



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

INSTA CURRENT AFFAIRS

MAY 2021



INSTACLASSES 2022

Full-fledged Classroom Program for Freshers

OGP- Offline & Online Guidance Program

We Don't Just Guide You

We EQUIP You!

EQUIP Strategy for your SUCCESS!

Features:

Explanation + Quest + Understand + Interact + Perform

- Personal Mentorship ▪ Free Access to All India Prelims Test Series
 - Ignite Session ▪ Integrated Ethics & Essay Classes
- Mains Answer Evaluation with Feedback ▪ Strategic Coverage of Current Affairs
 - Permanent Faculties + Special Classes by Guest Faculties

Table of Contents

| | | | |
|--|----------|---|-----------|
| GENERAL STUDIES – 1 | 6 | GENERAL STUDIES – 2..... | 25 |
| Topics: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times. | | | |
| 1. Maharana Pratap: | 6 | 1. President's Rule in Delhi: | 25 |
| 2. Mongolian Kanjur Manuscripts:..... | 6 | 2. Maratha quota unconstitutional, says SC: | 26 |
| 3. Basava Jayanti: | 7 | 3. Article 164 (3) of the Constitution: | 27 |
| 4. UNESCO world heritage sites:..... | 7 | 4. Article 311 of the Constitution:..... | 27 |
| 5. The Reclining Buddha: | 8 | | |
| Topics: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues. | | | |
| 1. Gopal Krishna Gokhale:..... | 10 | 1. Panel to define offences of speech, expression:..... | 28 |
| 2. Veer Savarkar:..... | 10 | | |
| Topics: History of the world will include events from 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.- their forms and effect on the society. | | | |
| 1. Rwanda genocide:..... | 11 | | |
| 2. What Germany recognising the colonial-era genocide in Namibia means for the African nation? .12 | | | |
| Topics: Women and women related issues. | | | |
| 1. How to measure unpaid care work and address its inequalities?..... | 13 | | |
| 2. Scope of Section 304-B in dowry deaths widened by SC: | 14 | | |
| Topics: Population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues. | | | |
| 1. China's population growth slows to lowest rate in decades:..... | 15 | | |
| Topics: Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes. | | | |
| 1. Climate change causing a shift in Earth's axis:..16 | | | |
| 2. What is a lineament? | 17 | | |
| 3. Latest findings about Venus:..... | 18 | | |
| 4. Cyclone 'Tauktae':..... | 19 | | |
| 5. Cyclone Yaas: | 20 | | |
| 6. Bay of Bengal, fomenting Yaas, hotter than normal for season:..... | 20 | | |
| 7. Monsoon onset over Kerala delayed: | 21 | | |
| 8. What is Sun's halo? | 23 | | |
| 9. Total lunar eclipse and supermoon: | 23 | | |
| Topics: Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure; Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.... | | | |
| 1. President's Rule in Delhi: | 25 | | |
| 2. Maratha quota unconstitutional, says SC: | 26 | | |
| 3. Article 164 (3) of the Constitution: | 27 | | |
| 4. Article 311 of the Constitution:..... | 27 | | |
| Topics: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein. | | | |
| 1. Panel to define offences of speech, expression:..... | 28 | | |
| Topics: Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions. | | | |
| 1. CEC moves Supreme Court against Madras HC's comments:..... | 29 | | |
| 2. Supreme Court strikes down W.B. law on regulating real estate:..... | 30 | | |
| 3. Centre moves SC against Delhi HC's contempt notice over oxygen supply: | 31 | | |
| 4. Supreme Court declines EC plea to restrain media reports: | 31 | | |
| 5. Why not place convicts under house arrest, asks SC?.... | 32 | | |
| 6. PM CARES:..... | 32 | | |
| 7. Recusal of Judges: | 33 | | |
| 8. CJI made 'statement of law' at CBI panel: | 34 | | |
| 9. The concept of anticipatory bail: | 35 | | |
| Topics: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these. | | | |
| 1. West Bengal government to set up a Legislative Council: | 36 | | |
| 2. Islanders seek withdrawal of land norms in Lakshadweep: | 37 | | |
| 3. MP Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS): | 38 | | |
| Topics: Salient features of the Representation of People's Act..... | | | |
| 1. Returning officer has final say in recount of votes: | 39 | | |
| Topics: Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies. | | | |
| 1. Appoint ECI members via collegium: | 39 | | |

| | | |
|--|---------------|--|
| Topics: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation..... | 40 | 11. What are monoclonal antibody therapies? ..63 |
| 1. Scheduled drugs' list: | 40 | |
| 2. The Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011: | 41 | |
| 3. Scheme of Financial Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure: | 41 | |
| 4. What is Chhattisgarh's vaccination policy, and why is it being opposed in court? | 42 | |
| 5. FCRA amendments crippling our work, say NGOs:..... | 43 | |
| 6. National Register of Citizens (NRC):..... | 43 | |
| 7. Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, 2015:..... | 44 | |
| 8. Why and how of creating a district? | 45 | |
| 9. PM Swasthya Suraksha Yojana: | 45 | |
| 10. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund For Sportspersons:..... | 46 | |
| 11. SC: personal guarantors liable for corporate debt: 47 | | |
| 12. Children under mid-day meal scheme to get aid: 47 | | |
| 13. D-voter, or doubtful voter: | 49 | |
| Topics: Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders..... | 50 | |
| 1. The role of DETER committees formed in Bengaluru: | 50 | |
| Topics: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes..... | 50 | |
| 1. Social stock exchanges (SSEs): | 50 | |
| 2. Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH): | 51 | |
| 3. Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Program: | 52 | |
| 4. One Stop Centre Scheme: | 52 | |
| 5. Kerala's 'Bell of Faith' for rural elders:..... | 53 | |
| 6. PM CARES For Children- Empowerment of COVID Affected Children: | 54 | |
| Topics: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources. | 55 | |
| 1. Congo Declares End Of Latest Ebola Outbreak: 55 | | |
| 2. A 'One Health' approach that targets people, animals:..... | 55 | |
| 3. WHO panel to investigate rise in zoonotic diseases and build action plan:..... | 56 | |
| 4. Scientists see flaws in SUTRA Model: | 57 | |
| 5. Black fungus: | 58 | |
| 6. WHO classifies India variant as being of global concern: | 59 | |
| 7. Vaccine hesitancy:..... | 60 | |
| 8. Long working hours are increasing deaths from heart disease: Report: | 61 | |
| 9. White fungus:..... | 62 | |
| 10. The fault line of poor health infrastructure:..62 | | |
| Topics: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures. | 64 | |
| 1. Electoral Bonds: | 64 | |
| Topics: Role of civil services in a democracy. | 65 | |
| 1. Rule 6(I) of the Indian Administrative Service (cadre) Rules, 1954: | 65 | |
| Topics: India and its neighbourhood- relations..... | 65 | |
| 1. Pakistan govt to set new rules to meet FATF demands: | 65 | |
| Topics: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests. | 66 | |
| 1. BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) Meeting: | 66 | |
| Topics: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora. | 67 | |
| 1. What's happening in Jerusalem? | 67 | |
| 2. Israel Palestine conflict: | 68 | |
| 3. India to push for WHO, EU approval for Covaxin: | 70 | |
| 4. U.K. to unveil plans for 'digital border':..... | 70 | |
| 5. China denounces people's tribunal in Britain on alleged Xinjiang abuses:..... | 71 | |
| 6. Blinken promises support for Gaza: | 72 | |
| 7. More scrutiny of Israel rights record sought: ...72 | | |
| 8. China expanded influence in UN bodies over the past decade: Study: | 73 | |
| 9. UAE's Golden Visa:..... | 74 | |
| 10. Gaza attack may constitute 'war crimes':....76 | | |
| 11. Biden orders probe into virus origins: | 77 | |
| Topics: Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate. | 78 | |
| 1. Network For Greening Financial System:..... | 78 | |
| 2. Quality standards for 4 more spices: | 78 | |
| 3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):..... | 78 | |
| 4. Asian Development Bank (ADB):..... | 79 | |
| 5. G7 seeks common front on China:..... | 80 | |
| 6. Arctic Science Ministerial:..... | 81 | |
| 7. U.S. against militarisation of the Artic: | 82 | |
| 8. China threatens Bangladesh, says ties will be hit if it joins Quad:..... | 83 | |
| 9. The diplomatic immunity: | 84 | |
| 10. Lithuania quits China's 17+1 cooperation forum: 84 | | |
| 11. International Atomic Energy Agency: | 85 | |
| 12. Quad targeting China: Consul General: | 86 | |
| 13. Interpol: | 87 | |
| 14. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): | 88 | |

| | |
|--|------------|
| GENERAL STUDIES – 3 | 90 |
| Topics: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment. | 90 |
| 1. RBI measures to protect small and medium businesses from pandemic impact: | 90 |
| 2. National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell Battery Storage: | 90 |
| 3. Why has Indian manufacturing been losing jobs since 2016? | 91 |
| Topics: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it. | 92 |
| 1. NITI Aayog report on digital financial inclusion: 92 | |
| 2. RBI to transfer Rs 99,122 crore surplus to government: | 93 |
| Topics: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing. | 93 |
| 1. Lumpy Skin Disease:..... | 93 |
| 2. Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH):..... | 94 |
| 3. PM-Kisan scheme:..... | 95 |
| 4. World Bee Day: | 95 |
| Topics: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology..... | 96 |
| 1. How Israel's Iron Dome intercepts rockets? | 96 |
| 2. Air India begins zeolite cargo flight service:.... | 97 |
| 3. How does 2-DG, DRDO's new oral drug for Covid-19, work? | 98 |
| 4. What is Mylab Covisef? | 98 |
| Topics: Awareness in space..... | 99 |
| 1. Parker Solar Probe: | 99 |
| 2. SpaceX's Starship landing: | 100 |
| 3. China rocket debris falls in Indian Ocean near Maldives: | 101 |
| 4. NASA's OSIRIS-REx: | 102 |
| 5. China's 'Zhurong' rover:..... | 102 |
| 6. NASA-ESA Solar Orbiter Spacecraft:..... | 103 |
| Topics: Awareness in the fields of IT, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights. | 104 |
| 1. NPCI refuses to ban cryptocurrency trades in India:..... | 104 |
| 2. Intellectual property waiver for Covid-19 vaccines: | 105 |
| 3. Why are monoclonal antibody therapies in focus & how they work? | 106 |
| 4. What Beijing's new crackdown means for cryptocurrencies in China? | 107 |
| 5. DRDO's Covid-19 antibody detection kit: | 108 |
| Topics: Conservation related issues, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment. | 109 |
| 1. The Global Forest Goals Report 2021: UN Report: | 109 |
| 2. Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil:..... | 109 |
| 3. UN Report on human-caused methane emissions: | 110 |
| 4. Green panel allows Great Nicobar plan to advance:..... | 111 |
| 5. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):..... | 112 |
| 6. 186 elephants killed on rail tracks in over 10 years: | 112 |
| 7. WWF report on snow leopard: | 113 |
| 8. Iceberg A-76- World's largest iceberg breaks off in Antarctica as glaciers retreat:..... | 114 |
| 9. NGT upholds rights of pastoralists in Banni grasslands: | 114 |
| 10. High levels of mercury found in rivers linked to Greenland Ice Sheet: | 115 |
| 11. National Mission on use of Biomass in coal based thermal power plants:..... | 116 |
| 12. Panel to investigate charges of illegal construction in Mekedatu: | 117 |
| Topics: Disaster and management. | 118 |
| 1. About uranium and its uses: | 118 |
| Topics: Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention | 119 |
| 1. Govt vs WhatsApp on privacy policy:..... | 119 |
| 2. The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021: | 119 |
| 3. WhatsApp Approaches Delhi High Court; Says New Media Rules Can Violate User Privacy:..... | 121 |
| GENERAL STUDIES – 4..... | 123 |
| 1. Kids from COVID-affected households get police help:..... | 123 |
| 2. Provide food, rations to stranded workers: SC: | 123 |
| 3. Plane wedding: DGCA must take action, say experts: | 123 |
| 4. IMA demands action against Ramdev: | 124 |
| FACTS FOR PRELIMS | 125 |
| 1. International Labour Day: | 125 |
| 2. Operation Samudra Setu-II: | 125 |
| 3. Armed forces get powers for relief work:..... | 125 |
| 4. Article 311: | 125 |
| 5. P-8I patrol aircraft:..... | 125 |

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 6. | Xylophis deepaki: | 125 |
| 7. | World Press Freedom Day: | 126 |
| 8. | Vorukh:..... | 126 |
| 9. | Odisha declares journalists as 'frontline COVID-warriors':..... | 126 |
| 10. | Kachin people: | 126 |
| 11. | SUTRA model: | 126 |
| 12. | Moorhen Yoga Mat:..... | 127 |
| 13. | Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG):..... | 127 |
| 14. | Global Innovation Partnership (GIP):..... | 127 |
| 15. | Facebook's Oversight Board:..... | 127 |
| 16. | Dahla Dam: | 128 |
| 17. | Kabasura Kudineer:..... | 128 |
| 18. | e-Sanjeevani OPD: | 128 |
| 19. | Pulayar Community: | 128 |
| 20. | Mount Sinabung: | 129 |
| 21. | Badrinath Dham:..... | 129 |
| 22. | Drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG):..... | 129 |
| 23. | Shuvuuia deserti:..... | 129 |
| 24. | National Technology Day:..... | 129 |
| 25. | World Food Prize: | 130 |
| 26. | International Nurses and Midwives Day:....130 | |
| 27. | India's first Olympic-bound Fencer Bhavani Devi:..... | 130 |
| 28. | Indicative Notes:..... | 130 |
| 29. | Punjab gets its 23rd district, Malerkotla: ...130 | |
| 30. | Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS) - 2021:...130 | |
| 31. | Red-eared slider: | 131 |
| 32. | What is Winchcombe?..... | 131 |
| 33. | Subdoluseps nilgiriensis:..... | 131 |
| 34. | Doomsday Surfing: | 131 |
| 35. | National Crisis Management Committee:..131 | |
| 36. | Sulawesi:..... | 132 |
| 37. | ELDERLINE:..... | 132 |
| 38. | SAMVEDNA:..... | 132 |
| 39. | International Museum Day 2021:..... | 132 |
| 40. | News Showcase: | 132 |
| 41. | Colombo Port City: | 133 |
| 42. | GI-certified Gholvad Chikoo: | 133 |
| 43. | Rajasthan govt. declares mucormycosis an epidemic: | 133 |
| 44. | Infrastructure' status for exhibition and convention centres:..... | 133 |
| 45. | Taiwan Strait:..... | 134 |
| 46. | Corpse flower: | 134 |
| 47. | New Big 5 project: | 134 |
| 48. | China completes Tibet highway:..... | 134 |
| 49. | New York's 'Vax and Scratch' programme: 135 | |
| 50. | International Day for Biological Diversity 2021:..... | 135 |
| 51. | Kalakshetra: | 135 |
| 52. | Bao-dhaan: | 135 |
| 53. | Sunderlal Bahuguna:..... | 135 |
| 54. | Congo's Mount Nyiragongo:..... | 136 |
| 55. | Kerala farmer bags India Biodiversity Award 2021:..... | 136 |
| 56. | Galwan Valley: | 136 |
| 57. | BRICS Astronomy Working Group (BAWG):136 | |
| 58. | Belarus: | 137 |
| 59. | MCA21 Version 3.0:..... | 137 |
| 60. | Shahi litchi: | 137 |
| 61. | Yuan Longping: | 137 |
| 62. | Paediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome (PIMS-TS): | 138 |
| 63. | WHO BioHub initiative:..... | 138 |
| 64. | Miniature sculpture of the Buddha found in Udupi:.... | 138 |
| 65. | Dhaka clears currency swap for Lanka:139 | |
| 66. | National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT):139 | |
| 67. | Louvre museum: | 139 |
| 68. | Places in News- Bhitarkanika National Park:..... | 140 |
| 69. | Species in News- blackbucks: | 140 |
| 70. | Jayanti:..... | 140 |
| 71. | Places in News- Cali: | 141 |
| 72. | Rishiganga:..... | 141 |
| 73. | Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve:..... | 141 |
| 74. | Vitamin D: | 142 |
| 75. | YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors) Scheme: | 142 |

**INSTA CLASSES
2022**
**A FULL-FLEDGED
CLASSROOM PROGRAM**
FOR FRESHERS
UPSC CSE 2022



Any doubt? We are just a call away, contact us on

Bangalore: 7483163074 / 9380863034 | Delhi: 9625668123 / 7303318519 / 011-49520205 | Hyderabad: 8688512637

www.insightsonindia.com

DO NOT LET TODAY'S UNCERTAINTY AFFECT
YOUR TOMORROW'S GOAL.

Join our time-tested and nationally-acclaimed
ONLINE INSTA CLASSES

to be certain amidst uncertainties.

Every offline feature perfectly simulated in online mode.

WE DON'T JUST GUIDE YOU,
WE EQUIP YOU.


INSIGHTSIAS
SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION



Vinay Kumar GB
Founder & Director
InsightsIAS

Subscribe
Here:



GENERAL STUDIES – 1

Topics: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

1. Maharana Pratap:

Context: May 9 marks the birth anniversary of **Maharana Pratap**, the 13th Rajput king of Mewar. Maharana Pratap was born in 1540 and died at the age of 56 in 1597.

- He was the eldest son of Uda Singh II (founder of city of Udaipur).



Battle of Haldighati:

He is known for his bravery in the Battle of Haldighati. It was fought in 1576 between **Maharana and the forces of Akbar led by Man Singh of Amber**.

- Rana's forces were defeated in 6 hours. But the Mughals failed to capture him. Maharana re-gathered his forces, fought and won against the Mughals after six years in 1582. Having faced a terrible defeat, Akbar stopped his military campaigns against Mewar after the battle.

Legacy:

- Rana Pratap's defiance of the mighty Mughal empire, almost alone and unaided by the other Rajput states, constitute a glorious saga of Rajput valour and the spirit of self sacrifice for cherished principles.
- Rana Pratap's methods of sporadic warfare was later elaborated further by Malik Ambar, the Deccani general, and by Shivaji Maharaj.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Battle of Haldighati- reasons, groups involved and outcomes.
2. Akbar's reign- extent, cultural contributions.

2. Mongolian Kanjur Manuscripts:

Context:

The Culture Ministry has informed that reprinting of about 100 sets of sacred Mongolian Kanjur will be completed by next year for distribution in the main centres of Buddhism in Mongolia.

What is Mongolian Kanjur?

In the Mongolian language 'Kanjur' means 'Concise Orders'- the words of Lord Buddha in particular.

- It is held in high esteem by Mongolian Buddhists and they worship the Kanjur at temples and recite the lines of Kanjur in daily life as a sacred ritual.
- The Mongolian Kanjur has been translated from Tibetan. The language of the Kanjur is Classical Mongolian.



Historical connection between India and Mongolia:

- Historical interaction between India and Mongolia goes back centuries.
- Buddhism was carried to Mongolia by Indian cultural and religious ambassadors during the early Christian era.
- As a result, today, Buddhists form the single largest religious denomination in Mongolia.
- India established formal diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1955.

Background:

India possesses an estimate of ten million manuscripts, probably the largest collection in the world. These cover a variety of themes, textures and aesthetics, scripts, languages, calligraphies, illuminations and illustrations.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Where is Mongolia?
2. When was National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) launched? Objectives?
3. Mongolian Kanjur- meaning and significance.

4. Diplomatic relations between India and Mongolia.

5. Various Buddhist Mudras, hand gestures and their meaning.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of Mongolian Kanjur manuscripts.

3. Basava Jayanti:

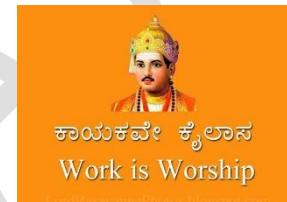
Context:

Basava Jayanti marks the birth anniversary of Lord Basavanna, the 12th-century poet-philosopher, and the founding saint of the Lingayat faith.

- This year it falls on 14th May 2021.

About Basavanna, his thoughts and contributions:

- Basavanna was a philosopher, statesman, Kannada poet and a social reformer during the reign of the **Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I in Karnataka**.
- Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as **Vachanaas**.
- Basavanna rejected gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals.
- He introduced new public institutions such as **the Anubhava Mantapa** (or, the “hall of spiritual experience”), which welcomed men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life, in open.
- As a leader, he developed and inspired a new devotional movement named **Virashaivas, or “ardent, heroic worshippers of Shiva”**. This movement shared its roots in the ongoing Tamil Bhakti movement, particularly the Shaiva Nayanars traditions, over the 7th- to 11th-century.
- Basava championed devotional worship that rejected temple worship and rituals led by Brahmins, and replaced it with personalized direct worship of Shiva through practices such as individually worn icons and symbols like a small linga.
- The Sharana movement he presided over attracted people from all castes, and like most strands of the Bhakti movement, produced a corpus of literature, the vachanas, that unveiled the spiritual universe of the Veerashaiva saints.
- The egalitarianism of Basavanna’s Sharana movement was too radical for its times.



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is Shramana tradition?
2. What are Vachanas?
3. What is Anubhava Mantapa?
4. Who are Kalachuris?

5. Who are Nayanars?

6. What is Bhakti Movement?

Mains Link:

Write a note on important contributions made by 12th Century reformer Basavanna to the society.

4. UNESCO world heritage sites:

Context:

Six sites have been added to India's tentative list of UNESCO world heritage sites.

These include:

1. Maratha military architecture in Maharashtra.
2. Hire Benkal megalithic site in Karnataka.
3. Bhedaghat-Lametagh at Narmada Valley in Madhya Pradesh.
4. Ganga ghats in Varanasi.
5. temples of Kanchipuram.
6. Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

With the addition of these six sites, the UNESCO has 48 proposals in tentative list of India.

What Next?

These proposals will remain in the tentative list for a year after which the government will decide which one of them to push for in their final dossier to UNESCO.

What is a World Heritage site?

- A World Heritage site is classified as a **natural or man-made area or a structure that is of international importance, and a space which requires special protection.**
- These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO.
- UNESCO believes that the sites classified as World Heritage are important for humanity, and they hold cultural and physical significance.

Key facts:

1. The list is maintained by the **international World Heritage Programme** administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 UNESCO member states which are elected by the General Assembly.
2. Each World Heritage Site remains part of the legal territory of the state wherein the site is located and UNESCO considers it in the interest of the international community to preserve each site.
3. To be selected, a World Heritage Site must be an already classified landmark, unique in some respect as a geographically and historically identifiable place having special cultural or physical significance.



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Who declares a site as world heritage site?

2. What is endangered list?

3. What is tentative list?

4. WHS in India and their locations?

5. The Reclining Buddha:

Context:

On Buddha Jayanti (May 26), **India's largest statue of the Reclining Buddha** was to have been installed at the Buddha International Welfare Mission temple in **Bodh Gaya**. The ceremony has been put off due to Covid-19 restrictions.

But, what does the statue of Reclining Buddha represent?

A reclining Buddha statue or image represents the Buddha during his last illness, about to enter Parinirvana. Parinirvana is the stage of great salvation after death that can only be attained by enlightened souls.

- The Buddha's death came when he was 80 years old, in a state of meditation, in **Kushinagar** in eastern **Uttar Pradesh**, close to the state's border with Bihar.

Iconographic representation:

The Reclining Buddha was first depicted in **Gandhara art**, which began in the period between 50 BC and 75 AD, and peaked during the Kushana period from the first to the fifth centuries AD.

- Statues and images of the Reclining Buddha show him lying on his right side, his head resting on a cushion or on his right elbow.

- It is meant to show that all beings have the potential to be awakened and be released from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Please note that the Buddha was against idol worship.

Statues of Reclining Buddha outside India:

Reclining postures are more prevalent in Thailand and other parts of South East Asia.

- The largest Reclining Buddha in the world** is the 600-foot Winsein Tawya Buddha built in 1992 in Mawlamyine, **Myanmar**.
- The Bhamala Buddha Parinirvana in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province**, which dates back to the 2nd century AD, is considered **the oldest statue of its kind in the world**.

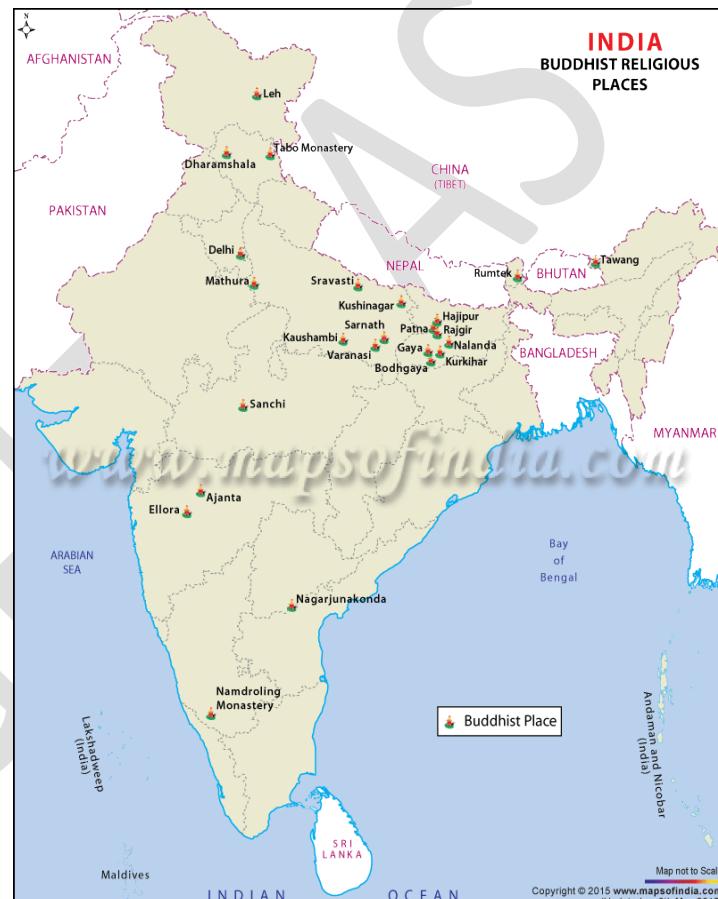


Reclining Buddha in India:

- Cave No. 26 of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ajanta** contains a 24-foot-long and nine-foot-tall sculpture of the Reclining Buddha, believed to have been carved in the 5th century AD.
- Kushinagar**, where the Buddha actually attained parinirvana, has a 6-metre-long red sandstone monolith statue of the Reclining Buddha inside the Parinirvana Stupa.

Other depictions of the Buddha in India:

- At the Mahabodhi temple, the Buddha is sitting in the bhoomi-sparsha mudra, where his hand is pointing towards the ground. It symbolises earth as being witness to his enlightenment.
- At Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first sermon, the stone statue has a hand gesture called the dharma-chakra mudra, which signifies preaching. This is also the most popular depiction in India, along with the Bodhi tree depiction.
- The Walking Buddha is either beginning his journey toward enlightenment or returning after giving a sermon. This is the least common of the Buddha postures, and is seen mostly in Thailand.



Insta Curious:

- Most Buddha images throughout Asia are in one of three postures: standing, sitting or lying down. But did you know there is a famous Walking Buddha posture known as **Sukhothai Walking Buddha**? [Read Here](#)
- Did you know about various mudras of Buddha(few questions have been asked on this in Prelims). [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Buddhism- Origin and Spread.
- Different sects under Buddhism.
- Various Mudras.
- Differences between Hinayana and Mahayana Sects.

- Who are Bodhisattvas?
- Different places associated with the life of Buddha.
- Various Buddhist Councils.

Mains Link: Discuss the relevance of Buddha and his thoughts today.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-the-reclining-buddha-and-his-various-other-depictions-in-art-7331149/lite/>.

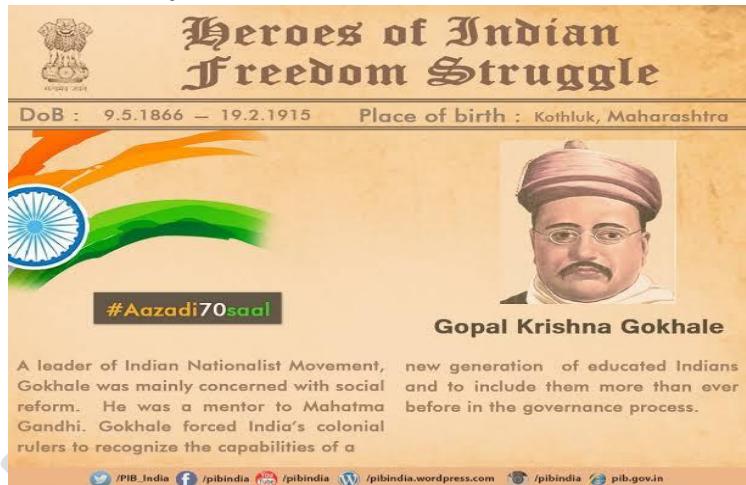
Topics: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.

1. Gopal Krishna Gokhale:

Context: PM paid tributes to Gopal Krishna Gokhale on his birth anniversary. He was born on 9 May 1866.

Contributions of GK Gokhale in freedom movement of India:

- He served as **Secretary of the Deccan Education Society**.
- He visited Ireland and arranged for Irish nationalist **Alfred Webb** to serve as the President of the Indian National Congress in 1894.
- Gokhale also published a daily newspaper entitled **Jnanaprakash**, which allowed him to voice his reformist views on politics and society.
- He was later elected to the **Council of India of the Governor-General of India** in 1903.
- He was appointed as the **Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire** in 1904 New Year's Honours List.
- In 1905, he founded the **Servants of India Society**, which trained people to be selfless workers so they could work for the common good of the people. He was also elected as the **President of the Indian National Congress**.
- He was instrumental in the formation of the **Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909**, which eventually became law.
- Gokhale was a mentor to both Mohammed Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi even wrote a book called, '**Gokhale, My Political Guru**'. His core beliefs about the importance of political liberty, social reform and economic progress for all Indians are still relevant to our times.



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Organisations in which Gokhale served.
2. His election Governor's council and imperial council.
3. His role in freedom movement.
4. Name of book written by Gandhi on Gokhale.
5. INC presidency for Gokhale.

6. Who published Mahratta?

7. Who founded Deccan Education Society?

8. Newspaper published by Gokhale.

9. Gist of Morley Minto reforms.

Mains Link:

Comment on the significance of key contributions made by GK Gokhale to the Indian freedom movement.

2. Veer Savarkar:

Context:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to pioneering Hindutva ideologue **Veer Savarkar** on his birth anniversary- **28th May**.

About Savarkar and his contributions:

- Born on May 28, 1883 in Bhagur, a city in Maharashtra's Nashik.
- He was against foreign goods and propagated the idea of Swadeshi. In 1905, he burnt all the foreign goods in a bonfire on Dussehra.



Social reforms:

- He championed **atheism and rationality** and also disapproved orthodox Hindu belief. In fact, he even dismissed cow worship as superstitious.
- He also Worked on **abolishment of untouchability** in Ratnagiri.
- Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar also compared his work to Lord Buddha.

Organisations he was associated with:

1. Vinayak Savarkar was a **president of Hindu Mahasabha from 1937 to 1943**. When congress ministries offered resignation on 22nd oct 1939, Hindu mahaasabha under his leadership cooperated with Muslim league to form government in provinces like Sindh, Bengal and NWFP.
2. In Pune, Savarkar founded the "**Abhinav Bharat Society**".
3. He was also **involved in the Swadeshi movement** and later joined Tilak's **Swaraj Party**. His instigating patriotic speeches and activities incensed the British Government. As a result, **the British Government withdrew his B.A. degree**.
4. He founded the **Free India Society**. The Society celebrated important dates on the Indian calendar including festivals, freedom movement landmarks, and was dedicated to furthering discussion about Indian freedom.
5. Vinayak Savarkar and Ganesh Savarkar started **Mitra Mela, a revolutionary secret society in Nasik in 1899**.

Important works:

1. In his book, **The History of the war of Indian Independence**, Savarkar wrote about the guerilla warfare tricks used in 1857 Sepoy Mutiny.
2. The book was banned by Britishers, but **Madam Bhikaji Cama** published the book in Netherlands, Germany and France, which eventually reached many Indian revolutionaries.
3. He founded the **two-nation theory** in his book '**Hindutva**' calling Hindus and Muslims two separate nations. In 1937, Hindu Mahasabha passed it as a resolution.

Insta Curious:

1. The airport at Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar's capital was renamed Veer Savarkar International Airport in 2002.
2. What's the difference between a social reformer and a social revolutionary?

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Who founded Mitra mela, Abhinav Bharat Society and Free India society, what are the objectives?
2. Books written by Savarkar?
3. Savarkar's book which was published by Madam Bikaji Cama?

4. Morley- Minto reforms- key changes.

5. Savarkar's views on use of arms to free India.
6. Hindu Mahasabha- key achievements.

Mains Link:

Discuss Veer Savarkar's contributions to social reforms in the country.

Topics: *History of the world will include events from 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.- their forms and effect on the society.*

1. Rwanda genocide:

Context:

French President Emmanuel Macron has said he recognised his country's role in **the Rwandan genocide** and hoped for forgiveness.

- This comes after years of Rwandan accusations that France was complicit in the 1994 atrocities.

Where is Rwanda?

Rwanda is a **landlocked country in central Africa**. Its Capital is **Kigali**.

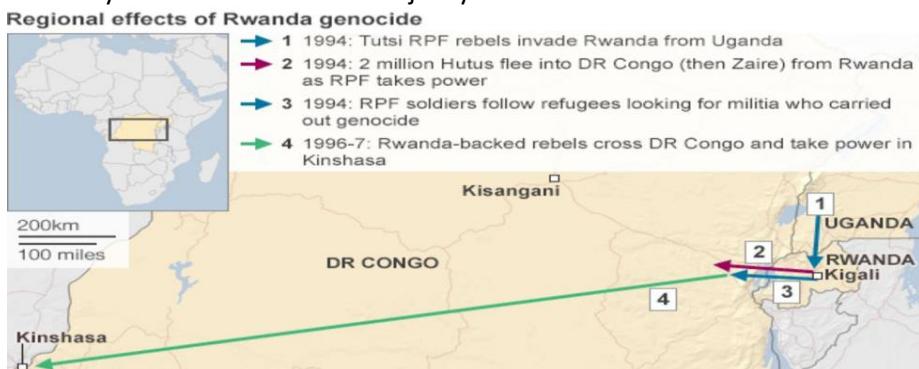
Population composition: Hutus – majority, Tutsi –Minority.

What is Rwanda genocide?

The Rwandan genocide, also known as the **genocide against the Tutsi**, was a genocidal mass slaughter of **Tutsi in Rwanda** by members of the **Hutu majority government**. An estimated more than 800,000 Rwandans were killed during the 100-day period from April 7 to mid-July 1994.

Causes:

1. After World War 1, Rwanda came under the **League of Nations mandate of Belgium** during which the ruling Belgians favored the minority Tutsis over the Hutu majority.
2. It led to widening communal rift between Tutsis and Hutus.
3. Rise in oppression of minority Tutsi by Hutu, creating a legacy of tension and violence even before Rwanda gained its independence.
4. Hutu revolution in 1959 forced thousands of Tutsis to flee the country.
5. Ethnically motivated violence continued against Tutsi even **after independence in 1962**.
6. **Immediate cause – signing of an Arusha agreement by Habyarimana** and thereafter killing of moderate Hutu leader Habyarimana of Rwandan government on Apr 6, 1994 in a plane crash.



French Connection:

France maintained close diplomatic ties with Hutu dominated govt. ever since they gained independence. During 1994's civil war, France sent forces only after it felt that Tutsi rebels will defeat the Hutu militia. France saved many Hutu plotters of Genocide, even gave them shelter/asylum in France.

- Therefore, some people blame that France knew and helped Hutus to plot this genocide.

Insta Curious:

1. Did you know the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was the first UN human rights treaty?
2. This convention was entered into force in 1951, has been ratified by more than 130 countries

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Where is Rwanda?
2. Locate Kigali on map.
3. About the Genocide.
4. Causes and outcomes.

Mains Link:

Write a note on Rwanda Genocide.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GI78KAJQ6.1&imageview=0>

2. What Germany recognising the colonial-era genocide in Namibia means for the African nation?

Context:

Germany for the first time has recognised that it committed **genocide against the Herero and Nama people in present-day Namibia** during its colonial rule over a century ago.

- Germany has also announced a fund of €1.1 billion (\$1.2 billion) to help aid community projects in Namibia.

About the Genocide- What happened then?

- Between 1904 and 1908, German colonial settlers killed tens of thousands of men, women and children from the Herero and Nama tribes after they rebelled against colonial rule in what was then called German South West Africa.
- Reasons for the rebellion:** Local tribes saw the German settlers as a threat to their land and resources.
- Important events- the Battle of Waterberg:** around 80,000 Herero, including women and children, were chased across the desert by German troops. A mere 15,000 survived.

How long was the present day Namibia under the control of Germans?

- Between 1884 and 1890, Germany formally colonised parts of present-day Namibia.
- The Germans continued to rule the region till 1915, following which it fell under South Africa's control for 75 years.
- Namibia finally gained independence in 1990.



So, what happens now?

The atrocities committed have been described by some historians as **the first genocide of the 20th century**.

Now, after the announcement, a declaration will be signed by Germany, following which it will be ratified by the parliaments of both countries.

- President Frank-Walter Steinmeier** is then expected to officially apologize for Germany's crimes in front of the Namibian Parliament.

Insta Curious:

- The six principal colonies of **German Africa**, along with native kingdoms and polities, were the legal precedents for the modern states of **Burundi, Cameroon, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Togo**.
- Can Bengal Famine falls into the category of Genocide by the British in India? [Here](#)
- Do you feel legal remedies for historical injustices are justified?

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What was called German South West Africa in the early 20th century?
- Location of Namibia.
- About the Genocide.
- Herero and Nama tribes are found in which country?

Mains Link:

Discuss the impact of acceptance of genocide that Germany had committed against the Herero and Nama people in present-day Namibia.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/germany-recognises-colonial-era-genocide-in-namibia-7334546/lite/>.

Topics: Women and women related issues.

1. How to measure unpaid care work and address its inequalities?

Context:

Recent election manifestos had promised various forms of payment to homemakers, thus putting the spotlight on the **unpaid domestic work done by women**.

What is unpaid care work?

According to the OECD, it refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including care of persons, housework and voluntary community work. These activities are considered work because theoretically one could pay a third person to perform them.

What's the issue now?

Standard measures of economic activity do not take into account a large portion of this work, much of which is done by women and girls.

- McKinsey estimates that women do 75% of the world's total unpaid care work.

- The economic contribution of women is 17% of India's GDP — less than half the global average.
- This **inequality has a direct correlation with participation in the formal economy.**

Implications for India:

India has slipped 28 places to rank 140th among 156 countries in **the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021.**

- Among the drivers of this decline is a decrease in women's labour force participation rate, which fell from 24.8 per cent to 22.3 per cent.
- Earned income of women in India is only one-fifth of men's, which puts the country among the bottom 10 globally on this indicator.

What needs to be done?

1. Policies should address the rising need for care and tackle the huge disparity between women's and men's care responsibilities.
2. More data will make more unpaid care work visible and help frame targeted policies and enable better monitoring of the impact of policies and investments.
3. Reduce unpaid care work by investment in physical infrastructure like clean water and sanitation, energy and public transport, and in social infrastructure such as care and health services and education.
4. Redistribution of care work between men and women, and between families and the state will encourage positive social norms and economic development.

Measuring and monetising care work:

The value of unpaid work can be estimated by calculating the amount of time spent on it – through time use surveys – and then putting a price on it by calculating the opportunity cost or replacement cost, or by measuring the labour inputs that go into the activity. But this has its own challenges.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Global Gender Gap Report- Highlights.
2. India's performance.

Mains Link:

Standard measures of economic activity do not take into account a large portion of this work, much of which is done by women and girls. Discuss its implications.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-how-to-measure-unpaid-care-work-and-address-its-inequalities-7297857/lite/>.

2. Scope of Section 304-B in dowry deaths widened by SC:

Context:

The Supreme Court has called **dowry harassment** a “pestiferous” crime where women are subjected to cruelty by “covetous” husbands and in-laws.

- Also, the Court indicated in a judgment that a **straitjacket and literal interpretation of Section 304-B, a penal provision on dowry death** may have blunted the battle against the “long-standing social evil”.

About Section 304-B of the Indian Penal Code:

According to Section 304-B, **to make out a case of dowry death**, a woman should have died of burns or other bodily injuries or “otherwise than under normal circumstances” within seven years of her marriage. She should have suffered cruelty or harassment from her husband or in-laws “soon before her death” in connection with demand for dowry.

Issues with Section 304-B:

The courts have mostly resorted to the narrow view of Section 304-B. For example:

1. Courts had interpreted the phrase '**soon before**' in Section 304-B as '**immediately before**'. This interpretation would make it necessary for a woman to have been harassed moments before she died.

- The phrase “otherwise than under normal circumstances” in the Section also calls for a liberal interpretation.

Dowry related deaths in India- a quick look:

- Dowry deaths accounted for 40% to 50% homicides in the country for almost a decade from 1999 to 2018.
- In 2019 alone, 7,115 cases of dowry death were registered under **Section 304-B of the Indian Penal Code.**

Need of the hour:

- Courts should instead interpret Section 304-B liberally while keeping in mind the law’s intention to punish dowry and bride-burning.
- Absurd interpretations should be avoided. Instead, courts need to show only a “proximate and live link” between the harassment and her death.
- The court must also put incriminating circumstances before the accused and seek his response. He should be given sufficient opportunity to give his side of the story.

Causes of dowry and related atrocities:

- Greed:** Expectations of material benefits from the bride’s family.
- Illiteracy:** The communities that are not knowledgeable about the laws and legislation face several atrocities owing to dowry exchange practices.
- Lack of Willingness** to adhere to laws.

Solutions:

- Educate girl child.
- Proper implementation of govt initiatives and laws.
- Initiating Mass Media Campaigns.

Insta Curious:

- Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code – in 1983 deals with Anti-Dowry
- It’s better to know SC’s orders on anti-dowry provisions (because of its misuse). [Read here.](#)

Mains Link: Why has the Supreme Court stressed on the need for liberal interpretation of Section of 304-B of the Indian Penal Code? Discuss.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Section of 304-B of the Indian Penal Code.
- Section 498A of the IPC.
- Protection to the accused in dowry cases.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GFD8KDIKV.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues.

1. China’s population growth slows to lowest rate in decades:

Context:

China’s seventh census, once-in-a-decade population census, was conducted recently.

Key findings:

- 12 million babies were born last year, the lowest number since 1961, a year when China was in the midst of a four-year famine unleashed by Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward policy in 1958 that devastated the farm sector and claimed millions of lives.
- China’s population was 1.41 billion in 2020, increasing by 72 million since the last census in 2010, recording a 5.38% growth in this period. The average annual growth was 0.53%.
- The census recorded a slowing population growth rate that will likely see China’s population peak — and be overtaken by India’s — by as early as 2025.

Concerns for China:

- The slowing growth rate is a consequence of China’s stringent family planning rules over decades — known as the “one-child policy”.

- It has evoked concerns of a rapidly ageing society and the impact on China's labour force, and fears that China will, as some experts have said, "**get old before it gets rich**".
- The impact on the labour force and healthcare is a particular concern.

Efforts towards a change:

China loosened family planning rules and allowed couples to have two children in 2016, but that has failed to mark a boom amid changing lifestyles and declining preferences, particularly in urban areas, for larger families.

Why was the One Child Policy adopted by China?

It was adopted out of the Malthusian fears that unchecked population growth would lead to economic and environmental catastrophe. It was also a response to concerns about food shortages.

What is Malthusian theory all about?

Thomas Robert Malthus was the first economist to propose a systematic theory of population. He argued that if left unchecked, a population will outgrow its resources, leading to a host of problems.

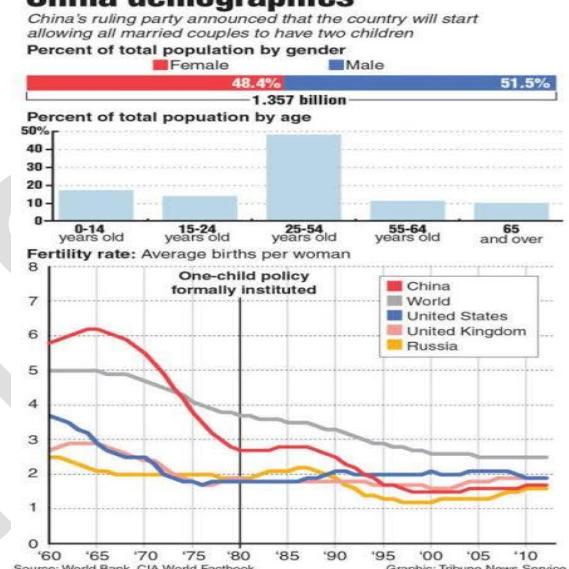
What's good about One Child Policy?

1. Helps to ease the overpopulation problems.
2. It is seen as practical by some families.
3. Lowers the poverty rate.

Why it isn't a good idea?

1. The enforcement is unequal.
2. It is a human rights violation.
3. Shrinking work population.
4. Gender imbalance due to the strong cultural preference of boys for labor and work.
5. Increase in abortions and female infanticide.
6. Extra babies end up being illegal and never becoming a citizen, due to fines.
7. Intrudes on people's personal values and opinions.

China demographics



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Malthusian theory on population.
2. China's one child policy.
3. States in India having policies related to restrictions on number of children.

Mains Link:

Examine China's one child policy.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GAQ8IRPAQ.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

1. Climate change causing a shift in Earth's axis:

Context:

According to a study, due to the significant melting of glaciers because of global temperature rise, our planet's axis of rotation has been moving more than usual since the 1990s.

Implications:

While this change is not expected to affect daily life, it can change the length of the day by a few milliseconds.

What is the Earth's axis?

The Earth's axis of rotation is the line along which it spins around itself as it revolves around the Sun. The points on which the axis intersects the planet's surface are the geographical north and south poles.

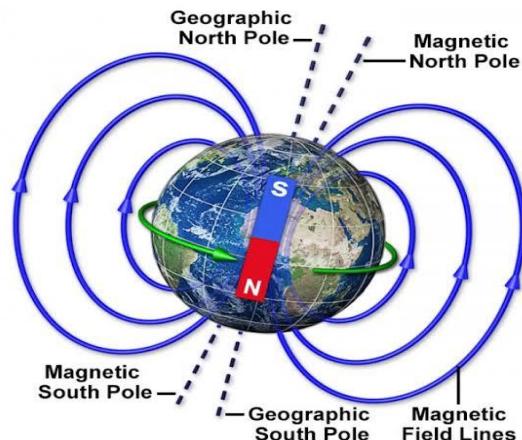
How it shifts?

The location of the poles is not fixed, however, as **the axis moves due to changes in how the Earth's mass is distributed around the planet**. Thus, the poles move when the axis moves, and the movement is called "polar motion".

- According to NASA, data from the 20th century shows that the spin axis drifted about 10 centimetres per year. Meaning over a century, polar motion exceeds 10 metres.
- Generally, **polar motion is caused by changes in the hydrosphere, atmosphere, oceans, or solid Earth.**

What the new study says?

- Since the 1990s, climate change has caused billions of tonnes of glacial ice to melt into oceans. This has caused the Earth's poles to move in new directions.
- As per the study, the north pole has shifted in a new eastward direction since the 1990s, because of changes in the hydrosphere (meaning the way in which water is stored on Earth).
- From 1995 to 2020, the average speed of drift was 17 times faster than from 1981 to 1995. Also, in the last four decades, the poles moved by about 4 metres in distance.



Latest factors behind this change:

- The faster ice melting, change in non-glacial regions due to climate change and unsustainable consumption of groundwater for irrigation and other anthropogenic activities.
- As millions of tonnes of water from below the land is pumped out every year for drinking, industries or agriculture, most of it eventually joins the sea, thus redistributing the planet's mass.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Earth's poles.
- Differences between geographic and magnetic poles.
- Causes for shifts.
- Implications.

Mains Link:

How climate change results in shift in Earth's axis?
Discuss.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-new-research-says-about-climate-change-causing-a-shift-in-earths-axis-7299258/lite/>.

2. What is a lineament?

A lineament is a linear feature in a landscape dictated by an underlying geological structure such as a fault.

Context:

According to a recent study, an unfamiliar lineament is one factor behind frequent earthquakes in northern Assam's Sonitpur area.

Why there are frequent earthquakes in Assam?

According to the Geological Survey of India (GSI), Sonitpur district lies within a tectonically complex triangular area bounded by the east-west trending **Atherkhet Fault**, the northwest-southeast trending **Kopili Fault** and a north-south trending lineament.

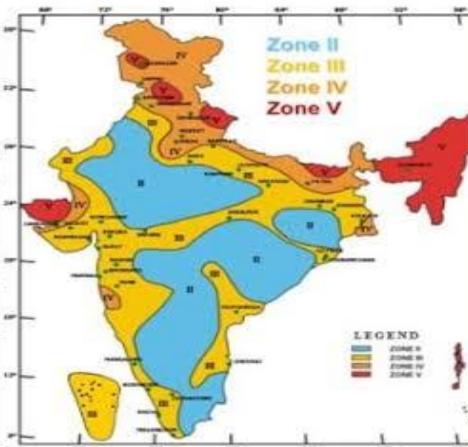
Why North east is vulnerable?

1. The Siang Fracture, Yemla Fault, Namula Thrust and Canyon Thrust are spread across the northeast and are active along with Main Himalayan Thrust, Main Boundary Thrust, Main Central Thrust and several subsidiary faults.
2. The northeast is demarcated as Seismic Zone V, which indicates a zone with high vulnerability.
3. The Indian plate is moving northeast toward the Eurasian plate in the Himalayan region, their oblique collision and release of stress and strain accumulated in the local tectonic or fault environments lead to earthquakes.

Seismic Zone Map of India: -2002

About 59 percent of the land area of India is liable to seismic hazard damage

| Zone | Intensity |
|----------|---|
| Zone V | Very High Risk Zone Area liable to shaking Intensity IX (and above) |
| Zone IV | High Risk Zone Intensity VIII |
| Zone III | Moderate Risk Zone Intensity VII |
| Zone II | Low Risk Zone VI (and lower) |



Seismic Zones in India

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

What is Lineament?

Identify the following:

1. Atherkhet Fault.
2. Kopili Fault.
3. Siang Fracture.
4. Yemla Fault.
5. Namula Thrust.

6. Canyon Thrust.

Mains Link:

Discuss why North Eastern India is highly vulnerable to earthquakes.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GRT8IAJTQ.1&imageview=0>.

3. Latest findings about Venus:

Context:

Scientists have obtained new data about Venus by bouncing radio waves off Venus.

- The researchers transmitted radio waves toward Venus 21 times from 2006 to 2020 from NASA's Goldstone Antenna in the Mojave Desert of California and studied the radio echo, which provided information on certain planetary traits.

Latest findings:

1. The study measured the tilt of the Venusian axis and size of the planet's core.
2. A single Venusian rotation takes 243.0226 Earth days. That means a day lasts longer than a year on Venus, which makes a complete orbit around the sun in 225 Earth days.
3. The Venusian planetary core has a diameter of about 4,360 miles (7,000 km), comparable to Earth's core.
4. The study calculated the Venusian tilt at about 2.64 degrees. Earth's is about 23.5 degrees.

About Venus:

- Venus, the second planet from the sun, is similar in structure but slightly smaller than Earth.
- Above its foreboding landscape is a thick and toxic atmosphere that consists primarily of carbon dioxide, with clouds of sulfuric acid droplets.

- With a runaway greenhouse effect, its surface temperatures reach 880 degrees Fahrenheit (471 degrees Celsius), hot enough to melt lead.
- Venus is one of just two planets that rotate from east to west. Only Venus and Uranus have this "backwards" rotation.**
- In another quirk, its day-night cycle - the time between sunrises as opposed to the length of a single axial spin - takes 117 Earth days because Venus rotates in the direction opposite of its orbital path around the sun.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Key facts related to Venus.
- Why is it called earth's twin?
- Latest findings.
- What are radio waves?

Link:<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/how-long-is-the-solar-systems-longest-day-venus-has-the-answer/article34478742.ece/amp/>.

4. Cyclone 'Tauktae':

Context:

Cyclone Tauktae, currently centered over Lakshadweep, has intensified into a cyclonic storm.

- It is likely to intensify further into a severe cyclonic storm in the next 24 hours.
- It is very likely to move north-northwestwards and reach near Gujarat coast by May 18.

Background:

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) maintains rotating lists of names.

The word **Tauktae** has been suggested by Myanmar, which means 'gecko', a distinctively vocal lizard, in the Burmese language.

- The name is **the fourth from a new list of 169 names released by the IMD last year**.

| India Meteorological Department Tropical Cyclone Intensity Scale | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Category | Sustained winds (3-min average) |
| Super Cyclonic Storm | >120 kt >222 km/h |
| Very Severe Cyclonic Storm | 64–119 kt 118–221 km/h |
| Severe Cyclonic Storm | 48–63 kt 88–117 km/h |
| Cyclonic Storm | 34–47 kt 62–87 km/h |
| Deep Depression | 28–33 kt 52–61 km/h |
| Depression | ≤27 kt ≤51 km/h |

How are cyclones named?

- A WMO/ESCAP (World Meteorological Organisation/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) Panel on Tropical Cyclones agreed in principle to assign names to the tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea during its 27th session held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, in 2000.
- The naming of the tropical cyclones over the north Indian Ocean commenced from September 2004, with names provided by eight members, starting with Bangladesh, followed by India. Since then, another five countries have joined the Panel.
- The Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC), New Delhi is responsible for naming the cyclonic storms formed over the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea when they reach the relevant intensity.

There are six RSMCs in the world, including the IMD and five Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Factors responsible for the genesis of cyclones.
- Naming of cyclones in various regions of the world.
- Why are there more cyclones in Eastern coast of India?

- What is coriolis force?

- What is the latent heat of condensation?

Mains Link:

Discuss the factors responsible for the formation of tropical cyclones.

5. Cyclone Yaas:

Context:

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has informed that a low pressure area is formed over **north Andaman Sea and adjoining east central Bay of Bengal** around May 22.

- It is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm by May 24. It has been named as **Cyclone Yaas**.

The name was given by?

- The name 'Yaas' was suggested by Oman and refers to a tree with good fragrance and in English, the word is similar to Jasmine.
- The next cyclone—after Yaas—is likely to be named Gulab, suggested by Pakistan.

How are cyclones formed?

Cyclones are **formed over the oceanic water in the tropical region**.

In this region, the sunlight is highest which results in warming of land and water surface. Due to warming of the surface, the warm moist air over the ocean rises upwards following which cool air rushes in to fill the void, they too get warm and rise — the cycle continues.

But what creates the spin?

Wind always blows from **high pressure to low pressure areas**. High pressure areas are created in the cold region while low is created in the warm regions. Polar regions are high pressure areas as the amount of sunlight here is less than the tropical region. So, wind blows from polar regions to tropical regions.

- Then comes **the Earth's movement**, which is west to east. The Earth's rotation on its axis causes deflection of the wind (in the tropical region as the speed of spinning of Earth is higher compared to polar sides due to its spherical shape — blowing from both the polar regions. Wind coming from the Arctic is deflected to the right while Antarctic wind deflects to the left side).
- So, wind is already blowing in a direction. But when it reaches the warmer place, cool air starts getting attracted to the centre to fill the gap. So while moving to the centre, cool air keeps getting deflected resulting in circulation of wind movement — this process continues until the cyclone hits the land.

What happens when a cyclone hits the land?

Cyclone dissipates when it hits the land as the warm water that rises and creates space for cool water is no longer available on land. Also, the moist air that rises up forms clouds leading to rains that accompany gusting winds during cyclones.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Factors responsible for the genesis of cyclones.
2. Naming of cyclones in various regions of the world.
3. Why are there more cyclones in Eastern coast of India?
4. What is coriolis force?

5. What is the latent heat of condensation?

Mains Link:

Discuss the factors responsible for the formation of tropical cyclones.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G2J8JTPU4.1&imageview=0>.

6. Bay of Bengal, fomenting Yaas, hotter than normal for season:

Context:

Climate scientists say the Bay of Bengal, where Cyclone 'Yaas' has formed, is **at least two degrees warmer than what is normal for this time of the year**.

Background:

Generally, cyclones in the Bay of Bengal are ferocious and cause significant devastation. This year, the north Bay of Bengal is exceptionally warm with temperatures up to 32 degrees Celsius.

Recent cyclones in Bay of Bengal:

- **Amphan** was a super cyclone that ravaged West Bengal in May last year. It was **the strongest storm that hit India's eastern coast since the super cyclone of 1999**, that struck Paradip, Odisha.
- Before Amphan, **Fani** in 2019 also hit Odisha, causing immense damage that lasted weeks.

What's the concern?

In the **last four years 12 cyclones have formed in the Bay**. Out of five cyclones that the Indian coastline witnessed in a year, four originated in the Bay of Bengal and only one in the Arabian Sea.

- There is also **increasing frequency of cyclone formation in the North Indian Ocean in recent years.**

Why Bay of Bengal is the hot-bed for cyclonic storms?

1. **The vast low pressure** created by the warm water of the ocean.
2. **The Bay of Bengal shaped like a trough** that makes it more hospitable for storms to gain force.
3. **The high sea surface temperature** makes matters more worse in the Bay triggering the intensity of the storms.
4. The Bay of Bengal also **gets more rainfall with sluggish winds and warm air currents** around it that keep temperatures relatively high all year.
5. **The constant inflow of fresh warm water** from the perennial rivers like Brahmaputra, Ganga makes it further impossible to mix with the cooler water below.
6. **Lack of landmass** between the Pacific Ocean and the Bay of Bengal tend cyclonic winds to move into the coastal areas causing heavy rainfall.
7. **The absence of air movements** from north-western India towards the Bay in the post-monsoon phase is also another reason for the chances of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal.



What geographical advantage the Arabian sea has?

- It is much calm as the stronger winds help dissipate the heat.
- Lack of constant fresh water helps the warm water to mix with the cool water underneath, reducing the surface temperature.
- The Arabian Sea enjoys the locational advantage as the winds from the Pacific Ocean encounter the Western Ghats and the Himalayas cutting down on its intensity and sometimes never reaching the Arabian Sea.

Insta Curious:

1. Recent cyclones/hurricanes are lasting longer after they make landfall. Do you know why? [Read Here](#)
2. Do you know how cyclones are named(There was a Mains question)? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What are cyclones?
2. Favourable conditions for their formation.
3. Types.
4. How are they named?
5. Recent list of names.
6. Why there are more cyclones in Bay of Bengal than in Arabian Sea?

Mains Link:

Why severity of cyclones forming in Bay of Bengal is increasing? Discuss.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GSJ8K51MK.1&imageview=0>.

7. Monsoon onset over Kerala delayed:

Context:

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said that **the arrival of the southwest monsoon over Kerala has been delayed to June 3**.

However, Skymet, a private weather forecast agency, said the monsoon had arrived. This was because **two of the three criteria — as defined by the IMD — had been met.**

The criteria are:

1. Rain-bearing westerlies being at a minimum depth and speed.
2. At least 60% of the available 14 stations in Kerala and coastal Karnataka reporting rainfall of 2.5 mm or more for two consecutive days after May 10.
3. A certain degree of clouding, indicated by a parameter called '**outgoing longwave radiation**' (OLR), being below 200 W/square metre.

Currently, IMD's own data indicated that except for the OLR, the other criteria were met. Thus, there is **an element of subjectivity in arrival.**

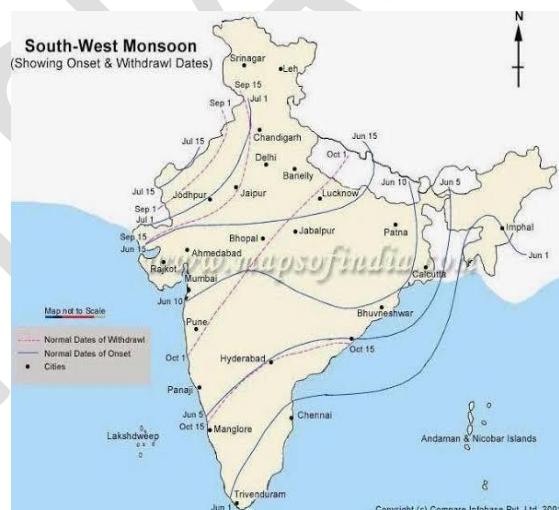
Factors influencing the onset on Southwest Monsoon:

The onset of Southwest Monsoon is an emotional event as it may cause anxiety if delayed or shoot excitement for stepping in early.

Various factors influencing its onset:

The onset needs **a trigger in the form of a weather system in the proximity of the coastline**. These are **ocean born phenomena** which accentuate the monsoon surge around the normal time of onset. These include:

1. **The low-pressure area or depression in the Bay of Bengal** during the last days of May or the beginning of June.
2. **There are such systems in the Arabian Sea** as well around the same time which results in onset over the mainland.
3. '**Cyclonic Vortex**' is another factor which appears in the Southeast Arabian Sea, off Kerala and Lakshadweep region. They also shift along the west coast to push the monsoon current.
4. **The formation of 'trough' off the west coast due to temperature differential between land and sea.** This situation could be for a mild start and weak progress.
5. Lastly **the cross-equatorial flow**, wherein the trade winds from the Southern Hemisphere crossover to the Northern Hemisphere can bring a strong monsoon surge towards the Indian mainland.



Monsoon in India- related key facts:

1. Generally, across the world, **the monsoons are experienced in the tropical area roughly between 20° N and 20° S.**
2. Out of a total of 4 seasonal divisions of India, monsoon occupy 2 divisions, namely- the southwest monsoon season and the retreating monsoon season.

Insta Curious:

1. Do you know that the Indian summer monsoon rainfall is influenced by a system of oscillating sea surface temperatures known as the **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)**? [Read here](#)
2. If you are more curious and would like to know how India Ocean Dipole also affects floods & bushfires in Africa and Australia respectively, [Read here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is El Nino?
2. What is La Nina?
3. What is ENSO?
4. When do these events occur?
5. Impact of ENSO on Asia, Africa and Australia.

6. What is Indian Ocean Dipole?

7. Differences between Southwest and Northeast monsoon.

8. Factors influencing the onset on Southwest Monsoon.

Mains Link:

Discuss the impact of La Nina weather phenomenon on India.

8. What is Sun's halo?

Context:

A mesmerising phenomenon -- a rainbow around the Sun known as a **Sun halo**, was observed recently in Bengaluru.



What is it? How is it formed?

The halo that appeared around the Sun is a **22-degree ring** that appears due to the dispersion of light as white light passes through ice crystals found in upper-level cirrus clouds, causing the halo to have colours.

- The clouds contain millions of tiny ice crystals, which refract, split and even reflect the light to give an impression of a circular rainbow ring.
- The crystals have to be oriented and positioned just so with respect to your eye, in order for the halo to appear.

Similarly, what are lunar halos?

Seen around the Moon, lunar halos are mostly colourless as moonlight is not very bright.

InstaCurious: Do you know what is **Sun Dog** – a related phenomenon? [Read Here.](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Sun's halo- meaning, features and causes.
2. Lunar halos.

9. Total lunar eclipse and supermoon:

Context:

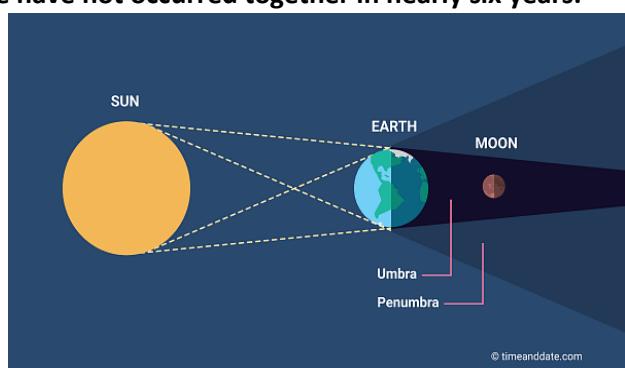
Two celestial events- the **Supermoon** and a total lunar eclipse- will be observed on May 26.

- Significantly, a supermoon and a total lunar eclipse have not occurred together in nearly six years.

What is a supermoon?

A supermoon occurs when the Moon's orbit is closest to the Earth at the same time that the Moon is full. In a typical year, there may be two to four full supermoons and two to four new supermoons in a row.

- Please note: As the Moon orbits the Earth, there is a point of time when the distance between the two is the least (called **the perigee** when the average distance is about 360,000 km from the Earth) and a point of time when the distance is the most (called **the apogee** when the distance is about 405,000 km from the Earth).



Why does the moon appear to be red during the event on May 26?

Because of the total lunar eclipse, the moon will also appear to be red. This is because the Earth will block some of the light from the Sun from reaching the moon and as the Earth's atmosphere filters the light, it will soften "the edge of our planet's shadow" giving the Moon a deep, rosy glow."

InstaCurious:

1. Now you know Supermoon & Bloodmoon – But have you ever heard about 'Harvest Moon' & 'Blue Moon'? [Read NASA article Here](#)
2. Also try to understand Impact of Moonlight on Earth – [Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is a Supermoon?
2. Differences between supermoon and blood moon?
3. What is a lunar eclipse?
4. Differences between Solar and lunar eclipses?

5. Sun and moon's perigees and apogees.
6. Why does the moon appear to be red during some celestial events?

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/total-lunar-eclipse-supermoon-may-26-explained-7329540/lite/>.

YEAR LONG MAINS (YLM) TEST SERIES 2022

Starts from 30th July 2021

EARLY BIRD OFFER: 15% off till 30th June 2021 | **OLD SUBSCRIBER: 20% off**

SUBSCRIBE HERE:  [READ MORE](#)



INSIGHTSIAS
SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

52 Mains Tests in EBS Approach

Mentorship

Preparatory Classes, Rapid discussions & Discussion classes included

INSTA 30 and other INSTA Value added material

Complete flexibility in mode & timings

Daily 2 Secure Answers Review

Bangalore Office : 7483163074 / 9380863034 | Delhi Office : 7303318519 / 011-49520205 | Hyderabad Office : 8688512637 | support@insightsias.com / mains@insightsias.com

INSIGHTS

GENERAL STUDIES – 2

Topics: Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure; Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.

1. President's Rule in Delhi:

Context:

AAP MLA Shoaib Iqbal has demanded imposition of **President's Rule** in Delhi in view of the massive surge in COVID-19 cases.

What's the issue?

He said neither him nor the government is able to offer any help to the people affected by the second wave of COVID-19. Therefore, the President's rule must be imposed.

Observations made by the High Court on the current situation:

- The Delhi High Court said “the state has failed to protect the right to life of citizens”, while expressing anguish over the death of a COVID-19 patient whose family had been pleading for an ICU bed for the last three days.
- It said, the state has failed to protect the right to life of people guaranteed under **Article 21 of the Constitution**.

What is President's Rule in the Indian context?

Article 356 of the Constitution of India gives the President of India power to suspend state government and impose President's rule of any state in the country “if he is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution”.

- It is also known as 'State Emergency' or 'Constitutional Emergency'.
- Upon the imposition of this rule, there would be no Council of Ministers.
- The state will fall under the direct control of the Union government, and the Governor will continue to head the proceedings, representing the President of India.

Parliamentary Approval and Duration:

- A proclamation imposing President's Rule must be approved by both the Houses of Parliament within two months from the date of its issue.
- The approval takes place through simple majority in either House, that is, a majority of the members of the House present and voting.
- Initially valid for six months, the President's Rule can be extended for a maximum period of three years with the approval of the Parliament, every six months.

Report of the Governor:

Under Article 356, President's Rule is imposed if the President, upon receipt of the report from the Governor of the State or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Revocation:

A proclamation of President's Rule may be revoked by the President at any time by a subsequent proclamation. Such a proclamation does not require parliamentary approval.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Imposition of President's Rule.
2. Related Provisions.
3. Report of Governor.
4. Parliamentary approval and duration.
5. Revocation.

6. What happens to the State legislature Under President's Rule.

Mains Link:

What is President's Rule? Why it is controversial? Discuss.

2. Maratha quota unconstitutional, says SC:

Context:

A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has struck down **the Maharashtra law granting reservation to the Maratha community in admissions and government jobs in the state.**

What was the law?

- In November 2018, the Maratha community was given the reservation under the Maharashtra State Socially and Educational Backward Act.
- The special act was sanctioned by Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission and approved in both the assembly and council.
- The Maratha reservation of 12 and 13 per cent (in education and jobs) had increased the overall reservation ceiling to 64 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively.

Judicial Intervention:

Initially, the reservation under SEBC was challenged by a PIL in Bombay High Court. The Bombay High Court while upholding the reservation pointed that instead of 16 per cent it should be reduced to 12 per cent in education and 13 per cent in jobs.

- Accordingly, the Act was implemented with Maratha students availing the quota in educational institutions and jobs.
- In September 9, 2020 the Maratha reservation confronted another hurdle as Supreme Court stayed its implementation and refer the case to Chief Justice of India for larger bench.

1992 Indira Sawhney Judgment:

In 1992 landmark ruling in *Indra Sawhney v Union of India*, in which **the Mandal Commission report** was upheld, the Court laid down two important precedents.

1. First, it said that the criteria for a group to qualify for reservation is “social and educational backwardness”.
2. Second, it reiterated the 50% limit to vertical quotas reasoning that it was needed to ensure “efficiency” in administration. However, the court said that this 50% limit will apply unless in “exceptional circumstances.”

What were the issues? Why was the Maratha Quota law struck down?

- The Maratha quota exceeded the 50% ceiling.
- The Court held that a separate reservation for the Maratha community violated Articles 14 (right to equality) and 21 (due process of law).

Maharashtra Government's arguments:

- The Indra Sawhney verdict must be referred to a 11-judge Bench for reconsideration since it laid down an arbitrary ceiling which the Constitution does not envisage.
- Additionally, in some judgements subsequent to Indra Sawhney, the Supreme Court itself had made exceptions to this rule.

What has the Court said on revisiting the 1992 judgment?

The court held that there is no need to revisit the case. The court said that the 50% ceiling, although an arbitrary determination by the court in 1992, is now constitutionally recognised.

Why this can't be an exceptional case?

The Marathas are dominant forward class and are in the main stream of National life. Hence, the court observed that the above situation is not an extra-ordinary.

What has the court said on state's power to identify SEBCs, and 102nd Amendment?

The **Constitution (One Hundred and Second Amendment) Act, 2018** gives constitutional status to **the National Backward Classes Commission**.

The Amendment also gives **the President powers to notify backward classes**.

Several states raised questions on the interpretation of the Amendment and argued that it curtails their powers.

- However, the Bench unanimously upheld the constitutional validity of the 102nd Amendment.
- The majority opinion also said that while the identification of SEBCs will be done centrally, state governments retain power to determine the extent of reservation and make specific policy in the spirit of “cooperative federalism”.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act.
2. About Maratha Quota law.
3. What is 9th schedule of the Indian Constitution.
4. Indira Sawhney Judgment.

Mains Link:

Discuss the implications of recent Supreme Court judgment in Maratha Quota law.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GRT8IAHAO.1&imageview=0>.

3. Article 164 (3) of the Constitution:

Context:

As the demand for online swearing-in of the new government in Kerala gets louder, jurists say **there is no legal infirmity in a government assuming office through online mode**.

What does the Constitution of India say?

The **Article 164 (3) of the Constitution** states that “before a Minister enters upon his office, the Governor shall administer to him the oaths of office and of secrecy according to the forms set out for the purpose in **the Third Schedule**.”

- There is no ban on an online event as the Constitution does not insist on a physical mode.

Need for:

- Several organisations, including the Indian Medical Association, have favoured the online mode in the wake of the alarming spread of COVID-19.
- Besides, the makers of the Constitution had not foreseen the advent of online world and hence there was no mention about the mode of Ministers assuming the office.

InstaLinks:

4. Article 164 (3).

Prelims Link:

1. Constitutional provisions related to Cabinet Ministers.
2. Their accountability.
3. Privileges.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G1U8J9UDU.1&imageview=0>.

4. Article 311 of the Constitution:

Context:

A suspended Maharashtra police officer has been **dismissed from service** by Mumbai Police Commissioner under **Article 311 (2) (b)** of the Indian Constitution without a departmental enquiry.

Safeguards to civil servants:

Article 311(1): It says that a civil servant cannot be dismissed or removed by any authority subordinate to the authority by which he was appointed.

Article 311(2): It says that a civil servant cannot be removed or dismissed or reduced in rank unless he has been given a reasonable opportunity to show cause against action proposed to be taken against him.

Safeguards under Art. 311:

Article 311 is meant to act as a safeguard for civil servants that give them a chance to respond to the charges in an enquiry so that he/she is not arbitrarily dismissed from service.

The article also provides exceptions to these safeguards under **subclause 2 provision b.**

- It states “when an authority empowered to dismiss or remove a person or to reduce him in rank is satisfied that for some reason, to be recorded by that authority in writing, it is not reasonably practicable to hold such enquiry”.

Can the dismissal under section 311 (2) be challenged by the government employee?

Yes, the government employee dismissed under these provisions can approach either tribunal like the state administrative tribunal or the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) or the Courts.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Article 311 and subclauses.
2. Safeguards available to civil servants under the constitution.

Mains Link:

Write a note on safeguards provided to civil servants under the constitution.

Topics: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

1. Panel to define offences of speech, expression:

Context:

As there is **no clear definition** of what constitutes a “hate speech” in the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, the **Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws** is attempting for the first time to **define such speech**.

- The committee is expected to submit its report soon.

Has it been defined anywhere else?

The **Bureau of Police Research and Development** recently published a manual for investigating agencies on **cyber harassment cases** that defined **hate speech** as a “language that denigrates, insults, threatens or targets an individual based on their identity and other traits (such as sexual orientation or disability or religion etc.)”.

Need for a standard definition:

Legally speaking, for criminal Sections to be invoked, any hate speech has to lead to violence or disturbance of law and order. However, even merely criticising someone is being termed hate speech. This is happening as there is no proper definition for this.

About the Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws:

In 2019, the Home Ministry decided to overhaul the **IPC, framed in 1860** and the **Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)** after seeking suggestions from States, the Supreme Court, High Courts, the Bar Council of India, Bar Councils of States, universities and law institutes on comprehensive amendments to criminal laws.

- The committee thus formed is examining a gamut of subjects pertaining to reforms in the IPC.
- The committee has decided that instead of ad hoc changes, all the pending issues such as those on **hate speech as recommended by the Viswanathan committee** can be examined and comprehensive changes are brought in.

What are the factors giving rise to hate speech?

The primary reason for the propagation of hate speech by individuals is that they believe in stereotypes that are ingrained in their minds and these stereotypes lead them to believe that a class or group of persons are inferior to them and as such cannot have the same rights as them.

- The stubbornness to stick to a particular ideology without caring for the right to co-exist peacefully adds further fuel to the fire of hate speech.

Hate speech threatens two key doctrines of democracy:

1. The guarantee of equal dignity to all.
2. The public good of inclusiveness.

What should be the criteria to identify hate speech?

- The extremity of the speech.
- Incitement.
- Status of the author of the speech.
- Status of victims of the speech.
- Potentially of the speech.
- Context of the Speech.

The penal provisions which relate to this aspect are as follows:

1. Sections 153A and 153B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) punish acts that cause enmity and hatred between two groups.
2. Section 295A of the IPC deal with punishing acts which deliberately or with malicious intention outrage the religious feelings of a class of persons.
3. Sections 505(1) and 505(2) make the publication and circulation of content which may cause ill-will or hatred between different groups an offence.
4. Section 8 of the Representation of People's Act, 1951 (RPA) prevents a person convicted of the illegal use of the freedom of speech from contesting an election.
5. Sections 123(3A) and 125 of the RPA bar the promotion of animosity on the grounds of race, religion, community, caste, or language in reference to elections and includes it under corrupt electoral practices.

InstaCurious:

1. Do you know about the international angle of 'Hate Speech'? [Here](#) (You will get good stuff to write introduction from this link)
2. Do you know there is something like the [United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech?](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Has hate speech been defined under the IPC?
2. Regulatory provisions related to hate speech.
3. Exceptions to freedom of speech under article 19.
4. Section 8 of the Representation of People's Act, 1951 (RPA).

5. Relevant Supreme Court judgments related to hate speeches.

Mains Link:

Why there is a need to define hate speech?
Discuss.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GSJ8K51LH.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

1. CEC moves Supreme Court against Madras HC's comments:

Context:

The **Chief Election Commissioner** of India has appealed to the Supreme Court through a **Special Leave Petition** against the oral comments attributed to the judges of the Madras High Court on the poll body and its officials, **portraying them as responsible for the surge in the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- CEC urged the court to direct the police not to register cases for murder against Election Commission officials or take any coercive action on the basis of media reports on oral observations attributed to the High Court judges.

What's the issue?

- Madras High Court had recently made some oral comments against the Election commission and its officials, portraying them as responsible for the surge in the COVID-19 pandemic.

- It has also been reported that the judge called for concerned officers to be put up for murder charges.
- Now, the Election Commission wants to obtain an order from the Madras High Court to gag the media from reporting oral observations made by judges during the hearing of elections-related cases.

Need for:

- Oral comments would impact or lower the faith of the masses in the poll body and the democratic process.
- It is also not justified in the least for an independent constitutional authority to make allegations against another which would effectively tarnish the image of the latter.

Article 136 in the Constitution Of India:

Special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court:

- Notwithstanding anything in this Chapter, the Supreme Court may, in its discretion, grant special leave to appeal from any judgment, decree, determination, sentence or order in any cause or matter passed or made by any court or tribunal in the territory of India.
- Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to any judgment, determination, sentence or order passed or made by any court or tribunal constituted by or under any law relating to the Armed Forces.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What is Special Leave Petition?
- Article 136.
- About CEC.

Mains Link:

Write a note on special leave petition.

Link:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/cec-moves-supreme-court-against-madras-hcs-comments/article34460089.ece/amp/>.

2. Supreme Court strikes down W.B. law on regulating real estate:

Context:

The Supreme Court has struck down **West Bengal's law on regulating the real estate sector in the State**, and said it was "**unconstitutional**" as the statute encroached upon the **Centre's Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act**.

- Also, in exercise of the jurisdiction under **Article 142**, the Court directed that the striking down of the law will not affect the registrations, sanctions and permissions previously granted under the legislation prior to the date of this judgment.

Why the court struck it down?

- The top court said that by enacting **West Bengal Housing Industry Regulation Act (WB-HIRA), 2017**, what the legislature of the State has attempted to achieve is to set up its **parallel legislation involving a "parallel regime"**.
- It said that the **State legislature has encroached upon the legislative authority of Parliament** which has **supremacy within the ambit of the subjects falling within the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule**.

What the Constitution says?

Article 254(1) in The Constitution Of India 1949:

(1) If any provision of a law made by the Legislature of a State is repugnant to any provision of a law made by Parliament which Parliament is competent to enact, or to any provision of an existing law with respect to one of the matters enumerated in the Concurrent List, then, subject to the provisions of clause (2), the law made by Parliament, whether passed before or after the law made by the Legislature of such State, or, as the case may be, the existing law, shall prevail and the law made by the Legislature of the State shall, to the extent of the repugnancy, be void.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About Article 142.
- About Article 254.

3. Subjects under 7th schedule.
4. What happens to states laws inconsistent with Central laws?

Mains Link:
[Link:<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/supreme-court-strikes-down-wb-law-on-regulating-real-estate-holds-it-unconstitutional/article34477787.ece/amp/>](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/supreme-court-strikes-down-wb-law-on-regulating-real-estate-holds-it-unconstitutional/article34477787.ece/amp/)

Discuss the significance of Article 254(1) in The Constitution Of India.

3. Centre moves SC against Delhi HC's contempt notice over oxygen supply:

Context:

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea of the Centre against Delhi High Court's order issuing **contempt notice** and seeking personal appearance of its officials for non-compliance of the direction on supply of oxygen to treat COVID-19 patients in the national capital.

What's the issue?

The Delhi High Court had directed the Centre to show cause as to why contempt should not be initiated against it for failing to comply with its order on the supply of oxygen to Delhi for treating COVID-19 patients.

Contempt of court can be of two kinds:

Civil, that is the willful disobedience of a court order or judgment or willful breach of an undertaking given to a court.

Criminal, that is written or spoken words or any act that scandalises the court or lowers its authority or prejudices or interferes with the due course of a judicial proceeding or interferes/obstructs the administration of justice.

Relevant provisions:

1. **Article 129 and 215 of the Constitution** of India empowers the Supreme Court and High Court respectively to punish people for their respective contempt.
2. **Section 10 of The Contempt of Courts Act of 1971** defines the power of the High Court to punish contempts of its subordinate courts.
3. The Constitution also includes **contempt of court as a reasonable restriction to the freedom of speech and expression under Article 19**, along with elements like public order and defamation.

Instalinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Powers of SC vs HCs wrt Contempt cases.
2. Constitutional provisions in this regard.
3. Changes brought about by Contempt of Courts (Amendment) Act, 2006.
4. Civil vs Criminal contempt.
5. Rights under Article 19.
6. Section 10 of The Contempt of Courts Act of 1971 is related to?

Mains Link:

Discuss how contempt cases are handled by Supreme Court in India.

[Link:<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/hc-asks-centre-why-it-should-not-face-contempt-for-failing-to-supply-oxygen-to-delhi-as-ordered/article34481630.ece/amp/>](https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/hc-asks-centre-why-it-should-not-face-contempt-for-failing-to-supply-oxygen-to-delhi-as-ordered/article34481630.ece/amp/)

4. Supreme Court declines EC plea to restrain media reports:

Context:

The Supreme court has declined a plea made by the Election Commission of India to restrain the media from reporting oral remarks made by a Division Bench of the Madras High court.

What's the issue?

The HC judges had said that poll body officials should be charged with "murder" for allowing rallies and mass gatherings during the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. The judges had remarked that the EC was solely responsible for the COVID surge.

Observations made by the Supreme Court:

- Real-time reportage of court proceedings, including the oral exchanges in courtrooms between judges and lawyers, is part of **the right to freedom of speech**.
- With the advent of technology, we are seeing reporting proliferate through social media forums which provide real-time updates to a much wider audience. This is **an extension of the freedom of speech and expression that the media possesses. This constitutes a virtual extension of the open court.**
- Such live reporting of court proceedings is a cause of celebration rather than apprehension.
- Except in cases of child sexual abuse and marital issues, the phenomenon of free press should extend to court proceedings.
- The court said oral observations made during the course of a hearing do not bind the parties and do not form a part of the judgment. An exchange of views was intrinsic to the applicability of mind and the process of judging. .
- On the nature of the remarks made by the Madras HC, the apex court said “a degree of caution and circumspection would have allayed the problems in the present case.

Need of the hour:

We must emphasise the need for judges to exercise caution in off-the-cuff remarks in open court, which may be susceptible to misinterpretation. Language, both on the Bench and in judgments, must comport with judicial propriety. Language is an important instrument of a judicial process which is sensitive to constitutional values.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Division of powers between SC and HC.
2. Writ petitions.
3. Appeals against HC verdicts.

Mains Link:

Madras High Court had said that poll body officials should be charged with “murder” for allowing rallies and mass gatherings during the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. Comment.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G598ID0D8.1&imageview=0>.

5. Why not place convicts under house arrest, asks SC?

Context:

The Supreme Court has asked the legislature to think over the idea of **placing convicts under house arrest to avoid overcrowding of prisons.**

Background:

The 206-page judgment was based on a plea for default bail filed by activist Gautam Navlakha on the ground that he had spent several days in house arrest.

Need for:

- Overcrowding of prisons- occupancy rate in prisons climbed to 118.5% in 2019.
- Increasing number of undertrials- 3,30,487 in 2019, which constituted 69.05% of the total number of prisoners.
- A very large sum (₹6818.1 crore) was the budget on prisons.
- The spread of COVID-19.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/ponder-over-house-arrest-to-avoid-choking-of-prisons-supreme-court-tells-legislature/article34550660.ece/amp/>.

6. PM CARES:

Context:

A plea was filed in the Supreme Court seeking a direction **to utilise the PM-CARES fund** for immediate procurement of vaccines and establishment of oxygen plants, generators and their installation in 738 district hospitals across the country.

- The petition said the government should loosen its PM-CARES purse strings and help common people in accessing medical care and oxygen.

Need for:

These government hospitals are easily accessible at no cost to common people of every district in the country who are desperately seeking medical oxygen as basic life-saving support.

About PM-CARES:

The Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM-CARES) Fund was set up to accept donations and provide relief during the Covid-19 pandemic, and other similar emergencies.

PM-CARES Fund:

- PM-CARES was set up as a public charitable trust with the trust deed registered on March 27, 2020.
- It can avail donations from the foreign contribution and donations to fund can also avail 100% tax exemption.
- PM-CARES is different from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF).

Who administers the fund?

Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance, Government of India are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What is a public account?
- Who administers PM CARES fund?
- Which organisations are exempted from the ambit of RTI act?
- What is Consolidated fund of India?
- What is a charitable trust?
- About NDRF.

Mains Link:

Discuss why PM CARES fund should be brought within the ambit of RTI act?

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GUV8JA5M9.1&imageview=0>.

7. Recusal of Judges:

Context:

Supreme Court judge Justice B.R. Gavai, one of the two judges on the Vacation Bench scheduled to hear a plea by former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh challenging the internal enquiries instituted against him, **has recused himself from hearing the case.**

Background:

Mr. Singh had moved the Supreme Court alleging that the departmental enquiries against him were part of a conspiracy to frame him for levelling allegations of corruption against Anil Deshmukh, who resigned as Maharashtra Home Minister. He urged the top court to shift the enquiries to another State.

What is Judicial Disqualification or Recusal?

Judicial disqualification, referred to as recusal, is the act of abstaining from participation in an official action such as a legal proceeding due to a conflict of interest of the presiding court official or administrative officer.

Grounds for Recusal:

- The judge is biased in favour of one party, or against another, or that a reasonable objective observer would think he might be.
- Interest in the subject matter, or relationship with someone who is interested in it.
- Background or experience, such as the judge's prior work as a lawyer.
- Personal knowledge about the parties or the facts of the case.
- Ex parte communications with lawyers or non-lawyers.
- Rulings, comments or conduct.

Are there any laws in this regard?

There are no definite rules on recusals by Judges.

- However, In taking oath of office, judges, both of the Supreme Court and of the high courts, promise to perform their duties, to deliver justice, “without fear or favour, affection or ill-will”.

What has the Supreme Court said on this?

Justice J. Chelameswar in his opinion in **Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India (2015)** held that “Where a judge has a pecuniary interest, no further inquiry as to whether there was a ‘real danger’ or ‘reasonable suspicion’ of bias is required to be undertaken”.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Grounds for Judicial Disqualification.
2. Who administers oath to Supreme Court and High Court judges?
3. Articles 127 and 128 of the Indian Constitution are related to?

Mains Link:

Recusal has become a selective call of morality for Supreme Court judges. Discuss.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G208JFOQ7.1&imageview=0>.

8. CJI made ‘statement of law’ at CBI panel:

Context:

The Centre has appointed Maharashtra cadre IPS officer of 1985 batch, Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, currently Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force, as **CBI Director for two years**.

- The government has picked him from a **panel of three officers** who were **shortlisted by the Prime Minister-led panel** consisting of **CJI as well as leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha**.

What is the 'statement of law' made by the CJI?

In the PM led panel, Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana opined **to avoid officers with less than six months left to retire for appointment as CBI Director**. This is being termed as a simple “**statement of law**”.

- Because, as per the CJI, the panel's selection of officers should be able to withstand the “**scrutiny of law in the future**”.

Supreme Court's views and judgements in this regard:

1. **Prakash Singh case:** The **six-month minimum residual tenure rule** was introduced by the Supreme Court in a March 13, 2019 order in the **Prakash Singh case** pertaining to the appointment of DGP. It was extended to the CBI Director too.
2. **Union of India versus C. Dinakar, 2004:** “Ordinarily IPS officers of the senior most four batches in service on the date of retirement of CBI Director, irrespective of their empanelment, shall be eligible for consideration for appointment to the post of CBI Director”.
3. **The Vineet Narain judgment of 1998:** The Director is to hold the post for not less than two years. He/she may not be transferred except with the previous consent of the high-level committee.

Implications of this stand by CJI:

The CJI's reliance on the 2019 order – which the other two members including the prime minister complied with – would mean that the degree of discretion which this government enjoyed before Jaiswal's selection has now been limited, while appointing persons to sensitive posts which require persons of impeccable character, integrity and professionalism as incumbents.

But, why is this needed?

The apex court had indicated the possibility that officers with only a few days of service may be in an insecure state of mind.

About the CBI Director and his appointment:

- The Director of the CBI is appointed as per **section 4A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946**.
- **The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act (2013)** says that the **Central Government shall appoint the Director of CBI on the recommendation of a three-member committee** consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India or Judge of the Supreme Court nominated by him.
- Further, the **Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Act, 2014** made a **change in the composition of the committee related to the appointment of the Director of C.B.I.** It states that where there is no recognized leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, then the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha would be a member of that committee.

Insta curious:

1. It is important to know which all other important appointments are made by **The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)**. Also know this important fact the ACC is one of the **8 Cabinet Committees** that India currently has.
2. Having a balanced opinion on CBI's autonomy is also important. [Read here.](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. The establishment of the CBI was recommended by?
2. The CBI comes under the administrative control of?
3. Is it a statutory body?
4. Committee to select the director of CBI.
5. Vineet Narain's judgment is related to?
6. Prakash Singh Case verdict- overview.

Mains Link:

Why do you think an officer to be appointed as the CBI Director should have a minimum of six months tenure? Discuss.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GSJ8K51L5.1&imageview=0>.

9. The concept of anticipatory bail:

Context:

The **Supreme Court** has resolved a dichotomy in approach of high courts and ruled that **Courts in "extraordinary circumstances" have the discretion to grant protection from arrest to accused even while denying them anticipatory bail**, but the power cannot be exercised in an untrammelled manner, and the order will have to be a reasoned one.

Background:

The court was hearing appeals against two High Court orders which, while **rejecting the prayer of the accused for anticipatory bail, had asked them to surrender before the trial court and file a regular bail application** within 90 days, and protected them from any coercive action during this period.

What has the Supreme Court ruled?

1. HCs and SC are given powers to grant anticipatory bail to the accused because of the premium that the Constitution places on the **right to liberty guaranteed under Article 21**.
2. The grant or rejection of an application under CrPC has a direct bearing on the **right to life and liberty of an individual**. Therefore, the provision needs to be read liberally, and considering its beneficial nature. The courts must not read in restrictions that the legislature have not explicitly provided for.
3. In doing so, the court may also exercise its powers under **Article 142 of the Constitution** to pass such an order.

Need for such protection:

An accused, besides being an accused, may also be **the primary caregiver or sole breadwinner of the family**. His arrest may leave his loved ones in a state of starvation and neglect.

- In the **1980 Gurbaksh Singh Sibia vs State of Punjab case**, a five-judge Supreme Court bench led by then Chief Justice Y V Chandrachud ruled that **S. 438 (1) is to be interpreted in the light of Article 21 of the Constitution (protection of life and personal liberty)**.

The concept of anticipatory bail:

- The provision of anticipatory bail under **Section 438** was introduced when CrPC was amended in 1973.
- **As opposed to ordinary bail**, which is granted to a person who is under arrest, in anticipatory bail, a person is directed to be released on bail even before arrest made.
- **Time limit:** The Supreme Court (SC) in **Sushila Aggarwal v. State of NCT of Delhi (2020)** case delivered a significant verdict, ruling that no time limit can be set while granting anticipatory Bail and it can continue even until the end of the trial.
- It is issued only by the Sessions Court and High Court.

Significance:

- The reason for enactment of Section 438 in the Code was parliamentary acceptance of the crucial underpinning of **personal liberty in a free and democratic country**.
- Parliament wished to foster **respect for personal liberty and accord primacy to a fundamental tenet of criminal jurisprudence**, that everyone is presumed to be innocent till he or she is found guilty.

Insta Curious:

1. Do you know about the **Substantive Rights** that Flow From Article 21? [Read here](#):
2. Please know a few important facts related to the issue of Undertrials in India. It's important. [Read Here](#).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Various rights under Article 21.
2. What is a bail?
3. What is an anticipatory bail?
4. Differences between bailable and non-bailable offences.
5. Conditions for Granting Anticipatory Bail.
6. Time limit on anticipatory bail.

Mains Link:

Discuss the need for and significance of anticipatory bail.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GJ98KIJN7.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

1. West Bengal government to set up a Legislative Council:

Context:

The West Bengal government will set up a Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad), as per a decision taken up at the recent Cabinet meeting.

What next?

For setting up the Council, a Bill has to be introduced in the Assembly and then a nod from the Governor is required. The Upper House existed till 1969.

What are the Legislative Councils, and why are they important?

India has a **bicameral system** i.e., two Houses of Parliament. At the state level, the equivalent of the Lok Sabha is the Vidhan Sabha or Legislative Assembly; that of the Rajya Sabha is the Vidhan Parishad or Legislative Council.

How is a legislative council created?

Under **Article 169 of the constitution**, Parliament may by law create or abolish the second chamber in a state if the Legislative Assembly of that state passes a resolution to that effect by a special majority.

Strength of the house:

As per **article 171 clause (1) of the Indian Constitution**, the total number of members in the legislative council of a state shall not exceed one third of the total number of the members in the legislative Assembly of that state and the total number of members in the legislative council of a state shall in no case be less than 40.

How are members of the Council elected?

1. 1/3rd of members are elected by members of the Assembly.
2. 1/3rd by electorates consisting of members of municipalities, district boards and other local authorities in the state.
3. 1/12th by an electorate consisting of teachers.
4. 1/12th by registered graduates.
5. The remaining members are nominated by the Governor from among those who have distinguished themselves in literature, science, art, the cooperative movement, and social service.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Legislative Council- creation and abolition.
2. Role of state governments.
3. Composition.
4. Powers.
5. Comparison with Legislative Assembly.
6. States having legislative councils.

Mains Link:

Discuss the need for having a state legislative council.

Link:<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kolkata/west-bengal-government-to-set-up-a-legislative-council/article34581812.ece/amp/>.

2. Islanders seek withdrawal of land norms in Lakshadweep:

Context:

Lakshadweep Administrator Praful Khoda Patel is facing opposition from the people of the union territory and politicians — both from within Lakshadweep and neighbouring Kerala — over policies introduced by him since his appointment in December 2020.

The contentious regulations include:

1. The Draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021 (LDAR) — which gives the administrator powers to remove or relocate islanders from their property, for town planning or any developmental activity.
2. The Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act (PASA), introduced in January 2021, under which a person can be detained without any public disclosure for a period of up to one year.
3. The draft panchayat notification, where a member with more than two children is disqualified from being a member.

Issues with the recently created Lakshadweep Development Authority (LDA):

- Lakshadweep Development Authority (LDA) has been created with extensive powers, including eviction of land owners.
- This is widely read as having been pushed by the real estate lobby and against the interest of the islanders.
- It is because the legislation vests extensive powers with the authority, allowing it to prepare comprehensive development plans for any area and relocate people.

Appointment, role and significance of the administrator:

Patel was made administrator of Lakshadweep in December 2020. He was appointed the administrator in a departure from the earlier practice of appointing only IAS officers to the post.

- The position of administration, appointed by the President of India, is important for any union territory, because the person becomes in charge of all functions in the area and acts on behalf of the President.

InstaCurious:

1. Did you know the President of India is also **chief administrator** of union territories as per [Article 239?](#)
2. Also in addition to Lakshadweep, administrators of Chandigarh and Daman & Diu are not called as [Lieutenant Governors](#) but just called as Administrators. Any specific reason?

InstaLinks:

www.insightsonindia.com

Prelims Link:

1. UTs in India.
2. Their administration.
3. Powers and functions of Administrators.
4. Representation of UTs in Rajya Sabha.

Mains Link:

Discuss the issues associated with the administration of UTs in India.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G108K1U4O.1&imageview=0>.

3. MP Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS):

Context:

MPs have written to Speaker Om Birla to restart the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS).

Background:

The Union government had resorted to Disaster Management Act to suspend the member of Parliament local area development (MPLAD) scheme in April 2020.

About MPLAD scheme:

- Launched in December, 1993.
- Seeks to provide a mechanism for the Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature for creation of durable community assets and for provision of basic facilities including community infrastructure, based on locally felt needs.
- The MPLADS is a Plan Scheme fully funded by Government of India.
- The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crore.

Special focus:

- MPs are to recommend every year, works costing at least 15 per cent of the MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by Scheduled Caste population and 7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by S.T. population.

Release of Funds:

- Funds are released in the form of grants in-aid directly to the district authorities.
- The funds released under the scheme are non-lapsable.
- The liability of funds not released in a particular year is carried forward to the subsequent years, subject to eligibility.
- The MPs have a recommendatory role under the scheme.
- The district authority is empowered to examine the eligibility of works, sanction funds and select the implementing agencies, prioritise works, supervise overall execution, and monitor the scheme at the ground level.
- At least 10% of the projects under implementation in the district are to be inspected every year by the district authority.

Recommendation of works:

- The Lok Sabha Members can recommend works in their respective constituencies.
- The elected members of the Rajya Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the state from which they are elected.
- Nominated members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha may select works for implementation anywhere in the country.

Insta Curious:

1. More than Rs. 1750 crores of MPLADS funds unutilized as of December 2020. Curious why?

2. Where can nominated MPs recommend their works?
3. Is there any special focus on SC and ST Welfare?
4. Difference between grants and loans?

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. How is MPLADS connected to Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana?

5. Implementing agencies.

Mains Link:

Critically examine whether MPLADS has helped in bridging the gaps in provisioning of public services?

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GI78KAJSK.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.

1. Returning officer has final say in recount of votes:

Context:

The Election Commission of India recently took cognisance of media reports on **recounting at Nandigram assembly constituency** in West Bengal, to clarify that **the returning officer appointed by the poll panel is the final authority under the law to take decision on such matter**.

What's the issue?

The Nandigram assembly constituency saw a tough, nail-biting battle between incumbent West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and her former aide, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Suvendu Adhikary.

Ultimately, the election commission declared Adhikari had won by a margin of 1,956 votes. Mamata's party Trinamool Congress immediately demanded a recount but was turned down by the EC.

Roles and powers of Returning Officer under the Representation of the People Act, 1951:

- The returning officer of an assembly constituency **performs statutory functions under the Representation of the People Act, 1951 in quasi-judicial capacity** independently.
- Whether it is nomination, polling or counting, the RO acts strictly in accordance with the extant electoral laws, instructions and guidelines of the ECI.
- When an application for recounting of votes is made **the returning officer shall decide the matter and may allow the application in whole or in part or may reject it in its entirety if it appears to him to be frivolous or unreasonable**.

What lies ahead?

In such a case, only legal remedy is to file an EP (election petition) before the high court.

- As per provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the decision of a returning officer can only be challenged through an election petition under section 80 of the Act.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Key Provisions of RPA.
2. Roles and powers of Returning Officer.
3. Appeals against EC's orders.

Link: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/returning-officer-has-final-say-in-recount-of-votes-ec-says-on-nandigram-poll-101620128973247-amp.html>.

Topics: Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

1. Appoint ECI members via collegium:

Context:

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court seeking the constitution of an independent collegium to appoint members of the Election Commission of India (ECI).

- The petition was filed by **the Association for Democratic Reforms**.

Need for an independent collegium:

The petition states that the present process of appointing members to the Election Commission, solely by the executive, is incompatible with **Article 324(2) of the Constitution**.

- The appointment of members of Election Commission on the "pick and choose" of the executive violates the very foundation for which it was created, thus, making **the Commission a branch of executive**.

Need of the hour:

Democracy is a facet of the basic structure of the constitution and in order to ensure free and fair elections and to maintain healthy democracy in our country, the Election Commission should be insulated from political and/or executive interference.

Recommendations given by various expert committees:

1. **255th Law Commission Report** recommended that the appointment of all the Election Commissioner should be made by the President in consultation with a three-member collegium or selection committee, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition of the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India.
2. **4th Report submitted by the Second Administrative Reform Commission** in January 2007 also recommended for the constitution of a neutral and independent collegium headed by the Prime Minister with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Law Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha as its members.
3. **Dr. Dinesh Goswami Committee** in its Report of May 1990 recommended for the effective consultation with neutral authorities like Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition for the appointment in Election Commission.
4. **Justice Tarkunde Committee** in its Report of 1975 recommended that the members of Election Commission should be appointed by the President on the advice of a Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India.

Present System of Appointment

Constitutional versus Executive Power of Appointment:

There is no prescribed procedure for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners as per the constitution.

1. At present, the President shall appoint the CEC and EC based on the recommendations made by the Prime Minister. Therefore, it is the executive power of the President to appoint CEC and ECs.
2. However, according to Article 324(5), the Parliament has the power to regulate the terms of conditions of service and tenure of ECs.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About CEC and ECs.
2. Appointment.
3. Removal.
4. Tenure.
5. Functions.
6. Related constitutional provisions.
7. Powers of Parliament to regulate their appointments.

Mains Link:

Discuss the need for having an independent collegium to appoint members of the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G128JCHKJ.1&imageview=0>.

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

1. Scheduled drugs' list:

Context:

Bombay High Court has asked the Centre to include Remdesivir in the list of scheduled drugs and to regulate its pricing.

- The direction came while the Bench was hearing a suo motu public interest litigation (PIL) petition on the shortage of oxygen, non-availability of Remdesivir, Tocilizumab injections, and hospital beds in Nagpur district.

Other measures suggested by the Court:

The court also said that it is possible to regulate the pricing if a liberal interpretation is given to the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act (DCA).

- The provisions of the DCA allow restriction or regulation of prices of a drug that was essential during a natural calamity or epidemic.
- Both **the Drugs Control Act and DCA** enable the central government to issue a notification **to fix rates of essential drugs during an epidemic.**

Need for:

If the powers conferred on the Central government are exercised, it will go a long way. It will stop extortion of money from families of COVID-19 patients, and will also put a full stop to the black-marketing of the drug.

Background:

The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 contains provisions for classification of drugs under given schedules and there are guidelines for the storage, sale, display and prescription of each schedule.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Classification of drugs in India.
2. Schedule H vs X drugs.
3. Important drugs under this schedule.

Mains Link: What are scheduled drugs? How are they classified? Discuss.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GAQ8HPDEB.1&imageview=0>.

2. The Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011:

Context:

Importers of medical devices, used particularly for providing oxygen support to Covid-19 patients, are now **allowed to import these devices without prior mandatory declaration for the next three months.**

Background:

The Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011, make it mandatory to get the approvals prior to the import.

But, considering the pandemic situation of COVID-19 and to meet the demand of (sic) medical devices, the Central Government has given permission.

About the Legal Metrology Act 2009:

- The Department of Consumer Affairs, administers the Legal Metrology Act 2009.
- The act provides for application of legal requirements to measurements and measuring instruments.
- The objective of Legal Metrology is to ensure public guarantee from the point of view of security and accuracy of the weighments and measurements.
- The Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities), Rules 2011 are primarily intended to ensure that the consumers are able to make informed choices by being informed of essential declarations on the pre-packed commodities.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of the act.
2. Prior permission.
3. Exemptions.

3. Scheme of Financial Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure:

Context:

The Ministry of Finance, Government of India has decided to provide an additional amount of upto ₹15,000 crore to States as **interest free 50 year loan for spending on capital projects.**

- The Department of Expenditure has issued fresh guidelines in this regard on **the “Scheme of Financial Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure”** for the financial year 2021-22.

Allocation under the scheme:

1. The first part of scheme is for North-east and hill states and an amount of ₹2,600 crore has been earmarked.

2. The **second part of scheme is for all other states** with an amount of ₹7,400 crore. This amount has been allocated among states in proportion to their share of central taxes as per the award of 15th Finance Commission for 2021-22.
3. The **third part of scheme is for providing incentives to states for monetisation or recycling of infrastructure assets and disinvestment of state public sector enterprises.** An amount of ₹5,000 crore is allocated.

Background:

Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to state governments in the form of 50-year interest free loan.

- An amount not exceeding ₹12,000 crore was earmarked for 2020-21 and a sum of ₹11,830.29 crore was released.
- This helped to sustain state level capital expenditure in the pandemic year.

4. What is Chhattisgarh's vaccination policy, and why is it being opposed in court?

Context:

Chhattisgarh High Court is hearing intervention applications filed by politicians and lawyers against the state government's **vaccination policy**.

- As per the policy, the state government will **administer the vaccines based on the economic situation of the citizens.**

Highlights of the Vaccination Policy:

Under this, vaccination of people between 18-44 years of age would be held in three stages.

1. Firstly, the Antyodaya Card holders are to be vaccinated.
2. Followed by the BPL card holders.
3. Then the APL card holders.

Need for sub-classification?

- Because of the limited number of vaccines available to the state.
- Besides, lack of education, access to internet, smart phone make it harder for the poor to receive benefits.

Also, since the Antyodaya Group who are residing mostly in the remote areas and who are rather illiterate or not knowing anything much about the Covid-19 pandemic, symptoms, complications, necessity to register in the portal and as to the infrastructure, are moving around quite freely which spreads the disease much faster.

Points raised against the state's vaccination policy:

- This sub-classification is beyond the constitutional mandate and is patently in violation of the law of equality and the equal opportunity before law.
- It discriminates citizens with reference to their right to life.

What did the High Court ask the state to do next?

1. Fix a reasonable ratio of allotment of vaccines.
2. A Scheme has to be formulated by the State by earmarking appropriate share of the vaccines to them as well.
3. Set up 'Help Desks' providing spot registration and to administer vaccines to them.

Who is an Antyodaya card holder?

Antyodaya Anna Yojana was a Union government scheme in which "poorest of the poor" were identified and given a yellow ration card, which indicated that they were to be given rice, wheat and other ration items at heavily subsidised rates.

- Families with annual income less than Rs 15,000, senior citizens with no support, widows and unemployed persons also fall in this category.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-chhattisgarhs-vaccination-policy-why-is-it-being-opposed-in-court-7303014/lite/>.

5. FCRA amendments crippling our work, say NGOs:

Context:

An NGO has now moved the Delhi High Court seeking exemption from the Union Home Ministry's March 31 deadline to open an FCRA account with the SBI branch in New Delhi.

What's the issue?

The amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) enacted in 2020 made it **compulsory for NGOs to open a bank account in Delhi**.

- But, this has crippled the work of many organisations that are unable to receive foreign funds.
- Many NGOs are affected by the new regulations as they are hampering charitable work during the pandemic.

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment, 2020:

- It seeks to prohibit 'public servants' from receiving any foreign funding.
- It proposes to reduce the use of foreign funds to meet administrative costs by NGOs from the existing 50 per cent to 20 per cent.
- It seeks to "prohibit any transfer of foreign contribution to any association/person".
- It proposes to make Aadhaar cards a mandatory identification document for all office-bearers, directors and other key functionaries of NGOs or associations eligible to receive foreign donations.
- It seeks to allow for the central government to hold a summary inquiry to direct bodies with FCRA approval to "not utilise the unutilised foreign contribution or receive the remaining portion of foreign contribution".
- And to limit the use of foreign funds for administrative purposes. This would impact research and advocacy organisations which use the funding to meet their administrative costs.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. When was FCRA enacted?
2. Who administers the legislation?
3. Definition of foreign funding as per the act.
4. Who cannot accept foreign contributions as per the act.
5. What is the eligibility criteria for grant of registration?

6. Key provisions in the amendment bill.

Mains Link:

Discuss why FCRA has been controversial in the recent past.

Link:<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/fcra-amendments-crippling-our-work-say-ngos/article34521449.ece/amp/>.

6. National Register of Citizens (NRC):

Context:

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that his coalition government favoured 20% reverification of the updated list of citizens in districts that shared a border with Bangladesh and 10% in the remaining districts.

Background:

The Supreme Court had monitored the exercise of updating the NRC of 1951 in Assam. About 19.06 lakh out of 3.3 crore applicants were excluded from the updated draft.

About NRC:

- At its core, **the NRC is an official record of those who are legal Indian citizens**. It includes demographic information about all those individuals who qualify as citizens of India as per the **Citizenship Act, 1955**.
- The register was first prepared after the 1951 Census of India and since then it has not been updated until recently.
- So far, **such a database has only been maintained for the state of Assam**.

Why was NRC updated for Assam?

In 2014, the SC ordered the updatation of the NRC, in accordance with Citizenship Act, 1955 and Citizenship Rules, 2003 in all parts of Assam. The process officially started in 2015.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Relation between Census and National Population Register.
2. NPR vs NRC.
3. How NRC is related to Assam accord.
4. Constitutional provisions wrt to grant and revocation of citizenships.

5. Who carries out Census?

Mains Link:

Discuss why a nationwide NRC exercise may not be feasible.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GFL8IOGP4.1&imageview=0>.

7. Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, 2015:

Context:

Social media posts appealing for adoption of children orphaned during COVID-19 are illegal, warn experts.

- Activists warn that such posts are illegal under **Section 80 and 81 of the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, 2015**, which prohibit offering or receiving children outside the processes laid down under the Act as well as their sale and purchase.
- Such acts are punishable with three to five years in jail or ₹1 lakh in fine.

What is the procedure to be followed with children who have been orphaned?

- If someone has information about a child in need of care, then they must contact one of the four agencies: Childline 1098, or the district Child Welfare Committee (CWC), District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) or the helpline of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights.
- Following this, the CWC will assess the child and place him or her in the immediate care of a Specialised Adoption Agency.
- When there is a child without a family, the State becomes the guardian.

Other childcare options available:

Adoption is only one of the options, it is not the only option. Such children will have uncles or aunts who can look after them. Children may desire contact with their own family and to remain within the same heritage. In such circumstances it is very important to guard the rights of the children involved.

Need of the hour:

This is the time to focus on kinship care. The Ministry of Women and Child Development and all concerned State departments should immediately roll out a kinship care programme and make it part of foster care provisions under the JJ Act.

About JJ Act:

- **Aim:** To Comprehensively address children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection.
- It mandates setting up **Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees** in every district. Both must have at least one-woman member each.
- Also, **the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** was granted the status of a statutory body to enable it to perform its function more effectively.
- The Act included several new offences committed against children (like, illegal adoptions, use of child by militant groups, offences against disabled children, etc) which are not adequately covered under any other law.
- All Child Care Institutions, whether run by State Government or by voluntary or non-governmental organisations are to be **mandatorily registered under the Act within 6 months from the date of commencement of the Act.**

InstaLinks:

www.insightsonindia.com

Prelims Link:

1. Key Provisions.
2. About CARA.
3. Registration of Childcare institutions as per the Act.
4. Latest amendments proposed.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the law.

Link:<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/adoption-pleas-for-covid-19-orphans-are-illegal-detrimental-experts/article34476241.ece/amp/>.

8. Why and how of creating a district?

Context:

Malerkotla recently became the 23rd district in Punjab.

How are new districts carved?

- The power to create new districts or alter or abolish existing districts rests with the State governments.
- This can either be done through an executive order or by passing a law in the State Assembly.
- Many States prefer the executive route by simply issuing a notification in the official gazette.

How does it help?

States argue that smaller districts lead to better administration and governance. For example, in 2016, the Assam government issued a notification to upgrade the Majuli sub-division to Majuli district for “administrative expediency”.

Does the Central government have a role to play here?

The **Centre has no role to play in the alteration of districts or creation of new ones**. States are free to decide. The **Home Ministry comes into the picture when a State wants to change the name of a district or a railway station**.

- The State government's request is sent to other departments and agencies such as the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Posts, Geographical Survey of India Sciences and the Railway Ministry seeking clearance. A no-objection certificate may be issued after examining their replies.

What has been the trend?

According to the 2011 Census, there were 593 districts in the country.

- The Census results showed that between 2001-2011, as many as 46 districts were created by States.
- Though the 2021 Census is yet to happen, Know India, a website run by the Government of India, says currently there are 718 districts in the country.
- The surge in number is also due to bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into A.P. and Telangana in 2014. Telangana at present has 33 districts and A.P. has 13 districts.

InstaLinks:

3. Procedure to rename a district.

Prelims Link:

1. Creation of a new district- procedure.
2. Roles of state and central government's.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G128JCV73.1&imageview=0>.

9. PM Swasthya Suraksha Yojana:

Context:

The Central government has approved setting up 22 new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) so far under **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)** out of which six are already fully functional.

About PMSSY:

PMSSY was announced in 2003 with objectives of correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/ reliable tertiary healthcare services and also to augment facilities for quality medical education in the country.

The PMSSY is implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

It has two components:

- Setting up new AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences).
- Upgradation of government medical colleges in various states.

The project cost for upgradation of each medical college institution is shared by the Centre and the state.



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Components under PMSSY.
2. Cost sharing.
3. Implementation of the scheme.

4. Institutions setup so far under the scheme.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the scheme.

10. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund For Sportspersons:

Context:

The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) has approved an amount of Rs 2 Lakh for Karnataka's V Tejaswini Bai, who won the Arjuna Award in 2011 and was a member of the Women's Kabaddi team that won gold medals at the 2010 and 2014 Asian Games respectively.

- The financial assistance has been approved from the **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for the Sportspersons (PDUNWFS)**.

About the Fund:

- Set up in March, 1982 with a view to assisting outstanding Sportspersons of yesteryear, living in indigent circumstances who had brought glory to the Country in sports.
- The scheme was revised in May, 2016 to provide for lump sum ex-gratia assistance to outstanding Sportspersons of yesteryears.
- **Provision of pension has been done away with** as there is already a Scheme of Pension for Meritorious Sportspersons.

The Fund shall be utilized for the following objectives:

1. To provide suitable assistance to outstanding sports persons now living in indigent sportspersons.
2. To provide suitable assistance to outstanding sports persons injured during the period of their training for competitions and also during the competitions, depending on the nature of the injury.
3. To provide suitable assistance to outstanding sports persons who bring glory to the country in the international field and who are disabled as an after effect of their strenuous training or otherwise and to provide them assistance for medical treatment.
4. To administer and apply the funds of the Fund to promote the welfare of the sports persons generally in order to alleviate distress among them and their dependents in indigent circumstances.
5. To administer and apply the funds of the Fund for active sports persons individually or collectively as a group.
6. To do all other things which are incidental to the above objectives.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link and Mains Link:

- Key features, Eligibility and significance of the scheme.

11. SC: personal guarantors liable for corporate debt:

Context:

In November 2019, a government notification had allowed creditors, usually financial institutions and banks, to move against personal guarantors under the Indian Bankruptcy and Insolvency Code (IBC).

- The Supreme Court has now upheld this move.
- The court said there was an “intrinsic connection” between personal guarantors and their corporate debtors.

Implications:

This will allow lenders to **initiate insolvency proceedings against personal guarantors**, who are usually promoters of big business houses, along with the stressed corporate entities for whom they gave guarantee.

About the IBC:

- The IBC was enacted in 2016, replacing a host of laws, with the aim to streamline and speed up the resolution process of failed businesses.
- The Code also consolidates provisions of the current legislative framework to form a common forum for debtors and creditors of all classes to resolve insolvency.

The Code creates various institutions to facilitate resolution of insolvency. These are as follows:

Insolvency Professionals: A specialised cadre of licensed professionals is proposed to be created. These professionals will administer the resolution process, manage the assets of the debtor, and provide information for creditors to assist them in decision making.

Insolvency Professional Agencies: The insolvency professionals will be registered with insolvency professional agencies. The agencies conduct examinations to certify the insolvency professionals and enforce a code of conduct for their performance.

Information Utilities: Creditors will report financial information of the debt owed to them by the debtor. Such information will include records of debt, liabilities and defaults.

Adjudicating authorities: The proceedings of the resolution process will be adjudicated by the National Companies Law Tribunal (NCLT), for companies; and the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT), for individuals. The duties of the authorities will include approval to initiate the resolution process, appoint the insolvency professional, and approve the final decision of creditors.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board: The Board will regulate insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies and information utilities set up under the Code. The Board will consist of representatives of Reserve Bank of India, and the Ministries of Finance, Corporate Affairs and Law.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is insolvency and bankruptcy?
2. Various institutions established under the IBC code.
3. NCLT- composition and functions.
4. What are debt recovery tribunals?

Mains Link:

Discuss how suspension of initiation of fresh insolvency proceedings will help shield companies impacted by the outbreak of Covid-19.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G6I8JP2S8.1&imageview=0>.

12. Children under mid-day meal scheme to get aid:

Context:

The Centre has decided to give about ₹100 each to children studying in Class 1 to Class 8 in government schools, who are beneficiaries of the Mid-Day Meal scheme.

- The money, ₹1200 crore in total, will be given to 11.8 crore children through direct benefit transfer as a one-time payment.

Cash payment under the Mid-Day Meal scheme:

- The money comes from the cooking cost component of the scheme.

Please note that cooking costs formed the largest component of the Central allocation for the Mid-Day Meal scheme in 2021-22.

- It covers the prices of ingredients such as pulses, vegetables, cooking oil, salt, and condiments.

What's the issue now?

Children are being given cash in lieu of the mid-day meal in some places and dry rations in others. Either way, the quantities/amounts are too low to be even adequate for one nutritious meal a day. ₹100 per child amounts to less than ₹4 a day even if it was a monthly payment.

- Therefore, the Centre should provide enhanced take-home rations, including eggs, vegetables, fruits, dal/chana, oil in order to ensure nutrition security.

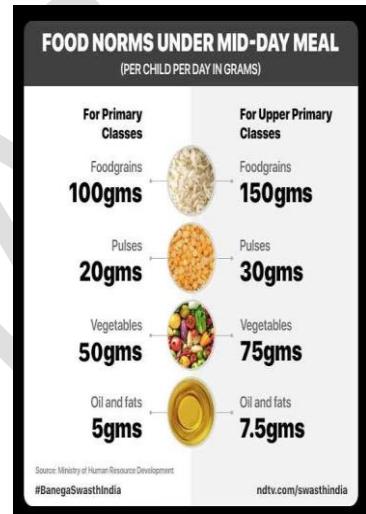
About the Mid-Day meal scheme:

The scheme guarantees one meal to all children in government and aided schools and madarsas supported under Samagra Shiksha.

- Students up to Class VIII are guaranteed one nutritional cooked meal at least 200 days in a year.
- The Scheme comes under the Ministry of HRD.
- It was launched in the year 1995 as the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP – NSPE), a centrally sponsored scheme. In 2004, the scheme was relaunched as the Mid Day Meal Scheme.
- The Scheme is also covered by the National Food Security Act, 2013.

Objective:

Address hunger and malnutrition, increase enrolment and attendance in school, improve socialisation among castes, provide employment at grassroot level especially to women.



The MDM rules 2015, provide that:

- The place of serving meals to the children shall be school only.
- If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.
- The School Management Committee mandated under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 shall also monitor implementation of the Mid-day meal Scheme.

Nutritional norms:

In terms of calorie intake, as per the MDM guidelines, the children in primary schools must be provided with at least 450 calories with 12 grams of protein through MDM while the children in upper primary schools should get 700 calories with 20 grams of protein, as per MHRD.

The food intake per meal by the children of primary classes, as provided by MHRD is 100 grams of food grains, 20 grams of pulses, 50 grams of vegetables and 5 grams of oils and fats. For the children of upper-primary schools, the mandated breakup is 150 grams of food grains, 30 grams of pulses, 75 grams of vegetables and 7.5 grams of oils and fats.

InstaCurious:

- Read [this interesting article](#) about linkages between Covid, children education & health.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Origin of MDMS.
- When was it renamed?

- Difference between centrally sponsored and Central sector schemes? What kind of scheme of the MDMS?
- Financing under the scheme.
- Nutritional norms prescribed.
- Coverage under the scheme.

7. Responsibility to pay food security allowance under the scheme.

Mains Link: Discuss the significance of Mid-Day Meal scheme.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GFD8KDIK6.1&imageview=0>.

13. D-voter, or doubtful voter:

Context:

Manindra Das- the last “foreigner” has walked out of one of the six **detention centres in Assam**, leaving about 170 more to be released from the other five.

- Mahindra Das was tagged a ‘D-voter’ in 2015 and later declared a “foreigner” in a one-sided decision by a **Foreigners’ Tribunal in 2019**.

Who is a D-voter, or doubtful voter?

Those persons whose citizenship was doubtful or was under dispute were categorized as ‘D- Voters’ during the preparation of **National Register of Citizens in Assam**.

- They have **not been defined in the Citizenship Act, 1955 or the Citizenship Rules of 2003**.

Who is a declared foreigner?

A declared foreigner, or DF, is a person marked by Foreigners’ Tribunal (FT) for allegedly failing to prove their citizenship after the State police’s Border wing marks him or her as an illegal immigrant.

What is a Foreigners tribunal?

The Foreigner tribunals are set up under **the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964**.

The tribunals are **quasi-judicial bodies**, to determine if a person staying illegally is a “foreigner” or not.

Composition: Advocates not below the age of 35 years of age with at least 7 years of practice (or) Retired Judicial Officers from the Assam Judicial Service (or) Retired IAS of ACS Officers (not below the rank of Secretary/Addl. Secretary) having experience in quasi-judicial works.

Who can set up these tribunals?

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has amended **the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964**, and has empowered district magistrates in all States and Union Territories to set up tribunals (quasi-judicial bodies) to decide whether a person staying illegally in India is a foreigner or not.

- Earlier, the powers to constitute tribunals were vested only with the Centre.

Who can approach these tribunals?

The **amended order (Foreigners (Tribunal) Order, 2019)** also empowers individuals to approach the Tribunals.

- Earlier, only the State administration could move the Tribunal against a suspect.

Insta Curious:

All you need to know about the citizenship trio: NRC, NPR & CAA. Read here: <https://blog.ipleaders.in/need-know-citizenship-trio-nrc-npr-caa/>.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) (IMDT) Act vs Foreigners Tribunal (Order) 1964.
2. Burden of proof under this order.
3. Powers to approach the tribunal and kind of cases to be decided by the tribunal.
4. Composition of the tribunal.
5. Tribunals vs Courts.
6. Geographical location of Assam and other NE states.

7. Refugee vs illegal Migrants.
8. Fundamental Rights available for Foreigners and other constitutional provisions wrt to Foreigners.
9. Human Rights vs Fundamental Rights.

Mains Link:

Discuss briefly the laws that are in place to tackle illegal non-citizens in the country. Why was the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964 amended? Explain.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GJ98KIJML.1&iimageview=0>

Topics: Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

1. The role of DETER committees formed in Bengaluru:

Context:

To manage Covid pandemic at the local level, the Karnataka state government has formed **Decentralized Triage and Emergency Response (DETER) Committees** at ward-levels in Bengaluru.

About DETER committees:

- The objective is to strengthen government response and management of the coronavirus pandemic.
- These teams will emphasise on the distribution of localised action in a decentralised system of disaster response.
- They will be run in synergy with officials, ward committee members, government officers, representatives of the peoples, volunteers from resident welfare associations, civil society organisations, and disaster-support initiatives.

Roles and functions:

1. They will act as the first-point contact for those infected with Covid-19.
2. The Karnataka government has formulated a '**3E Strategy**' for WDCs to micromanage Covid-19 in a **comprehensive manner**. The 3E Strategy is explained as follows: Efficient admission to hospitals facilitated by community triage services; Efficient discharge from hospitals enabling efficient bed-turnover; Empowering hospitals, doctors, and their management with supportive supervision.

Significance:

This is expected to improve supervision for better ward-level Covid governance.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the committees.
2. Their roles and responsibilities.

Mains Link: Discuss how civil society groups can help manage the spread of covid pandemic.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/bengaluru-deter-committees-covid-management-7310716/lite/>.

Topics: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

1. Social stock exchanges (SSEs):

Context:

SEBI's technical group (TG) on social stock exchanges (SSEs) has submitted its report.

- The expert panel was headed by Harsh Bhanwala, ex-Chairman, Nabard.

Key recommendations made:

1. Eligibility:

Both for-profit (FP) and not-for-profit organisations (NPO) should be allowed to tap the SSE provided they are able to demonstrate that social intent and impact.

Corporate foundations, political and religious organisations should be made ineligible to raise funds using the SSE mechanism.

2. Modes available for fundraising:

For NPOs, it shall be equity, zero coupon zero principal bond (ZCZP), development impact bonds, social impact fund, currently known as social venture fund (SVP) with 100 per cent grants-in grants out provision, and donations by investors through mutual funds.

For FP enterprises, it will be equity, debt, development impact bonds, and social venture funds.

3. Corpus size of the fund:

Minimum corpus size for such funds be reduced from Rs 20 crore to Rs 5 crore and the minimum subscription amount be reduced from Rs 1 crore to Rs. 2 lakh.

4. The capacity building fund for SSE:

It should have a corpus of Rs 100 crore. This fund should be housed under Nabard. Exchanges and other developmental agencies such as SIDBI should be asked to contribute towards this fund.

5. List of broad activities based on those identified by Niti Aayog under sustainable development goals that SEs can engage in:

These include eradicating hunger, poverty malnutrition and inequality; promoting gender equality by empowerment of women and LGBTQIA+ communities; training to promote rural sports; and slum area development, affordable housing.

What is social stock exchange (SSE)?

- It is a novel concept in India and such a bourse is meant to serve private and non-profit sector providers by channelling greater capital to them.
- As per the proposal, SSE can be housed within the existing stock exchange such as the BSE and/or National Stock Exchange (NSE).



ILLUSTRATION: AJAY MOHANTY

| ANOTHER SHOT AT SUCCESS | | Exchange | Instrument | Disclosures |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|-------------|
| FOR-PROFIT | IGP, SME, NSE or BSE (main board) | Equity, debt, development impact bonds, SVPs | Social impact reporting | |
| NOT-FOR-PROFIT | Separate segment under the existing stock exchanges | Equity, ZCZP, MFs, SVPs, development impact bonds | Social impact reporting and other disclosure requirements of exchanges | |

Source: Sebi report

Significance:

- With this, Social welfare enterprises and non-profits could soon get to raise so-called social capital on a transparent electronic platform, aiding the process of rebuilding livelihoods ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic.
- These recommendations, if implemented as a package, can result in a vibrant and supportive ecosystem, enabling the non-profit sector to realise its full potential for creating social impact.

Need for social capital:

India will need a significant amount of patient capital to repair and rebuild those livelihoods, which are the bedrock of her economy. Conventional capital that prioritises financial returns will not be able to carry such a burden all by itself.

- Social capital, on the other hand, is more suited for this role. It is not only patient but its goal is precisely to support and fortify social structures that are in danger of collapsing because of COVID-19.

What is a social enterprise?

A social enterprise is a revenue-generating business. Its primary objective is to achieve a social objective, for example, providing healthcare or clean energy.

- This in no way means that a social enterprise can't be highly profitable. In fact, most social enterprises look and operate like traditional businesses. The only catch is that the profit these entities generate is not necessarily used for payouts to stakeholders, but reinvested into their social programmes.

Instalinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is a social enterprise?
2. What is SSE?
3. What is social capital?
4. SEBI- key functions.

Mains Link:

India will need a significant amount of social capital to repair and rebuild those livelihoods, which are the bedrock of her economy. Discuss.

2. Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH):

Context:

Centre's Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) has completed its **first residential project**.

- The residential project -- Rivali Park in suburban Mumbai -- is the first housing project in India to have received funding under the SWAMIH Fund.

About SWAMIH Fund:

- The SWAMIH Fund was **launched by Sitharaman in November 2019**.
- SWAMIH Investment Fund has been formed to complete construction of stalled, RERA-registered affordable and mid-income category housing projects which are stuck due to paucity of funds.
- The fund was set up as a **Category-II AIF (Alternate Investment Fund) debt fund** registered with SEBI.
- The Investment Manager of the Fund is **SBICAP Ventures**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SBI Capital Markets, which in turn is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the State Bank of India.
- The **Sponsor of the Fund is the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance**.

Who will be the investors of the fund?

AIFs created/funded under the Special Window would solicit investment into the fund from the Government and other private investors including cash-rich financial institutions, sovereign wealth funds, public and private banks, domestic pension and provident funds, global pension funds and other institutional investors.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is an Alternative Investment Fund?
Types?
2. Investment Manager of the SWAMIH Fund?
3. Sponsor of the fund?
4. Who can invest?
5. What will it be used for?

3. Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Program:

Launched recently by the Union Ministry of Social Justice.

Features:

1. The program aims to **create a pool of grass-root rehabilitation workers at community level** who can work alongside ASHA and Anganwadi workers to handle cross disability issues and facilitate inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society.
2. The program has been designed to provide competency based knowledge and skills among these workers to enhance their ability for successfully discharging their duties. These workers will be called '**Divyang Mitra**' i.e. friends of persons with disabilities.
3. The National Board of Examination in Rehabilitation under the Rehabilitation Council of India will conduct examinations and award certificates to pass-out candidates.

4. One Stop Centre Scheme:

Context:

The Central government will set up **One Stop Centres (OSCs) across 10 missions** to provide assistance to Indian women who are survivors of gender-based violence.

- The missions where the OSCs will come up are Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Jeddah and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Australia, Canada and Singapore.

About the scheme:

Popularly known as **Sakhi, Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** has formulated this **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.

It is a sub – scheme of Umbrella Scheme for National Mission for Empowerment of women.

Target group: The OSC will support all women including girls below 18 years of age affected by violence, irrespective of caste, class, religion, region, sexual orientation or marital status.

The Centres will be integrated with a Women Helpline to facilitate access to following services:

1. Emergency response and rescue services.
2. Medical assistance.

3. Assistance to women in lodging the FIR.
4. Psycho- social support and counselling.
5. Legal aid and counselling.
6. Shelter.
7. Video conferencing facility.

Funds:

The Scheme will be funded through **Nirbhaya Fund**. The Central Government will provide **100% financial assistance to the State Government /UT Administrations under the Scheme**.

Need for protection:

1. **Gender Based Violence (GBV)** is a global health, human rights and development issue that transcends geography, class, culture, age, race and religion to affect every community and country in every corner of the world.
2. **The Article 1 of UN Declaration** on the Elimination of Violence 1993 provides a definition of gender – based abuse, calling it “any act of gender – based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.
3. **In India, gender based violence has many manifestations;** from the more universally prevalent forms of domestic and sexual violence including rape, to harmful practices such as, dowry, honour killings, acid attacks, witch – hunting, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, child marriage, sex selective abortion, sati etc.

InstaCurious:

1. You should know which international organisations & campaigns are involved in addressing domestic violence against women. [Click Here for such a list.](#)
2. Also briefly know about COVID & violence against women – [Click Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Objectives of the scheme.
2. Features of the scheme.
3. Funding.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GSJ8K51L7.1&imageview=0>.

4. What is Nirbhaya Fund?

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the scheme.

5. Kerala's 'Bell of Faith' for rural elders:

Context:

The 'Bell of Faith' scheme will now be implemented for senior citizens staying alone in villages.

- Previously, this scheme was successfully implemented in a number of urban households in Kerala.

What is the 'Bell of Faith' scheme all about?

- It is a safety project conceived under Kerala's **Community Policing Scheme**.
- It will help elderly citizens **attract the attention of their neighbours using a loud, remote-controlled alarm in emergencies**.
- It has been **under implementation in Kerala since 2018**.



Significance of the Project:

It sets an example for **community participation** to ensure the well-being and safety of the elderly. It can be of great support for the aged during the COVID-19 pandemic as many live in fear for their health.

Insta Curious:

1. It is important to comprehensively understand issues related to **Geriatric Care** in India. This [latest article](#) has good facts & insights on this issue.

- Take a look at such similar and innovative schemes initiated by Kerala police (helps in ethics case studies)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About the scheme.
- Implementing state.
- Target state.
- Benefits.

Mains Link: Discuss the need for **community participation** in ensuring the well-being and safety of the elderly. Suggest measures.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GJ98KIK3G.1&imageview=0>.

6. PM CARES For Children- Empowerment of COVID Affected Children:

Context:

The scheme has been **launched for support & empowerment of Covid affected children.**

Eligibility: All children who have lost both parents or surviving parent or legal guardian/adoptive parents due to Covid 19 will be supported under the scheme.

Features of the scheme:

- Fixed Deposit in the name of the child:** A corpus of Rs 10 lakh for each child when he or she reaches 18 years of age. This corpus:
- School Education: For children under 10 years:** Admission will be given in the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya or in a private school as a day scholar.
- School Education: for children between 11-18 years:** The child will be given admission in any Central Government residential school such as Sainik School, Navodaya Vidyalaya etc.
- Support for Higher Education:** The child will be assisted in obtaining education loan for Professional courses / Higher Education in India as per the existing Education Loan norms.
- Health Insurance:** All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under Ayushman Bharat Scheme (PM-JAY) with a health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakhs.

(Note: We have covered only highlights and key features of the scheme here. For complete details, please visit: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1722719>.)

Need for these measures:

- As India battles a raging second wave, cases of children losing their parents to Covid-19 are also mounting.
- Also the apprehension of **child trafficking** in the garb of adoption has increased.
- Child Marriages** have also increased in the Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Insta Curious:

- CARES stands for Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations
- How different is the PM- CARES fund from the PM National Relief Fund(PMNRF)? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What is a public account?
- Who administers PM CARES fund?
- Which organisations are exempted from the ambit of RTI act?
- What is Consolidated fund of India?
- What is a charitable trust?

- PM CARES For Children- Empowerment of COVID Affected Children- eligibility and benefits.

Mains Link:

Discuss why PM CARES fund should be brought within the ambit of RTI act?

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

1. Congo Declares End Of Latest Ebola Outbreak:

Context:

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has officially declared the end of the 12th Ebola outbreak.

- Since the outbreak declared on February 7, 2021, a total of 12 cases have been reported.
- Thanks to the experience of the DRC's response team and health partners, the epidemic has been brought under control in less than three months after its declaration.

About Ebola:

Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as **Ebola haemorrhagic fever**, is a severe, often fatal illness in humans.

Transmission: The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission.

The average EVD case fatality rate is around 50%. Case fatality rates have varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks.

Prevention: Community engagement is key to successfully controlling outbreaks. Good outbreak control relies on case management, surveillance and contact tracing, a good laboratory service and social mobilisation.

Treatment: Early supportive care with rehydration, symptomatic treatment improves survival. There is yet no licensed treatment proven to neutralise the virus but a range of blood, immunological and drug therapies are under development.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- How is Ebola spread?
- What are zoonotic diseases?
- Differences between virus, bacteria and other pathogens.
- Where is Congo?

2. A 'One Health' approach that targets people, animals:

Context:

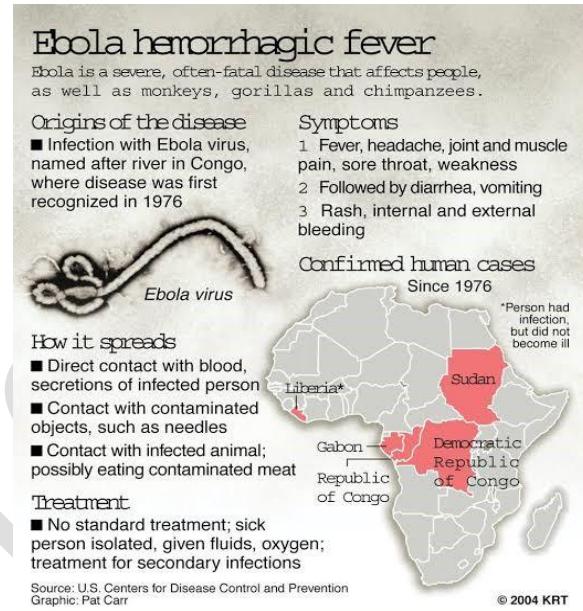
Various studies indicate that more than two-thirds of existing and emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, or can be transferred between animals and humans, and vice versa, when the pathogen in question originates in any life form but circumvents the species barrier.

- The transboundary impact of viral outbreaks in recent years such as the Nipah virus, Ebola, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Avian Influenza has further reinforced the need for us to consistently document the linkages between the environment, animals, and human health.

This forces us to acknowledge the interconnectedness of animals, humans, and the environment, an approach referred to as "**One Health**".

What is OneHealth concept?

- One Health is the collaborative efforts of multiple disciplines working locally, nationally, and globally, to attain optimal health for people, animals and our environment, as defined by the One Health Initiative Task Force.
- One Health model facilitates interdisciplinary approach in disease control so as to control emerging and existing zoonotic threats.



- Regions in Africa where Ebola outbreak was observed?

Mains Link:

Discuss how the Ebola pandemic was handled by Congo Republic.

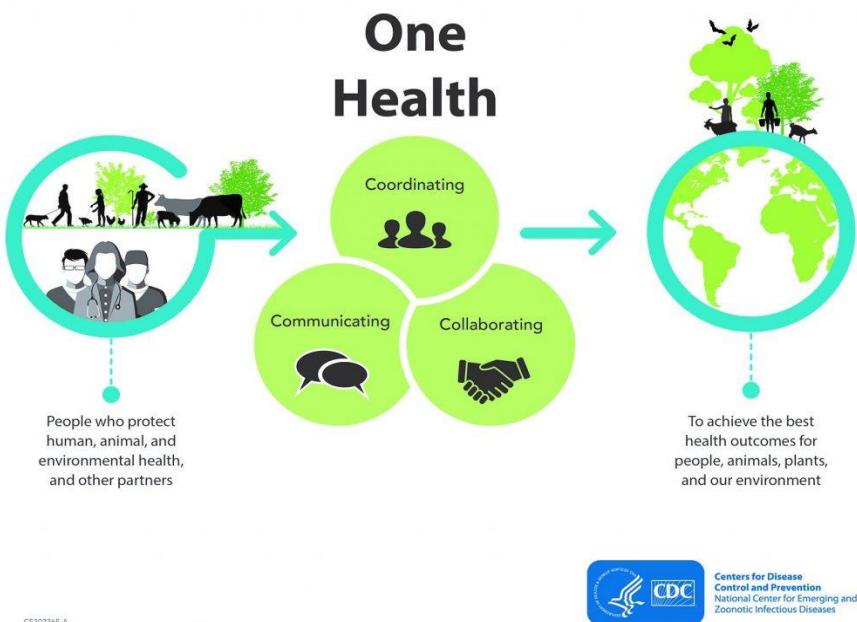
India's framework, plans:

India's 'One Health' vision derives its blueprint from the agreement between the tripartite-plus alliance comprising the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) — a global initiative supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank under the overarching goal of contributing to 'One World, One Health'.

- In keeping with the long-term objectives, India established a **National Standing Committee on Zoonoses** as far back as the 1980s.
- This year, funds were sanctioned for setting up a '**Centre for One Health**' at Nagpur.
- The **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD)** has launched several schemes to mitigate the prevalence of animal diseases since 2015, with a funding pattern along the lines of 60:40 (Centre: State); 90:10 for the Northeastern States, and 100% funding for Union Territories.

Need for coordination:

Scientists have observed that there are more than 1.7 million viruses circulating in wildlife, and many of them are likely to be zoonotic, which implies that unless there is timely detection, India risks facing many more pandemics in times to come.



What needs to be done?

1. Consolidate existing animal health and disease surveillance systems — e.g., the Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health and the National Animal Disease Reporting System.
2. Develop best-practice guidelines for informal market and slaughterhouse operation (e.g., inspections, disease prevalence assessments).
3. Create mechanisms to operationalise 'One Health' at every stage down to the village level.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. One Health component under the National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well Being.
2. Zoonotic vs vector-borne diseases.
3. Common OneHealth issues.

Mains Link:

One Health model is a globally accepted model for research on epidemiology, diagnosis and control of zoonotic diseases. Discuss.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G6U8I2LSR.1&imageview=0>.

3. WHO panel to investigate rise in zoonotic diseases and build action plan:

Context:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has formed a high-level expert panel 'One Health' to study the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases like H5N1, avian influenza, MERS, Ebola, Zika and possibly the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Terms of reference:

1. The panel will advise global agencies on how future outbreaks, especially due to zoonotic diseases, can be averted.
2. It will also develop a surveillance framework and global action plan for the same.

Background:

Zoonotic diseases — pathogenic infections that transmit from animals to humans — have triggered pandemics in past as well. Three of every four infectious diseases are caused by zoonosis. Scientists across the world suspect COVID-19 is also a zoonosis.

What are zoonotic diseases?

The word 'Zoonosis' (Pleural: Zoonoses) was introduced by Rudolf Virchow in 1880 to include collectively the diseases shared in nature by man and animals.

- Later WHO in 1959 defined that Zoonoses are those diseases and infections which are naturally transmitted between vertebrate animals and man.
- Zoonoses may be bacterial, viral, or parasitic, or may involve unconventional agents.

Concerns:

As well as being a public health problem, many of the major zoonotic diseases prevent the efficient production of food of animal origin and create obstacles to international trade in animal products.

InstaCurious: Do you know like plants can be the source of infection for humans – kind of opposite to zoonosis? Ever heard *Candida auris*? [Read about it here \(Can be a Prelims question!\)](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. One Health component under the National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well Being.
2. Zoonotic vs vector-borne diseases.
3. Common OneHealth issues.

Mains Link : One Health model is a globally accepted model for research on epidemiology, diagnosis and control of zoonotic diseases. Discuss.

Link:<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/health/new-who-panel-to-investigate-rise-in-zoonotic-diseases-and-build-action-plan-77040>.

4. Scientists see flaws in SUTRA Model:

Context:

Questions are being raised by many scientists on whether a government-backed model, called SUTRA, to forecast the rise and ebb of the COVID-19 pandemic, may have had an outsized role in creating the perception that a catastrophic second wave was unlikely in India.

What is SUTRA model?

SUTRA (Susceptible, Undetected, Tested (positive), and Removed Approach) first came into public attention when one of its expert members announced in October that India was “past its peak”.

The model uses three main parameters to predict the course of the pandemic which are:

1. **Beta:** Also called contact rate, which measures how many people an infected person infects per day. It is related to the R₀ value, which is the number of people an infected person spreads the virus to over the course of their infection.
2. **Reach:** It is a measure of the exposure level of the population to the pandemic.
3. **Epsilon:** It is the ratio of detected and undetected cases.

Why questions are being raised now?

1. **Incorrect prediction:** The model said a “second wave” would peak by the third week of April and stay around 1 lakh cases.
2. **Too many parameters:** The SUTRA model was problematic as it relied on too many parameters, and recalibrated those parameters whenever its predictions “broke down”.
3. Omission of the importance of the behaviour of the virus.
4. The fact that some people were bigger transmitters of the virus than others (say a barber or a receptionist more than someone who worked from home).
5. A lack of accounting for social or geographic heterogeneity.
6. Not stratifying the population by age as it didn’t account for contacts between different age groups also undermined its validity.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link and Mains Link:

Features and issues surrounding SUTRA Model.

Link: https://www.google.com/amp/s/wap.business-standard.com/article-amp/current-affairs/couldn-t-predict-exact-nature-of-second-covid-wave-supermodel-committee-121050400673_1.html.

5. Black fungus:

Context:

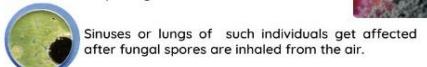
It is a disease being detected relatively frequently among Covid-19 patients in some states.

EVIDENCE BASED ADVISORY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

(Screening, Diagnosis & Management of Mucormycosis)

Mucormycosis - if uncared for - may turn fatal

Mucormycosis is a fungal infection that mainly affects people who are on medication for other health problems that reduces their ability to fight environmental pathogens.



Sinuses or lungs of such individuals get affected after fungal spores are inhaled from the air.

This can lead to serious disease with warning signs and symptoms as follows:

- Pain and redness around eyes and/or nose
- Fever
- Headache
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Bloody vomits
- Altered mental status



What predisposes

- Uncontrolled diabetes mellitus
- Immunosuppression by steroids
- Prolonged ICU stay
- Co-morbidities - post transplant/malignancy
- Voriconazole therapy

How to prevent

- Use masks if you are visiting dusty construction sites
- Wear shoes, long trousers, long sleeve shirts and gloves while handling soil (gardening), moss or manure
- Maintain personal hygiene including thorough scrub bath

When to Suspect (in COVID-19 patients, diabetics or immunosuppressed individuals)

- Sinusitis - nasal blockade or congestion, nasal discharge (blackish/bloody), local pain on the cheek bone
- One-sided facial pain, numbness or swelling
- Blackish discolouration over bridge of nose/palate
- Toothache, loosening of teeth, jaw involvement
- Blurred or double vision with pain; fever, skin lesion; thrombosis & necrosis (eschar)
- Chest pain, pleural effusion, haemoptysis, worsening of respiratory symptoms

Dos

- Control hyperglycemia
- Monitor blood glucose level post COVID-19 discharge and also in diabetics
- Use steroid judiciously - correct timing, correct dose and duration
- Use clean, sterile water for humidifiers during oxygen therapy
- Use antibiotics/antifungals judiciously

Don'ts

- Do not miss warning signs and symptoms
- Do not consider all the cases with blocked nose as cases of bacterial sinusitis, particularly in the context of immunosuppression and/or COVID-19 patients on immunomodulators
- Do not hesitate to seek aggressive investigations, as appropriate (KOH staining & microscopy, culture, MALDI-TOF), for detecting fungal etiology
- Do not lose crucial time to initiate treatment for mucormycosis

How to manage

- Control diabetes and diabetic ketoacidosis
- Reduce steroids (if patient is still on) with aim to discontinue rapidly
- Discontinue immunomodulating drugs
- No antifungal prophylaxis needed
- Extensive Surgical Debridement - to remove all necrotic materials
- Medical treatment
 - Install peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC line)
 - Maintain adequate systemic hydration
 - Infuse Normal saline IV before Amphotericin B infusion
 - Antifungal Therapy, for at least 4-6 weeks (see the guidelines below)
- Monitor patients clinically and with radio-imaging for response and to detect disease progression

Team Approach Works Best

- Microbiologist
- Internal Medicine Specialist
- Intensivist
- Neurologist
- ENT Specialist
- Ophthalmologist
- Dentist
- Surgeon (maxillofacial/plastic)
- Biochemist

Detailed management guideline & information available on the following

Global guideline for the diagnosis and management of mucormycosis: an initiative of the European Confederation of Medical Mycology in cooperation with the Mycoses Study Group Education and Research Consortium. Lancet Infect Dis. 2019 Dec;19(12):e405-e421. doi: 10.1016/S1473-3099(19)30312-5.
https://www.ijmr.org.in/temp/IndianMedRes1533311-3965147_110051.pdf



https://www.ijmr.org.in/temp/IndianMedRes1392195-397834_110303.pdf



Advisory developed by the following experts & National Task Force for COVID-19

- Dr. Animesh Chakrabarti, Professor & Head, Department of Medical Microbiology PGIMER, Chandigarh
- Dr. Atul Patel, Infectious Disease Specialist, Ahmedabad
- Dr. Rejeet Soman, Consultant Infectious Disease Physician, Pune
- Dr. Rakesh Srivastava, Vice Chairman, Critical Care, Sri Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi
- Dr. J P Modi, Medical Superintendent, Dr. J P Medical Hospital, Ahmedabad
- Dr. Girish Parikh, Head, Department of Internal Medicine and Multi-disciplinary Clinical Management Group, BJ Medical College & Hospital, Ahmedabad
- Dr. Girish Parikh, Dean, Government Medical College, Ahmedabad
- Dr. Jayant Khandwala, Professor, Dept. of Internal Medicine, Smt. N.H.L. Municipal Medical College, Nagpur
- Dr. Hemang Purohit, Medical Microbiologist, Smt. N.H.L. Municipal Medical College, Ahmedabad
- Dr. R S Trivedi, Medical Superintendent, Pt. Dindayal Upadhyay Medical College, Rajkot
- Dr. Panjab Buch, Professor, Dept. of Pediatrics, Pt. Dindayal Upadhyay Medical College, Rajkot
- Dr. Geeta Mehta, Associate Professor, Dept. of ENT, Pt. Dindayal Upadhyay Medical College, Rajkot
- Dr. Deepak Bhagat, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Internal Medicine, Pt. Dindayal Upadhyay Medical College, Rajkot
- Dr. Camran Panda, Head, Epidemiology & Communicable Diseases (ECD), ICMR, New Delhi
- Dr. Gurjinder Mukherjee, Scientist E, Clinical Trial & Health Systems Research Unit, ICMR, New Delhi
- Dr. Dipankar Das, Scientist D, Clinical Trial & Health Systems Research Unit, ECD, ICMR, New Delhi
- Dr. Girish Kumar, Scientist C, Clinical Trial & Health Systems Research Unit, ECD, ICMR, New Delhi



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

About the disease:

- It is a rare but serious fungal infection.
- Also known as mucormycosis.
- The disease often manifests in the skin and also affects the lungs and the brain.
- Caused by a group of moulds known as **mucormycetes** present naturally in the environment.

Vulnerability:

It mainly affects people who are on medication for health problems that reduces their ability to fight environmental pathogens.

Symptoms:

- Sinuses or lungs of such individuals get affected after they inhale fungal spores from the air.
- Warning signs include pain and redness around the eyes or nose, with fever, headache, coughing, shortness of breath, bloody vomits, and altered mental status.

What's the treatment?

Treated with antifungals.

It may eventually require surgery.

It is of utmost importance to control diabetes, reduce steroid use, and discontinue immunomodulating drugs.

Prevention:

Use masks if you are visiting dusty construction sites. Wear shoes, long trousers, long-sleeved shirts and gloves while gardening. Maintain personal hygiene including a thorough scrub bath.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the disease.
2. Cause.
3. Spread.
4. Symptoms.

5. Prevention.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/mucormycosis-in-covid-patients-fungal-infections-7308721/lite/>.

6. WHO classifies India variant as being of global concern:

Context:

The World Health Organization has classified **B.1.617**, a coronavirus variant first identified in India as a “**global variant of concern**”.

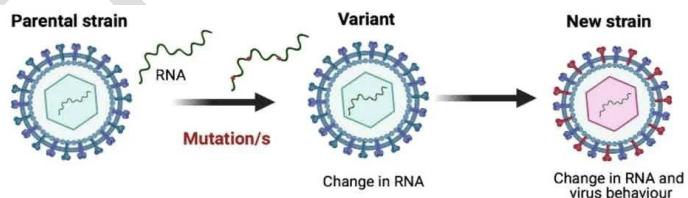
- This variant was classified as a **variant under investigation (VUI)** by authorities in the UK earlier in May.
- It has already spread to more than 17 countries.

Concerns for India:

Last week, the Indian government said that this variant also called **the “double mutant variant”** could be linked to a surge in the cases of coronavirus seen in some states.

How do variants of a virus emerge and why?

- Variants of a virus have one or more mutations that differentiate it from the other variants that are in circulation.



- Essentially, the goal of the virus is to reach a stage where it can cohabit with humans because it needs a host to survive.
- Errors in the viral RNA are called mutations, and viruses with these mutations are called variants. Variants could differ by a single or many mutations.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus:

It is evolving fast because of the scale at which it has infected people around the world. High levels of circulation mean it is easier for the virus to change as it is able to replicate faster.

- The B.1.617 variant of the virus has two mutations** referred to as E484Q and L452R. Both are separately found in many other coronavirus variants, but **they have been reported together for the first time in India.**

How does the WHO define a variant of concern?

A variant of interest (VOI) becomes a variant of concern (VOC) in two ways:

- First, if, through a comparative assessment, it has been demonstrated to be associated with increase in transmissibility or detrimental change in COVID-19 epidemiology, increase in virulence or change in clinical disease presentation or a decrease in effectiveness of public health and social measures or available diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics.
- Alternatively, a variant may be classified as a VOC by the WHO in consultation with the WHO SARS-CoV-2 Virus Evolution Working Group.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-who-classifies-india-variant-as-being-of-global-concern-what-does-it-mean-7310999/lite/>.

7. Vaccine hesitancy:

Context:

Authorities in rural and remote districts of Chhattisgarh are engaging tribal activists among others as a strategy to remove vaccine hesitancy among the villagers in the fight against Covid.

What's the issue?

People believe fake news faster than genuine information in these times. They either believe the vaccine is going to kill them or make them impotent.

What is being done?

- Through posters and folk songs, the administration is trying to attract the rural and tribal populace.

www.insightsonindia.com

ABOUT MUTATIONS AND VARIANTS

Mutations occur when something changes, **is added or deleted from the virus' proteins.**

A variant is created by a **combination of mutations** – often between five and 15 mutations.

A variant becomes "of concern" (VOC) if it fulfils at least one of these criteria:

- There is evidence that it **transmits more easily** 
- Causes **more severe illness** 
- Significantly reduces neutralisation** by antibodies, or **reduces the effectiveness** of treatment, vaccines or diagnosis. 

A variant is "of interest" if it might fulfil any of the criteria of a VOC, but there is insufficient evidence to declare it a VOC.

| VARIANTS OF CONCERN | | | |
|--|---|---|------------------------------|
| UK B117 | South Africa B1351 | Brazil P1 | |
|  |  |  | |
| Mutations on the spike protein Key changes Other changes | | | |
| Earliest samples | September 2020 | August 2020 | |
| First detected | United Kingdom | South Africa | Brazil and Japan |
| Concerns | | | |
| - Increased infectivity | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| - Increased severity | ✗ Possible | ✗ Possible but not confirmed | ✗ Possible but not confirmed |
| - Reduction of vaccine effectiveness | ✗ | ✗ Possible | ✗ Possible |
| Number of locations now detected in* | 142 | 97 | 56 |

| VARIANTS OF INTEREST | | |
|--|---|-------|
| India B16171 | India B16172 | |
|  |  | |
| Earliest samples | October 2020 | |
| First detected | India | India |
| Concerns | | |
| - Increased infectivity | | |
| - Increased severity | | |
| - Reduction of vaccine effectiveness | ✗ Possible but not confirmed | |
| Number of locations now detected in* | At least 17 | |

NOTE: *Accurate as at latest update by WHO on May 4.

Sources: SEBASTIAN MAURER-STROH, LOUIS DEFALCO, BII/GIS A*STAR AND GISAID

2. They are going to make it mandatory for the panch and other village representatives to get themselves and their families vaccinated.
3. Similarly, the employers will be mandated to get their employees vaccinated.

Vaccine Hesitancy: A generation at risk:

Vaccine hesitancy is defined by WHO as a “delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccination services”.

- It was one of 10 threats to global health this year.

What's the Concern?

A vaccine is one of the essential weapons in the armamentarium in our war against the pandemic. Any hesitation in accepting the vaccine will have a negative consequence on our effort to control the pandemic.

Need of the hour:

1. Proactively address the reasons behind this hesitancy.
2. Give confidence to the public by discussing the robustness of various processes involved in drug/vaccine development — clinical trial designs, conduct, monitoring, analysis, reporting and the regulatory reviews that happen before it is approved.
3. This will make the public aware about the rigorous processes followed for clinical trials, and the approval, as followed by regulators.

InstaLinks:

Prelims and Mains Links:

Meaning, Concerns, challenges and ways to address them.

Link:<https://www.google.com/amp/s/indianexpress.com/article/india/vaccine-hesitancy-rural-chhattisgarh-counts-on-activists-and-folk-songs-7312834/lite/>.

8. Long working hours are increasing deaths from heart disease: Report:

Context:

Report on long working hours and its impact were recently published by the WHO and International Labour Organization (ILO).

Key findings:

- Working 55 hours or more per week is a serious health hazard.
- Long working hours led to 745,000 deaths from stroke and ischemic heart disease in 2016, a 29% increase since 2000.
- The study concluded that working 55 or more hours per week is associated with an estimated 35% higher risk of a stroke and a 17% higher risk of dying from ischemic heart disease, compared to working 35-40 hours a week.

Most vulnerable groups:

- This work-related disease burden is particularly significant in men (72% of deaths occurred among males), people living in the Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions, and middle-aged or older workers.
- Most of the deaths recorded were among people aged 60-79 years, who had worked for 55 hours or more per week between the ages of 45 and 74 years, said the agencies.

Concerns ahead:

Working long hours is now known to be responsible for about one-third of the total estimated work-related burden of disease and is established as the risk factor with the largest occupational disease burden.

- This has shifted the thinking towards a relatively new and more psychosocial occupational risk factor to health.
- Further, the number of people working long hours is increasing and is now 9% of the total population globally. This trend puts even more people at risk of work-related disability and early death.

Impact of Pandemic:

- The pandemic is accelerating developments that could feed the trend towards increased working time.
- Teleworking has become the norm in many industries, often blurring the boundaries between home and work.
- In addition, many businesses have been forced to scale back or shut down operations to save money and people who are still on the payroll end up working longer hours.

What needs to be done?

No job is worth the risk of stroke or heart disease. Governments, employers, and workers need to work together to agree on limits to protect the health of workers.

- Governments can introduce laws that ban mandatory overtime and ensure maximum limits on working time.

Link: https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.livemint.com/v/s/www.livemint.com/science/health/long-working-hours-are-increasing-deaths-from-heart-disease-report/amp-11621278495677.html%3famp_js_v=0.1&usqp=mq331AQHKAFQArABIA%253D%253D#ampf=

9. White fungus:

Context:

Four cases of 'white fungus' or 'candidiasis' have been detected in Patna, Bihar.

What is While Fungus and What are its symptoms?

- This infection can be caused due to low immunity or if people come in contact with things that contain these moulds like water, etc.
- Patients of white fungus show Covid-like symptoms but test negative; the infection can be diagnosed through CT-Scan or X-ray.
- The exact cause is unknown yet.

Effects:

White fungus can affect not just the lungs but also other parts of the body including "nails, skin, stomach, kidney, brain, private parts and mouth.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Differences between Black fungus and white fungus.
- Causes and symptoms.
- Treatment.

Mucormycosis menace

Over 7,200 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis have been reported in India, according to an affidavit filed by the Centre

STATES WITH MOST CASES

| State | Cases | Deaths |
|--------------|-------|--------|
| Maharashtra | 1,500 | 90 |
| Gujarat | 1,163 | 61 |
| MP | 575 | 31 |
| Haryana | 268 | 8 |
| Delhi | 203 | 1 |
| UP | 169 | 8 |
| Bihar | 103 | 2 |
| Chhattisgarh | 101 | 1 |
| Karnataka | 97 | 0 |
| Telangana | 90 | 10 |

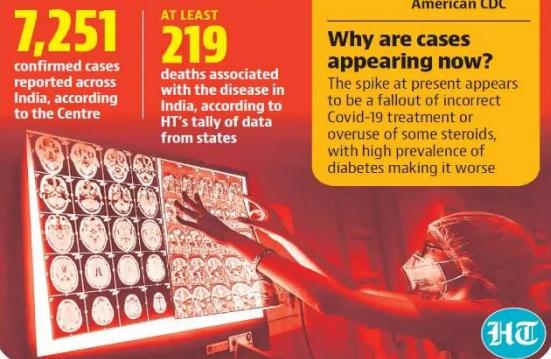
What is it?

It is an infection caused by fungal organisms known as mucormycetes. It is called 'black fungus' as it causes blackening over the nose. The fungus is found in abundance in India, but a normally functioning immune system typically fights it off.

54% fatality rate of mucormycosis, according to the American CDC

Why are cases appearing now?

The spike at present appears to be a fallout of incorrect Covid-19 treatment or overuse of some steroids, with high prevalence of diabetes making it worse.



Mains Link:

Discuss why the centre has asked states to notify black fungus as epidemic.

10. The fault line of poor health infrastructure:

Context:

The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed **the abysmally poor state of the country's health infrastructure**.

Current state of India's health infrastructure- World Bank data:

- India had 85.7 physicians per 1,00,000 people in 2017 (in contrast to 98 in Pakistan, 100 in Sri Lanka and 241 in Japan).
- 53 beds per 1,00,000 people (in contrast to 63 in Pakistan, 79.5 in Bangladesh, 415 in Sri Lanka and 1,298 in Japan).
- 172.7 nurses and midwives per 1,00,000 people (in contrast to 220 in Sri Lanka, 40 in Bangladesh, 70 in Pakistan, and 1,220 in Japan).

4. India has among the highest out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditures of all countries in the world- 62% of the total health expenditure in India is OOP.

Reasons and causes for this:

1. Low public health expenditure- 1% of GDP 2013-14 and 1.28% in 2017-18 (including expenditure by the Centre, all States and Union Territories).
2. Centre is the key player in public health management because the main bodies with technical expertise are under central control. The States lack corresponding expert bodies such as the National Centre for Disease Control or the Indian Council of Medical Research.
3. States also differ a great deal in terms of the fiscal space to deal with the novel coronavirus pandemic because of the wide variation in per capita health expenditure.

Inter-State variation in per capita health-care expenditure (between 2010-11 to 2019-20):

- Kerala and Delhi have been close to the top in all the years.
- Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have been consistently towards the bottom of the ranking in all years.
- Odisha is noteworthy as it had the same per capita health expenditure as Uttar Pradesh in 2010, but now has more than double that of Uttar Pradesh.

What needs to be done? How to manage the pandemic?

- A coordinated national plan at the central level to fight the pandemic.
- The central government should handle the responsibilities including that of procuring vaccines from the international market.
- Once the vaccines arrive in India, these could be distributed across States equitably in a needs-based and transparent manner.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GMB8JK60K.1&imageview=0>

11. What are monoclonal antibody therapies?

Context:

The Apollo Hospital in Delhi has started an “**antibody cocktail treatment**” for COVID-19 patients, who have mild symptoms and comorbidities. It comprises **neutralising monoclonal antibodies**.

What are Monoclonal antibodies?

They are **artificially created antibodies** that aim to aid the body’s natural immune system. They target a specific antigen — a protein from the pathogen that induces immune response.

How are they created?

Monoclonal antibodies can be created in the lab **by exposing white blood cells to a particular antigen**.

To increase the quantity of antibodies produced, a single white blood cell is cloned, which in turn is used to create identical copies of the antibodies.

- In the case of Covid-19, scientists usually work with the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which facilitates the entry of the virus into the host cell.

Need for monoclonal antibodies:

In a healthy body, the immune system is able to create antibodies — tiny Y-shaped proteins in our blood that recognise microbial enemies and bind to them, signalling the immune system to then launch an attack on the pathogen.

However, for people whose immune systems are unable to make sufficient amounts of these antibodies, scientists provide a helping hand- using monoclonal antibodies.

History:

The idea of delivering antibodies to treat a disease dates as far back as the 1900s, when Nobel-prize winning German immunologist **Paul Ehrlich** proposed the idea of a ‘**Zauberkugel**’ (magic bullet), a compound which selectively targets a pathogen.

- From then, it took eight decades of research to finally arrive at Muromonab-CD3, the world’s first monoclonal antibody to be approved for clinical use in humans.
- **Muromonab-CD3** is an immunosuppressant drug given to reduce acute rejection in patients with organ transplants.

Applications:

Monoclonal antibodies are now relatively common. They are used in treating Ebola, HIV, psoriasis etc.

Insta Curious:

Did you know about Polyclonal antibodies. Find out more about them: [Read here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What are antibodies?
2. What are monoclonal antibodies?
3. How they are created?

4. Applications.

Link:<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/apollo-begins-antibody-cocktail-for-mild-cases/article34671049.ece/amp/>.

Topics: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

1. Electoral Bonds:

Context:

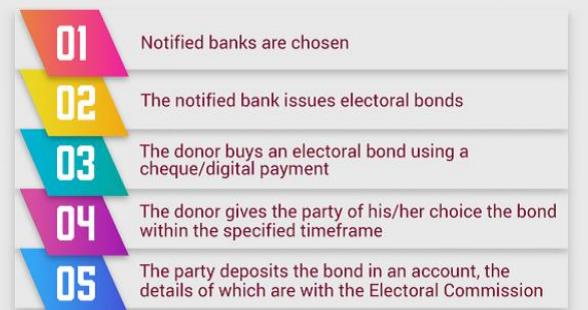
The State Bank of India (SBI) sold electoral bonds worth ₹695.34 crore from April 1 to 10, when the Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, West Bengal, Assam and Kerala polls were in full swing.

- The amount sold was the highest-ever for any Assembly elections since the scheme started in 2018.

What are electoral bonds?

- Electoral Bond is a financial instrument for making donations to political parties.
- The bonds are issued in multiples of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 10,000, Rs. 1 lakh, Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 1 crore **without any maximum limit.**
- **State Bank of India** is authorised to issue and encash these bonds, which are valid for fifteen days from the date of issuance.
- These bonds are redeemable in the designated account of a registered political party.
- The bonds are available for purchase by any person (who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India) for a period of ten days each in the months of January, April, July and October as may be specified by the Central Government.
- A person being an individual can buy bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.
- Donor’s name is not mentioned on the bond.

How An Electoral Bond Works



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What are electoral bonds?
2. Eligibility.
3. Denomination.
4. Features.
5. Who can issue these bonds?

Mains Link: Critically examine the effectiveness of electoral bonds in ensuring transparent political funding and suggest alternatives?

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G208JFOR1.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Role of civil services in a democracy.

1. Rule 6(I) of the Indian Administrative Service (cadre) Rules, 1954:

Context:

In an unprecedented order, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) invoked **Rule 6(I) of the Indian Administrative Service (cadre) Rules, 1954** to place the services of West Bengal Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay with the Government of India.

What is it?

Rule 6(I) of the Indian Administrative Service (cadre) rules, 1954 states: A cadre officer may, with the concurrence of the state governments concerned and the central government, be deputed for service under the central government or another state government or under a company, association or body of individuals, whether incorporated or not, which is wholly or substantially owned or controlled by the central government or by another state government.

What happens in case of disagreement?

Rule 6(I) states that “provided that **in case of any disagreement**, the matter shall be decided by the Central Government and **the State Government shall give effect to the decision of the Central Government.**”

What's the Concern/issue now?

It is being called a “blatant misuse of power and an attempt to encroach on state's jurisdiction.”

What has the Supreme Court said in such matters?

Earlier in December 2020, the Home Ministry had attached three Indian Police Service (IPS) officers of West Bengal cadre but the State government did not relieve them.

- Following this, a petition was filed which stressed that **the unique dichotomy in the prevalent laws is itself self-contradictory and violative of Article 14.**
- It claimed that this rule has created havoc in the law-and-order situation and in the administrative structure of the concerned state governments.

However, the court rejected the petition.

Insta Curious:

1. Is Article-131 of the Indian Constitution relevant here in this context? [Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Rules related to All India Services.
2. Responsibility to manage cadres of IAS, IPS and IFS.
3. Civil services board.
4. Who has powers to take action against civil service officials who are posted under the state government?

5. What is Home Ministry's deputation policy for IPS officers?

Mains Link:

Discuss what are emergency provisions under the IPS Cadre Rule, 1954.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GFD8KDIVU.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

1. Pakistan govt to set new rules to meet FATF demands:

Context:

Pakistan, in order to exit from the grey list of the FATF, is set to introduce new rules relating to money laundering and terror financing cases.

- Changes being made include the transfer of investigations and prosecution of anti-money laundering (AML) cases from police, provincial anti-corruption establishments (ACEs) and other similar agencies to specialised agencies.

What next?

Based on these measures, the FATF would conclude if Pakistan has complied with three outstanding benchmarks, out of 27, that blocked its exit from the grey list in February this year.

Background:

Pakistan was put on **the grey list by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** in June 2018 and the country has been struggling to come out of it.

About FATF:

1. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 on the initiative of the G7.
2. It is a “policy-making body” which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in various areas.
3. The FATF Secretariat is housed at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

Roles and functions:

- Initially it was established to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering.
- In October 2001, the FATF expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to combat terrorist financing, in addition to money laundering.
- In April 2012, it added efforts to counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Composition:

The FATF currently comprises 37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organisations, representing most major financial centres in all parts of the globe. It also has observers and associate members.

What is a blacklist and grey list?

Black List: Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.

Grey List: Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

Considered in the grey list may face:

1. Economic sanctions from IMF, World Bank, ADB.
2. Problem in getting loans from IMF, World Bank, ADB and other countries.
3. Reduction in international trade.
4. International boycott.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. G7 vs G8 vs G20.
2. Black vs Grey list.
3. Are FATF's decisions binding on member countries?

4. Who heads the FATF?

5. Where is its secretariat?

Mains Link:

What is the mandate and objectives of the Financial Action Task Force? Discuss.

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

1. BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) Meeting:

Context:

1st BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) Meeting was held recently at New Delhi in virtual format.

- India has assumed BRICS Presidency this year.

The prime agenda for the discussions were:

Promoting Social Security Agreements amongst BRICS Nations, Formalization of labour markets, Participation of women in labour force and Gig and platform workers – Role in labour market.

Outcomes of the meeting:

- On the issue of Social Security Agreement (SSA), the Member Nations resolved to enter into dialogue and discussion with each other and take it forward towards signing of the agreements.
- The International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Social Security Agency (ISSA) on their part, expressed willingness to provide technical support in facilitating conclusion of such agreements.

What are SSAs?

- SSA is a bilateral agreement between India and a foreign country designed to protect the interests of cross border workers.
- The agreement provides for avoidance of 'double coverage' and ensures equality of treatment to workers of both countries from a social security perspective.

Background:

As on date, India has signed SSAs with 18 countries.

SSAs broadly provide the following three benefits:

- Avoiding making of double social security contributions by the workers (detachment).
- Easy remittance of benefits (Exportability).
- Aggregating the contribution periods (in two countries) to prevent loss of benefits (Totalization).
- Provide for disability insurance benefits to the Indian nationals working abroad.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About BRICS.
- Important organizations associated with BRICS.

3. What are SSAs?

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of SSAs.

Topics: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

1. What's happening in Jerusalem?

Context:

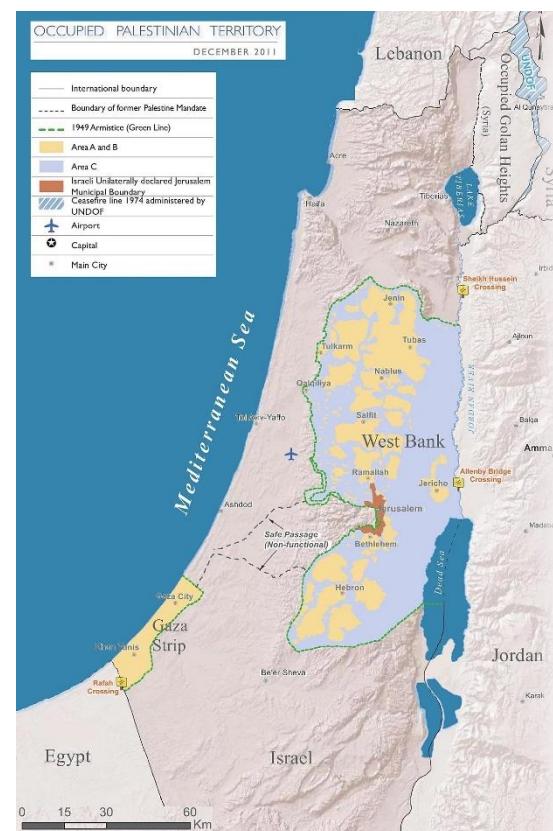
Tensions have been building up in Jerusalem since the start of Ramzan in mid-April between Israeli forces and Palestinians.

- Recently, Israeli armed forces stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Haram esh-Sharif in Jerusalem.
- In retaliation, Hamas, the Islamist militant group that runs Gaza, fired dozens of rockets.

Why Jerusalem?

- Jerusalem has been at the centre of the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.
- According to the original **1947 UN Partition Plan**, Jerusalem was proposed to be an international city.
- But in **the first Arab Israel war of 1948**, the Israelis captured the western half of the city, and Jordan took the eastern part, including the Old City that houses **Haram esh-Sharif**.
- Al-Aqsa Mosque**, Islam's third holiest site, and the Dome of the Rock are situated within Haram esh-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary).
- Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War** and annexed it later.

Citizenship issues:



- Since its annexation, Israel has expanded settlements in East Jerusalem, which is now home for some 220,000 Jews. Jews born in East Jerusalem are Israeli citizens, while Palestinians in the city are given conditional residency permits.
- Palestinians in East Jerusalem, unlike other parts of the occupied West Bank, can, however, apply for Israeli citizenship. Very few Palestinians have done so.

Root cause of the problem:

Israel sees the whole city as its “unified, eternal capital”, a claim endorsed by Donald Trump when he was U.S. President but not recognised by most other countries. Palestinian leaders across the political spectrum have maintained that they would not accept any compromise formula for a future Palestinian state unless East Jerusalem is its capital.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About Jerusalem.
- Six day war.
- Israel Palestine conflict.
- Gaza strip.
- Where is Al-Aqsa Mosque?

Mains Link:

Write a note on Israel-Palestine conflict.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GAQ8IRPAO.1&imageview=0>.

2. Israel Palestine conflict:

Context:

At the United Nations Security Council, India has reiterated its strong support for **the just Palestinian cause** and its unwavering commitment to **the two-state solution**.

Background:

- There is an ongoing fight in Israel and **the Gaza Strip**. Roughly 200 Palestinians have died, and officials say nearly half of them are women and children. Israel has reported at least 10 dead.
- An escalation of fighting between Israelis and Palestinians has led **the UN to warn of a "full-scale war"**.

Firstly, where is the Gaza Strip?

The Gaza Strip is an entirely artificial creation that emerged in 1948 when roughly three-fourths of Palestine's Arab population was displaced, in some cases expelled, during the course of Israel's creation. And most of the refugees, they were sort of scattered across the region in neighboring countries like Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

- Some went to **the West Bank**, which came under Jordanian rule after 1948. And a very large number went to the Gaza Strip, which is this **tiny little coastal strip between Egypt and what is now Israel**. Today, the population of Gaza, **about 70% of Gaza's population are refugees**.

Who controls it?

Hamas forcibly took control over the Gaza Strip in 2007. Shortly thereafter, the Israelis imposed a complete closure on Gaza's borders. They declared Gaza to be an enemy entity. Of course, Gaza is not a state.

- Hamas**, of course, is viewed by Israel and by much of the international community as a terrorist organization, including the United States, for their history of attacks on civilians and so forth.

Israel- Palestine conflict- Historical Background:

- The conflict has been ongoing for more than a 100 years **between Jews and Arabs over a piece of land between Jordan river and the Mediterranean sea**.
- It was between 1882 to 1948, when the Jews from around the world gathered in Palestine. This movement came to be known as **Aliyahs**.
- Then in 1917, **Ottoman Empire** fell after World War 1 and the UK got control over Palestine.
- The land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and Arab majority.
- The Balfour Declaration** was issued after Britain gained control with the aim of establishing a home for the Jews in Palestine. However during that period the Arabs were in majority in Palestine.
- Jews favoured the idea while the Palestinians rejected it. Almost 6 million Jews lost their lives in **the Holocaust** which also ignited further demand of a separate Jewish state.

- Jews claimed Palestine to be their natural home while the Arabs too did not leave the land and claimed it.
- The international community supported the Jews.
- In 1947, the UN voted for Palestine to be split into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem becoming an international city.
- That plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by the Arab side and never implemented.

The creation of Israel and the 'Catastrophe':

- It was in the year 1948 that Britain lifted its control over the area and Jews declared the creation of Israel. Although Palestinians objected, Jews did not back out which led to an armed conflict.
- The neighboring Arabs also invaded and were thrashed by the Israeli troops. This made thousands of Palestinians flee their homes. This was called Al-Nakba, or the "Catastrophe".
- Israel had gained maximum control over the territory after this came to an end.
- Jordan then went on a war with Israel and seized control over a part of the land which was called the West Bank, and Egypt occupied Gaza.
- Jerusalem was divided between Israel in the West, and Jordan in the East. However, no formal peace agreement was signed, each side continued to blame each other for the tension and the region saw more wars.
- Israeli forces captured East Jerusalem and the West Bank, various areas of Syrian Golan Heights, Gaza and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula in the year 1967.



Present scenario:

- Israel still occupies the West Bank, and although it pulled out of Gaza the UN still regards that piece of land as part of occupied territory.
- Israel claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.
- The US is one of only a handful of countries to recognise Israel's claim to the whole of the city.

What's happening now?

- Tensions are often high between Israel and Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank.
- Gaza is ruled by a Palestinian militant group called Hamas, which has fought Israel many times. Israel and Egypt tightly control Gaza's borders to stop weapons getting to Hamas.
- Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank say they're suffering because of Israeli actions and restrictions. Israel say it is only acting to protect itself from Palestinian violence.
- Things have escalated since the start of the holy Muslim month of Ramadan in mid-April 2021, with nightly clashes between police and Palestinians.
- The threatened eviction of some Palestinian families in East Jerusalem has also caused rising anger.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Where is the west bank?
2. Gaza strip.
3. Golan heights.
4. Who are Hamas?
5. What is Al-Nakba?
6. About the conflict.

Mains Link:

Suggest solutions to end the long standing Israel-Palestine conflict.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G128JC8N4.1&imageview=0>.

3. India to push for WHO, EU approval for Covaxin:

Context:

Faced with **concern that Indians receiving the Covaxin vaccine may not get relaxation in travel restrictions**, the government has decided to help ensure that Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech receives clearances from both **the World Health Organisation (WHO)** and subsequently, **the EU's European Medicines Agency (EMA)**.

- **The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** has been tasked with studying the matter and help get Covaxin a place in **WHO's Emergency Use List (EUL)**.

Need for:

EU member countries recently approved a proposal to allow “fully vaccinated” tourists from countries outside Europe under certain criteria. While the travellers getting AstraZeneca’s Covishield would be included on the WHO and EU’s listings, if travel from India is accepted, those who have taken Covaxin would not.

Benefits of being included in the list:

Covaxin on the WHO’s EUL would be a big boost, and a first for an Indian-developed and produced vaccine.

About WHO's Emergency Use List (EUL):

The WHO Emergency Use Listing Procedure (EUL) is a risk-based procedure for assessing and listing unlicensed vaccines, therapeutics and in vitro diagnostics with the ultimate aim of expediting the availability of these products to people affected by a public health emergency.

- This will assist interested UN procurement agencies and Member States in determining the acceptability of using specific products, based on an essential set of available quality, safety, and efficacy and performance data.

Eligibility of candidate products:

The EUL concerns three product streams (vaccines, therapeutics and in vitro diagnostics), each of which has specific requirements for products to be eligible for evaluation under the EUL procedure.

The following criteria must be met:

1. The disease for which the product is intended is serious or immediately life threatening, has the potential of causing an outbreak, epidemic or pandemic and it is reasonable to consider the product for an EUL assessment, e.g., there are no licensed products for the indication or for a critical subpopulation (e.g., children).
2. Existing products have not been successful in eradicating the disease or preventing outbreaks (in the case of vaccines and medicines).
3. The product is manufactured in compliance with current Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in the case of medicines and vaccines and under a functional Quality Management System (QMS) in the case of IVDs.
4. The applicant undertakes to complete the development of the product (validation and verification of the product in the case of IVDs) and apply for WHO prequalification once the product is licensed.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. European Union- Composition and objectives.
2. About WHO EUL.
3. Benefits.
4. Eligibility.

Mains Link:

Write a note on WHO's EUL.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G2J8JTQ99.1&imageview=0>.

4. U.K. to unveil plans for ‘digital border’:

Context:

Britain is planning to announce a “fully digital border”.

- This is part of a wider overhaul of the country’s immigration system, which will also include the introduction of a points-based migration system.

What will the digital border look like?

- The move means those coming to Britain without a visa or immigration status will need an Electronic Travel Authorisation - similar to that used in the United States - as part of plans to be implemented by the end of 2025.
- Digital identity checks will also be used to reduce the need to visit visa application centres.
- Digitising the border will mean officials "can now count who is coming in and out of the country and whether they have permission to be there".

What are the benefits?

This approach will make it easier to identify potential threats before they reach the border.

Need for:

Last year, roughly 8,500 people arrived in Britain having made the perilous crossing across the Channel, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, in small boats.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G2J8JTFF8.1&imageview=0>.

5. China denounces people's tribunal in Britain on alleged Xinjiang abuses:

Context:

China has denounced plans for a people's tribunal in Britain on allegations of genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim people in China's Xinjiang region.

What's the issue?

- Xinjiang has become a major foreign policy headache for China, which is accused of locking up more than a million **Uyghurs, Kazakhs and members of other minority groups** in re-education camps where they are forced to denounce their traditional culture and swear fealty to China's ruling Communist Party and its leader, Xi Jinping.
- Women from the region have also testified that they have been forced to undergo contraceptive measures, children have allegedly been taken from their incarcerated parents and claims of forced labor have prompted multinational companies to cut ties with Xinjiang's key cotton industry.

China's response on these allegations:

China says it has merely been providing job training and counseling to de-radicalize those influenced by jihadist propaganda following years of violent outbursts against Chinese rule in the region.



About the tribunal and its implications:

- The tribunal does not have government backing.
- It is to be chaired by prominent lawyer Geoffrey Nice, who led the prosecution of ex-Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and worked with the International Criminal Court.
- While the tribunal's judgment is not binding on any government, organizers hope the process of publicly laying out evidence will compel international action to tackle the alleged abuses in Xinjiang.

Who are Uighurs?

The Uighurs are a predominantly **Muslim minority Turkic ethnic group**, whose origins can be traced to Central and East Asia.

The Uighurs speak their own language, similar to Turkish, and see themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.

- China recognises the community only as a regional minority and rejects that they are an indigenous group.
- Currently, the largest population of the Uighur ethnic community lives in the Xinjiang region of China.
- A significant population of Uighurs also lives in the neighbouring Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Uighur Muslims for decades, under the false accusation by the Chinese government of terrorism and separatism, have suffered from abuses including persecution, forced detention, intense scrutiny, surveillance and even slavery.

InstaCurious:

1. Do you know what is ‘Sinicization’? Give a quick reading [Here](#)(without digging much).
2. China’s Xinjiang region is like India’s Rajasthan – its largest Province. And it borders 8 countries – Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Who are Uighurs?
2. Where is Xinjiang?
3. Who are Han Chinese?
4. Indian states bordering Xinjiang province.

Mains Link:

Who are Uighurs? Why are they in news? Discuss.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GSJ8K519P.1&imageview=0>.

6. Blinken promises support for Gaza:

Context:

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has vowed to “rally international support” to aid **Gaza** following a devastating war there while keeping any assistance out of the hands of its militant **Hamas** rulers.

What's the issue?

The 11-day fighting between Israel and Hamas killed more than 250 people, mostly Palestinians, and caused widespread destruction in the impoverished coastal territory.

The truce that came into effect recently has so far held, but it did not address any of the underlying issues in **the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.

Note: The issue has been covered in-depth previously on-

1. <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2021/05/12/whats-happening-in-jerusalem/>.
2. <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2021/05/19/israel-palestine-conflict/>.

InstaCurious:

1. Once many years ago there was a question on the **Yom Kippur war**. So, brief knowledge about Israel’s other wars is desirable. [Click Here](#)

7. More scrutiny of Israel rights record sought:

Context:

Member states of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation** are calling on the **UN Human Rights Council** to set up a **permanent commission** to report on human rights violations in **Israel, Gaza and the West Bank**.

- If passed, it would mark an unprecedented level of scrutiny authorised by the UN’s top human rights body.

For details on Israel- Palestine conflict, recent issues, please refer:

1. <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2021/05/12/whats-happening-in-jerusalem/>.
2. <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2021/05/19/israel-palestine-conflict/>.

In this article, we shall try and learn more about the **UNHRC**:

- The Council was created by the **United Nations General Assembly** in **2006**. It replaced the former **United Nations Commission on Human Rights**.
- The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** serves as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council.
- OHCHR is **headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland**.

Composition:

- The UNHRC has 47 members serving at any time with elections held to fill up seats every year, based on allocations to regions across the world to ensure geographical representation.
- Each elected member serves for a term of three years.
- Countries are disallowed from occupying a seat for more than two consecutive terms.

The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution. Seats are distributed as follows:

1. African States: 13 seats.
2. Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats.
3. Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats.
4. Western European and other States: 7 seats.
5. Eastern European States: 6 seats.

Functions:

1. The UNHRC passes **non-binding resolutions** on human rights issues through a periodic review of all 193 UN member states called **the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**.
2. It oversees expert investigation of violations in specific countries (Special Procedures).

Challenges to UNHRC and Need for reforms:

1. Despite the continued participation of several western countries in the UNHRC, they continue to harbour **misgivings on the understanding of Human rights**.
2. **Non-compliance** has been a serious issue with respect to the UNHRC's functioning.
3. **Non-participation** of powerful nations such as the US.

InstaCurious:

1. What's the difference between **UNHRC** and **UNHCR**(related to refugee rights)?
2. It's always good to know the names and works of a few important global level NGOs working to ensure human rights. [Click Here.](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Where is the west bank?
2. Gaza strip.
3. Golan heights.
4. Who are Hamas?
5. What is Al-Nakba?
6. About the conflict.

7. About UNHRC.

Mains Link:

Suggest solutions to end the long standing Israel-Palestine conflict.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G638K7BU8.1&imageview=0>

8. China expanded influence in UN bodies over the past decade: Study:

Context:

China has taken **numerous steps** over the past decade to expand its influence in **the United Nations (UN) and related bodies**.

Various steps taken by China include:

1. **Increase in funding:** There has been a nearly 350% increase in voluntary donations to these organisations by China.
2. **Dominant position:** China increased its influence in crucial non-UN multilateral bodies and is now in a "dominant position" in several such organisations in terms of personnel and funding (Eg:ITU and UNIDO).
3. **Focus groups:** China's focus has been on bodies that help set international standards in order to boost the fortunes of Chinese companies and to favour Beijing's projects such as **the Belt and Road Initiative**.

Impacts of these measures:

1. China **directly heads four of 15 principal agencies of the UN** – ITU, UNIDO, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

- Chinese deputies are present in nine of these agencies, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Maritime Organisation (IMO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and World Health Organization (WHO).

How has China benefited from these positions?

- ITU also has Chinese representatives serving two terms. This ensures that Chinese national champions like Huawei and its standards become embedded and implemented by UN agencies engaged in development work in sparsely penetrated markets like the African continent, the Pacific, and South and Southeast Asia (Eg: acceptance of blockchain standards for finance).
- UNIDO: China has connected UNIDO to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which UNIDO now endorses.
- ICAO: China's positioning at ICAO, which sets air navigation and safety standards, ensured that during the pandemic, Taiwan was excluded from all discussions – just as it was with the WHO, over which China has a disproportionate influence.

How are the other countries responding?

The US started renegotiating the Postal Treaty in 2019 to increase stamp costs on post and mail originating from China. This was done after it was found it was cheaper to send a package from China to the US than between two destinations within the US.

How can India counter such moves by China?

- A more proactive role as a rule-maker.
- Setting up and leading its own multilaterals such as the International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.
- Increasing voluntary contributions to agencies and bodies where it believes it can play a larger role.
- Sponsoring Indian nationals for influential policy positions in the UN system.

Insta Curious:

- Funding for the United Nations comes from two sources- Assessed and Voluntary. Do you know the differences between them?

Read here: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.devex.com/news/simplifying-the-un-budget-77709/amp>.

- How many UN Organs do you remember? Refer: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-3>.

Insta Curious:

- Funding for the United Nations comes from two sources- Assessed and Voluntary. Do you know the differences between them? [Read here](#):

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

Briefly study about the following UN Organisations:

- ITU.
- UNIDO.
- FAO.
- ICAO.
- IMF.
- IMO.

Mains Link:

Discuss how China has Increased its influence over multiple UN organs and how it will impact India.

Link: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/china-expanded-influence-in-un-bodies-over-past-decade-study-101622117270848-amp.html>.

9. UAE's Golden Visa:

Context:

Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt recently received his **golden visa from the UAE government**.

What is it?

In 2019, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) implemented a new system for long-term residence visas, thereby enabling foreigners to live, work and study in the UAE without the need of a national sponsor and with 100 per cent ownership of their business.

So, what does the Golden Visa offer?

The Golden Visa system essentially offers long-term residency (5 and 10 years) to people belonging to the following groups:

- investors, entrepreneurs, individuals with outstanding talents the likes of researchers, medical professionals and those within the scientific and knowledge fields, and remarkable students.

Eligibility requirements (Have a brief overview; need not mug up):

For investors:

- A deposit of at least AED (United Arab Emirates Dirham) 10 million worth of public investment, either in the form of an investment fund or a company.
- 60% of the total investment must not be in the form of real estate.
- The invested amount must not be loaned, or in case of assets, investors must assume full ownership.
- The investor must be able to retain the investment for a minimum of three years.
- May be extended to include business partners, providing that each partner contributes AED 10 million.
- Can also include the holder's spouse and children, as well as one executive director and one advisor.

For individuals with specialized talents:

The category includes doctors, researchers, scientists, investors and artists. These individuals may be granted a 10-year visa following accreditations granted by their respective departments and fields. The visa also extends to their spouses and children.

Eligibility for a 5-year visa:

- The investor must invest in a property of a gross value of not less than AED 5 million.
- The amount invested in real estate must not be on loan basis.
- The property must be retained for at least three years.

Outstanding students:

- Outstanding students with a minimum grade of 95% in public and private secondary schools.
- University students within and outside the country having a distinction GPA of at least 3.75 upon graduation.

Reasons Behind the Move:

The UAE's economy has been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic and low oil prices, prompting many expatriates to leave.

- The move intends to bring them back now and keep the "talented people and great minds" in the Gulf country and help in nation-building.
- It will attract talented professionals from various fields of expertise and further encourage innovation, creativity and applied research, adding to the appeal of a career in the UAE for the world's brightest minds.

Significance for India:

- It would attract more Indian professionals and businessmen to the Gulf nation and strengthen the India-UAE Relations.
- It will also facilitate the return of Indians who want to resume work after the relaxation of Covid-19-related restrictions, for which India had requested the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in early November 2020.

Insta Curious:

1. India is the top country receiving the highest remittances from the UAE (the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, and the US). It stands at around \$14 billion.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Important countries in the middle East and their location.
2. India and UAE- Bilateral trade and crude oil supply.
3. Indian diaspora in UAE- volume and significance.
4. What is Golden Visa?
5. Who is eligible?

6. Benefits.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of UAE Golden Visa Scheme.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/uae-golden-visa-what-is-it-and-who-is-eligible-to-apply-7333143/lite/>.

10. Gaza attack may constitute ‘war crimes’:

Context:

The UN rights chief recently said that **Israel’s recent deadly air strikes on Gaza may constitute war crimes.**

- Meanwhile, countries are discussing about launching a broad, international investigation.

What next?

If found to be indiscriminate and disproportionate in their impact on civilians and civilian objects, such attacks may constitute war crimes.



Background:

Before a truce took hold last Friday, Israeli air strikes and artillery fire on Gaza killed 254 Palestinians, including 66 children, and wounded more than 1,900 people in 11 days of conflict.

But what is a war crime?

According to **the United Nations**, a war crime is a serious breach of international law committed against civilians or “enemy combatants” during an international or domestic armed conflict.

In contrast with genocide and crimes against humanity, **war crimes have to occur in the context of armed conflict.**

Geneva Conventions:

The meaning of war crimes was clarified in **the four 1949 Geneva Conventions.**

- **Article 147** of the Fourth Geneva Convention defines war crimes as “wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a protected person taking of hostages and extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly”.

ICC developments:

The Rome Statute of the ICC expanded the list of crimes that constitutes war crimes. The statute, for example, recognises forced pregnancy as a war crime.

Proportionality, distinction and precaution:

The **three main pillars of humanitarian law** are the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. **If any or all of these principles are violated, it could be found that a war crime has been committed.**

Insta Curious:

1. Curious about Ethics and war crimes? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Definition of War Crimes as defined by Geneva Conventions.
2. About ICC.

3. Members and jurisdiction.
4. Where is Gaza?
5. Locate Golan Heights on map.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GI78KAJQ0.1&imageview=0>

11. Biden orders probe into virus origins:

Context:

U.S. President Joe Biden has asked American intelligence agencies to “redouble” their efforts to analyse the origins of COVID-19, **to determine whether it emerged from human-animal contact or via a laboratory accident.**

- The United States also said that it will keep working with like-minded partners around the world to press China to participate in a full, transparent, evidence-based international investigation and to provide access to all relevant data and evidence.

Implications of this move:

This announcement significantly adds to **the growing pressure on China to be more open about the origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus**, an outbreak of which was seen first in early 2020 in the Chinese city of Wuhan, which houses the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV).

Why is the lab in Wuhan a focus of interest?

The institute collects genetic material from wildlife for experimentation.

- The lab has done extensive work on bat-borne viruses since the 2002 **SARS-CoV-1** international outbreak, which began in China.
- The search for its origins led years later to discovery of **SARS-like viruses** in a southwest China bat cave.

How the virus might have leaked from this lab?

1. Researchers **experiment with live viruses in animals to gauge human susceptibility**. To reduce the risk of pathogens escaping accidentally, the facility is supposed to enforce rigorous safety protocols, such as protective gear and super air filtration. But even the strictest measures cannot eliminate such risks. So, there is a reason to believe that the virus might have originated in the lab.
2. Additionally, **the lab is not far from the Huanan Seafood Market**, which early in the health crisis was cited as the most likely place where animal-to-human transmission of the virus may have taken place. **The market was also the site of the first known COVID-19 superspreader event.**

Above all, the **Chinese government’s refusal to allow the lab-leak scenario to be fully investigated** adds fuel to these theories.

What do Scientists who favor the natural origins hypothesis say?

Some of the most lethal new diseases of the past century have been traced to human interactions with wildlife and domestic animals, including **the first SARS epidemic (bats), MERS-CoV (camels), Ebola (bats or non-human primates) and Nipah virus (bats)**.

While an animal source has not been identified so far, swabs of stalls in the wildlife section of the wildlife market in Wuhan after the outbreak tested positive, suggesting an infected animal or human handler.

Insta Curious:

Do you know the differences between Bacteria, Viruses, Fungi, and Protozoa? [Read here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is mRNA?
2. What are zoonotic diseases?
3. Overview of SARS, MERS, Ebola and Nipah.
4. Diseases caused by various pathogens.
5. What is SARS-CoV-2 virus?
6. What is RT PCR test?

7. Differences between antigens and antibodies.

Mains Link:

It is still not known whether Covid 19 virus emerged from human-animal contact or via a laboratory accident. Discuss how international community is considering the matter.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GI78KAJQA.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.

1. Network For Greening Financial System:

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has joined the Central Banks and Supervisors **Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS)** as a member.

About NGFS:

- Launched at the Paris One Planet Summit on December 12, 2017.
- It is a group of central banks and supervisors willing to share best practices and contribute to the development of environment and climate risk management in the financial sector.
- It also seeks to mobilise mainstream finance to support the transition towards a sustainable economy.
- **Composition:** Includes central banks and financial supervisors.
- **Secretariat** is hosted by the Banque de France.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About NGFS.
2. Composition.
3. Objectives.

4. Functions.

5. Members.

Mains Link:

Write a note on NGFS.

2. Quality standards for 4 more spices:

Context:

The **Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)** has finalised and recommended quality standards for four spices; cloves, oregano, basil, and ginger.

- The committee forwarded these four new standards to the **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** for adoption.

What is CCSCH?

- Formed in 2013, CCSCH is the youngest of the Codex Commodity Committees.
- The Committee is Chaired by India and Spices Board India is its Secretariat.
- This committee is mandated to elaborate worldwide, science-based quality standards for spices and culinary herbs, in accordance with the Codex principles of consumer protection and fair trade practices.

About CAC:

Set up in 1963, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) is an intergovernmental body established jointly by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Programme to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Codex Alimentarius.
2. About CAC.
3. What is CCSCH?

Mains Link:

Write a note on the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH).

3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

Context:

The High Court of Manipur has allowed seven Myanmar nationals, who entered India secretly following the February military coup, to travel to New Delhi to seek protection from the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**.

Observations made by the Court:

- Though India is not a party to the UN Refugee Conventions, the country is a party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.
- The far-reaching and myriad protection afforded by Article 21 of our Constitution, as interpreted and adumbrated by our Supreme Court time and again, would indubitably encompass the right of non-refoulement.

What is Non-refoulement?

It is the principle under international law that a person fleeing from persecution from his own country should not be forced to return.

About the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

- It is a UN Refugee Agency and a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting the rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.
- It was created in 1950 to help millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes.
- It is headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About UNHCR.
2. What is Non-refoulement?
3. UN Refugee Conventions.
4. Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

5. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G6U8I31A7.1&imageview=0>.

4. Asian Development Bank (ADB):

Context:

Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who is the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Governor for India, recently participated in the Governors' Seminar on "Cooperation for a Resilient Future", held as part of ADB's annual meeting 2021.

- Sitharaman appreciated the ADB for providing timely financial support for Covid and non-Covid projects.

About ADB:

- It is a regional development bank.
- established on 19 December 1966.
- headquartered — Manila, Philippines.
- official United Nations Observer.

Who can be its members?

The bank admits the members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, formerly the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East or ECAFE) and non-regional developed countries.

- ADB now has 68 members, 49 from within Asia.

Voting rights:

- It is modeled closely on the World Bank, and has a similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with members' capital subscriptions.
- As of 31 December 2019, ADB's five largest shareholders are Japan and the United States (each with 15.6% of total shares), the People's Republic of China (6.4%), India (6.3%), and Australia (5.8%).

Roles and functions:

- Dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.
- This is carried out through investments – in the form of loans, grants and information sharing – in infrastructure, health care services, financial and public administration systems, helping nations prepare for the impact of climate change or better manage their natural resources, as well as other areas.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About ADB.
2. Funding and loans.
3. Members.

4. Voting.

5. ADB vs NDB vs AIIB.

Mains Link:

How ADB

5. G7 seeks common front on China:

Context:

The Group of Seven wealthy democracies recently discussed how to form a common front towards an increasingly assertive China in the Foreign Ministers' first in-person talks in two years.

- The recent meet also focused on the nuclear programmes of Iran and North Korea.

What's the issue?

China's growing military and economic clout and willingness to exert its influence at home and abroad have increasingly unnerved Western democracies.

Outcomes of the meet:

1. US pledged "robust cooperation" with Britain in pressuring China over the Xinjiang region, where Beijing's incarceration of one million Uighurs and other Muslims has been labelled genocide by Washington, and over a clampdown against civil rights in Hong Kong.
2. Britain called for "holding Beijing to the commitments that they've made", including on Hong Kong, which was promised a separate system before London handed over the colony in 1997.
3. The countries also called for "finding constructive ways to work with China in a sensible and positive manner where that's possible" — including on climate change.

What is G7?

- The G7, originally G8, was set up in 1975 as an informal forum bringing together the leaders of the world's leading industrial nations.
- The summit gathers leaders from the European Union (EU) and the following countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The major purpose of the G-7 is to discuss and deliberate on international economic issues. It sometimes acts in concert to help resolve other global problems, with a special focus on economic issues.



How did G7 become G8?

- Russia was formally inducted as a member in the group in 1998, which led G7 to become G8.
- However, Russian President Vladimir Putin's condemnable act of moving Russian troops into eastern Ukraine and conquering Crimea in 2014 drew heavy criticism from the other G8 nations.
- The other nations of the group decided to suspend Russia from the G8 as a consequence of its actions and the group became G7 again in 2014.

InstaLinks:

www.insightsonindia.com

Prelims Link:

- Groups: G7, G8, G10, G15, G20, G24 countries.
- Geographical location of member countries.

Discuss the relevance of G7 countries today. What are the reforms necessary to make the grouping more effective?

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GJO8I7071.1&imageview=0>

Mains Link:

6. Arctic Science Ministerial:

Context:

India is participating in the 3rd Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM3) - the global platform for discussing research and cooperation in the Arctic region.

Key facts:

- The first two meetings—ASM1 and ASM2—were held in the USA in 2016 and Germany in 2018, respectively.
- ASM3, jointly organised by Iceland and Japan, is the first Ministerial meeting being held in Asia.
- The meeting is designed to provide opportunities to various stakeholders to enhance collective understanding of the Arctic region, emphasize and engage in constant monitoring, and strengthen observations.
- The theme for this year** is 'Knowledge for a Sustainable Arctic'.

Need for international collaboration and cooperation in maintaining the Arctic region:

Arctic warming and its ice melt are global concerns as they play a pivotal role in regulating climate, sea levels, and maintaining biodiversity. Moreover, there is growing evidence of connection between the Arctic and the Indian Ocean (which modulates the Indian monsoon).

Hence, improving the understanding of physical processes and quantifying the impact of Arctic ice melt on the Indian summer monsoon is very important.

India and the Arctic:

- Since 2013, India enjoys 'Observer' status in the Arctic Council with twelve other countries (Japan, China, France, Germany, UK, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, Spain, Netherlands, Singapore, and South Korea).
- India's engagement with the Arctic dates back to 1920 with the signing of **the Svalbard Treaty in Paris**.
- Since July 2008, India has a permanent research station in the Arctic called **Himadri** at NyAlesund, **Svalbard Area in Norway**.
- It has also deployed a multi-sensor moored observatory called **IndARC** in the Kongsfjorden fjord since 2014.
- The research in the Arctic region from India is coordinated, conducted, and promoted by **the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India**.



India's contributions further:

- India shared its plans to contribute observing systems in the Arctic, both in-situ and by remote sensing.
- The country would deploy open ocean mooring in the Arctic for long-term monitoring of upper ocean variables and marine meteorological parameters.
- The launch of **NISER (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite mission**, in collaboration with the USA, is underway. NISER aims to conduct global measurements of the cause and consequences of land surface changes using advanced radar imaging.

- India's contributions to **the Sustained Arctic Observational Network (SAON)** are continuing.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About ASM- objectives and meetings.
2. About SAON.
3. What is NISER?

4. About the Arctic Council.
5. About NCPOR.
6. What is IndARC?
7. About India's permanent research station in the Arctic.

7. U.S. against militarisation of the Arctic:

Context:

On the eve of **an Arctic Council meeting** of Foreign Ministers, the US has expressed concerns about increased military activities in the Arctic.

- This comes after Russia defended its military activities in the strategic region.

What are the concerns?

Increased military activities in the Arctic increase the dangers or prospects of accidents and undermines the shared goal of a peaceful and sustainable future for the region.

Background:

President Vladimir Putin has in recent years made Russia's Arctic region a strategic priority and ordered investment in military infrastructure and mineral extraction, exacerbating tensions with Arctic Council members.

About Arctic council:

It is **an Intergovernmental forum** which addresses issues faced by the Arctic governments and people living in the Arctic region.

It is **Not a treaty-based international organization** but rather an international forum that operates on the basis of consensus.

The decisions, recommendations or guidelines of the Arctic Council are **non-enforceable and strictly the prerogative of the individual state**.

Its **mandate explicitly excludes military security**.

Who takes part in it?

The **1996 Ottawa Declaration** lists the following countries as Members of the Arctic Council: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States.

In addition, six organizations representing Arctic indigenous peoples have status as **Permanent Participants**.

They include: the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and the Saami Council.

Observer status in the Arctic Council is open to non-Arctic states, along with inter-governmental, inter-parliamentary, global, regional and non-governmental organizations that the Council determines can contribute to its work.

Arctic Council working groups:

1. Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP)— strengthening and supporting mechanism to encourage national actions to reduce emissions and other releases of pollutants.
2. Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) — monitors the Arctic environment, ecosystems and human populations, and provides scientific advice to support governments as they tackle pollution and adverse effects of climate change.
3. Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) — addresses the conservation of Arctic biodiversity, working to ensure the sustainability of the Arctic's living resources.
4. Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR)— protect the Arctic environment from the threat or impact of an accidental release of pollutants or radionuclides.

5. Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) –protection and sustainable use of the Arctic marine environment.
6. Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) — works to advance sustainable development in the Arctic and to improve the conditions of Arctic communities as a whole.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is NISER?
2. About the Arctic Council.
3. About NCPOR.
4. What is IndARC?
5. About India's permanent research station in the Arctic.

Mains Link:

Discuss the issues associated with militarisation of the Arctic.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G208JFOIO.1&imageview=0>.

8. China threatens Bangladesh, says ties will be hit if it joins Quad:

Context:

China has bluntly threatened Bangladesh with reprisals if it considered any sort of participation in the Quad, warning that this will lead to a degrading of bilateral ties.

- Beijing sees the Quad as an anti-China grouping.

Implications for India:

China's tougher stand as regards India has only sharpened from 2020. The reference to Quad and the undiplomatic manner in which Bangladesh was warned indicate Beijing's deep annoyance with a grouping that intends to curtail its influence in the Indo-Pacific and areas that China considers its zone of influence.

What is Quad grouping?

- The quadrilateral security dialogue includes Japan, India, United States and Australia.
- All four nations find a common ground of being the democratic nations and common interests of unhindered maritime trade and security.

Genesis:

The grouping traces its genesis to 2004 when the four countries came together to coordinate relief operations in the aftermath of the tsunami.

It then met for the first time in 2007 on the sidelines of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit.

The intention was to enhance maritime cooperation between the four nations.

Significance of the grouping:

- Quad is an opportunity for like-minded countries to share notes and collaborate on projects of mutual interest.
- Members share a vision of an open and free Indo-Pacific. Each is involved in development and economic projects as well as in promoting maritime domain awareness and maritime security.
- It is one of the many avenues for interaction among India, Australia, Japan and the US and should not be seen in an exclusive context.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Quad- composition.
2. When was it first proposed?
3. Countries and important islands in the Indian Ocean region.
4. Geographical overview of Indo-Pacific region.

5. Important seas and straits in the region.

Mains Link:

A formal revival and re-invigoration of the Quad is called for to maintain peace and tranquillity and to ensure observance of the UN Law of the Seas. Examine.

Link: https://m.timesofindia.com/india/china-threatens-bangladesh-says-ties-will-be-hit-if-it-joins-quad/amp_articleshow/82538736.cms

9. The diplomatic immunity:

Context:

After she allegedly hit two staff members at a boutique in Seoul last month, the wife of Belgium's ambassador to South Korea will now be exercising her **diplomatic immunity to avoid criminal charges**.

- The incident has since sparked anger in South Korea, with debates rife over the extent of protection enjoyed by diplomats and their family members.

What is diplomatic immunity?

It is a **privilege of exemption from certain laws and taxes granted to diplomats** by the country in which they are posted.

The custom was formed so that **diplomats can function without fear, threat or intimidation from the host country**.

Diplomatic immunity is granted on the basis of two conventions:

1. Popularly called the Vienna Conventions — the Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961.
2. The Convention on Consular Relations, 1963.

They have been **ratified by 187 countries**, which means, **it is a law under that country's legal framework and cannot be violated**.

What is the extent of this immunity?

According to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961, the immunity enjoyed by a diplomat posted in the embassy is "**inviolable**".

- The diplomat cannot be arrested or detained and his house will have the same inviolability and protection as the embassy.

Exceptions:

It is possible for the diplomat's home country to waive immunity but this can happen only when the individual has committed a 'serious crime', unconnected with their diplomatic role or has witnessed such a crime. Alternatively, the home country may prosecute the individual.

What are the Concerns?

While diplomatic immunity is intended to "insulate" diplomats from harm, it does not insulate their countries from a bad reputation and a blow to bilateral ties.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is diplomatic immunity?
2. Types.
3. Eligibility.
4. Exceptions.
5. The Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961.
6. The Convention on Consular Relations, 1963.

Mains Link:

What is diplomatic immunity? What is the need for it? Discuss.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/diplomatic-immunity-belgian-envoys-wife-seoul-7318980/lite/>.

10. Lithuania quits China's 17+1 cooperation forum:

Context:

Lithuania has quit China's **17+1 cooperation forum** with central and eastern European states that includes other EU members.

Why?

Lithuania has called it “divisive”. It has also urged fellow EU members to pursue “a much more effective 27+1 approach and communication with China.”

What is the “17+1” initiative?

The 17+1 initiative is a China-led format **founded in 2012 in Budapest** with an aim to expand cooperation between Beijing and the Central and Eastern European (CEE) member countries, with **investments and trade for the development of the CEE region**.

- The framework also focuses on infrastructure projects such as bridges, motorways, railway lines and modernisation of ports in the member states.
- The platform is largely seen as an extension of China’s flagship **Belt and Road initiative (BRI)**.
- China’s narrative towards the 17+1 initiative is about **improving its relations with the European countries that are less developed as compared to the Western European states**.

Composition:

The initiative includes twelve EU member states and five Balkan states — Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What are Baltic nations?
2. About the “17+1” initiative.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G2J8JTFEP.1&imageview=0>.

11. International Atomic Energy Agency:

Context:

The speaker of Iran’s parliament said a three-month monitoring deal between Tehran and the UN nuclear watchdog- IAEA has expired and that its access to images from inside some Iranian nuclear sites would cease.

- The announcement has raised further questions about the future of indirect talks underway between the United States and Iran on reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

What was the deal?

The International Atomic Energy Agency and Tehran struck the three-month monitoring agreement in February to cushion the blow of Iran reducing its cooperation with the agency, and it allowed monitoring of some activities that would otherwise have been axed to continue.

Background:

- Iran and global powers have held several rounds of negotiations since April in Vienna, Austria, working on steps that Tehran and Washington must take, on sanctions and nuclear activities, to return to full compliance with the nuclear pact.
- Iran began gradually breaching terms of the 2015 pact with world powers after former President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the deal in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions.

About IAEA:

- Set up as the world’s “Atoms for Peace” organization in 1957 within the United Nations family.
- Reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.
- Headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

Functions:

- Works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- Seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.

Programs:

1. Program of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT)
2. Human Health Program.
3. Water Availability Enhancement Project.
4. International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles, 2000.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is IAEA? Relation with the UN.
2. Members of IAEA.
3. Programs of IAEA.
4. Board of Governors- composition, voting and functions.
5. What is Uranium Enrichment?

Mains Link:

Discuss the need for bringing back Iran nuclear deal.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G2J8JTFFC.1&imageview=0>

12. Quad targeting China: Consul General:

Context:

China's Consul General in Mumbai has described Quad as “**an attempt for containment**”.

- Because, Quad advocates so-called democratic alliance, and targets certain specific country in an attempt for containment.”

Implications for India:

China's tougher stand as regards India has only sharpened from 2020. The reference to Quad indicate Beijing's deep annoyance with a grouping that intends to curtail its influence in the Indo-Pacific and areas that China considers its **zone of influence**.

What is Quad grouping?

The quadrilateral security dialogue includes **Japan, India, United States and Australia**.

All four nations find a common ground of being the democratic nations and common interests of unhindered maritime trade and security.

- It is often dubbed as **an "Asian" or "mini" NATO**, and is viewed as a counterbalance to China's military and economic clout in the Indo-Pacific region.

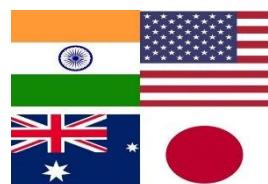
Genesis:

The grouping traces its genesis to 2004 when the four countries came together to coordinate relief operations in the aftermath of the tsunami.

- It then met for the first time in 2007 on the sidelines of **the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit**.
- The intention was **to enhance maritime cooperation between the four nations**.

Significance of the grouping:

1. Quad is an opportunity for like-minded countries to share notes and collaborate on projects of mutual interest.
2. Members share a vision of an open and free Indo-Pacific. Each is involved in development and economic projects as well as in promoting maritime domain awareness and maritime security.
3. It is one of the many avenues for interaction among India, Australia, Japan and the US and should not be seen in an exclusive context.



Recent developments:

- **QUAD** pledged to promote a free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law to advance security and prosperity and counter threats to both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.
- **Quad Vaccine Partnership:** To ensure “equitable” access to vaccines to counter the pandemic.

- In 2020, all four QUAD Countries - Japan, India, Australia and the USA took part in the Malabar exercise.** Malabar exercise is an annual trilateral naval exercise between the navies of India, Japan, and the USA which is held alternately in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

InstaCurious:

1. China is the largest producer of rare earth minerals. How has Quad impacted it? [Read Here](#)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Quad- composition.
2. When was it first proposed?
3. Countries and important islands in the Indian Ocean region.
4. Geographical overview of Indo-Pacific region.

5. Important seas and straits in the region.

Mains Link:

Quad seeks to maintain peace and tranquillity in the Indo- Pacific region. Examine.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G638K7BUE.1&imageview=0>.

13. Interpol:

Context:

Fugitive diamantaire **Mehul Choksi**, who had recently fled from Antigua and Barbuda, was captured in neighbouring Dominica after an **Interpol Yellow Notice** was issued against him.

- Choksi had been living in Antigua and Barbuda since 2018 after taking the citizenship. He is wanted in a ₹13,500-crore loan fraud in Punjab National Bank.

(Note: we need to learn about **Interpol** and various notices issued by it from this article; nothing much).

What is Interpol?

- The **International Criminal Police Organisation, or Interpol**, is a 194-member intergovernmental organisation.
- headquartered in Lyon, France.**
- Formed in 1923** as the International Criminal Police Commission, and started calling itself Interpol in 1956.
- India joined the organisation in 1949**, and is one of its oldest members.



Interpol's declared global policing goals include:

- Countering terrorism, promoting border integrity worldwide, protection of vulnerable communities, providing a secure cyberspace for people and businesses, curbing illicit markets, supporting environment security, and promoting global integrity.

What is the Interpol General Assembly?

- It is Interpol's supreme governing body, and comprises representatives from all its member countries.
- It meets annually for a session lasting approximately four days, to vote on activities and policy.
- Each country is represented by one or more delegates at the Assembly, who are typically chiefs of law enforcement agencies.
- The Assembly also elects the members of the Interpol Executive Committee, the governing body which "provides guidance and direction in between sessions of the Assembly".



InstaCurious:

- Did you know like Interpol (which is a non-UN body), there is something called The United Nations Police ([UNPOL](#)). There is an [Europol](#)
- And there is UNODC. Read what's it about [Here](#). (Remember to read only a few introductory lines about these organisations. Please don't dig deep).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Who is a fugitive economic offender?
- What is Interpol.
- Various notices issued.

- Overview of Interpol's crime programmes.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GG68K7PIB.1&imageview=0>.

14. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS):

Context:

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is attempting to mediate to solve the crisis in Mali.

What's happening in Mali?

Since 1960, when Mali gained independence from France, there have been five coups — and only one peaceful transition from one democratically elected president to another.

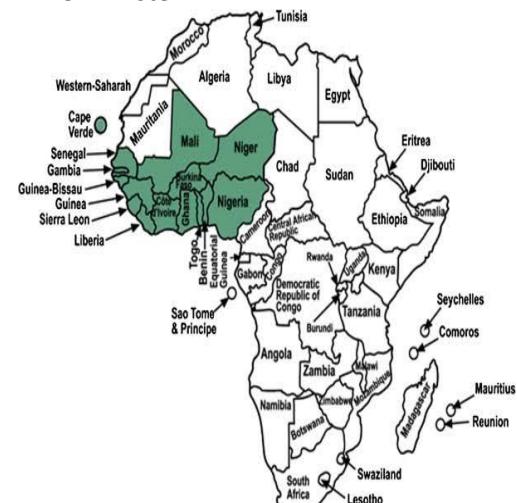
Recent coup: Nine months ago, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was overthrown in the wake of **mass anti-government protests**. Last week, the announcement of a new cabinet was made that excluded two key military leaders. Following this, the army has detained the President and the Prime Minister.

About ECOWAS:

- It is a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa.
- Established in 1975, with the signing of the **Treaty of Lagos**.
- The goal of ECOWAS is to achieve "collective self-sufficiency" for its member states by creating a single large trade bloc by building a full economic and trading union.
- It also serves as a **peacekeeping force in the region**.
- Considered one of the pillar regional blocs of the continent-wide **African Economic Community (AEC)**.

ECOWAS includes two sub-regional blocs:

- The West African Economic and Monetary Union is an organisation of eight, mainly French-speaking states.



2. **The West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ)**, established in 2000, comprises six mainly English-speaking countries.

Insta Curious:

- Did you know that the ‘Treaty of Pelindaba’ is also known as the African Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone Treaty? [Read here.](#)
- Here is a list of African organisations. Note down only an important few from [this list.](#)

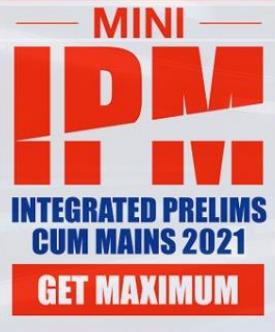
InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About the Bloc.
- It's goals and objectives.
- Members.

- Sub-regional blocs under it.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GJ98KIJEH.1&imageview=0>.



**MINI
IPM
INTEGRATED PRELIMS
CUM MAINS 2021**
GET MAXIMUM

**Mini Integrated Prelims cum Mains
(Mini IPM) Test Series 2021**

Starts from 1st June 2021 | Prelims: 20 (14 GS + 6 CSAT) Tests, Mains: 25 Tests

FEE:
Rs.10,000/- including taxes

EARLY BIRD OFFER:
10% Discount till 31st May 2021

OLD SUBSCRIBER OFFER:
15% Discount

FEATURES:

- A single tailor-made timetable for both Prelims and Mains
- INSTA 30 and other INSTA Value added material
- Complete flexibility in mode* & timings
- Post-Test Discussions
- Mentorship sessions

* offline mode is subject to COVID regulations

For queries contact: support@insightsias.com
Bangalore: 7483163074 / 9380863034 | Delhi: 9625668123 / 7303318519 / 011-49520205 | Hyderabad: 8688512637

Subscribe Here: [Subscribe Here](#) 

INSIGHT

GENERAL STUDIES – 3

Topics: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

1. RBI measures to protect small and medium businesses from pandemic impact:

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India has announced **measures to protect small and medium businesses and individual borrowers** from the adverse impact of the intense second wave of COVID-19 buffeting the country.

Measures announced:

1. The RBI has decided to conduct special three-year **long-term repo operations (SLTRO)** of ₹10,000 crore at the repo rate for Small Finance Banks. The SFBs would be able to deploy these funds for fresh lending of up to ₹10 lakh per borrower.
2. SFBs are now being permitted to reckon fresh lending to smaller MFIs (with asset size of up to ₹500 crore) for onlending to individual borrowers as priority sector lending.
3. To enable the State governments to better manage their fiscal situation in terms of their cash flows and market borrowings, maximum number of days of overdraft (OD) in a quarter is being increased from 36 to 50 days and the number of consecutive days of OD from 14 to 21 days.

Who is eligible?

1. Those with aggregate exposure of up to ₹25 crore, who had not availed restructuring under any of the earlier restructuring frameworks (including under last year's resolution framework), and whose loans were classified as 'standard' as on March 31, 2021, were eligible for restructuring under the proposed framework.
2. In respect of individual borrowers and small businesses who had already availed restructuring under Resolution Framework 1.0, lenders have been permitted to use this window to modify such plans to the extent of increasing the period of moratorium and/or extending the residual tenor up to a total of two years.
3. In respect of small businesses and MSMEs restructured earlier, lending institutions have been permitted as a one-time measure, to review the working capital sanctioned limits, based on a reassessment of the working capital cycle and margins.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GSO8IACU6.1&imageview=0>.

2. National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell Battery Storage:

Context:

The Cabinet has approved the proposal of **Department of Heavy Industry** for implementation of the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** 'National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage' for achieving manufacturing capacity of Fifty (50) GigaWatt Hour (GWh) of ACC and 5 GWh of "Niche" ACC.

About the scheme:

- It is a ₹18,100 crore production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for building Tesla-style giga factories to manufacture batteries.
- The plan is to set up 50 gigawatt hour (GWh) manufacturing capacity for advanced chemistry cell batteries by attracting investments totaling ₹45,000 crore.
- As part of the scheme, each selected ACC battery storage manufacturer would have to commit to set up an ACC manufacturing facility of minimum 5GWh capacity and ensure a minimum 60% domestic value addition at the project level within five years.

What are Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACC)?

ACCs are the new generation of advanced storage technologies that can store electric energy either as electrochemical or as chemical energy and convert it back to electric energy as and when required.

Significance of the scheme:

All the demand of the ACCs is currently being met through imports in India.

- The National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage will reduce import dependence.
- It will also support the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. ACC battery Storage manufacturers will be selected through a transparent competitive bidding process.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What are ACCs?
2. Applications.

3. About the PLI schemes.
4. Overview of the National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage

3. Why has Indian manufacturing been losing jobs since 2016?

Context:

The words “lives” and “livelihoods” are often mentioned together. But the ongoing Covid pandemic has created a difference between these two: **Measures aimed at saving lives are proving to be terrible for livelihoods.**

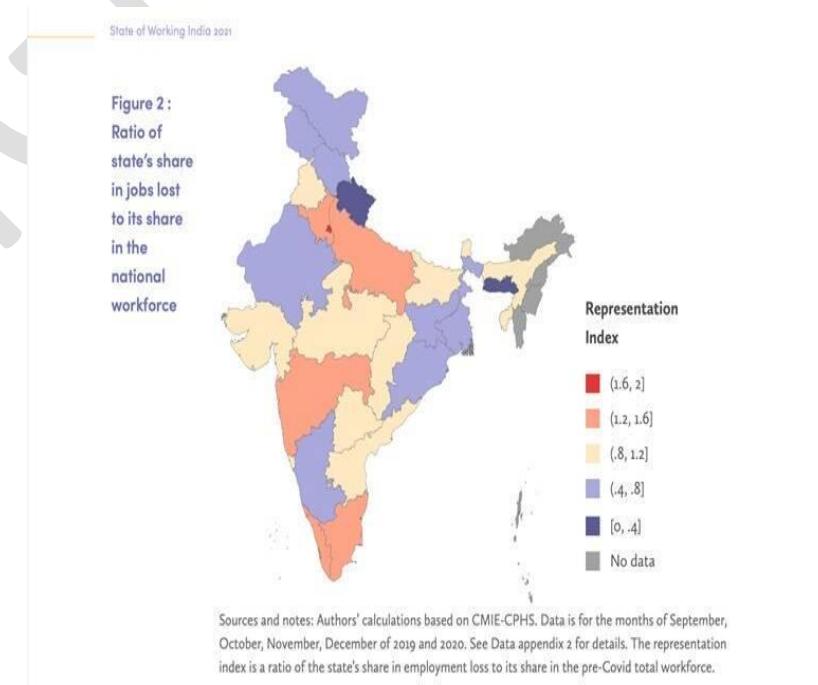
What is the current scenario?

Impact on livelihoods before the second Covid wave unfolded- As per Azim Premji University's **the State of Working India (SWI) report 2021:**

1. The pandemic had forced people out of their formal jobs into casual work, and led to a severe decline in incomes.
2. Not surprisingly, there is a sudden increase in poverty over the past year.
3. Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi, contributed disproportionately to job losses.

As per a report brought out jointly by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) and Centre for Economic Data and Analysis:

1. Indian economy has gotten worse over the past few years even without the help of Covid.
2. **The number of people employed in the manufacturing sector of the economy has come down from 51 million to 27 million — that is, almost halving in the space of just four years!**
3. Besides, the number of people employed in agriculture is going up. Equally disheartening is that employment in non-financial services has fallen sharply.



Why is job loss in the manufacturing sector worrisome?

Traditionally Indian policymakers have been of the view that **the manufacturing sector is our best hope to soak up the surplus labour otherwise employed in agriculture.**

- **Manufacturing** is well suited because it can make use of the millions of poorly educated Indian youth, unlike the services sector, which often requires better education and skill levels.

Why is Indian manufacturing failing to create jobs?

1. Manufacturing units require the highest amount of fixed investment upfront.
2. What has traditionally made this truly risky is the highly extractive nature of Indian governments (corruption, weak supply etc).
3. Also, historically Indians have always consumed relatively less of manufacturing goods and relatively more of food and services (This is because most Indians are quite poor and hence most of the income is spent on food, and repairs and maintenance costs are high).
4. By treating the labour-intensive manufacturing firms as small-scale industries, policies held back their growth.
5. India did not push for integrating its labour-intensive manufacturing in the global supply chains by aggressively following exports. Instead, the idea was to substitute imports in the name of self-reliance.

Issues with ambitious Make in India (MII) initiative and the latest Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme:

They are again aimed more at capital intensive manufacturing, not labour intensive ones. Moreover, India is reverting to the protectionist approach, aimed at self-reliance, yet again in recent years.

Simply put:

From the perspective of creating jobs, India is facing a double whammy. The manufacturing and construction sectors are bleeding jobs instead of creating them. Making matters worse is the decline in employment in large sections of the service industry, thanks to the Covid-induced disruption.

Need of the hour:

Indian manufacturing, which is still India's best hope for creating new jobs and soaking up excess unskilled labour from agriculture, requires policymakers to target labour-intensive firms, especially in the informal sector (read MSMEs) and help them — through better infrastructure and easier regulatory support — to create millions of new jobs.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explainspeaking-why-has-indian-manufacturing-been-losing-jobs-since-2016-7318114/lite/>.

Topics: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

1. NITI Aayog report on digital financial inclusion:

Context:

NITI Aayog and Mastercard have released a report titled 'Connected Commerce: Creating a Roadmap for a Digitally Inclusive Bharat'.

- The report identifies challenges in accelerating digital financial inclusion in India and provides recommendations for making digital services accessible to its 1.3 billion citizens.

Challenges in accelerating digital financial inclusion:

1. Digital Exclusions.
2. Unfamiliarity With DBT.
3. Breeding of Corruption.
4. Inadequate Rural Banking.
5. Unsuccessful Banking Correspondent Model.
6. Accountability Issue.

Key recommendations in the report include:

1. Strengthening the payment infrastructure to promote a level playing field for NBFCs and banks.
2. Digitizing registration and compliance processes and diversifying credit sources to enable growth opportunities for MSMEs.
3. Building information sharing systems, including a 'fraud repository', and ensuring that online digital commerce platforms carry warnings to alert consumers to the risk of frauds.

4. Enabling agricultural NBFCs to access low-cost capital and deploy a ‘phygital’ (physical + digital) model for achieving better long-term digital outcomes. Digitizing land records will also provide a major boost to the sector.
5. To make city transit seamlessly accessible to all with minimal crowding and queues, leveraging existing smartphones and contactless cards, and aim for an inclusive, interoperable, and fully open system such as that of the London ‘Tube’.

2. RBI to transfer Rs 99,122 crore surplus to government:

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will transfer a surplus of Rs 99,122 crore to the government for the nine-month accounting period ended March 31.

- The bank also decided to maintain **the contingency risk buffer** at 5.5 percent.

Significance of the move:

The transfer will help the government's finances as the country battles a furious second coronavirus wave that has seen daily infections and deaths rise to a record level. The restrictions clamped to break the chain of infections have also put a question mark on the country's economic recovery.

Provisions in this regard:

The RBI, established in 1935, operates according to **the Reserve Bank of India Act of 1934**. The act mandates that profits made by the central bank from its operations be sent to the Centre.

- As the manager of its finances, every year the RBI also pays a dividend to the government to help with the finances from its surplus or profit.

A technical Committee of the RBI Board headed by **Y H Malegam (2013)**, which reviewed the adequacy of reserves and surplus distribution policy, recommended a higher transfer to the government.

RBI's Earning:

- **Returns earned on its foreign currency assets**, which could be in the form of bonds and treasury bills of other central banks or top-rated securities, and deposits with other central banks.
- **Interest on its holdings of local rupee-denominated government bonds or securities**, and while lending to banks for very short tenures, such as overnight.
- **Management commission** on handling the borrowings of state governments and the central government.

RBI's Expenditure:

Printing of currency notes and on staff, besides the commission it gives to banks for undertaking transactions on behalf of the government across the country, and to primary dealers, including banks, for underwriting some of these borrowings.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About RBI.
2. Management of Surplus.
3. RBI's earnings and expenditure.

Mains Link:

Discuss the mechanism under which RBI transfers surplus to the government.

Topics: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

1. Lumpy Skin Disease:

What is it?

- Lumpy Skin Disease is a **viral illness that causes prolonged morbidity in cattle and buffaloes**.
- Caused by **the poxvirus Lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV)**.

Symptoms:

- It appears as nodules of two to five centimetre diameter all over the body, particularly around the head, neck, limbs, udder (mammary gland of female cattle) and genitals. The lumps gradually open up like large and deep wounds.

Spread:

- It spreads through mosquitoes, flies and ticks and also through saliva and contaminated water and food.

Affected Countries:

- LSD is endemic to Africa and parts of West Asia, where it was first discovered in 1929.
- In Southeast Asia the first case of LSD was reported in Bangladesh in July 2019.
- In India it was first reported from Mayurbhanj, Odisha in August 2019.

Treatment:

There is no treatment for the virus, so prevention by vaccination is the most effective means of control.

Context:

- The Bihar government sounded an alert and issued an advisory about the likely spread of the disease.

Concerns:

- In India, which has the world's highest 303 million heads of cattle, the disease has spread to 15 states within just 16 months.
- This might have a devastating impact on the country, where most dairy farmers are either landless or marginal landholders and milk is among the cheapest protein sources.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- About the disease.
- Symptoms.
- Treatment.

Mains Link:

Discuss the Concerns associated with the spread of this disease for India.

Link: <https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/lumpy-skin-disease>.

2. Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH):

Context:

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has provided an enhanced allocation of Rs. 2250 Crore for the year 2021-22 for 'Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture' (MIDH).

About the 'Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture' (MIDH):

It is a scheme for the holistic growth and development of the Indian horticulture sector.

- This Centrally Sponsored scheme covers vegetables, fruits, roots and tuber crops, aromatic plants, flowers, spices, bamboo, coconut, cashew and cocoa.
- MIDH also provides technical support and advice to state horticultural missions, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Saffron Mission and the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).
- MIDH is under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, GOI.
- Under MIDH, Government of India (GOI) contributes 60% of total outlay for developmental programmes in all the states except states in North East and Himalayas, 40% share is contributed by State Governments. In the case of North Eastern States and Himalayan States, GOI contributes 90% (as per [click here](#)).

Sub Schemes:

- National Horticulture Mission (NHM).
- Horticulture Mission for North East & Himalayan States (HMNEH).
- National Bamboo Mission (NBM).
- National Horticulture Board (NHB).
- Coconut Development Board (CDB).

6. Central Institute for Horticulture (CIH).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About MIDH.

2. Features.

3. Sub Schemes.

3. PM-Kisan scheme:

Context:

The eighth instalment of minimum financial benefit under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme has been released.

- This was the first instalment of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi for the financial year 2021-22.

About PM-Kisan scheme:

- It is a central sector scheme with 100 per cent funding from the Government of India. The scheme was launched in December 2018.
- Under the scheme, income support of ₹6,000 per year in three equal installments of ₹2000 is provided to small and marginal farmers having a combined land holding of up to two hectares.
- The state governments and Union Territory administration identify the farmers who are eligible for the scheme and share the list with the Centre.

Ambit:

The Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land upto 2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded w.e.f. 01.06.2019 to cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings.

Exceptions:

Affluent farmers have been excluded from the scheme such as Income Tax payers in last assessment year, professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants etc and pensioners pensioners drawing at least Rs.10,000/- per month (excluding MTS/Class IV/Group D employees).

Similar programmes by states:

1. Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana- MP.
2. The Rythu Bandhu scheme- Telangana.
3. Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income augmentation (KALIA)- Odisha.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. PM KISAN- eligibility.

2. About Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana.

3. About Rythu Bandhu scheme.

4. About KALIA scheme.

4. World Bee Day:

- May 20 is observed as World Bee Day annually.
- It was on this day in 1734 that **Anton Janša**, the pioneer of beekeeping, was born.
- The United Nations proclaimed May 20 as World Bee Day in 2017. The proposal was put forth by **Slovenia**.
- **2021 theme:** "Bee Engaged – Build Back Better for Bees".

Efforts by the government:

- Government is promoting Beekeeping as part of its aim to double farmers' income.
- The Government has allocated 500 crores towards Beekeeping under **the Atma Nirbhar Abhiyan**.
- The **National Bee Board** has created four modules to impart training as part of **the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM)** and 30 lakh farmers have been trained in beekeeping. They are also being financially supported by the Government.
- The Government has launched '**Honey Mission**' as part of '**Sweet Revolution**'.
- India is among **the world's top five honey producers**.

- Compared to 2005-06 honey production has risen by 242% and exports shot by 265%.

Significance of Beekeeping:

- As per **Food and Agricultural Organization** database, in 2017-18, India ranked eighth in the world in terms of honey production (64.9 thousand tonnes) while China stood first with a production level of 551 thousand tonnes.
- Further, beekeeping can be an important contributor in achieving the 2022 target of doubling farmer incomes.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Importance of the day.
- Beekeeping in India.
- Technology missions.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance and importance of beekeeping in India.

Topics: *Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

1. How Israel's Iron Dome intercepts rockets?

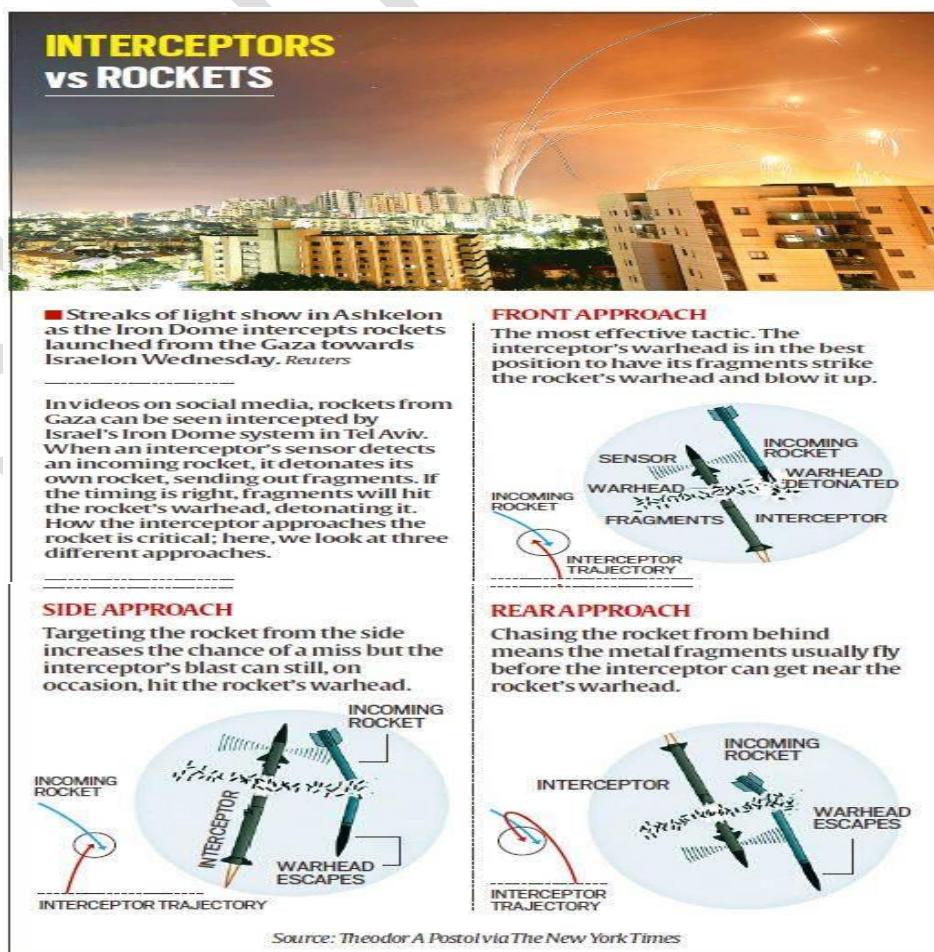
Context:

In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, both sides have taken to air strikes and rocket attacks.

- Recently, rockets fired from Gaza were intercepted by the Israeli Iron Dome air defence system. It appeared that the rockets were hitting an invisible shield.

What is Iron Dome?

- Deployed in 2011, it is a short-range, ground-to-air, air defence system that includes a radar and Tamir interceptor missiles that track and neutralise any rockets or missiles aimed at Israeli targets.
- It is used for countering rockets, artillery & mortars (C-RAM) as well as aircraft, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles.
- Its success rate is over 90%.



How does it work, and what makes it so effective?

- The Iron Dome has three main systems that work together to provide a shield over the area where it is deployed, handling multiple threats.

- It has a detection and tracking radar to spot any incoming threats, a battle management and weapon control system (BMC), and a missile firing unit.
- It is capable of being used in all weather conditions, including during the day and night.

What kind of systems does India have?

- India has got **S-400**, which caters to the three threats (rockets, missiles and cruise missiles). But they have much longer range. S400 has to cater to shooting down missiles, aircraft in some 300 to 400 km range.
- At the moment, India has **Akash** short-range surface-to-air missiles, and Russian systems including **Pechora**.

InstaLinks:

4. Where is Gaza strip.

Prelims Link:

1. About Iron dome and its working.
2. India's Akash missile system.
3. About Pechora.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-how-israels-iron-dome-intercepts-rockets-7312743/lite/>.

2. Air India begins zeolite cargo flight service:

Context:

- National carrier Air India has begun the first of its “**zeolite cargo flights**” with the government of India having commenced the process of importing zeolite from across the world for use in medical oxygen plants.
- The government has appointed **the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as the charterer for these consignments**.
- Under **the Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund**, the DRDO is to set up these medical oxygen plants.

Use of Zeolite in medical oxygen plants:

The technology being developed by the DRDO uses **the pressure swing adsorption process** and **molecular sieve zeolite** in oxygen generation.

- Zeolites are used as adsorbent material.
- An oxygen concentrator uses Zeolites to adsorb atmospheric nitrogen and then vents out the nitrogen. This leaves oxygen gas remaining to be used for patients.
- In high pressure, the surface area of zeolites increases and thus is capable of adsorbing large quantities of nitrogen.

Pressure Swing Adsorption:

Pressure swing adsorption (PSA) is a technology **used to separate some gas species from a mixture of gases under pressure**.

- **PSA operates at near-ambient temperatures.**
- Specific adsorbent materials (e.g., zeolites, activated carbon, molecular sieves, etc.) are used as a trap, preferentially adsorbing the target gas species at high pressure.

What are Zeolites?

Zeolites are microporous, three dimensional crystalline solid of aluminium silicate. Zeolites have small openings of fixed size in them which allow small molecules to pass through them easily but larger molecules cannot pass through them; that is why they are sometimes called molecular sieve.

- Zeolites are either formed naturally or can be synthesized.

Properties Of Zeolites:

- Zeolites are very stable solid under different environmental conditions. The melting point of zeolite is very high, i.e. 1000°C.
- They are insoluble in water or other inorganic solvents.
- They do not undergo oxidation in the presence of air.

- Zeolites which are rich in alumina are attracted to polar molecules like water whereas zeolite rich in silica are attracted towards nonpolar molecules.
- Since zeolites are not reactive and are obtained from naturally occurring minerals, therefore, they do not have any harmful environmental effects; although skin contact or inhalation may have a carcinogenic effect.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is swing adsorption technology?
2. About Zeolites.
3. Sources.
4. Features.
5. Applications.

Mains Link:

Write a note on swing adsorption technology.

Link: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thehindu.com/news/national/air-india-begins-zeolite-cargo-flight-service/article34565547.ece/amp/>.

3. How does 2-DG, DRDO's new oral drug for Covid-19, work?

Context:

The first batch of the indigenously developed anti-Covid-19 drug, 2-deoxy-D-glucose or '2-DG', has been released.

Background:

Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), had cleared the formulation on May 1 for emergency use as an adjunct therapy in moderate to severe Covid-19 patients.

About 2- DG:

2-DG has been developed by the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), New Delhi, a lab of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in collaboration with Hyderabad-based pharma company Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL).

How it works?

- The drug accumulates in virus-infected cells, and prevents the growth of the virus by stopping viral synthesis and energy production.
- Its selective accumulation in virally-infected cells makes this drug unique.

Benefits:

- The molecule helps in faster recovery of patients hospitalised with Covid-19, and reduces their dependence on supplemental oxygen.
- 2-DG being a generic molecule and an analogue of glucose, it can be easily produced and made available in large quantities.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About 2- DG.
2. How it works?

Mains Link: Discuss the issues involved in development and administration of vaccines in India.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/drdo-s-new-oral-drug-2-dg-coronavirus-7318447/lite/>.

4. What is Mylab Coviself?

Context:

It is **India's first Covid-19 self-testing kit** approved recently by the ICMR.

- This means anyone can collect their own nasal sample and test it for SARS-CoV-2.

Such a self-test kit was first approved in **the US** last November. Similar kits have been approved in **Europe and South Korea too**.

About CoviSelf:

- Developed by MyLab Discovery Solutions, a Pune-based molecular company.
- It uses a rapid antigen test, in which a nasal swab sample is tested for the virus and gives results within 15 minutes.
- Taking the test takes hardly two minutes.

How does it work?

This easy-to-use test combines with MyLab's AI-powered mobile app so that a user can know his/her positive status, submit the result to ICMR directly for traceability, and know what to do next in either result.

What are the arguments for?

1. A person testing himself at home rather than visiting a hospital or lab, or calling a technician at home, reduces the risk of transmission to others.
2. Swab collection in this case is fairly simple and quick, and reduces overall testing expenditure and the stress of booking appointment in labs.
3. Self-testing will reduce the burden on laboratories that are currently working 24 hours up to full capacity with manpower that is already saturated.

Arguments against:

1. The reliability of results remains a major concern. The likelihood of the sample not being collected correctly, or the swab stick getting contaminated, is high.
2. Also, rapid antigen tests come with a high chance of false negatives. If a Covid-infected person is asymptomatic and tests negative, the test may give a false sense of security.
3. Technical errors in the mobile app can also hamper the entire testing and reporting process.

Can the launch be a game-changer in Covid-19 management?

Many states are going through a second wave of infections, putting pressure on diagnostics laboratories. The RT-PCR test, considered the gold standard for Covid-19 testing, takes 3-4 days to give results, delaying hospitalisation and treatment.

- Self-test kits can potentially be a game-changer in Covid-19 management in India. These can cut queues in laboratories, reduce costs, dissipate the burden on existing manpower for sample collection from homes, and provide quick results (within 15 minutes), leading to prompt treatment and isolation.
- This testing kit cost Rs 250, while RT-PCR test costs between Rs 400 to Rs 1,500 and a rapid antigen test in laboratory costs Rs 300-900 in different states.



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is Coviself?
2. How it works?
3. Differences between antigens and antibodies.

Mains Link : Discuss the pros and cons of self-help kits for the detection of Covid.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/covid-19-home-test-kits-who-can-use-it-and-how-7322775/lite/>.

Topics: Awareness in space.

1. Parker Solar Probe:

Context:

During a brief swing by Venus, **NASA's Parker Solar Probe** detected a natural radio signal that revealed the spacecraft had flown through the planet's upper atmosphere. **This was the first direct measurement of the Venusian atmosphere in nearly 30 years.**

Findings:

Like Earth, Venus sports an electrically charged layer of gas at the upper edge of its atmosphere, called the ionosphere. This sea of charged gases, or plasma, naturally emits radio waves.

Implications:

This discovery confirms that Venus' upper atmosphere undergoes puzzling changes over **a solar cycle, the Sun's 11-year activity cycle**.

- This marks the latest clue to untangling how and why Venus and Earth are so different.

Background:

Born of similar processes, Earth and Venus are twins: both rocky, and of similar size and structure. But their paths diverged from birth. Venus lacks a magnetic field, and its surface broils at temperatures hot enough to melt lead.

About the mission:

- NASA's historic Parker Solar Probe mission will revolutionize our understanding of the sun, where changing conditions can propagate out into the solar system, affecting Earth and other worlds.
- Parker Solar Probe will travel through the sun's atmosphere, closer to the surface than any spacecraft before it, facing brutal heat and radiation conditions — and ultimately providing humanity with the closest-ever observations of a star.

Journey:

In order to unlock the mysteries of the sun's atmosphere, Parker Solar Probe will use Venus' gravity during seven flybys over nearly seven years to gradually bring its orbit closer to the sun.

The spacecraft will fly through the sun's atmosphere as close as 3.9 million miles to our star's surface, well within the orbit of Mercury and more than seven times closer than any spacecraft has come before.

Parker Solar Probe has three detailed science objectives:

1. Trace the flow of energy that heats and accelerates the solar corona and solar wind.
2. Determine the structure and dynamics of the plasma and magnetic fields at the sources of the solar wind.
3. Explore mechanisms that accelerate and transport energetic particles.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Solar Parker Probe.
2. What are Solar Flares.
3. Sun's Corona.

Mains Link:

Discuss how Solar Flares influence earth's environment.

2. SpaceX's Starship landing:

Context:

Serial number 15 (SN15), a prototype of the futuristic Starship rocket developed by Elon Musk's SpaceX company, was able to launch and successfully land on Wednesday, heralding a new era in space exploration for NASA.

Background:

The latest successful landing is a relief for NASA and SpaceX, as four previous prototypes of Starship had failed to do so, getting destroyed during or soon after touchdown at the southeastern tip of Texas, near Brownsville.

What is Starship?

- It is a full-scale, stainless steel, bullet-shaped rocketship built by SpaceX.
- The spacecraft has been described as a game-changer for space travel, being **a fully reusable transportation system** for crew and cargo to the Earth's orbit, Moon and Mars.
- SpaceX has described Starship as "the world's most powerful launch vehicle" with an ability to carry over 100 metric tonnes to the Earth's orbit.

Significance of the latest development:

Reusability is at the heart of making interplanetary travel accessible, SpaceX believes, since a majority of the launch cost is attributed to the expense of building a rocket that is ultimately designed to burn up during re-entry.

Potential Applications:

- Starship can deliver satellites further and at lower marginal costs than Falcon vehicles and it can ferry both cargo and crew to the International Space Station (ISS).
- Once developed, Starship is also expected to help carry large amounts of cargo to the Moon, for human spaceflight development and research.
- Beyond the Moon, the spacecraft is being designed for carrying crew and cargo for interplanetary missions as well.

NASA's Artemis mission:

- Last month, NASA chose SpaceX to build a lander for its Artemis programme, which plans to send humans to the Moon in this decade.
- The vehicle, which is based on Starship, will carry the next man and the first woman to land on the Moon.
- With the Artemis programme, NASA aims to demonstrate new technologies, capabilities and business approaches that will ultimately be needed for the future exploration of Mars.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Artemis space mission.
2. Objectives.
3. About Starship.

4. Important interplanetary space missions.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/spacex-starship-takeoff-landing-nasa-moon-mission-7305716/lite/>.

3. China rocket debris falls in Indian Ocean near Maldives:

Context:

Debris from the last stage of **China's Long March rocket** that had last month carried a key component of its under-construction space station fell into the waters of the Indian Ocean west of the Maldives recently.

Key facts:

- The **Long March-5B Y2 rocket** was carrying **the Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony**, module, which is the first of three key components for the construction of China's space station, which will be completed by the end of next year.
- Tianhe will act "the management and control hub of the space station" which is called Tiangong, or Heavenly Palace.
- The space station, which will be only the second after the International Space Station (ISS), has been designed with a lifespan of 10 years but could last 15 years, or until 2037.

Concerns and issues:

- The re-entry of the rocket, described by astrophysicists as **the fourth-largest uncontrolled reentry in history**, had evoked concerns in recent days about possible damage should it have fallen on land.
- It had been criticised by **the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** in the U.S. for "failing to meet responsible standards".
- Few expected **the debris to harm humans, mainly due to most of it burning up in the atmosphere**, as well as the fact that **large parts of the Earth are covered by oceans and massive land areas lie uninhabited**.

Need of the hour:

"Spacefaring nations" should "minimise the risks to people and property on Earth of re-entries of space objects and maximise transparency regarding those operations.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GL18ILNVH.1&imageview=0>.

4. NASA's OSIRIS-REx:

Context:

On May 11, **NASA's Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security, Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-REx)** spacecraft will depart asteroid **Bennu**, and start its two-year long journey back to Earth.

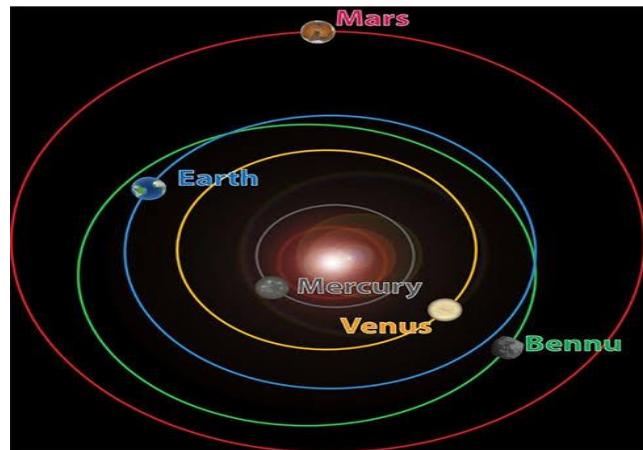
About the mission:

- OSIRIS-REx is NASA's first mission to visit a near-Earth asteroid, survey its surface and collect a sample from it.
- In October 2020, the spacecraft briefly touched asteroid Bennu, from where it collected samples of dust and pebbles.
- The mission was launched in 2016.

About asteroid Bennu:

Bennu is considered to be an ancient asteroid that has not gone through a lot of composition-altering change through billions of years, which means that below its surface lie chemicals and rocks from the birth of the solar system.

- Therefore, scientists and researchers are interested in studying this asteroid as it might give them clues about the origins of the solar system, the sun, the Earth and the other planets.
- So far, we know that Bennu is a B-type asteroid, implying that it contains significant amounts of carbon and various other minerals.
- Because of its high carbon content, the asteroid reflects about four per cent of the light that hits it, which is very low when compared with a planet like Venus, which reflects about 65 per cent of the light that hits it. Earth reflects about 30 per cent.



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Objectives of OSIRIS- REx.
2. What are near earth asteroids?
3. About Bennu.

Mains Link:

Discuss the objectives of OSIRIS- REx.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-as-nasas-osiris-rex-begins-journey-back-from-asteroid-the-significance-of-its-mission-asteroid-bennu-7309820/lite/>.

5. China's 'Zhurong' rover:

Context:

China's **uncrewed 'Tianwen-1' spacecraft** recently landed safely on the surface of **Mars**.

The spacecraft landed on a large plain located in the northern hemisphere of Mars, known as **Utopia Planitia**.

- This makes China **the second country in the world to send a rover to explore the mysterious Red Planet**.
- Onboard the lander was **the 'Zhurong' rover**, which will soon be deployed **to study the Martian atmosphere and geology**.

The Tianwen-1, China's Mars mission:

Launched in **July 2020**, the mission **consists of an orbiter, a lander and a golf cart-sized rover called 'Zhurong'**. The spacecraft arrived in Mars' orbit in February this year.

Yinghuo-1 mission:

This is not the first time China has attempted to send a spacecraft to Mars. Nearly ten years ago, the country launched the Yinghuo-1 mission, which ultimately failed after the spacecraft burnt while still in the Earth's atmosphere after the Russian rocket that was carrying it failed in flight.

What Next?

If ‘Zhurong’ is deployed without a hitch, China will become **the first country to successfully orbit, land and offload a rover during its maiden Mars mission.**

Which other countries have managed to send rovers to Mars?

Apart from China, **only the United States has been able to deploy rovers to study the surface of the Red Planet.**

1. The first successful landing was made by NASA in July 1976, when the Viking 1 rover touched down on Mars.
2. Shortly after that, Viking 2 arrived on the Red Planet.
3. In the decades that followed, the US successfully sent the Opportunity and Spirit rovers to explore Mars.
4. Most recently, in February this year, NASA’s Perseverance rover landed at the Jezero Crater on the Red Planet, after which it resumed work to look for signs of past life.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Objectives of the mission.
2. Others Mars missions.
3. India’s Mars mission.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the mission.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-all-you-need-to-know-about-chinas-zhurong-rover-set-to-explore-mars-7316365/lite/>.

6. NASA-ESA Solar Orbiter Spacecraft:

Context:

NASA and European Space Agency’s spacecraft has captured **the first solar eruption on the Sun’s surface.**

These eruptions are also known as **coronal mass ejections (CME).**

- If these eruptions on the Sun’s surface are big enough, they can cause billions of tons of plasma and electrically charged particles to dash towards Earth.

About NASA-ESA Solar Orbiter Spacecraft:

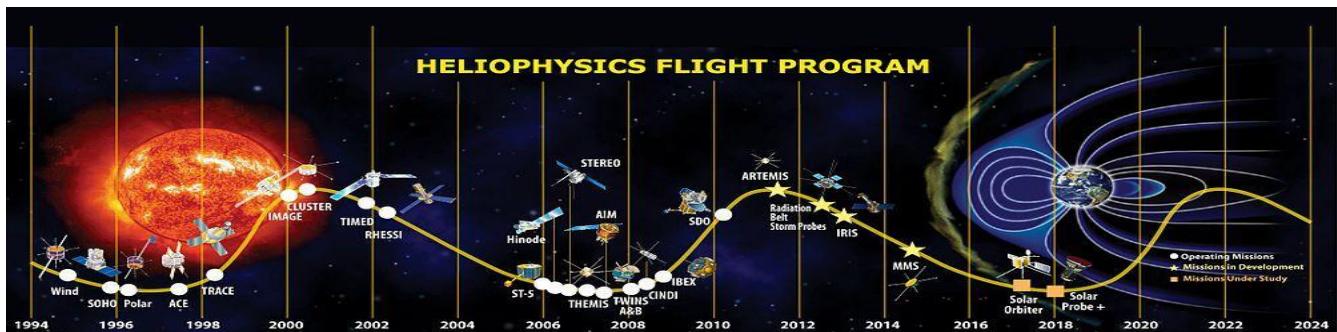
Solar Orbiter is a space mission of **international collaboration between ESA (European Space Agency) and NASA.**

- The spacecraft was launched from Cape Canaveral on a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket in **February 2020.**
- It was selected as **the first medium-class mission of ESA’s Cosmic Vision 2015-2025 Programme.**
- This is **the first mission that will provide images of the sun’s north and south poles** using a suite of six instruments on board that will capture the spacecraft’s view.
- It is **a seven-year mission and will come within 26 million miles of the sun.**
- It will be able to brave the heat of the sun because it has a custom titanium heat shield coated in **calcium phosphate** so that it can endure temperatures up to 970 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Solar Orbiter follows **the Ulysses spacecraft**, another collaboration between ESA and NASA that launched in 1990.

Solar Orbiter will set about answering four top-level science questions:

1. What drives the solar wind and where does the coronal magnetic field originate from?
2. How do solar transients drive heliospheric variability?
3. How do solar eruptions produce energetic particle radiation that fills the heliosphere?
4. How does the solar dynamo work and drive connections between the Sun and the heliosphere?

Other solar missions:



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Murchison Widefield Array (MWA) radio telescope.
2. What are radio waves?

3. Different layers of sun?

4. What are solar flares?
5. What are Sunspots?
6. About Sun's Corona.

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

1. NPCI refuses to ban cryptocurrency trades in India:

Context:

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has refused to ban cryptocurrency transactions.

- Further, it has put the onus on banks whether to ban transactions of cryptocurrency trades or not. It told banks to take a decision based on the advice of their legal and compliance departments.

What is NPCI?

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) serves as an umbrella body for the operation of retail payment in India.
- This organization was established by the Reserve Bank of India along with the Indian Bank's Association under **the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**.
- Presently, NPCI is promoted by ten major promoter banks.

NPCI can operate the following payment systems:

1. National Financial Switch (NFS).
2. Immediate Payment System (IMPS).
3. Affiliation of RuPay Cards (debit cards/ prepaid cards) issued by banks and co-branded credit cards issued by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) or any other entity approved by the RBI.
4. National Automatic Clearing House (ACH).
5. Aadhaar Enabled Payments System (AEPS).
6. Operation of Cheque Truncation System.

Products of NPCI:

1. RuPay.
2. National Common Mobility Card.
3. Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM).
4. Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
5. Bharat Bill Payment System.

Why has it refused to ban cryptocurrency trades?

NPCI's decision is based on the Supreme Court's March 2020 ruling which set aside a directive by the Reserve Bank of India from April 2018 to ban banks and finance companies for "dealing in virtual currencies or providing services to facilitate" anyone trading in crypto.

- NPCI has not blocked the trades given that the RBI did not come out with any directive following the Supreme Court ruling.

What is a cryptocurrency?

Cryptocurrencies are digital currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of units of currency and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.

It works on blockchain technology.

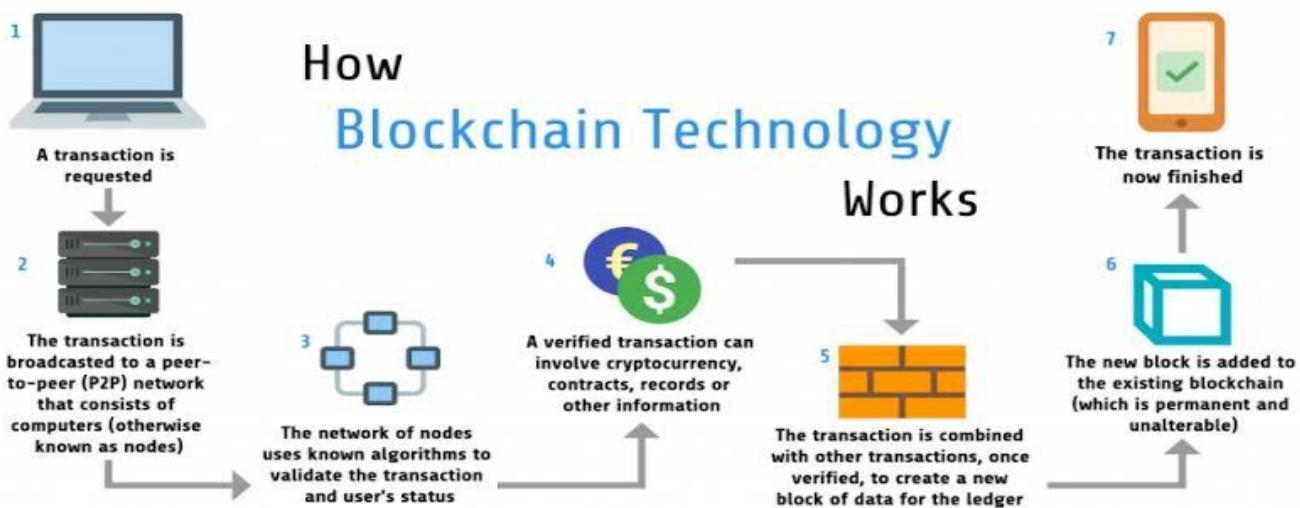
Examples: Bitcoin, Ethereum etc.

Why is it in demand?

1. Funds transfer between two parties will be easy without the need of third party like credit/debit cards or banks.
2. It is a cheaper alternative compared to other online transactions.
3. Payments are safe and secured and offer an unprecedented level of anonymity.
4. Modern cryptocurrency systems come with a user “wallet” or account address which is accessible only by a public key and private key.
5. The private key is only known to the owner of the wallet.
6. Funds transfer are completed with minimal processing fees.

Disadvantages:

1. The almost hidden nature of cryptocurrency transactions makes them easy to be the focus of illegal activities such as money laundering, tax-evasion and possibly even terror-financing.
2. Payments are not irreversible.
3. Cryptocurrencies are not accepted everywhere and have limited value elsewhere
4. There is concern that cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin are not rooted in any material goods. Some research, however, has identified that the cost of producing a Bitcoin, which requires an increasingly large amount of energy, is directly related to its market price.



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Various cryptocurrencies.
2. Cryptocurrencies launched by various countries.
3. What is Blockchain technology?

4. About NPCI.

Mains Link:

What are Cryptocurrencies? Why is there a need for regulation? Discuss.

2. Intellectual property waiver for Covid-19 vaccines:

Context:

The United States has announced support for waiving intellectual property protection for Covid-19 vaccines, saying extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary measures.

- The US will pursue “text-based negotiations” on the waiver at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

What are Text-based negotiations?

They involve negotiators exchanging texts with their preferred wording and then thrashing out a consensus on the working — a fairly long-drawn affair.

What does the intellectual property waiver for Covid-19 vaccines mean?

The IP waiver might open up space for production of Covid vaccines with emergency use authorisations (EUA) — such as those developed by Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Novavax, Johnson & Johnson and Bharat Biotech — on a larger scale in middle-income countries.

- Most production is currently concentrated in high-income countries; production by middle-income countries has been happening through licensing or technology transfer agreements.

What was the earlier proposal from India and South Africa?

In October 2020, India and South Africa had asked the WTO to waive certain conditions of **the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement** that could impede timely access to affordable medical products to combat Covid-19.

- The countries had asked the TRIPS Council to recommend, “as early as possible”, a waiver on the implementation, application and enforcement of four sections in the second part of the agreement.
- These sections — 1, 4, 5, and 7 — pertain to copyright and related rights, industrial designs, patents, and the protection of undisclosed information.

What are patents and IP rights?

A patent represents a powerful intellectual property right, and is an exclusive monopoly granted by a government to an inventor for a limited, pre-specified time. It provides an enforceable legal right to prevent others from copying the invention.

Patents can be either process patents or product patents:

1. A product patent ensures that the rights to the final product is protected, and anyone other than the patent holder can be restrained from manufacturing it during a specified period, even if they were to use a different process.
2. A process patent enables any person other than the patent holder to manufacture the patented product by modifying certain processes in the manufacturing exercise.

Patent regime in India:

India moved from product patenting to process patenting in the 1970s, which enabled India to become a significant producer of generic drugs at global scale, and allowed companies like Cipla to provide Africa with anti-HIV drugs in the 1990s.

- But due to obligations arising out of the TRIPS Agreement, India had to **amend the Patents Act in 2005**, and **switch to a product patents regime across the pharma, chemicals, and biotech sectors**.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is TRIPS?
2. Indian Patents Act, 2005.
3. Patent regime in India.
4. What is compulsory Licensing?

Mains Link:

Write a note on compulsory Licensing.

Link:<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-ip-waiver-for-covid-vaccines-7304992/lite/>.

3. Why are monoclonal antibody therapies in focus & how they work?

Context:

India is facing shortages of the two **monoclonal antibody therapies** — Itoizumab and Tocilizumab.

- In this article, we shall understand what are antibodies and monoclonal antibodies.

What are Monoclonal antibodies?

They are **artificially created antibodies** that aim to aid the body's natural immune system.

They target a specific antigen — a protein from the pathogen that induces immune response.

How are they created?

Monoclonal antibodies can be created in the lab by exposing white blood cells to a particular antigen.

To increase the quantity of antibodies produced, a single white blood cell is cloned, which in turn is used to create identical copies of the antibodies.

- In the case of Covid-19, scientists usually work with the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which facilitates the entry of the virus into the host cell.

Need for monoclonal antibodies:

In a healthy body, the immune system is able to create antibodies — tiny Y-shaped proteins in our blood that recognise microbial enemies and bind to them, signalling the immune system to then launch an attack on the pathogen.

However, for people whose immune systems are unable to make sufficient amounts of these antibodies, scientists provide a helping hand- using monoclonal antibodies.

History:

The idea of delivering antibodies to treat a disease dates as far back as the 1900s, when Nobel-prize winning German immunologist **Paul Ehrlich** proposed the idea of a ‘Zauberkugel’ (magic bullet), a compound which selectively targets a pathogen.

- From then, it took eight decades of research to finally arrive at Muromonab-CD3, the world’s first monoclonal antibody to be approved for clinical use in humans.
- **Muromonab-CD3** is an immunosuppressant drug given to reduce acute rejection in patients with organ transplants.

Applications:

Monoclonal antibodies are now relatively common. They are used in treating Ebola, HIV, psoriasis etc.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What are antibodies?
2. What are monoclonal antibodies?
3. How they are created?
4. Applications.

Link:https://theprint.in/health/itolizumab-to-tocilizumab-why-monoclonal-antibody-therapies-are-in-focus-how-they-work/658217/?utm_source=izooto&utm_medium=push_notification&utm_campaign=ThePrint&

4. What Beijing's new crackdown means for cryptocurrencies in China?

Context:

Chinese regulators have tightened restrictions on use of Cryptocurrencies.

- The new rules greatly expanded the scope of prohibited services, and judged that “virtual currencies are not supported by any real value”.

As per the latest changes:

1. Banks and online payment firms will not offer any crypto-related services, such as account openings, registration, trading, clearing, settlement and insurance. This also covers services that were not previously mentioned.
2. Institutions are prohibited from providing cryptocurrency saving, trust or pledging services and issuing crypto-related financial products. And virtual currencies must not be used as investment targets by trust and fund products.

Background:

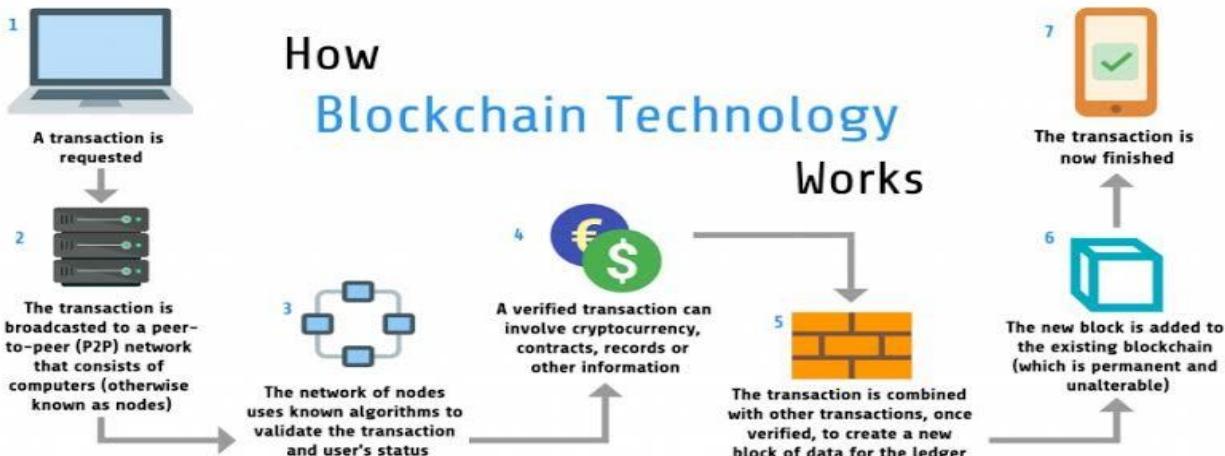
China does not recognise cryptocurrencies as legal tender and the banking system does not accept cryptocurrencies or provide relevant services.

Why has China tightened regulation?

The directive warned speculative bitcoin trading had rebounded, infringing “the safety of people’s property and disrupting the normal economic and financial order.

What's the impact of the crackdown?

- The fresh crackdown makes it more difficult for individuals to buy cryptocurrencies using various payment channels.
- It could impact miners' business by making it harder for them to exchange cryptocurrencies for yuan.
- But banks and payment companies also face challenges of identifying money flows related to



cryptocurrencies.

What are Cryptocurrencies?

Cryptocurrencies are digital currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of units of currency and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.

Examples: Bitcoin, Ethereum etc.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Various cryptocurrencies.
- Cryptocurrencies launched by various countries.
- What is Blockchain technology?

Mains Link : What are Cryptocurrencies? Why is there a need for regulation? Discuss.

Link:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/china-cryptocurrency-crackdown-explained-new-rules-impact-7322410/lite/>.

5. DRDO's Covid-19 antibody detection kit:

Context:

The Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS), a laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has developed a **Covid-19 antibody detection kit called 'Dipcovan'**.

About Dipcovan:

- The Dipcovan kit can detect both spike as well as nucleocapsid (S&N) proteins of SARS-CoV-2 virus with a high sensitivity of 97 % and specificity of 99%.
- The kit has a shelf life of 18 months.
- It has been developed in association with Vanguard Diagnostics Pvt Ltd.
- The antibody detection kit is approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in April 2021.

Antibody:

- Antibody, also called **immunoglobulin** is a protective protein produced by the immune system in response to the presence of a foreign substance, called an antigen.
- Antibodies recognize and attack onto antigens in order to remove them from the body.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- Differentiate between- RT- PCR, Rapid antibody and rapid antigen tests.

2. What are antibodies?
3. What are antigens?
4. How does the body's immune system work?
5. What are lymphocytes?

6. Coronavirus that affects humans.

Mains Link:

Write a note on rapid antigen tests.

Topics: Conservation related issues, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

1. The Global Forest Goals Report 2021: UN Report:

Context:

Released recently, the Report has been prepared by **the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations**.

- It provides an initial overview of progress of Goals and targets contained within **the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030**.

Key findings:

1. Covid-19 pandemic has aggravated the challenges faced by countries in managing their forests.
2. **Overall impact:** More than just a health crisis, Covid-19 is driving losses of lives and livelihoods, extreme poverty, inequality, and food insecurity, and it has put the 'Future We Want' further out of reach.
3. **Impact on Global Output:** It is estimated that world gross product fell by an estimated 4.3% in 2020. It is the sharpest contraction of global output since the Great Depression.
4. **On the economic front**, forest-dependent populations have faced job loss, reduced income, diminished access to markets and information, and for many women and youth, a contraction in seasonal employment.
5. **Many forest dependent populations**, especially those in remote or hard to reach places, have faced difficulties accessing healthcare or find that government assistance programmes and basic services are disrupted.
6. **Pandemic driven health and socio-economic outcomes have increased pressure on forests.** This is because, to ease their growing vulnerability, many indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as returning migrants and urban workers, have retreated deeper into the woods to seek food, fuel, shelter, and protection from the risks of Covid-19.
7. One million species were at risk of extinction and that 100 million hectares of tropical forest were lost from 1980 to 2000.

What needs to be done?

- **Sustainably resourced and managed forests** can bolster employment, disaster risk reduction, food security and social safety nets, for starters.
- **With regard to global health**, safeguarding and restoring forests are among the environmental actions that can reduce the risk of future zoonotic disease outbreaks.
- The report called for a **future course of action that included greater sustainability and a greener and more inclusive economy** to tackle the threats of Covid-19, climate change and the biodiversity crisis faced by forests.

2. Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil:

Context:

Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas flagged off the first supply of UCO (Used Cooking Oil) based Biodiesel blended Diesel.

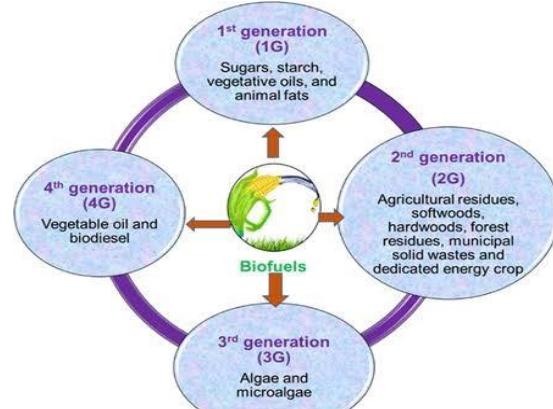
Background:

To create an eco-system for collection and conversion of UCO into Biodiesel, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas had initiated **Expressions of Interest for "Procurement of Bio-diesel produced from Used Cooking Oil"** on the occasion of World Biofuel Day on 10th August 2019.

- Under this initiative, OMCs offer periodically incremental price guarantees for five years and extend off-take guarantees for ten years to prospective entrepreneurs.

Concerns associated with the consumption of used cooking oil (UCO):

- During frying, several properties of oil are altered, Total Polar Compounds (TPC) are formed on repeated frying.
- The toxicity of these compounds is associated with several diseases such as hypertension, atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, liver diseases.



InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

- What is a biofuel?
- Categorisation of biofuels.
- Overview of National Policy on Biofuels.
- What is ethanol? How is it produced?

Mains Link:

Discuss the importance of biofuels for India?
Critically examine whether the national policy on biofuels will help India unlock its biofuel potential?

3. UN Report on human-caused methane emissions:

Context:

The report, titled **Global Methane Assessment: Benefits and Costs of Mitigating Methane Emissions** was recently released by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Key findings:

Main Concerns:

- Human-caused methane emissions are increasing faster currently than at any other time since record keeping began in the 1980s.
- Carbon dioxide levels have dropped during the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. However, methane in the atmosphere reached record levels last year.
- This was a cause of concern as methane was an extremely powerful greenhouse gas. It was responsible for about 30 percent of warming since pre-industrial times.



Sources of human-caused methane emissions:

- Most human-caused methane emissions came from three sectors: Fossil fuels, waste and agriculture.
- Oil and gas extraction, processing and distribution accounted for 23 per cent of methane emissions in the fossil fuel sector. Coal mining accounted for 12 per cent of emissions.
- Landfills and wastewater made up about 20 per cent of emissions in the waste sector. In the agricultural sector, livestock emissions from manure and enteric fermentation constituted for roughly 32 per cent and rice cultivation eight per cent of emissions.

Mitigation potential varied between countries and regions:

- Europe had the greatest potential to curb methane emissions from farming, fossil fuel operations and waste management.
- India had the greatest potential to reduce methane emissions in the waste sector. China's mitigation potential was best in coal production and livestock, while Africa's was in livestock, followed by oil and gas.

- The fossil fuel industry had the greatest potential for low-cost methane cuts.

Suggestions:

1. Human-caused methane emissions must be cut by 45 per cent to avoid the worst effects of climate change.
2. Such a cut would prevent a rise in global warming by up to 0.3 degrees Celsius by 2045.
3. It would also prevent 260,000 premature deaths, 775,000 asthma-related hospital visits annually, as well as 25 million tonnes of crop losses.

Three behavioural changes — reducing food waste and loss, improving livestock management and adopting healthy diets (vegetarian or with a lower meat and dairy content) — **could reduce methane emissions by 65–80 million tonnes per year over the next few decades.**

Link: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/reduce-human-caused-methane-emissions-by-45-to-avoid-worst-of-climate-change-un-76837>.

4. Green panel allows Great Nicobar plan to advance:

Context:

The **Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC) - Infrastructure I** of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has flagged serious concerns about **NITI Aayog's ambitious project for Great Nicobar Island.**

- The committee has, however, “recommended” it “for grant of terms of reference (TOR)” for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies, which in the first instance will include baseline studies over three months.

About the project for Great Nicobar Island:

The proposal includes an international container transshipment terminal, a greenfield international airport, a power plant and a township complex spread over 166 sq. km. (mainly pristine coastal systems and tropical forests), and is estimated to cost ₹75,000 crore.

What are the main concerns?

- The plan document has no information about a note on seismic and tsunami hazards, freshwater requirement details and details of the impact on **the Giant Leatherback turtle**.
- Besides, there were no details of the trees to be felled — a number that could run into millions since 130 sq. km. of the project area has some of the finest **tropical forests in India**.
- The committee raised a number of additional issues, including about **Galathea Bay**, the site of the port and the centrepiece of the NITI Aayog proposal. Galathea Bay is an iconic nesting site in India of the enigmatic **Giant Leatherback, the world's largest marine turtle**.

Action points listed out by the committee:

1. The need for an independent assessment of terrestrial and marine biodiversity.
2. A study on the impact of dredging, reclamation and port operations, including oil spills.
3. The need for studies of alternative sites for the port with a focus on environmental and ecological impact, especially on turtles, analysis of risk-handling capabilities.
4. A seismic and tsunami hazard map, a disaster management plan, details of labour, labour camps and their requirements.
5. An assessment of the cumulative impact, and a hydro-geological study to assess impact on round and surface water regimes.

Need for conservation:

Ecological surveys in the last few years have reported a number of new species. These include the critically endangered Nicobar shrew, the Great Nicobar crake, the Nicobar frog, the Nicobar cat snake, a new skink (*Lipinia sp*), a new lizard (*Dibamus sp*), and a snake of the *Lycodon* sp that is yet to be described.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GL18ILO16.1&imageview=0>.

5. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):

Context:

The Union Territory of Puducherry has become the fourth State/UT after Goa, Telangana and Andaman & Nicobar Islands to provide assured tap water supply to every rural home under **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)**.

About the Jal Jeevan Mission:

JJM envisages supply of **55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household** through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024**.

It is under **the Ministry of Jal Shakti**.

It also encompasses:

1. Prioritizing provision of FHTCs in quality affected areas, villages in drought prone and desert areas, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) villages, etc.
2. Providing functional tap connection to Schools, Anganwadi centres, Gram Panchayat buildings, Health centres, wellness centres and community buildings.
3. Technological interventions for removal of contaminants where water quality is an issue.

Implementation:

- The Mission is based on a **community approach** to water and includes extensive Information, Education and Communication as a key component of the mission.
- JJM looks to create a **jan andolan for water**, thereby making it everyone's priority.
- The fund sharing pattern between the Centre and states is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 50:50 for other states, and 100% for Union Territories.

InstaLinks:

3. Fund allocation.

Prelims Link:

1. Mission goal.
2. Implementation.

Mains Link:

Discuss the significance of the mission.

6. 186 elephants killed on rail tracks in over 10 years:

According to **the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, a total of 186 elephants were killed after being hit by trains across India between 2009-10 and 2020-21.

- Assam accounted for the highest number of elephant casualties on railway tracks (62), followed by West Bengal (57), and Odisha (27).

Key measures taken:

1. Setting up of a Permanent Coordination Committee between the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) and the MoEFCC for preventing elephant deaths in train accidents.
2. Clearing of vegetation along railway tracks to enable clear view for loco pilots.
3. Using signage boards at suitable points to alert loco pilots about elephant presence.
4. Moderating slopes of elevated sections of railway tracks.
5. Setting up underpass/overpass for safe passage of elephants.
6. Regulation of train speed from sunset to sunrise in vulnerable stretches.
7. Regular patrolling of vulnerable stretches of railway tracks by frontline staff of the Forest Department and wildlife watchers.

Eco Bridges as a solution:

1. Eco Bridges are wildlife corridors also known as wildlife crossing that are a link of wildlife habitat which connects two larger areas of similar wildlife habitat.
2. It connects wildlife populations that would otherwise be separated by human activities or structures such as roads and highways, other infrastructure development, or logging and farming, etc.
3. Eco Bridges aims at enhancing wildlife connectivity.
4. These are made up of native vegetation i.e., it is overlaid with planting from the area to give a contiguous look with the landscape.

InstaLinks:**Prelims Link:**

1. IUCN conservation status of Asian Elephant.
2. Elephant corridors in India.
3. Calving period of elephants.
4. Heritage animal of India.
5. About Gaj Yatra.

6. Elephant herd is led by?

7. State with highest elephant population in India.

Mains Link:

Discuss the measures suggested by the Environment Ministry to manage man-elephant conflicts.

7. WWF report on snow leopard:

Context:

The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) has released a report titled "Over 100 Years of Snow Leopard Research — A spatially explicit review of the state of knowledge in the snow leopard range".

Key findings:

1. More than 70 per cent habitat of the snow leopard, over 12 Asian countries, remains unresearched.
2. Nepal, India and China had conducted the most snow leopard research, followed by Mongolia and Pakistan.
3. Despite a major research focus on snow leopard population assessments, less than three per cent of the big cat's range had robust data on abundance.
4. Globally, there could be as few as 4,000 snow leopards left in Asia's high mountains and this remaining population faces continued and emerging threats.

Threats include:

Increased habitat loss and degradation, poaching and conflict with communities.

Snow Leopard conservation in India:

- India has been conserving snow leopard and its habitat through the **Project Snow Leopard (PSL)**.
- India is also party to the **Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Programme since 2013**.
- For conservation, India has identified **three large landscapes, namely**, Hemis-Spiti across Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh; Nanda Devi – Gangotri in Uttarakhand; and Khangchendzonga – Tawang across Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Project Snow Leopard (PSL)** was launched in 2009 to promote an inclusive and participatory approach to conserve snow leopards and their habitat.
- **Snow Leopard** is in the list of 22 critically endangered species for the **recovery programme of the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change**. (The recovery programme for critically endangered species in India now includes 22 wildlife species after including caracal, a medium-sized wildcat found.)

Protection:

- Snow leopards are categorized as 'Vulnerable' by IUCN and in the Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
- They are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), revealing the need for the highest conservation status to the species, both globally and in India.

Conservation efforts launched by India are:

1. Project Snow Leopard (PSL) : It promotes an inclusive and participatory approach to conservation that fully involves local communities.
2. SECURE Himalaya: Global Environment Facility (GEF)-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funded the project on conservation of high altitude biodiversity and reducing the dependency of local communities on the natural ecosystem. This project is now operational in four snow leopard range states, namely, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. IUCN Conservation status of snow leopard.
2. About Project Snow Leopard.
3. Snow Leopards in India- distribution and conservation centres.
4. About GSLEP.

5. About Bishkek declaration.

Link:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/wildlife-biodiversity/more-than-70-snow-leopard-habitat-unexplored-wwf-report-76946>.

8. Iceberg A-76- World's largest iceberg breaks off in Antarctica as glaciers retreat:

Context:

Iceberg A-76 calved from the western side of the **Ronne Ice Shelf in Antarctica** and is now floating on the **Weddell Sea**.

- Measurements taken from satellites and planes confirm it's now the world's largest.
- It measures around 170 kilometers (105 miles) long and 25 kilometers (15 miles) wide.

What's the Concern?

The Antarctica ice sheet is warming faster than the rest of the planet, causing melting of snow and ice covers as well as the retreat of glaciers, especially around the Weddell Sea. As glaciers retreat, chunks of ice break off and float adrift until they break apart or crash into land.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Location of the iceberg.
2. About Antarctica.
3. Weddel sea.

4. Ronne Ice Shelf.

Mains Link:

Discuss the impact of climate change on Antarctica.

9. NGT upholds rights of pastoralists in Banni grasslands:

Context:

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered all encroachments to be removed from **Gujarat's Banni grasslands** within six months and directed a joint committee to prepare an action plan in a month.

- The court also said the Maldharis will continue to hold the right to conserve the community forests in the area, granted to them as per the provisions in **Section 3 of Forest Rights Act, 2006**.

What's the issue?

The Maldhari community had filed a case against the rampant encroachment in the ecologically-sensitive grassland in May, 2018.

Who are Maldharis?

Maldharis are a tribal herdsmen community in Gujarat, India.

Maldhari community breeds Banni Buffaloes, a species endemic to the region. The buffaloes are adaptive to Kutch's hot weather conditions.

About Banni Grasslands:

- Banni grassland is spread over 2,618 kilometres and accounts for almost 45 per cent of the pastures in Gujarat.
- It comprises 48 hamlets / villages organised into 19 panchayats, with a population of about 40,000.
- Two ecosystems, **wetlands and grasslands, are juxtaposed in Banni**.
- The area is rich in flora and fauna, with 192 species of plants, 262 species of birds, several species of mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

InstaCurious: Like Maldhari community, can you think of other communities in India which are protecting wildlife & biodiversity (like Bishnois).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Banni Grasslands.
2. Who are Maldharis?
3. About NGT.

Mains Link:

What are reserve forests? Discuss their significance.

10. High levels of mercury found in rivers linked to Greenland Ice Sheet:

Context:

According to recent research, high concentrations of **mercury** were found in the water bodies fed by the **Greenland Ice Sheet**.

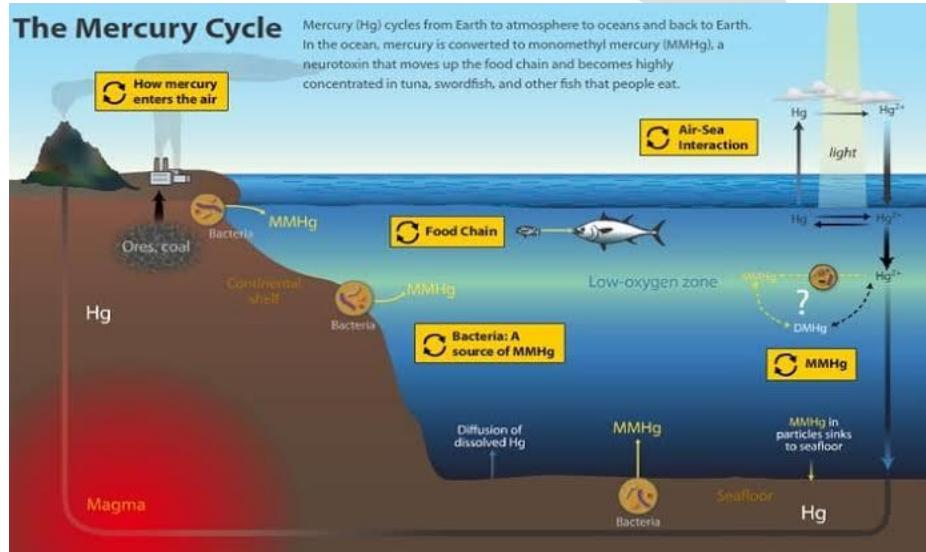
Mercury level found:

Typical dissolved mercury content in rivers is about 1 – 10 ng L-1 (the equivalent of a salt grain-sized amount of mercury in an Olympic swimming pool of water).

- In the water bodies fed by the **Greenland Ice Sheet**, scientists found dissolved mercury levels in excess of 150 ng L-1, far higher than an average river.

What are the reasons behind the high concentration of mercury?

It is not the industries or other anthropogenic activities, as is the case with most contaminants. **Mercury-rich bedrock** is weathered during the slow movement of glaciers down the slope of hills and the ground particles are carried into the streams as the glacier melts.



What are the concerns now?

1. So far, efforts were aimed at preventing mercury being released from **direct anthropogenic activity, like industry**. But **mercury coming from climatically sensitive environments like glaciers could be a source that is much more difficult to manage**.
2. Besides, this will lead to **increased water pollution** as the Earth continues to heat up and ice-sheets and glaciers melt faster than ever before.

Significance of the latest discovery:

- We now understand that even glaciers carry potential toxins. This will force researchers to study how these toxins influence water quality and downstream communities, which may alter in a warming world.
- Also, it shall help us understand its influence on the Earth's geochemical and biological processes.

Basics- about Mercury:

Sources: Mercury is a naturally occurring element that is found in air, water and soil. Released into the atmosphere through natural processes such as weathering of rocks, volcanic eruptions, geothermal activities, forest fires, etc. Mercury is also released through human activities.

Mercury may have toxic effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, and on lungs, kidneys, skin and eyes.

Chemical of major public health concern- Mercury is considered by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as one of the top ten chemicals or groups of chemicals of major public health concern.

Minamata Disease: A disorder caused by methylmercury poisoning that was first described in the inhabitants of Minamata Bay, Japan and resulted from their eating fish contaminated with mercury industrial waste.

About the Minamata Convention:

- The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury and its compounds.
- It was agreed at **the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Geneva, Switzerland 2013**. It entered into force in 2017.
- **Controlling the anthropogenic releases** of mercury throughout its lifecycle is one of the key obligations under the Convention.
- **It is a UN treaty.**
- The Convention also addresses **interim storage of mercury and its disposal once it becomes waste, sites contaminated by mercury as well as health issues.**
- **India** has ratified the Convention.

InstaCurious:

1. The Arctic region is adversely affected by pollution of many sorts. There can be a Mains question on this. **Note down a few important points from here.**

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About Mercury- Source, contamination and effects on health.
2. About Minamata disease.
3. What is Minamata convention?
4. What is WHO ten chemicals or groups of chemicals of major public health concern?
5. Meaning of Ratification of a convention.

Mains Link:

Write a note on mercury contamination and discuss international efforts to address the issue.

Link:<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/environment/curiously-high-levels-of-mercury-found-in-rivers-linked-to-greenland-ice-sheet-77095>.

11. National Mission on use of Biomass in coal based thermal power plants:

Context:

To address the issue of air pollution due to farm stubble burning and to reduce carbon footprints of thermal power generation, **Ministry of Power** has decided to set up a **National Mission on use of Biomass in coal based thermal power plants**.

Objectives of the mission:

- (a) To increase the level of co-firing from present 5% to higher levels to have a larger share of carbon neutral power generation from the thermal power plants.
- (b) To take up R&D activity in boiler design to handle the higher amount of silica, alkalis in the biomass pellets.
- (c) To facilitate overcoming the constraints in supply chain of bio mass pellets and agro- residue and its transport upto to the power plants.
- (d) To consider regulatory issues in biomass co-firing.

Implementation:

1. The Mission would have a Steering Committee headed by Secretary (Power) comprising of all stakeholders including representatives from Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG), Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) etc.
2. The Executive Committee would be headed by Member (Thermal), CEA. NTPC will play a larger role in providing logistic and infrastructure support in the proposed National Mission.

What is Biomass Cofiring?

It refers to the concurrent blending and combustion of biomass materials with other fuels such as natural gas and coal within a boiler, which reduce the use of fossil fuels for energy generation and emissions without significantly increasing costs and infrastructure investments.

Benefits of Cofiring:

1. Biomass cofiring is a promising technology to decrease the use of fossil fuels for energy generation and hence mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Coal and biomass cofiring accounts for the relevant advantages of a relative ease of implementation and an effective reduction of CO₂ and other pollutant (SO_x, NO_x) emissions to the atmosphere.
3. Cofiring biomass with coal may record no loss in total boiler efficiency after adjusting combustion output for the new fuel mixture.

Insta Curious:

1. Are there any purely natural gas based thermal plants in India? [Read Here](#).
2. Also do you think the future belongs to gas based plants in India? [Read here](#).

3. Issues.

4. Gases released from stubble burning.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. What is Biomass Cofiring?
2. Benefits.

Mains Link:

Write a note on biomass Cofiring.

12. Panel to investigate charges of illegal construction in Mekedatu:

Context:

Acting **suo motu** based on a media report, the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has appointed a joint committee to look into allegations of unauthorised construction activity taking place in **Mekedatu**, where the Karnataka government had proposed to construct a **dam across the Cauvery River**.

Jurisdiction of NGT over such matters:

If any project is to be implemented without conducting any **environmental impact assessment study** and without obtaining necessary clearance, if any required, then it will be an unauthorised act affecting the environment. In such matters, **the NGT would get the jurisdiction of intervening on the issue**.

Where is it located?

Mekedatu, meaning **goat's leap**, is a deep gorge situated at the confluence of the rivers Cauvery and its tributary Arkavathi.

Issues surrounding Mekedatu project:

The project aims to store and supply water for drinking purposes for the Bengaluru city. Around 400 megawatts (MW) of power is also proposed to be generated through the project.

- However, Tamil Nadu objected saying that the

project would affect the flow of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu also argues that **the project is against the final order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)** in which the SC held that no state can claim exclusive ownership or assert rights to deprive other states of the waters of inter-state rivers.

Cauvery River:

Origin: River rises on Brahmagiri Hill of the Western Ghats in south-western Karnataka state.

The river basin covers three states and a Union Territory: Tamil Nadu, 43,868 square kilometres, Karnataka, 34,273 square kilometres I, Kerala, 2,866 square kilometres and Puducherry.

Key tributaries: Hemavati, Lakshmantirtha, Kabini, Amaravati, Noyil, and Bhavani rivers.

Falls along the way: Upon entering Tamil Nadu, the Kaveri continues through a series of twisted wild gorges until it reaches Hogenakkal Falls.

Mekedatu project

Conceived in early 2000 as a hydroelectricity project

Proposed as a balancing reservoir in 2013

Cabinet clears the project in February 2017

Project involves construction of a balancing reservoir at Mekedatu, near Kanakapura, in Ramanagaram district

Located about 100 km from Bengaluru

Estimated cost (in 2017) ₹ 5,912 crore

The reservoir will have impounding capacity of 66 tmcft

Proposed to produce 400 MW of power and supply drinking water to Bengaluru and Ramanagaram districts



A file photo of the Cauvery at Mekedatu near Kanakapura.

Conditions laid down by the CWC

While the CWC has in principle allowed Karnataka to take up the DPR for the project, it has imposed some conditions. They include:

1. Karnataka to consider points raised by Tamil Nadu. View of other co-basin States to be taken into consideration so that inter-State issues can be resolved amicably

the DPR by the Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Water Resources

2. Acceptance of the project by Cauvery Water Management Authority is a prerequisite for consideration of

3. The DPR has to be prepared in due consultation with the Central Electricity Authority and the Central Water Commission

4. The cost of preparing the DPR to be borne by Karnataka

Dams: There the Mettur Dam was constructed for irrigation and hydel power in Tamil Nadu.

Insta Curious:

1. In addition to SIA, also know the definitions and examples of SIA and HIA.

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Tributaries of Cauvery.
2. Basin states.
3. Important falls and dams across the river.
4. Where is Mekedatu?
5. What is the project related to?

6. Beneficiaries of the project.

Mains Link:

Write a note on the Mekedatu project.

Link:<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G638K7C9A.1&imageview=0>.

Topics: Disaster and management.

1. About uranium and its uses:

Context:

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested two persons with 7 kg natural uranium estimated to be worth around Rs 21 crore.

- The duo were placed under arrest under **the Atomic Energy Act of 1962** for possessing uranium without licence.

What exactly is uranium and what are its uses?

Occurrence: occurs naturally in low concentrations in soil, rock and water and is commercially extracted from uranium-bearing minerals.

Applications:

1. Uranium that has a silvery grey metallic appearance is mainly used in nuclear power plants due to its unique nuclear properties.
2. Depleted uranium is also used as shield against radiation in medical processes using radiation therapy and also while transporting radioactive materials.
3. Though itself radioactive, uranium's high density makes it effective in halting radiation.
4. Its high density also makes it useful as counterweights in aircraft and industrial machinery.

Uranium Mining In India:

- In India, Uranium deposits occur in the Dharwar rocks.
- It occurs along the Singbhum Copper belt (Jharkhand); Udaipur, Alwar and Jhunjhunu districts of Rajasthan, Durg district of Chhattisgarh, Bhandara district of Maharashtra and Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh.
- Significant quantity of reserves were recently discovered in parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana between Seshachalam forest and Sresailam (Southern edge of Andhra to Southern edge of Telangana).

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Radioactive vs non radioactive elements.
2. What is half life of an element? How is it measured?
3. Abundance of various elements in earth's crust.
4. How uranium contaminates groundwater?
5. Uranium limits- BIS vs WHO.

Mains Link:

A recent report has highlighted uranium contamination in India's groundwater. Discuss the causes, its effects and ways to address the issue?

Link:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-ats-seizes-7kg-uranium-worth-rs-21-crore-from-a-scrap-dealer-heres-what-happened-7305856/lite/>.

Topics: Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention

1. Govt vs WhatsApp on privacy policy:

Context:

Communication between the IT Ministry and WhatsApp on the issue of **the updated privacy policy** has been going on since January this year.

- The Ministry has recently warned WhatsApp once again to roll back its latest update in privacy policy. This time, the Ministry has also warned of legal action if it does not get a satisfactory reply by May 25.

Key Features of the Privacy Policy:

Information Sharing with Third Party Services: When users rely on third-party services or other Facebook Company Products that are integrated with our Services, those third-party services may receive information about what you or others share with them.

Hardware Information: WhatsApp collects information from devices such as battery level, signal strength, app version, browser information, mobile network, connection information (including phone number, mobile operator or ISP) among others.

Deleting the Account: If someone only deletes the WhatsApp app from their device without using the in-app delete my account feature, then that user's information will remain stored with the platform.

Data Storage: WhatsApp mentions that it uses Facebook's global infrastructure and data centers including those in the United States to store user data. It also states that the data in some cases will be transferred to the United States or other parts where Facebook's affiliate companies are based.

Location: Even if a user does not use their location-relation features, WhatsApp collects IP addresses and other information like phone number area codes to estimate your general location (city, country).

Payment Services: WhatsApp says that if anyone uses their payments services they will process additional information about you, including payment account and transaction information.

What are the concerns and why is the policy being criticised?

The Ministry has reiterated that the changes to WhatsApp's privacy policy and the manner of introducing them undermine the sacrosanct values of informational privacy, data security and user choice for Indian users.

- The new WhatsApp policy contradicts the recommendations of the **Srikrishna Committee report**, which forms the basis of the Data Protection Bill 2019.
- The principle of **Data Localisation**, which aims to put curbs on the transfer of personal data outside the country, may come in conflict with WhatsApp's new privacy policy.
- With the updated privacy policy, WhatsApp can now share one's **metadata**, essentially everything beyond the conversation's actual text.
- If users disagree with the messaging platform's updated privacy policy, they will have to quit WhatsApp when the new terms of service are set to come into effect.

2. The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:

Context:

New IT rules to regulate digital content, featuring a **code of ethics and a three-tier grievance redressal framework**, have come into force (May 26).

Background:

On February 25, the Centre framed the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021**, in the exercise of powers under **section 87 (2) of the Information Technology Act, 2000** and in supersession of the earlier Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011, which will come into effect from May 26.

Overview of the new rules:

1. It mandates a **grievance redressal system** for over the top (OTT) and digital portals in the country. This is necessary for the users of social media to raise their grievance against the misuse of social media.

2. **Significant social media firms** have to appoint a **chief compliance officer** and have a **nodal contact person** who can be in touch with law enforcement agencies 24/7.
3. **A grievance officer:** Social media platforms will also have to name a **grievance officer** who shall register the grievance within 24 hours and dispose of it in 15 days.
4. **Removal of content:** If there are complaints against the dignity of users, particularly women - about exposed private parts of individuals or nudity or sexual act or impersonation etc - social media platforms will be required to remove that within 24 hours after a complaint is made.
5. **A monthly report:** They also will have to publish a monthly report about the number of complaints received and the status of redressal.
6. There will be **three levels of regulation for news publishers** -- self-regulation, a self-regulatory body, headed by a retired judge or an eminent person, and oversight from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, including codes of practices and a grievance committee.

What is a significant social media intermediary and benefits obtained under it?

Social media companies with more than 50 lakh registered users will be considered 'significant social media intermediaries', as per the new norms.

What happens in case of non compliance?

- Social media giants such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp messenger **could face a ban** if they do not comply with the new Information Technology rules.
- They also run the risk of losing their status as "**intermediaries**" and may become liable for criminal action if they do not comply with the revised regulations.

What are the Concerns being raised?

1. Various industry bodies have written to the government **for up to a one-year compliance window, particularly in view of the pandemic.**
2. Concerns have also been expressed over potential **unavailability of 'safe harbour' protection** given to intermediaries under **Section 79 of the IT Act**, under the new rules.
3. They have requested a re-think over a clause in the new rules which can lead to **imposition of criminal liability upon the employees for non-compliance by intermediaries**, asking for it to be dropped in the interest of ease of doing business.
4. **Originator traceability mandate in end-to-end encrypted platforms** could end up weakening the security architecture of the platform. This could render the entire citizenry susceptible to cyberattacks by hostile actors.
5. Additionally, the extant data retention mandate entailed **risking privacy of users in India and abroad** in addition to security risks and technical complexities which requires a lot of time for development and testing before integration with the existing ecosystem.

InstaCurious:

1. It's not the Home ministry which has come up with these rules. It's the ministry of electronics and information technology.
2. Whether govt bans Facebook, Twitter etc or not, but as an aspirant you should log out of them till you get your rank(provided they still exist in India till then)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. Overview of the new rules.
2. Who are intermediaries as per the definition?
3. What is safe harbour protection?

4. Grievance redressal mechanism as provided under the new rules.

Mains Link:

What are the concerns being raised against the new IT rules? Discuss ways to address these concerns.

3. WhatsApp Approaches Delhi High Court; Says New Media Rules Can Violate User Privacy:

Context:

WhatsApp has moved the Delhi High Court against **India's new and stricter IT Rules** that require instant messaging platforms to aid in **identifying the 'originator' of messages**.

- The petition challenged the **constitutional validity of the rules**, which came into force on May 26.

What's the contentious clause in new rules?

The **Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** state that **intermediary providing messaging services will "enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource"** following a judicial order passed by a court of competent jurisdiction or an order passed under **section 69 by the Competent Authority as per the Information Technology Act**.

Applicability of this clause:

The rules state that an order will be passed only for the purposes of prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of an offence related to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or of incitement to an offence relating to the above or in relation with rape, sexually explicit material or child sexual abuse material, punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than five years.

What are the arguments put forth by Whatsapp?

1. **Undermines people's right to privacy:** Rules violate the fundamental **right to privacy guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India**.
2. **Against the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in the K.S. Puttaswamy case:** The court had held that the right to privacy is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution.
3. **The right to anonymity:** More recently, the Supreme Court affirmed that the right to privacy included the **right to anonymity**.
4. **Breaking end-to-end encryption:** Enabling the identification of the first originator of information in India results in significant harm, including "breaking end-to-end encryption and chilling lawful speech".
5. **Violate the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression:** Privacy is inextricably intertwined with the right to freedom of speech and expression because it protects people from retaliation for expressing unpopular, but lawful, views.

Note:

We have Covered about the New IT Rules previously on: <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2021/05/26/the-information-technology-guidelines-for-intermediaries-and-digital-media-ethics-code-rules-2021/>.

Insta Curious:

1. Do you know about 'splinternet' ? It's an interesting concept related to the above post. [Read it here](#) (3 min read)

InstaLinks:

Prelims Link:

1. About the new IT rules.
2. Who are intermediaries as per the new rules.
3. When did the rules come into force?
4. What did the Supreme Court rule in the Puttaswamy case?
5. Right to Anonymity is covered under which Right under the constitution?

Mains Link:

Privacy is inextricably intertwined with the right to freedom of speech and expression because it protects people from retaliation for expressing unpopular, but lawful, views. Comment.

Link:

<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G638K7C9I.1&imageview=0>.



INSIGHTSIAS
Simplifying IAS Exam Preparation

INTEGRATED PRELIMS CUM MAINS (IPM) TEST SERIES 2022

A FLAGSHIP PROGRAM OF INSIGHTSIAS

- 50 Prelims + 52 Mains Tests in EBS Approach
- A single tailor-made timetable for both Prelims and Mains
- Flexibility in Mode and Timings
- Preparatory Classes, Pre-Test & Post-Test Discussions

- Mentorship - Personalised feedback for every test
- INSTA 30 and other INSTA Value added material
- Daily 2 Secure Answers Review
- Understand UPSC : Solve previous years' prelims papers + Discussion + strategy session

STARTS FROM 20TH JULY 2021

EARLY BIRD OFFER 15% DISCOUNT TILL 30TH JUNE 2021

OLD SUBSCRIBER 20% DISCOUNT



[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

Bangalore: 7483163074 / 9380863034, Delhi: 7303318519 / 011-49520205, Hyderabad: 8688512637

support@insightsias.com

INSIGHTSIAS

GENERAL STUDIES – 4

1. Kids from COVID-affected households get police help:

Context:

- As COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc across Gautam Buddha Nagar, affecting thousands of families in some form, a young IPS officer (Deputy Commissioner of Police (Women Safety- Vrinda Shukla) — in charge of women's safety in Noida — is diverting resources at her disposal to help children from affected households who were left to fend for themselves.
- The officer has sent teams to escort children, whose parents are in home isolation, for COVID tests at district hospitals, provide multiple meals per day and, in an instance even secured the academic future and possible adoption of siblings orphaned by the raging pandemic.
- Ms. Shukla took to social media and requested volunteers to step forward to help provide aid to such families. Following this appeal, she now has a team of 35 such volunteers.

2. Provide food, rations to stranded workers: SC:

Context:

The Supreme Court has ordered States across the country **to distribute dry rations to stranded migrant workers without ration cards and run community kitchens for them.**

- The court left it to the discretion of individual States to utilise either **the Centre's Atma Nirbhar Bharat Scheme**, which was implemented for giving dry rations to migrant workers in May and June of 2020, or any other alternative scheme.
- The Bench directed that “wide publicity” should be given about the various welfare schemes for migrant workers, including locations of community kitchens, so that needy persons would benefit.

Background:

The orders came in a suo moto proceeding initiated by the top court in the light of problems faced by migrants across the country.

Need for:

The government had recently submitted that it had opened control rooms to help the migrant workers. But it was the responsibility of the States to provide cooked food for stranded migrant workers.

- The real issue now is that such measures cover only people covered under the Food Security Act, that is, people with ration cards. Unorganised labourers, wandering from one place of work to another in mega cities, could not be expected to have ration cards.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GGQ8K1F40.1&imageview=0>.

InstaCurious:

- What's the definition of Unorganised Labourers/Workers in India – it's defined under the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 – check what it is [Here](#)

3. Plane wedding: DGCA must take action, say experts:

What's the issue?

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has launched an investigation into a case of **161 passengers on board a chartered SpiceJet flight flouting onboard Covid norms** while attending a mid-air wedding ceremony.

Wedding rituals were also organised onboard violating Covid related norms. The flight hovered over Madurai's Meenakshi Amman temple as the couple completed the marriage rituals.

- However, the company says they didn't know there were going to be rituals performed onboard.

What has the DGCA ruled?

In March, the DGCA had issued a circular to all airlines, airports and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to treat passengers who violate Covid-19 protocol, despite repeated warnings during the course of the flight, as “unruly passengers”.

- This meant that passengers who do not wear their masks appropriately or follow social distancing norms during a flight could land on the **no-fly list** for at least three months.
- **There are three levels of putting an offender on the no-fly list:** Three months for verbal abuse, six months for physical assault, and two years or more for life-threatening behaviour.
- The rules also stipulate that after the airline’s crew file a complaint, **an internal committee** formed by the airline will decide the nature of the offence and the level of punishment that needs to be given to the passenger.

What are the issues in the latest incident?

1. No one was wearing masks and PPE kits.
2. No social distancing.
3. Assembly of more than 100 people.
4. Violating all safety norms.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=GSJ8K51MA.1&imageview=0>.

InstaCurious:

1. Can you list down at least 4 ethical issues involved in this Covid-Escape wedding? (You can write them in the comments section).

4. IMA demands action against Ramdev:

Context:

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking his help **to stop the misinformation campaign on COVID-19 vaccination** and demanding action against Baba Ramdev for his alleged remarks on allopathy and allopathic doctors.

What's the issue?

In a recent video Baba Ramdev claimed that 10,000 doctors and several people have died despite taking both doses of vaccine. This is being seen as a deliberate move to stall the efforts of vaccination to reach our masses.

Need of the hour:

We must acknowledge and compliment all systems of medicine especially our Indian system of Ayurvedic Medicine, as each system is helping our people differently. However, no one should be allowed to propagate fear of vaccination.

What is vaccination?

Vaccination is a method to teach the immune system to trigger the antibodies and specialised immune-system cells in case of a future infection by an actual virus.

Insta Curious:

1. Not related to Maharshi Ramdev (but related to viruses though) – have you heard about an interesting phenomenon known as Antibody dependent enhancement (ADE)? [Read here](#).
2. Can you think of 4 ethical issues involved in Maharshi Ramdev's allergy towards allopathy? Please write them down in comments section.

Link: <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/MShareArticle?OrgId=G638K7CLO.1&imageview=0>.

FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. International Labour Day:

Celebrated across the world on May 1.

Often referred to as May Day.

The date was chosen by a pan-national organization of socialist and communist political parties to commemorate the **Haymarket affair**, which occurred in Chicago on 4 May 1886.

2. Operation Samudra Setu-II:

- Indian Navy has launched Operation Samudra Setu-II to augment the ongoing national mission for meeting the Oxygen requirements.
- Last year Indian Navy had launched Operation Samudra Setu as part of the Vande Bharat Mission and repatriated approx 4000 (3992) stranded and distressed Indian citizens from Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran.

3. Armed forces get powers for relief work:

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has invoked special provisions and granted emergency financial powers to the armed forces to empower them and speed up their efforts to tide over the current COVID-19 situation.
- The emergency financial powers will help formation commanders to establish and operate quarantine facilities, hospitals and undertake procurement, repair of equipment, items, material and stores, besides provisioning of various services and works required to support the ongoing effort against the pandemic.

4. Article 311:

J&K govt. teacher dismissed under Article 311 without inquiry.

- **Article 311** deals with dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of persons employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State.
- **Article 311(2), sub clause (c)** notes that where the President or the Governor, as the case may be, is satisfied that in the interest of the security of the State, it is not expedient to hold such inquiry into the allegations against a person, enquiry may be skipped.

5. P-8I patrol aircraft:

U.S. clears sale of six P-8I patrol aircraft to India.

- P-8I is a long-range, multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft manufactured by Boeing for the Indian Navy.
- The P-8I aircraft is designed to protect the vast coastline and territorial waters of India.
- It can conduct anti-submarine warfare, intelligence, maritime patrol, and surveillance and reconnaissance missions.



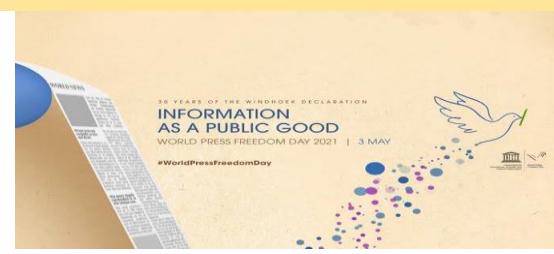
6. Xylophis deepaki:

- It is a new snake species discovered recently in Tamil Nadu.
- It is a tiny snake of just 20 cm length with iridescent scales.
- The species is named in honour of Indian herpetologist Deepak Veerappan for his contribution in erecting a new subfamily Xylophiinae to accommodate wood snakes.
- Wood snakes are harmless, sub-fossorial and often found while digging soil in farms and under the logs in the Western Ghats forests.



7. World Press Freedom Day:

- 3 May, the anniversary of the **Declaration of Windhoek** is celebrated worldwide as World Press Freedom Day.
- Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993, following the recommendation of UNESCO's General Conference.
- **Theme:** "Information as a Public Good".



8. Vorukh:

- It is a jamoat in northern Tajikistan. It is an exclave surrounded by Kyrgyzstan that forms part of the city of Isfara in Sughd Region.
- Jamoats are the third-level administrative divisions, similar to communes or municipalities, in the Central Asian country of Tajikistan.

Why in News?

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan border tension.



9. Odisha declares journalists as 'frontline COVID-19 warriors':

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik recently declared working journalists of the state as 'Frontline COVID-19 Warriors' and announced an ex-gratia of Rs 15,00,000 to the next of kin of a journalist who succumbed to novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infection.

10. Kachin people:

- They are a confederation of ethnic groups who inhabit the Kachin Hills in northern Myanmar's Kachin State and neighbouring Yunnan Province, China, and Arunachal Pradesh, Assam in Northeastern India.
- The term Kachin people is often used interchangeably with the main subset, called the Jingpo people in China.

Why in News?

Protests against Myanmar's military government continued in Kachin State and elsewhere in the country.



11. SUTRA model:

Scientists from the IITs of Kanpur and Hyderabad have applied the '**Susceptible, Undetected, Tested (positive), and Removed Approach**' (**SUTRA**) model to predict the COVID graph in India.

The model uses three main parameters to predict the course of the pandemic.

1. The first is called beta, or contact rate, which measures how many people an infected person infects per day. It is related to the R₀ value, which is the number of people an infected person spreads the virus to over the course of their infection.
2. The second parameter is 'reach' which is a measure of the exposure level of the population to the pandemic.
3. The third is 'epsilon' which is the ratio of detected and undetected cases.

12. Moorhen Yoga Mat:

- It is a **biodegradable and compostable yoga mat developed from water hyacinth** by six young girls from the fishing community in Assam.
- It could turn this water plant from a nuisance to wealth.

Background:

The intervention was triggered through an initiative by **North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR)**, an autonomous body under Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt. of India to involve the entire women community associated with a collective called 'Simang' meaning dream, led by the 6 girls to create wealth from water hyacinth plants.



13. Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG):

- Launched in 2020, it comprises 10 labs.
- The overall aim of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium is to monitor the genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 on a regular basis through a multi-laboratory network.
- This vital research consortium will also assist in developing potential vaccines in the future.

14. Global Innovation Partnership (GIP):

Cabinet gives ex-post facto approval to MoU between India and UK on Global Innovation Partnership (GIP).

- GIP will support Indian innovators to scale up their innovations in third countries thereby helping them explore new markets and become self-sustainable.
- GIP innovations will focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) related sectors thereby assisting recipient countries achieve their SDGs.
- Through seed funding, grants, investments and technical assistance, the Partnership will support Indian entrepreneurs and innovators to test, scale up and take their innovative development solutions to select developing countries.
- GIP will also develop an open and inclusive e-market place (E-BAAZAR) for cross border innovation transfer and will focus on results based impact assessment thereby promoting transparency and accountability.

15. Facebook's Oversight Board:

- The Oversight Board has been set up as an independent body that will help Facebook figure out what content can be allowed on the platform and what ought to be removed.
- Facebook as well as its users can refer cases to the board. The decisions of the board are binding on Facebook.
- It was announced in 2018 and it officially began its work on October 22, 2020.
- In order to ensure the board's independence, Facebook established an irrevocable trust with \$130 million in initial funding, expected to cover operational costs for over half a decade.
- Anyone can nominate a candidate for board membership, through a recommendations portal operated by the U.S. law firm Baker McKenzie.

Why in News?

Facebook's Oversight Board has upheld the social media network's decision on January 7 to block the then-U.S. President Donald Trump from its platform.

16. Dahla Dam:

- It is Afghanistan's second-biggest dam.
- The Taliban has captured it after months of fierce fighting.
- It is located in Kandahar Province in Afghanistan.
- The Dahla Dam is built on the Arghandab River.



17. Kabasura Kudineer:

- Kabasura Kudineer is a traditional formulation used by Siddha practitioners for managing common respiratory health.
- It is a herbal concoction, comprising dry ingredients of ginger, pippali, clove, cirukancori root, mulli root, kadukkai, ajwain and many other herbs.
- The ingredients are powdered and mixed with water, then boiled to make a decoction of one-fourth of its initial volume.

Context:

The Ministry of Ayush has launched a massive nationwide campaign to distribute its proven poly herbal Ayurvedic drug AYUSH 64 and Siddha drug Kabasura Kudineer for the benefit of the vast majority of out-of-hospital COVID patients.



18. e-Sanjeevani OPD:

- The e-Sanjeevani OPD is a flagship telemedicine platform of the Government, developed by the Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC), Mohali under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- It provides free consultations to Indian citizens.



19. Pulayar Community:

- The Pulayar, also Pulaya, or Holeya or Cheramar, are one of the main social groups found in Kerala, Karnataka and in historical Tamil Nadu or Tamilakam.
- Pulayas are noted for their music, craftsmanship, and for certain dances which include, Kōlam-thullal (a mask dance which is part of their exorcism rituals) and Mudi-āttam or hair-dance.
- **Mahatma Ayyankali** (1863- 1941) was called as **Pulaya King**.

Context:

Two Tribal settlements (Kattupatti and Kuzhipatti) of Pulayar community within the limits of Anamalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu are gearing up for their annual festival of local deity Vairapattan.

20. Mount Sinabung:

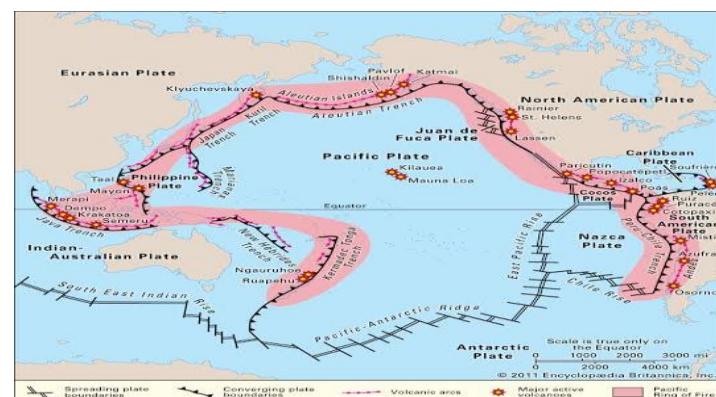
Located in Indonesia. The volcano has been active since 2010 when it erupted after nearly 400 years of inactivity.

Why in News?

Because of the recent eruption.

Background:

Indonesia is home to many active volcanoes owing to its location in the “Ring of Fire” or the Circum-Pacific Belt — an area along the Pacific Ocean characterised by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.



21. Badrinath Dham:

Five oil PSUs have pledged Rs 100 crore for development of Badrinath Dham in Uttarakhand as a spiritual smart city.

- The developmental activities will include river embankment work, building all-terrain vehicular path, building bridges, beautifying existing bridges, establishing gurukul facilities with accommodation etc.
- The expenditure will be borne by the companies from their CSR fund.

Geography:

Badrinath is in the Garhwal Himalayas, on the banks of the Alaknanda River. The town lies between the Nar and Narayana mountain ranges 9 km east of Nilkantha peak (6,596m). Badrinath is located 62 km northwest of Nanda Devi peak and 301 km north of Rishikesh.

22. Drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG):

- The DCGI has granted emergency use approval to DRDO's 2-DG drug for treatment in moderate to severe cases of Covid-19.
- 2-DG helps in faster recovery of hospitalized patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence.
- The drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) has been developed by DRDO's Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS) in collaboration with Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories.

23. Shuvuuia deserti:

- It is a small bird-like nocturnal dinosaur that lived 70 million years ago.
- It was a pheasant-sized, two-legged Cretaceous Period dinosaur weighing about as much as a small house cat.
- It employed excellent night vision and superb hearing to thrive.
- Lacking the strong jaws and sharp teeth of many carnivorous dinosaurs, it had a remarkably bird-like and lightly built skull and many tiny teeth like grains of rice.



24. National Technology Day:

India celebrates May 11 as ‘National Technology Day’.

- The day, which was first observed on 11 May, 1999, aims to commemorate the scientific and technological achievements of Indian scientists, engineers.
- Theme this year** is “Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future”.

Significance:

- It is the day India successfully tested nuclear bombs in Pokhran on May 11, 1998. India successfully test-fired its **Shakti-1 nuclear missile** in operation called **Pokhran-II**, also codenamed as **Operation Shakti**.
- On the same day, India performed a successful test firing of the **Trishul Missile (surface to air short range missile)** and had test flown the first indigenous aircraft – ‘Hansa – 3’.

25. World Food Prize:

Dr Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, a global nutrition expert of Indian descent has won the prestigious 2021 World Food Prize for her groundbreaking research in developing holistic, nutrition-sensitive approaches to aquaculture and food systems.

About the World Food Prize:

The World Food Prize is the foremost international honor recognizing the achievements of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world.

- **Fields Covered:** Any field involved in the world food supply including plant, animal and soil science; food science and technology; nutrition, rural development, etc.
- **Eligibility:** It is open for any individual without regard to race, religion, nationality or political beliefs.
- Cash Prize: \$2,50,000.
- It is presented by **the World Food Prize Foundation** which has over 80 companies, individuals, etc. as donors.
- **Dr. Norman E. Borlaug**, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his work in global agriculture, conceived the Prize. He is also known as **the Father of the Green Revolution**.
- The World Food Prize was **created in 1986 with sponsorship by General Foods Corporation**.
- It is also known as **the "Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture"**.
- **Dr. M.S. Swaminathan**, the father of India's green revolution, was **the first recipient of this award in 1987**.

26. International Nurses and Midwives Day:

Celebrated on May 12 every year.

Theme: A Voice to Lead-A Vision for Future Healthcare.

- Started in 1965 by the International Council of Nurses(ICN).
- This day is the birth anniversary of the famous Florence Nightingale.
- Florence Nightingale was an English nurse, social reformer, and statistician. During the Crimean war, she gained fame while serving as a manager and trainer of nurses, being the pillar of modern nursing.

27. India's first Olympic-bound Fencer Bhavani Devi:

- Sabre Fencer Bhavani Devi has created history by becoming **the first Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympic Games**.
- She won a quota through the Adjusted Official Ranking (AOR) method after the Budapest World Cup in March.



28. Indicative Notes:

- It is a new feature on the Supreme Court's website.
- It aims to provide concise summaries of landmark judgments in an easy-to-understand format.
- This will serve as a useful resource for media persons and the general public who wish to be better informed about the rulings of the court.

29. Punjab gets its 23rd district, Malerkotla:

Getting Malerkotla declared as an independent district was a long pending demand of the Muslim community and the residents of the town. The town has a predominant Muslim population.

30. Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS) - 2021:

- Indian Navy recently hosted 'GMS-21' under the aegis of Naval War College, Goa.
- The event for the first time was hosted in virtual mode, with online participation of Naval representatives from 13 Indian Ocean Littoral countries.

- It included India, Bangladesh, Comoros, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- The theme for GMS-21 was focused on “Maritime Security and Emerging Non-Traditional Threats: A Case for Proactive Role for IOR Navies.”

Significance: With the Indian Ocean becoming the locus of 21st century strategic landscape, the symposium will play a constructive role in bringing together the stakeholders who have a role in evolving strategies, policies and implementation mechanisms on the issues of common interest in maritime domain.

31. Red-eared slider:

- The red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) derives its name from red stripes around the part where its ears would be and from its ability to slide quickly off any surface into the water.
- Native to the U.S. and northern Mexico, this turtle is an extremely popular pet due to its small size, easy maintenance, and relatively low cost.
- But on the flip side, they grow fast and virtually leaves nothing for the native species to eat.



Context:

Herpetologists have warned that the invasive red-eared slider, released in natural water bodies by people who keep them as ‘cute’ pets, could turn nasty for 29 native species of turtles and tortoises.

32. What is Winchcombe?

- It is a meteorite.
- A piece of the Winchcombe meteorite had touched down in the town of Winchcombe in Gloucestershire in the UK in February 2021.
- It will be displayed at the National History Museum beginning next week.

The difference between a meteor, meteorite and meteoroid is nothing but where the object is:

1. Meteoroids are objects in space that range in size from dust grains to small asteroids.
2. But when meteoroids enter the Earth’s atmosphere they are called meteors.
3. But if a meteoroid enters the Earth’s atmosphere and hits the ground, it is called a meteorite.

33. Subdoluseps nilgiriensis:

It is a new species of an **Asian gracile skink** that has been discovered recently at **Anaikatti hills, Coimbatore**.

- This species is only the third skink species discovered from mainland India in the last millennium.
- The reptile has a slender body of just about 7 cm and is sandy brown in colour. The inconspicuous limbs of skinks make them resemble snakes.
- Most skinks are diurnal and are non-venomous.
- Skinks are known to feed on insects such as termites, crickets and small spiders.
- It is currently classified as a **vulnerable species**.



34. Doomsday Surfing:

Doomsday Surfing refers to the tendency to continue to surf or scroll through bad news, even though that news is saddening or depressing.

What's the concern now?

- Many people are finding themselves continuously reading bad news about Covid-19 without being able to stop, even sacrificing their crucial sleep time or working hours in the process.

35. National Crisis Management Committee:

For effective implementation of relief measures in the wake of natural calamities, the Government of India has set up a National Crisis Management Committee.

- Cabinet Secretary is its **Chairman**.

- **Other members:** Secretaries of all the concerned Ministries /Departments as well as organizations are the members of the Committee.
- The NCMC gives direction to the Crisis Management Group as deemed necessary.

36. Sulawesi:

Researchers have reported that Pleistocene-era rock paintings dating back to 45,000-20,000 years ago in cave sites in southern Sulawesi, on **the Indonesian island of Sulawesi**, are weathering at an alarming rate.

- The artwork in the area includes what is believed to be the world's oldest hand stencil (almost 40,000 years ago), created by pressing the hand on a cave wall, and spraying wet red-mulberry pigments over it.
- A nearby cave features the world's oldest depiction of an animal, a warty pig painted on the wall 45,500 years ago.
- The cave art of Sulawesi is much older than the prehistoric cave art of Europe.

Reasons:

The artwork made with pigments was decaying due to a process known as **haloclasty**, which is triggered by the growth of salt crystals due to repeated changes in temperature and humidity, caused by alternating wet and dry weather in the region.

37. ELDERLINE:

- The Ministry of Social Justice has started state-wise call centres in five major states to address the problems faced by elderly people in the wake of the covid pandemic.
- The toll free helpline for elderly persons called ELDERLINE is expected to become operational in all states by the end of May 2021.
- The states covered are Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan. It was already working in Telangana since one year.
- The toll free number by which the call centres can be reached is 14567.

38. SAMVEDNA:

- SAMVEDNA tele counselling service is for psychological support to children to address their stress, anxiety, fear and other issues during the coronavirus pandemic.
- The service is provided by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).
- The service was launched in September 2020 and is available in various regional languages.
- SAMVEDNA is an acronym for 'Sensitizing Action on Mental Health Vulnerability through Emotional Development and Necessary Acceptance'.

39. International Museum Day 2021:

- Celebrated on 18 May every year.
- The theme for 2021 is 'The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine'.
- The objective is to raise awareness about the fact that, "Museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among people."

40. News Showcase:

- Google has announced the roll-out of News Showcase in India with 30 news publishers, including national, regional and local news organisations.
- The News Showcase allows partnering publishers to curate content which is displayed as story panels on Google's News and Discover platforms.
- The technology firm also pays the publishers to license their content, providing limited access to pay-walled content for readers.
- Globally, more than 700 news publications have signed agreements for Google News Showcase in countries including Germany, Brazil, Canada, France, Japan, the U.K., Australia, Czechia, Italy and Argentina.

41. Colombo Port City:

- It is a Chinese-funded tax-free enclave billed as Sri Lanka's answer to Dubai and Singapore.
- The largest single foreign investment in Sri Lanka is one of several massive Asian infrastructure projects funded by China as Beijing increases its regional footprint.
- Under the proposed legislation expected to be passed by Parliament, the Port City will be administered by a commission with unprecedented powers to fast track investment approvals.
- Transactions within the Port City will be denominated in foreign currency and all salaries earned by any worker will be tax-exempt.

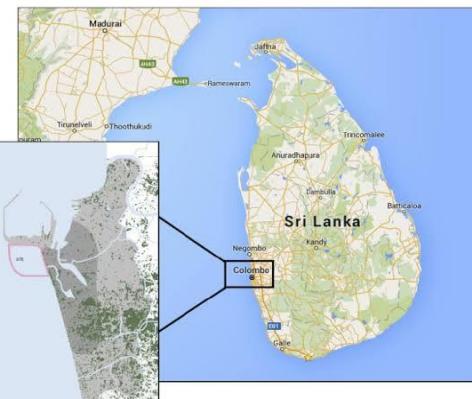


Figure 1 Location of the Colombo Port City

42. GI-certified Gholvad Chikoo:

- GI-certified Dahanu Gholvad Chikoo from Maharashtra begins UK journey.
- GI certification of Gholvad Sapota is held by Maharashtra Rajya Chikoo Utpadak Sangh and the fruit is known for its sweet and unique taste. It is believed that the unique taste is derived from calcium-rich soil of Gholvad village.
- Sapota is grown in many states- Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Karnataka is known to be the highest grower of the fruit, followed by Maharashtra.



43. Rajasthan govt. declares mucormycosis an epidemic:

- Amid the increasing instances of mucormycosis or black fungus, which is primarily affecting people recovering from COVID-19, the Rajasthan government has declared it an epidemic and a notifiable disease.
- The declaration of mucormycosis as an epidemic would ensure its "integrated and coordinated" treatment along with the treatment for COVID-19.
- The notification was issued under the **Rajasthan Epidemic Act, 2020**.

UNDERSTANDING THE INFECTION

- Mucormycosis is a fungal growth that primarily takes place in the upper nasal cavity. As it spreads through arteries, it can infect blood vessels and can spread very quickly
- Some of the symptoms associated with the infection include bad/foul smell from the nose, respiratory issues, frequent cold, feeling of blocked nose, swelling in and around nose and sinuses and blackening/darkening of parts of nose and upper cheeks. It can also cause fever and headache
- Those who are above 40 years of age, those who have recently got recovered from Covid-19 or any immuno-compromised diseases, those with diabetes or other co-morbidities are susceptible to the infection
- It's important to approach ENT surgeon/expert quickly after developing any major symptoms



Treatment procedure

- The suspected patient is sent for CT scan/MRI or other tests. If the fungal growth is found, its sample is collected and sent for biopsy
- Through sensitive MRI scans, the experts try to assess the extent of fungal growth and its possible source
- Experts use treatment protocol such as Amphotericin B deoxycholate injection to treat the patients. The injection, costing about Rs 2,500-3,000 is required six times a day for about 15 to 21 days. Other treatment procedures are also adopted

TOI FOR MORE INFOGRAPHICS DOWNLOAD TIMES OF INDIA APP

Available on the
App Store

Google play

Windows Phone

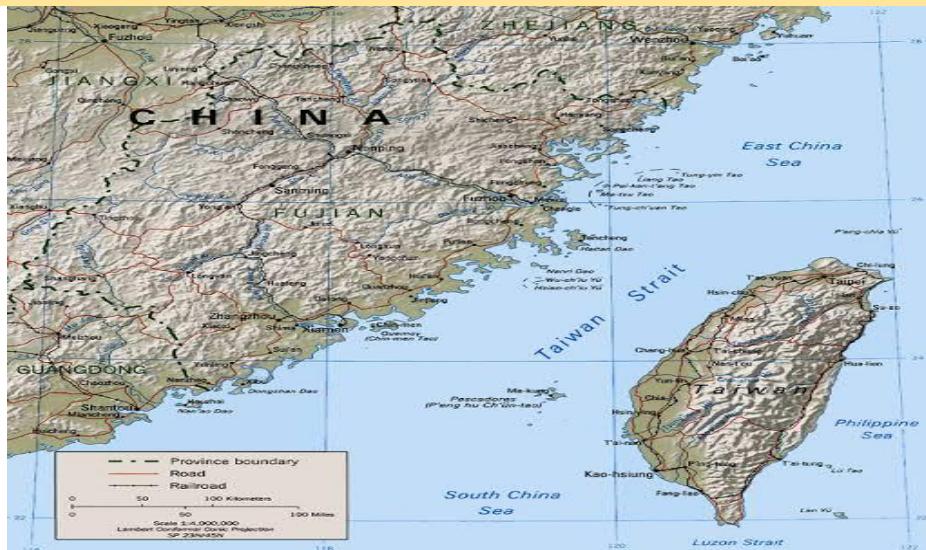
44. Infrastructure' status for exhibition and convention centres:

The Finance Ministry has granted 'Infrastructure' status for exhibition and convention centres, a move that is expected to ease bank financing for such projects.

Eligibility: The benefits would only be available for projects with a minimum built-up floor area of 1,00,000 sq. m. of exclusive exhibition space or convention space or both combined.

45. Taiwan Strait:

- The Taiwan Strait, also known as the Formosa Strait, is a 180 km wide strait separating Taiwan and mainland China.
- The strait is currently part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north. The narrowest part is 130 km wide.
- The entire strait is on Asia's continental shelf.



46. Corpse flower:

- Scientific name: Amorphophallus titanum.
- The ultra-rare plant is known to **bloom only once every seven to ten years**.
- The flower is also considered to be one of the largest in the world.
- While the plant is **native to Indonesia**, its saplings have been cultivated in zoos, botanical gardens and greenhouses around the world over the years.
- The average corpse flower has a **lifespan of about three-four decades**.
- The flower is known for its **pungent stench**, which is said to be similar to rotting meat or a decaying cadaver.
- It was listed as an **endangered plant in 2018 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.



47. New Big 5 project:

It is an international initiative of more than 250 of the world's wildlife photographers, conservationists and wildlife charities.

- Created by British photographer Graeme Green.
- Its aim is to raise awareness about the crisis facing the world's wildlife from threats including habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, poaching, illegal wildlife trade and climate change.
- Since its launch in April 2020, the project to list the animals received more than 50,000 votes from wildlife lovers.



Why in News?

It has named the five animals for framing instead of firing at. These are the elephant, polar bear, gorilla, tiger and lion.

- All the New Big 5 animals are keystone species, essential to the balance of nature in their habitats, biodiverse ecosystems and the survival of other species, including humans.

48. China completes Tibet highway:

- It enables greater access to remote areas along the disputed border with Arunachal Pradesh in India.
- It passes through the **Grand Canyon of the Yarlung Zangbo river**, as the Brahmaputra is called in Tibet.

- This is the “second significant passageway” to Medog county that borders Arunachal, directly connecting the Pad township in Nyingchi to Baibung in Medog county.
- The highway will reduce the distance between Nyingchi city and Medog from 346 km to 180 km and will cut the travel time by eight hours.

49. New York's 'Vax and Scratch' programme:

- It is a new vaccination programme that will provide free lottery tickets to those individuals over the age of 18 years who choose to get vaccinated from one of the ten state-run sites.
- Under the programme, lottery tickets that are otherwise sold for \$20 by retailers across the state, will be given free of cost to those above the age of 18.

50. International Day for Biological Diversity 2021:

Celebrated each year on May 22.

This year, 2021, **the theme** is "We're part of the solution".

Background: The resolution to celebrate the day was adopted in 1992. The day was initially celebrated on December 29 till 2000 starting from 1993. It was marked on December 29 to celebrate the Day the Convention on Biological Diversity came into effect. It was later shifted to May 22 to commemorate the adoption of **the convention at Rio Earth Summit**.

51. Kalakshetra:

- Kalakshetra, as the name suggests, is a centre for artistic endeavour.
- It is an arts and cultural academy dedicated to the preservation of traditional values in Indian art and crafts, especially in the field of **Bharatanatyam dance and Gandharvaveda music**.
- Founded in 1936 by the vibrant visionary **Rukmini Devi Arundale**.
- The Institution stands testimony to her dream of creating a space where the essence of Indian thought would find expression through artistic education.
- Located in Chennai, **the Kalakshetra Foundation**, as it is known today, is a vital centre for the study and performance of fine arts.
- In 1994, an Act of the Parliament of India recognised the Kalakshetra Foundation as an "**Institute of National Importance**".

52. Bao-dhaan:

- It is iron-rich rice variety grown in Brahmaputra valley of Assam, without the use of any chemical fertilizer.
- The first consignment of this ‘red rice’ variety was sent to the US from Assam recently.



53. Sunderlal Bahuguna:

Well-known environmentalist and Gandhian Sunderlal Bahuguna is no more.

- He was one of the founders of the Chipko, or hug the tree movement, in the 1970s to save Himalayan forests.
- Mr. Bahuguna also led the charge against the construction of big dams in the Himalayas in the 1980s.
- He was fervently opposed to the construction of the Tehri dam and sat on two long hunger strikes against the dam, which proved to be of no avail.
- He also led a movement of women’s groups, or mahila mandals, to enforce prohibition in Tehri Garhwal, which was then part of Uttar Pradesh.



54. Congo's Mount Nyiragongo:

Congo's Mount Nyiragongo volcano erupted at night and sent thousands fleeing in panic.

- Mount Nyiragongo is an active stratovolcano with an elevation of 3,470 m in the **Virunga Mountains** associated with the **Albertine Rift**.
- It is located inside **Virunga National Park**, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Nyiragongo and nearby Nyamuragira are together responsible for 40 percent of Africa's historical volcanic eruptions.



55. Kerala farmer bags India Biodiversity Award 2021:

Shaji .N.M., fondly called as '**Tuber Man**' of Kerala has been awarded **the India Biodiversity Award 2021** in the individual category of 'Conservation of domesticated species'.

- Mr. Shaji conserves a wide array of around 200 tuber crops including greater yam, lesser yam, elephant foot yam, arrowroot, colocasia, sweet potato, cassava and Chinese potato.
- He has also received many state awards including the Plant Genome Savior Reward 2015, instituted by PPV&FR Authority, New Delhi.

About the India Biodiversity Award:

- In 2012, the Government of India, in partnership with UNDP India, initiated the India Biodiversity Awards to recognize and honour outstanding models of biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and governance at the grassroots level.
- The award carries ₹2 lakh cash prize and citation.

56. Galwan Valley:

There was a minor face-off between Indian and Chinese troops in the no-patrolling zone at Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in the first week of May.

Background:

A no-patrolling zone extending to around 3 km, around 1.5 km each on either side of the clash site near the Y-junction of the Galwan Valley, was created after June 15, 2020, when 20 Indian Army personnel were killed in clashes with Chinese troops. A 30-day moratorium was also applied on foot-patrolling then. It was not known if it had been extended.

Where is Galwan Valley?

- The valley refers to the land that sits between steep mountains that buffet the **Galwan River**.
- The river has its source in Aksai Chin, on China's side of the LAC, and it flows from the east to Ladakh, where it meets the Shyok river on India's side of the LAC.
- The valley is strategically located between Ladakh in the west and Aksai Chin in the east (currently controlled by China).
- At its western end are the Shyok river and the **Darbuk-Shyok-Daulet Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road**.



57. BRICS Astronomy Working Group (BAWG):

Context:

Recently, India virtually hosted the 7th meeting of the BRICS Astronomy Working Group (BAWG) under the Science, Technology, and Innovation track of the BRICS 2021.

About BAWG:

- It provides a platform for BRICS member countries to collaborate in the field of astronomy, recommending that the focal points in each country should present the scientific results of the work being carried out in each country.
- This will help seek funding support to realize the flagship project whenever funding opportunities are announced by BRICS funding agencies.

Outcomes of the recent meet:

It recommended networking of telescopes in member countries and creating a regional data network.

58. Belarus:

It is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe. It is bordered by Russia to the east and northeast, Ukraine to the south, Poland to the west, and Lithuania and Latvia to the northwest.

Why in News?

Recently, Belarus administration forced a commercial airline flying from Greece to Lithuania to land in its territory allegedly on the pretext of a bomb scare, so it could arrest a dissident journalist on board.



InstaCurious:

1. Do you know International commercial air travel is guided by the **Chicago Convention**.
2. Also what's the difference between '**Hijacking**' and Belarus Incident? [Here](#)

59. MCA21 Version 3.0:

Minister of Corporate Affairs has launched the first phase of Ministry of Corporate Affairs' (MCA) MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0).

What is MCA 21?

MCA21 is an e-Governance initiative of Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) that enables easy and secure access of the MCA services to the corporate entities, professionals and citizens of India. It is the **first Mission Mode e-Governance project of GoI**.

MCA21 3.0:

- MCA21 V3 is a technology-driven forward-looking project, envisioned to strengthen enforcement, promote Ease of Doing Business, enhance the user experience, and facilitate seamless integration and data exchange among Regulators.
- The project will have Micro-services architecture with high scalability and capabilities for advanced analytics.
- It will have additional modules for e-Adjudication, e-Consultation and Compliance Management.

InstaCurious: What is the definition of 'Mission Mode Project' – *A mission mode project (MMP) is an individual project within the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) that focuses on one aspect of electronic governance, such as banking, land records or commercial taxes etc. For more read [here](#)*

60. Shahi litchi:

Season's first consignment of Shahi Litchi from Bihar was recently exported to United Kingdom by air route.



- Shahi litchi was the fourth agricultural products to get GI certification from Bihar in 2018, after Jardalu mango, Katarni rice and Magahi paan.
- India is the second largest producer of litchi (Litchi chin) in the world, after China.

InstaCurious:

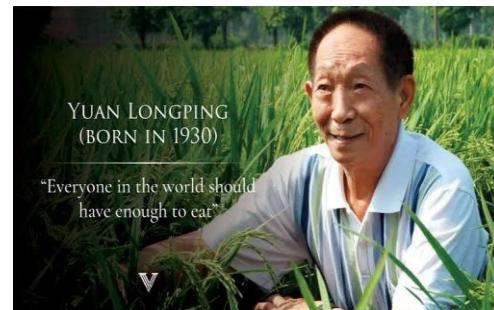
1. Remember there was a tragic news – What's the relationship between Litchi fruits, hunger & encephalopathy? [Read Here](#)
2. Did you know that under **Paris Convention** for the Protection of Industrial Property, GIs are covered as an element of IPRs?

61. Yuan Longping:

Yuan Longping, a Chinese agricultural scientist whose breakthroughs in hybrid rice brought food security to China and transformed agriculture worldwide, died aged 91.

Yuan is celebrated in China as the "**father of hybrid rice**" for his contributions to agriculture.

- In 1970s, he developed “the first hybrid rice combination called **Nan-you No. 2** which, due to **heterosis** — a phenomenon in which the progeny of two distinctly different parents grow faster, yield more, and resist stress better than either parent.
- Farmers around the world have benefitted from his techniques as hybrid rice spread throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas.
- In 2004, he was honoured with the **World Food Prize** “for his breakthrough achievement in developing the genetic materials and technologies essential for breeding high-yielding hybrid rice varieties”.
- The **Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation** honoured him with a prize in 2001.



InstaCurious: Read more about Hybrid Rice and its contribution towards Food Security [Here](#)

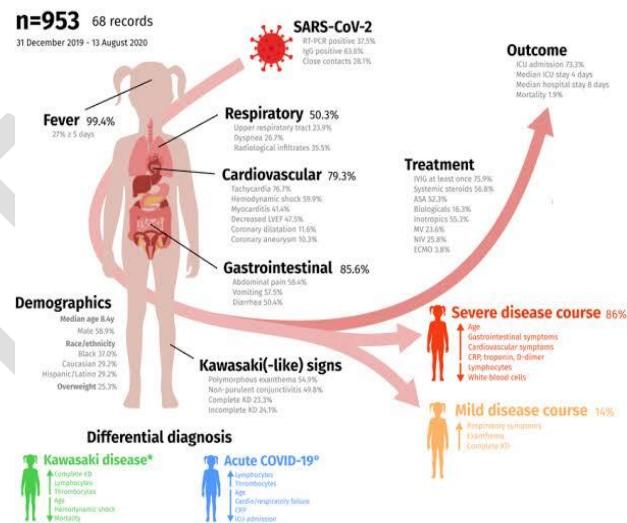
62. Paediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome (PIMS-TS):

- PIMS-TS, also known as **multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C)**, is a rare condition associated with **SARS-CoV-2 infection** that was first defined in April 2020.
- Causes:** It is not known what triggers the condition, but it is thought to be a rare **immune overreaction** that occurs approximately four to six weeks after mild or asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- Symptoms of the condition include** fever, rash, eye infection, and gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g. diarrhoea, stomach-ache, nausea). In some rare cases, the condition can lead to multi-organ failure.

Why in the News?

A small study has reported most symptoms of rare paediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome (PIMS-TS) associated with SARS-CoV2 are resolved after six months.

PIMS-TS / MIS(-C)



63. WHO BioHub initiative:

BioHub will be a **global facility for pathogen storage, sharing and analysis**.

Significance: The sharing of pathogens is currently done bilaterally between countries; WHO BioHub will expedite the process.

WHO and Switzerland have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch this facility.

Potential: The move is significant in the view of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the need to underline the importance of sharing pathogen information to assess risks and launch countermeasures.

| Type of pathogen | Description | Human diseases caused by pathogens of that type |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Bacteria Prokaryotes | Single-celled organisms without a nucleus | Breathless, High fevers, tuberculosis, food poisoning, typhoid, pneumonia, septicemia |
| Viruses Prokaryotes | Thread-like particles that reproduce by taking over living cells | Common cold, flu, genital herpes, cold sores, measles, AIDS, genital warts, chicken pox, smallpox |
| Fungi Eukaryotes | Simple eukaryotes, attacking tissues and plants, that grow as single cells or thread-like filaments | Rhinatitis, asthma, food allergy, candidiasis, histoplasmosis, mastoiditis, paleoanthrax |
| Protozoa Eukaryotes | Single-celled organisms with a nucleus | Malaria, "natural killer cells", trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) |

64. Miniature sculpture of the Buddha found in Udupi:

The Buddha was found among debris removed from an abandoned well at **Alembi in Udupi district in Karnataka**.

Description:

- It is nine centimetres high, five centimetres wide and two centimetres thick.
- The Buddha is seated on a lotus pedestal in **Dharma Chakra Pravartha Mudra**.
- Below the seat, six disciples are seated on either side of the Dharma Chakra.
- The Lord wears clothes and ear-rings.

- A small Ushnisha is shown on the top of the head.
- In the back of the head, a beautifully carved round lobe is seen.
- On the top corners, two Yakshas and, on either side of his back, two winged horses have been carved out.
- The sculpture is in the **Gupta style**.

Significance of the discovery:

Traditionally, the ancient Tulu Nadu was said to be ruled by the **Kadambas of Banavasi**. The **Guptas and the Kadambas of Banavasi had matrimonial relations**. Hence, the discovery of the Buddha sculpture is not an uncommon thing.



65. Dhaka clears currency swap for Lanka:

Bangladesh has cleared a \$200 million currency swap facility for Sri Lanka, becoming **the first South Asian country to extend crucial financial assistance to the island nation this year**.

Background:

With Sri Lanka's main foreign exchange-earning sectors — tourism, export of garments and tea — badly hit due to the pandemic, the country has been struggling to maintain its reserves in the face of a daunting debt repayment schedule.

What is Currency Swap Arrangement?

- It is an arrangement between two friendly countries to involve in trading in their own local currencies.
- As per the arrangements, both countries pay for import and export trade at the pre-determined rates of exchange, without bringing in third country currency like the US Dollar.
- In such arrangements no third country currency is involved, thereby eliminating the need to worry about exchange variations.

InstaCurious:

1. India signed a similar agreement with Sri Lanka last year. [Read Here](#)

66. National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT):

- The **National Company Law Tribunal** is a **quasi-judicial body** in India adjudicating issues concerning companies in the country.
- It was formed on June 1, 2016, as per **the provisions of the Companies Act 2013**.
- Formed based on the recommendations of **the Justice Eradi Committee** that was related to insolvency and winding up of companies in India.
- **Appeals:** Decisions taken by the NCLT can be appealed to **the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)**. The decisions of the NCLAT can be appealed to the Supreme Court on a point of law.

Why in News?

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has ordered the liquidation of Devas Multimedia Pvt. Ltd.

67. Louvre museum:

- It is **the world's largest art museum**, based in Paris.
- It is also **the world's most visited museum**.
- It is **home to the Mona Lisa**, a classic that cultural organisations and art lovers across the world would love to exhibit.

Why in News?

Art historian and curator **Laurence des Cars** has become **the first woman to be appointed the president of Louvre** – in its 228-year history.

InstaCurious:

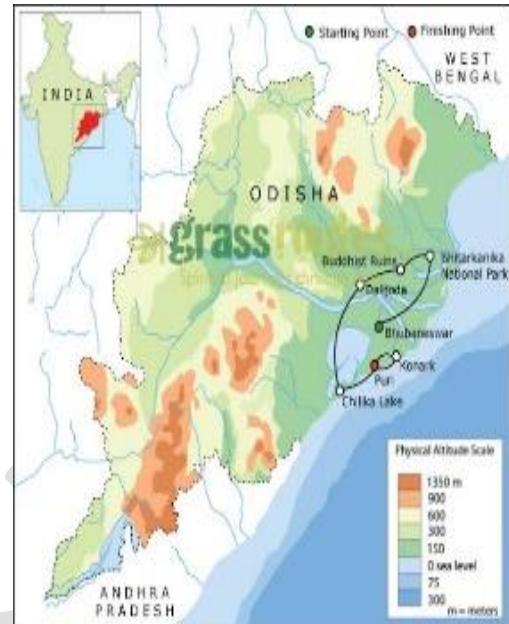
1. It was also in the news for wrong reasons in 2018. Famous relic of Amaravati Stupa is at the Louvre. [Read Here](#) (2 min read)

68. Places in News- Bhitarkanika National Park:

- Bhitarkanika National Park, located in Odisha, is famous for its mangroves, migratory birds, turtles, estuarine crocodiles, and countless creeks.
- It is India's second-largest mangrove forest.
- The Bhitarkanika is represented by 3 Protected Areas, the Bhitarkanika National Park, the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary and the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.
- Bhitarkanika is located in the estuary of Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra, and Mahanadi river systems.
- It is said to house 70% of the country's estuarine or saltwater crocodiles, conservation of which was started way back in 1975.
- Bhitarkanika is home to a wide range of fauna, including 3,000 spotted deer, bird species and other species such as wild boars, jackal, hyenas, jungle cat, fishing cats, water monitor lizards, rhesus macaques, common langur, Indian civet cat and hare.
- The area was designated a national park in September 1998 and as a Ramsar site by UNESCO in August 2002.

Why in News?

Cyclone Yaas fells hundreds of trees in Bhitarkanika, hit on fauna being assessed.



69. Species in News- blackbucks:

- Odisha's blackbuck population has doubled in the last six years, according to figures from the latest population census released recently by the chief conservator of forest (wildlife).
- The antelopes numbered 7,358 — 4,196 females, 1,712 males and 1,450 young, according to census figures.
- Blackbucks are found only in the Ganjam district in the southern part of the state.
- Protection status: The blackbuck is a Schedule-1 animal according to the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (amended in 1992) and is considered as 'Vulnerable' according to the Red Data Book.
- The blackbuck is known in Odisha and Ganjam as Krushnasara Mruga.



Other related facts:

Bishnoi community of Rajasthan is known worldwide for their conservation efforts to blackbuck and Chinkara. State animal of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana & Punjab.

Protected Areas:

1. Velavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary — Gujarat.
2. Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary.
3. Nilgiri biosphere reserve.
4. Corbett national park.

70. Jayanti:

- Jayanti has become the twelfth subgenus, or species, of cricket identified under the genus *Arachnomimus* Saussure, 1897.
- It was found in the Kurra caves of Chhattisgarh in April 2021 by a team of zoologists.
- It was named Jayanti after Professor Jayant Biswas, one of the leading cave explorers in the country, who assisted the team.
- Interestingly, males of the new Jayanti subgenus cannot produce sound and their females don't have ears.



Arachnomimus is the genus name given by Swiss Entomologist **Henri Louis Frédéric de Saussure** in 1878 to crickets that resembled spiders.

71. Places in News- Cali:

- Cali is **the second-largest city** in Colombia by area and **the third most populous**.
- It is **the only major Colombian city with access to the Pacific Coast**.
- Cali is located in the **Cauca Valley to the west of the Cauca River**.

Why in the News?

The Colombian Army has tightened its control over Cali following the latest anti-government protests.

Reasons for the protest:

- Protests erupted in Cali and other cities in April over a **proposed reform that would have lowered the threshold at which salaries are taxed**.
- The government argued that the move was key to mitigating economic difficulties but many Colombians feared they could slip into poverty as a result.
- The tax plan was withdrawn but anti-government sentiment saw the protests grow to cover police violence, poverty and Colombia's health crisis.



72. Rishiganga:

- It is a river in the Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, India.
- **Sources:** It springs from **the Uttari Nanda Devi Glacier** on the Nanda Devi mountain. It is also fed from the Dakshini Nanda Devi Glacier.
- Continuing through the Nanda Devi National Park, **it flows into the Dhauliganga River near the village Rini**.

Disaster in 2021:

In February 2021, a flooding disaster occurred all along the river and its gorge following a landslide, avalanche or glacial lake outburst flood.

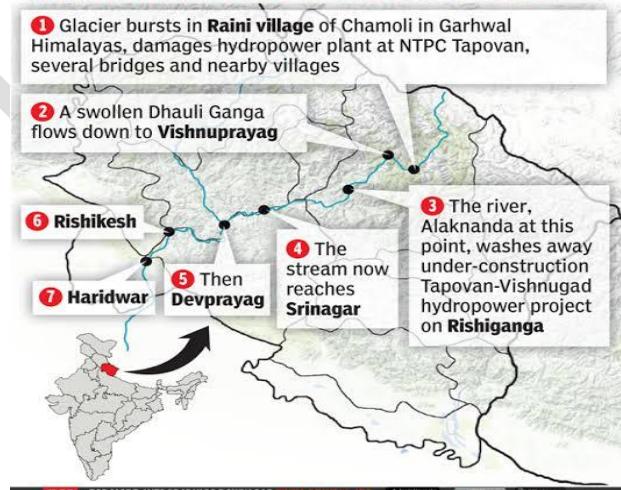
Why is it in News now?

Following reports that cracks had developed in glaciers at the origin of Rishiganga in Chamoli, a team of scientists carried out an aerial survey and found nothing wrong.

Insta Curious:

Know more about Ganga and important places through which it passes: [Read here](#)

TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION



73. Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve:

- It is a **national park** in Assam.
- Formed in 1908 on the recommendation of **Mary Curzon**, the park is located in the edge of the Eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspots – Golaghat and Nagaon district.
- It hosts two-thirds of **the world's great one-horned rhinoceroses**.
- It is a **World Heritage Site**.
- It is also recognized as **an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International** for the conservation of avifaunal species.
- Much of the focus of conservation efforts in Kaziranga are focused on **the 'big four' species**— Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo.
- Kaziranga is crisscrossed by **four main rivers** — Brahmaputra, Diphlu, Mora Diphlu and Mora Dhansiri.

Why in the News?

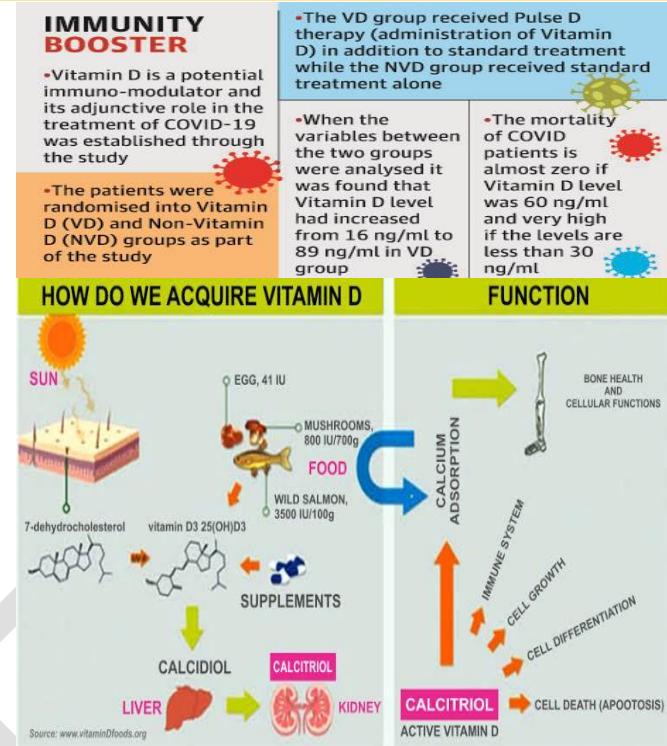
The Assam government has approved a proposal to increase the firepower of the guards of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve and provide commando training to them. These measures are aimed at preventing poaching.

74. Vitamin D:

- Vitamin D is a **fat-soluble vitamin**, meaning that it dissolves in fats and oils and can be stored in your body for a long time.
- It is produced when sunlight (or artificial light, particularly in the ultraviolet region of 190-400 nm wavelength) falls on the skin and triggers a chemical reaction** to a cholesterol-based molecule, and converts it into calcidiol in the liver and into calcitriol in the kidney.
- Its role:** It is known to help in having the right amount of calcium in the bones, catalyse the process of protecting cell membranes from damage, preventing the inflammation of tissues and helping stop tissues from forming fibres and weakening bones from becoming brittle, leading to osteoporosis.
- Vitamin D deficiency** can cause rickets in children and osteomalacia in adults.

Why in News?

A study done by the doctors of Nizams Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) has revealed that **high Vitamin D levels reduce the risk of coronavirus infection, and administration of the vitamin in the infected patients considerably reduce mortality.**



75. YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors) Scheme:

Ministry Of Education has launched YUVA To Mentor Young Authors.

- The scheme seeks to **mentor authors under the age of 30** and train them to promote reading, writing and book culture in the country, and project India and Indian writings globally.
- A consolidated scholarship of **Rs50,000 per month for a period of six months per author will be paid under the YUVA Scheme.**
- YUVA is a part of India@75 Project (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav).**
- The National Book Trust, India** under the Ministry of Education is the Implementing Agency.

When things didn't fall in line even in my third Mains, I emailed InsightsOnIndia to seek guidance for the next attempt. InsightsIAS Offline program suited all my requirements. Thus, I moved in and stayed nearby Insights institute.

I followed offline prelims test series of Insights and also, prelims cum mains integrated study plan that was given to core batch students. I scheduled my day in accordance with the test series timetable (please make your own timetable which suits you the best). In my timetable I ensured 8 hours of sleep, one hour of sports and 5 minutes break in between. Make a realistic timetable which is practically possible to implement, set achievable targets and be honest to yourself in following it.

I improved immensely by getting the personal feedback by Vinay Sir, and was able to top the UPSC CSE-2016.

NANDINI K R 99

AIR 01, CSE 2016

