule of the Constitution.
 - ✓ It was then forwarded to the Centre for approval which is still pending.
- Earlier, state government had also **demand to amend the Constitution and waive Article 371(H) and put Arunachal Pradesh under the provisions of Article 371(A) and 371(G)** in line with Nagaland and Mizoram.
 - Article 371(A) and 371(G) provides special protection with respect to religious and social practices, customary laws and rights to ownership and transfer of land to the tribal people of the state of Nagaland and Mizoram respectively
 - Under Article 371 (H), the state governor has special responsibility with respect to law and order in the state and in the discharge of his functions in relation thereto.
- Though, at present Arunachal Pradesh has **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) Act of 1873** which prohibits all citizens of India from entering Arunachal without a valid **Inner Line Permit**.

- Inner Line Permit is a document that **allows an Indian citizen to visit or stay in a state that is protected under the ILP system.**
- It is British era regulation under the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873**, for Crown's own commercial interests.
- Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram are protected by the Inner Line, and lately Manipur was added.

Permit for foreigners

Every foreigner, except a citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter and stay in a Protected or Restricted Area, is **required to obtain a special permit called Protected Area Permit/Restricted Area Permit** from a competent authority.

Article 371

Article 371 to 371-J of Constitution contains special provisions for eleven states to meet the aspirations, to protect the cultural and economic interests of the tribal and local people of the states or to deal with the disturbed law and order condition in some parts of the states.

Sixth schedule

Sixth schedule to the constitution provides power to tribal communities to administer the tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram under the provision of article 244(2) and 275(1) of the constitution

- Article 244 of provides special system of administration for certain areas** designated as 'scheduled areas' and 'tribal areas.
- Article 275 makes provisions for statutory grants** to be charged on Consolidated Fund of India. Such grants also include specific grants for promoting the welfare of the scheduled tribes or for raising the level of administration of the scheduled areas in a state.

Inner Line Permit

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook Twitter YouTube Telegram

Page No. 40
Page No. 40

Advantages of inclusion in 6th schedule

Sixth schedule benefits in democratic devolution of powers, preserve and promote the distinct culture of the region, protect agrarian rights including rights on land and enhance transfer of funds for speedy development through following features:

- **Autonomous District Councils (ADC):** ADCs are bodies representing a district to which the Constitution has **given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature.**
 - o Each **autonomous district council** consisting of 30 members, of whom four are nominated by governor and the remaining 26 are elected. All of them remain in power for a term of five years.
- **Autonomous region:** If there are different Scheduled Tribes in an autonomous district, the Governor may, by public notification, divide the area or areas inhabited by them into autonomous regions.
- **Legislative Power:** ADCs are empowered to make legislative laws with due approval from the governor.
- **Limitation to power of Parliamentary or state legislature over autonomous regions:** Acts passed by Parliament and state legislatures may or may not be levied in these regions unless the President and the governor gives her or his approval.
- **Judicial powers:** councils can constitute village courts within their jurisdiction to hear trial of cases involving the tribes. Governors of states that fall under the Sixth Schedule specifies the jurisdiction of high courts for each of these cases.
- **Regulatory power:** The district council can establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, ferries, fisheries, roads and so on in the district. It can also make regulations for the control of money lending and trading by non-tribals. But such regulations require the assent of the governor
- **Tax revenue collection:** - The district and regional councils are empowered to assess and collect land revenue and to impose certain specified taxes. They can also

receive grants-in-aids from the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the costs of schemes for development, health care, education, roads and regulatory powers to state control.

Issues with Sixth Schedule

- **No Decentralization of powers and administration:** It has not taken place in many 6th schedule areas. For example, in Bodo Territorial Area districts, there is only district council which elects few people who enjoy unbridled power.

Thus, units should be created that will represent people at all strata.

- **Legislative power of state over councils:** The laws made by the councils require the assent of governor. This process has no time limits which delayed the legislations for years. Also, Para 12 (A) of the Sixth Schedule clearly states that, whenever there is a conflict of interest between the District Councils and the state legislature, the latter would prevail.
- **Conflict in discretionary powers of governor:** There are differing views over the discretionary power of governors with respect to the administration of these areas. Thus, conflict is there on requirement of consultation of governor with council of ministers.
- **Lack of codification of customary law:** Customary laws need to be codified and brought into practical use to ensure protection of tribal cultural identity.
- **Lack of skilled professionals:** Almost all Councils do not have access to planning professionals which results in ad-hoc conceiving of development projects without proper technical and financial consideration.
- **Financial dependency:** Autonomous councils are dependent on their respective state governments for funds in addition to the occasional special package from the Centre. There is no State Finance Commission for recommending ways to devolve funds to District Councils and Regional Councils.

- **Lack of development:** Although 6th schedule was enacted to give more benefit to the people and bring fast paced development, yet due to no panchayats or parishad at people level, they have no power and money which non-6th schedule areas have for implementation of various schemes like MGNREGA etc.
- **Corruption:** Financial mismanagement and rampant corruption have often been detected in the functioning of different Councils under the Sixth Schedule provision.

Way Forward

- **Creation of elected village councils** in all areas and ensuring accountability of Village Councils to Gram Sabha.
- Ensure **regular election** conducted by the State Election Commission.
- Recognize Gram Sabha under law and specify its powers & functions.
- Ensure **women and other ethnic minorities** are not excluded from representation in council.
- **Bring transparency** in planning, implementation and monitoring of developmental programmes.

National Recruitment Agency

In The News

The Union Cabinet recently approved setting up of National Recruitment Agency, an independent body to conduct examination for government jobs.

More on news

- The National Recruitment Agency (NRA) was first proposed by the government in the union budget 2020.
- NRA will conduct the Common Eligibility Test (CET) for recruitment to **non-gazetted posts in government and public sector banks**.
- Government has **sanctioned a sum of INR 1500 crore** for the NRA which will be undertaken over a period of three years.

Key Features

- NRA will be a Society registered under the **Societies Registration Act**, headed by a Chairman of the rank of the Secretary to the Government of India.
- It will have **representatives of Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance, Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) & Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS)**.
- CET will be held **twice a year** with different CETs for **graduate level, 12th Pass level and 10th pass level** to facilitate recruitment to vacancies at various levels.
- Initially CET will be conducted for 3 agencies only— **RRB, IBPS and SSC**, but later it will be extended to all future recruitments.
- The examinations will be **conducted in 12 languages**.
- CET will be a first level test to shortlist candidates and the **score will be valid for three years**. **Advantages for students**
- CET aims to **replace multiple examinations** conducted by different recruiting agencies for selection to government jobs advertised each year, with single online test. Thus, CET **removes the hassle of appearing in multiple**

examinations.

- CET will be **held in 1,000 centres across India** in a bid to remove the currently prevalent urban bias. **There will be an examination centre in every district of the country**. This would **encourage more women candidates** to apply. Also, Central government will invest in the necessary infrastructure for 117 aspirational districts.
- There will be a common registration, single fee. This would **reduce financial burden** that multiple exams imposed.
- Also, planned **outreach and awareness facility** to assist candidates in rural and far flung areas to familiarize them with the online examination system will ensure more participation.

Advantages for Institutions

- It will **reduce the cost of spending on setting up an exam centre for every exam** conducted throughout the year with expected savings of Rs 600 crore.
- Currently, approximately 1.25 lakh government jobs are advertised every year for which 2.5 crore aspirants appear in various examinations. A **single eligibility test would significantly reduce the recruitment cycle** leading to efficient administration by filling vacancies quickly.
- **NRA will bring in transparency and efficiency to the recruitment cycle** by conducting single exam and taking onetime fee from candidates.

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t y



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

Supply Chain Resilience Initiative

In The News

Recently, Trade ministers of India, Australia, and Japan decided to **launch an initiative on supply chain resilience (it was first proposed by Japan)** and invited like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region to join the initiative.

About SCRI

- It is an approach that helps a country to **ensure that it has diversified its supply risk** across a clutch of supplying nations instead of being dependent on just one or a few.
- **Unanticipated events** — whether natural, such as tsunamis, earthquakes or even a pandemic; or manmade, such as an armed conflict in a region — that disrupt supplies from a particular country or even intentional halts to trade, **could adversely impact economic activity in the destination country.**
- **Objective is to-**
 - Attract foreign direct investment to turn the **Indo-Pacific into an economic powerhouse.**
 - Build a mutually **complementary relationship among partner countries.**

Why focus on SCRI?

- **COVID-19 Impact:** If supply chains are heavily dependent on supplies from one country, the impact on importing nations could be crippling if that source stops production for involuntary reasons, or even as a conscious measure of economic coercion.
- **U.S.-China trade tensions:** It could threaten globalization as a whole and have a major impact on countries like India, Japan and Australia which are heavily reliant on international trade both for markets for its exports and for supplies of a range of primary goods
- **Managing supply of inputs:** Diversification of supply chain is critical

for managing the risks associated with supply of inputs and will help to cohesively react to adverse events faster and also to disciplining price volatility.

- **Fraying trade and diplomatic relations with China:** India restricted some Chinese imports and banned several Chinese apps after a deadly border clash. In Australia, exports like beef, barley and now wine has been targeted by China amid deteriorating ties between the two nations.
- **Enhanced cooperation among partner countries:** In 2019, cumulative GDP of 3 countries was \$9.3 trillion, and their merchandise goods and services trade was \$2.7 trillion and \$0.9 trillion, respectively.
 - Australia, Japan and India are already part of **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue** with US.
- **Initiate recharging of supply chains in Indo-Pacific region:** SCRI can work with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to build stronger supply and manufacturing chains that are protected from external shocks and influences.

About Global Supply Chain

- Global supply chains are **networks that can span across multiple continents and countries** for the purpose of sourcing and supplying goods and services.
- Global supply chains **involve the flow of information, processes and resources** across the globe.

Abraham Accord

In The News

Recently, UAE and Israel signed a US-brokered agreement that has come to be known as the ‘**Abraham Accord**’, that aims at establishing formal relations between the two countries.

More about news

- According to the Accord, UAE and Israel would establish formal diplomatic relations and in exchange, Israel would suspend its plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank.
 - With this, **UAE will become the first Gulf country** to establish diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.
 - ✓ **Gulf countries** are the seven Arab states which border the **Persian Gulf**, namely **Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE**.
 - ✓ UAE becomes the third Arab nation to recognize Israel after Egypt (in 1979) and Jordan (1994).
- For decades, there has been a consensus among many Arab and Muslim-majority states that they will not end a state of hostility with Israel until it agrees to a deal granting statehood to the Palestinians.

About Arab-Israel conflict

- **Hussein-McMahon (1915) correspondence** contained British support of an independent Arab state for Arab assistance in opposing the Ottoman Empire.
- In 1917, during World War I, the British captured Palestine from the Ottoman Empire after the **Sykes-Picot Agreement** with France (1916).
- Later in **Balfour Declaration (1917)**, Britain pledged establishment of Palestine as national home for Jews.



- The British Mandate period saw rise in immigration of Jews to the Mandate of Palestine. During World War II, the persecution of Jews by Nazi Germany gave momentum to the demands for a state for Jews in Palestine. This led to a conflict between Arabs and Jews i.e. Israel-Palestine conflict and Arab-Israel wars.
- **In 1947 the United Nations voted to split the Palestine between Arabs and Jews.**
 - Jewish leadership accepted while Arabs rejected the agreement.
 - Consequently, Arab states of **Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria** declared war on Israel.
- **Israel** won the war and expanded its territory reducing Palestine to just Gaza strip and West bank.
 - It was the beginning of this Palestine

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

refugee crisis which ultimately led to the creation of **PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)** in 1964.

- After a **series of wars in 1956, 1967 (Six-day War) and 1973 (Yom Kipper War)** between Israel and Arab States. In 1993, PLO signed **OSLO Accord** with Israel that provides for Palestinian interim self-government in West bank and Gaza strip. (However, Israel backtracked and refused to consider Palestine as a free country.)
- The issue was further complicated by the establishment of **settlements** by Israel in the occupied West Bank.
- In 2011 Palestine launched a diplomatic campaign to gain membership in the UN for the state of Palestine. Same year, it was **admitted in UNESCO as a full member**, however the Palestinian struggle to be an independent nation is still going on.

in West Asia can aid Arab states.

- **Enhanced cooperation with Israel:** Israel is the most technologically advanced country in the Middle East and it can provide cutting-edge technology in fields of biotech, healthcare, defense and cyber surveillance.
- **Threat from radical Sunni extremism:** Arab states now realize the danger it poses to them as exemplified by the rise of the Islamic State terror group.
- **Need to counter Iran:** It could pave the way for the region's Sunni Arab kingdoms, US and Israel enhancing regional cooperation against their common foe, Shia Iran.

Need to address threat of Islamism or political Islam: It is a transnational concept often embodied by the Muslim Brotherhood and one which certain Gulf Arab rulers view as an existential threat to their dynastic monarchies.

Significance of this region for US

- **Valuable oil reserves:** Arab states of Persian Gulf holds valuable oil reserves to which US seeks access, not just to supplement American reserves but as a means of maintaining a degree of leverage over the import-dependent European, Asian and Japanese markets.
- **Threat of Terrorism:** U.S. has highlighted the threat of terrorism from the Middle East as America's major national security concern in the post-cold war world.
- **Sustaining freedom of navigation:** It is required by U.S. Navy and for global commercial traffic through the Middle East's major maritime passages—the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el Mandeb Strait, and the Suez Canal.
- **Iran issue:** US intends to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

About West Bank

- It is **located on the west bank of the Jordan River** and is bounded by Israel on the north, west and south. On the east lies Jordan.
- Since the Six-Day War in 1967, **West Bank has been occupied by Israel**. Both Israelis and Palestinians assert their rights to the territory of the West Bank.
- Palestinians who live in the West Bank live **under Israeli military rule, as well as limited self-rule**.
- Also present in the West Bank are some **132 Israeli settlements and 124 unauthorized settlements**, along with military outposts.

What is the geo-political significance of this agreement?

- **For UAE:** Deal signifies a strategic advantage over Iran and access to better technology including biotech, healthcare, defense and cyber surveillance. It might also prompt other Gulf and Arab nations to start engagement with Israel.
- **For Israel:** Israel gets a diplomatic and economic opening with the big power in the Gulf, that could open other doors, given its security interests. It will also provide Israel a secure presence in Gulf and the larger

Why Arab states are engaging with Israel?

- **Need to reorient their economies:** To diversify petrodollar fueled economy Arab states need to invest in technology driven sectors. Israel being the leader in technology

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook Twitter YouTube Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

region.

For Saudi Arabia bloc: The bloc sees its interests being aligned with that of U.S. and Israel (Over Iran, Muslim brotherhood etc.) and their support for Palestine, which Arab powers had historically upheld, is dwindling,

- **For USA:** It allows US to pivot away from Trump’s Peace to Prosperity plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The agreement could be interpreted as a counter to the Iran-China deal.
- **For Palestine:** Unlike the past two Arab-Israeli peace agreements, Palestinians do not figure prominently in the current one. Palestinians want a viable independent state which is nowhere on the horizon.
 - o Egypt and Israel peace deal promised an autonomous self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza.
 - o Jordanian Israeli treaty came after Israel agreed to the formation of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza.

Conclusion

While the deal has the potential to change Arab-Israeli relations for good, it also shows how the Arab countries are gradually decoupling themselves from the Palestine question. The question now is whether the UAE would be able to convince the Jewish state to relax its occupation of the Palestinian territories and start talks between them. If so happens, the UAE-Israel deal would become a significant step towards Palestinian statehood and peace in the Middle East.

India-Vietnam

Why in news

India and Vietnam held the 17th meeting of their bilateral Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

Highlights of the meeting

- **Economic and defence engagement:** India and Vietnam agreed to add new momentum to their economic and defence engagement and explore closer cooperation in civil nuclear energy, space, marine sciences and new technologies.
 - o India had earlier announced a line of credit US\$500 million for procurement of defence equipment from India.
 - o Vietnam is negotiating with India for both BrahMos and Akash missiles.
- **Cooperation at Multilateral and Regional forums:** including at the UN Security Council where both are elected to be non-permanent members in 2021, based on their strong convergence of views on many global and regional issues.
 - o Both agreed to step up cooperation and coordination at important regional forums under the ASEAN framework.
 - o Vietnam has supported India's bid to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council and join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
- **Indo-Pacific:** Both agreed to enhance their bilateral cooperation in line with India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** and the **ASEAN's Outlook on Indo-Pacific** to achieve shared security, prosperity and growth for all in the region.

Importance of Vietnam for India

- **Act east Policy:** Vietnam is a core partner of India in ASEAN and a critical partner in Look & Act East Policy which aims to re-invigorate its historical ties with countries in Southeast and East Asia.
- **To contain China:** Vietnam, due to its critical geostrategic location in the neighborhood of China holds the key to any

future strategy to contain the hegemonic rise of China.

- o India and Vietnam have **built strategic partnerships**, including extensive cooperation on developing nuclear power, enhancing regional security and fighting terrorism, transnational crime and drug trafficking.
- **Energy Security:** Vietnam has rich hydrocarbon reserves. **Vietnam is also keen for India to expand its presence in oil and gas exploration** in the South China Sea.
- **Trade and Economy:** India is among the top ten trading partners of Vietnam. Under the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) framework, India has been taking up **Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)** having short gestation period, bringing direct benefits to communities at the grassroots level.

Challenges in India-Vietnam relations

- **South China Sea:** Vietnam is involved in a territorial dispute with China over the South China Sea (SCS). India too is engaged in oil exploration activities in the areas of the Sea that Vietnam has claimed.
 - o However, Vietnam lauded India's principled position on the disputed South China Sea and also sought India's participation in the oil and gas sectors.
- **Cultural gap:** There is a significant cultural, custom and language gap between people from both countries. India is much closer to Thailand (Buddhism, Hinduism, Brahmanical Rights) and Cambodia (Angkor Wat renovation) in comparison to Vietnam.
- **Connectivity:** The two countries are geographically far apart. This not only affects tourism but also impacts the import and export of goods and business exchanges.
 - o However, India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral **highway will allow Indian goods to reach Southeast Asia with ease and vice versa**. India-Myanmar-

Thailand trilateral highway could link up with already existing roads like the one linking Thailand with the Vietnamese port of Da Nang.

- **Industries:** India has some problems related to land acquisition in Vietnam, which is hampering the pace with which manufacturing industries can set up their bases in Vietnam.

Way forward

- India-Vietnam strategic partnership is key to maintaining peace and stability not only in SE Asia but in the entire Indo-Pacific region as the two countries share plethora of complementarities. Both the countries, **by exploring different areas such as IT, agro-chemicals, agro-processing etc can come more close to each other.**
- Strengthening ties with Vietnam will eventually lead **a step towards the realization of SAGAR** (Security and Growth all in the region) initiative and **both can mutually benefit each other in the arena of Blue Economy and ocean security.**
- o **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** is India's policy or doctrine of maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. Through this, India seeks to deepen **economic and security cooperation** with its maritime neighbours and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.

India-Maldives Bilateral Relations

In The News

India announced a slew of new connectivity measures for the Maldives to help the island nation deal with the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About news

The announced projects include:

- An “**air bubble agreement**” for travel, a direct ferry service and a submarine cable for telecom connectivity.
- US \$500 million assistance to provide **assistance for the Greater Male Connectivity project (GMCP)** to connect Male to three neighbouring islands - Villingili, Thilafushi and Gulhifahu islands. GMCP would be the largest civilian infrastructure project in Maldives.
- **US \$400 million Line of Credit (LoC)** comes in addition to a previous LoC of \$800 million that was announced in 2018.

Strategic Importance of Maldives

- Maldives lies in close **proximity to the west coast of India** and its **potential to allow a third nation’s naval presence in the area** imbues it with significant strategic importance to India.
- **Maldives is situated at the hub of commercial sea-lanes** running through the Indian Ocean. More than **97% of India’s international trade by volume and 75% by value** passes through the region.
- India has the ambition to be ‘**Net- security provider**’ in Indian Ocean region and this calls for **close military and naval ties with Maldives** so that India protects its own interests as well of its neighbours in the Indian Ocean region.
- China is **rapidly expanding its footprint in the Maldives** though it opened an embassy in the island nation only in 2011. Thus, it **becomes geo-politically and strategically important** for India to maintain its presence in Maldives.

Air bubble agreements

- “Transport Bubbles” or “Air Travel Arrangements” are **temporary arrangements between two countries** aimed at restarting commercial passenger services when regular international flights are suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- They are **reciprocal in nature**, meaning airlines from both countries enjoy similar benefits.
- India signed air bubble agreements with **various countries including**, Afghanistan, Canada, France, Germany, Maldives, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA etc.

Overview of India-Maldives relations

• Economic relations

- India and Maldives signed a **trade agreement in 1981**, now bilateral trade stands at US\$ 288.99 Million (2018) heavily in favour of India. **India is Maldives’ 4th largest trade partner.**
- **State Bank of India** has been playing a vital role in the economic development of the Maldives since 1974 by providing **loan assistance for promotion of island resorts, export of marine products and business enterprises.**

• Defence Cooperation

Since **Operation Cactus (1988)**, in which **Indian Troops prevented a coup in Maldives**, defence and security has been a major area of cooperation between both.

- India provides the largest number of training opportunities for Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF),

meeting around 70% of their defence training requirements.

- Indian Army and MDNF have been conducting **Exercise Ekuverin** (‘Friends’ in the Maldivian language) since 2009.

□ Development Assistance

- Major completed development assistance by India include **Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital**, Maldives

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

Institute of Technical Education, Construction of National Police Academy etc.

- o **Grants for projects under High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs):** These include projects such as ambulances, Convention Centre, drug rehabilitation centre, police station upgradation etc.
- o India has provided large-scale assistance to Maldives in the **aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami** and during the **2014 Male water crisis under Operation Neer**.

□ People to people relations

- o Indians are the **second largest expatriate community** in the Maldives. About 25% of Doctors and Teachers in Maldives are Indian nationals.
- o India offers **several scholarships to Maldivian students** such as: Indian Council for Cultural Relations scholarships, SAARC Chair Fellowship etc.
- o The **India Cultural Center (ICC)** in Male was inaugurated in 2011, which conducts courses in **yoga, classical music and dance**. Also, **Hindi commercial films**, TV serials and music are immensely popular in Maldives.
- o In 2019, Indian PM was conferred with the **Maldives’ highest honour —Rule of Nishan Izzuddeen**

Infrastructure Limited.

- Its political instability has challenged **overall security of the Indian Ocean** by **increasing radicalisation** — over **200 Maldivians reportedly joined the Islamic State** —and by the granting of non-transparent permissions for foreign investment.

Way Forward

- Both countries need to enhance **regional cooperation** by using common platforms such as the Indian Ocean RIM Association and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium.
- While the recent **‘India-First Policy’** of the **Maldives** and **India’s ‘Neighbourhood First Policy’** are intuitively complementary, implementing these policies with strategic sensitivity is of the utmost importance.

Challenges in India-Maldives Relations

- The Maldives’ **reliance on China** to develop more than **US\$2.5 billion in infrastructure projects** and the resulting accumulation of foreign debt— **40 per cent of the country’s GDP**, is a concern for India. These raises concerns about Chinese **debt-trap diplomacy**.
- **Political instability in Maldives** as democracy is yet to take a firm footing is a cause of concern as it will have impact on India’s relations. E.g. in 2012 Maldives announced **termination of a USD 511 million project** with the Indian infrastructure company **GMR**

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

EWS quota challenge referred to Constitution Bench

In The News

The Supreme Court has referred to a five-judge Bench the “substantial question of law” whether grant of **10% reservation to economically weaker sections of the society is unconstitutional and violates the 50% ceiling cap on quota declared by the court itself.**

What does the reference mean?

A reference to a larger Bench means that the legal challenge is an important one.

- As per **Article 145(3) of the Constitution**, “the minimum number of Judges who are to sit for the purpose of deciding any case involving a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of this Constitution” shall be five.
- **The Supreme Court rules of 2013** also say that writ petitions that allege a violation of fundamental rights will generally be heard by a bench of two judges unless it raises substantial questions of law. In that case, a five-judge bench would hear the case.

What are the grounds of challenge?

The law was challenged primarily on two grounds.

1. First, **it violates the Basic Structure of the Constitution.** This argument stems from the view that the special protections guaranteed to socially disadvantaged groups are part of the Basic Structure and that **the 103rd Amendment departs from this by promising special protections on the sole basis of economic status.** Although there is no exhaustive list of what forms the Basic Structure, any law that violates it is understood to be unconstitutional.
2. Second, **it violates the SC’s 1992 ruling in Indra Sawhney & Ors v Union of India**, which upheld the Mandal Report and capped reservations at 50%. In the ruling, the court held that economic backwardness cannot be the sole criterion for identifying backward class.

What’s the issue?

The **economic reservation was introduced in the Constitution by amending Articles 15 and 16** and adding clauses empowering the state governments to provide reservation on the basis of economic backwardness.

- The validity of the Constitutional Amendment was challenged, saying the 50% quota limit was part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution.

A three-judge bench had refused to stay the implementation of the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, which provides the 10% quota.

How centre defends this move?

The Centre had argued that **it was every State’s prerogative to provide 10% economic reservation in State government jobs and admissions in State-run education institutions.** Whether or not to provide reservation to the economically weaker section (EWS) of the society for appointment in State government jobs and for admission to State government educational institutions, as per provisions of the newly inserted **Articles 15(6) and 16(6) of the Constitution**, is to be decided by the State government concerned.

- The government also argued that under **Article 46 of the Constitution, part of Directive Principles of State Policy**, it has a duty to protect the interests of economically weaker sections.
- Countering the claims that the amendment violates the Indra Sawhney principle, the government relied on a 2008 ruling— **Ashok Kumar Thakur v Union of India**, in which the SC upheld the 27% quota for OBCs. The argument is that the court accepted that the definition of OBCs was not made on the sole criterion of caste but a mix of caste and economic factors, to prove that there need not a sole criterion for according reservation.

What is a constitution bench?

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 5200
Page PT 2020

Article 145(3) says at least five judges need to hear cases that involve "a substantial question of law as to the interpretation" of the Constitution, or any reference under **Article 143**, which deals with the power of the President of India to consult the Supreme Court.

- But this doesn't mean constitution benches can't be larger. For example, nine judges were on the bench that unanimously declared privacy to be a fundamental right in August 2017. There have also been seven and 13-judge benches.

ASPIRE IAS

Arunachal Groups Push For 6th Schedule Status

In The News

The revival of the demand for two autonomous councils has made political parties and community-based groups call for bringing the entire Arunachal Pradesh under the ambit of **the Sixth Schedule or Article 371 (A) of the Constitution**.

What's the demand?

Currently, Arunachal Pradesh is under the **Fifth Schedule** that “does not provide special rights for the indigenous communities” unlike **the Sixth Schedule**.

- Many political parties have been demanding the inclusion of Arunachal Pradesh in the 6th Schedule **for making the Arunachalees owner of all natural resources instead of being protectors only.**
- Inclusion of the state under the Sixth Schedule would **enable the state to own the legitimate ownership rights over its own natural resources and make it self sufficient** without having to depend too much on central grants.

What is 6th Schedule?

The Sixth Schedule currently includes 10 autonomous district councils in four northeastern States — Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.

Passed by **the Constituent Assembly in 1949**, it seeks to safeguard the rights of tribal population through the formation of **Autonomous District Councils (ADC)**.

This special provision is provided under **Article 244(2) and Article 275(1) of the Constitution**.

Key provisions:

The governor is empowered to organise and re-organise the autonomous districts.

1. If there are different tribes in an autonomous district, **the governor can divide the district into several autonomous regions.**

2. **Composition:** Each autonomous district has a district council consisting of 30 members, of whom four are nominated by the governor and the remaining 26 are elected on the basis of adult franchise.
3. **Term:** The elected members hold office for a term of five years (unless the council is dissolved earlier) and nominated members hold office during the pleasure of the governor.
4. Each autonomous region also has **a separate regional council.**
5. **Powers of councils:** The district and regional councils administer the areas under their jurisdiction. They can make laws on certain specified matters like land, forests, canal water, shifting cultivation, village administration, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, social customs and so on. But all such laws require the assent of the governor.
6. **Village councils:** The district and regional councils within their territorial jurisdictions can constitute village councils or courts for trial of suits and cases between the tribes. They hear appeals from them. The jurisdiction of high court over these suits and cases is specified by the governor.
7. **Powers and functions:** The district council can establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, ferries, fisheries, roads and so on in the district. It can also make regulations for the control of money lending and trading by non-tribals. But, such regulations require the assent of the governor. The district and regional councils are empowered to assess and collect land revenue and to impose certain specified taxes.

Exceptions: The acts of Parliament or the state legislature do not apply to autonomous districts

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

and autonomous regions or apply with specified modifications and exceptions.

The governor can appoint a commission to examine and report on any matter relating to the administration of the autonomous districts or regions. He may dissolve a district or regional council on the recommendation of the commission.

What about Nagaland?

Nagaland is governed by **Article 371 (A)**, which says that no Act of Parliament shall apply in the State in several areas unless the Nagaland Assembly so decides by a resolution.

- These include administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law and ownership and transfer of land and its resources.

What is Curative Petition?

In The News

Recently, the Supreme Court held Prashant Bhushan guilty of **criminal contempt of court** for his tweets against the CJI S.A. Bobde and against the judiciary.

- Now, Prashant Bhushan has asked the Court to defer the punishment till the review petition is filed and decided.
- He also submitted that the remedy of **curative petition** is also available.

About Curative Petition:

The concept was first evolved by the Supreme Court of India in **Rupa Ashok Hurra vs. Ashok Hurra and another case (2002)** on the question whether an aggrieved person is entitled to any relief against the final judgement/order of the Supreme Court, even after the dismissal of a review petition.

- The court used the Latin maxim “**actus curiae neminem gravabit**”, which means that an act of the court shall prejudice no one. Its objectives are twofolds- avoid miscarriage of justice and to prevent abuse of process.

Related Constitutional provisions:

The concept of the curative petition is supported by **Article 137** of the Indian Constitution.

It provides that in the matter of laws and rules made under **Article 145**, the Supreme Court has the power to review any judgement pronounced (or order made) by it.

Procedure:

1. A curative petition may be filed after a review plea against the final conviction is dismissed.
2. It can be entertained if the petitioner establishes that there was a violation of the principles of natural justice, and that he was not heard by the court before passing an order.
3. It must be rare rather than regular.
4. A curative petition must be first circulated to a Bench of the three

senior-most judges, and the judges who passed the concerned judgment, if available.

5. Only when a majority of the judges conclude that the matter needs hearing should it be listed before the same Bench.
6. The Bench at any stage of consideration of the curative petition can ask a senior counsel to assist it as *amicus curiae* (Friend of the court).
7. A curative petition is usually decided by judges in the chamber unless a specific request for an open- court hearing is allowed.

Rules For Administration In The Union Territory Of Jammu And Kashmir

In The News

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has notified new rules for administration in the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** that specify the functions of the **Lieutenant Governor (LG)** and the **Council of Ministers**.

long as it takes the **President of India** to decide on the cases referred to her.

Role of Council of Ministers, led by the Chief Minister:

Overview of the new rules:

Roles and powers of LG:

1. **Police, public order, All India Services and anti-corruption, will fall under the executive functions of the LG, implying that the Chief Minister or the Council of Ministers will have no say in their functioning.**
2. **Proposals or matters which affect or are likely to affect the peace and tranquility of the UT or the interest of any minority community, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Backward Classes “shall essentially be submitted to the Lieutenant Governor through the Chief Secretary, under intimation to the Chief Minister, before issuing any orders.”**
3. **In case of difference of opinion between the LG and a Minister when no agreement could be reached even after a month, the “decision of the Lieutenant Governor shall be deemed to have been accepted by the Council of Ministers.**

1. They will decide service matters of non-All India Services officers, proposal to impose new tax, land revenue, sale grant or lease of government property, reconstituting departments or offices and draft legislations.
2. **Any matter which is likely to bring the Government of the Union territory into controversy with the Central Government or with any State Government, shall, as soon as possible, be brought to the notice of the LG and the Chief Minister by the secretary concerned through the Chief Secretary.**

Role of the Central Government:

The Lieutenant Governor shall make a prior reference to the Central government with respect to proposals of the following kinds:

1. those affecting the relations of the Centre with any state government, the Supreme Court of India or any other high court;
2. proposals for the appointment of Chief Secretary and Director General of Police;
3. important cases which affect or are likely to affect the peace and tranquility of the Union Territory; and
4. cases which affect or are likely to affect the interests of any minority community, Scheduled Castes or the Backward Classes.

Role of the President:

- In case of difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor and the Council with regard to any matter, the Lieutenant Governor shall refer it to the Central Government for the decision of the President and shall act according to the decision of the President.
- The LG of J&K has been empowered to pass directions in such situations that action taken by the Council of Ministers will be suspended for as

Background:

On August 6, 2019, Parliament read down **Article 370 of the Constitution** revoking the special status of J&K and bifurcated and downgraded the

State into Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh J&K with a legislative assembly. J&K has been without a chief minister since June 2018.

- According to requirements of **the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019**, fresh elections will be held after the delimitation exercise is completed next year.

Implications of the new rules:

In the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, when it had special status, the chief minister was the most powerful person in the decision-making process.

With the new rules, CM has been reduced to **an ornamental figure**. He would not even have the power to transfer a constable of the Jammu & Kashmir Police.

Comptroller And Auditor General Of India (CAG)

In The News

Former Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor GC Murmu was recently appointed as the new Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

About CAG:

- The Constitution of India provides for an independent office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in chapter V under Part V.
- The CAG is mentioned in the Constitution of India under Article 148 – 151.
- He is the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department.
- He is the guardian of the public purse and controls the entire financial system of the country at both the levels- the centre and state.
- His duty is to uphold the Constitution of India and the laws of Parliament in the field of financial administration.

Appointment and Term to Constitutionals Posts:

- The CAG is appointed by the President of India by a warrant under his hand and seal.
- He holds office for a period of six years or upto the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

Duties:

1. CAG audits the accounts related to all expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India, Consolidated Fund of each state and UT having a legislative assembly.
2. CAG audits all expenditure from the Contingency Fund of India and the Public Account of India as well as the Contingency Fund and Public Account of each state.
3. CAG audits all trading,

manufacturing, profit and loss accounts, balance sheets and other subsidiary accounts kept by any department of the Central Government and the state governments.

4. CAG audits the receipts and expenditure of all bodies and authorities substantially financed from the Central or State revenues; government companies; other corporations and bodies, when so required by related laws.
5. He ascertains and certifies the net proceeds of any tax or duty and his certificate is final on the matter.

Reports:

- He submits his audit reports relating to the accounts of the Centre and State to the President and Governor, who shall, in turn, place them before both the houses of Parliament and the state legislature respectively.
- He submits 3 audit reports to the President: audit report on appropriation accounts, audit report on finance accounts and audit report on public undertakings.

CAG and PAC:

He acts as a guide, friend and philosopher of the Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament. CAG along with its mandatory regulatory and compliance audit performs the performance as well as efficiency audit to question executive's wisdom and economy in order to identify cases of improper expenditure and waste of public money.

Constitutional provisions which ensure the independence of CAG are:

1. CAG is provided with the security of tenure. He can be removed by the president only in accordance with the procedure mentioned in the Constitution. Thus, he does not hold

his office till the pleasure of the president, though he is appointed by him.

2. He is **not eligible for further office**, either under the Government of India or of any state, after he ceases to hold his office.
3. His **salary and other service conditions are determined by the Parliament**. His salary is equal to that of a judge of the Supreme Court.
4. Neither his salary nor his rights in respect of leave of absence, pension or age of retirement can be altered to his disadvantage after his appointment.
5. The administrative expenses of the office of the CAG, including all salaries, allowances and pensions of persons serving in that office are **charged upon the Consolidated Fund of India**. Thus, they are not subject to the vote of Parliament.

Appointment Of Election Commissioners

About:

In pursuance of clause (2) of **article 324 of the Constitution**, the President has appointed Rajiv Kumar, IAS(Retd.) as the Election Commissioner.

About Election commission of India:

The constitution under **article 324** provides for an Election Commission for the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for the conduct of elections to parliament, state legislatures and to the offices of president and vice president.

Composition Election commission of India:

The constitution provides for the following provisions in relation to the composition of the election commission:

1. The election commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and a such number of other election commissioners, if any, as the president may from time to time fix.
2. The appointment of the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners shall be made by the president.
3. When any other election commissioner is so appointed the chief election commissioner shall act as the chairman of the election commission.
4. The president may also appoint after consultation with the election commission such regional commissioners as he may consider necessary to assist the election commission.
5. The conditions of service and tenure of office of the election commissioners and the regional commissioners shall be such as the President may by rule determine.

commissioners. **All the matters in the commission are decided by the majority amongst its members.** The Chief Election Commissioner and the two other election commissioners receive equal salary, allowances and other benefits.

Tenure:

The Chief Election Commissioner and other election commissioners hold office for 6 years or till they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. They can resign at any time by addressing their resignation to the president.

Removal:

- They can resign anytime or can also be removed before the expiry of their term.

The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from his office in the same manner and on same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.

CEC vs ECs:

Though the Chief Election Commissioner is the chairman of the election commission, however, his powers are equal to the other election

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 61
Page No. 61

Lokayukta

About

The Supreme Court has issued notice on a plea filed by the State of Nagaland for a direction to its **Lokayukta** to cease exercising his powers and functions and transfer all his work to the Upa-Lokayukta.

What's the issue?

The petition by the State asked the court to use its extraordinary powers under **Article 142 of the Constitution** to preserve the institutional integrity of the Lokayukta and ensure that a “fit, proper and competent person” occupies the office of the Lokayukta.

What is Lokayukta?

Lokayukta is an **anti-corruption authority or ombudsman** – an official appointed by the government to represent the interests of the public.

- Most importantly, it investigates allegations of corruption and mal-administration against public servants and is tasked with speedy redressal of public grievances.

Genesis:

The **Administrative Reforms Commission** headed by Late Morarji Desai in 1966 recommended the setting up of the institution of Lokayukta.

The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013, commonly known **The Lokpal Act** was passed by the Parliament of India in December 2013.

- It provides for the **appointment of a Lokayukta “to investigate and report on allegations or grievances relating to the conduct of public servants.”**
- It also called for establishment of **Lokpal at the Centre.**

Who is appointed as the Lokayukta?

The Lokayukta is usually a former High Court Chief Justice or former Supreme Court judge and has a fixed tenure.

Selection of Lokayukta:

- The Chief Minister selects a person as the Lokayukta after consultation with the High Court Chief Justice, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Chairman of the Legislative Council, Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly and the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council. The appointment is then made by the Governor.
- Once appointed, Lokayukta cannot be dismissed nor transferred by the government, and can only be removed by passing an impeachment motion by the state assembly.

Public Safety Act

In The News

The special status of Jammu and Kashmir was revoked on **August 5** last year. But, even after almost a year, over two dozen mainstream leaders of the regional parties in Jammu and Kashmir remain under **house arrest**.

- The state was stripped of special status under **Article 370** and the government had also repealed

Article 35A.

Concerns associated with such measures:

1. House detentions without any administrative orders are **unlawful**.
2. It **undermines human rights and individual liberty**.
3. Even the **courts failed to hear petitions** and left jailed Kashmiris at the mercy of the government.

How many people have been arrested so far?

Jammu and Kashmir home department officials estimate that, in the run up to and aftermath of August 5, **more than 500 people were booked under the Public Safety Act**.

- That included stone-pelters, lawyers, separatist leaders of the Hurriyat as well as leaders of pro-India parties.
- Around 250 Kashmiri detainees are still lodged in jails outside the Union Territory.

Since 6th of August, 2019, **more than six hundred Habeas Corpus Petitions** have been filed before the Hon'ble High Court of Union Territory of J&K at Srinagar and till date **not even 1% of such cases have been decided by the J&K High Court**.

What needs to be done now?

1. Conditional release of leaders placed under house arrest for more than a year.
2. Restoration of 4G network.
3. Lifting of the curbs on peaceful political activity.

4. A multilevel dialogue with those affected with the August 5 decision.
5. Compensation to Kashmiri farmers and businessmen for their economic losses.

Powers of government under the Public Safety Act:

- Also called as **the Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978**.
- It is a **preventive detention law**, under which a person is taken into custody to prevent him or her from acting in any **manner that is prejudicial to “the security of the state or the maintenance of the public order”**.

When and why was it introduced?

Introduced as a **tough law to prevent the smuggling of timber and keep the smugglers “out of circulation”**.

Applicability:

1. The law allowed the government to **detain any person above the age of 16 without trial for a period of two years**.
2. It allows for **administrative detention for up to two years** “in the case of persons acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State”, and for **administrative detention up to one year** where “any person is acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order”.

How is it enforced?

It comes into force when administrative **order passed by either by Divisional Commissioner or the District Magistrate**.

The detaining **authority need not disclose any facts about the detention** “which it considers to be against the public interest to disclose”.

Protection to enforcing authorities:

Section 22 of the Act provides protection for any action taken “in good faith” under the Act: “No suit, prosecution or any other legal proceeding shall lie against any person for anything done or intended to be done in good faith in pursuance of the provisions of this Act.”

Who is empowered to make rules in this regard?

Under **Section 23 of the Act**, the government is empowered to “make such Rules consistent with the provisions of this Act, as may be necessary for carrying out the objects of this Act”.

However, **no Rules have so far been framed** to lay down procedures for the implementation of the provisions of the PSA.

But, why is the law controversial?

1. It allows for **detention without trial**.
2. **No Right to File Bail Application**.
3. It provides a **vast number of reasons for detention**.
4. **No Distinction** Between Minor and Major Offences.

Can the Courts intervene?

The only way this administrative preventive detention order can be challenged is through a **habeas corpus petition filed by relatives of the detained person**.

- The **High Court and the Supreme Court** have the **jurisdiction** to hear such petitions.
- However, **if the order is quashed, there is no bar on the government** passing another detention order under the PSA and detaining the person again.

Draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020

In The News

Ministry of Defence (MoD) has formulated and released a **draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020 (DPEPP 2020)**.

- It is envisaged as **overarching guiding document of MoD to provide a focused, structured and significant thrust** to defence production capabilities of the country for self-reliance and exports.

The policy has laid out following goals and objectives:

- To achieve a **turnover of Rs 1,75,000 Crores** (US\$ 25Bn) including export of Rs 35,000 Crore (US\$ 5 Billion) in Aerospace and Defence goods and services **by 2025**.
- To develop a dynamic, robust and competitive Defence industry, including Aerospace and Naval Shipbuilding industry to cater to the needs of Armed forces with quality products.
- To reduce dependence on imports and take forward "Make in India" initiatives through domestic design and development.
- To promote export of defence products and become part of the global defence value chains.
- To create an environment that encourages R&D, rewards innovation, creates Indian IP ownership and promotes a robust and self-reliant defence industry.
- The **share of domestic procurement in overall defence procurement is about 60%**. In order to enhance procurement from domestic industry, it is incumbent that **procurement is doubled from the current ₹70,000 crore to ₹1,40,000 crore by 2025**.

- Procurement Reforms
- Indigenization & Support to MSMEs/Startups
- Optimize Resource Allocation
- Investment Promotion, FDI & Ease of Doing Business
- Innovation and R&D
- DPSUs and OFB
- Quality Assurance & Testing Infrastructure
- Export Promotion

Other highlights of the policy:

- The policy states that a **negative list of weapons and platforms** will be notified with year-wise time lines for placing an embargo on import of such items from those dates.
- A **Technology Assessment Cell (TAC)** would be created. It would assess the industrial capability for design, development and production, including re-engineering for production of major systems such as armoured vehicles, submarines, fighter aircraft, helicopters and radars with the major industries in the country, the policy states.
- A **Project Management Unit (PMU)** will be set up with representation from the Services for estimation of development and production lead times specifications and technologies involved, life cycle costs and maintenance requirements of platforms, equipment and weapon systems.

The Policy brings out multiple strategies under the following focus areas:

Domicile-Based Job Quota

In The News

The **Madhya Pradesh** government's recent decision to **reserve all government jobs for “children of the state”** raises questions relating to the fundamental right to equality.

What's the issue now?

Reservation solely based on place of birth would raise constitutional questions.

What does the Constitution say?

Article 16 of the Constitution, which guarantees equal treatment under law in matters of public employment, prohibits the state from discriminating on grounds of place of birth or residence.

Article 16(2) states that “no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect or, any employment or office under the State”. The provision is supplemented by the other clauses in the Constitution that guarantee equality.

Enabling provisions:

However, **Article 16(3) of the Constitution** provides an exception by saying that Parliament may make a law “prescribing” a requirement of residence for jobs in a particular state. **This power vests solely in the Parliament, not state legislatures.**

Why does the Constitution prohibit reservation based on domicile?

When the Constitution came into force, **India turned itself into one nation from a geographical unit of individual principalities** and the idea of **the universality of Indian citizenship** took root.

- As India has **common citizenship**, which gives citizens the liberty to move around freely in any part of the country, the requirement of a place of birth or residence cannot be qualifications for granting public employment in any state.

What has the Supreme Court said on reserving jobs for locals?

The Supreme Court has ruled against reservation based on place of birth or residence.

- In 1984, ruling in **Dr Pradeep Jain v Union of India**, the issue of legislation for “sons of the soil” was discussed. The court expressed an opinion that such policies would be **unconstitutional** but did not expressly rule on it as the case was on different aspects of the right to equality.
- In a subsequent ruling in **Sunanda Reddy v State of Andhra Pradesh (1995)**, the Supreme Court affirmed the observation in Pradeep Jain to strike down a state government policy that gave 5% extra weightage to candidates who had studied with Telugu as the medium of instruction.
- In 2002, the Supreme Court invalidated **appointment of government teachers in Rajasthan** in which the state selection board gave preference to “applicants belonging to the district or the rural areas of the district concerned”.
- In 2019, the Allahabad High Court struck down a **recruitment notification by the UP Subordinate Service Selection Commission** which prescribed preference for women who are “original residents” of the UP alone.

How do some states then have laws that reserve jobs for locals?

Exercising the powers it has under **Article 16(3)**, Parliament enacted the **Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act**, aimed at abolishing all existing residence requirements in the states and enacting **exceptions only in the case of the special instances of Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.**

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

- Constitutionally, some states also have **special protections under Article 371**.
- Andhra Pradesh under **Section 371(d)** has powers to have “direct recruitment of local cadre” in specified areas.
- In **Uttarakhand**, class III and class IV jobs are reserved for locals.

Some states have gone around the mandate of Article 16(2) by using language.

- States that conduct official business in their regional languages prescribe knowledge of the language as a criterion. This ensures that local citizens are preferred for jobs. For example, states including Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu require a language test.

Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN

In The News

The **Civil Aviation Ministry** has approved **78 new routes** under the **4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN**.

- So far, 766 routes have been sanctioned under the UDAN scheme.

About Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN:

UDAN, which stands for ‘**Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik**’, aims to make air travel affordable and widespread. The **Ministry of Civil Aviation** had launched **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)** in October 10 2016 to stimulate regional air connectivity and making air travel affordable to the masses.

- The scheme will be **jointly funded by the central government and state governments**.
- The scheme will run for **10 years** and can be extended thereafter.

Viability Gap Funding (VGF):

The scheme entails making the routes financially viable, without insisting on the financial viability of the regional airports, by lowering the cost of flight operations and through financial support in the form of **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)**. VGF will be available to flight operators on specific routes for the first 3 years of operation.

UDAN 4.0:

The **4th round of UDAN** was launched in **December 2019** with a special focus on **North-Eastern Regions, Hilly States, and Islands**.

- The airports that had already been developed by **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** are given higher priority for the award of **VGF (Viability Gap Funding)** under the Scheme.
- Under UDAN 4, the operation of **helicopter and seaplanes** is also been incorporated.

Lok Adalat Held Online

In The News

In a first of its kind in the country, the **Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA)** recently organized the **e-lok Adalat** to facilitate mediation between the parties, who are willing to get their matters settled amicably, in all the District Courts Complexes of Delhi.

How it was conducted?

In the e-Lok Adalat, an online link would be sent by **SAMA** (an Online Dispute Resolution platform recognized by Department of Justice for resolving disputes through video conferencing) to the concerned parties and a judge would preside over the mediation process.

Following the settlement, **an OTP would be sent to them and on confirmation, the dispute would be settled.**

Outcomes:

77 Benches were constituted wherein total 5838 cases were disposed of pertaining to various categories in which settlement amount was approx Rs 46.28 crores.

What is a Lok Adalat?

Lok Adalat is **one of the alternative dispute redressal mechanisms**, it is a forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably.

The Lok Adalats are formed to fulfil the promise given by the preamble of the Indian Constitution—**securing Justice – social, economic and political of every citizen of India.**

Constitutional basis:

Article 39A of the Constitution provides for free legal aid to the deprived and weaker sections of the society and to promote justice on the base of equal opportunity.

Articles 14 and 22(1) of the Constitution also make it compulsory for the State to guarantee equality before the law.

Statutory provisions:

Under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**

Lok Adalats have been given statutory status.

Final award:

The decision made by the Lok Adalats is considered to be **a verdict of a civil court and is ultimate and binding on all parties.**

No appeal:

There is **no provision for an appeal against the verdict made by Lok Adalat.**

But, **they are free to initiate litigation by approaching the court of appropriate jurisdiction** by filing a case by following the required procedure, in exercise of their **right to litigate.**

Court fee:

There is **no court fee payable** when a matter is filed in a Lok Adalat. If a matter pending in the court of law is referred to the Lok Adalat and is settled subsequently, the court fee originally paid in the court on the complaints/petition is also refunded back to the parties.

Nature of Cases to be Referred to Lok Adalat:

1. Any case pending before any court.
2. Any dispute which has not been brought before any court and is likely to be filed before the court. Provided that any matter relating to an offence not compoundable under the law shall not be settled in Lok Adalat.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

In The News

Over 10 individuals belonging the **Great Andamanese tribe**, a notified Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), with a population of just 56 individuals tested positive for COVID.

- The island administration has since ramped up testing among the **Onge, Little Andamanese and the Great Andamanese and the Jarawas**.

About ‘Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)’:

PVTGs are more **vulnerable among the tribal groups**.

- They have declining or stagnant population, low level of literacy, pre-agricultural level of technology and are economically backward.
- They generally inhabit remote localities having poor infrastructure and administrative support.

Identification:

In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** created **Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)** as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.

- In **1975**, the Government of India initiated to identify the **most vulnerable tribal groups as a separate category called PVTGs** and declared 52 such groups, while in 1993 an additional 23 groups were added to the category, making it a total of **75 PVTGs**, spread over 18 states and one Union Territory (A&N Islands) in the country (2011 census).
- Among the 75 listed PVTG's the **highest number are found in Odisha (13), followed by Andhra Pradesh (12)**.

In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs.

Scheme for development of PVTGs:

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements the

Scheme of “**Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**” exclusively for them.

- Under the scheme, **Conservation-cum-Development (CCD)/Annual Plans are to be prepared by each State/UT** for their PVTGs based on their need assessment, which are then appraised and approved by the Project Appraisal Committee of the Ministry.
- Priority is also assigned to PVTGs under the schemes of Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Tribal Sub-Scheme (TSS), Grants under **Article 275(1) of the Constitution**, Grants-in-aid to Voluntary Organisations working for the welfare of Schedule Tribes and Strengthening of Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts.

The criteria followed for determination of PVTGs are as under:

1. A pre-agriculture level of technology.
2. A stagnant or declining population.
3. Extremely low literacy.
4. A subsistence level of economy.

New Tick-Borne Virus

In The News

This new virus is rapidly spreading in **China**. It causes a disease called **Severe Fever with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (SFTS)**.

What's the concern now?

- While the disease is transferred to **humans through tick bites**, Chinese virologists have warned that human-to-human transmission of the virus cannot be ruled out.
- The **current case fatality rate** rests between approximately 16 and 30 per cent.
- Due to the rate at which it spreads and its high fatality rate, **SFTS has been listed among the top 10 priority diseases blue print by the World Health Organisation (WHO)**.
- Unlike SARS-CoV-2 however, **this is not the first time the SFTS virus has infected people**. The recent spate of cases merely marks a re-emergence of the disease.

What is the SFTS virus?

Severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome virus (SFTSV) belongs to the **Bunyavirus family** and is

transmitted to humans through tick bites.

The virus was **first identified by a team of researchers in China over a decade ago**.

How it spreads?

An Asian tick called **Haemaphysalis longicornis** is the primary vector, or carrier, of the virus.

Scientists have found that **the virus is often transmitted to humans from animals like goats, cattle, deer and sheep**.

What are the symptoms of the SFTS virus?

According to a study conducted by a team of Chinese researchers in 2011, the incubation period is anywhere between seven and 13 days after the onset of the illness. Patients suffering from the disease usually experience a whole range of

symptoms, including, fever, fatigue, chill, headache, lymphadenopathy, anorexia, nausea, myalgia, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, gingival hemorrhage, conjunctival congestion, and so on.

How is SFTS treated?

While a vaccine to treat the disease is yet to be successfully developed, the antiviral drug Ribavirin is known to be effective in treating the illness.

African Swine Fever (ASF)

In The News

African swine fever (ASF) has spread to Meghalaya; more than 17,000 pigs have died due to the highly-contagious disease in adjoining Assam.

Background:

Since February this year, ASF has killed at least 17,000 domesticated pigs in Assam and an unspecified number in Arunachal Pradesh. The disease is believed to have been transmitted from China where it has resulted in the death of several animals in 2019.

What's the concern?

Piggery is a major source livelihood in the northeast because of the high demand for pork. Assam alone has seven lakh pig farmers engaged in the business, worth at least ₹8,000 crore annually.

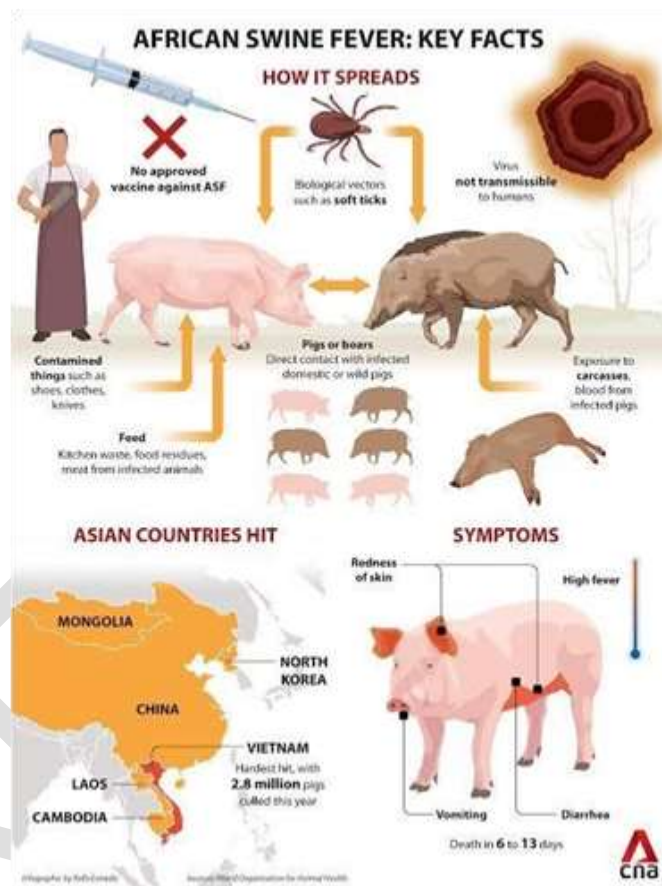
About African Swine Fever (ASF):

ASF is a highly contagious and fatal animal disease that infects domestic and wild pigs, typically resulting in an acute form of hemorrhagic fever.

It was first detected in Africa in the 1920s.

- The mortality is close to 100 per cent, and since the fever has no cure, the only way to stop it spreading is by culling the animals.
- ASF is **not a threat to human beings** since it only spreads from animals to other animals.

According to the FAO, “its extremely high potential for transboundary spread has placed all the countries in the region in danger and has raised the spectre of ASF once more escaping from Africa. It is a disease of growing strategic importance for global food security and household income”.



Vaccine Nationalism

Context:

Even before the end of final stage human trials or regulatory approval, several wealthier countries like Britain, France, Germany and the US have entered into pre-purchase agreements with Covid-19 vaccine manufacturers, a development that has come to be known as “**vaccine nationalism**”.

- There are fears that such advance agreements will make the initial few vaccines unaffordable and inaccessible to everyone apart from the rich countries in a world of roughly 8 billion people.

What is Vaccine Nationalism? How it works?

Vaccine nationalism occurs when a country manages to secure doses of vaccine for its own citizens or residents before they are made available in other countries.

This is done through pre-purchase agreements between a government and a vaccine manufacturer.

How was it used in the past?

Vaccine nationalism is not new. During the early stages of the **2009 H1N1 flu pandemic**, some of the wealthiest countries entered into pre-purchase agreements with several pharmaceutical companies working on H1N1 vaccines.

- At that time, it was estimated that, in the best-case scenario, the maximum number of vaccine doses that could be produced globally was two billion.
- The US alone negotiated and obtained the right to buy 600,000 doses. All the countries that negotiated pre-purchase orders were developed economies.

Why its not good? What are the associated concerns?

- Vaccine nationalism is **harmful for equitable access to vaccines**.
- It further **disadvantages countries with fewer resources and bargaining power**.
- It **deprives populations in the Global South from timely access to**

vital public health goods.

- Taken to its extreme, it **allocates vaccines to moderately at-risk populations in wealthy countries over populations at higher risk in developing economies.**

What needs to be done?

- **International institutions** — including the WHO — **should coordinate negotiations** ahead of the next pandemic to produce a framework for equitable access to vaccines during public health crises.
- **Equity entails both, affordability of vaccines and access opportunities** for populations across the world, irrespective of geography and geopolitics.

What is being done now?

To bring about equitable and broad access, WHO, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, and Gavi have come up with an initiative known as “**Covax Facility**”. The facility aims to procure at least two billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines by the end of next year for deployment and distribution mainly in the low- and middle-income countries

Israel- UAE Agreement

In The News

Israel and the United Arab Emirates have announced **an agreement that will lead to a full normalisation**

of diplomatic relations between the two states, a move that reshapes the order of West Asia politics from the Palestinian issue to Iran.

- The agreement will be known as **the Abraham Accords**.

Overview of the agreement:

- **Trilateral agreement:** The agreement was the product of lengthy discussions between Israel, the UAE and the US that accelerated recently.
- Under the accord, **Israel has agreed to suspend annexing areas of the occupied West Bank** as it had been planning to do.
- It also firms up **opposition to regional power Iran**, which the UAE, Israel and the US view as the main threat in the region.

Background:

Israel had signed peace agreements with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. **But the UAE, along with most other Arab nations, did not recognise Israel** and had no formal diplomatic or economic relations with it until now.

Where is West Bank?

It is a **landlocked territory near the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia**, bordered by Jordan to the east and by the Green Line separating it and Israel on the south, west and north.

The West Bank also **contains a significant section of the western Dead Sea shore**.

What is the dispute settlements here? Who lives there?

1. The West Bank was **captured by Jordan after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War**.
2. Israel snatched it back during **the Six Day War of 1967**, and has occupied it

ever since. During this war, the country defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.

3. It has built some 130 formal settlements in the West Bank, and a similar number of smaller, informal settlements have mushroomed over the last 20-25 years.
4. Over 4 lakh Israeli settlers — many of them religious **Zionists** who claim a Biblical birthright over this land — now live here, along with some 26 lakh Palestinians.
5. The territory is still a point of contention due to a large number of Palestinians who live there and hope to see the land become a part of their future state.
6. When Israel took control of the land in 1967 it allowed Jewish people to move in, but **Palestinians consider the West Bank illegally occupied Palestinian land**.



Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

International Finance Corporation (IFC)

In The News

IFC to invest \$10 mn in Endiya Partners Fund II for product start-ups.

About the International Finance Corporation (IFC):

- It is an international financial institution that offers investment, advisory, and asset management services to encourage private sector development in developing countries.
- It is a member of the World Bank Group and is headquartered in Washington, D.C., United States.
- It was established in 1956 as the private sector arm of the World Bank Group to advance economic development by investing in strictly for-profit and commercial projects that purport to reduce poverty and promote development.
- The IFC is owned and governed by its member countries, but has its own executive leadership and staff that conduct its normal business operations.
- It is a corporation whose shareholders are member governments that provide paid-in capital and which have the right to vote on its matters.
- Since 2009, the IFC has focused on a set of development goals that its projects are expected to target. Its goals are to increase sustainable agriculture opportunities, improve healthcare and education, increase access to financing for microfinance and business clients, advance infrastructure, help small businesses grow revenues, and invest in climate health.
- It offers an array of debt and equity financing services and helps companies face their risk exposures while refraining from participating in

a management capacity.

- It advises governments on building infrastructure and partnerships to further support private sector development.



Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook Twitter YouTube Telegram

Public Notice 2020
Public PT 2020

GS - III

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Printed in India
Printed in India

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Agricultural Education

In The News

The Prime Minister recently pitched for taking agricultural education to middle school level using reforms proposed by National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.

What is Agricultural education?

- Agricultural education focuses on, but is not limited to, study in **horticulture, forestry, conservation**, natural resources, **agricultural products and processing**, production of food and fiber, aquaculture and other agricultural products, mechanics, sales and service, **economics, marketing**, and leadership development.
- It encompasses the study of **applied sciences** (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics), and **business management** principles. One of the major purposes of agricultural education is to apply the knowledge and skills learned in several different disciplines to agriculture.
- **Current status in India:** Formal agricultural education in India is mostly confined to **higher educational institutions**. Currently, there are three central agricultural universities, around 65 State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) and 4 Deemed-to be-Universities (DUs) in India which focus on imparting formal education in the field of agriculture.

Significance of agricultural education in India

- **Self-reliance of a village/rural economy:** Streamlining the flow of knowledge about agriculture, its modern farming techniques and marketing, to farmers will improve profitability of agriculture and promote agro- entrepreneurship in the country.
 - o The growth of farmers and overall farm sector will lead to **creation of jobs** and supplement the efforts of **poverty alleviation** at village level.
- **Emerging food processing industry:** Agriculture sector in India suffers from high post- harvest losses and fragmented food

processing industry and needs technical and skills based intervention in food processing technologies, storage infrastructure, marketing etc. This can be facilitated through agricultural education.

Promoting Sustainable agricultural practices:

Technical education in the field of rainwater harvesting, micro irrigation, organic farming, climate resilient agriculture, zero budget farming, accurate use of chemical fertilizers etc. will enable farmers to **minimize environmental damage**, ensure **food security** in the future and **adapt and mitigate for climate change**.

- **Boosting agricultural exports in changing globalized scenario:** Development of analytical and professional skills and knowledge in areas such as Intellectual property Rights (IPRs), WTO's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), technological specialties etc. is a necessity in today's time.
- **Increased access to information:** A robust agricultural education system can strengthen **Farmers- Researchers linkages** through cooperation of the universities in streamlining the flow of knowledge and expertise from campus to agriculture fields.
- **Expanding agricultural research:** India needs skilled students for research in technologies such as biosensors, precision farming, genetic engineering, bio-fuels, nanotechnology, farm equipments etc.
- **Transforming agricultural market and economy:** There is need for agricultural graduates having knowledge, skills and entrepreneurship to provide a class of **economics and market-based services** such as market intelligence, avenues for development of corporate and contract farming etc.

Challenges to agricultural education

- **Difficulty in attracting talented rural and urban youth:** Low returns, poor quality of education and limited career opportunities make agricultural education a less preferred

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

choice amongst students.

- **Shortage of competent faculty:** There exists high number of vacancies, especially in disciplines like Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Meteorology, Agricultural Statistics etc., in agricultural institutions with limited opportunities for faculty to improve and update their knowledge.
- **Issues in State institutions:** Lack of significant efforts by states have led to deteriorating conditions in some SAUs. Since agriculture is a state subject, central bodies such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) can play only a facilitating role.
- **Inadequate funding support:** Over the years, increase in the level of public finances of the states to the agricultural universities has been far below their requirements in the context of contemporary needs of higher agricultural education.
- **Integrating Agricultural Education with job creation:** Due to absence of a creditable system of assessment of job profiles and skills needed in the sector, agricultural graduates in various streams often find difficulty in accessing gainful employment.
- **Outdated curriculum:** Curriculums have not been changed keeping in view the advances in science and technology in general and agriculture and allied sectors in particular, changing economic status, life styles, food habits and demand for processed/value added foods.
- **Lack of holistic education:** Agricultural education in India concentrates mainly on primary agricultural activities, such as crop production and management, etc and lack components relating to supply chain management like processing, grading, packaging, transportation, marketing etc.
 - o There is also a need to shift from **information-based syllabus to skill-based curriculum. Way Forward**
- **Extending Non-formal education** in rural regions to tap the agricultural potential of workforce.
 - o Basic agricultural subjects can also be introduced at **pre-high school and**

higher secondary level with the purpose of imparting firsthand knowledge on a particular agro-business or agricultural production self-earning aspects.

- **Updating course curriculum:** Agricultural education needs to keep pace with the changing agricultural scenario and developing technology and incorporate aspects of agro-business management and sustainable practices.
- **Training the academic staff** and collaborating with other national or international centres of excellence can give better exposure to the teachers.
- **Providing students guidance and counseling:** through training and placement cells to attract students in agriculture and to prepare them for job markets.
- **Effective accreditation system** should be evolved for monitoring the quality of SAUs and they can be incentivized to adopt the **Model Act for Agricultural Universities in India (2009)** developed by the ICAR through performance-based grants.
- **Release of fund** through the ICAR Development Grant should be directly made available to the colleges with a freedom to the Deans for better utilization of the fund in the areas of specific need.
- **Public-private partnerships in education:** Models of public-private partnerships must be evolved for curriculum delivery and educational research which can encourage hands on training and experience in real life situations.

Conclusion

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for **58 per cent of India's population** and the sector contributed

16.5 per cent to India's Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2018-2019. Therefore, for a holistic development of the sector and to achieve the goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022, it becomes imperative to expand the scope of agricultural education in India.

Government Initiatives for Agriculture

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f YouTube

Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Education

- **Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture (ARYA):** The scheme aims to attract and empower the Youth in Rural Areas to take up various Agriculture, allied and service sector enterprises for sustainable income and gainful employment through skill development.
- **Dedicated Agriculture Education Portal:** It was developed as a single window platform for providing vital education information, e-learning resources etc. from Agricultural Universities across the country in an easy and fast way.
- **Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana)** programme: It provides job based and entrepreneurial training to students and consists of — Experiential learning (Business Mode); Hands on training (Skill Development Mode); Rural Awareness Work Experience (RAWE); In Plant Training/ Industrial attachment; and students projects.
- **National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP):** It is designed to strengthen the national agricultural education system in India with an overall objective to provide more relevant and high-quality education to agricultural university students.
- **International collaborations:** ICAR coordinates the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS), Indo-Afghan Fellowship Scheme etc. to support the agricultural human resource development in India.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)

In The News

Recently, Prime Minister launched a new Central Sector Scheme of a financing facility under Rs. 1 Lakh Crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.

About AIF

- It is a Central Sector Scheme, under Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, to provide **medium - long term debt financing facility** through interest subvention and credit guarantee.
- **Beneficiaries include** farmers, Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs), Agri-entrepreneurs, Startups, Central/State agency or Local Body sponsored Public-Private Partnership Projects etc.
- **Eligible projects include:**
 - o **Post Harvest Management Projects like:** Supply chain services including e-marketing platforms, Warehouses, Silos, Sorting & grading units, Cold chains, Logistics facilities etc.
 - o **Building community farming assets** like Organic inputs production, Infrastructure for smart and precision agriculture, supply chain infrastructure for clusters of crops including export clusters etc.
- Under AIF, **Rs. 1 Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans** with interest subvention of 3% per annum on loans up to Rs. 2 crore.
- The Scheme **will be operational from 2020-21 to 2029-30**. Disbursement in four years starting with sanction of Rs. 10,000 crore in the first year and Rs. 30,000 crore each in next three financial years.
- Moratorium for repayment may vary subject to minimum of 6 months and maximum of 2 years.
- AIF will be managed and **monitored through an online Management Information System (MIS) platform**.
- National, State and District Level

Monitoring Committees will ensure real-time monitoring and effective feedback about the implementation of scheme.

Need for a better agricultural Infrastructure

- **For ~58% of total population** of India, agriculture and allied activities are the primary income source and adequate infrastructure **raises farm productivity and lowers farming costs**.
- **India has limited infrastructure connecting farmers to markets** and hence, 15-20% of yield is wasted which is relatively higher vs. other countries where it ranges between 5-15%.
- **Value addition, packing, branding and good marketing** network also adds to the income of the farmer.
- **Provide testing facilities** to assess the quality of product thereby help in fixing better rates in the market.
 - o It can help the farmers to assess the quantity in a better manner to predict the outcome.
- **Modernize the trading activities** helping the farmers/traders to instantly decide and convey the decisions to initiate the action as early as possible (Ex: e-trading and internet auctions).

About Agricultural Infrastructure

- Agricultural infrastructure primarily includes wide range of public services that facilitate production, procurement, processing, preservation and trade.
- It can be grouped under following broad-based categories:
 - o **Input based infrastructure:** Seed, Fertilizer, Pesticides, Farm equipment and machinery etc.
 - o **Resource based infrastructure:** Water/irrigation, Farm power/energy
 - o **Physical infrastructure:** Road connectivity, Transport, storage, processing, preservation, etc.
 - o **Institutional infrastructure:**

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

Agricultural research, extension & education technology, information & communication services, financial services, marketing, etc.

Stakeholder	Intended benefits of Scheme
Farmers (including FPOs, PAC S, Cooperative Societies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved marketing infrastructure to allow farmers to sell directly to a larger base of consumers and hence, increase value realization for the farmers. Investments in logistics infrastructure will reduce post-harvest losses and number of intermediaries. Community farming assets for improved productivity and optimization of inputs will result in substantial savings to farmers.
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will be able to direct priority sector lending in the currently unviable projects by supporting through interest subvention, incentive and credit guarantee. Government will further be able to reduce national food wastage percentage thereby enable agriculture sector to become competitive with current global levels. Central/State Government Agencies or local bodies will be able to structure viable PPP projects for attracting investment in agriculture infrastructure.
Agri entrepreneurs and startups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a dedicated source of funding, entrepreneurs will push for innovation in agriculture sector by leveraging new age technologies including IoT, AI, etc. It will also connect the players in ecosystem and hence, improve avenues for collaboration between entrepreneurs and farmers.
Banking ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With Credit Guarantee, incentive and interest subvention, lending institutions will be able to lend with a lower risk. This scheme will help to enlarge their customer base and diversification of portfolio. Refinance facility will enable larger role for cooperative banks and RRBs.
Consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With reduced inefficiencies in post-harvest ecosystem, key benefit for consumers will be a larger share of produce reaching the market and hence, better quality and prices.

Agricultural Exports

In The News

Recently, the **High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) on Agricultural Exports** set up by the **Fifteenth Finance Commission** had submitted its report to the Commission.

Terms of reference of the HLEG

- To assess **export & import substitution opportunities** for Indian agricultural products in the changing international trade.
- To **recommend strategies and measures** to increase farm productivity and enable higher value addition.
- To **identify the impediments for private sector investments** along the agricultural value.
- To **suggest appropriate performance-based incentives** to the state governments for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26.

- India has a **2018 Agri Export Policy** which is framed with a focus on agriculture export-oriented production, export promotion, better farmer realization and synchronization within policies and programmes of Government.

Significance of Agriculture Export

- **High growth potential:** India's agricultural export has the potential to grow from USD 40 billion to USD 70 billion in a few years.
- **Job creation:** Additional exports are likely to create an estimated 7-10 million jobs.
- **Enhancing farm income:** A growth in agri exports can lead to **doubling of farm income, expansion of diversified markets** for Indian agricultural commodities etc
- **Earns foreign exchange**

India's status in Agricultural Export

- India is the **second largest agriculture producer in the world** and has the largest arable land of 156 million hectares.
- In 2019, India exported USD 38.7 billion of agricultural goods, which is only **7% of Indian agriculture production**.
- India ranks **13th in the world in agriculture exports** despite being leading producer of milk, bananas, mangoes etc.
 - One key cause of the discrepancy between rank in production and exports is the **large domestic demand of a population** of 1.34 bn people.
- From 2013 to 2018, growth has slowed down relative to the impressive growth of 2009 to 2011.
 - **Exports dropped by 10% CAGR** due to a drop in global process and back to back drought in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- India exports **70% of its commodities and agricultural product exports to nearby geographies, including the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific**, only exporting 30% to Europe and the Americas showing low agri market diversification.

Agri Export Policy 2018

- Implemented by the **Department of Commerce** under **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- It aims to double agricultural exports from **US\$ 30+ Billion (2018) to US\$ 60+ Billion by 2022** and reach US\$ 100 Billion in the next few years thereafter.
- It tries to promote **novel, indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional and non-traditional Agri products** exports.
- It tries to provide an **institutional mechanism for pursuing market access**, tackling barriers and deal with sanitary and phytosanitary issues.
- It has both **strategic and operational elements**.
 - **Strategic elements** include both **general and commodity specific measures**, Infrastructure and logistics, Greater involvement of State Governments and multiple ministries in Agriculture Exports.
 - **Operational elements** include focusing on clusters, marketing and promotion of “Brand India”, establishment of Strong

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

Quality Regime, creation of Agri-start-up fund etc.

Agricultural and Processed Foods Export Development Authority (APEDA)

- It is an apex body responsible for the **export promotion of agricultural products** established under the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985**.
- It works under **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

Why there is a slowdown in Agri Export growth?

- **Low productivity:** Indian farms are smaller (1-2 hectares on average), making it harder to achieve economies of scale.
- **Low mechanization:** It is relatively low and Indian farmers do **not utilise many high-yield input varieties** used in other agri-producing countries.
- **High logistics costs:** India's cost of logistics is currently around 14% of GDP – higher than developed country exporters like the US (9.5%).
- **Limited value addition:** India is a more prolific exporter of primary commodities than of value-added agriculture products – **the country ranks 10th globally in processed meat**, 18th in the export of processed fruits and vegetables and 35th in dairy.
 - o Reasons for low value addition include relative lack of private sector investment and adequate incentives.
- **Decreasing incentives to agri exports:** While India has invested heavily in a broad range of export promotion schemes such as **Agriculture Export Zones (AEZ)**, India's export incentives have declined over time.
- **Non-tariff barriers (NTB):** Indian agriculture exports also face non-tariff barriers stringent **sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards**, **residue Limits for various pesticides, antibiotics, etc** in attractive markets such as **Europe** (e.g., more stringent shrimp inspections

than for other top exporting countries).

- o NTB refer to restrictions that result from prohibitions, conditions, or specific market requirements that make importation or exportation of products difficult and/or costly.
- o SPS measures are biosecurity measures which are applied to protect human, animal or plant life or health risks arising from additives, toxins and contaminants in food and feed. These measures are governed by the WTO Agreement.
- **COVID 19:** The pandemic has accentuated the global food and agriculture trends, which may result in decrease of agricultural exports.

Recommendations of HLEG

- **Crop value chains:** Focus on 22 crop value chains with demand driven approach with a potential of taking **Indian exports from USD ~40 bn today to USD ~70 bn in a few years**.
 - o HLEG also identified 7 “must-win” lighthouse value chains using parameters of competitiveness, export potential, agricultural diversity etc. These are rice, shrimps, buffalo, spices and fruits and vegetables, vegetable oils and wood.
- **Target markets for export:** Identify markets with high export potential for competitive value chains and sign beneficial bilateral or multilateral trade agreements with them, raising sanitary and phytosanitary production levels to meet their quality standards and negotiating with them to remove non-tariff barriers.
- **Solve Value Chain Clusters (VCC) holistically with focus on value addition:** The clusters would also serve to converge the government's spends and schemes, as well as seek any additional funding required, for **building the necessary infrastructure** at competitive costs for value addition, promoting research and development and promoting “**Brand India**” in global markets.

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook Twitter YouTube Telegram

Public Notice 2020
Folio PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

- **Creating State-led Export Plan:** It is a business plan for a crop value chain, that will lay out the opportunity, initiatives and investment required to meet the desired value chain export aspiration.
- **Centre as an enabler:** Centre should play an active role in enabling the players involved in the agriculture exports and encourage them for more production.
- **Private investment:** To make the proposed state-level plans viable, both the central and state governments will need to incentivise private investors as well as provide viability gap funding, wherever necessary.
- **Robust institutional mechanism to fund:** Funding through the convergence of existing schemes, Finance Commission allocation and private sector investment should be promoted.
- **Long term contracts:** Due to Covid 19 large food importers may seek to enter into **long-term contracts with exporters** that can assure supply during crises also.
 - o India could position itself well to capitalise on these emerging opportunities.

Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020

In The News

Recently, NITI Aayog in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness released the **Export Preparedness Index (EPI) report 2020**.

About EPI 2020

- It is a data-driven effort to **identify the core areas crucial for export promotion** at the sub-national level.
- **Primary goals of the Index** are to inculcate competition among all states in India in order to:
 - Bring favorable **export promotion policies**.
 - **Ease regulatory framework** to prompt subnational promotion of exports.
 - Create **necessary infrastructure** for exports.
 - **Help in identifying strategic recommendations** for improving export competitiveness.
- It attempts to provide with an extensive **framework for the continual assessment of export readiness of Indian States and UTs** and intends to serve the following purposes:
 - **Ranking of states and UTs** based on their index score.
 - Examining **export preparedness and performance** of Indian States.
 - Identification of challenges and opportunities
 - Enhancing effectiveness of government policies.
- Structure of the **EPI includes 4 pillars and 11 sub-pillars (refer infographic)**.
 - **Policy:** A comprehensive trade policy provides a strategic direction for exports and imports.
 - **Business Ecosystem:** An efficient business ecosystem can help states attract investments and create an enabling infrastructure for individuals to initiate start-ups.
 - **Export Ecosystem:** aims to assess the business environment, which is specific

to exports.

- **Export Performance:** It examines the export performance of states and UTs to identify focus areas and track improvements.

Key Findings of the report

- On the whole, India has scored an average of 39 on the index. **Both Policy and Business Ecosystem are the two highest scoring pillars**, with the Export Ecosystem being the least scoring pillar.
- Most of the **Coastal States are the best performers**. (States are classified geographically – coastal, landlocked, Himalayan, and UTs/city states.)
 - **Top 3 states in overall ranking:** Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu.
 - **Top 3 landlocked states:** Rajasthan, Telangana and Haryana.
 - **Top 3 Himalayan states:** Uttarakhand, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.
 - **Top 3 UTs/City states:** Delhi, Goa and Chandigarh.

India's trends in Global Market

- India's merchandise exports have witnessed growth from USD 275.9 billion in 2016–17 to **USD 331.0 billion in 2018–19**.
- India's share in global trade is less than 2% (1.7% in 2018).
- As of present, **70% of India's export has been dominated by five states** – Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.
- **Key measures adopted by the government post-2016** for promotion of merchandise exports:
 - A **mid-term review of the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20** was conducted in 2017 to assess the policy interventions required to boost the export levels.
 - ✓ For labour-intensive/MSME sectors, incentive rates were revised by 2% and also interest equalization at 3% (both pre and postshipment) was

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

introduced.

- o A new **Logistics Division** was established in the Department of Commerce to organize the integrated development of the logistics sector.
- o **Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)** was launched in April 2017 to address the existing export infrastructure gaps.
- o Other **sector-specific policies** such as **Agriculture Export Policy** were rolled out to target export contribution at a micro-level.
- o **Transport and Marketing Assistance scheme** was also introduced for the export of specified agriculture products to mitigate the disadvantage of the higher cost of transportation.

materials from other developing nations, inconsistent and unpredictable valuation of Yuan, falling global demands etc.

- o China has also rapidly **moved up the Global Value Chains (GVC)** in the same period.
 - ✓ GVCs break up the production process so different steps can be carried out in different countries.
- o **Bangladesh and Vietnam successfully managed to integrate the above GVCs**, which were previously dominated by China.

India missed the opportunity, despite cheaper labour supply and emphasizing on core sectors to produce large-scale exporting products, **because of issues in product specialization.**



Way Forward: Recommendations suggested by the report

- **Convergence:** Creation of Export Infrastructure is a capital-intensive process. By **convergence with various national infrastructure development plans** and coordinating the joint development of export infrastructure, Central government can reward states that have taken significant steps towards export promotion.
- **Robust government-industry-academia linkages:** Every state must actively create channels for such linkages by facilitating and encouraging the capacity building of SMEs and establishment of general export councils.
- **Creating state-level engagements for economic diplomacy:** Under the newly christened ‘Economic Diplomacy and States’ vertical of the Ministry of External Affairs, NITI Aayog should create capacity within states and build frameworks to facilitate direct engagements with such transnational trade bodies.
- **Focus on designs and standards to make products export-ready:** Central and state governments will have to coordinate and engage with design institutions within the country to create a national discourse on the importance of designs and standards needed



- **Missed opportunities**
 - o Weakened global trade during 2014-2016, severely affected the exporting capacities of some of the top contributing nations such as China. This created opportunities for other nations to take over.
 - ✓ **China's poor performance can be attributed to** less import of raw

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook, YouTube, Telegram

Page No. 2020
Page No. 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

for exports.

- **New use cases for products** such as coconut coir, woven textiles, and bamboo, will have to be identified with design thinking so that the vast export potential of the Indian micro-enterprises gets adequately harnessed.

ASPIRE IAS

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Printed in India
Printed in India

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Transparent Taxation – ‘Honoring The Honest’ Platform

In The News

- Recently a platform – “Transparent Taxation — Honouring the Honest” was launched by Prime Minister to strengthen the efforts of reforming and simplifying India's tax system.

taxpayer-friendly ecosystem.

- Faceless Assessment and Taxpayers Charter have come into force from 13th August 2020 while the facility of faceless appeal will be available for citizens across the country from 25th September.

About the platform

- It is aimed at **easing the tax compliance and also rewarding honest taxpayers.**
- Main features of Platform are Faceless Assessment, Faceless Appeal and Taxpayer Charter.
 - o **Faceless assessment:** To eliminate direct contact between Taxpayer and Income Tax officer.
 - ✓ Under this system, the selection of a taxpayer will be done only through systems using data analytics and AI.
 - o **Faceless appeals:** Appeals will be randomly allotted to any officer in the country and identity of the officer deciding the appeal will remain unknown.
 - o **Taxpayer charter:** It outlines the rights and responsibilities of both tax officers and taxpayers. It is likely to empower citizens by ensuring timely services by the IT Department.
- It aims to resolve the problems of a taxpayer instead of entangling him further and **ensure that there is no direct contact in all matters of scrutiny, notice, survey or assessment.**
- The new platform apart from being faceless is also **aimed at boosting the confidence of the taxpayer** and decreasing the fear associated with the taxation process.
 - o It helps to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of income taxpayers.
 - o It seeks to eliminate corrupt practices by doing away with the territorial jurisdiction of income- tax offices
- It is a shift towards rationalization, simplification, greater transparency, ease of managing tax issues and creating an overall

Need for Direct Tax reforms

- **Rationalization and simplification of Income Tax Structure:** The rate structure has broadly remained the same in the last 20 years. Further, there is a need for **rationalization of exemptions** and a rethink of incentives on savings (such as small savings schemes like PPF).
- **Simplify corporate tax rate structure and phase out exemptions:** Exemptions are not equitable vertically (small firms end up paying more taxes) and also there is a loss of revenue due to large number of exemptions.
- **Widen tax base:** It will help to deal with the problem of potential revenue loss due to lower tax rates and simplified tax structure.
- **Reducing tax litigations:** Tendency of tax officials to initiate an action without the necessary justification or assessment is reflected from low success rate of appeals (~30%). There is a need for providing alternate ways of dispute resolutions.
- **Need of Technology infusion** in the tax administration to improve efficiency of tax collection as well as to aid the taxpayer
- **Better sync with global economy:** Since India is much more integrated with the world globally in terms of business linkages and capital account convertibility, the differential treatment of foreign and domestic companies in the country should be gradually phased out.

Recent steps taken to improve direct tax ecosystem

- **Personal Income Tax - Finance Act, 2020** has provided an option to individuals and co-

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

operatives for paying income-tax at concessional rates if they do not avail specified exemption and incentive.

- **Abolition of Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT)** - In order to increase the attractiveness of the Indian Equity Market and to provide relief to a large class of investors companies are not required to pay DDT with effect from 01.04.2020.
- **Vivad se Vishwas:** To provide for resolution of pending tax disputes which will not only benefit the Government by generating timely revenue but also the taxpayers as it will bring down mounting litigation costs.
- **Faceless E-assessment Scheme** – It provides for making assessment by eliminating the interface between the Assessing Officer and the assessee, optimizing use of resources through functional specialization and introducing the team-based assessment.
- **Document Identification Number (DIN)** - In order to bring efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the Income Tax Department, every communication of the Department is mandatorily having a computer-generated unique DIN.
- **Simplification of compliance norms for Start-ups** - Start-ups have been provided hassle-free tax environment which includes simplification of assessment procedure, exemptions from Angel-tax, constitution of dedicated start-up cell etc.
- **Raising of monetary limit for filing of appeal** - To effectively reduce taxpayer grievances/ litigation monetary thresholds for filing appeals have been raised from Rs. 20 lakh to Rs. 50 lakh for appeal before **Income Tax Appellate Tribunal**, from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 1 crore for appeal before the High Court and from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 2 crore for appeal before the Supreme Court.

17% in FY 20 (**direct tax** is ~6% and **indirect tax** is ~11%) which still remains below that of emerging economies (~21%) and much below OECD average (~34%).

- o The ratio of central taxes to GDP slid to a 10-year low of 9.88 % (**direct tax** fell to its lowest in 14 years, at 5.1 per cent, while the **indirect tax** was at a 5-year low at 4.6 per cent in FY20).

About Tax-to-GDP ratio

- It is a representation of the size of the **government's (Centre + States) tax revenue expressed as a percentage of the GDP**.
- Ratio determines the extent to which government is able to finance its expenditure from tax collections, it is also an indicator of tax compliance.
- **Higher Tax-to-GDP ratio means that an economy's tax buoyancy is strong** as the share of tax revenue rises in sync with rise in country's GDP.

India's Tax penetration status

- 57.8 million Individuals filed the **income tax return (~5% of the population)** of which only **15 million (~1.15% of the population)** actually paid taxes.
- India's **Tax-to-GDP ratio** stands at around

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page FT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

DPEPP 2020

In The News

Recently, Ministry of Defence proposed Draft Defence Production and Export Policy 2020 with an aim to double India's defence production in five years.

Current Status of Defence Production in India

- India remained the world's **second-largest arms importer** during 2015-19, with Russia as its largest supplier.
 - Although **Russia's share** of the Indian weapons market **has declined from 72% to 56%**.
- Estimates suggest the Indian armed forces **could spend about \$130 billion** to procure defence equipment in the next five years. The share of domestic procurement in overall Defence procurement is about **60 percent**.
- The size of India's defence industry is **estimated to be Rs 80,000 crore**. “While the contribution of the **public sector** is estimated to be **Rs 63,000 crore**, the share of **private sector** has steadily grown to **Rs 17,000 crore** over the years.
- Defence exports:** In 2018-19, they were worth Rs 10,745 crore, a growth of over 700 per cent since 2016-17. India exports to more than 40 countries.
- The defence industry is ably **supported by a strong base of over 8,000 MSMEs** that provide strength and vibrancy to the defence supply chain.

About the Draft Policy

The policy is envisaged as a guiding document to overcome aforesaid challenges by providing a focused, structured and significant thrust to defence production capabilities of the country for self-reliance and exports.

Goals and Objectives of the policy:

- To achieve a **turnover of Rs 1,75,000 Crores** including export of Rs 35,000 Crore in Aerospace and Defence goods and services by 2025.

- To develop a **dynamic, robust and competitive Defence industry**, including Aerospace and Naval Shipbuilding industry to cater to the needs of Armed forces with quality products.
- To **reduce dependence on imports** and take forward "Make in India" initiatives through domestic design and development.
- To **promote export of defence products** and become part of the global defence value chains.
- To **create an environment that encourages R&D**, rewards innovation, creates Indian IP ownership and promotes a robust and self-reliant defence industry.

Key Guidelines announced in the policy

- Procurement Reforms** – which include **Project Management Unit** for supporting the acquisition process and facilitate management of the contracts
 - A **Technology Assessment Cell (TAC)** would make an assessment of the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) levels available in the country for all the major systems/ platforms
- Support to MSMEs/Start-ups** –
 - setting up of an indigenization portal with an industry interface** to provide development support to MSMEs/Start-ups/Industry **for import substitution**.
 - Defence Investor Cell** in Department of Defence Production will provide handholding to MSMEs, investors and vendors in defence production for resolving issues
- Investment Promotion and Ease of Doing Business** - **Investments would be encouraged** to provide specific focus on certain identified segments and technological areas such as development of **Aero Engines Complex, Maintenance Repair & Overhaul (MRO) and Critical Technologies & Materials**.
- Innovation and R&D** - **DRDO** in

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

consultation with the Services and in collaboration with other scientific and industrial establishments would **set up missions in select areas to develop futuristic and critical systems/platforms/materials.**

- **Reforms in DPSUs and Ordinance Factories-**

- o **Ordinance factories will be corporatized** to make them competitive and to improve their productivity.
- o Efforts will be made to **position DPSUs as system integrators** and create a multi-tier domestic supply chain and would be **encouraged to move towards INDUSTRY 4.0.** Disinvestment of DPSUs will be pursued.

- **Quality Assurance (QA) and Testing Infrastructure -**

- o The **existing testing infrastructure** with Defence organizations would be made **available for private industry** use on equal priority.
- o Create testing infrastructure through **Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS)** by providing assistance to industry to set up common testing facilities.

- **Export Promotion-**

- o Subject to strategic considerations, **domestically manufactured defence products will be promoted** through Govt to Govt agreements and **Lines of Credit/Funding.**
- o **Export Promotion Cell** set up to promote Defence exports through coordinated action to support the Industry would be further strengthened.
- o An **Open General Export License (OGEL) regime** would be utilized to encourage export of selected defence equipment/items to identified friendly countries.

- **Governance –**

- o The **Department of Defence Production** would be the **nodal department** for coordination on various components of the DPEPP.
- o **Institutional data collection**

mechanism regarding Defence industry, including Aerospace & Naval Shipbuilding industries, in the country would be further strengthened.

NATGRID

In The News

NATGRID has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to access the centralised online database on FIRs and stolen vehicles.

More about News

- MoU will give **NATGRID access to Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) database.**
- All State police are mandated to file First Information Reports (FIR) in the CCTNS.
- MoU enables the NATGRID to get information about details of a suspect as mentioned in the FIR such as his/her father's name, telephone number and other details.

About NATGRID

- NATGRID, an attached office of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), is the integrated intelligence grid which connects databases of core security agencies. It was **proposed after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.**
- It will **assist intelligence and law enforcement agencies** in ensuring national and internal security, **with the ultimate aim to counter terror.**
- NATGRID will **link 10 user agencies with certain databases** that would be procured from 21 organisations.
 - **Database involves data related to** credit and debit cards, tax, telecom, immigration, airlines and railway tickets, passports, driving licenses.
 - **It will be available for various central agencies,** on a case-to-case-basis, including Intelligence Bureau, Research and Analysis Wing, Department of Revenue Intelligence etc.
- Recently, MHA announced that physical infrastructure of NATGRID Project will go live by 31st December 2020.

with intelligence, each having its own database that largely worked in isolation. NATGRID will help in better coordination among them.

- For instance, it will provide relevant information on terror suspects from various data providing organisations such as banks, telecommunications companies, immigration/income tax department etc.
- **To keep all data on previous intelligence alerts:** By doing so, such data could be assessed to verify similar links when a fresh intelligence alert is issued.
- **Providing real time data:** Real time information will help to collate scattered information into a transparent, accessible, integrated grid and do away with the inefficiencies associated with information asymmetries.
- **New evolving threats:** Use of social media and other platforms for recruitment and propaganda by terrorist groups, and formal banking channels are used to transact terror funding

Challenges faced in implementation of NATGRID

- **Lack of consensus among various ministries:** Ministries including defence had expressed their reservations on the project. There is a fear among the stakeholders that MHA would have access to all information under their jurisdiction.
- **Reduced relevance:** Project was need of the hour in 2008, but since it failed to start, mostly all intelligence agencies, state police and central armed police developed their own mechanism.
- **Lack of adequate safeguards and protections:** Lack of adequate laws to govern Intelligence Agencies and lack of privacy and data protection laws can result in possible violations of privacy and leakage of confidential personal information.
- **Possible misuse of database:** There has

Why NATGRID is needed?

- **Communicate or gather information:** India has around a dozen agencies tasked

been widespread misuse of surveillance capabilities, in recent years, to compromise individual privacy and even violate national sovereignty. For example Snowden files (top-secret documents about telephone records that Edward Snowden stole from National Security Agency of US).

- **Doubts over efficacy:** As State police will not be part of NATGRID they will not be able to access database. It will impact overall efficacy as state agencies are first line responder in most cases.
- **Resistance from the intelligence agencies:** Because of the fear that it would impinge on their territory and possibly result in leaks on the leads they were working on to other agencies.
- **Infringes on the federal system of the Constitution:** For example NCRB is under the Union government and the data pertaining to FIRs of a particular police station is a State subject.

Way forward

- **Mitigate misuse of data concerns:** Elaborate mechanisms to prevent intelligence and security agencies from getting information for any other purpose than that of countering terrorism and transnational organised crimes.
- **Comprehensive privacy laws:** Like in European Union and US, which also lay down conditions for access to databases, and the limitations of such use.
- **Parliamentary Oversight:** To dispel fear of states, that it infringes on federal structure, and to uphold the sovereign electorate's right to oversee institutions that may affect it in the future.
- **Regular audit:** To improve accountability and credibility, it is imperative to have a proper mechanism in which the data is accessed and sought to be used.

Agrometeorology In India

In The News

The Centre for Science and Environment has released a report titled, ‘Agrometeorological services in India- An assessment’.

apple, mango, sugarcane, cotton, grapes, etc.

- **Climate Change:** Current rate of climate change is resulting in an increasing demand for effective and timely agro-meteorological information and services.

What is Agrometeorology?

- Agrometeorology is the study and use of weather and climate information to improve the productivity of the agricultural sector.
- In India, **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)** under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), is tasked with providing meteorological services. It does so through the **Agrometeorological Advisory Service** program.
- The **three sub-sectors** which work together to provide such services include
 - o **Weather forecasting;**
 - o **Generation of agromet advisories** (identifying how weather forecasts affect farming);
 - o **Dissemination of advisories** (two-way communication with users).

Need for Agrometeorology

- **Weather forecasts:** It plays an essential part in many farming operations. For instance, weeding is best done in a rainless period, planting requires regular but not too heavy rain, spraying pesticides cannot be done in windy weather, etc.
- **Minimise crop loss:** It helps to minimize crop losses due to excess rainfall, cold/heatwaves, cyclones etc. It also helps in better planning for pest attacks.
- **Increasing productivity:** Productivity in agriculture relies on the weather. The growth and harvest of plants is a response both to genetics and the surrounding environment.
- **Need-based services:** For the farmers engaged in cultivation of commercial field crops and horticultural crops like tea, coffee,

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 2020
Page 94 2020

Protected Agricultural Zone - PAZ

In The News

The State government of Tamil Nadu recently notified the **Tamil Nadu Protected Agricultural Zone Development Rules, 2020**.

More

In February, 2020 the State government enacted the **Tamil Nadu Protected Agricultural Zone Development (TNPAZD) Act, 2020**, with objectives to use the available agricultural lands for sustainable development of agriculture and ensure that the **agricultural activities were not unduly constrained by non-agricultural use or other development objectives**.

- The **Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR)** in Tamil Nadu was subsequently scrapped.
 - o **PCPIR** is a specifically delineated investment region planned for the establishment of manufacturing facilities for domestic and export led production in petroleum, chemicals & petrochemicals, along with the associated services and infrastructure.
- **Key features of the TNPAZD Act, 2020**
 - o **Establishment of Protected Agricultural Zone (PAZ)** comprising of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts and some region in Cuddalore and Pudukkottai districts.
 - o **Prohibition of certain new industrial and developmental activities in PAZ:** such as
 - ✓ Establishment of Zinc, Copper and Aluminium smelter, Iron and steel plants, Tannery, Ship breaking Industry.
 - ✓ Exploration, drilling and extraction of oil and natural gas including coal-bed methane, shale gas and other hydrocarbons.
 - o **Creation of a Protected Agricultural Zone Development Authority (PAZDA):** with Chief Minister of TN as

its Chairperson. It will perform following functions in the PAZ-

- ✓ **recommend area for inclusion**
 - ✓ Take necessary steps to **increase agricultural production** and productivity
 - ✓ recommend establishment of **agro-based and allied industries**
 - ✓ Suggest measures related to **sustainable agricultural practices**
 - ✓ suggest preventive measures to safeguard the **livelihood of the agriculturalists**
- Significance of PAZ in the Cauvery delta region**

- **Recognition of farmers' concerns:** The delta has seen multiple protests for a decade over methane, hydrocarbon, oil and natural gas projects which required acquisition of fertile lands and well drilling.
- **Sustainable development of Cauvery delta region:** Activities like coal bed methane projects in the region can lead to intrusion of seawater in agricultural lands and threaten sustainable agricultural developments, livelihood and security of the farmers.
- **Food security:** The Cauvery delta region is the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu and contributes around 40 per cent of the paddy production of the state. Thus, protecting and improving farming activities will improve food security.
- **Addressing environmental degradation:** The Cauvery delta region is already highly vulnerable to climatic change and sea level rise.
 - o Certain industrial projects and activities in the region have had adverse effects on the environment including depletion of ground water and degradation of sanctuaries, wet lands and other biodiversity rich and eco-sensitive regions.

Way Ahead

- The impact of existing projects on environment and agriculture must be

thoroughly assessed.

- PAZs can be developed on the lines of **Special agricultural zones (SAZs)** envisioned by **M.S. Swaminathan**, to include features like-
 - o Focus on **water security and water use efficiency** and climate smart agriculture.
 - o Creation of **Agro Service Centres** including soil testing labs and call centre, plant health clinics, weather stations and advisories, biopharmacy etc.
 - o **Development of infrastructure facilities** such as farm production units, planting materials production units, markets, processing and value addition units, irrigation support etc.
 - o **ICT based initiatives** related to procurement system, on farm technology and training of farmers.

Emission Norms For Thermal Power Plants

In The News

With several thermal power plants (TPP) likely to miss the government's 2022 deadline for installing equipment to minimise pollution from their operations, the Ministry of Power is **recommending that the deadline be extended by up to two years for over 300 such units.**

Background

In 2015, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) notified specific standards for the thermal power plants to control the emissions under “**Environment (Protection) Amendment Rules, 2015**”.

- According to rules,
 - o TPPs were required to achieve the **notified limit within 2 years i.e. by 2017 in a phased manner.**
 - o It amends existing norms related to **emission of suspended particulate matter (SPM) and introduces new norms for emission of SO₂, NO_x and Mercury from TPPs.**
 - o It also **specifies modified limits for specific water consumption** by TPPs and insists to convert existing **once through based condenser cooling (OTBCC) system to recirculation type.**
- The deadline had to be pushed to December 2022 for all the power stations in the country in view of the sheer volume of work, implementation issues and challenges as well as the critical need for maintaining supply of electricity.
 - o Power stations in national capital region were however required to comply with the revised norms by December, 2019.

Emission standards for TPPs and present status:

- As per rough estimates, the 2015 norms can reduce the TPPs' **PM emissions by 35%, SO₂ emissions by 80%, and NO_x emissions by 42%** and reduce their water consumption by nearly a third.
- **The norms provide different mechanisms**

to reduce the emissions and usage of water such as:

- o **Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD)** process for controlling SO_x emissions.
- o **Selective Non-Catalytic Reduction (SNCR) and Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR)** system for controlling NO_x emissions.
- o **Electro-Static Precipitators (ESPs)** are to be deployed for control of particulate matter (PM) in thermal power stations.
- o **Installation of cooling towers** in order to change over to closed cooling water system for controlling water consumption.

• Present status

- o In 2017, 165.9 gigawatts (GW) out of the total of 187.1 GW — or **89% of the country's existing coal based power capacity — were not in compliance** with the sulphur dioxide (SO₂) emission limits notified in 2015.
 - ✓ **Only 1% of the total coal-fired power plant capacity** have installed the mandatory FGD systems.
- o According to Centre for Science and Environment **less than half of the coal-fired capacity is in compliance with particulate matter (PM) standards.**
- o Of the total coal-fired capacity in the country, plants **with only 27% capacity have awarded bids for FGD implementation.** Around 72% capacity have not even awarded the bids at present.

Challenges in achieving the targets

- **Technology implementation:** Very few of the power producers in the country have **prior experience** in the selection, maintenance and evaluation of Air Quality Control Systems which reduces the scope of compliance.
- **Unavailability of Limestone and Water Consumption:** There are issues related to

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

limestone availability and water consumption; for implementing the FGD installation plans in the thermal power plants across the nation.

- o The **mobilization of Limestone** to power plants will create its own environmental foot-print.
- **Requirement of Additional capital:** As per a recent Centre for Science, Technology and Policy (C-STEP) Report, the total cost of installing pollution control technology in India's thermal power plants is around ₹ 3.91 – 3.96 lakh Crore till 2030.
 - o Uncertainties in regard to time frame in which **payment will be received from DISCOMs**, which has been a challenge for the private sector generating companies in maintaining desired cash flow, and hence delays in installation of equipment.
 - o Lenders and banks already being conscious in funding new generation projects in view of many of the new **power stations having turned into stranded assets**, are not keen to finance emission control systems to power stations.
- **Space Constraints:** Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has identified about 72 GW of thermal capacity that is not in a position to install FGD due to the non-availability of space and hence will not be able to comply with the new SOx emission norms.
- **Covid 19 lockdown:** This has delayed the construction of emission reduction facilities by 6 months due to unavailability of labour force.
- **Tariff rationalization:** SERCs may expeditiously make appropriate provisions in tariff regulations necessitated on account of revised emission standards for thermal power stations so that there is a regular cash flow.
- **Closing down inefficient plans:** A proper retirement plan for old and inefficient units, causing more emission due to poor operational heat rate, is required to be formulated.
- **Optimization of implementation:** Options of excluding auxiliaries like water treatment plant, lime handling system, etc., can be provided in the tenders in order to optimize scope and overall implementation schedule.
- **Market for Pollution Control Technologies:** The implementation of the new emission norms has created a huge business opportunity for the equipment manufacturers of FGD, SCR etc. To comply with the emission standards, power producers will have to make significant investments in installing Pollution Control Technologies.

Way Forward

- **Information sharing:** Technology options in respect of FGD may be examined by CEA and the findings may be brought to the notice of all concerned - generating companies, power utilities, State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERCs) as well as CERC so as to facilitate proper and timely decision making on the part of generating companies to place orders.

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 98
Page No. 98

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Carbon Capture, Utilisation & Storage (CCUS)

In The News

The Department of Science & Technology (DST) has invited proposals from Indian researchers in the area of CCUS under **Accelerating CCUS Technologies (ACT)** in collaboration with other ACT member countries.

More About

- ACT is an initiative to facilitate the emergence of Carbon dioxide (CO₂) Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS) via **translational funding of projects** aimed at accelerating and maturing CCUS technology through targeted innovation and research activities.
- Sixteen countries, regions, and provinces are working together in ACT.
- To date, there have been two ACT calls, the first (in 2016), which mobilised funds from participating partners and the European Commission, and the second call (in 2018) was funded by participating national funding agencies only. DST has now made a third call and will make available funds of **approx. 10 Million €**.
- CCUS is also one of the identified innovation challenges in the **Mission Innovation (MI) Programme**- a global initiative of 24 countries and the European Union to accelerate the global clean energy innovation in which the Department of Science & Technology (DST) is an active partner.

About Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS)

- CCUS is group of technologies designed to **reduce the amount of CO₂** released into the atmosphere from coal and gas power stations as well as heavy industry including cement and steel production. Once captured, the CO₂ can be either re-used in various products, such as cement or plastics (**utilisation**), or stored in geological formations deep underground (**storage**).
- **Capture technologies** separate CO₂ from

other gases which may be done in three different ways:

- o **Pre-combustion capture:** It refers to capturing **CO₂ generated as an undesired co-product** of an intermediate reaction of a conversion process. A pre-combustion system involves first converting solid, liquid or gaseous fuel into a mixture of hydrogen and carbon dioxide using one of a number of processes such as ‘gasification’ or ‘reforming’.
 - ✓ **Gasification** is a process that converts biomass- or fossil fuel-based carbonaceous materials into carbon monoxide, hydrogen and carbon dioxide.
 - ✓ **Reforming**, in chemistry, processing technique by which the molecular structure of a hydrocarbon is rearranged to alter its properties.
- o **Post-combustion capture:** It involves **separation of CO₂ from waste gas streams** after the conversion of the carbon source to CO₂ – for example, via combustion of fossil fuels or digestion of wastewater sludge. It includes methods like absorption in solvents, high pressure membrane filtration, adsorption by solid sorbents, including porous organic frameworks, and cryogenic separation etc.
- o **Oxy-fuel combustion:** It can only be applied to **processes involving combustion**, such as power generation in fossil-fuelled plants, cement production and the iron and steel industry. Here, **fuel is burned with pure oxygen to produce flue gas with high CO₂ concentrations** and free from nitrogen and its compounds.
 - ✓ **Flue gas** refers to the **combustion exhaust gas** produced at power plants and other industries.
- **Storage:** Suitable storage sites for captured

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

carbon include former gas and oil fields, deep saline formations (porous rocks filled with very salty water), coal bed formations, ocean bed etc.

- **Utilization:** As an alternative to storage, captured CO₂ can be used as a commercial product, either directly or after conversion. Examples of utilisation include-

- o **In the food and drink industry:** CO₂ is commonly used as a carbonating agent, preservative, packaging gas and as a solvent for the extraction of flavours and in the decaffeination process.
- o **In the pharmaceutical industry:** where CO₂ can be used as a respiratory stimulant or as an intermediate in the synthesis of drugs
- o **Concrete building materials:** CO₂ can be used to cure cement, or in the manufacture of aggregates.
- o **Enhanced oil and coal-bed methane recovery:** where the carbon dioxide is injected into depleting oil or gas reserves to increase the amount of recovery.
- o **Production of chemicals, plastics and fuels** such as methanol, urea, polymers, syngas etc.
- o **Remediation of alkaline industrial wastes**
- o **Mineral carbonation:** It is a chemical process in which CO₂ reacts with a metal oxide such as magnesium or calcium to form carbonates.
- o **Biofuels production:** CO₂ can be used to cultivate microalgae used for the production of biofuels.
- o **Generating additional power:** Technologies are being developed to use CO₂ for power generation. **Example-** CO₂-based steam cycles can help power generation turbines run more efficiently, geologically stored CO₂ could be used to extract geothermal heat for producing renewable geothermal energy.

limitations, extra energy and materials needed in the process of carbon capturing, transport and infrastructure costs etc., CCUS technologies are still not cost effective and scalable. For example- Oxy fuel combustion requires oxygen which is expensive.

- **Environmental impacts:** Deep sea storage of CO₂ can lead to acidification or eutrophication and harm marine organisms close to injection points. Long term effects of direct CO₂ injection on large ocean areas have not yet been studied.
- **Leakage:** The main concerns with CO₂ storage are its possible leaks and the related damage that a concentrated CO₂ stream would cause if it escaped into the environment.
- **Benefits being partly offset by emissions related to the CCUS life cycle chain:** The extra energy and materials needed for the technology: for example, from fuel extraction, transportation, infrastructure building, burning of fuel, CO₂ capture, solvent production etc., can increase concentration of other gas pollutants and deplete natural resources.

Way Forward

- **Environmental impacts** of CCUS have to be evaluated carefully on a life cycle basis to ensure a positive economic and environmental balance.
- **Further research** is needed to develop **cost-effective and energy-efficient** capture techniques. Focus should be on the development of materials and products with longer lifetimes to enable **long-term storage** of CO₂.
- Governments should establish an **overall policy strategy and pathway for CCUS in industry**, incorporating necessary R&D priorities, **awareness generation**, incentive policy mechanisms and legal frameworks.

Concerns

High Costs: Due to reasons such as, technological

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
f t y

Telegram
Pulse India 2020
Pulse PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Urban Forestry

In The News

Recently, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) selected Arunachal Pradesh capital

(Itanagar) for implementation of the ‘Nagar Van’ or Urban Forest scheme.

About Nagar Van Scheme

- It envisages creating forests in **200 urban cities across the country in next five years** with a renewed focus on people’s participation and collaboration between Forest Department, Municipal bodies, NGOs, Corporates and local citizens.
 - Pune’s Warje forest offer good model for growth.
- Forest once established **will be maintained by State Government.**

About Urban Forestry

- It is an integrated, city wide approach to the **planting, care and management of trees, forests, and natural systems** in the city to secure multiple environmental and social benefits for urban dwellers.
- It **concentrates on all tree dominated as well as other green resources** in and around urban areas, such as woodlands, public and private urban parks and gardens, urban nature areas, street tree and square plantations, botanical gardens and cemeteries.

Importance of urban Forestry

- **Environmental Benefits:**
 - It includes **reduction in temperature rise in urban areas**, removal of other air pollutants, recharge of groundwater and stabilization of soil.
 - India has pledged to **create an additional carbon sink** of 2.5 -3.0 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030 and urban forestry will have an important contribution towards achieving it.

• Social and Psychological Benefits:

- Urban trees enhance the **beauty and environmental quotient of city** and are among the most important features contributing to the aesthetic quality of residential streets and community parks.
- Urban parks and peri-urban forests are an **important recreational facility**. Urban green spaces can enhance cultural activities by providing venues for local festivals, civic celebrations, political gatherings and theatrical performances.
- It can **reduce stress and improve physical health** for urban residents as it is discovered that time spent in nature, relieves mental fatigue and the feelings of violence and aggression that can spring from it.

• Economic Benefits:

- Landscaping with trees can **increase property values and commercial benefits**. In Delhi, poor people gain income from the harvesting and sale of a number of products from trees growing on land owned by the Municipal Corporation.
- Urban forest offers significant benefits in reducing building air-conditioning demand and **reducing energy consumption**.
- **Saves municipal expenditures** for storm water management infrastructure, ozone non-attainment and other costs associated with asthma and other illnesses related to poor air quality.

Potential issues with Urban Forestry

- **Expensive approach:** Urban forestry initiatives conducted on a scale beyond small homegardens can cost a large amount of money to implement. This is particularly the case if instant results are wanted as maintenance costs can be very high in such situations.
- **Structural damage:** The roots of street

trees often cause the cracking of roads and pavements and sometimes water pipes. Urban trees can also cause structural damage to buildings.

- **Threats to Human safety:** Poorly planted or inappropriate tree species can serve as a hazard to urban inhabitants, either directly (through falling branches or the falling over of the entire tree) or indirectly.

Way forward

- Initiatives such as **engagement of NGOs, civil society, media and corporate groups** are necessary to extend urban green cover.
- Species must be selected by **considering climate, soil type and topography**. In recent times, trees are largely planted for their high growth rate and decorative appearance.
- Need to **plant trees that provide multiple benefits to individual and society**, particularly in-house compounds for providing edible pods, flowers, fruits, leaves etc. and in median strips between roads for shades and ground water recharge.
- **Riverside beautification** as well as tree plantation can solve the problem of lack of space. Tree plantation on the shores of river or water channel can increase the urban green cover and provide space for city dwellers.
- Plan for urban forestry **should be integrated into overall planning of the urban areas** in advance otherwise greening of the urbanized area becomes more difficult once the settlement takes place.

Sea Level Rise

In The News

Recently Scientific Reports journal noted that sea-level rise (SLR) is a "well accepted" consequence of climate change.

Findings of the study

- Sea levels have risen by between **180 to 200 mm since 1900.**
- **0.5-0.7% of the world's land area is at a risk of episodic coastal flooding by 2100**, impacting 2.5-4.1% of the population assuming there are no coastal defenses or adaptation measures in place.
- o By 2100, the global population potentially exposed to episodic coastal flooding will increase **from 128-171 million to 176-287 million.**
- The value of global assets exposed to this change is projected to be between **\$6-\$9 trillion or 12-20% of the global GDP.**

Causes of the sea-level rise

- **Thermal expansion:** When water heats up, it expands. About half of the sea-level rise over the past 25 years is attributable to warmer oceans simply occupying more space.
- **Melting glaciers:** Persistently higher temperatures caused by global warming have led to greater-than-average summer melting of mountain glaciers as well as diminished snowfall due to later winters and earlier springs.
 - o That creates an imbalance between runoff and ocean evaporation, causing sea levels to rise.
- **Loss of Greenland and Antarctica's ice sheets:** Melt water from above and seawater from below is seeping beneath Greenland's ice sheets, effectively lubricating ice streams and causing them to move more quickly into the sea
- **Changes in the net storage of terrestrial**

freshwater: E.g., groundwater/river extraction, reservoirs, changes in rainfall and evaporation from climate variability.

- **Local factors:** Over relatively short time spans (hours to years), the influence of tides, storms, earthquakes and landslides and climatic variability—such as El Niño—dominates sea level variations at local level.

Impacts of Sea Level Rise

- **Loss of habitat:** Almost 3 billion people are living within 200 km of the coasts and islands all over the world. A sea level rise will lead to loss of habitation and hence leads to de-urbanization.
 - o Indonesia is planning to shift its capital from **Jakarta**, the “**world's fastest-sinking city**” owing to sinking of land by 25 cm per year.
 - o It may also significantly affect tourism and recreation through impacts on landscapes (e.g., beaches), cultural features etc.
- **Agriculture:** SLR will affect agriculture mainly through land submergence, soil and fresh groundwater resources salinisation, and land loss due to permanent coastal erosion, with consequences on production, **livelihood diversification and food security.**
- **Coastal fisheries and aquaculture:** The negative effects of SLR on fisheries and aquaculture are indirect, through adverse impacts on habitats (e.g., coral reef degradation, reduced water quality in deltas and estuarine environments, soil salinisation, etc.).
- **Impact on Small Island Nations:** Because of small islands' high coastline to land area ratio, most of their human settlements, agricultural lands, and critical infrastructure are at or near the coasts.
- **Storm Surges:** Higher sea levels are coinciding with more dangerous hurricanes and cyclones that move more slowly and drop more rain, contributing to more

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

powerful storm surges.

- **Digital exclusion:** The prospect of higher coastal water levels threatens basic services such as Internet access, since much of the underlying communications infrastructure lies in the path of rising seas.
- **Maritime disputes:** With sea-level rise, the baselines from which most maritime zones (defined under **United Nation Convention on Law of Seas (UNCLOS)**) are measured will change. As a consequence, the outer boundary of the zone may also change, retreating landward, which may lead to maritime disputes.
- **Impact on India:** As per the study by Hyderabad-based Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services, Sea levels along the Indian coast are projected to rise between 3.5 inches to 34 inch (2.8 feet) by the end of century due to global warming.
 - o Climate change is expected to inundate significant sections of Mumbai by 2050, impacting millions of people.

people, and important economic regions of 15 Northern European countries from rising seas as a result of climate change a **mammoth Northern European Enclosure Dam (NEED)**, enclosing all of the North Sea is being planned.

- **Adaptation to Sea Level Rise:**
 - o **Relocating utility infrastructure**, such as treatment plants and pump stations, to higher elevations would reduce risks from coastal flooding.
 - o **Understanding and modeling groundwater conditions** will inform aquifer management and projected water quantity and quality changes.
 - o **Coastal restoration plans** may protect water utility infrastructure from damaging storm surge by increasing protective habitat of coastal ecosystems such as **mangroves and wetlands**.
 - o **The injection of fresh water into aquifers** can help to act as a barrier, while intrusion recharges groundwater resources.

Way forward

- **Integrated coastal management:** It will help in resource management following an integrative, holistic approach and an interactive planning process in addressing the complex management issues in the coastal area.
 - o **Coastal Regulation Zone** notifications issued under **Environmental Protection Act, 1986** will help in this integrated management.
- **Community ownership:** Policy makers should engage stakeholders in the early stages of decision-making and throughout the entire decision-making process to enhance overall resilience in coastal areas, while supporting community ownership.
- **Barriers to urban areas:** Rotterdam has offered a model to other cities seeking to combat flooding and land loss. **Rotterdam has built barriers**, drainage, and innovative architectural features such as a “water square” with temporary ponds.
- **Enclosure dams:** To protect 25 million

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t y



Page No. 104
Page No. 104

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Landslides

In The News

Recently, unusually high rainfall and unscientific land use caused landslides at a settlement of tea estate workers in Munnar in Idukki, Kerala.

About Landslide

- **Landslides are a type of "mass wasting,"** which denotes any down-slope movement of soil and rock under the direct influence of gravity.
- It encompasses five modes of slope movement: **falls, topples, slides, spreads, and flows.**
- As per **Geological Survey of India (GSI)**, about 0.42 million km² covering nearly 12.6% of land area of our country is prone to landslide hazards.

Causes of landslide

- **Water and flooding:** Water reduces the friction between the bedrock and the overlying sediment, and gravity sends the debris sliding downhill.
 - o In sand and clay soils, a small amount of water may increase stability. However, the sediment gets heavier as more water is added and that can cause it to flow downhill.
 - o **Earthquakes:** If the Earth's crust vibrates enough to disrupt the force of friction holding sediments in place on an incline, a landslide can strike. Seismic activity can also make it easier for water to seep into the soil, further destabilizing the slope.
 - o Moreover, as the Indian plate moves northwards under the Eurasian plate at a speed of 45 mm per year, the mountain rocks experience continuous stress, making them fragile and prone to further landslides.
- **Wildfires and deforestation:** Plants help keep the soil stable by holding it together like glue with their roots. When this glue is removed, the soil loosens, and gravity acts upon it much more easily. The loss of

vegetation after a fire or deforestation makes the razed land susceptible to slides.

- **Anthropogenic activities:** External loads such as buildings, reservoirs, highway traffic, stockpiles of rocks, accumulation of alluvium on slopes, etc.

Impacts of landslides

- **Loss of life:** Landslides have caused massive damage of life and property during extremely heavy rain across India
 - o **Kedarnath landslide in Uttarakhand in June 2013,** caused by flash floods that resulted in over 5,000 deaths, was identified as the most tragic such disaster.
- **Infrastructure loss:** The surface communications in the hilly areas throughout the world are disrupted by landslides.
- **Agriculture & vegetation loss:** Destruction of the agricultural land is the direct impact of landslide hazards. Sometimes the surface becomes so irregular that even the use of machinery becomes impossible.
 - o Landslides lead to tilting of trees and their subsequent uprooting leading to deforestation.

Way forward

- The **National Disaster Management Authority** has released **National Landslide Risk Management Strategy.**
 - o **Landslide Hazard Zonation (LHZ):** It recommends Landslide Hazard Zonation maps to be prepared at macro scale and meso level.
 - ✓ It focuses on making use of advanced state-of-the-art tools such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), Terrestrial Laser Scanner, and very high-resolution Earth Observation (EO) data.
 - o **Awareness Programmes:** Since the community is the first to confront the disaster before any aid reaches them, a

mechanism of awareness is framed to involve and educate the community.

- o **Capacity Building and Training of Stakeholders:** Creation of **Centre for Landslide Research Studies and Management (CLRSM)** to create a techno-scientific pool of expertise in the country.
- o **Preparation of Mountain Zone Regulations and Policies:** The strategy describes the formulation of land- use policies and techno legal regime, updation and enforcement of building regulations, **review and revision of BIS code / guidelines for landslide management, proposed amendment in town and country planning legislations**, regulations for land use zoning for natural hazard prone areas etc.
- Some of the best practices in **Sikkim** such as **controlled breaching of artificial lake** to prevent Lake Burst situation helped in reducing landslides can be extrapolated in hilly regions.
- **Early Warning System for Landslide** should be installed in hazard prone areas and dissemination of information through mobile networks can be used to reduce the loss of life.
- **The Gadgil Panel on Western Ghats Ecology** recommended for a replacement of the prevailing ‘Develop Recklessly, Conserve Thoughtlessly’ pattern with one of ‘**Develop Sustainably, Conserve Thoughtfully**’, which would result in to reduced landslide incidents on the Western Ghats.

Floods In Bihar And Assam

In The News

Parts of Assam and Bihar in India have been severely affected by floods almost every year in the last decade.

Floods in India

- Rashtriya Barh Ayog (RBA) had estimated in 1980, total flood-prone area in the country as **40 million hectare (mha)** which was revised further to 49.815 mha.
 - As such, about 39.58 % of the total land area of Assam and 73.63% of the geographical area of North Bihar is considered to be prone to floods.
- Recurring floods in the Assam and Bihar have had **catastrophic effects** such as widespread loss of human and animal life, destruction of crops and private property, displacement of people, and damage to infrastructure which aggravates the already poor drainage system.
 - Average annual loss due to flood in Assam is to the tune of Rs. 200.00 Crores.

Why are floods a recurring phenomenon in these regions?

- **Topographical and Hydrological factors:** Overflowing Rivers is the primary cause of floods in these regions. Brahmaputra and Barak and their tributaries in Assam and Kosi River in Bihar are responsible for majority of floods. The flooding situation in these rivers is often aggravated by:
 - **erosion and silting of the river beds**, resulting in a reduction of the carrying capacity of river channels
 - **earthquakes and landslides** leading to changes in river courses and obstructions to flow
 - **synchronization of floods** in the main and tributary rivers
 - **inflow** from neighboring states
- **Meteorological factors:** 80% of the precipitation in India takes place in the monsoon months from June to September.

Concentrated rainfalls in a short span of time and events such as cloud bursts, glacial lake outbursts etc. often cause floods in Himalayan Rivers.

- **Anthropogenic factors:** These include deforestation, drainage congestion, encroachment of natural water bodies, unsustainable mining of river-bed, poorly planned development works and climate change induced extreme weather events.
- **Flaws in Flood management strategies:**
 - **Construction of embankments without proper assessment:** Embankments have been used extensively in Assam and Bihar for managing flooded rivers. Some studies have concluded that in certain cases embankments have enhanced the flood problem. Major issues with embankments include:
 - ✓ They can interfere with drainage and cause drainage congestion
 - ✓ Their inability to stand erosion
 - ✓ They need continuous maintenance and repairs
 - ✓ They can raise river bed levels thus decreasing carrying capacity of rivers
 - **Absence of an integrated approach by the Centre and the state:** The Brahmaputra Board formed under the Brahmaputra Board Act, 1980, lacks coordination with the state government. Similar lack of coordination can be seen between the Assam Disaster Management Authority and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
 - **Unrealized potential of multipurpose dams:** The dams in Assam and Bihar mainly focus at the hydropower benefits and lack storage space for flood control.
 - **Trans boundary management of rivers:** Absence of real time sharing of hydrological data and poor coordination among river basin nations about river

flow management is an issue.

Way forward

- **Adopting a collaborative approach** involving all stake holders — the Centre, the state, the district administration, Indian Meteorological Department and crucially, the community.
 - o It is also important for Assam to **work together with the neighbouring states** like Meghalaya that shares the basin of Brahmaputra.
- **Shifting the focus from mindless construction of embankments to flood mitigating policies** that complement the existing embankments and accentuate the impact of floods.
 - o **National Water policy, 2012**, recommends conducting **morphological studies**, based on which planning, execution and maintenance of revetments, spurs, embankments, etc. could be carried out.
- An **integrated approach to managing floods** is needed that works simultaneously for water management, physical planning, land use, agriculture, transport and urban development as well as nature conservation.
 - o **E.g. - Wetlands**, locally known as beels, act as reservoirs and rejuvenating them before monsoon can help in mitigating flood in parts.
- **Incorporating storage space in the reservoirs** as a preventive measure during the floods.
- **Raising awareness among communities** residing in the flood-prone areas and ensuring efficiency of the local authorities could help mitigate the effects of the disaster.
- **Improving Flood forecasting** so that information about floods forecasts reaches the affected villages on time.
- **Managing silt through dredging**: The fine dredged material can be used to supply organic content and nutrients to deficient soils to increase productivity.
- **Flood Plain Zoning (FPZ)**: FPZ measures aim at demarcating zones or areas likely to be affected by floods of different

magnitudes or frequencies and probability levels and specifying the types of permissible developments in these zones, so that whenever flood actually occurs, the damage can be mitigated.

- o **Central Water Commission (CWC)** had circulated a **Model Bill on Flood Plain Zoning** to all the States in 1975 to guide of States for enactment of legislation in this regard.
- o **RBA** recommends **scientific assessment** of flood prone areas, flood damage and areas suffering from drainage congestion and water-logging. This should be based on frequency of flooding and period of inundation as gauged by **contour maps and satellite imagery**.

Flash Droughts

In The News

According to a recent study, about 10-15% areas under cultivation of rice and maize were affected by flash droughts during the monsoon seasons in India between 1951 and 2018.

About Flash Droughts

- Unlike conventional drought that propagates slowly, **flash drought is characterized by rapid onset and intensification** caused by high evapotranspiration rates due to abnormally high temperatures, winds, and high incoming solar radiation.
 - Therefore, flash droughts are **associated with low soil moisture, extreme heat, and high evapotranspiration.**
- It can be classified as **agricultural droughts** due to their direct association with soil moisture and crop stress. Therefore, **soil moisture has been widely used as an indicator** to identify flash droughts.
- Flash droughts can be driven by lack of precipitation known as **precipitation deficit flash drought.**
- On the other hand, flash drought caused by anomalously **high temperature is known as heatwave flash drought.**
- Drivers and **characteristics of flash droughts can vary regionally as well as in different seasons.** For example, subtropical or temperate regions of the world can experience flash droughts anytime in a year.
- Flash drought can have **localized as well as to large-scale implications.** The regional flash droughts can affect crop production and irrigation demands at the local scale.
 - For instance, 2017 flash drought in the Northern Plains of the USA was limited to only two states.

season in India.

- Flash droughts are mainly **driven by significant negative anomalies of precipitation (monsoon break).** Increased air temperature and precipitation deficit together (during breaks) cause a rapid depletion of soil moisture leading to flash drought.
- Flash droughts in the monsoon season can have **implications for agriculture and water management in India.**
 - About **10-15% of rice and maize grown area is affected** by the flash droughts each year in India.
 - Since flash droughts cause a rapid depletion of soil moisture, **irrigation water demands can considerably increase** in the agricultural regions.
 - Frequent flash droughts during the monsoon season in northern India **can indirectly influence groundwater storage.**

Key findings of the study

- It identified **39 flash droughts during 1951-2018** and found that **82% of those occurred during monsoon**

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On

f t YouTube



Page No. 109
Page No. 109

Boreal Summer Intra Seasonal Oscillation

In The News

Researchers at the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad have found a better way to forecast waves based on **Boreal Summer Intra Seasonal Oscillation (BSISO)**.

It carries out **sustained ocean observations** and constant improvements through systematic and focussed research.

About news

- Researchers found that, some phases of **BSISO induce high wave activity** in north Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.
- Waves induced by **active phases of BSISO are nearly 0.5 meters higher** than those which occur during other phases of BSISO.
- Studying BSISO will help improve wave forecasts along India's coasts and mitigate adverse impacts of high waves (coastal flooding, erosion, etc).
- It also helps in better planning of Sea-navigation routes.

About BSISO

- BSISO is the **transfer of heat from Indian Ocean to western Pacific Ocean** roughly every 10-50 days during the monsoon (June-September).
- It represents the monsoon's 'active' and 'break' periods, in which **weeks of heavy rainfall give way to brilliant sunshine** before starting all over again.
- The active phase **enhances monsoon winds** and hence the surface waves.
- It is **one of the most prominent sources of short-term climate variability** in the global monsoon system.

Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)

- It was established as an **autonomous body in 1999 under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** and is a **unit of the Earth System Science Organization (ESSO)**.
- It is mandated to provide **the best possible ocean information and advisory services** to society, industry, government agencies and the scientific community.

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Page No. 110
Page No. 110

Snow Leopard

In The News

India's first snow leopard conservation centre will be established in Uttarakhand.

More about news

- The conservation centre will be built by the **Uttarakhand forest department along United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Uttarkashi forests** as part of its six-year long project, **SECURE Himalayas**.
 - The project aims at securing livelihoods, conservation, sustainable use and restoration of high range Himalayan ecosystems.
 - The project looks into conversation of snow leopards and other endangered species and their habitats, found in Himalayas. **This project was started in 2017.**
 - It is funded by the **Global Environment Facility-United Nations Development Programme.**
- The Snow leopard conservation centre aims to protect the animal with the help of local community and also **give employment to locals** from nearby villages through tourism. It also aims to conservation and restoration of Himalayan ecosystems.

Other Conservation measures by the Government:

- **Project Snow Leopard:** To safeguard and conserve India's unique natural heritage of high-altitude wildlife populations and their habitats by **promoting conservation through participatory policies and actions.**
- **Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP):** It is an unprecedented alliance of all snow leopard range countries, non-governmental organizations, multi-lateral institutions, scientists and local communities, united by one goal: saving the snow leopard and its

mountain ecosystems.

- **Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan** are part of GSLEP.
- The Indian Government has also launched the **first national Snow Leopard Population Assessment** to estimate the population of snow leopards in the Indian ranges.

About Snow Leopard

- It is a **Schedule I animal under Wildlife Protection Act** of India.
- It is listed as **“Vulnerable”** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- They are listed under Appendix I of CITES.
- The animal faces many threats to its existence due to poaching and habitat destruction.
- In India, it inhabits the Himalayas at elevations ranging from 3,000 to 4,500 metres across **Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.**
 - This area contributes to about five per cent of the global snow leopard range.
 - In Uttarakhand, snow leopards are found in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Gangotri National Park, Askot Wildlife Sanctuary and other places of altitude between 3000-4500 meters in total geographical area of around 13,000 square kilometres.
- Snow leopards are found in 12 countries—including China, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, and Mongolia.

DNA Technology Regulation Bill, 2019

In The News

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology has expressed concerns over some of the provisions of The **DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019**.

provisions of the Bill

- It provides for the **regulation of use of DNA technology** for establishing the identity of certain persons.
- DNA testing is allowed only in respect of matters listed in the Schedule to the Bill, like:
 - o matters of **offences under Indian Penal Code**,
 - o **civil matters such as paternity suits** and
 - o for **establishment of individual identity**.
- **Consent provisions for collection of DNA:**
 - o For arrested persons, **authorities are required to obtain written consent** if the **offence carries a punishment of up to seven years**.
 - o If the offence carries more than seven years of imprisonment or death, **consent is not required**.
 - o If the person is a **victim/relative of a missing person/minor/disabled person**, the authorities are **required to obtain the written consent** of such person.
 - o **If consent is not given** in these cases, the authorities can approach a **Magistrate who may order the taking of bodily substances** of such persons.
- Establishment of a **National DNA Data Bank and Regional DNA Data Banks**.
 - o DNA laboratories are required to share data prepared by them with the National and Regional DNA Data Banks.
- Bill provides for **removal of the DNA profiles** of the following persons:
 - o A **suspect** if a police report is filed or court order given.
 - o An **undertrial** if a court order is given.
 - o on written request, for persons **who are not a suspect, offender or undertrial**.
- Establishment of a **DNA Regulatory Board** to **supervise the DNA Data Banks and laboratories**.
 - o **The Secretary, Department of Biotechnology** will be **ex officio Chairperson** of the Board.
 - o Board will comprise **additional members** including: Experts in the field of biological sciences; **Director General of the National Investigation Agency** and **Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation**.
 - o **Functions of the Board** include, advising governments on all issues related to establishing DNA laboratories or Data Banks, granting accreditation to DNA laboratories etc.
- **Penal provisions** for offences like **unauthorised disclosure**, obtaining, use and access of DNA samples, destruction, alteration, contamination or tampering with biological evidence etc.

Previously

- The first attempt to regulate use and application of DNA technology was made in **2003** with the constitution of a **DNA Profiling Advisory Committee**. A draft bill was accordingly prepared.
- After many revisions, the **Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha in 2018**, but it lapsed.
- **In 2019, it was reintroduced and was referred to Parliamentary Standing Committee**.

Concerns raised by the Committee

- **Sensitive information:** DNA profiles can reveal extremely sensitive information of an individual such as pedigree, skin colour, behaviour etc. Access to such information can be misused to specifically target individuals and their families with their own genetic data. E.g.: incorrectly linking a

particular caste/community to criminal activities.

- **Weak Consent Clause:** Magistrate can easily override it consent thereby making consent perfunctory. There is no guidance on the grounds and reasons of when the magistrate can override consent.
- **Violation of the fundamental right to privacy:**
- Bill provides **retention of DNA found at a crime scene in perpetuity**, even if conviction of the offender has been overturned.
- **DNA profiles for civil matters will also be stored in the data banks**, but without a clear and separate index. This violates the fundamental right to privacy and does not serve any public purpose.
- **Absence of robust data protection legislation**, which raises concerns regarding security of a huge number of DNA profiles that will be placed with the National DNA Data bank and its regional centres.

Way Forward

Committee suggested the following:

- **Independent scrutiny must be done** of the proposals to destroy biological samples and remove DNA profiles from the database.
- Make provisions to ensure that if a person has been found innocent **his DNA profile has to be removed immediately** from the data bank.
- India first needs **laws to protect privacy and personal data** and also sample collection has to be carefully defined, purpose-based.
- The DATA banks and laboratories should have **highest possible levels of cyber security** to prevent Cyber security breaches.

GS - IV

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Printed in India
Printed in India

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Vaccine For All ?

There is tremendous interest in the development of a COVID-19 vaccine, with more than a hundred initiatives under way around the world. Even if one or more vaccines emerge, the public-health problem will not be eliminated. But policymakers can avert some foreseeable problems by starting to address key questions about financing and distribution now.

But why vaccine distribution requires ethical decision-making?

Governments, international agencies and health systems have an obligation to ensure, to the best of their ability, adequate provision of health care for all. However, this may not be possible during a pandemic, when health resources are likely to be limited.

- Setting priorities and rationing resources in this context means **making tragic choices**, but it is essential that these tragic choices be **ethically justified**.
- Ethical justifications can be provided in various ways, it is important to understand which systems suits the context best. For example, the **allocation of different resources may find ethical justifications in different principles** or values.
- Most importantly, a standardized ethical framework that can be used as a **guide for decision-making process** from hospitals to administrators.

Globalism vs. Nationalism debate in the context of vaccine distribution

- Several countries like Britain, France, Germany and the US have entered into pre-purchase agreements with Covid-19 vaccine manufacturers, a development that has come to be known as “**vaccine nationalism**”.
- There are fears that such advance agreements will make the initial few vaccines **unaffordable and inaccessible to everyone** apart from the rich countries, in particular to **countries with fewer resources and bargaining power**.

- In this context, **WHO has warned** that hoarding possible COVID-19 vaccines while excluding others would **further deepen the pandemic**.
- The possible counter to vaccine nationalism is **global collaboration**, which is being done through the WHO-backed

COVAX Facility mechanism.

o The facility aims to procure **at least two billion doses** of COVID-19 vaccines by the end of next year for deployment and **distribution mainly in the low- and middle-income countries**.

What values could be the basis for deciding who should get priority?

- **Equality:** Each person’s interest should count equally unless there are good reasons that justify the differential prioritization of resources.
 - o Characteristics of individuals, such as race, ethnicity, creed, ability or gender, should not serve arbitrarily as the basis for the differential allocation of resources.
 - o This value could be the most appropriate guide the allocation of scarce resources among individuals or populations who can be expected to derive the same benefit from the resource, for example, vaccines among high-risk populations.
- **Best outcomes (utility):** This principle can be used to justify the allocation of resources according to receiver’s capacity to do the most good or minimize the most harm, for example, using available resources to save the most lives possible.
 - o This value could be the most appropriate guide for allocation of scarce resources that confer substantially different benefits to different individuals, for example, ventilators to those expected to derive the most benefit.
- **Prioritize the worst off:** This principle can be used to justify the allocation of resources to those in greatest medical need or those

most at risk.

This value could be the most appropriate to guide the allocation of resources that are designed or intended to protect those at risk, for example, PPE for health care workers, vaccines for those most at risk of infection and severe illness, or those most in need.

- **Prioritize those tasked with helping others:** This principle can be used to justify the allocation of resources to those who have certain skills or talents that can save many other people, or because something is owed to them on account of their participation in helping others.
 - o This value could be most appropriate to guide the allocation of resources to health care workers, first responders, etc.

What can be done to ensure that these principles are applied fairly?

- **Ensuring Transparency:** The decisions and their justifications should be made public. This implies that the population should be informed about the criteria guiding the decisions.
- **Encouraging Inclusiveness:** Those affected by allocation decisions – including individuals, communities or countries – should be able to exert at least some influence over the decision-making process as well as the decision itself.
 - o This also implies that decisions should be open to challenge and potentially revisable, perhaps through an appeal process.
- **Ensuring Consistency:** Decisions should be consistent so that all persons in the same categories are treated in the same way. This implies that favoritism towards one's own family, religious or political compatriots, or otherwise, should not be exercised.
- **Maintaining Accountability:** Those making decisions about allocation must be accountable for those decisions – that is, they should justify their decisions and be held responsible for them.

Conclusion

Ethical considerations are vital to decision-making about the deployment of vaccines in acute humanitarian emergencies. A fair system **engenders solidarity and trust**, which are **vital to the successful and sustained collective response** necessary for dealing effectively with any outbreak. This allocation of a limited supply of vaccine calls for a fine balance between utility and equality and fairness. Following could be done to ensure this:

- **Vaccine Delivery Platform:** which enables coordination between health management authorities, local government and state government.
 - o Further, the platform could be **integrated with the information repository** created for the vaccination distribution.

Maintaining Information Repository for identification and accordingly optimization of the vaccine delivery process. Also, it could create a **list of people who need vaccination** on immediate basis in a given area.

PT POINTERS

Aspire IAS  The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM

9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On



Feeds Meena 2020
Feeds PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

Places in News- Beirut

It is the capital and largest city of Lebanon. Located on a peninsula at the midpoint of Lebanon's Mediterranean coast, **Beirut is an important regional seaport. Why in News?**

A huge explosion recently devastated the port area of the capital Beirut. The blast was caused by 2,750 tonnes of **ammonium nitrate** stored unsafely in a warehouse.

John Hume

John Hume, the visionary politician who won a **Nobel Peace Prize for fashioning the agreement that ended violence in Northern Ireland**, has died at 83.

He was seen as the principal architect of **Northern Ireland's 1998 peace agreement**.

He, along with few others, won the Nobel Prize for their efforts to end the sectarian violence that plagued the region for three decades and left more than 3,500 people dead.

Dhole (Asiatic wild dog)

Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh rank high in the conservation of the endangered dhole in India, according to a new study.

Key facts:

- Dhole is an apex social carnivore in the tropical forests of South and South East Asia.
- **Endangered** –IUCN.
- **CITES – Appendix II.**
- **Schedule II** of wildlife act.

Disease and pathogens: Dholes are susceptible to rabies, canine distemper, canine parvovirus and sarcoptic mange among others which are usually contracted from domestic village dogs that act as reservoirs.



Bharat Air Fibre Services

The Bharat Air Fibre services are **introduced by BSNL as part of digital India** initiated by the Government of India and it aims of providing Wireless Connectivity in the range of 20 KMs from the BSNL Locations and thus customers at remote places also will be benefitted as BSNL comes with cheapest services with support of Telecom Infrastructure Partners (TIPs).

Young Scientist Award

- Given by **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).**
- **Given to scientists working in different institutions of CSIR for their achievements in** biological sciences, chemical sciences, earth, atmosphere, ocean and planetary sciences, engineering sciences and physical sciences.
- The award comprises a citation, a cash award of Rs 50,000, and a plaque.

Pokkali variety of rice

The pokkali variety of rice is **known for its saltwater resistance** and flourishes in the rice paddies of **coastal Kerala districts**.

- The uniqueness of the rice has brought it **the Geographical Indication (GI) tag** and is the subject of continuing research.
- The organically-grown Pokkali is **famed for its peculiar taste and its high protein content.**

Pangolin

- Pangolin is only scaly mammal on the planet.
- According to CITES, it is also the most illegally traded vertebrate within its class (Mammalia).
- Of the eight species of pangolin worldwide, two are found in India. They are Chinese pangolin, mostly found in northeast India and Indian

Easy to PICK – “UPSC Monthly Magazine” August - 2020

pangolin.

Protection Status:

- Chinese pangolin has been listed as “critically endangered”.
- Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) has been listed as “endangered”.
- It is also a Schedule I category protected animal, under the Wildlife Protection Act (1972).



K. V. KAMATH COMMITTEE

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of veteran banker

K.V. Kamath to make recommendations on norms for the resolution of **COVID-19** related stressed loans.

The **Indian Banks’ Association (IBA)** will function as the secretariat to the committee and the committee will be fully empowered to consult or invite any person it deems fit.

Loya Jirga

- It is a **mass national gathering** that brings together representatives from the various ethnic, religious, and tribal communities in Afghanistan.
- It is a **highly respected centuries-old consultative body** that has been convened at times of national crisis or to settle national issues.
- **According to the Afghan Constitution**, a Loya Jirga is considered the highest expression of the Afghan people. **It is not an official decision-making body** and

its decisions are not legally binding.

Why in News?

A three-day **Loya Jirga-grand assembly** has been called in Afghanistan to decide on freeing about 400 Taliban fighters convicted for serious crimes including murder and abductions.

Sputnik V

It is a **new coronavirus vaccine** launched by **Russia**.

It is touted as **the world's first such vaccine, too**.

- Currently, WHO and Russian health authorities are discussing the process for possible WHO prequalification for its newly approved COVID-19 vaccine.
- The vaccine is named **Sputnik V**, a reference to the first orbital satellite, which was launched by the Soviet Union in 1957 and set off the global space race.

World Elephant Day 2020

Observed every year on **August 12**.

The **first World Elephant Day** was observed on **August 12, 2012**.

This day was conceived by **the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation** in Thailand and Canadian filmmakers Patricia Sims and Michael Clark in 2011

Ayuraksha

All India Institute of Ayurveda under Ministry of AYUSH and **Delhi Police** have jointly launched ‘**AYURAKSHA**’

for police personnel.

Ayurveda medicines will be provided to nearly 80000 personnel of Delhi Police.

Ninja UAVs

Indian Railways has started deploying “**Ninja UAVs**” (**unmanned aerial vehicles**) for establishing a drone-based

Aspire IAS The name associated with excellence

Office No - 5, Below Ground Floor, Apsara Arcade Building,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, New Delhi - 110060

WWW.ASPIREIAS.COM
9999801394, 8010068998

Follow Us On
Facebook Twitter YouTube

Telegram
Pulse March 2020
Pulse PT 2020

©2019 ASPIRE IAS All rights reserved.

surveillance system in a bid to intensify its security mechanism across its network.

- A drone camera can cover a large area, which may require up to 10 RPF personnel.
- The exercise may lead to a substantial improvement in utilisation of scarce manpower, said a note on drone surveillance issued by the ministry.

Hamas

Hamas is a **Palestinian Islamist political organization** and militant group that has waged war on Israel since the group's 1987 founding, most notably through suicide bombings and rocket attacks. It seeks to replace Israel with a Palestinian state. It also **governs Gaza independently of the Palestinian Authority**.

Millennium Alliance

Millennium Alliance Round 6 & COVID19 Innovation Challenge-Award Ceremony was recently held. 49 innovations in 5 focus areas were recognised.

What is Millennium Alliance?

- It is an **innovation-driven and impact-focused initiative** leveraging collaborative resources to identify test and scale Indian innovations that address global development solutions.
- It is a **consortium of partners (Public-Private Partnership)** including the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), Facebook and Marico Innovation Foundation.

Hari Path app

- It is a mobile app launched recently by the National Highway Authority of India.
- It will monitor plantation along national highways.
- The app will monitor location, growth, species details, maintenance activities, targets and achievements of each of the NHAI's field units for each and every plant under all plantation projects.