

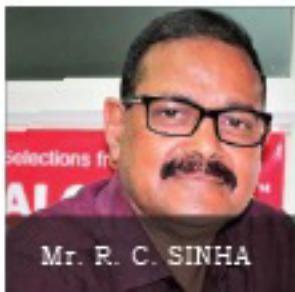


समिक्षा  
Comprehensive NEWS Analysis

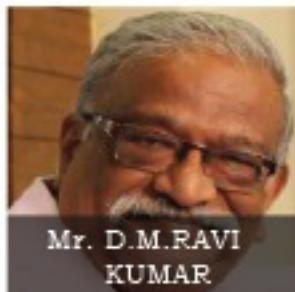
06-05-2019  
To  
12-05-2019  
MAY  
Week - 02

# OUR TEAM

## GENERAL STUDIES



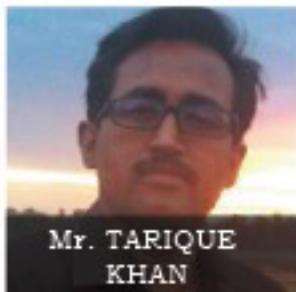
Mr. R. C. SINHA



Mr. D.M.RAVI KUMAR



Mr. SAROJ SAMAL



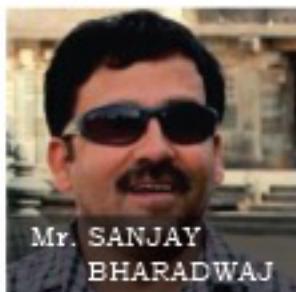
Mr. TARIQUE KHAN



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## OPTIONALS



### SOCIOLOGY

Mr. SAROJ SAMAL

### Public Administration



Mr. R.C. SINHA



Mr. D.M.RAVI KUMAR



### MATHEMATICS

Mr. VINNAKOTA SRIKANTH



### GEOGRAPHY

Mr. PRIYESH SINGH SENGAR

## OTHER OPTIONALS

ANTHROPOLOGY

POLITICAL SCIENCE

TELUGU LITERATURE

HISTORY

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# Polity and Governance

## 1. India needs to revamp primary Health Care System

### Primary Health care system

It is the first point of contact between health system and person, in case a person falls sick. Its main aim is to provide local care to a patient because professionals related to primary care are normal generalists.

In India, Primary Healthcare is provided through a network of Sub centres and Primary Health Centres in rural areas, whereas in urban areas, it is provided through Health posts and Family Welfare Centres. PHCs helps in prevention of diseases.

### Secondary healthcare

Secondary Healthcare refers to a second tier of health system, in which patients from primary health care are referred to specialists in higher hospitals for treatment. In India, the health centres for secondary health care include District hospitals and Community Health Centre at block level.

### Tertiary health care

Tertiary health care is known as specialized consultative healthcare usually on referral from primary and secondary healthcare for advanced medical investigation and treatment. In India, under public health system, tertiary care service is provided by medical colleges and advanced medical research institutes.

### Why Primary health care is important?

- Primary health interventions help detect diseases early, well before complications set in.
- It reduces the need for expensive secondary and tertiary healthcare.
- Of the total current expenditure on health classified by healthcare functions, preventive care accounts for 6.7 per cent, while spending on curing people account for 51% of the total expenditure on health.
- Developed nations such as the UK, Australia, Canada, Netherlands and Sweden spend a large share of their federal healthcare budgets on primary care.
- India has been spending huge amount in cure of non-communicable diseases, which can only be won through a primary health system that ensures that chronic diseases are not only detected early, but also that preventive action is taken to ensure improved lifestyles.
- Unavailability of PHC from government leads to heavy burden of out of pocket expenses on consultations and drugs.

### Problems of PHC in India

- **Limited services:** Although Primary Health Care system exists in India but its scope is limited to pregnancy care, limited childcare and certain services related to national health programmes.

- **Training and manpower problems:** PHCs are suffering from poor management skills, lack of appropriate training and supportive supervision for health workers.
- **Conversion in Health and Wellness centres:** Government announced conversion of 150,000 sub centres into HWCs in 2017 budget and also in National Health policy 2017, only few thousand such centres have been sanctioned.
- **Urban neglect:** Primary Health care for growing urban population has not been conceptualized. It's focus is still limited to the rural population of India.
- **Funding:** Funding for overall health care is very low, leaving insufficient amount that requires to be spent on Primary Health Care.
- **Staff shortage:** PHCs are also suffering from inadequate skilled and trained manpower. There is a shortfall of about 9,000 doctors in about 25,000 PHCs in the country.
- **Poor facilities:** Primary level facilities need complete building reconstruction, as they operate out of rented apartments and thatched accommodations, and lack basic facilities such as toilets, drinking water and electricity.
- **Overburdened PHCs:** India has a large network of primary health centres (PHCs), each supposed to serve a population of 25,000. But in states such as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand, however, a PHC covers as many as 45,000, 49,000 and 76,000 people.

## **Government measures**

- The National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 advocated allocating resources of up to two thirds of total health budget to Primary Health care.
- Last year, an outlay of <sup>1</sup> 1,200 crore was proposed to transform 1.5 lakh sub-health centres into health and wellness centres. (HWC) by 2022, which would provide a wider range of primary care services than existing sub and primary health centres (PHC).
- Each HWC is to be operated by a well-trained, mid-level health provider (nurse practitioner or community health officer) who will be supported by a team of front line health workers to provide an expanded package of services.

## **Best national and international Practices**

- Cuba has one of the most effective primary healthcare systems in the world, the system provides community-based polyclinic, each polyclinic serves a catchment area hosting between 30,000 and 60,000 people.
- Polyclinic facility is further extended by neighborhood-based family doctor-and-nurse offices closer to the communities, one such office for 1,000-2,000 people. Prevention is the cornerstone of these services, complemented by community analysis and treatment.

- In a cross-country analysis of governance systems and health outcomes, countries with higher fiscal decentralisation (Citizens participation) were found to have consistently lower infant mortality rates than those with more centralised forms.
- In West Bengal and Kerala in India – states in which primary healthcare is co-managed by panchayats – health outcomes are better than in most other states at similar levels of economic development.

### Way forward

- Government must fasten the process of conversion of Sub-health centers into health and wellness centres so that it can achieve its target by 2022-23.
- Digitization of family records and information from the community to the facility level, to provide better treatment.
- An important requirement of primary healthcare is the active participation of those whom the care serves – akin to citizen participation in democracy. Such systems are likely to be more responsive to public needs.
- Government should delegate the responsibility of managing these health facilities to communities and local self-government institutions.
- Nursing staff must be prepared to provide treatment to the patient in case doctor is absent from clinic. Adequate orientation and training must be provided to nursing staff for that.
- Government must increase budgetary allocations to healthcare to at least 3.4% of GDP so that public expenditure on healthcare is at least 70% of total health expenditure.
- Undertake a well-funded research programme to find the best pathways for effective and context-specific scaling up of primary health care.

## 2. National Urban Employment Guarantee Programme

### Context

Centre for Sustainable Employment, Azim Premji University, recently published policy brief “Strengthening Towns through Sustainable Employment”, which propose the creation of a National Urban Employment Guarantee Programme.

### Need of Urban Employment Guarantee Programme

According to Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the unemployment problem is aggravated in India especially in cities and towns. In the context of the present employment crises, it is worthwhile considering introducing an employment guarantee programme in urban areas. The scheme, which is similar to MGNREGS, would provide minimum livelihood security to the poorest of the poor in the urban areas.

Centrally funded programmes like the Smart Cities Mission and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) have disproportionately focused on development of bigger towns and cities. Such program helps in the development of small cities and towns

### **Brief history of urban employment schemes**

While cities and towns do not yet have an equivalent of MGNREGA, India has a history of urban employment schemes. Unlike MGNREGA, India's urban employment schemes were not demand-driven and only a set of identified beneficiaries could avail their benefits.

- **Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)** launched in 1997 provided employment to the unemployed and underemployed urban poor through self-employment and wage employment.
- The SJSRY was replaced by the **National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM)** in 2013. This programme, and its subsequent version, laid more emphasis on self-employment and entrepreneurship than on wage employment.
- **Yuva Swabhiman Yojana:** The newly elected government in Madhya Pradesh recently announced a 100-day urban job guarantee scheme, the Yuva Swabhiman Yojana, which provides urban youth with varying educational qualifications with a wide set of jobs.
- **Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme (AUEGS):** Since 2010, Kerala has been running a programme called the Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme (AUEGS) which guarantees 100 days of wage-employment to an urban household for manual work.
- **Green New Deal:** In the United States of America, 'Green New Deal' proposals provide for a 'Green Job Guarantee' which enshrines 'a legal right that obligates the federal government to provide a job for anyone who asks for one and to pay them a liveable wage'.

### **Benefits**

The proposed programme seeks to address the following key problems

- Such a programme would give urban residents a statutory right to work and thereby ensure the right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- It increases demand by raising incomes directly, and indirectly in the informal sector, by improving the fallback position of workers
- Address issue of Underemployment and low wages in the informal urban workforce
- Check migration to large cities from small and medium towns
- Such programme can bring in much-needed public investment in towns to improve the quality of urban infrastructure and services
- Prevent ecological degradation of urban spaces

- Employment guarantee enables people to contribute productively to the creation of useful public goods and services.

## Challenges

- **Increase Migration from Rural to Urban areas:** A potential problem with an employment guarantee programme for urban areas is that it may increase migration from rural areas.
- **Identification of beneficiary:** It would be difficult to prove domicile status as per state laws as well as identification of actual beneficiary
- **Fund:** Successful implementation of scheme require huge fund. This may create extra burden on state and centre
- **Different from MGNREGA:** Urban unemployment is different from rural. In urban area unemployment is primarily among skilled and semi-skilled

## Way Ahead

This is on a line similar to the highly successful programmes on urban livelihoods in China and some developed nations in the West. It is high time that we followed suit.

The basic premise of a healthy rural to urban economic transformation is to transfer workers from low-skill and low-productivity professions to high-skill jobs. It would be extremely difficult for an urban employment guarantee scheme to ensure this. The few steps involved in the rollout of such a programme are:

- Passage of a National Urban Employment Guarantee Act – This Act will legally bind the state to provide a fixed number of days of work for all eligible people who apply under the programme, lay down the governance structure for administering the programme, and provide accountability mechanisms for its operation.
- Creation of a Ministry of Employment – This programme is administered by a newly created Ministry of Employment under the Government of India. Such a Ministry will be responsible for all matters related to employment generation including the administration of MGNREGA.
- Establishing functionaries for administering the programme – The Central and state governments have to hire, through an open process, a set of dedicated staff who are responsible for administering this programme as well as staff responsible for accountability measures under this programme.

## 3. Analysing effectiveness of Mediation in Ram Mandir Dispute

### All important events of Ayodhya Ramjanambumi-Babri masjid case

Although there has been protests and demands for Ram mandir even before 1986, but main events start from 1980's

**1986:** Faizabad district court orders the gates of the mosque be opened and Hindus be allowed to worship there. Muslims protest the move and forms Babri Mosque Action Committee.

**1989:** Faizabad district court orders the gates of the mosque be opened and Hindus be allowed to worship there. Muslims protest the move and forms Babri Mosque Action Committee.

**1990:** Then BJP President L K Advani launches his Rath Yatra

**1992:** The disputed Babri Mosque is razed to the ground by karsevaks.

**2002:** Three-judge Bench of high court begins hearing to determine the ownership of land. The HC orders the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to excavate the site to determine if it was a temple earlier.

**2003:** ASI finds evidence of the presence of a temple under the mosque. Muslim organisations dispute the findings

**2010:** The HC rules the disputed land be divided into three parts — one-third to Ram Lalla Virajman, represented by the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha; one-third to the Sunni Waqf Board; and the remaining to the Nirmohi Akhara. In December, the parties move the SC

**2011:** The SC stays the HC order

**2018:** The Supreme Court decides that the land dispute case will only be listed before an “appropriate Bench” in January 2019.

**2019:** The Supreme Court sets up a five-judge Constitution Bench to hear the land dispute case.

**March, 2019:** Supreme Court ordered the mediation as a resolution to the dispute and formed e members mediation panel.

**Members:** The chairman, Justice Kalifulla, has served at the Supreme Court with distinction. Sreeram Panchu is a senior advocate who has pioneered mediation as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism in this country. Sri Sri Ravishankar has come a long way from his initial days with Mahesh Yogi.

**Time limit:** The panel has to hold sittings in Faizabad and submit a status report within four weeks and try to resolve the issue within eight weeks.

### **What is mediation?**

Mediation is a party-centred and structured negotiation process where a neutral third party assists the parties in amicably resolving their disputes. Even though the mediator facilitates their communication and negotiations, the parties always retain control over the outcome of the dispute.

### **Legal provisions regarding Mediation**

#### **Section 89 of Civil Procedure Code**

In 1999, the Indian Parliament passed the CPC Amendment Act of 1999 inserting Sec.89 in the Code of Civil Procedure 1908. it mandates that where it appears to the Court that there exists an element of settlement which may be acceptable to the parties, the Court shall formulate the terms of settlement and after receiving comments of the parties may reformulate the terms of possible settlement after which parties may be referred to arbitration, conciliation, judicial settlement or mediation.

## **Arbitration and conciliation act 1996**

The Indian parliament enacted the Arbitration and Conciliation Act in 1996. The Act provided for the commencement of conciliation proceedings, appointment of conciliators and assistance of suitable institution for the purpose of recommending the names of the conciliators. It also defines the role of conciliator in assisting the parties in negotiating settlement of disputes between the parties.

### **Reasons for accepting mediation mechanism**

Court has accepted that Conventional legal and constitutional tools are powerless in the face of faith.

Law Commission of India in its 129th report had “recommended the introduction of the conciliation court system and had underlined the importance of conciliation/ mediation as a mode of ADR”.

### **Difference between Judicial process and mediation**

	JUDICIAL PROCESS	ARBITRATION	MEDIATION
1.	Judicial process is an adjudicatory process where a third party (judge/ other authority) decides the outcome.	Arbitration is a quasi-judicial adjudicatory process where the arbitrator(s) appointed by the Court or by the parties decide the dispute between the parties.	Mediation is a negotiation process and not an adjudicatory process. The mediator facilitates the process. Parties participate directly in the resolution of their dispute and decide the terms of settlement.
2.	Procedure and decision are governed, restricted, and controlled by the provisions of the relevant statutes.	Procedure and decision are governed, restricted and controlled by the provisions of the Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996.	Procedure and settlement are not controlled, governed or restricted by statutory provisions thereby allowing freedom and flexibility.
3.	The decision is binding on the parties.	The award in an arbitration is binding on the parties.	A binding settlement is reached only if parties arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement.
4.	Adversarial in nature, as focus is on past events and determination of rights and liabilities of parties.	Adversarial in nature as focus is on determination of rights and liabilities of parties.	Collaborative in nature as focus is on the present and the future and resolution of disputes is by mutual agreement of parties irrespective of rights and

## Why mediation is not a good idea?

Mediation as a medium of settlement is not new. Supreme Court has also used it before

- In Bhopal Gas tragedy, Mediation was ordered in which Union of India and Union carbide were parties. The settlement absolved Union Carbide of all criminal and civil liabilities for a sum of \$450 million. Although criminal proceedings were restored after protests by victims.
- The six-decade-old Babri masjid dispute has witnessed several serious mediations attempts to find a way out, none of which yielded any result.
- There will also be the issue of choosing mediators, having universal acceptability among the population they are representing.
- Putting the responsibility of finding a solution on few people makes them an easy political target in case of adverse decision.
- There is very less chances of any resolution to come out as none of the party want to compromise due to political and religious pressure owing to an absence of consensus and coordination thus dragging the matter indefinitely.

## Why Mediation is a good idea?

- Without negotiations and settlements there are chances that Court's order would be Violated and misused for achieving their selfish and sinister objective by some elements, thus reaching an agreement by talks can resolve this issue amicably.
- Court's order not to report the proceeding is a nice idea to keep the issue from politicisation.
- To keep the parties insulated from outside interference, the court has directed an 'in- camera' process to ensure that the progress of the negotiations is known only to the parties concerned.
- Keeping out political and electorate consideration would be important and that is possible only through a peaceful solution.
- After analysing the graveness and vain efforts in this case, trying to bring a peaceful settlement is a welcoming step. Now it needs to be ensured that none of the party is influenced by outside power and space has been given to the parties to find a rationale decision.

## 4. Darbar Move

The Civil Secretariat and other move offices of Jammu & Kashmir government will re-open in summer capital Srinagar today as part of bi-annual Darbar Move.

### About:

- **What is it?** It is the name for the bi-annual shift of the secretariat and all other government offices in J&K from Srinagar (state's summer capital) to Jammu (state's winter capital).

- **When is it done?** The secretariat is located in Srinagar from May to October and in Jammu from November to April. Along with the secretariat, the J&K High Court also moves.
- **Who started the Darbar Move?** The practice was started by Dogra King Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1872.
- **Why was it started?** This was done to escape extreme weather conditions in these places. It was a compulsion in the past because of poor means of transportation and communication.



### **Important Info:**

### **DEBATE**

#### **Arguments against Darbar move:**

- Some sections of the society have questioned the practice from time to time. In 1987, the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi asked the government "to review the age-old practice". In 2012, the then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah questioned the practice.
- The Practice is inconvenient. It is a waste of time as well as money.
- Every year, over 7,000 employees along with thousands of files of the civil secretariat are ferried between Jammu and Srinagar in buses and trucks on the 300-km-long route.
- The move costs the State over Rs. 40 crore.

#### **Challenges in abolishing it:**

- Since the shifting of the capital pumps a lot of money into the Jammu economy along with renovation of roads, so the people of Jammu are opposed to any change.
- Also the government fears that abolishing the "Darbar Move" may increase the feeling of alienation between Jammu (which is predominantly Hindu) and Kashmir (which is predominantly Muslim).
- Thus it appears that keeping in mind this delicate relationship, status quo will prevail.

## **5. Section 10 Of The Election Commission Act, 1991**

Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa has dissented with the opinion of his colleagues in the Election Commission in five different matters pertaining to alleged violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

## About:

- Section 10 (Disposal of business by Election Commission) of The Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991, lays down that “all business of the Commission shall, as far as possible, be transacted unanimously”.
- However If the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs) differ in opinion on any matter, such matter shall be decided according to the opinion of the majority”.



## Size of Election Commission:

- Under Article 324, the powers of “superintendence, direction and control of elections” are to be vested in an Election Commission. **The Constitution does not, however, fix the size of the Election Commission.**
- **Article 324(2)** says that “the Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time to time fix”.
- In 1993, the government of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao promulgated an Ordinance to provide for the appointment of two more Election Commissioners. The Ordinance was replaced by **The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Conditions of Service) Amendment Act, 1993**, which came into effect in 1994.
- The Election Commission has had three members ever since. At present, the Election Commission of India comprises CEC Sunil Arora and ECs Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra. **All three Election Commissioners have equal say in the decision making of the Commission.**

# International Relations

## 6. India Canada Relation

### Context

Recently, Canada removed a reference to Sikh extremism from its “2018 Public Report on the Terrorism Threat to Canada”, a move that was criticised by the Indian government.

### More in News

- Earlier, the 2018 report had identified Sikh extremism and the movement for an independent homeland of Khalistan, in Punjab, as one of five key terror threats facing Canada, along with “Sunni Islamist Extremism”, “Right-Wing Extremism”, “Shia Extremism” and “Canadian Extremist Travellers”.
- The report was widely criticised by Sikh organisations in Canada
- Bowing to the pressure from the influential Sikh community in the country, Public Safety Canada has updated the report with ‘Extremists who Support Violent Means to Establish an Independent State within India’ deleting the words Sikh extremism and Khalistan.
- Added section identifies two organisations in Canada, Babbar Khalsa International and the International Sikh Youth Federation, as being associated with terrorism.
- This move is being criticised by the India government, which has long accused the Canadian government of going soft pro-Khalistan groups in Canada

### Relation between India and Canada in recent time

1. **Believes in Multipolarity:** Canada, a middle power country, is sympathetic to the Indian view that peace and prosperity in Asia would depend on an effective balance of power rather than a Sino-centric Asia.

Also, Canada, like India, is a strong supporter of “freedom of navigation and over-flight throughout the Indo-Pacific”, and it has expressed itself forthrightly on China’s unacceptable activities in the South China Sea. This shows Canada is conscious of the value of multi-polarity.

2. **Trade and economy:** Bilateral trade between India and Canada has reached US\$ 6 in 2016 and cumulative two-way Direct Foreign Investment reached US\$ 2.9 billion.

Both the countries undertaking bilateral negotiations toward a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA)

- Major items of India’s exports to Canada include gems, jewellery and precious stones, pharmaceutical products, readymade garments,

textiles, organic chemicals, light engineering goods and iron & steel articles.

- India's import from Canada include pulses, newsprint, wood pulp, asbestos, potash, iron scrap, copper, minerals and industrial chemicals.

**3. Cooperation in Energy sectors:** Resource rich Canada is well positioned as a reliable partner in India's quest for energy security. India and Canada working together on development of civil nuclear energy.

**4. Education Sector:** Education is a key area of collaboration between India and Canada. In 2017, Indian students received well over 25% (over 80,000) of the available study permits.

**5. Permanent residency:** In 2017, well over 40% of the 86,022 people who received invitations for permanent residency were Indians. During 2018, this rose by a staggering 13% to 41,000.

**6. Agriculture Sector:** Canada is a key supplier of pulses and potash. Cold chain management, animal husbandry, dryland farming, food processing technologies and agricultural sustainability are priority areas for bilateral cooperation.

**7. Science & Technology:** India-Canada S&T Cooperation Agreement was signed in 2005. Regular consultations have taken place through the Indo-Canada Joint S&T Committee.

**8. Outer Space:** India and Canada have been cooperating since 1990s, in the areas of space science, earth observation, satellite launch services and ground support for space missions.

### **Areas of concern between India and Canada**

- **Khalistan Issue:** Canadian political parties are openly supporting Khalistan movement in Canada. This became a major area of concern between two countries.
- **Bilateral Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA):** India has not signed the BIPPA yet. Once the agreement is finalised there would be higher inflow of Pension fund from Canada.

### **Steps to be taken**

- Tourism and education are two important sectors where huge potential exists. The more Indian tourists visit Canada and the more Indian students enter Canadian universities, the stronger momentum will develop that shall enrich the people-to-people relations. Promotional measures should be undertaken actively for this twin purpose.
- India must sign BIPPA which would help to flow more funds to India.
- Canadian firms should explore opportunities more actively in infrastructure, urban development, energy, education, and health sectors. Indian companies can exploit the largely untapped potential of the expanding ICT business in Toronto and other Canadian cities.

- If there is evidence of support for any violent activity related to Khalistan, both the country must work together to tackle the problem.

## Way Ahead

India-Canada relations are strategically thin. Canada has little to offer in terms of assisting India with core strategic objectives that include China, Pakistan, the subcontinent, maritime security in the Indian Ocean rim and beyond.

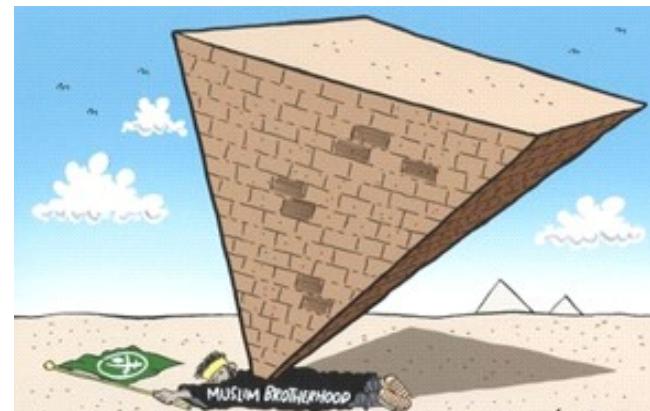
But with over 1.2 million people of Indian origin, Canada remains an important destination for Indians. Being an open economy, it has continued to attract not only Indian capital but also Indian professionals and students. Thus, it is important to handle ties with Canada with nuance. India should not focus only on one issue of Khalistan as relation between two countries is multi-layered.

## 7. Muslim Brotherhood

The White House recently said that United States is working on a proposal to designate the Muslim Brotherhood a foreign terrorist organisation (FTO).

### About:

- **What is it?** Muslim Brotherhood is a movement.
- **History:** it was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna.
- **Objective:** He preached that an Islamic religious revival would help Muslim nations improve their situation and defeat their colonial masters. He was not specific about the kind of Muslim revivalist government he was advocating.
- **Global influence:**



- His ideas led inspired a large number of Islamist political movements and parties alongwith powerful missionary and charitable initiatives all over the world.
- Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Morocco, Turkey and Tunisia are among the countries that have large parties that trace their origins to the Brotherhood.
- Hamas, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood has been designated as an Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) by the US. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the fugitive leader of al-Qaeda, is a former member of the Egyptian Brotherhood.

- **Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood:**

- There is a broad consensus among historians that the Egyptian Brotherhood, as an organisation at least, has not undertaken violent

action since 1960s, when it formally announced they were only “preachers”.

- In Egypt, the Brotherhood has been in Parliament since the 1980s, and one of its leaders, Mohamed Morsi, became President in 2012, who was ousted the following year.

### **Important Info:**

#### **Recent development: Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO)**

- The White House recently said that United States is working on a proposal to designate the Muslim Brotherhood a foreign terrorist organisation (FTO).
- This happened after the Egyptian leader urged the United States to impose sanction on the Brotherhood.
- After the military takeover in Cairo in 2013, some factions of the Egyptian Brotherhood such as Hasm and Liwa al-Thawra have broken off and carried out violence against the government.
- But President Al-Sisi accuses the Brotherhood as a whole of supporting and carrying out terrorism, which the Brotherhood denies.
- Also last month, the Trump administration designated Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO).
- The FTO designation imposes sweeping economic and travel sanctions on both the IRGC and on organizations, companies, and individuals that have links to it.

## **8. Arctic Council**

At the 11th Arctic Council ministerial meeting, India has been re-elected as Observer of the Arctic Council. Earlier, India had got the observer status in 2013.



### **About:**

- **What is it?** Arctic Council is an inter-governmental forum.
- **History:** The 1996 Ottawa Declaration established the Arctic Council in 1996.
- **Secretariat:** Tromsø, Norway.
- **Mandate:** To promote cooperation among Arctic states on common issues, particularly on sustainable development and environmental protection.

### **What doesn't it do?**

- The Arctic Council does not and cannot implement or enforce its guidelines, assessments or recommendations. That responsibility belongs to each individual Arctic State.

- The Arctic Council's mandate, as articulated in the Ottawa Declaration, explicitly excludes military security.

### **Who takes part?**

- The Ottawa Declaration lists the following 8 countries as Members of the Arctic Council: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States.
- In addition, six organizations representing Arctic indigenous peoples have status as Permanent Participants.
- Observer status in the Arctic Council is open to non-Arctic states. Besides India, 12 other nations including China, France, Germany, Japan, UK, Switzerland and Netherlands have observer status.

### **India and Arctic:**

- With sea ice melting due to global warming, the Arctic has become vital for researchers studying climate change.
- India had embarked upon Arctic research by launching its first scientific expedition in 2007, using the international research facility at Ny-Alesund in the Spitsbergen Island of Norway.
- The country – led by National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) – has since then been regularly sending scientific teams for carrying out studies in the Arctic, primarily in the fields of glaciology, hydrochemistry, microbiology and atmospheric sciences.
- A station building "HIMADRI" with accommodation and work space for a total of eight scientists was formally inaugurated there on July 1, 2008.

## **9. India Africa Trade Relations**

The Union Commerce Ministry along with Indian High Commissions and Embassies of eleven African countries held discussions with the Indian business community in Africa in order to further deepen and strengthen India-Africa trade ties.



### **Present status of Trade:**

- India's total trade with the African region during 2017-18 was USD 62.69 billion (8.15% of India's total trade with the World).
- India's share of exports to African countries as a percentage of India's total exports to the world was of the order of 8.21% in 2017-18.

- Africa region's share in India's total imports from the World accounted for 8.12% in 2017-18.

### **Trade opportunities in Africa:**

- Africa present immense opportunities for India with the world's largest land mass, 54 countries, a population growing to be almost equivalent to that of India, huge mineral resources, oil wealth, a youthful population, falling poverty levels and increasing consumption patterns.
- Thus, Africa has a huge demand for new business models for market entry, stable market access, entrepreneurship and investments in transport, telecom, tourism, financial services etc.
- Indian Diaspora in Africa constitutes 9.11% of the total Diaspora of India which is playing a vital role in all fields like politics, business and education.

### **The major issues highlighted by the Indian Business Community in Africa are:**

- Improving the Line of Credit system and developing a facility for an affordable funding.
- Setting up of Indian Banks/financial institutions in Africa.
- Reviewing and liberalizing visa policies from both sides.
- Need for direct flights between the India and African countries.
- Exploring the possibility of rupee trade to address the issue of shortage of dollars in region.
- Development of a robust trade dispute settlement mechanism.
- Establishment of country chapters of FICCI or CII in Africa.
- Frequent visits of policy makers, chamber of commerce and investors for familiarization with local business and investment regime for informed decisions.

## **10. World Customs Organisation (WCO)**

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) is organising a meeting of the Regional Heads of Customs Administration of Asia Pacific Region of the WCO in Kochi from 08th to 10th May, 2019.

### **About:**

- **Background:** WCO was established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC). In 1994, the organization adopted its current name (WCO).
- **Status:** An independent intergovernmental body.
- **Objective:** It is the only intergovernmental organisation exclusively focused on Customs matters. Its objective is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.

- **Key functions:**

- Maintaining the international Harmonized System (HS) goods nomenclature.
- Administering the technical aspects of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements on Customs Valuation and Rules of Origin.

- **HQ:** Brussels, Belgium.

- **Administration:** The WCO is governed by the Council, which brings together all Members of the Organization once a year.

- **Membership:**

- WCO represents 182 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade.
- Membership is divided into six Regions. Each of the six Regions is represented by a regionally elected Vice-Chairperson to the WCO's governing body (the Council).
- India became the Vice Chair of the Asia Pacific region of the WCO on 1st July, 2018 for a two-year period.

## Economy

### 11. UDAY

According to analysis by CRISIL, aggregate external debt of State-owned Discoms is set to increase to pre-Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) levels.

#### **Recent report:**

- CRISIL analysed State-owned electricity distribution companies (Discoms) in 15 States, which account for 85% of the aggregate losses.
- According to it, aggregate external debt of these discoms is set to increase to pre-Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) levels of <sup>1</sup> 2.6 lakh crore by the end of this fiscal.
- With most States having limited fiscal headroom, continuous financial support to their discoms may be difficult. So discoms have to become commercially viable through prudent tariff hikes and a material reduction in aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses.

#### **UDAY:**

- **Full name:** Ujjwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY).
- **Scheme Objectives:**
- The scheme was launched for operational and financial turnaround of State owned Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs).
- It aims to reduce the interest burden, reduce the cost of power, reduce power losses in Distribution sector, and improve operational efficiency of DISCOMs.
- **Strategy:** This is through four initiatives (i) Improving operational efficiencies of DISCOMs; (ii) Reduction of cost of power; (iii) Reduction in interest cost of DISCOMs; (iv) Enforcing financial discipline on DISCOMs through alignment with State finances.
- **Launched by:** Ministry of Power.
- **History:** It was approved by Union Cabinet in November, 2015.

### 12. RBI's Forex Swap and Its impact

#### **Context**

To improve domestic liquidity conditions, the Reserve Bank of India has decided to conduct a long-term forex swap auction.

#### **What is forex swap?**

- The swap is in the nature of a simple buy/sell foreign-exchange swap with the RBI.
- A bank shall sell U.S. dollars to the RBI, in turn the RBI will pay rupees to the participating banks at the current spot rate.

- Simultaneously, the banks will agree to buy-back the same amount of dollars from the RBI after three years, the tenor of current auction. The final exchange rate will be decided by an auction where banks will bid on the forward premium, they are willing to pay.

### How it works

If the spot exchange rate is 70 to a dollar, say Bank A quotes a premium of 150 paisa and bids for \$25 million. So, the bank will get <sup>1</sup> 175 crore (\$25 million multiplied by the exchange rate of 70). After three years, the bank has to pay back approximately <sup>1</sup> 179 crore (\$25 million multiplied by the exchange rate of 71.5) to the RBI to buy back \$25 million.



- Forex swap is different from currency swap where two parties exchange a notional principal with one another in order to gain exposure to a desired currency.
- Forex swaps and other types of foreign exchange operations are also open market operations. OMO is a direct instrument of monetary policy, because the instrument influences the money supply directly.
- RBI uses Open Market Operations along with other monetary policy tools such as repo rate, cash reserve ratio and statutory liquidity ratio to adjust the quantum and price of money in the system.
- On the other hand, in swap transaction, only authorised dealers, mainly banks, will be allowed to deposit US dollars in exchange for rupees.
- Under the current swap auction, RBI will buy US dollars from banks totalling to \$5 billion. Minimum bid size would be \$25 million and in multiples of \$1 million thereafter.

### Benefits of forex swap

- Increase liquidity in market: Indian financial markets have been undergoing liquidity problems since the IL&FS crisis. In addition to this, the demand for rupees is expected to spike in the coming weeks as a result of a huge spending towards the upcoming general elections. Swap Auction will increase the supply of rupees in the market.
- Boost foreign exchange reserve: The auction will help to boost RBI's forex reserves by another \$5 billion. The forex reserve is one tool which the RBI uses to intervene in the currency market at times of abnormal volatility.
- Improve credit: This auction is expected to improve fund availability with the banks and in turn moderate borrowing costs.
- Benefits Importer: The decline in forward premium (especially at the longer tenor) will lower dollar hedging cost for importers.

- Benefits banks: Banks which currently short on SLR (Statutory liquidity ratio) securities and cannot participate in OMOs. Dollar swap would help banks to improve their liquidity. Also, the cost of dollar swap is less than government securities.
- Fiscal Discipline: Open market operations and sale of government bonds usually used to keep the interest rate lower artificially. Using different mechanism would implicitly infuse fiscal discipline.
- Bring stability: Low premium would attract foreign flows into domestic markets. This also helps to hedge risks of exchange-rate depreciation at low costs.

### **Issues with forex swap**

- Impact bond market: Until now, bond market is preferred route for short term credit adjustment. The success of Forex swap would have a negative impact on bond market
- Limited participation: Only the Category-I banks are allowed to participate in the auction, not all players in the financial services sector will be able to get the benefits.

### **Way Ahead**

This is first time that such a tool has been deployed by the RBI, which has been normally using OMOs to inject liquidity into the system. The RBI's latest move is in line with its easy monetary policy stance. This would definitely help to meet the durable liquidity needs of the system as many analysts believe that this led to faster monetary policy transmission, unlike the OMOs which is good enough for government bond investors only, but the real impact could be analysed only in coming days.

## **13. Managing India's sugar surplus**

### **Context**

Australia and Brazil dragged India to the WTO for its market-distorting policies on sugar.

Their contention was that the subsidies given by India to their sugarcane farmers far exceeded the norms set by the WTO resulting in higher sugar production/exports which dampen the international prices and, consequently, hurt their domestic producers.

### **Fast facts**

- India is the second largest producer of sugar in the world after Brazil and is also the largest consumer.
- Sugarcane is grown as a Kharif Crop. It needs hot and humid climate with an average temperature of 21°C to 27°C and rainfall in the range of 75-150 cm
- Sugarcane can grow in any soil which can retain moisture. Ideal soil for sugarcane is rich loamy soil.

- The sugar economy is a highly controlled one. There is a Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane fixed by the Central Government and State advised prices (SAP) fixed by each State over and above the FRP.
- India's exports at 4.64 lakh tonnes last year is a minuscule part of the global trade estimated at 450 lakh tonnes

### **Reason for sugar surplus**

In 2018-19, the sugar industry is expected to have a surplus that will be as high as 48 per cent of the country's annual consumption. Due to vote bank politics successive government announced **high sugarcane prices**. Sugarcane fetches 60 per cent higher returns than any other competing crop. This assurance of price led farmers to prefer sugarcane even if they periodically face significant delay in receiving payment.

### **Other Impact of high sugarcane price**

- **On market:** Due to high cane price the cost of production in India is way above the international sugar prices. Indian mills pay <sup>1</sup> 2,890 per tonne of cane compared with <sup>1</sup> 1,732 in Brazil, <sup>1</sup> 1,739 in Australia and <sup>1</sup> 1,842 in Thailand.
- **On export:** Very high cost of sugarcane pushes up the costs of sugar which makes it unfeasible in International market. In 2017-18, the production cost was <sup>1</sup> 3,580 per quintal of sugar while the international prices averaged <sup>1</sup> 2,080.
- **On mill owners:** Farmers grow sugarcane and sell it to the sugar mills. Since the price of sugar cane does not reflect the market price of sugar there is a price mismatch and the mill owners are not able to pay the farmers when the market price of sugar is low. This led to accumulation of arrears and affects cash flows of the mill.
- **On Farmers:** Due to price mismatch mill owners usually not able to pay the price on time.
- **On government:** High price support put extra burden on exchequer. Also, government has to face allegation in WTO as countries like Brazil and Australia accused India that it followed market distortion policies which is against WTO principle.
- **On other crops:** Sugarcane fetches 60 per cent higher returns than any other competing crop. This led farmers to prefer sugarcane over another crop
- **On environment:** Preference of sugarcane led to monoculture of sugarcane. Lack of crop rotation in some areas, leads to depletion of nutrients in soil and adversely affect environment.

### **Other problem faced by sugarcane farmers**

- **Low yield per hectare:** The average rate of sugar recovery from the sugar cane is less than other sugar producing areas like Java, Brazil and Australia.

- **Monoculture of sugarcane:** lack of crop rotation in some areas, leads to depletion of nutrients in soil and adversely affect cane productivity.
- **Water availability:** Irregularity in availability of water for irrigation especially in north India, adversely affecting the sucrose content in the crop.
- **Perishable nature of crop:** Post harvest deterioration in cane quality on account of staling and delayed crushing contributes to low sugar recovery.

### **Steps taken by government**

- **Export subsidy:** Government provides export subsidy to sugar but it covers only part of the total cost
- **Ethanol Blending Program:** Government announced ethanol blending program to divert surplus sugarcane for production of ethanol.
- **Allow use of sugarcane juice in manufacturing of Ethanol:** Government now allowed sugar mill to produce ethanol through sugarcane juice and also announced a premium price for the ethanol so produced.

Typically, ethanol is manufactured from molasses, which is a by-product of sugar. But it can also be manufactured directly from sugarcane juice. Earlier the government did not permit large scale conversion directly to ethanol as that would have hurt sugar production.

In 2018-19, Brazil converted 65 per cent of its cane into ethanol directly. This helped it to keep sugar production at the required level and also reduce significantly its oil import bill at a time when crude oil prices rose sharply.

### **Steps to be taken**

- **Link the sugarcane price to output price:** Today, cane price keeps increasing irrespective of the price of sugar. The government should come up with a formula that arrives at the cane price after factoring the value of the output (including price of sugar, ethanol and power generated from bagasse).
- **Reduce cost of production:** Government should popularize innovative methods like Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative (SSI) which uses less seeds, less water and optimum utilization of fertilizers and land for sugarcane production.
- **Focus more on Ethanol blending program:** The government should focus more on Ethanol blending program and try to harness its full potential. As per the estimates given in Auto Fuel Vision and Policy 2025 issued in May 2014, blended petrol is available only in 13 states and the average blend is 2%.

### **Conclusion**

According to the India Sugar Mills Association, India is set to produce 35.5 million tonnes of sugar between October 2018 and September 2019 but

the demand is only at 25 million tonnes. Efficient management of surplus sugarcane would benefit everyone including farmers, mill owners and government.

## 14. U.S. - China Trade War

President Donald Trump has announced that the United States would raise tariffs on 200 billion dollars of Chinese goods from 10 to 25 %, because trade talks are moving “too slowly.”

### About:

- **Background:** The two sides have imposed tariffs on 360 billion dollars in two-way trade since last year but Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed to a truce in December to refrain from further escalation.
- **Recent announcement by Donald Trump:** Trade deal with China is going too slowly. For 10 months, China has been paying tariffs to the USA of 25 % on 50 billion dollars of high tech, and 10 % on 200 billion dollars of other goods. He added that the 10 % will go up to 25 %.

### Important Info:

#### US-China trade war: Brief Overview

- **Beginning:** US President Donald Trump has complained about China's trading practices since before he took office in 2016. The US launched an investigation into Chinese trade policies in 2017. It imposed tariffs on billions of dollars worth of Chinese products last year, and Beijing retaliated in kind.
- **Breakthrough:** After months of hostilities, a breakthrough of sorts came in December. Both countries agreed to halt new trade tariffs to allow for talks.
- Now President Trump has decided to hike existing tariffs.
- **Why tariffs?** Tariffs, in theory, make US-made products cheaper than imported ones, and encourage consumers to buy American.
- **What is the impact so far?** Both US and international firms have said they are being harmed. Fears about a further escalation has rattled investors and hit stock markets. The IMF warned a full-blown trade war would weaken the global economy.

## 15. Saccharine (Anti-Dumping Duty)

The Finance Ministry has, on the recommendations of the Commerce Ministry, imposed an anti-dumping duty of \$1,633.17 per tonne on the import of saccharine from Indonesia.

### Saccharine:

- **What is it?** Saccharin is an artificial, or non-nutritive, sweetener.

- **History:** The substance was first discovered in 1878 by researcher Constantin Fahlberg. Its popularity increased during the 1960s and 1970s among dieters as a result of its ‘calorie-free’ status.
- **Applications:** Saccharine is a compound most commonly used in sugar-substitute sweeteners. It is used to sweeten products such as drinks, candies, cookies, and medicines.
- **Properties:**
  - It is 200 to 700 times sweeter than sucrose (table sugar), does not raise blood sugar levels and like all non-nutritive sweeteners has no calories. However, it does have a bitter or metallic aftertaste, especially at high concentrations.
  - Saccharin is unstable when heated but does not react chemically with other food ingredients, which makes it good for storage.
- **India's import from Indonesia:** Indonesia, until recently, accounted for a large chunk of India's saccharine imports. However, imports from Indonesia have declined since then. In the April 2018 to February 2019 period, India imported only 20% of its total saccharine imports from Indonesia.
- **Recent ban:** According to Government of India, saccharine has been exported to India from Indonesia below their normal values and consequently, the Indian domestic industry has suffered a lot.

### **Anti-Dumping Duty:**

- **Dumping:** Dumping refers to export/sale of a commodity in foreign country by a company at a price which is lower than domestic market price.
- **Anti-Dumping Duty:** These are additional import duties which are imposed to check dumping. As per WTO Norms, Member countries can impose Anti-Dumping duty if –
  - Exporter is dumping goods &
  - It is adversely affecting domestic industries.
- **Counter-veiling duty:** It is an additional import duty which is imposed to counter or offset the impact of Indirect tax differential or subsidy provided by the exporting country’s government.

## **16. Business Correspondents (BCs)**

Business correspondents (BCs) operating in the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme and other banking services are finding it tough to operate due to reduction in fees and unaffordability of the Aadhar enabled payment system (AEPS).

### **About:**

- **Who are they?** Business correspondents are retail agents engaged by banks for providing services at locations other than a bank branch or an ATM.

- **Permitted services include:** identification of borrowers, collection and preliminary processing of loan applications, collection of small value deposit, disbursal of small value credit, sale of micro insurance, MF products and pension products.
- **History:** In 2006, RBI issued guidelines for engagement of BCs by banks for providing banking and financial services.

**Who can act as BCs?** The RBI has provided a long list of entities and persons who can act as BCs.

- Some of these are NGOs/ MFIs set up under Indian Societies/ Trust Acts (**excluding non banking financial companies (NBFCs)**), Societies registered under mutually aided co-op. societies (MACs) Act or the Coop. Acts of States, Section 25 companies, Post Offices, Individual kirana/ medical/fair price shop owners etc.
- In June 2018, Union government announced that all 2.9 lakh common service centres (CSCs) in the country will operate as business correspondents of banks.

## 17. Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP)

Rajasthan has decided to execute the Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) on time this year for facilitating ease of doing business to maintain its ranking as one of the top achievers.

### About:

- **Background:** The Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) for implementation by States/UTs was released for the first time in 2015.
- **Released by:** The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry in partnership with the World Bank Group
- **What does it includes:** The BRAP includes recommendations for reforms on regulatory processes across various reform areas such as labour regulation enablers; contract enforcement; registering property; inspection reform enablers; single window system etc.
- **Ranking of States:** For each State/UT, the scores will be aggregated over all the surveys conducted to yield an overall score for the State/ UT. The feedback scores will be used to generate a ranking of States/ UTs in terms of reform implementation.

### Rankings (2018):

- Andhra Pradesh tops ease of doing business list followed by Telangana and Haryana.
- Jharkhand, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan and West Bengal are the other states in the top ten list.

## 18. Pattachitra

Cyclone Fani, which hit part of the coastal district of Puri, has inflicted heavy damage on the creations of 'Pattachitra' artists.

### About:

- Patta means cloth, and Chitra means picture. Hence, Pattachitra is a picture painted on a piece of cloth.
- It is based in the states of West Bengal and Odisha.
- **Bengal tradition:** It is centered around Kalighat (in Kolkata). Theme is Not much devotional.

### • **Odisha tradition:**

- It is centered around Puri.
- These paintings are based on Hindu mythology and specially inspired by Jagannath and Vaishnava sect.
- All colours used in the Paintings are natural and paintings.
- Almost all of the Chitrakar community hails from a small village in Puri district called Raghurajpur.



## Geography and Environment

### 19. Purple Frog

Purple frog could soon be designated as Kerala's state amphibian – a title that researchers hope would go a long way in protecting its fragile habitat. A proposal for this has been floated by state's leading Herpetologists.

#### About:

- **Scientific Name:** Nasikabatrachus sahyadrensis.
- **Common Name:** It is also known as Purple Frog, Maveli frog or Pignose Frog.
- **Family:** The purple frog is a frog species belonging to the family Sooglossidae.
- **Features:**
  - Its body appears robust and bloated and is relatively rounded compared to other flattened frogs. Compared to other frogs, *N. sahyadrensis* has a small head and an unusual pointed snout.
  - Adults are typically dark purplish-grey in color.
  - It lives almost its entire life in underground tunnels, comes out to the surface for a single day in a year to breed.
- **Distribution:** Earlier thought to be restricted to the south of the Palghat Gap in the Western Ghats, the species is now known to be quite widely distributed in the Western Ghats.
- **History:** Herpetologists believe that the species should be rightly called a 'living fossil' as its evolutionary roots suggest it could have shared space with dinosaurs going back almost 70 million years ago.
- **Conservation Status:** It listed as endangered on the red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



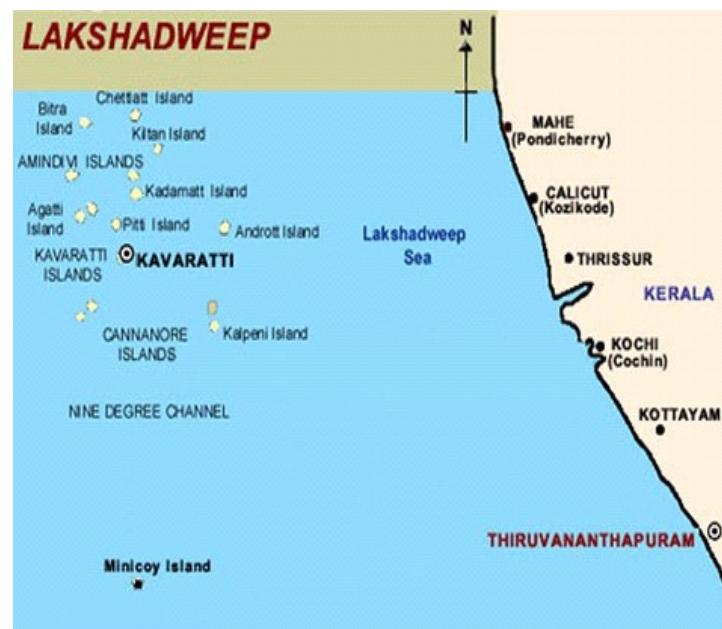
### 20. Lakshadweep Islands

Scientists have carried out genetic study on people of Lakshadweep Islands for the first time.

#### Genetic study on people of Lakshadweep:

- The Genetic study was done by a team of researchers at CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).
- The studies have shown that a majority of human ancestry in Lakshadweep is largely derived from South Asia with minor influences from East and West Eurasia.

- And, there was no evidence of early human migration through the Lakshadweep islands. Earlier it was presumed that Lakshadweep Islands might have presence of genetic signatures of ancient people, such as Andamanese and Australian aborigines.
- However, the genetic composition of the first human settlement of this archipelago is not clear.



### Lakshadweep:

- **Location:** Lakshadweep is an archipelago of 36 islands in the Laccadive Sea, scattered over approximately 78,000 square km of the Arabian Sea, 200-440 kms off the south-western coast of India.
- **Polity & Governance:**
  - The archipelago is a Union Territory and is governed by the Union Government of India.
  - The region forms a single Indian district.
  - Kavaratti serves as the capital of the Union Territory.
  - The region comes under the jurisdiction of Kerala High Court.
- **Size:** The islands form the smallest Union Territory of India and their total surface area is just 32 km<sup>2</sup>.
- **Geology:** The islands are the northernmost of the Lakshadweep-Maldives-Chagos group of islands, which are the tops of a vast undersea mountain range, the Chagos-Laccadive Ridge.
- **The main islands are:** Kavaratti, Agatti, Minicoy, and Amini.
- **The Nine Degree Channel:** It is a channel in the Indian Ocean between the Laccadive Islands of Kalpeni and Suheli Par, and Maliku Atoll. It is so named as it lies on the 9-degree line of Latitude, north of the equator.
- **Human history:**
  - The islands were known to sailors since ancient times and historical documents say that the spread of Buddhism to these islands happened during 6th century B.C. and Islam was spread by in 661 A.D. by Arabians.
  - Cholas ruled the islands in 11th century, Portuguese in 16th century, Ali Rajahs in 17th, Tipu Sultan in 18th before the British Raj of 19th century.

## 21. Global Assessment By Ipbes

According to a study, known as the Global Assessment, released by the IPBES, 40% of amphibian species and more than a third of all marine mammals are threatened. The report was endorsed by 130 countries, including the U.S., Russia and China.

### Key Highlights of the report:

- The Global Assessment contained a litany of estimates made after a three-year review of some 15,000 scientific papers that showed the profound impact of the rise of a globalised industrial society on the planet over the past half century.
- Up to one million of Earth's estimated eight million plant, insect and animal species is at risk of extinction, many within decades.
- 40% of amphibian species and more than a third of all marine mammals are threatened.
- This is because of relentless pursuit of economic growth, twinned with the impact of climate change. Industrial farming and fishing are major drivers of threat.
- Only a wide-ranging transformation of the global economic and financial system could pull ecosystems back from the brink of collapse.

### Comment:

- The report's message echoed the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which said in October that profound economic and social changes would be needed to curb greenhouse gases quickly enough to avert the most devastating consequences of a warming world.
- The findings will also add to pressure for countries to agree bold action to protect wildlife at a major conference on biodiversity due to take place in China towards the end of next year.

### IPBES:

- **Full name:** The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).
- **What is it?** It is the intergovernmental body which assesses the state of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services it provides to society, in response to requests from decision makers.
- **Established in:** 2012.
- **Membership:** Currently has over 130 governments as its member States. India is its founding member.
- **Secretariat:** Bonn, Germany.

## 22. Grizzled Giant Squirrel

For the first time, researchers have sighted nests of the grizzled giant squirrel at Pakkamalai Reserve Forests near Gingee in the Eastern Ghats.

### About:

- **Scientific name:** Ratufa macroura.
- **What is it?** It is a large tree squirrel in the genus Ratufa.
- **Distribution:** The species is usually known to nest in the Western Ghats in Southern India ranging from Chinnar Wildlife sanctuary in Kerala to Anamalai Tiger Reserve and Palani hills in Tamil Nadu. It is also found in Sri Lanka.
- **Conservation status:** Owing to habitat loss and poaching, the species has been categorised as near threatened by the Red List and listed under Schedule II of CITES. It is also listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- **Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary:** It is located in Shenbagathoppu, Srivilliputtur, Tamil Nadu.



## 23. Who Global Status Report On Road Safety

According to a World Health Organisation (WHO) report released during the ongoing global road safety week, Road accidents are the leading cause of death among people in the 5-29 age-group worldwide.

### Key Findings of the report:



- Road accidents are the leading cause of death among people in the 5-29 age-groups worldwide.
- More than 1.35 million lives are lost each year and 50 million sustaining injuries.
- Since 2008, India has maintained the dubious distinction of being world number one in road crash deaths, inspite of being a signatory to the **Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety**.
- As per the data released by the Indian government, road crashes kill close to 1,50,000 people each year. However, the WHO report challenged

the numbers and stated that India might be losing over **2,99,000 people each year.**

- **The reasons listed for this trend include** — rapid urbanisation, poor safety, lack of enforcement, distracted, influence of drugs or alcohol, speeding and a failure to wear seat-belts or helmets, according to experts.

### **Important Info:**

- **Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety:** India has signed the 2015 Brasilia Declaration committing to halve the number of deaths in road accidents by 2020.
- **Global road safety week:** The Fifth United Nations Global Road Safety Week is being held from 6-12 May 2019. This Week will focus on leadership for road safety. Therefore it launches action through the ongoing campaign: **Save Lives - #SpeakUp.**

## **24. Wildlife Areas Of Odisha**

Odisha's wildlife areas such as Balukhand Wildlife Sanctuary, Nandankanan Zoological Park and Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary have been ravaged by cyclone Fani.

### **Balukhand Wildlife Sanctuary:**

- The Balukhand-Konark Wildlife Sanctuary is located along the Bay of Bengal coast, between the towns of Puri and Konark.
- The sanctuary includes groves of introduced Casuarina trees planted in 1916-17, and cashew plantations. Olive Ridley Sea Turtles nest on the beaches.

### **Nandankanan Zoological Park:**

- It is located in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It lies in adjacent to Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary, in the vicinity of Kanjia lake.
- It is the only zoological park in India to become an institutional member of **World Association of Zoos and Aquarium (WAZA).**
- It is the only zoo in India after which an express train **Puri-New Delhi express** has been named as "**Nandankanan Express**".
- It is the first zoo in the World to breed White tiger and Melanistic tiger.
- It is the only conservation breeding centre of **Indian Pangolins** in the world.

## Science and Technology

### 25. Newspace India Ltd. (NSIL)

Officials in the DoS and ISRO have been trying to figure out how exactly Antrix and newly created NSIL would operate their respective businesses in the common, niche area.

#### **About:**

- **History:** In February 2019, the Union Cabinet had cleared a new business arm for Department of Space (DoS). On March 6, 2019, the DoS registered NewSpace India Ltd. (NSIL) as its commercial entity.
- **Type:** NSIL is the second commercial entity of the Department of Space (DoS) after Antrix Corporation Limited, which was set up in 1992 to market the products and services of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **Headquarters:** Bengaluru.
- **Financial administration:** NSIL has an authorised capital of<sup>1</sup> 10 crore and a paid up capital of<sup>1</sup> 1 crore.

**Mandate:** The new company has following mandates –

- transfer technology to industry for producing the commercially successful PSLV spacecraft launchers;
- outsource assembly of small satellites and the upcoming Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) and
- To commercially exploit the R&D work done by ISRO centres and DoS constituents.

### 26. Vishal

According to a media report, the United Kingdom is in talks with the Indian government on building a new state-of-the-art aircraft carrier.

#### **About:**

- The new state-of-the-art aircraft carrier is proposed to be build along the lines of **Britain's HMS Queen Elizabeth** as part of the ongoing 'Make in India' negotiations.
- The talks are under way for the Indian Navy to buy detailed plans for the 65,000-ton British warship to build a **so-called "copycat supercarrier" to be named INS Vishal in 2022.**
- If a deal can be agreed, the new warship would be built in India but UK companies could supply many of the parts.
- Such a new Naval carrier would serve alongside India's 45,000-ton carrier **INS Vikramaditya** — bought from Russia in 2004 — and the currently under-construction 40,000-ton **INS Vikrant**, and could give India a larger carrier fleet than Britain.

- The reported India-UK Naval deal would follow the sale of Britain's Falklands War carrier HMS Hermes to India in 1987, which was renamed **INS Viraat** and decommissioned two years ago.

## 27. Vela

Vela, the fourth Scorpene class submarine, was launched on 6 May 2019 at Mumbai Port Trust.

### About:

- What is it?** It is the fourth Scorpene class submarine being built under Project 75 for the Indian Navy.
- Bodies involved:** The submarine has been designed by French naval defence and energy group DCNS and manufactured by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL), Mumbai.
- Significance:** Scorpene submarines can undertake various types of mission's i.e Anti-Surface warfare, Anti-Submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, area surveillance etc. The Scorpene class is the Navy's first modern conventional diesel-electric submarine series in almost two decades.



### List of Scorpene submarines:

- INS Kalvari:** It was commissioned in 2017 by PM Narendra Modi.
- INS Khanderi:** It was launched in 2017 and is currently undergoing series of trials.
- INS Karanj:** It was launched in January 2018.
- Vela:** It was launched in May 2019.
- Vagir and Vagsheer:** The remaining two submarines are in the series are in advanced stages of manufacturing and trials.
- The entire project is expected to be completed by 2020.

## 28. INS Ranjit

Frontline missile destroyer of the Indian Navy, INS Ranjit was decommissioned at a grand ceremony at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam.

### About:

- INS Ranjit, the third of the five Rajput-class destroyers built by the erstwhile USSR, was commissioned in 1983.
- The ship has rendered yeoman service to the nation for 36 years. Since being commissioned, INS Ranjit has sailed for 2,190 days, covering over 7,43,000 nautical miles, equivalent to navigating around the world 35 times and 3.5 times the distance from the earth to the moon.

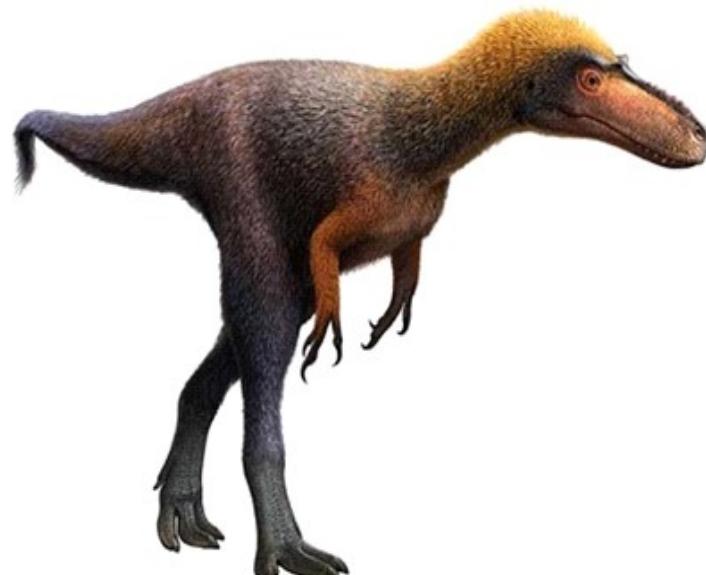
- The ship was at the forefront of major naval operations and served on both the Eastern and Western seabards.
- Apart from naval operations like 'Op Talwar' and various multinational exercises, the ship participated in relief operations post Tsunami in 2004 and Hud-hud on 2014.
- In recognition of the service rendered by INS Ranjit to the nation, the ship was awarded Unit Citations by the Chief of Naval Staff in 2003-04 and in 2009-10.

## 29. **Suskityrannus Hazelae**

A newly identified dinosaur, named *Suskityrannus hazelae*, has been described in a paper published in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*.

### About:

- **Genus:** *Suskityrannus* is a genus of small tyrannosauroid family. It contains a single species, *Suskityrannus hazelae*.
- **Time of existence:** The fossil discovered in New Mexico dates back 92 million years to the Cretaceous Period.



### • Features:

- It is a tiny relative of the *Tyrannosaurus rex*. It stood roughly 3 feet tall at the hip and was about 9 feet in length, the entire animal only marginally longer than the just the skull of a fully grown *Tyrannosaurus rex*.
- It is believed to have weighed between 45 and 90 pounds, compared to 90 tons for a typical full-grown *T rex*.
- Its diet likely consisted of the same as *T Rex*, but likely hunted small animals.

## Miscellaneous

### 30. School Burden

The Karnataka government issued an order directing all schools in the State, including government, aided and unaided institutions, to ensure that the weight of a school bag is not more than 10% of the child's weight.

#### Key highlights of order:

- All schools in the State, including government, aided and unaided institutions, should ensure that the weight of a school bag is not more than 10% of the child's weight. A bag of a student in Class 1 or 2 should weigh no more than 2 kg. It can weigh anywhere between 2 and 3 kg for students from Class 3 to 5. The prescribed weight increases progressively, with students in Class 9 and 10 allowed carrying bags in the 4-5 kg range.
- Students in Classes 1 and 2 should not be given any homework. All classwork should be kept in the school itself, either in files or books.
- Schools must set a timetable in advance, which will limit the number of books that have to be brought to class every day.
- Schools should create awareness about the health hazards of lugging heavy school bags.
- Schools must provide some space in classrooms where students can store their notebooks and textbooks.
- Make provisions for drinking water facilities so students don't have to carry water bottles in their bags.
- The third Saturday of every month should be followed as a "No School Bag Day". On that day, teachers have to engage students without any books. Suggested activities include field visits, general knowledge clubs, art classes, indoor and outdoor games, abacus, dance classes, and debates.

#### Background:

- The order comes after the Union Ministry for Human Resource Development in October last year directed all States to draw up guidelines to reduce the weight of school bags.
- Following the Ministry's direction, the Department of Primary and Secondary Education took up a pilot study, which was conducted by the Directorate of State Education, Research and Training and the Centre for Child and Law, National Law School of India University.

### 31. Ramzan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted the people on the occasion of beginning of the Holy month of Ramzan.

## About:

- **Names:** Ramadan is also known as Ramazan, Ramzan, Ramadhan, or Ramathan.
- **What is it?** It is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar.

## Religious significance:

- It is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad.
- This annual observance is regarded as one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

## Religious practices:

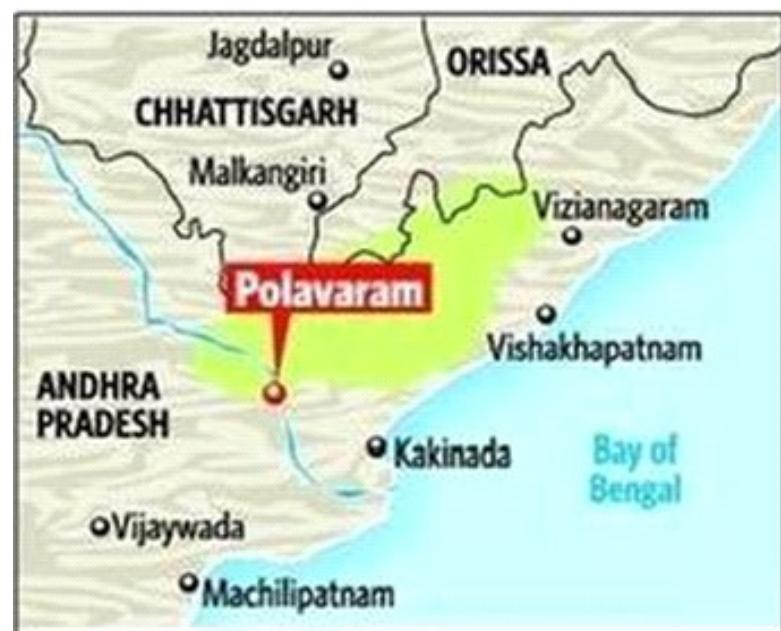
- For Muslims, Ramadan is a month of fasting, prayer. While fasting from dawn until sunset, Muslims refrain from consuming food, drinking liquids, smoking, and engaging in sexual relations.
- Pre-fast meals before dawn are referred to as **Suhoor**, while the post-fast breaking feasts after sunset are called **Iftar**.
- Muslims are also instructed to refrain from sinful behavior that may negate the reward of fasting, such as false speech and fighting except in self-defense.
- **Eid al-Fitr:** The holiday of Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan and the beginning of the next lunar month, Shawwal.
- **Taraweeh:** it refers to extra prayers performed by Muslims at night, after Isha prayer during the month of Ramzan.

## 32. Polavaram Project

Observing that there was delay in Polavaram irrigation project works owing to the general elections and the model code of conduct, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said that the entire project would be completed by May 2020.

### About:

- Polavaram Project, is an under-construction multi-purpose irrigation project.
- **Location:** It is being constructed on the Godavari River in the West Godavari District and East Godavari District in Andhra Pradesh. Its reservoir spreads into parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha States also.



- The project has been declared a **National Project by Government of India**. **The Polavaram Project Authority** was constituted by the Union Cabinet in May 2014.
- Described as the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh, the Polavaram project, once completed, will provide irrigation water to 75.38 lakh acres of land in 13 districts of the State. Out of them, 32.2 lakh acres will be new ayacut.

### 33. World Asthma Day

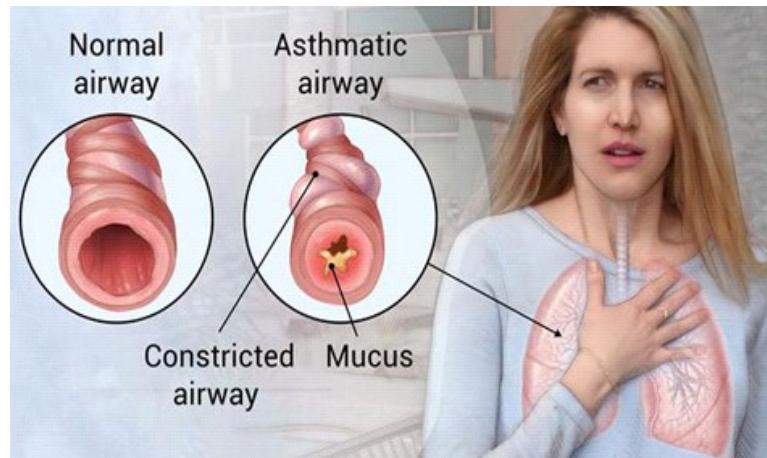
World Asthma Day was observed on May 7, 2019 with the theme “Stop for Asthma”.

#### World Asthma Day:

- **Objective:** The day is celebrated to increase awareness about asthma and aims to improve the lives of people with asthma across the world.
- **Day of observance:** It is observed every year on first Tuesday of May.
- **History:** The first World Asthma Day, in 1998, was celebrated in more than 35 countries in conjunction with the first World Asthma Meeting held in Barcelona, Spain.
- **Theme this year:** Stop for Asthma.

#### Asthma:

- **What is it?** Asthma is a chronic disease of the lungs which causes breathing problems.
- **Symptoms:** Asthma usually appears through symptoms like coughing, tightness in the chest, breathlessness.
- **Asthma attack:** During an asthma attack, the lining of the bronchial tubes swell, causing the airways to narrow and reducing the flow of air into and out of the lungs.
- **Causes:** The fundamental causes of asthma are not completely understood. The strongest risk factors for developing asthma are a combination of genetic predisposition with environmental exposure to inhaled substances and particles that may provoke allergic reactions or irritate the airways.
- **Vulnerable groups:** Asthma is the most common chronic disease among children.
- **Global scenario:** According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) there are 235 million people currently suffering from asthma around the world.



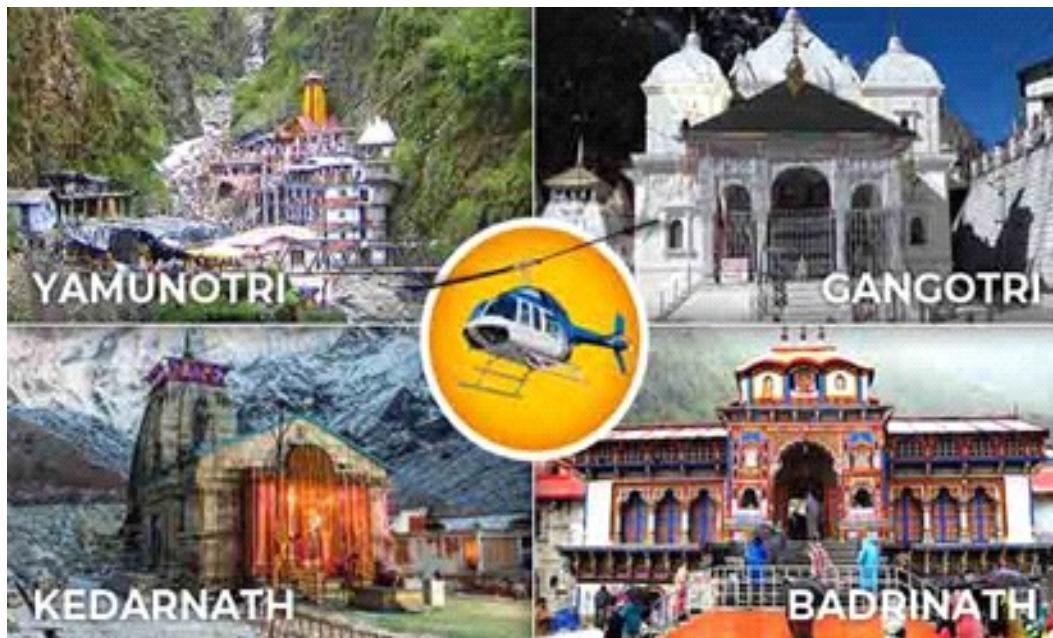
- **Prevention and cure:** Regular exercise can help reduce asthma symptoms.

## 34. Chardham Yatra (Of Uttarakhand)

In Uttrakhand, the world renowned chardham yatra began.

### About:

- **Location:** In the great Himalayas in Uttarakhand, the four pilgrimage destinations namely Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath are collectively known as Chardham.
- **Route:** Traditionally, this pilgrimage tour should begin from the West and end in the East. Thus, the Char Dham Yatra commences from Yamunotri, then proceeding to Gangotri and finally to Kedarnath and Badrinath.
- **Deities covered:** Each of these four sites is devoted to a specific deity.
- **Yamunotri** is dedicated to the Goddess 'Yamuna'. Yamunotri stands high up in the deep left on the western face of the Bandarpunch Peak.
- **Gangotri** is dedicated to Goddess 'Ganga'. The shrine overlooks the River Bhagirathi.
- **Kedarnath** is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is also a part of the Panch Kedar. It is the northern-most Jyotirlinga and is close to the source of the holy River Mandakini.
- **Badrinath** is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It is situated on the bank of the River Alaknanda.
- In accordance with the Hindu conventions, thousands of devotees take up this pious tour in the hope to experience bliss and successfully purge their souls of all worldly demons.





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## Abhyasa Program Structure

	Multiple Choice Questions (PRELIMS)	Descriptive Questions (MAINS)	Total Marks
<b>Daily Test</b>	<b>10</b> (10*1 = 10 marks)	<b>1</b> (1*10= 10 Marks)	<b>20</b>
<b>Weekly Test</b>	<b>20</b> (20*1 = 20 marks)	<b>2</b> (2*10= 20 Marks)	<b>40</b>
<b>Fortnightly Test</b>	<b>30</b> (30*1 = 30 marks)	<b>3</b> (3*10= 30 Marks)	<b>60</b>
<b>Monthly Test</b>	<b>50</b> (50*1 = 50 marks)	<b>5</b> (5*10= 50 Marks)	<b>100</b>
<b>3 Months Test</b>	<b>100</b> (100*1 = 100 marks)	<b>10</b> (10*10= 100 Marks)	<b>200</b>
<b>Total Questions</b>	<b>4250+</b>	<b>500+</b>	

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# OUR RESULTS - 2017

62



Fathima Zeba  
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83



Srivastava  
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100



Mourya  
HT No : 255748

105



Mishra  
HT No : 262146

144



149



187



295



296



360



412



417



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