



Samiksha

Comprehensive NEWS Analysis

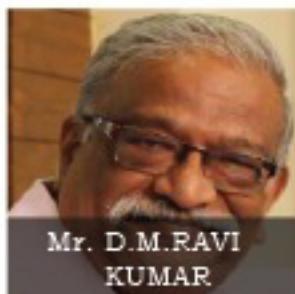
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DECEMBER
WEEK 01

OUR TEAM

GENERAL STUDIES



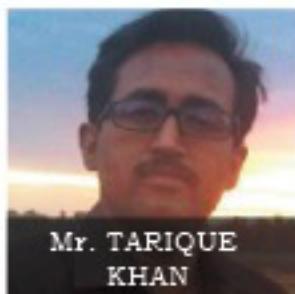
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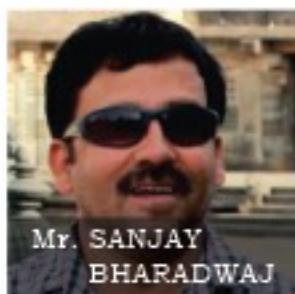
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Polity and Governance

1. India's maternity laws need serious tweaking

Context:

Team Lease conducted a study in May on the effects of the amendment on women's employment and on representation of female workforce in India by surveying employers across 10 key sectors. According to the study, there could be significant job losses for women in India in the short to medium term.

Causes for the low female labour participation:

- The amendment to the Maternity Benefit Act came into force effective 1 April 2017, it was lauded by industry as a progressive step towards improvement in securing the employment rights of women.
- The Maternity Benefit bill had its heart in the right place but unintentionally led to higher caution on the part of the employers, leading to lower levels of hiring of women.
- India offers one of the world's most generous maternity leave policies. But India is also probably the only country where the entire financial burden of the maternity leave is supposed to be borne by the employer.
- In most countries, the cost of maternity leave is shared across the government, employer, insurance and other social security programmes (Singapore—eight weeks employer and eight weeks public funds; Australia and Canada—100% public funds; France—social insurance scheme; Brazil—mixed contribution from the employer, employee and government).
- A few remedial measures suggested in the TeamLease study for addressing and mitigating this issue include cost sharing between employer and government by way of reimbursement once the employer furnishes the proof of payment of maternity leave wage, slab-based tax rebates offered by the government on actual maternity wages paid, setting up a government insurance scheme to pay for maternity wages, and leave sharing in the form of 13 months maternity and 13 months paternity to negate any possibility of gender bias.

Drawbacks of the Maternity Benefits Amendment Act, 2017:

- Wages equivalent to only seven weeks shall be reimbursed by the government of India to employers who employ female workers and provide maternity benefits of 26 weeks' paid leave.
- To enable an entity to avail the incentive, the female employees working in the entity concerned should be earning wages less than ¹ 15,000. The Employees' State Insurance (ESIC) Act mandates that all employees earning wages of ¹ 21,000 or less shall be covered under the Act. But the proposal to consider employees earning wages of Rs. 15,000 or less, with the conditions attached to it, does not seem justifiable.

- This is owing to the fact that the women earning wages of ₹ 21,000 or less but are employed in non-implemented areas are not entitled to the benefits and the employer is forced to bear the entire cost.
- Yet another important factor to be borne in mind is that large number of female employees, especially in information technology, information technology-enabled services, pharmaceutical, logistics, banking, financial services and insurance, and service sectors, are paid wages of ₹ 15,000 or ₹ 21,000 or higher per month.
- The female worker has to be a member of Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) for at least one year and must not be covered under ESIC.
- The added provisions such as crèches with certain prerequisites (caretakers, visits by mothers, suitable location) that are mandatory for commissioning mothers lack clarity.
- Last, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, as amended from time to time, is a state government legislation, implying thereby that state governments may amend the Act from time to time to extend benefits higher and incremental to the benefits recommended by the central government.

Possible measures to increase women labour participation:

- The seven weeks reimbursement limit must be extended to a minimum of 13 weeks. The period of wages of 13 weeks could also stand to be extended to all female employees who are not covered under ESIC, without any preconditions on wage ceiling or membership of the provident fund organization for one year, etc.
- Further, the government must set up crèches with all the attendant facilities proposed in the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, and allow employees eligible for such benefits to use these crèches at a very nominal cost.
- Bringing the Maternity Benefit Act under central legislation will also help maintain uniformity.

Way forward:

Such changes in the Act will likely encourage employers to provide employment opportunities to women without any gender discrimination and thus bring women into the mainstream of India's progress. Hiring and employee retention will no doubt improve as well. With such active steps, we have genuine hope of raising India's overall female labour force participation from the present 26% to a competitive level like China's 60%.

2. ‘Women with disabilities are more vulnerable’

Context:

Kolkata based NGO compiles that more than 100 differently-abled women and girls have raised allegations of sexual harassment in West Bengal since 2012.

Why in news?

On account of the International Day for Disabled Persons hundreds of differently-abled persons held rallies in the country. Now we will analyse the concept critically.

International Day for Disabled Persons:

“On this International Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to work together for a better world that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable for everyone, where the rights of people with disabilities are fully realized.” — António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

- The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992, by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3.
- It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.
- Building on many decades of UN’s work in the field of disability, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 2006, has further advanced the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international development frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the New Urban Agenda, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.

2018 Theme: Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

- This year’s theme focuses on empowering persons with disabilities for an inclusive, equitable and sustainable development as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The 2030 Agenda pledges to “leave no one behind”. Persons with disabilities, as both beneficiaries and agents of change, can fast track the process towards inclusive and sustainable development and promote resilient society for all, including in the context of disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action, and urban development.
- Governments, persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, academic institutions and the private sector need to work as a “team” to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- This year, the UN Secretary-General will launch on the Day a flagship report, entitled “UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development | 2018 – Realizing the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities”.
- Events at UNHQ on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at UN Headquarters will bring together Member States, UN entities,

Mayors, national and local policy makers, civil society organizations, academic institutes and organizations of persons with disabilities to discuss the way forward for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

After Rajya Sabha, on 16th December, 2016, the Lok Sabha passed “The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill – 2016”. The Bill replaces the existing PwD Act, 1995, which was enacted 21 years back.

The salient features of the “The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill – 2016” are:

- **Addition in types of disability:**
- Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21.
- The Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities.
- **Education:** Every child with benchmark disability will get free education from 6 to 18 years of the age.
- **Reservation:** Reservation to the differently abled person in the education and government jobs has been increased from 3% to 4%.
- **Infrastructure:** An important distinguishing feature of the 2016 Act is that it provides for time limits within which existing infrastructure and premises should be made disabled friendly. The obligations laid down in the Act are mandatory for both government and private establishments.
- **Fund:** Creation of National and State Fund will be created to provide financial support to the persons with disabilities. The existing National Fund for Persons with Disabilities and the Trust Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities will be subsumed with the National Fund.
- **Grant of guardianship:** The Bill provides for grant of guardianship by District Court, under which there will be joint decision, making between the guardian and the persons with disabilities.
- **Strict enforcement:** Special Courts will be designated in each district to handle cases concerning violation of rights of PwDs.
- **Persons with benchmark disabilities:** Additional benefits such as reservation in higher education, government jobs, reservation in allocation of land, poverty alleviation schemes etc. have been provided for persons with benchmark disabilities and those with high support needs.

The 21 disabilities are given below:

- Blindness

- Low-vision
- Leprosy Cured persons
- Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing)
- Locomotor Disability
- Dwarfism
- Intellectual Disability
- Mental Illness
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Cerebral Palsy
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Chronic Neurological conditions
- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Speech and Language disability
- Thalassemia
- Hemophilia
- Sickle Cell disease
- Multiple Disabilities including deaf blindness
- Acid Attack victim
- Parkinson's disease

What was “The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995”?

- The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was enacted in 1995.
- It was enacted to give effect to the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of the People with Disability in the Asian & Pacific Region (Beijing 1992).

The aims and objectives of the Act were:

- To spell out the responsibility of the state towards the prevention of disabilities, protection of rights, provision of medical care, education, training, employment and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities;
- to create a barrier free environment for person with disabilities in the sharing of development benefits, vis-a -vis non-disabled persons;
- to counteract any situation of abuse and exploitation of persons with disabilities; and
- To make special provision of the integration of persons with disabilities into the social mainstream.

Where has the PwD Act, 1995 possibly lagged for which The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill – 2016 has been introduced?

- 1. Absence of protection against discrimination:** The new “The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill – 2016” empowers the right to equality, preservation of dignity and personal liberty which was absent in the PwD Act, 1995.
- 2. Limitation in types of disability:** Disability being a dynamic concept needed an expansion in its types; the former act had incorporated only seven types of disability.
- 3. Absence of benchmark disabilities:** The 1995 Act had no special provision for persons with benchmark disabilities.
- 4. Limited social security:** The 1995 Act’s focus on social security was limited to financial assistance and insurance coverage-community participation. The recreational approaches were ignored.
- 5. Gender specific clauses:** Gender specific clauses make the new Act gender sensitive, a significant development over the 1995 Act.
- 6. Weak enforcement:** Penal provisions for violating the provisions of the 1995 Act was weak. Also the Officer of Chief Commissioner and State Commissioner for PwDs was not vested with enough strength and power.

What is the strategy of the Supreme Court in the context of public infrastructure accessibility to differently-abled persons?

- The Supreme Court directed states to identify 10 most important cities or towns.
- It also orders complete the accessibility audit of 50 per cent of government buildings at these places by February 28, 2018.
- The retrofitting work would be completed by December 2019.
- Regarding Central government buildings, the bench said that the work be completed by August next year.
- The court also directed the government to lay down a plan giving dates by which this task would be undertaken and asked it to furnish the same before it within three months.

Conclusion:

- The duty of the Union, states as well as Union Territories to take up the matter.
- It is also important to ensure that all government buses are disabled friendly in accordance with the harmonized guidelines.
- Lastly, the citizens of the country should not leave any stone unturned to make the lives of the differently abled ones much easier.

3. WHO EXACTLY ARE THE NAXALITES?

Introduction

In general terminology, a ‘naxalite’ or a ‘naxal’ refers to someone who is a member of a political party known as the Communist Party of India (Maoist). Note the “Maoist” carefully, because that’s the basis for everything naxals do.

The name ‘Naxal’ comes from, it’s actually named after a town in West Bengal called Naxalbari, where the organization is said to have originated. Now, even though “Communist Party of India (Maoist)” sounds a lot like it’s just another political party - it’s not. In fact, the Election Commission of India doesn’t recognise the CPI (Maoist) as a political party. Instead, this organization is recognised by the Government of India as a terrorist organization.

Maoism:

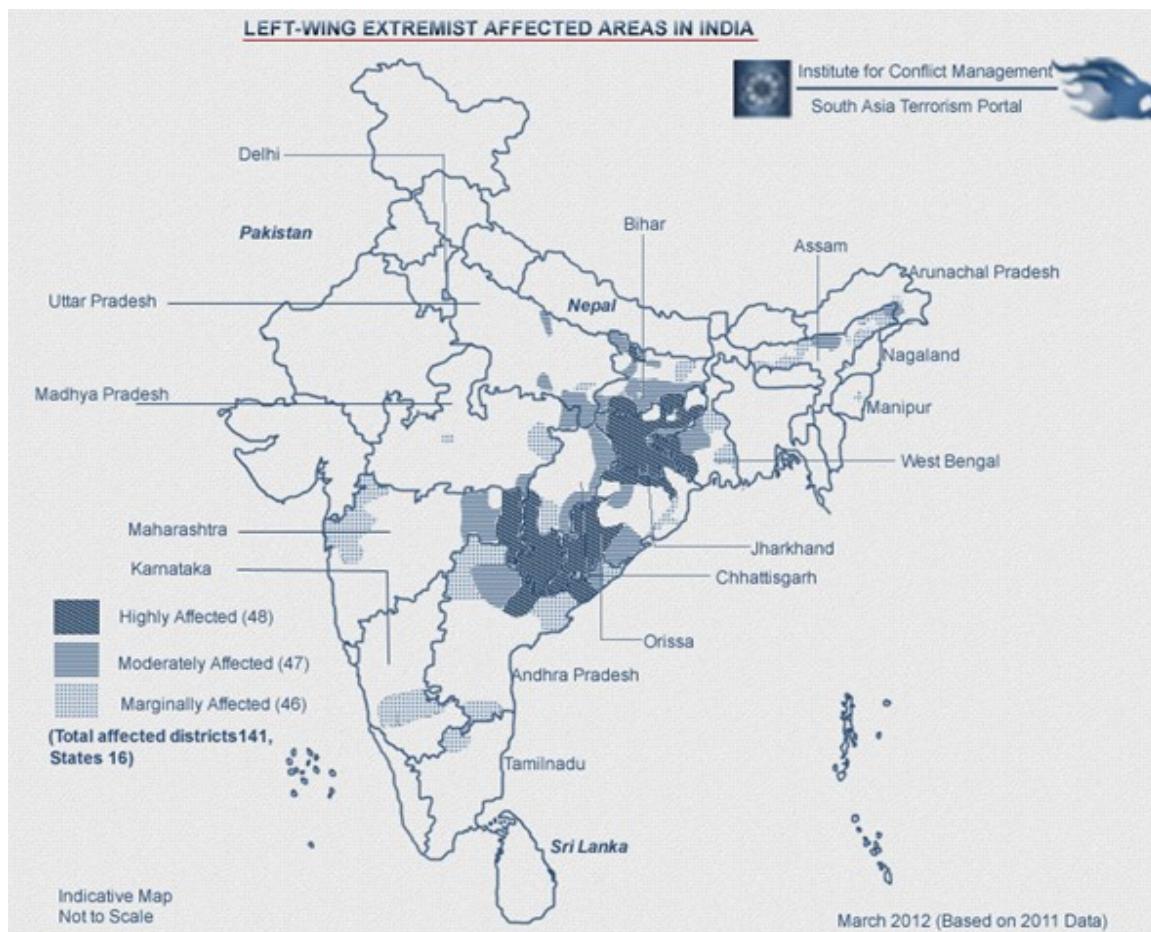
- As the name of the organization suggests, the Naxals follow the ideology of ‘Maoism’, named after Mao Zedong - a communist revolutionary from China who served as the Chairman of the Communist Party of China for over 30 years.
- In pursuance of this Maoist school of thought, the basic aim of the Naxalites is to overthrow the government of India through guerrilla warfare.
- Guerrilla Warfare is essentially when a large group of armed people not formally affiliated with the military engage in combat with regular forces, which can lead to a large number of civilian deaths.
- This is exactly what the Naxals do: through shootings, bombings, and through the use of other explosives such as landmines, they attack military personnel and other officials, and thus terrorize civilians.

What all does Maoism entail?

- Maoism is a variant of communism which originated during China’s Communist Revolution in the mid-1900s.
- In general, however, Maoism finds its bedrock in something called a “people’s war”.
- Maoists subscribe to the notion that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun”, and therefore believe that a violent uprising is the only way to gain political power.
- In the context of this revolution, they believe in uniting the peasantry and the working class, to fight the elites and power-holders (some of you may associate the term bourgeois or bourgeoisie with this) in society.
- As mentioned above, the Naxalites claim to be Maoists who want to fight such a “people’s war” against the Indian government - whom they consider to be the “elite” in society.

- However, do note that the Naxals have found little success in their stated objectives, and are seen throughout India (by the Government and by most citizens) as terrorists.

Where do the naxalites operate in India?



The past and the future: what is the government doing?

- Naxalism originated in the 60s, primarily in tribal areas in India - in protest against the government's alleged failure to provide certain tribal communities with autonomy.
- Certain sections took up arms with the extreme goal of overthrowing the government (i.e. the Naxals).
- While the CPI (Maoist) has certainly become more violent as time has progressed, in its initial stages, it claimed that the reason behind its agitation was that the government had allegedly not implemented the fifth and sixth schedules of the Constitution, which provide for autonomy to certain Scheduled Tribes, in particular demarcated areas.
- The so-called Naxal 'movement' has become more violent with the passage of time, from being a demand for autonomy to becoming one that is placed under the banner of terrorism.
- In fact, in 2010, then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said that Naxalism was the "biggest threat to internal security in India".

Since then, Modi government has continued this stance, and has detailed a few measures it plans to take against naxalism, as of May, 2017. Some of these are discussed below:

1. Better tracking and registration of weapons, such as biometric scanning and so-called “smart” weapons in order to prevent them from falling in the wrong hands. As a terrorist organization, the Naxals have no lawful method of obtaining weapons and explosives, and so the government’s aim is to prevent them from unlawfully getting access to them by implementing stronger weapon-identification
2. Ensuring aerial support for forces stationed in Naxal-affected areas, such as armed helicopters and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or UAVs (yes, the same as the ones in Call of Duty).
3. Implementing strategies to prevent money laundering by affiliates of the Naxalites, in order to place a stoppage on their funding.
4. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of India has also stated that if it is able to better connect certain regions in states such as Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand to other parts of the country (through railways, mobile connectivity, and the internet), it can prevent the brainwash-like techniques the Naxalites used for recruitment.

The Government has called this plan of action ‘Operation Samadhan’, the implementation of which began last May. While it is still too early to comment on the effectiveness of these plans, and the Naxal problem is still ever-presenting, greater public discourse on and awareness about it will ensure that citizens can hold the government to account on its progress on combatting the Naxal threat, and generally be more clued in about an important internal issue plaguing the country.

4. Global nutrition report

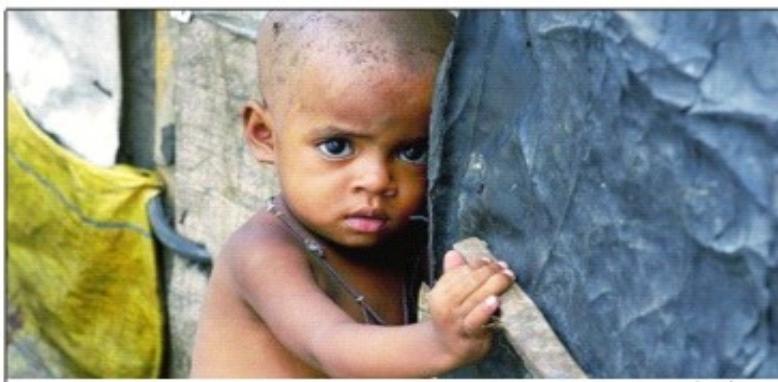
Context:

India is facing a major malnutrition crisis as it holds almost a third of the world’s burden for stunting, according to a global nutrition report. With 46.6 million children who are stunted, India tops the list of countries followed by Nigeria (13.9 million) and Pakistan (10.7 million), the Global Nutrition Report 2018 said.

HIGHLIGHTS OF REPORTS:

- **Stunting, or low height for age,** is caused by long-term insufficient nutrient-intake and frequent infections.
- India also accounted for 25.5 million children who are wasted, followed by Nigeria (3.4 million) and Indonesia (3.3 million).
- Wasting, or low weight for height, is a strong predictor of mortality among children under five. It is usually the result of acute significant food shortage and/or disease.
- “More than half of the world’s children impacted by wasting (26.9 million) live in South Asia. Of the three countries that are home to almost half (47.2 per cent) of all stunted children, two are in Asia, with India having 46.6 million (31 per cent) and Pakistan having 10.7 million,” the report said.

INDIA HOME TO 40 MILLION STUNTED CHILDREN



► +8 states have under 5 stunting levels higher than national avg: UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya, Gujarat, MP, Assam

► +13 states have 'wasting' levels higher than national average: West Bengal, Goa, Kerala, Jharkhand,

Gettyimages
Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and others

► +Reduction in stunting and 'wasting' levels between 2006-2014

► +Adult overweight and obesity is 26% but increasing

Wasting | Wasting or thinness indicates in most cases a recent and severe process of weight loss, which is often associated with acute starvation and/or severe disease, as per WHO

Over
17 million
'wasted' children
under 5 years
of age

ANAEMIA PERCENTAGE

48

women of child bearing age

Over 75

children under 5 yrs of age

Source: India Health Report 2015

- India also figures among the set of countries that has more than a million overweight children. The other nations are China, Indonesia, India, Egypt, US, Brazil and Pakistan.
- Of the 38.3 million children globally overweight, 5.4 million are in South Asia and 4.8 million are in East Asia.
- Prevalence of overweight children is the highest in upper-middle income countries and the lowest in low-income countries.
- In urban areas, there are 7.1 per cent overweight children on average, whereas in rural areas 6.2 per cent children are overweight. It is slightly more common among boys (6.9 per cent) than girls (6.1 per cent), the report highlighted.
- As with obesity, among adults, women are more overweight than among men (39.2 pc and 38.5 pc respectively in 2016). Conversely, diabetes is more common among men than women (9.0 pc and 7.9 pc respectively in 2014).
- Of the 141 countries analyzed, 88 per cent (124 countries) experience more than one form of malnutrition, the report said.
- The report referred to a study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) which used district-level aggregate data from the 2015–2016 National and Family Health Survey, covering 601,509 households in 604 districts in India, to understand the causes of the spatial variation.
- Researchers used mapping and descriptive analyses to understand spatial differences in distribution of stunting. The mapping showed that stunting varies greatly from district to district (12.4 to 65.1 pc), with 239 of 604 districts having stunting levels above 40 per cent.

- The study found that factors such as women's low BMI accounted for 19 per cent of the difference between the low versus high-burden districts. Other influential gender-related factors included maternal education (accounted for 12 pc), age at time of marriage (7 pc) and antenatal care (6 pc).
- Children's diets (9 pc), assets (7 pc), open defecation (7 pc) and household size (5 pc) were also influential.
- "This study is important in that it reinforced the multi-sect oral nature of stunting by highlighting that differences between districts were explained by many factors associated with gender, education, economic status, health, hygiene, and other demographic factors.

What needs to be done?

Food and freedom go together, and the availability of one strongly influences access to the other; social institutions can work to improve nutrition and children's welfare in free societies, and the absence of hunger enables people to develop their capabilities.

- Governments should acknowledge the linkages and commit themselves to improved nutritional policies.
- The national framework to improve nutrition strategy already exists.
- The Anganwadi Services scheme, which incorporates the Integrated Child Development Services, caters to children up to age six, and to pregnant and lactating women. If it has not worked well in several States, it must be subjected to a rigorous review and targeted interventions for supplementary nutrition made.
- The quality of nutrition in packaged foods available to children. Going by the report, only 21% of these foods in India were rated as being healthy, based on overall energy, salt, sugar and saturated fat on the negative side, and vegetable, fruit, protein, fiber and calcium as positive factors.
- There should be robust chain linkages of central and state government policies in addressing children's development.

The latest report on stunting and wasting should convince the Centre that it needs to understand the problem better and work with the States to give India's children a healthy future.

5. Guidelines to ensure safety of children in hostels

Context:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development will soon formulate guidelines for children's hostels, prescribing the minimum standards of care that should be provided to the children.

- The decision comes at a time when institutions, housing children on the request of parents at children's homes, are not registering under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

- Also, the Supreme Court, in the case of “Exploitation of Children in Orphanages in the State of Tamil Nadu” Vs. Union of India, had directed the Union and the State Governments to enforce minimum standards of care required for such children living in any facility either created by the Government system or by civil society organisations.
- The Ministry has directed the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights to draft the guidelines in consultation with stakeholders concerned. The guidelines will be notified under the Juvenile Justice Act or the JJ Rules.

About the Juveniles Justice Act, 2015:

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 came into force in January, 2016. The new Act repeals the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000. The JJ Act, 2015 provides for strengthened provisions for both children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law.

Key provisions:

- **Definition:** The Act clearly defines and classifies offences as petty, serious and heinous, and defines differentiated processes for each category. Keeping in view the increasing number of serious offences being committed by persons in the age group of 16-18 years and recognizing the rights of the victims as being equally important as the rights of juveniles, special provisions are incorporated in the Act to tackle heinous offences committed by individuals in this age group.
- It establishes a statutory status for the Child Adoption Resources Authority (CARA). It also proposes several rehabilitation and social integration measures for institutional and non-institutional children. It provides for sponsorship and foster care as completely new measures.
- Mandatory registration of all institutions engaged in providing child care is required according to the Act. New offences including illegal adoption, corporal punishment in child care institutions, the use of children by militant groups, and offences against disabled children are also incorporated in the legislation.
- The new law gives the Juvenile Justice Board the power to assess whether the perpetrator of a heinous crime aged between 16 and 18, had acted as a ‘child’ or as an ‘adult.’ The board will be assisted in this process by psychologists and social experts.
- It strikes a fine balance between the demands of the stakeholders asking for continued protection of rights of juveniles and the popular demand of citizens in the light of increasing incidence of heinous crimes by young boys.

International Relations

6. Tariff truce

Context

USA and China agreed to tariff off the longstanding trade chaos that lasted for more than three months. The decision took on the side lines of G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Background

President Trump placed a 30% tariff on foreign solar panels on January 22, 2018, to be reduced to 15% after four years. China, the world leader in solar panel manufacture, decried the tariffs. That same day, tariffs of 20% were placed on washing machines for the first 1.2 million units imported during the year. In 2016, China exported \$425 million worth of washers to the United States.

President Trump asked the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to investigate applying tariffs on US\$50-60 billion worth of Chinese goods, on March 22. He relied on Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 for doing so, stating that the proposed tariffs were "a response to the unfair trade practices of China over the years", including theft of U.S. intellectual property. Over 1,300 categories of Chinese imports were listed for tariffs, including aircraft parts, batteries, flat-panel televisions, medical devices, satellites, and various weapons.

China responded on April 2 by imposing tariffs on 128 products it imports from America, including aluminum, airplanes, cars, pork, and soybeans (which have a 25% tariff), as well as fruit, nuts, and steel piping (15%). On April 5, Trump responded saying that he was considering another round of tariffs on an additional \$100 billion of Chinese imports as Beijing retaliates. The next day the World Trade Organization received a request from China for consultations on new U.S. tariffs.

What are the reasons behind such moves?

- **USA's Point** - USA's tariffs are aimed at penalising China for arm-twisting foreign businesses to hand over technology to Chinese firms in lieu of access to the Chinese market.
- The US has indicated this action is specifically aimed at protectionist measures by China, especially its "Made in China 2025" programme, an initiative to transform China into an advanced manufacturing powerhouse.
- USA has also accused China of subsidising steel exports in a practice termed dumping selling a product at lower than the cost of production to gain market share.
- **China's Point** - Besides slapping retaliatory tariffs on US goods, the Chinese could leverage an anti-American sentiment among consumers to boycott US goods.

- In 2012, Chinese nationalists boycotted Japanese cars and stores because of a territorial dispute, badly denting sales of Japanese goods.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE SIDE LINES OF G20 SUMMIT:

The two countries will try to find an amicable solution to the various problems plaguing bilateral trade relations, such as disputes over intellectual property rights and Chinese state support for domestic industries, through talks over the next three months. Meanwhile, the U.S. will refrain from raising the tariff on Chinese goods worth \$200 billion from the current rate of 10% to 25% on January 1, 2019, as planned. In return, according to the White House, China will purchase agricultural and other goods from the U.S. in order to reduce the trade imbalance between the two countries. Signs of a significant slowdown in the Chinese economy and concerns over the negative impact of the trade war on American financial markets may have played a part in Mr. Trump and Mr. Xi agreeing to the truce — probably a sober recognition of the fact that there are no economic winners in any trade war.

What will be the consequences of the trade war?

- Last year, China had imported \$130 billion in US goods, while the US bought goods worth \$506 billion from China, So, the goods trade is weighed in favour of China.
- US economy could actually suffer more than China's, and that South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Singapore are the economies most at risk in Asia based on trade openness and exposure to supply chains involving China.
- After the latest series of tariff strikes by the US and China, world trade could be seriously disrupted as two-thirds of goods traded are linked to global value chains.
- There are also projections that almost two-thirds of US imports from China came in from companies with foreign capital and, based on foreign investment flows, the capital is likely to have come mostly from the US, Japan and South Korea.

What are the concerns before India?

- India's total exports have been faltering, down from \$310.53 billion in FY15 to \$262.29 billion in FY16, before recovering marginally to \$276.55 billion in FY17.
- Exports from India to the US under Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) have been consistently on the rise, bucking the broader declining trend in overall exports.
- Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a preferential tariff system extended by developed countries to developing countries.
- Out of the total GSP imports into the US under this programme, India has consistently accounted for a quarter of this.

The global trade activities and its regulations lies upon the trade watchdog world trade organization (WTO), therefore it should act pro actively to halt the trade war and maintain global trade sustainability.

What can World Trade Organization (WTO) do?

The arbiter of international trade disputes – WTO – was born in 1995 out of a set of agreements struck by countries trying to reduce trade barriers.

If a government's complaint about another nation's trade barriers is seen as grounded, the WTO recommends acceptable retaliation.

In the case of steel, Trump is invoking a seldom-used clause of a 1962 U.S. law that gives him the authority to curb imports if they undermine national security.

Under WTO rules, countries can take trade actions to protect “essential security interests.”

Other nations could challenge the validity of the U.S. use of that clause. They also could copy the U.S. move by citing national security to block imports themselves.

Summary

Trump's trade war will hurt everyone — the only question is how much. Everybody, all economies, will be adversely affected.

A trade war between the world's major economies would lead to a significant contraction of world trade. In turn, this could result in a deep recession in the world economy, which would, no doubt, exacerbate the -already tense geopolitical strains. However, the dialogue between two leaders seems to be good gesture but the carry forwarding the momentum is very important.

7. Qatar to quit OPEC

Context:

Qatar will leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) next month in order to focus on gas production, the Gulf state's new Energy Minister Saad al-Kaabi announced on Monday.

ABOUT OPEC

The **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** is an intergovernmental organization of 15 nations, founded in 1960 in Baghdad by the first five members (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela), and headquartered since 1965 in Vienna, Austria. As of September 2018, the 15 countries accounted for an estimated 44 percent of global oil production and 81.5 percent of the world's “proven” oil reserves, giving OPEC a major influence on global oil prices that were previously determined by the so called “Seven Sisters” grouping of multinational oil companies.

Mission of organization

- The stated mission of the organization is to “coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its member countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets, in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers, and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry.
- The organization is also a significant provider of information about the international oil market.
- Two-thirds of OPEC’s oil production and reserves are in its six Middle-Eastern countries that surround the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

International cartel

- At various times, OPEC members have displayed apparent anti-competitive cartel behavior through the organization’s agreements about oil production and price levels
- International commodity agreements covering products such as coffee, sugar, tin and more recently oil (OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) are examples of international cartels which have publicly entailed agreements between different national governments.
- OPEC members strongly prefer to describe their organization as a modest force for market stabilization, rather than a powerful anti-competitive cartel. In its defense, the organization was founded as a counterweight against the previous **“Seven Sisters”** cartel of multinational oil companies, and non-OPEC energy suppliers have maintained enough market share for a substantial degree of worldwide competition.
- Moreover, because of an economic “prisoner’s dilemma” that encourages each member nation individually to discount its price and exceed its production quota, widespread cheating within OPEC often erodes its ability to influence global oil prices through collective action.
- OPEC has not been involved in any disputes related to the competition rules of the World Trade Organization, even though the objectives, actions, and principles of the two organizations diverge considerably. A key US District Court decision held that OPEC consultations are protected as “governmental” acts of state by the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, and are therefore beyond the legal reach of US competition law governing “commercial” acts. Despite popular sentiment against OPEC, legislative proposals to limit the organization’s sovereign immunity, such as the NOPEC Act, have so far been unsuccessful.

Conflicts

- OPEC often has difficulty agreeing on policy decisions because its member countries differ widely in their oil export capacities, production

costs, reserves, geological features, population, economic development, budgetary situations, and political circumstances.

- Indeed, over the course of market cycles, oil reserves can themselves become a source of serious conflict, instability and imbalances, in what economists call the “natural resource curse”.
- A further complication is that religion-linked conflicts in the Middle East are recurring features of the geopolitical landscape for this oil-rich region. Internationally important conflicts in OPEC’s history have included the Six-Day War (1967), Yom Kippur War (1973), a hostage siege directed by Palestinian militants (1975), the Iranian Revolution (1979), Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988), Iraqi occupation of Kuwait (1990–1991), September 11 attacks by mostly Saudi hijackers (2001), American occupation of Iraq (2003–2011), Conflict in the Niger Delta (2004–present), **Arab Spring (2010–2012)**, **Libyan Crisis (2011–present)**, and **international Embargo against Iran (2012–2016)**
- Although events such as these can temporarily disrupt oil supplies and elevate prices, the frequent disputes and instabilities tend to limit OPEC’s long-term cohesion and effectiveness.

How much influence does OPEC have on global oil prices?

- In the short term, the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) has significant influence on the price of oil. Over the long term, its ability to influence the price of oil is quite limited, primarily because individual countries have different incentives than OPEC as a whole.
- On the other hand, OPEC can decide to increase supply. On June 21, 2018, OPEC met in Vienna and announced that they would be increasing supply. A big reason for this is because of the extremely low output by fellow OPEC member Venezuela. Russia and Saudi Arabia are big proponents of increasing supply while Iran is not.
- In the end, **the forces of supply and demand determine the price equilibrium**, although OPEC announcements can temporarily affect the price of oil by altering expectations. One case where OPEC’s expectations would be altered is when its share of world oil production declines, with new production coming from outside nations such as the U.S. and Canada.

8. G20 SUMMIT

Context:

The **2018 G20 Buenos Aires summit**, was the thirteenth meeting of Group of Twenty (G20), which was held on 30 November and 1 December 2018 in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina.^{[1][2]} It was the first G20 summit to be hosted in South America.

GROUP 20:

The **G20** (or **Group of Twenty**) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union. Founded in 1999 with the aim to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability.



of the world population,^[2] and approximately half of the world land area.

What were the key outcomes from the G20 summit?

World Trade Organization

All G20 leaders called for reforming the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the issue will be discussed during the group's next summit in Osaka, Japan, in June.

The gathering's final statement, however, did not mention protectionism after negotiators said the US objected to the wording. Mr. Trump has criticized the WTO and adopted aggressive trade policies targeting China and the European Union.

US-China trade war

Mr. Trump agreed to hold off on plans to raise tariffs on January 1 on 200 billion dollars in Chinese goods. Mr. Xi agreed to buy a "not yet agreed upon, but very substantial amount of agricultural, energy, industrial" and other products from the United States to reduce America's huge trade deficit with China, the White House said.

Climate change

The final communiqué signed by all 20 member nations said 19 of them reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris climate accord. The only holdout was the US, which has withdrawn from the pact under Mr. Trump.

Still, environmental groups praised the statement as welcome news.

"That G20 leaders signed up to the Paris Agreement reaffirmed their commitment to its full implementation in the resulting communiqué is important," the World Wildlife Fund said. "It is also a reflection of the Argentinian government rightly making climate an important topic on the agenda."

Low expectations – low output

The G20 veered all over the road” at the summit and the leaders failed to fix trade, which is widely seen as a priority for boosting growth in jobs and economies, said Thomas Bernes, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation who has held leading roles with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and Canada’s government.

“Leaders buried their differences in obscure language and dropped language to fight protectionism, which had been included in every G20 communiqué since the leaders’ first summit. This is clearly a retrograde step forced by United States intransigence.

India's Stand at G20

During the G20 summit, Prime Minister stated numerous issues and reasons. He stated that demonetization move started by his government had been akin to a big blow against corruption.

The Prime Minister also said that the demonetization drive widened and enlarged India’s formal economy and even boosted digitization of the economy.

He also talked about the Goods and Service Tax addressing the leaders of **BRICS** nations in the backdrop of the G20 summit.

Some of these reforms mentioned by the G20 report are:

1. India has done a good job to popularize the derivative instruments on exchanges
2. The international body observed that India has done a good work in labor reforms in order to boost workers’ security, and increasing female participation in the workforce.
3. India has initiated startups to facilitate external borrowings by promoting innovation and easing of doing business.

The Indian government has indicated that what it wants to see the G20 do more of:

1. India wants creating a strong partnership in skilling and up-skilling of the work force
2. India wishes to encourage manpower mobility in a manner in which it would help the host nation as well as the source nation
3. Promote digitization in order to strengthen labor markets and to improve delivery of services.

Challenges in from G 20

1. Global Productivity

It has been observed that over the last decade, globally, there has been a significant decline and stagnation in industrial productivity levels. There has been stagnating real wages across manufacturing sectors in both developed and developing countries.

A good platform is provided by the G20 summit to address such kind of problems. One important area on cooperation in this regard is related to reassessing the traditional metrics of productivity assessment.

2. Coordination on reducing discriminatory taxation

In this area, the G20 members have already made some progress during the recent couple of years, but more effort needs to be made in reducing disproportional, nationalized tax systems that inadequately affect global capital movements and affect interest rates.

3. Climate change

After Trump's withdrawal of the United States from the Paris climate agreement, a new strategic focus has been put on climate change and ways to tackle rising heating of the planet.

G 20 leaders have said they will persuade Trump to rejoin the Paris agreement. The European countries have shown much commitment to the cause of limiting global warming to a maximum of 2°C.

4. Terrorism

In recent times, more and more terrorist attacks have been reported around the world. In G20 summit India raised the seriousness required for tackling terrorism around the world.

G20 leaders also deliberated on ways to eliminate channels of terror financing and improving exchange of information.

5. Reducing corruption

Under the German Presidency, the G 20 focused on measures to improve public sector integrity and the common search for ways to fight corruption in particularly susceptible areas such as wildlife trafficking. Due to the rampant increase in the global corruption, the governments are aiming at achieving transparency and accountability to get public approval.

6. Increasing cooperation with African states

This G 20 summit reflected its intention of creating an 'enabling environment for investment and infrastructure development' and encouraging cooperation with African states is on the Summit agenda.

CONCLUSION:

Global leaders had first time decided to work together in international trade and commerce but summit as to showcase the commitment and consensus in promoting rules based trade order.

Economy

9. Many of the risks that dominated the MPC discussions in October have receded

Context:

The monetary policy committee (MPC) will decide its next move this week. The committee's October meeting was held under the shadow of monetary risks.

Major Risks involved in monetary policy:

- Global oil prices had soared in the previous months.
- The sharp decline in the rupee would increase the cost of imported goods.
- Strong economic growth in the first quarter of the current fiscal year had closed the output gap.
- It was unclear how the government's decision to increase farm support prices would affect food prices in general, especially when combined with the fact that the monsoon this year has been well below average.
- There was a question mark about the sanctity of the annual fiscal deficit target.
- Only one of the risks that worried the members of the MPC in October seems to linger on—the fiscal situation. The big question before the MPC's decision this week is how the changed circumstances will affect its inflation forecast, which is the intermediate target of Indian monetary policy under flexible inflation targeting.
- Core inflation is running far ahead of food inflation, which is to be expected as excess capacity in many parts of the economy has shrunk.

Current monetary situation in India:

- The current combination of benign inflation as well as slower economic growth means that there is no reason at all for the MPC to increase rates this week. Many of the risks that seem to have dominated the MPC discussions in October have receded.
- The consensus in the financial markets is that the finger will continue to be on the pause button, and the focus of attention will be on whether there are any moves to reduce the liquidity deficit in the money market as well as a change in the stance of monetary policy.
- The committee had changed its outlook from neutral to calibrated tightening in October, in effect saying that the next change in the repo rate would be through a rate hike rather than a rate cut.

Monetary policy:

- Monetary policy refers to the policy of the central bank with regard to

the use of monetary instruments under its control to achieve the goals specified in the Act.

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is vested with the responsibility of conducting monetary policy. This responsibility is explicitly mandated under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934

Monetary Policy Committee:

- It is the committee which will decide India's Monetary Policy.
- The formation of the monetary policy committee was mooted by the Urjit Patel committee.
- The committee suggested that monetary policy be rule-based and not discretion-based. The final decision on monetary policy should not lie with the RBI governor alone but on a group of people.
- Targeting inflation is to be the core objective of the central bank, and it will be answerable to law-makers if it failed to achieve the target.

Composition of MPC

- MPC was a 6 member committee:
- 3 members will be from RBI. These 3 members would include the governor who will also be the ex-officio chairperson of the committee.
- 3 members will be appointed by the central govt. These members should be experts in the field of finance or banking or economics or monetary policy. They will have tenure of 4 years and will not be eligible for reappointment.
- The members appointed by the govt. will be appointed based on the recommendations by the search-cum-selection committee which will be headed by the cabinet secretary.
- Decisions will be taken by majority vote with each member having a vote
- The governor will not enjoy a veto power to overrule the other panel members, but will have a casting vote in case of a tie.
- No government official will be nominated to the MPC
- MPC will meet four times in 1 year and will announce its decisions publicly after each meeting. MPC replaces previous arrangement where RBI Governor along with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) taking decisions on monetary policy including setting interest rates. In the previous arrangement TAC was only having advisory functions and the RBI Governor enjoyed veto power over the committee in setting interest rates.

Way forward:

There is thus a strong reason for the MPC to keep policy interest rates at their current level— though it will be worth watching whether any individual member shifts his or her recommendation from either a hike to pause or

from a pause to a rate cut on Wednesday.

10. Sovereign rating is not just about finance

Credit Rating Agency is an organization that gives rating to the debtors or the borrowers (government, companies etc) on the basis of their ability to pay back their principal loan and interest on time. Thus it gives an idea of the probability of committing a default by them on debt and other credit related instruments. It is important to note that such agencies give ratings only to the organizations and not individual customers for whom separate credit score is released.

Every country has their own credit rating agencies and besides them there are international credit agencies. The most important among them are Standard and Poor's, Moody's and Fitch.

Why sovereign rating exercise is important?

- A sovereign rating exercise is not just about assessing a country's financial soundness.
- Non-economic fundamentals are equally important in determining a sovereign rating.
- It's the combination of the country's institutional and economic profile that is relevant for achieving a superior rating.
- Rating agencies conduct analysis on non fiscal aspects such as effectiveness of policy making and strength, and stability of its civil institutions.

The discussion below is focused on assessment of institutional effectiveness and delivery.

- The institutional rating framework is fairly comprehensive, assessed both at the federal and state levels.
- The assessment is undertaken on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being the strongest and 6 the weakest.
- For achieving a high sovereign rating, institutions need to be seen as proactive, possessing strong track record and perception, implementing reforms, promoting a cohesive civil society, social order and inclusion.
- There is a transparency check undertaken on the government's reported data for its validity, reliability and credibility.
- The S&P, in its sovereign rating methodology, has listed the nation's ability to implement key reforms with regard to healthcare, pension, monetary policy, public finances and external pressures, apart from policymaking, the judiciary and accountability.
- Institutions must have independent mechanisms free of corruption and interference, and should help sustain growth.

- Policymaking needs to be perceived as free of interference by successive governments.
- In this context, the world is keenly watching rating actions on policy reversals by successive governments in some advanced economies on climate change and Brexit.

Push for the Economic Growth:

- A country needs to be seen as promoting unbiased enforcement of contracts and having respect for the rule of law in property ownership, and in creditors' and investors' interest.
- A part of the assessment is on the ease of doing business blended with a green way of doing business. The country's economic growth also needs to reflect its less carbon-intensive nature.
- Strong institutions generate investor-lender confidence and help bring certainty in contracts.
- The recent jump in India's ease of business ranking by 23 notches is an acknowledgement that reforms have the potential of pushing India's rating upwards.

Institutional effectiveness is judged on macro prudential outcome over micro prudent output:

- Rating agencies undertake increased scrutiny in conducting effectiveness exercise as both actions and inactions are judged for outcome.
- In an Indian context, initiatives such as Swachh Bharat, metro rails, freight corridors, cleaning of rivers, digital banking, soil-strengthening, goods and services tax rollout, bankruptcy reforms, and bank recapitalization have the potential of pushing for a rating upgrade.
- India's projected gross domestic product (GDP) growth may make it the world's fourth largest economy in the coming years, but its investment grade rating is not yet reflective of its true potential.
- Despite India currently being the world's fifth largest economy by GDP, its rating is second lowest after Brazil among the world's 10 large economies. India's per capita income is the lowest among the top ten economies by GDP. Further, implementation of institutional reforms, especially at state and municipal levels, can bring credibility to India's institutional-effectiveness culture and delivery.

How is the judiciary perceived? What is the average justice delivery time compared to an AAA-rated country?

Some key questions come up on macro prudential outcome.

- Long overdue judicial reforms for timely justice delivery once implemented have the potential of upping India's rating.
- Ongoing developments pertaining to the Central Bureau of Investigation's governance are a concern.

- Interventions by the Supreme Court, the Central Vigilance Commission, and the government will be judged for the outcome with regard to India's ability to handle delicate governance situations.

Is access to healthcare affordable? Do we have sufficient healthcare delivery infrastructure compared to an AAA country?

- Ayushman Bharat is a key event that upon successful implementation can push India up the rating ladder.
- The recent spat between the Reserve Bank of India and the government is a healthy sign if the outcome is preserving RBI's independence while facilitating informed and well reasoned decisions.

Contentious issues include:

- 1.If a rating agency is independent enough and free of conflict to rate civil institutions?
- 2.Could a rating agency be influenced by its shareholders or regulator?
- 3.Is evaluation done on local or offshore perceptions?
- 4.Which body will take a call for an adverse rating action influenced by subjective judgment?

Developing economies have frequently called for multilateral interventions in determining a sovereign rating methodology, ownership and supervision of rating agencies.

Being independent and unbiased, a multilateral rating system will generate confidence.

Is superior rating solely the responsibility of the federal government?

- While the federal government would be responsible for fiscal performance and enabling environment, collective and participatory approach of citizens, a cohesive civil society and stakeholders are equally necessary.
- State governments could up the ante for delivery of quality municipal, urban and rural services. Active participation of legal, medical, governance, accounting and business professionals will make institutions responsive and relevant.
- Of course, an independent and free press is a prerequisite—existing abundantly in India and making citizens proud.

Should Credit rating Agencies be regulated?

- Rating agencies can distort the market and shift the flow of investment from one country to another leading to currency fluctuations, shutdown and unemployment.
- For example-It is argued that unduly negative evaluations accelerated the European sovereign debt crisis which spread through Greece, Spain, and Italy etc.

- In 2010 S & P downgraded Greece debt to junk status which weakened investor's confidence, increased the cost of borrowing and overall exacerbated the crisis.
- Further, they also tend to influence fiscal and monetary policies across the world. Hence there is a need for their regulation. But there are high chances that the increasing regulation of government may lead to compromise on their autonomy and their independence.
- Hence rather than external regulation, there is a need for internal regulation by the rating agencies by coming open on their tools and mechanisms adopted in rating.
- For instance-These credit rating agencies should declare on their website the methods employed so that there is no opaqueness.



Geography and Environment

11. Act together and quickly on climate change

Context:

In the inaugural session of COP24 in Katowice, Poland, India reaffirmed that it is on track to meet the target of 40% electric power generation from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, and reduce the emission intensity of its gross domestic product by 33-35% from the 2005 level.

Climate change impact on developing countries:

- The world has already warmed by 1°C since pre-industrial levels, and is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052, in a business-as-usual scenario. That is the level at which significant climate impacts begin to hit large swaths of humanity, particularly climate vulnerable countries such as India, Bangladesh and the Maldives.
- A recent review by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, a wing of the agriculture ministry, predicts that crops, plantations and livestock in 151 districts (one-fifth of India's districts) are susceptible to the impact of climate change.
- United Nations highlighted that people exposed to natural hazards in the poorest nations are seven times more likely to die than a similar person in the richest nations.
- The “protection gap” between the rich and the poor is evidently wide enough. Thus, the need of the hour is to strike a balance between the adaptation and mitigation, but in a manner that it does not put any additional burden on developing economies.
- It is little wonder then that India, and even China, want to set and meet “bold and ambitious targets” under a global agreement, despite the non-participation of the US, which is the world’s second-largest carbon emitter.
- The exit of the US from the Paris Agreement; a slew of recent studies which bring the window of irretrievable planetary change much closer (to 2040); and the glacial pace in effecting substantial carbon emission cuts have cast a pall of gloom

India's concerns:

- India's self-declared national target is to achieve 40% electric power generation from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, and reduce the emission intensity of its gross domestic product by 33-35% from the 2005 level.
- In the inaugural session of COP24 in Katowice, Poland, India reaffirmed that it is on track to meet these targets. The country has also installed 72GW of renewable energy capacity.

- The massive push towards renewable energy is a result of India's leading role in promoting the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which pledged to generate 1,000GW of solar power capacity by 2030. At Katowice, India's main theme would remain—One World One Sun One Grid.
- India held two meetings with like-minded developing countries to collectively make a big issue of technology transfer and climate funding from the developed world

Challenges remained in the implementation of climate change mitigation strategies:

- The issue of climate funding dates back to Cancun in 2010—when rich nations first made a commitment to create a green corpus in order to help countries like India purchase new technology—there has been little money to show eight years down the line.
- For India to meet its national targets, and for global human-caused CO₂ emissions to reach “net zero” by 2050, advanced technology to capture carbon has to be more widely available.
- Paris Agreement requires that developed countries “shall provide financial resources to assist developing countries with respect to both mitigation and adaptation”, there is a continuing lack of clarity on the release of these funds and the modalities regarding its accountability and use.
- The rulebook negotiations would be central to the Katowice conference, in the background of differences prevailing between developing and developed countries over its contents.
- The contention of developed countries is that the Paris accord makes them “liable” for climate change impacts, which is why they are reluctant to commit to specific emission targets. With this ambivalent stance, the developed countries could risk sending the signal that they do not want to help the developing countries in fulfilling their commitments.

Way forward:

COP24 should be able to frame guidelines, which are pragmatic and gives due consideration to the challenges and priorities of developing countries—their vulnerabilities and challenges, including poverty, food security, energy access, and public-health.

The next 15 years are critical for action on climate change and any delay would only render it impossible to limit the level of planetary warming to even 2°C. Absolute economic losses might be concentrated in high-income countries, but the human costs of disasters would fall on low and lower middle-income countries. And then, it might just be too late even if the world wants to come together to work towards a fix. We must act together, now and quickly.

12. Mangroves mitigated Gaja's impact

Context:

Mangrove forests saved the Muthupet city in Tiruvarur district which was among the coastal towns that faced the wrath of Cyclone Gaja.

Importance of mangroves:

- Mangroves are the trees & bushes growing below the high water level of spring tides, which exhibits remarkable capacity for salt water tolerance. Basically Littoral evergreen land plants growing on sheltered shores typically on tidal flats, deltas, estuaries, bays etc. where abundant silt is brought down by rivers
- Mangroves functioned as a shield and broke the velocity of the wind. In the process, the mangrove forests sacrificed themselves to save Muthupet
- This is not the first time mangroves saved a disaster-prone area. During the 2004 tsunami, Pichavaram mangrove forests saved Cuddalore district.

Function of mangroves:

- Exhibits viviparity mode of reproduction e. seeds germinate in the trees itself, before falling to ground (An adaptive mechanism to overcome problem of germination in saline water)
- Produces pneumatophores (Blind or aerial roots) to overcome respiration problem in anaerobic soil conditions as these aerial roots enable plants to breathe air through waterlogged soil
- Some Mangroves secrete excess salt through their leaves (form crystals of salt on back of leaves) & some block absorption of salt at their roots



- Produce stilt/Prop roots, which emerged from main trunk of the tree above ground level i.e. aerial pitchfork-like extensions from the trunk which grow downwards and anchor themselves in the soil trapping sediment which helps to stabilize

the tree, subjected to tides and flooding

- Mangroves of sundarban are the largest single block of tidal halophytic mangroves of the world, famous for Bengal tigers & crocodiles

13. A new deal for the farmer

Context:

Recent rally by All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination, in New Delhi reflects the agrarian distress and lacunae in government schemes and policies.

According to Census 2011, 54.6 per cent of India's workforce was engaged in agriculture. However, the sector contributes less than 17 per cent of the GDP. The policies of successive governments have failed to correct this imbalance.

Why farmers in distress?

- A report prepared by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, released in March 2018, based on a survey of 5,000 farm households across 18 states, revealed that 76 per cent farmers would prefer to do some other work than farming.
- It says that only 10 per cent of the poor and small farmers with average land holding of 1-4 acres have benefited from government schemes and subsidies.
- Seventy per cent of those interviewed alleged they did not get any information or advice regarding farm practices from agriculture department officials.
- The survey shows that 62 per cent of interviewed farmers were unaware of the Minimum Support Price (MSP). Seventy per cent had not heard about the Direct Cash Transfer scheme.
- According to the Standing Committee on Rural Development, only 10 per cent of the projects taken up under the watershed development component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) have been completed so far.

The structural challenge of agriculture are:

Fragmented Land Holdings: The net area under cultivation is close to 141 million hectares. However, its immensity diminishes with the fact that a vast number of land holdings are fragmented to an extent of being rendered economically unviable. This is a prime reason that agriculture instruments in India cannot be used effectively.

Supply Channel Bottlenecks: The supply channel is inefficient because of the greedy middlemen involved in the marketing process. It compels the farmers to make distress sale. They have to sell their produce at whatever prices they are offered, which ultimately diminishes their income.

Lack of Storage Facilities: The lack of proper storage facilities results in degradation of the quality of the produce. This, in turn, affects the volume of exports causing loss of potential income. Not to mention wastage of the produce. Estimates say that 9.3% of the produce gets wasted because of improper storage and maintenance.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- Rainwater harvesting should be incorporated in irrigation projects, owing to its magnificent untapped potential
- The establishment of micro, small and medium irrigation projects like tube wells and check dams, instead of big irrigation projects. Such projects should be financed entirely by the Centre.
- A “paani panchayat” should be established for every scheme, which will act as a specialized registered body responsible for the execution of irrigation projects.
- The panchayat will be responsible for the maintenance of water channels and collecting user charges from the beneficiaries.
- Every small and marginal farmer and every agricultural laborer above the age of 60 should receive a monthly pension of Rs 5,000.
- Fertilizer subsidies should be provided to the farmers via direct benefit transfer.
- There should be a separate category of entrepreneurs under the Mudra Yojana who will set up processing and storage plants for agricultural units.
- To immediately implement a Basic Income Scheme for the Indian farmer. The main features of this scheme will be: All small and marginal farmer households, including tenant and sub-tenant farmers, should receive a basic income of Rs 6,000 per acre per crop season. This will work out to Rs 12,000 per household per annum.

14. Uneasy fields

Context:

Last week, tens of thousands of farmers reached Delhi for a two-day Kisan Mukti Morcha and held the country's attention. They sought a special 21-day Parliament session to discuss the crisis in India's agrarian economy.

Agriculture in Indian economy:

- **Agriculture** is the most important sector of **Indian Economy**. Indian agriculture sector accounts for 18 per cent of India's gross domestic product (GDP) and provides **employment** to 50% of the countries **workforce**.
- India is the world's **largest producer** of pulses, rice, wheat, spices and spice products. India has many areas to choose for business such as dairy, meat, poultry, fisheries and food grains etc.
- India has emerged as the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world According to the data provided by Department of Economics and Statistics (DES) the production of food grains for the year 2013-2014 is 264 million tons which is increased when compared to (2012-2013) 257million tons.

- This is a good symptom for the Indian economy from the agriculture sector. India remains among main three as far as production of different agricultural things like paddy, wheat, pulses, groundnut, rapeseeds, natural products, vegetables, sugarcane, tea, jute, cotton, tobacco leaves and so on.
- On the other hand, on advertising front, Indian **agribusiness** is as yet confronting the issues, for example, low level of business sector reconciliation and integration, availability of dependable and convenient information needed by farmers on different issues in farming.

Agrarian challenges

Small and fragmented land-holdings:

- The seemingly abundance of net sown area of 141.2 million hectares and total cropped area of 189.7 million hectares (1999-2000) pales into insignificance when we see that it is divided into economically unviable small and scattered holdings.

Seeds:

- Seed is a critical and basic input for attaining higher crop yields and sustained growth in agricultural production. Distribution of assured quality seed is as critical as the production of such seeds. Unfortunately, good quality seeds are out of reach of the majority of farmers, especially small and marginal farmers mainly because of exorbitant prices of better seeds.

Manures, Fertilizers and Biocides:

- Indian soils have been used for growing crops over thousands of years without caring much for replenishing. This has led to depletion and exhaustion of soils resulting in their low productivity. The average yields of almost all the crops are among the lowest in the world. This is a serious problem which can be solved by using more manures and fertilizers.

Irrigation:

- Although India is the second largest irrigated country of the world after China, only one-third of the cropped area is under irrigation. Irrigation is the most important agricultural input in a tropical monsoon country like India where rainfall is uncertain, unreliable and erratic. India cannot achieve sustained progress in agriculture unless and until more than half of the cropped area is brought under assured irrigation.

Lack of mechanization:

- In spite of the large scale mechanization of agriculture in some parts of the country, most of the agricultural operations in larger parts are carried on by human hand using simple and conventional tools and implements like wooden plough, sickle, etc.

Agricultural Marketing:

- Agricultural marketing still continues to be in a bad shape in rural India. In the absence of sound marketing facilities, the farmers have to depend upon local traders and middlemen for the disposal of their farm produce which is sold at throw-away price.

Scarcity of capital:

- Agriculture is an important industry and like all other industries it also requires capital. The role of capital input is becoming more and more important with the advancement of farm technology. Since the agriculturists' capital is locked up in his lands and stocks, he is obliged to borrow money for stimulating the tempo of agricultural production.

FARMERS DEMAND:

Protesting farmers are demanding a complete and unconditional waiver of loans and electricity bills; All India Kisan Sabha has alleged that 1,753 debt-ridden farmers have killed themselves since June 2017

- Farmers demand a minimum support price of 1.5 times the input cost for farm produce
- Farmers want the immediate implementation of recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission, which safeguards interests of small farmers
- Farmers want compensation for crop losses due to unseasonal rain, hailstorm and attack by pink bollworm, in February.

Major demands



A protester during the Kisan Long March in Mumbai. ■ FILE PHOTO

- Payment of minimum support price as recommended by the M.S. Swaminathan Committee

- Curb price rise, universalise public distribution system and ban forward trading in essential commodities
- Debt waiver for poor peasants and agricultural workers
- Ensure public procurement of crops
- Minimum wage of at least ₹18,000 per month
- Stop anti-worker labour law reform
- Universal social security

- The All India Kisan Sabha said, "We want the state government to stop forceful acquisition of farm lands in the name of development projects like the super highway and tracks for bullet trains." Farmers demand implementation of Forest Rights Act, which will benefit the tribal population

Government schemes on agrarian

Initiative for increasing flow of credit

- In order to ensure that all eligible farmers are provided with hassle free and timely credit for their agricultural operation, **Kisan Credit Card** (KCC) Scheme was introduced in 1998-99. The main objectives

of the scheme are to meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops, post harvest expenses, produce marketing loan, consumption requirements of farmer household, working capital for maintenance of farm assets and activities allied to agriculture like dairy animals, inland fishery, etc., investment credit requirement for agriculture and allied activities like pump sets, sprayers, dairy animals, etc.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

- under the new scheme, the farmers' premium has been kept at a maximum of 2 per cent for food grains and oilseeds, and up to 5 per cent for horticulture and cotton crops.
- There is no upper limit on Government subsidy. Even if balance premium is 90%, it will be borne by the Government.

Soil Health Card

- Soil Health cards are necessary to ensure that only requisite nutrients are applied in the soil in a balanced manner to enhance productivity of specific crops in a sustainable manner.

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY)

- Aim of the project is to maximize the utilization of natural resources through eco-friendly cultivation.

E-NAM

National Agriculture Market or eNAM is an online trading platform for agricultural commodities in India. The market facilitate farmers, traders and buyers with online trading in commodities.

Way forward

The government commitment to double the farmer's income by 2022 needs holistic and comprehensive policy approach. In this regard Ashok dalwai committee on doubling farmer's income is important.

Recommendations:

- The one-India market concept may benefit from placing agricultural marketing under the Concurrent List (in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution).
- While cultivation is limited to the land and area of farming operations, marketing has no boundaries and needs to operate on a pan-India level to meet demand across the country.
- The needs include creation of better physical infrastructure, improved price information dissemination campaigns, and reform regulations that force farmers to sell their produce to local monopolies. The committee believes that small and marginal farmers, who constitute 80 per cent of Indian farmers, would benefit from an efficient marketing system, only if they have withholding capacity.

- This can be achieved by offering them pledge finance (post-harvest loan against produce as collateral).
- Storage godowns, including cold storages, should be upgraded per the standards laid down by the Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority so that they can issue Negotiable Warehouse Receipts.
- The Ministry has to develop comprehensive guidelines to promote warehouse-based post-harvest loans and eNWR based trading.

15. Kachchativu issue

Context:

The Prime Ministers of Ceylon and India have agreed that discussions on the sovereignty over Kachchativu and connected matters in the Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar should continue.

Back ground:

Kachchativu Island seems to have been under the Kings of Ramanathapuram in modern Tamil Nadu. During the British era, the island was administered by both the sides. Sri Lanka claimed it mainly because of its strategic location; and this issue was discussed many a times before 1974.

What's the issue?

According to Sri Lanka's ministry of external affairs website, Katchatheevu is an uninhabited islet in the Palk Strait that was formed due to volcanic eruption in the 14th century. The 285-acre land, strategically important for fishing activities, was owned by the Raja of Ramnad (Ramanathapuram)

and later became part of the Madras Presidency after the delimitation of Gulf of Mannar and Palk Strait during British rule between the then governments of Madras and Ceylon. In 1921, both Sri Lanka and India claimed this piece of land for fishing and the dispute remained unsettled.

Indira Gandhi's Emergency

- In 1974, Katchatheevu was ceded to Sri Lanka by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi through the Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime agreement to settle the maritime



boundary in the Palk Strait with her counterpart Srimavo Bandaranaike.

- This forced M. Karunanidhi, then chief minister of Tamil Nadu, to write to Indira Gandhi on how the land was historically a part of Ramnad's zamindari.
- Though ceded to Sri Lanka, the agreement, which did not specify fishing rights, allowed Indian fishermen to fish around Katchatheevu and to dry their nets on the island.
- During Emergency, with the Tamil Nadu government dismissed in 1976, without the consultation of the state assembly and Parliament, another agreement was finalized to determine the boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal and restricted both the countries' fishermen from fishing in the other's waters.

Exclusive Economic Zones

"With the establishment of the Exclusive Economic Zones by the two countries, India and Sri Lanka will exercise sovereign rights over the living and non-living resources of their respective zones. The fishing vessels and fishermen of India shall not engage in fishing in the historic waters, the territorial sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Sri Lanka, nor shall the fishing vessels and fishermen of Sri Lanka engage in fishing in the historic waters, the territorial sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone of India, without the express permission of Sri Lanka or India, as the case may be," said the agreement.

Sri Lanka Civil War

- In 1991, the Tamil Nadu Assembly adopted a resolution demanding the retrieval of Katchatheevu. During the civil war and with northern borders under the control of the LTTE (expand), the fishermen had easy access into the fishing grounds. Later in 2008, Jayalalithaa moved the Supreme Court to nullify the Katchatheevu agreements of 1974 and 1976.
- As the war between Sri Lankan government and LTTE reached an end by 2009, the Sri Lankan government strengthened its security at maritime boundaries. When Indian fishermen crossed boundaries, arrests followed and talks for retrieval of Katchatheevu followed suit in Tamil Nadu. The Sri Lankan government claims that depletion of marine resources on its waters has affected the livelihood of fishermen.

The Church

Every February, thousands of devotees from Rameshwaram visit the 110-year-old St Anthony's Church on Katchatheevu island built by a Tamil Catholic from Tamil Nadu, Srinivasa Padaiyachi.

Recent moves

- a) **2014:** The Centre informed the Madras high court responding to a PIL that Sri Lanka's sovereignty over Katchatheevu is a settled matter and

fishermen from India do not enjoy any right to engage in fishing activities in the region.

b) 2015: Sri Lanka's prime minister Ranil Wickramasinghe stoked a controversy in an interview for Chennai-based Tamil Channel (Thanthi TV), suggesting that Indian fishermen may be shot if they intrude into Sri Lankan waters.

c) Recently in December 2018

- The Prime Ministers of Ceylon and India have agreed that discussions on the sovereignty over Kachchativu and connected matters in the Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar should continue.
- They exchanged views on a number of issues, including territorial waters, delineation of median line and fishing rights.
- A joint communiqué issued at the end of the visit of the Ceylon Prime Minister, Mr. Dudley Senanayake said 'they formally explored the possibilities for fruitful collaboration between the two countries in this area and agreed that discussions of matters should continue.'

The highlight of the communiqué

The highlight of the communiqué was the great satisfaction they felt over the increasing co-operation between their countries in regard to trade and economic matters.

Among the subjects discussed by the two Prime Ministers were the bilateral relations between their countries including the progress made in the implementation of the Indo-Ceylon Agreement of 1964 and matters of common interest in the Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar.



Science and Technology

16. The downside of gene editing

Context:

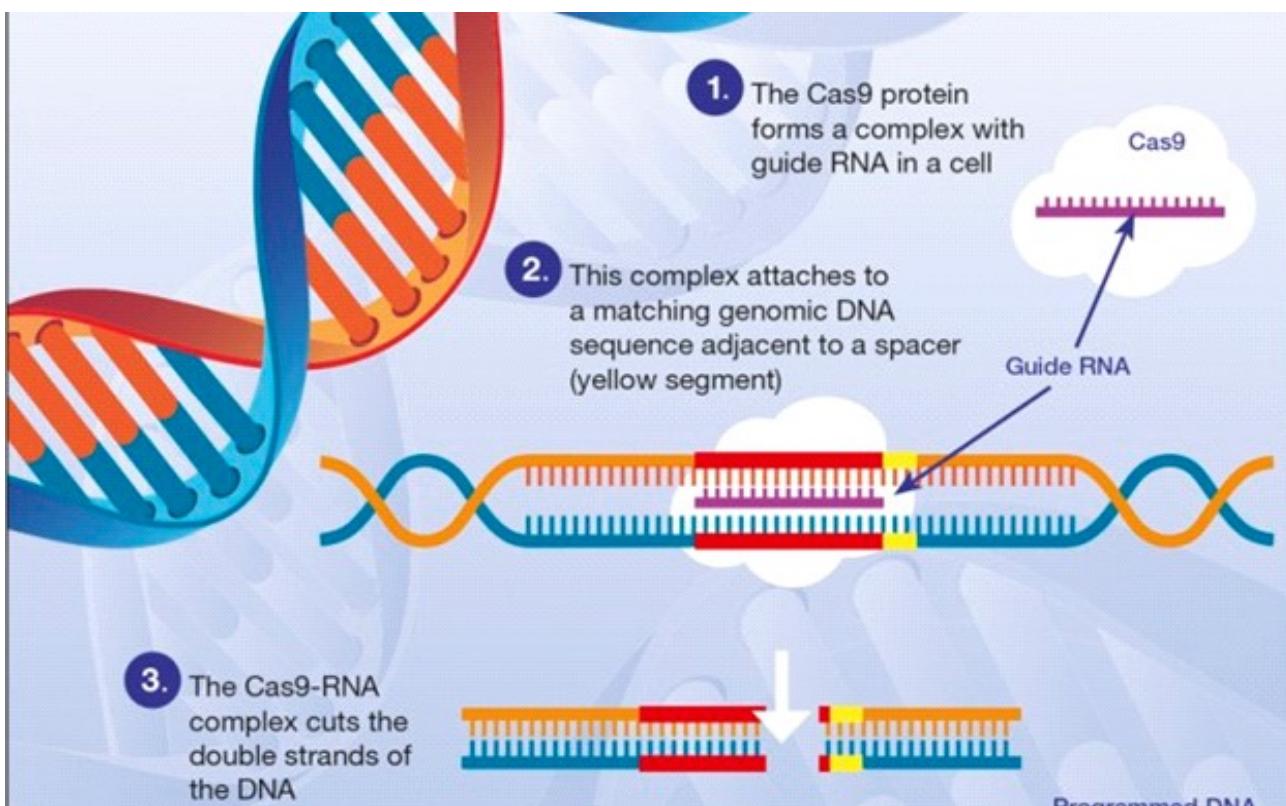
He Jiankui, a Chinese researcher, had managed to successfully use CRISPR-Cas9 technology to edit a human embryo and effectively disable a gene (called CCR5) that is responsible for creating the protein pathways through which various viruses infect human cells.

Gene Editing:

Gene editing or genome editing is a way of making specific changes to the DNA of a cell or organism. An enzyme cuts the DNA at a specific sequence, and when this is repaired by the cell a change or 'edit' is made to the sequence.

CRISPR-Cas9:

- CRISPR is a dynamic, versatile tool that allows us to target nearly any genomic location and potentially repair broken genes. It can remove, add or alter specific DNA sequences in the genome of higher organisms.



- CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) are sections of DNA and are sections of genetic code containing short repetitions of base sequences followed by spacer DNA segments.
- CAS-9 (CRISPR-associated protein 9) is an enzyme. It uses a synthetic guide RNA to introduce a double strand break at a specific location within a strand of DNA. It is a system used by bacterial cells to recognize and destroy viral DNA as a form of adaptive immunity.

Advantages of gene editing:

- Embryos created using this method will, if brought to full term, result in babies that are highly resistant to diseases such as AIDS, cholera and smallpox.
- Children born without the CCR5 protein pathway are highly susceptible to the West Nile virus. Thus, while genetically editing out this protein might improve the resistance of these children to diseases like AIDS, it will increase their susceptibility to other equally harmful illnesses.

Moral obligations:

- The **United States** has banned federal aid from being used to support germline editing.
- In the **United Kingdom**, one can apply to the regulatory body for a licence to edit the genomes of a human embryo, but only for research work. The embryos have to be destroyed within 14 days.
- The recently held **International Summit on Human Gene Editing** announced that it would be irresponsible to proceed with any clinical use of germline editing until the relevant safety and efficiency issues were resolved.
- In India, there is **no law** for forbidding research laboratories and private companies from using the technology to experiment on embryos. However, the Drug Controller General of India is trying to use interpretations of existing laws on drugs to clamp down on improper use.

Cons of Gene editing:

- The genes that have been edited out in this case do not, themselves, cause any disease or disorder in the embryo. They merely offer a health advantage that gives those with the edited genes a better chance of not contracting certain diseases.
- Had the mutation been the direct cause for a genetic disease, editing out that mutation from the genome of the embryo in question could perhaps be justified. However, when the manipulation was merely to offer a greater resistance to an anticipated infection, the justification carries less weight.
- While the Chinese team has been at pains to say that they will not use this technique to change physical features or intelligence, there is a fine line between providing a health advantage and improving features such as looks and IQ.

Need of Global Framework:

- Need to work towards agreeing on a formal global treaty that binds all signatory nations to a common set of commitments with regard to gene editing.

- Even if we do manage to sign such a global treaty, the sovereignty of individual nation states and the fact that the coercive force of public international law depends on the submission of member states to global consensus makes the enforcement of these principles deeply challenging.
- In the first place, any treaty that we eventually pass will only be binding on countries that ratify it. With a few exceptions, most international treaties have only been ratified by a sub-set of the countries in the world.
- This means that even if the vast majority of nations prohibit genetic manipulation, there is likely to always be some place on the planet where you will be able to legally manipulate your embryos to serve some dubious objective.

17. 5.8-tonne GSAT-11 ready for launch

Context:

Geo Synchronous satellites (GSAT) is a part of ISRO's new satellite fleet for high-speed Internet services, it will take off from French Guiana.

About GSAT-11:

- The 5,854-kg satellite, almost double the biggest one built or launched by ISRO to date.
- It will ride up on European launch vehicle Ariane 5 ECA, numbered VA246.
- IST, according to the schedule of Arianespace, which is providing the launch services. It will be sunset at nearby Kourou in French Guiana, located 5 degrees north of the Equator, with a launch window between 5.37 p.m. and 6.53 p.m. local time.

Big push for communication

GSAT-11 will play a vital role in providing broadband services across the country. It will also provide a platform to demonstrate new generation applications

■ Launching from French Guiana between 2 a.m. & 3 a.m. IST on Dec. 5

■ Will be lifted to space on a European Ariane 5 rocket

■ Mass 5,854 kg, cost ₹1,200 crore, including the foreign launch

■ Will rest in over the 74°E longitude, nearly 36,000 km away



■ Will carry 40 transponders in the Ku /Ka bands

■ Built to provide throughput data rate of 16 gbps

■ Expected to work for 15 years

APPLICATIONS:

To meet unprecedented data demands: Greater capacity and high data rates over regions due to use of the spot beam technology

Supporting Bharat Net connectivity: Substantial bandwidth coverage to gram panchayats for supporting e-governance and other platforms

VSAT terminals: Capacity platform to support a huge subscriber base

Unlock new applications: Reaching out to different strata of society through Digital India platform

- GSAT-11 is part of ISRO's new family of high-throughput communication satellite (HTS) fleet that will drive the country's Internet broadband from space to untouched areas;
- The broadband domain is now ruled by underground fibre and covers partial and convenient locations.

High-speed data

- Already up in space are two HTSs — GSAT-29 (November 14) and GSAT-19 (June 2017) — while one more is due to join them in the near future.
- They are all to provide high-speed Internet data services at the rate of 100 Gbps (Gigabits per second) to Indian users.
- ISRO has earlier said this speed would be far better than what is available in the country now.
- The HTSs will also be the backbone of pan-India digital or easy Internet-based programmes and services — such as Digital India, BharathNet for rural e-governance, and commercial and public sector VSAT Net service providers.
- According to ISRO, GSAT-11's multiple spot beam coverage — 32 in Ku band and eight in Ka bands — will deliver an improved service of 16 gbps over the Indian region and nearby islands.
- GSAT-11 will play a vital role in providing broadband services across the country. It will also provide a platform to demonstrate new generation applications.

GSAT-11 was earlier planned for launch on May 26 this year. A few days before it, ISRO brought it back from Kourou to the Bengaluru satellite centre for additional checks. The spacecraft was sent back in October for the rescheduled launch.

Its co-passenger is South Korea's GEO-KOMPSAT-2A, a meteorology satellite.

Miscellaneous

18. Giant tortoise may offer clues to a long life

Context:

Giant tortoise possesses genetic variants linked to DNA repair, immune response and cancer suppression.

What's in news?

- Galapagos giant tortoises possess genetic variants linked to DNA repair, immune response and cancer suppression — providing clues into their longevity.
- A team of researchers sequenced the genomes of two such tortoises, including Lonesome George



- Lonesome George — the last known member of the subspecies *Geochelone nigra abingdoni*.
- Researchers detected “lineage-specific variants affecting DNA repair genes, inflammatory mediators and genes related to cancer development”
- The Pacific island chain off mainland Ecuador is famous for its unique flora and fauna studied by Charles Darwin as he developed his theory of evolution.

Twelve giant tortoise species still inhabit it.

Giant tortoises, which can live for over 100 years in captivity, arrived in the Galapagos region three to four million years ago.

19. Sex-sorted semen to control stray bulls

Context:

Uttar Pradesh government launched a ‘Sex Sorted Semen’ scheme to reduce the numbers of ‘unproductive’ cattle by curbing their birth.

Sex Sorted Semen’ scheme:

- The government approved a ‘Sex Sorted Semen’ scheme, under which chances of cows delivering a female calf are as high as 90-95%.
- The aim of the project was two-fold: to increase the productivity of cows and to decrease the number of unproductive male cattle.

- The State government plans to reduce the numbers of stray bulls by making sure that they are never born. It will provide a permanent solution to the stray cattle menace in the next 2-4 years
- After successfully testing the scheme as a pilot project in three districts (Etawah, Lakhimpur Kheri and Barabanki), the government has decided to launch it in all the 75 districts of U.P. The State Cabinet has approved the project.
- The scheme would be implemented on indigenous breeds, such as Sahiwal, Gir, Haryanvi, Tharparkar and Gangatiri.
- To avail of the scheme, cattle-breeders would have to pay Rs. 300 per conception, while in the drought-prone region of Bundelkhand, this levy would only be Rs. 100.
- The practice of ‘Amnapratha’, or the letting loose of unproductive cattle, is a common practice in Bundelkhand.
- The government added that the fall in the number of male cattle will bring down the damage to crops and the number of road accidents caused by the animals.
- A production unit for the project will come up at Babugarh in Hapur district. A firm has been selected through global e-tendering to execute the project.
- Earlier this year, State Animal Husbandry Minister S.P. Singh Baghel had claimed that the number of stray cattle heads had increased only because the government had, since March 2017, strictly implemented anti-cow slaughter laws and shut illegal slaughterhouses.

20. Indian Navy Day 2018: Operation Trident, blue-water ambitions and a long way to Indigenisation

Context:

India is commemorating the 47th Navy Day on Tuesday. Like elsewhere in the world, Navy Day in India too is celebrated with much fanfare and gusto. The enthralling performances of navy men during the annual Beating Retreat and Tattoo ceremony at the Gateway of India are now synonymous with Navy Day. Nonetheless, the significance of 4 December is unparalleled in independent India’s military history.

The day Karachi burned

- It was on this day in 1971 that Indian Navy left its shores for the very first time to successfully attack Pakistan. Operation Trident, the codename for the naval attack on Karachi, is considered one of the most successful operations in the post-World War II era.
- It all began when Pakistan launched pre-emptive airstrikes against India’s air bases on 3 December 1971. However, Pakistan failed to neutralise India’s air force, leading to India’s entry into the Bangladesh War.

- After the success of Operation Trident, the navy launched Operation Python on the night of 8/9 December. Both operations, along with the successful naval blockade of East Pakistan, jeopardised Pakistan's war efforts. Pakistan unconditionally surrendered on 16 December 1971.

Significance of Operation Trident

- For former chief of naval staff Admiral SM Nanda, the heroics of 4 December, 1971 meant that the side-lined Navy could finally gain its rightful place in India's security matrix. "India's naval power had remained neglected as our political leaders envisioned threat only from across our Western land border," a 2015 Indian Defence Review article noted while commenting on navy's minimal role until 1971 war.
- A 2004 Tribune review of the memoir The Man Who Bombed Karachi captured Nanda's thoughts, "A misperception had gained ground (in the 50s and 60s) among the political and military planners that the Navy had only a marginal role to play in the armed conflicts India was forced into."
- In the aftermath of the war, as Hiranandani noted in his book, the government finally realised the effectiveness of sea power. The navy, as the book stated, also rose in the eyes of Western and Russian navies for its "professionalism and innovativeness". A cumulative effect was that India's Navy managed to become the seventh largest in the world.

Fast forward to present day

- The Indian Navy of the 21st century is emerging as a formidable force likely to influence the Indian Ocean Region. This is in tune with a CIA report, which pointed out India's desire to maintain its dominance in the region.
- In line with India's huge global ambitions, the Navy is expanding and modernizing – albeit bureaucratic hiccups remain.
- Speaking on the eve of Navy Day, Admiral Sunil Lanba said, "Navy is looking at inducting 56 warships and submarines to enhance its strength. This is apart from 32 warships under construction."
- In geopolitical dynamics, aircraft carriers are considered a sign of blue-water ambitions. India's lone aircraft carrier is INS Vikramaditya. Accommodating 30 MIG-29Ks and six Kamov helicopters, the aircraft carrier is expected to be battle-ready by May 2019.
- Among Indian Navy's latest vessels are the Kalvari-class diesel-electric attack submarines. According to one report, INS Khanderi will be delivered to the Navy by the end of 2018. INS Kalvari, the lead submarine of the Kalvari-class, is already in service. Another submarine from the same class is expected to be commissioned sometime next year.

- However, with just 14 conventional — some considered obsolete — submarines, India lags behind in the geopolitical race. On the other hand, China, its main rival in the region, already controls about 60 conventional submarines.

India, nevertheless, operates two nuclear submarines: INS Chakra and INS Arihant. On 6 November this year, INS Arihant completed its first deterrence patrol, helping India enter the exclusive nuclear triad club. This means India can now launch nukes from air, land and water. Currently equipped with K15 nuclear-tipped missiles having a range of 750 kilometres, INS Arihant is the lead submarine of Arihant-class ballistic missile submarines.

Another recent addition to Indian Navy's firepower is the destroyer INS Chennai. Capable of being fitted with Brahmos as well as Barak 8 missiles, INS Chennai is the last of the three modern Kolkata-class vessels to be commissioned.





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Weekly Test	20 (20*1 = 20 marks)	2 (2*10= 20 Marks)	40
Fortnightly Test	30 (30*1 = 30 marks)	3 (3*10= 30 Marks)	60
Monthly Test	50 (50*1 = 50 marks)	5 (5*10= 50 Marks)	100
3 Months Test	100 (100*1 = 100 marks)	10 (10*10= 100 Marks)	200
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673



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726



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