

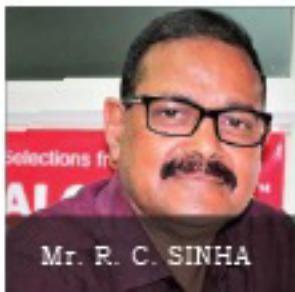


सामिक्षा  
Comprehensive NEWS Analysis

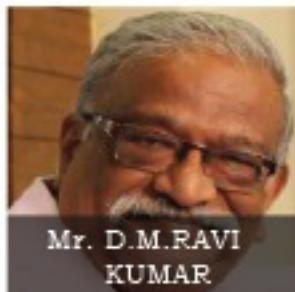
25-02-2019  
To  
03-03-2019  
MARCH  
Week - 01

# OUR TEAM

## GENERAL STUDIES



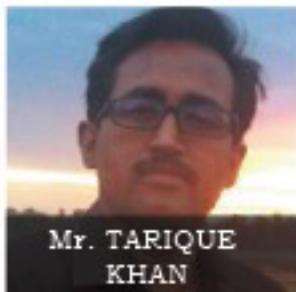
Mr. R. C. SINHA



Mr. D.M.RAVI KUMAR



Mr. SAROJ SAMAL



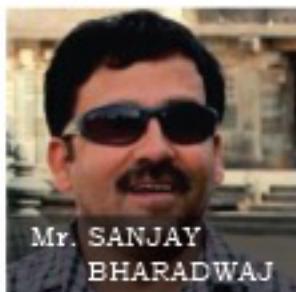
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## OPTIONALS



### SOCIOLOGY

Mr. SAROJ SAMAL

### Public Administration



Mr. R.C. SINHA



Mr. D.M.RAVI KUMAR



### MATHEMATICS

Mr. VINNAKOTA SRIKANTH



### GEOGRAPHY

Mr. PRIYESH SINGH SENGAR

## OTHER OPTIONALS

ANTHROPOLOGY

POLITICAL SCIENCE

TELUGU LITERATURE

HISTORY

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# Polity and Governance

## 1. Draft e-commerce Policy

### Context:

The Department of Industry and Internal Trade has released the draft National ecommerce Policy that sends a clear message that India and its citizens have a sovereign right to their data.

### Key features of the draft:

**Indian control over Data:** Govt to be given access to source code, algorithms of AI systems Impose custom duties on electronic transmissions to reduce revenue loss. It bars sharing of sensitive data of Indian users with third party entities, even with consent.

A 'data authority' to look at community data.

- **Local presence for apps & websites:** All ecommerce websites, apps available for downloading in India to have a registered business entity here. Non-compliant ecommerce app/website to be denied access here.
- **Incentives for data localization:** Location of the computing facilities like data centres, server farms within India. Firms to get 3 years to comply with local data storage requirements.
- Data storage facilities to get 'infrastructure status'.
- **FDI in ecommerce:** FDI only in marketplace model. No FDI in inventory model.
- **Ecommerce trade:** Curbs on Chinese ecommerce exports. Gifting route, often used by Chinese apps, websites, banned for all parcels except life-saving drugs. Integrating Customs, RBI and India Post to improve tracking of imports through ecommerce.
- **Incentives & e-commerce export promotions.**
- **Ecommerce startups may get 'infant industry' status** raising limit for courier shipments from Rs 25,000 to boost ecommerce export.
- **Regulation:** No separate regulator for ecommerce sector.
- **E-consumer courts** to be developed.

### Does India need an e-commerce policy?

- In the last couple of years, e-commerce transactions have risen substantially in India and abroad. According to an estimate by the finance ministry, the size of the digital economy in India will be \$1 trillion by 2022 and it will account for close to 50% of the entire economy by 2030.

### Conclusion:

This necessitates better policy response and coordination among various wings of the government. A national e-commerce policy will also enable better negotiations on multilateral issues with the World Trade Organization.

## 2. Anti-Doping Regulations in India – Ensuring Ethics in Sport

### Context:

Recently, the Anti-Doping Appeal Panel of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has blacklisted 2 persons with respect to the illegal supply of meldonium. Another bone of contention is the proposed 'National Anti Doping Act of India 2018' which would criminalize doping as an offence. These issues highlight the need to relook at the status of anti-doping mechanism in India.

### What is Meldonium?

- Meldonium is produced by the Latvian company Grindeks and is prescribed for ischemia, a disease in which there is an inadequate flow of blood to tissues = starvation of oxygen & glucose.
- Meldonium provides those patients with heart and circulatory conditions more physical capacity and mental function.

### What are the concerns with its usage?

As Meldonium aids in oxygen uptake and endurance many athletes have been caught using it.

Meldonium came to the spotlight when tennis superstar Maria Sharapova tested positive for it in 2016.

- A study on its functioning proves that the drug demonstrates
- An increase in endurance performance of athletes
- Enhanced rehabilitation after exercise
- Protection against stress
- Improved activations of the central nervous system (CNS) functions

However, it is believed that the substance would not improve athletes' performance in competition, and might even do the opposite. Even though the drug was not approved by USFDA (US Food & Drug Administration), it has been easily available over the counter in Eastern Europe and Russia. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) listed it in the banned substances in 2015. But the usage of meldonium has not been curbed till now.

### What is the role of WADA and NADA?

- World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) was set up in 1999 as an international independent organisation.
- It is composed and funded equally by the sports movement and governments across the world.
- It seeks to lead a collaborative international campaign for doping-free sport.
- Its major activities include scientific research, education, and development of anti-doping capacities and monitoring of the World Anti-Doping Code.

- World Anti-Doping Code is the document that provides consistency to anti doping rules, regulations, and policies across the world.
- Since 2004 and as obligated by the World Anti-Doping Code, WADA has published an annual list of Prohibited Substances and Methods (List).
- The list, which constitutes one of the 6 international standards, finds out the substances and methods banned in and out of competition and in concerned sports.

In India, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) is responsible for advancing, coordinating and supervising the doping control programme in sports in all its forms in the country.

- NADA was set up as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act of 1890 in 2005.
- It has a mandate for ensuring dope free sports in India.

### **The major objectives of NADA are:**

- To enforce anti-doping rules under WADA code,
- Regulate doping control programme,
- To promote education and research and Creating awareness about doping and its ill effects
- It comes under the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

### **Recent doping case in India:**

- Jagtar (a decathlete) has been tested positive for Meldonium in 2017 Federation Cup in Patiala.
- He was banned for a maximum of 4 years for a 1st-time dope offense.
- His ban was recently been reduced from four years to two after he had given significant evidence that aided in capturing a ring of illegal/unlicensed sports drug suppliers at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium which serves as a hub of national and international sporting athletic activity in India.

Therefore, the Anti-doping Appeal panel ordered NADA to issue a warning to be axed on notice boards or websites of NADA with respect to the substances and the risk of procurement of any supplies by the athletes from illegal suppliers

### **What are the factors for the rise of doping in sports?**

- Peer pressure,
- Irresponsible advisers and fellow athletes,
- Unethical coaches, Easy availability,
- Poorly administered sports federations and
- Human fallibility (the likelihood of making errors)

## **What are the concerns with anti-doping regulations in India?**

In the WADA's list of offenders, India comes under top 10 which is unique considering the fact that the levels of its sporting achievement are not that significant.

The NADA Anti-Doping Rules specifically state that it is the fault of the athlete if the supplements consumed are contaminated.

- An athlete is expected to conduct research before consuming any supplement. However, there is a lack of laboratories in India that carry out such specific tests on supplements,
- And if an athlete finds such a laboratory, the cost of carrying out the tests are high.

NADA recently proposed 'National Anti-Doping Act of India 2018' which would criminalize doping as an offence.

- As per the Act, any attempt to involve in the supply of prohibited substances to an athlete or having links to an organized crime syndicate involved in doping = jail term of up to 4 years or fine of Rs. 10 lakh.
- Under the proposed law, NADA can refer the matter to the CBI if it has a suspicion that an organized doping syndicate is involved in the supply of prohibited substances to sportspersons. However, these provisions generated much debate between the sports ministry and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).
- IOA objected to the presence of union sports minister and the other ministry officials in the proposed governing body and the executive committee to be constituted by NADA under the Act = government interference = violation of Olympic charter.
- Moreover, IOA has objected to the government wanting to criminalize supply of prohibited substances to athletes considering the fact that few of legal substances which have the effect of performance enhancement (illegal) would not stand the general implications of a criminal act.
- IOA also maintains that the NADA should be autonomous and independent in nature.

Therefore, merely subjecting the accused athletes to the complex legal process before NADA is not a long-term solution.

## **What is the way forward?**

- Making doping a criminal offence, is an unjustifiable idea which would subject athletes to an already crippled criminal justice system.
- Instead, the following measures should be taken to ensure ethical sports in India. Need to change the culture of casual doping amongst athletes.
- Along with zero tolerance for unethical and fraudulent practices, it is important to create an atmosphere where players are educated about

the rules of ethics in terms of fairness, integrity, responsibility, and respect.

- Athletes, support staff, federations, sports medical personnel should be provided with well-conceived literature, consultation, and workshops regarding doping and its consequences.
- NADA's initiatives need to be supplemented by a cadre of indigenous antidoping experts.
- A framework must be established to effectively counsel athletes to understand the real causes, degrees of fault and administrative lapses.
- We must understand the socio-cultural reality of our sportspersons. There should be independent tribunals/entities for anti-doping disciplinary procedures for transparent and effective resolution of any doping-related cases.

These measures may show results only in the long-term, however, they should be necessarily taken right now to clean up an image of being doping riddled unethical sporting fraternity. If this is not given the kind of priority it deserves, then surely, it will negatively impact the sanctity and trust given to sports by millions of fans in a sporting crazy world.

### 3. Tribal Eviction

#### **Context:**

The Supreme Court's recent, order may lead to the eviction of lakhs of persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) categories across 21 States their claim as forest dwellers have been rejected under the Forest Rights Act of 2006.

- A three-judge Bench had ordered the Chief Secretaries of many of these States to evict those whose claims as forest dwellers have been finally rejected under the law.

## MOST AFFECTED

	Claims Rejected
Madhya Pradesh	3,54,787
Karnataka	1,76,570
Odisha	1,48,870
West Bengal	86,146
Telangana	82,075
All India*	11.8 lakh



\*in 16 states

**In case eviction orders have attained finality, we direct (the states)... to ensure that eviction is carried out on or before the next date of hearing, July 24**

- SC

- The court directed that the eviction should be carried out on or before July 24, 2019.
- The order of the Supreme Court issued with respect to the claims of forest-dwelling peoples in India the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers is a case of the Supreme Court speaking against itself.

### **Background:**

- The order in question was issued in the case of Wildlife First & Ors v. Ministry of Forest and Environment & Ors. The matter relates to the Constitutional validity of the Forest Rights Act and also questions pertaining to the preservation of forests.
- The details regarding the claims made under the FRA, which were placed before the Court showed that of the 44 lakh claims filed, 20.5 lakh claims (46.5%) were rejected.
- A claim is made either for individual or community rights by the people/ communities covered by the FRA.

### **Administrative Faults causing inconvenience**

According to the 2014 report of the High-Level Committee on Socio-Economic, Health and Educational Status of Tribal Communities in India, constituted by the Government of India (Xaxa Committee):

- About 60% of the forest area in the country is in tribal areas protected by Article 19 (5) and Schedules V and VI of the Constitution.
- But the present Claims from tribal and forest dwellers are being rejected without assigning reasons of the Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD) definition and the ‘dependence’ clause, or simply for lack of evidence or ‘absence of GPS survey’.
- The land is wrongly considered as ‘not forest land’, or because only forest offence receipts are considered as adequate evidence.
- The mere rejection of claims by the state, does not add up to a finding of the crime of “encroachment”, the sheer volume of rejections should instead set alarm bells ringing in the court of procedural improprieties.
- The rejections are not being communicated to the tribal and forest dwellers, and their right to appeal is not being explained to them nor its exercise facilitated.

### **Sudden Eviction in scheduled Areas is against the safeguards mentioned in our Constitution:**

- At an even more fundamental level, we are speaking of special protections under the Constitution — even more today than ever before.
- The presence of Article 19(5) in the Fundamental Rights chapter of the Constitution, which specifically enjoins the state to make laws ”for the protection of the interests of any Scheduled Tribe”, is vital.

- There is no clarity on whether Supreme Court has the authority to order evictions of Schedule Tribes from areas designated in Schedule V & Schedule VI areas.

### **Way forward:**

- In effect, the court has ordered the eviction of lakhs of people whose claims as forest dwellers have been rejected under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, or FRA.
- This order of Supreme Court negates the claims of citizens under special protection of the Constitution, viz. the Scheduled Tribes and other vulnerable communities already pushed by gross governmental neglect precariously to the edge, is another matter altogether.
- Finally, in the recent judgments of the apex court on the right to privacy and Section 377, the court highlighted and given importance to autonomy, liberty, dignity, fraternity and constitutional morality, the pillars of transformative constitutionalism.
- It is the same court in the same era that has now ordered the dispossession of entire communities protected under the Constitution. We, as citizens, have every reason to worry.
- The question before us today centres on the responsibility of the Supreme Court in upholding constitutional claims and equal citizenship.

## **4. National Mineral Policy 2019**

### **Context:**

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved National Mineral Policy 2019.

### **Benefits**

The New National Mineral Policy will ensure more effective regulation. It will lead to sustainable mining sector development in future while addressing the issues of project affected persons especially those residing in tribal areas

### **Objective**

The aim of National Mineral Policy 2019 is to have a more effective, meaningful and implementable policy that brings in further transparency, better regulation and enforcement, balanced social and economic growth as well as sustainable mining practices.

### **Highlights**

The National Mineral Policy 2019 includes provisions which will give boost to mining sector such as

- Introduction of Right of First Refusal for RP/PL holders,

- encouraging the private sector to take up exploration,
- auctioning in virgin areas for composite RP cum PL cum ML on revenue share basis,
- encouragement of merger and acquisition of mining entities and
- transfer of mining leases and creation of dedicated mineral corridors to boost private sector mining areas.
- The 2019 Policy proposes to grant status of industry to mining activity to boost financing of mining for private sector and for acquisitions of mineral assets in other countries by private sector
- It also mentions that Long term import export policy for mineral will help private sector in better planning and stability in business
- The Policy also mentions rationalize reserved areas given to PSUs which have not been used and to put these areas to auction, which will give more opportunity to private sector for participation
- The Policy also mentions to make efforts to harmonize taxes, levies & royalty with world benchmarks to help private sector

Among the changes introduced in the National Mineral Policy, 2019 include the focus on make in India initiative and Gender sensitivity in terms of the vision. In so far as the regulation in Minerals is concerned, E-Governance, IT enabled systems, awareness and Information campaigns have been incorporated. Regarding the role of state in mineral development online public portal with provision for generating triggers at higher level in the event of delay of clearances has been put in place.

- NMP 2019 aims to attract private investment through incentives while the efforts would be made to maintain a database of mineral resources and tenements under mining tenement systems.
- The new policy focusses on use coastal waterways and inland shipping for evacuation and transportation of minerals and encourages dedicated mineral corridors to facilitate the transportation of minerals.
- The utilization of the district mineral fund for equitable development of project affected persons and areas.
- NMP 2019 proposes a long term export import policy for the mineral sector to provide stability and as an incentive for investing in large scale commercial mining activity.

The 2019 Policy also introduces the concept of Inter-Generational Equity that deals with the well-being not only of the present generation but also of the generations to come and also proposes to constitute an inter-ministerial body to institutionalize the mechanism for ensuring sustainable development in mining.

# International Relations

## 5. India and West Asia ties

### Context:

Over the past few years, the course of India's relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) suggests that under the current government, India finally appears to be moving away from its traditional "balancing" approach to West Asia. The government has in practice demonstrated a preference for working with the three regional powers.

### Importance of West Asia

**Energy Security:** For India, the energy resources of the West Asian region are extremely significant because of its growing hydrocarbon demands.

**Security:** Ensuring the stability and security of the Persian Gulf region and Gulf of Aden. Piracy in the surrounding regions remains a threat to Sea Lines of Communication.

**Indian diaspora:** Protection of the large Indian expatriate community in the context of persistent conflict and violence across the region. These Indians living in Gulf region remit more than one-third of the annual \$69 billion remittances to India.

**Trade and Economy:** West Asian countries are India's largest trade partner. The economic ties between India and the GCC countries are moving at a faster pace increasing the mutual interdependence.

**Culture and Religion:** India hosts the second largest Muslim population in the World, which views Saudi Arabia as its important pilgrimage because of the holy Shrines at Mecca and Medina.

**Investment:** Investment ability of Saudi Arabia and UAE is Huge. During his visit to New Delhi, MBS said he foresaw up to \$100 billion worth of Saudi investments in India over the next few years, including a plan by the Saudi Basic Industries Corp. to acquire two LNG plants.

**Regional connectivity:** In Iran, India invested in its large natural gas fields and develop the Chabahar port, which is expected to be a bridge of trade between India, Iran and central Asia along with Afghanistan.

**Defence:** India has strong defence and security partnership with Israel which is useful to its security and military modernization drive.

### Recent trend:

- With the US exercising less of an influence in the Gulf these days, the space is now available for India to put together a diplomatic peace initiative for the region. This led India recognize the need to develop a holistic engagement strategy, one that seeks both to strengthen economic ties and to institutionalize long-term security cooperation.
- India has been a gradual push over the last few decades towards deepening bilateral ties with West Asian countries, without getting

trapped in regional rivalries. There is a series of high-profile visitor from West Asia and vice versa. These visits are both symbolic and substantial.

- Indian diplomacy is now used for an independent relation towards a nation irrespective of if such policy may offend another country or state. This can be viewed in de-hyphenated policy of India towards Israel and Palestine.

## Challenges

- **Pakistan Factor:** Creation of Pakistan deprived India of its “geopolitical reach” to Central and West Asia. Pakistan continues to have a strong political constituency across Muslim West Asia. This has incapacitated India from advancing its commercial interests, including the bringing to fruition of the Iran-India-Pakistan (IPI) and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline projects.
- **China factor:** There is a huge power disparity between China and India in terms of hard cash and military prowess. China has already made rapid inroads in the Gulf by virtue of having acquired equity stakes in the region’s upstream oil and gas sector, and having successfully penetrated Arab markets.
- **Internal Rivalry within West Asia:** Despite the buoyancy in bilateral ties in recent years, India remains hyphenated with Pakistan and Arab cause. India have to delicately perform the balancing act between Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia and GCC to explore the benefits.
- **Great Power rivalry:** Although US has shifted its focus from middle east to Pacific Ocean region but US presence and dominance is still felt in many west Asian countries. To counter US there is significant presence of other emerging power such as Russia and China
- **Economic Factor:** The decline of oil and gas prices, along with the rising cost of “war conditions” has led to the slowing of Arab Gulf economies, resulting in layoffs and the nationalization of workforces at the cost of the expatriate community. The Indian government has yet to develop a policy framework to deal with such future contingencies.

## Conclusion

The historical ties as well as the hard facts of present-day politics and economy point to a future of growing interdependence and co-operation between India and West Asia. The possibilities are almost limitless. Although, recent escalation between Iran and Israel on the Syrian front suggests that tensions are unlikely to drop soon. Amid competing demands from West Asian powers for India to take sides, India might find it difficult to maintain a “balancing” approach even if it wanted to.

India must continue to pursue close military relationships with Persian Gulf and Gulf of Aden countries contributing to maritime security in the

Arabian Sea. India must avoid grouping countries with such regional complexity into the same box. It should seek progress where its interests match.

## 6. Geneva Convention

### Context:

An Indian pilot was captured by Pakistan after a major aerial confrontation and chase between Pakistan Air Force planes, which dropped bombs in four locations of Jammu and Kashmir, and Indian Air Force jets that countered them over the Line of Control (LoC).

New Delhi has conveyed to Islamabad that “no harm” should come to the pilot. India has also cited the **Geneva Conventions** while demanding the release of Wing Commander in Pak custody.

### Geneva Convention

- The 1949 Geneva Conventions are a set of international treaties that ensure that warring parties conduct themselves in a humane way with non-combatants such as civilians and medical personnel, as well as with combatants no longer actively engaged in fighting, such as prisoners of war, and wounded or sick soldiers.
- All countries are signatories to the Geneva Conventions. There are four conventions, with three protocols added on since 1949.

### Monitoring of Geneva Convention.

The Geneva Conventions have a system of “Protecting Powers” who ensure that the provisions of the conventions are being followed by the parties in a conflict. In theory, each side must designate states that are not party to the conflict as their “Protecting Powers”. In practice, the International Committee of the Red Cross usually plays this role

### Does the captured pilot count as a prisoner of war?

- The provisions of the conventions apply in peacetime situations, in declared wars, and in conflicts that are not recognized as war by one or more of the parties.
- India has said its airstrikes were a “non-military” intelligence-led operation and therefore both sides are bound by the Geneva Conventions. This means the IAF officer is a prisoner of war, and his treatment has to be in accordance with the provisions for PoWs under the Geneva Conventions.

### Provisions for PoWs

The treatment of prisoners of war is dealt with by the Third Convention or treaty. The Third Convention is unambiguous about how prisoners must be treated: “humanely”. And the responsibility for this lies with the detaining power, not just the individuals who captured the PoW.

- Any unlawful act or omission by the Detaining Power causing death or seriously endangering the health of a prisoner of war in its custody is prohibited, and will be regarded as a serious breach of the present Convention.
- In particular, no prisoner of war may be subjected to physical mutilation or to medical or scientific experiments of any kind which are not justified by the medical, dental or hospital treatment of the prisoner concerned and carried out in his interest.
- Likewise, prisoners of war must at all times be protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity. Measures of reprisal against prisoners of war are prohibited,” says Article 13 of the Convention.

### **Rights of Prisoners of War**

Article 14 of the Convention lays down that PoWs are “entitled to in all circumstances to respect for their persons and their honour”.

- In captivity, a PoW must not be forced to provide information of any kind under “physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion”.
- Refusal to answer questions should not invite punishment.
- A PoW must be protected from exposure to fighting.
- Use of PoWs as hostages or human shields is prohibited, and a PoW has to be given the same access to safety and evacuation facilities as those affiliated to the detaining power.
- Access to health facilities, prayer, recreation and exercise are also written into the Convention.
- The detaining power has to facilitate correspondence between the PoW and his family, and must ensure that this is done without delays.
- A PoW is also entitled to receive books or care packages from the outside world.

### **India's Past experiences**

At the end of the 1971 war, India had more than 80,000 Pakistani troops who had surrendered to the Indian Army after the liberation of Dhaka. India agreed to release them under the Shimla Agreement of 1972. Pakistan can decide to send Wing Commander Abhinandan unilaterally, or negotiate his release with India.

## **7. UN Statement on Pulwama Terror Attack**

### **Context:**

The UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted a ‘statement’ on February 21 condemning the Pulwama terrorist attack.

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) strongly condemned the Pulwama terror attack.

- The Council mentioned the name of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror group in the statement.
- It emphasized the need to hold the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice.
- Reportedly, China made attempts to stall the statement for its reference to Jaish e Mohammed (JeM).
- However China too finally went with the statement.

### **What are the different actions that the UNSC can take?**

- **Addressing the media** - The least forceful action the Council can take is to authorise the current President to speak to media representatives about the proceedings of the Council. There is no official record of these remarks.
- **Statement** - The second level is when the Council adopts a presidential statement.
  - A lot of negotiations are undertaken as informal consultations in a Council chamber where only members of the Council are present.
  - Of necessity, it has to be a ‘consensus’ document, and not a ‘unanimous’ one.
  - This means that not all the members support everything included in it but go along since they do not have a serious problem with the text.
  - Even if one member has strong objections to the text, the statement cannot be approved.
  - The draft of the text could be prepared either by the President or by one of the members who, in most cases, is the representative of one of the permanent members.
  - Also, the statement could be issued either in the name of the Council or in the name of ‘members of the Security Council’.
  - The former is generally regarded as carrying more weight than the latter.
- **Resolution** - The third level is the resolution, which is the most authentic voice of the Council, carrying maximum weight. Again, the resolution can be under Chapter VI or Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Resolutions adopted under Chapter VII are enforceable unlike those under Chapter VI (Resolutions regarding Kashmir are under Chapter VI).

### **What effect do these have?**

- In practice, the country against which the resolution or statement is aimed cares a lot about the contents in it.
- This is because countries care about their image in the international community.

- E.g. Israel has the maximum number of resolutions critical of its actions.
- It makes tough efforts, through its protector, the U.S., to have the resolutions moderated to make them less critical.
- Notably, hours of time are spent on negotiations, discussing whether to ‘condemn’, ‘deplore’ or ‘strongly deplore’ something.

### **Significance of the statement**

- The UN Security Council has only adopted a presidential ‘statement’ on Pulwama attack and not a ‘resolution’ as is reported by some.
- The statement was in the name of the members of the Council.
- Though not ineffective, it is relatively lower in state than a statement that is issued in the name of the Council.
- A statement in the name of the members might also suggest that not all of them were in full agreement with the entire text.
- The fact that China went along with the statement does not signify much of a shift in its position.
- It’s because, the Council had already declared the JeM as a terrorist organisation.
- The statement does not name JeM chief Masood Azhar whom India wants to list as a “global terrorist” at the UNSC.
- With these proper perspectives, India should take further its fight against terrorism, at the United Nations Security Council.

## **8. India invited as Guest of honour for OIC Foreign Ministers Meet**

### **Context:**

For the first time, India would be attending the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers Meet. India will attend 46th Session of the OIC’s Council of Foreign Ministers to be held in Abu Dhabi from March 1 to 2

### **UAE’s Invitation for India**

- The host UAE has stated that the friendly country of India has been named as the guest of honour in view of its great global political stature as well as its time-honoured and deeply rooted cultural and historical legacy and its important Islamic component.
- UAE’s invitation to India highlights the desire of the UAE to go beyond rapidly growing close bilateral ties and forge a true multifaceted partnership at the multilateral and international level.
- The Invitation is seen as a milestone in the comprehensive strategic partnership with the UAE.

- The invitation is also recognition of the presence of 185 million Muslims in India and of their contribution to its pluralistic ethos, and of India's contribution to the Islamic world.

### **Why the Invitation is a significant one?**

The invitation has gained immense significance because of the timing. At a time when India is cornering Pakistan on all international forums due to its alleged role in Pulwama terror attack, the invitation by the OIC which was the biggest supporter of the Pakistan and Pakistan had blocked all efforts of India to engage with OIC. This invitation is seen as a signal of changing geopolitical dynamics.

### **About the OIC:**

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation is an international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states.

- It is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations.
- The organisation states that it is “the collective voice of the Muslim world” and works to “safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony”.
- The OIC has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union.

## Economy

### 9. TRAI Regulations

#### Introduction:

The telecom market can be split into three segments – wireless, wireline and internet services. The wireless market comprises 98.1% of the total subscriber base. India's telephone subscriber base has expanded at a CAGR of 19.6%. India is the world's second-largest telecommunications market, with around 1.2 billion subscribers as of September 2018.

- In rural areas, the tele density is far lower (56.9%) than that in urban India (171.1%).
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) cap in the telecom sector has been increased to 100% from 74%. Out of 100 per cent, 49 per cent will be done through automatic route and the rest will be done through the FIPB approval route.
- The Government of India has introduced Digital India programme under which all the sectors such as healthcare, retail, etc. will be connected through internet

#### Challenges faced by telecom sector

1. Financial Health of the Sector: Gross revenue has dropped by 15% to 20% for the year 2017-18 over the preceding year for the incumbents and overall sector revenue has dropped. Also, there is drop in voice and data revenue per user
2. Limited Spectrum Availability: Available spectrum is less than 40% as compared to European nations and 50% as compared to China. Hence, it is imperative that spectrum auctioning at sustainable prices is the need of the hour. Also, government auction spectrum at an exorbitant cost which makes it difficult for mobile operators to provide services at reasonable speeds.
3. High competition and tariff war: Competition heating up post entry of Reliance Jio. Other telecom players have to drop in tariff rates both for voice and data
4. Lack of Telecom Infrastructure in Semi-rural and Rural areas: Service providers have to incur huge initial fixed cost to enter semi-rural and rural areas. Key reasons behind these costs are lack of basic infrastructure like power and roads, resulting in delays in rolling out the infrastructure.
5. Lack of trained personnel to operate and maintain the cellular infrastructure.
6. Delays in Roll Out of Innovative Products and Services: Substantial delays in roll out of data-based products and services are hampering the progress of telecom sectors. This is primarily due to the non-

conducive environment resulting out of government policies and regulations.

7. Low Broad Band Penetration: Low broadband penetration in the country is a matter of concern and the government needs to do a lot more work in the field to go up in the global ladder.
8. Over the top services: Over the Top (OTT) applications such as WhatsApp, OLA, Viber and so on do not need permission or a pact with a telecommunications company. This hamper the revenue of telecommunication service provider.
9. License fee: The license fee of eight per cent of the Adjusted Gross Revenue including five per cent as Universal Service Levy (USL) is one of the highest in the world.

## **Measures taken by government**

- Infrastructure status: The National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) 2018 accorded telecom the status of critical and essential infrastructure. This would help operators in reducing capex and operational expenditure.
- Ease in Merger & Acquisition guidelines: Ease in M & A helps the sector to consolidate. Today there is consolidation in the sector leading to 4-5 operators in each of the service area, similar to the global average. There is also spectrum consolidation with each operator holding reasonable quantities of spectrum.
- Revival of the National Optic Fibre Network: This enhance broadband connectivity. With the rising subscriber base, thrust on data services has enabled a smartphone revolution.
- Payment bank initiative: Operators have received in-principle approval from the RBI for Payments Bank license, which is expected to aid in customer retention and enables them to build on their M-Payment services.
- Mobile virtual network operators: Introduction of the concept of mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) by the regulator are expected to open up new opportunities for operators such as wholesale revenue stream.
- New national telecom policy: The Telecom Commission, the highest decision-making body of the telecom ministry, has given its nod to the new telecom policy. The policy proposes to invite sustainable investment over a period of time and promote fair competition. The National Digital Communications Policy 2018 has envisaged attracting investments worth US\$ 100 billion in the telecommunications sector by 2022.
- Smart cities initiative: The Indian Government is planning to develop 100 smart city projects, where IoT would play a vital role in development of those cities.

## Way Forward

- Infrastructure Sharing: Since telecom business is heavy on capex and as much as 40%– 60% of the Capex is utilized for setting up and managing the Telecom infrastructure. By sharing infrastructure, operators can optimize their capex, and focus on providing new and innovative services to their subscribers.
- Availability of Affordable Smart Phones and Lower Tariff Rates: This would increase tele penetration in rural areas.
- Curb on predatory pricing: government should fix a minimum price to save the industry from price war.
- Lower License fee: The license fee of eight per cent of the Adjusted Gross Revenue including five per cent as Universal Service Levy (USL) is one of the highest in the world.
- Reduce reserve price for spectrum auction: In the past, some of the operators participated recklessly in these auctions leading to exaggerated prices — much above their true valuations. Reasonable reserve prices for the market mechanisms induce “truthful bidding”, and not leading to “winners’ curse” as witnessed in some of the previous auctions.

## Conclusion

- All the digital initiatives of the government including digital identification and authentication, e-Know Your Customer, digital finance depend heavily on the telecom and broadband infrastructure. Economic survey 2017-18 also underlined that the ‘crisis’ being faced by telecom sector. Survey added that it has also deeply impacted their investors, lenders, partners and vendors. The above steps could be taken to improve the health of telecom sector.

## 10. Banks may set repo rate as benchmark for lending

### Context:

Most commercial banks in India are likely to select RBI’s repo rate as the external benchmark to decide their lending rates, from April 1. The repo rate is the key policy rate of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

### Current scenario:

The marginal cost of fund based lending rate (MCLR) is currently the benchmark for all loan rates. Banks typically add a spread to the MCLR while pricing loans for homes and automobiles.

### Why repo?

The RBI has mandated that the spread over the benchmark rate to be decided by banks at the inception of the loan should remain unchanged through the life of the loan. It should remain unchanged unless the borrower’s credit assessment undergoes a substantial change and as agreed upon in the loan contract.

If the lending rates are linked to the repo rate, any change in the repo rate will immediately impact the home and auto loan rates, since RBI has mandated the spread to remain fixed over the life of the loan.

### **Benefits of setting Repo Rate as benchmark for lending:**

- It will make the system more transparent since every borrower will know the fixed interest rate and the spread value decided by the bank.
- It will help borrowers compare loans in a better way from different banks.
- There shall be standardisation and ease of understanding for the borrowers. This would mean that same bank cannot adopt multiple benchmarks within a loan category.

### **What is Repo Rate?**

Repo stands for ‘Repurchasing Option’. It refers to the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the RBI in case of shortage of funds. It is one of the main tools of RBI to keep inflation under control.

### **What is MCLR?**

- The Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rate (MCLR) system was introduced by the Reserve Bank to provide loans on minimal rates as well as market rate fluctuation benefit to customers.
- This system has modified the existing base rate system of providing home loans. In this system, banks have to set various benchmark rates for specific time periods starting from an overnight to one month, quarterly, semi-annually and annually.
- MCLR replaced the earlier base rate system to determine the lending rates for commercial banks. RBI implemented it on 1 April 2016 to determine rates of interests for loans.

### **MCLR aims:**

- To improve the transmission of policy rates into the lending rates of banks.
- To bring transparency in the methodology followed by banks for determining interest rates on advances.
- To ensure availability of bank credit at interest rates which are fair to borrowers as well as banks
- To enable banks to become more competitive and enhance their long run value and contribution to economic growth.

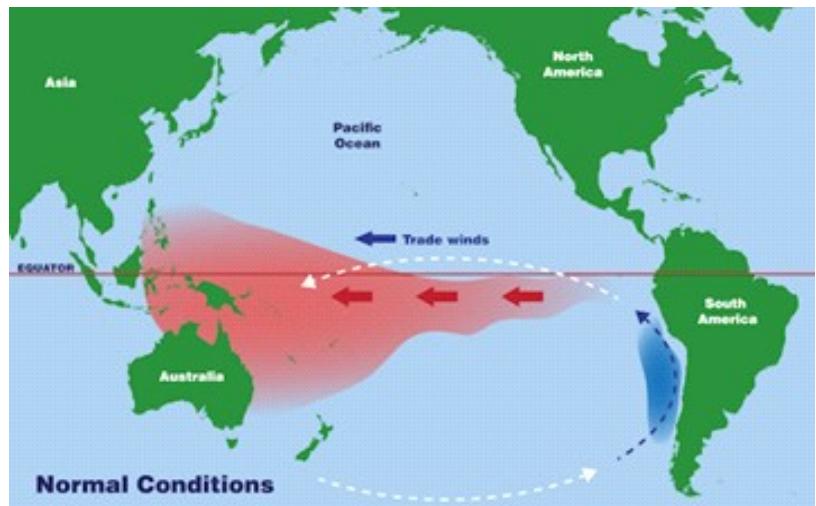
# Geography and Environment

## 11. Drought less probable this year

### Context:

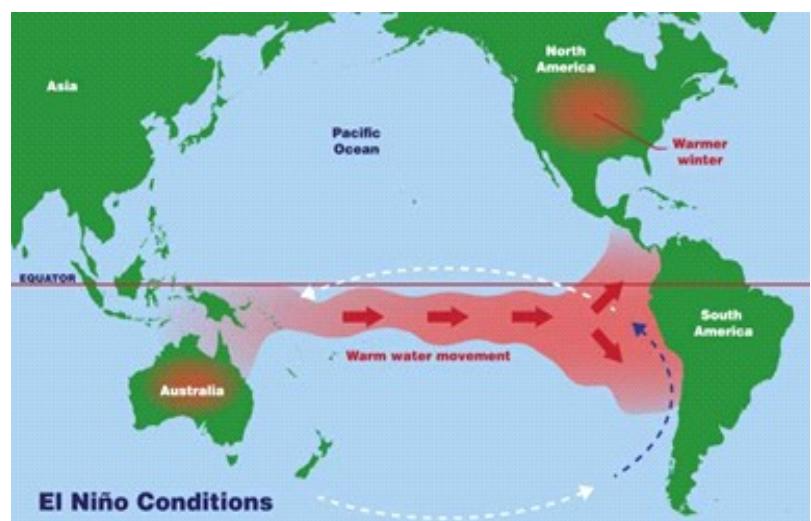
According to Skymet (private weather forecaster), there's unlikely to be a drought in 2019 as the El Nino — a climate phenomenon linked to poor monsoon in India — is likely to peter out by the beginning of the season.

- Indian climatic conditions are shaped by many factors; one of them is El-Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO).
- The El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is a recurring climate pattern involving changes in the temperature of waters in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.



### El Nino

- Phenomenon of warming of the ocean surface, or above-average sea surface temperatures (SST), in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean is known as El Nino.
- The low-level surface winds, which normally blow from east to west along the equator ("easterly winds"), instead weaken or, in some cases, start blowing the other direction (from west to east or "westerly winds").
- This reversal of winds creates unusual warming and low pressure near the Peruvian Coast, and causes heavy rainfall.

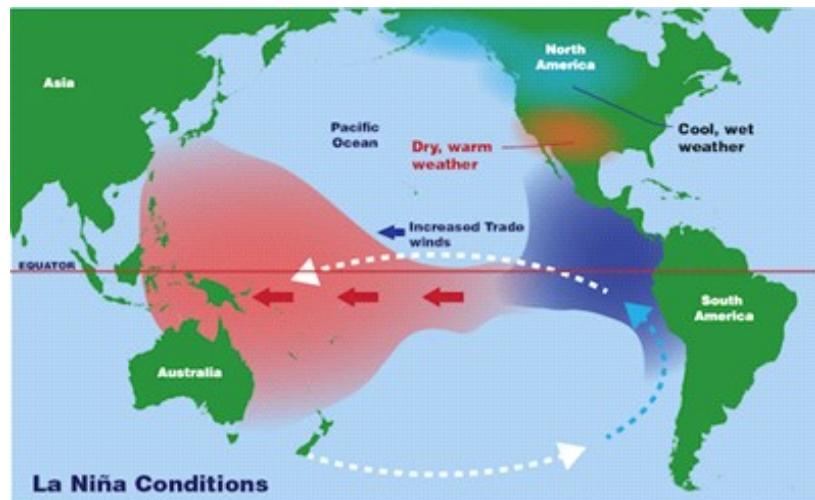


### La Nina

- Phenomenon of cooling of the ocean surface or below-average Sea surface temperatures (SST), in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean is known as La Nina.

- The normal easterly winds along the equator become even stronger.
- This situation causes heavy rainfall (monsoon) on western Pacific areas.

### Effects of El-Nino and La-Nina on India's climate



- For India, El Nino during winter results in development of warm conditions.
- During summer, it leads to dry conditions and deficient monsoon, leading to droughts and water scarcity.
- Whereas La-Nina brings rains and stronger monsoon in India, it may cause flood like situation in coastal areas.
- El-Nino and La-Nina are complex unpredictable phenomenon and Agriculture being the important occupation, climatic changes due to these are grave for India.
- El Nino and La Nina are the extreme phases of the ENSO cycle.

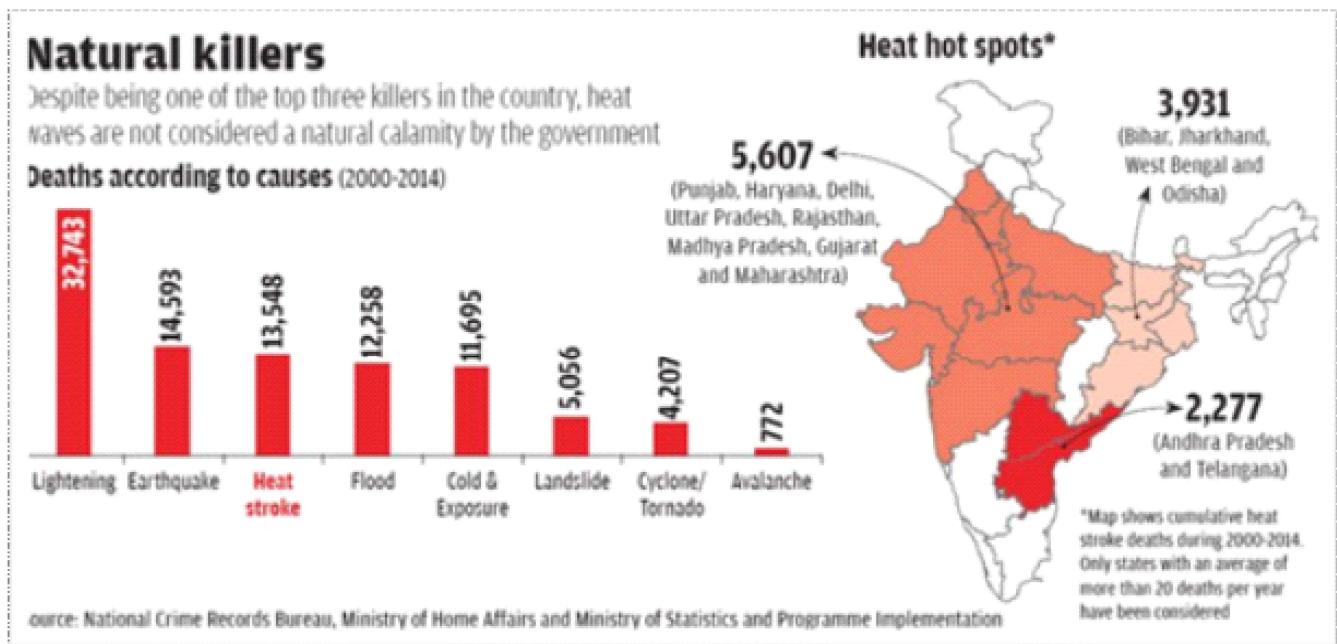
## 12. Increasing Heat Waves

### Introduction:

- Climate change is here and affecting our health, with extreme heat in particular also having effects on productivity, food supply and disease transmission, a new global report finds.
- According to Indian Meteorological Department, Heat wave is considered if maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40°C or more for Plains, 37°C or more for coastal stations and at least 30°C or more for Hilly regions.

### Lancet Countdown:

- Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change between 1901 and 2007, India's mean temperature increased by more than 0.5 degree Celsius.
- India experienced an additional 40 million heatwave exposure events in 2016 as compared to 2012, raising concerns over a "dangerous surge" in negative health impacts.
- Over the last two decades, there has been a "marked increase" in the duration of heatwaves in India, as well as the numbers of Indians exposed to heatwaves.
- The country will likely be among the worst affected by climate change given its "weaker health systems and poorer infrastructure.



- These are the findings of a study called Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change.

### Heat waves and Heat Stress

- Heat exposure can lead to heat stress — illnesses which occur as a result of the body's inability to prevent its temperature rising from beyond a normal range.
- Severe heat stroke can lead to multiple organ failure, seizures, and death.
- Children, the elderly and those with pre-existing morbidities are particularly vulnerable.

### Socio-economic Impact of Climate Change

Since 1990, every region of the globe has become steadily more vulnerable to extreme increases of heat.

Increased exposure to heat can cause

1. A decrease in labour output
  2. Burden health systems ill-equipped to cope with the effects of heat stress
  3. Promote the spread of diseases like cholera and dengue fever across endemic areas.
- Climate change threatens to undermine the public health gains of previous decades.
  - With each additional tonne of carbon dioxide emitted costs India \$86 — almost double the expense borne by the USA (\$48) and Saudi Arabia (\$47), according to a study.
  - IPCC warned that if the global community is not able to limit a temperature rise to 1.5 degrees, climate-related risks to livelihoods, food security, health, water supply and human security will further intensify.

## **Labour loss**

- India lost nearly 75 billion hours of labour in 2017 as a result of rising temperatures.
- This made sustained work increasingly difficult and negatively affecting workers' output.
- The agriculture sector experienced the largest increase in labour loss
- The “climate-related impacts” on the workforce and economy could be significant for India, with 18 percent of the country’s GDP tied to the agricultural sector.
- An urgent review of occupational health standards and labour laws must be carried out.

## **Carbon Emissions Exacerbating Premature Deaths**

- India's dependency on fossil fuels is contributing to high levels of ambient air pollution containing PM 2.5 Land-based transport is “responsible for a substantial number” of PM 2.5 related deaths.
- However, these emissions can be addressed through improvements to travel infrastructure.
- Cities should tackle the population's transport needs through public infrastructure, limiting the rise in car-users and keeping vehicular pollution at bay Raising awareness of such pollution-related issues, their associated health risks and climate change overall is the key.
- Increasing regional, non-english media coverage of climate change and health issues across states can further help to stimulate a “state-by-state policy response”.
- Carrying out comprehensive city-level traffic surveys to guide urban infrastructure while promoting safe walking and cycling to reduce the emission load.
- It is of prime importance for India to reduce its carbon emissions and air pollution levels, specifically targeting the use of coal, oil and natural gas.

## **Way Forward**

- Advance implementation of local Heat Action Plans, plus effective inter-agency coordination is a vital response which the government can deploy in order to protect vulnerable groups.
- This will require identification of “heat hot spots”, analysis of meteorological data and allocation of resources to crisis-prone areas.
- Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) has adopted a heat action plan which necessitates measures such as building heat shelters, ensuring availability of water and removing neonatal ICU from the top floor of hospitals.
- It has helped bring down the impact of heatwave of vulnerable population.
- Similar action plan should be developed by other states also.

### 13. PM donated Seoul Peace Prize money for Ganga Cleaning

#### Context:

Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi has been conferred with the Seoul Peace Prize, 2018. Modi has donated the prize amount received as part of Seoul Peace Prize to Namami Gange Fund. Prime Minister Modi, is the 14th recipient of the award, first for an Indian. He has been awarded the prize in recognition of his service to international cooperation, global growth and human development.

#### Reasons for awarding Modi:

The Award Committee of Seoul Peace Prize Cultural Foundation has awarded him recognizing his efforts in:

- Contribution to the growth of the Indian and global economies through the vision of 'Modinomics'.
- Accelerating the human development of the people of India by fostering economic growth and the targeted intervention through flagship schemes.
- Initiatives to make the government cleaner through anti-corruption measures and demonetization.
- Contribution towards regional and global peace through a proactive foreign policy with countries around the world under the 'Modi Doctrine' and the 'Act East Policy'.

#### Other important awards conferred on Modi in the recent past

- Saudi Arabia's highest civilian honour 'King Abdulaziz Sash' by King Salman bin Abdulaziz in 2016.
- Afghanistan's highest civilian honour of Amir Amanullah Khan Award in 2016.
- The 'Grand Collar of the State of Palestine' in 2018 by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, recognising his contributions in promoting relations between India and Palestine.
- UN Champions of the Earth Award 2018, the highest environmental honour of the United Nations.

#### Seoul Peace Prize

- It was established in 1990 to commemorate the success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul in 1988, which heralded the end of age-old political and ideological conflicts between the East and the West.
- The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, giving the Seoul Games the distinction of being the last Cold War Olympics.
- It was established to crystallize the Korean people's yearning for peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world.
- **Award given to:** Individual(s) or institution(s) that made great contributions to the harmony of mankind and world peace in each

field of endeavor around the world regardless of nation, race, religion, or ideology.

- **Area:** Peace
- **Awarded:** Biennial
- **Prize:** Diploma and plaque, along with honorarium of US\$200,000

### **Seoul Peace Prize Cultural Foundation**

- It was established as the juridical foundation on June 3, 1992 with the aim of contributing to the attainment of a true world peace for mankind by awarding the Seoul Peace Prize.
- The foundation recognizes those who made great contributions to the harmony of mankind, the reconciliation between nations and the world peace on the basis of the ideals of the 24th Seoul Olympic Games held in Seoul, Korea in 1988 in an atmosphere of friendship and harmony of the peoples around the world.

### **Some of the important recipient of the award in the past**

Mr. Modi is the fourteenth recipient of this award. Past laureates include distinguished global personalities like former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and renowned international relief organizations like Doctors without Borders and Oxfam.

### **Significance of the Award**

- The award serves as an occasion to confirm the possibility of achieving world peace through mutual understanding and cooperation by recognising the contribution of world leaders and organisations , who through their individual acts or at organisational level try to bring peace and prosperity to the mankind.
- The Seoul Peace Prize was established to reflect the wishes of the people and to crystallize their desire for ever-lasting peace on earth.
- The idea was to end the divide between the East and the West as well as between North and South Korea.
- In spite of this, the Korean Peninsula is still divided and remains the last vestige of the Cold War. This makes the Seoul Peace Prize all the more significant.

### **Significance for India**

- Conferring the award on Indian Prime Minister is the recognition of India's growing stature at the international level. It will give credence to India's growing international presence on issues such as world peace, anti-terrorism, climate change, natural disasters and geostrategic issues.
- At individual level, the award will boost the confidence of the Mr. Modi to pursue his foreign and domestic policy more vigorously. He has also received UN's Champions of Earth Award for his contribution

towards creation of International Solar Alliance, as an alliance to harness solar energy so as to mitigate climate change.

## 14. Dolphin Census

### Context:

Odisha's recent annual census of dolphins in its waters have thrown up some shocking numbers, with the aquatic mammals' population declining from 469 in 2018 to 259 in 2019.

- The census covered important aquatic ecosystems in the state including the Chilika lake, India's largest brackish water lagoon, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts, the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary and its nearby areas within the Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district, Balasore district and the mouth of the Rushukulya River in Ganjam district.

### Key findings

- The reduction in the number of dolphins compared to last year could be due to the migration of species from the Chilika Lake and other water bodies to the deep sea.
- Gahirmatha is the home of the state's largest dolphin population, having 126 animals. More dolphins were found in Gahirmatha than Chilika due to its bigger areas.
- After Gahirmatha, Chilika had the next largest population at 113, followed by the Rushukulya River in Ganjam district, with 15 dolphins and finally, Balasore, with 5 individuals.
- The dolphin species sighted during the state-wide census included the Irrawaddy, the Bottle Nose and the Humpback.
- Dolphins have been included in Schedule I of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972, in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), in Appendix II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and categorised as 'Endangered' on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List.

## Science and technology

### 15. Action plan for hepatitis

#### Context:

Patients infected with hepatitis B and C virus will soon be able to avail free treatment. Model treatment centres in Maharashtra will roll out free treatment for hepatitis C and B.

#### About the Action Plan

- According to the action plan, one model hepatitis treatment centre will be established in each State in a government institution in the first year.
- While the number of model centres will be increased gradually, by the end of the second year, efforts will be made to establish one such centre at district level.
- Setting up a national reference laboratory and State-level reference laboratories is also under planning.

#### About Hepatitis

- Viral hepatitis is a global public health problem that kills nearly 2.72 lakh people annually.
- It is an inflammatory condition of the liver caused by five known hepatitis viruses — A, B, C, D and E. Of these, B and C are known to cause 96% mortality.
- The comprehensive action plan will focus on curbing mother-to-child transmission by improving the coverage of hepatitis B injection given at birth.
- While hepatitis B requires life-long treatment which costs around <sup>1</sup> 2,500 per month, hepatitis C requires a 84-day long course costing nearly <sup>1</sup> 40,000.

#### Other important facts:

- Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. The condition can be self-limiting or can progress to fibrosis (scarring), cirrhosis or liver cancer.
- Hepatitis viruses are the most common cause of hepatitis in the world but other infections, toxic substances (e.g. alcohol, certain drugs), and autoimmune diseases can also cause hepatitis.
- There are 5 main hepatitis viruses, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E.
- World Hepatitis Day (28th July) which is celebrated every year, is an opportunity to step up national/international efforts for raising awareness as well as encouraging prevention, diagnosis and treatment of viral hepatitis at global level so as to achieve its elimination by 2030.

## National Programme for Control of Viral Hepatitis

- From the 2018-19 financial year, for which a budget of Rs 600 crore for the next three years has been approved.
- With the focus on Hepatitis C, an anti-viral treatment will be provided free at all government health set-ups.
- Sofosbuvir is recommended under the new WHO treatment guidelines for Hepatitis C.

## 16. Liquor Menace

### Context:

Illicit/unregulated alcohol or hooch forms a large part of the alcohol consumed in India, especially in villages and tribal areas. It has become a root cause of many major tragedies thus it becomes necessary to know about this menace that has been explained below.

### Major Hooch tragedies in India

- In 2009, Nearly 136 people had been reported dead in Ahmedabad.
- In 2011, a hooch tragedy in Sangrampur in West Bengal had claimed the lives of 172 people.
- In 2015, 102 people died in Mumbai due to consumption of poisonous liquor.
- In January, 2019, almost 95 people died in UP and Uttarakhand
- In the most recent case in Feb, 2019 250 people died in Assam due to consumption of illicit liquor.

### What is illicit liquor?

- Alcoholic beverages are made by fermentation of sugary and starchy substances, followed by distillation to increase alcohol concentration. The active ingredient in them is ethyl alcohol or ethanol.
- Illicit alcohol in contrast to other permitted liquors, is produced under unregulated circumstances and is often adulterated with chemicals like methanol, organo-phosphorus compounds and ethanol to save costs.
- Among the above-mentioned chemicals, Methyl alcohol (methanol) is a commonly used adulterant because of its appearance and taste similar to ethyl alcohol and its easy availability. It has also been concluded that it was the reason behind major hooch tragedies.
- Methyl alcohol (methanol) is generally used for furniture polish.

### Negative Effects of Illicit liquor

- Post consumption, Methanol is changed into formic acid inside the body. The accumulation of formic acid in the body adversely affects various organ systems.

- In normal cases it leads to dizziness and vomiting but as Methyl alcohol is extremely toxic — in extreme cases, 10 ml can cause blindness and 30 ml can cause death within 10 to 30 hours.

### **Why use of illicit liquor is so widespread?**

- Legal alcohol is taxed heavily making it unaffordable for the poor and habitual drinkers
- Price of illicit liquor is very low due to its low-cost production and no taxation, making it favorite alcoholic beverage for lower strata.
- Illicit liquor preparation and sale of such liquor earns a huge profit to the main bootleggers. Thus, they risk going to jail for short terms or paying officials to avoid being caught.
- Patients and relatives are hesitant in disclosing the real facts about consumption of liquor due to its corollary like fear of police action.
- Delay in providing antidote (ethyl alcohol) at the initial stage leads to more casualties.
- The victim starts experimenting with homemade remedies and seeks treatment only when condition becomes worse.
- Lack of education unawareness about the evil effects of illicit liquor.
- Present laws for prohibition are very liberal, lenient and the quantum of punishment is very minor, with exception of states that made changes recently.

### **Constitution Provisions that must direct state's policy against liquor**

Our constitution through various provisions has implicitly and explicitly directed states to take action that can reduce the amount of or eliminate the alcohol consumption:

**PART IV: DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY Article 47** envisages duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health: The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health.

**Article 21** provides for Right to life and liberty, which as per Supreme Court does not mean merely 'animal existence' but living with 'human dignity' and consumption of liquor leads to degradation of human dignity.

**Article 38** envisages the function of the Republic is to secure, inter alia, social, economic and political justice. i.e. not only legal justice but the socioeconomic justice as well.

**Legal status:** Alcohol prohibition is a state subject in India with each state having full control of alcohol legislation, state excise rates and the organization of production and sale of alcohol. There is thus significant variation in prohibition across states and over time within states.

## **Recommendations by Hooch tragedy commission of Gujarat**

- Elevate the standards of literacy in slum areas and rehabilitation of addicts/offenders duly supported by meaningful alternative social and clinical therapy/ activities.
- Awareness through entertainment is also one of the best ways to bring down addiction level.
- State Government should frame specific Rules, particularly for manufacture, transport, import of methyl alcohol rules. The existing rules are not adequate.
- Steps to break the nexus between Police and bootleggers must be taken. A speedy and effective mechanism to investigate the matters should be placed.
- Proper supply of antidotes (Ethyl alcohol and fomepizole) and instruments for diagnosis to the hospitals should be ensured and doctors must be trained to handle these tragedies.

By looking at the number of casualties (given on the top) every year (or alternate year), we can easily infer that this matter should be urgently dealt with. Though this subject matter comes under the jurisdiction of states but as it is not a state specific issue, central government must constitute a commission to look into the issue and issue some model suggestive guidelines to states to deal with it.

## **17. Defence Innovation Hubs**

### **Context:**

The Defence Innovation Organisation set up under Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework has announced setting up of two Defence Innovation Hubs (DIHs) in Tamil Nadu (Coimbatore) and Maharashtra (Nashik).

### **About Defence Innovation Hubs (DIHs)**

- The Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework of the Government envisages setting up and managing independent Defence Innovation Hubs (DIHs).
- These DIHs will serve as platforms where innovators can get information about needs and feedback from the Services directly and create solutions for India's major defence platforms. This structure is also geared towards attracting more innovators to work for the defence sector in India.

### **iDEX**

- The Framework to Fund Defence Innovation Hubs under iDEX, approved by the Board of Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) prescribes the following minimum criterion for setting up Defence Innovation Hubs.

- Any Central Government recognized Incubator including but not limited to:
  - Department of Science and Technology (DST) recognized Incubators.
- Atal Innovation Mission, NITIAayog created Atal Incubation Centers (AICs) and Established Incubation Centers (EICs).
- Ministry of MSME recognized incubators.
- Any other incubator recognized or funded through any Central government scheme.
- The incubator located in districts mentioned in the list of SME clusters hosted by the Ministry of MSME in collaboration with UNIDO.
- Incubator / Hub promoted by local industry associations

## 18. Mega food park

### Context:

Cremica Food Park is the first mega food park of Himachal Pradesh. The Park is located at Village Singhain Una District of Himachal Pradesh. It is set up at a cost of Rs 107.34 crore.

### Mega Food Park Scheme.

- India's first mega food park 'Sri Sri Mega Food Park', sprawling 147-acre space, was opened in Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh in 2012.
- To give a major boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing Mega Food Park Scheme in the country.
- The Mega Food Park Scheme is based on "Cluster" approach and envisages creation of state of art support infrastructure in a well-defined agri/ horticultural zone for setting up of modern food processing units along with well-established supply chain.
- Common facilities and enabling infrastructure is created at Central Processing Centre and facilities for primary processing and storage is created near the farm in the form of Primary Processing Centers (PPCs) and Collection Centers (CCs).
- Under the Scheme, the Centre provides financial assistance up to Rs 50 crore per mega food park project.

## 19. Mirage 2000

### Context:

In the early hours of Tuesday, 12 Indian Air Force Mirage-2000 fighter jets, entered Pakistani airspace and dropped 1,000-kg laser-guided bombs on Jaish-e-Mohammed terror launch pads across the Line of Control.

- While India has many new-age fighter jets like the Sukhoi Su-30MKI and MiG 29, apart from the indigenously developed Tejas LCA in its arsenal, it was again the Mirage-2000 jet, which was used in the Kargil war, that was used for the unprecedented cross-border strike.

## History

- The Mirage-2000 is undoubtedly one of the Indian Air Force's (IAF) most versatile and deadliest aircraft and it was first commissioned in 1985.
- Soon after inducting the Mirage, IAF gave it the name – Vajra – meaning lightening thunderbolt in Sanskrit.
- It was developed by Dassault Aviation and took its first flight in 1978 and was inducted in the French Air Force in 1984.
- India had placed an initial order of 36 single-seater Mirage-2000 and 4 twin-seater Mirage 2000 in 1982 as an answer to Pakistan buying US-made F-16 fighter jets by Lockheed Martin.

The Mirage-2000 played a decisive role in the 1999 war of Kargil and turned it in India's favour.

Seeing the success of the jets, the government placed an additional order of 10 Mirage-2000 planes in 2004, taking the total tally to 50 jets.

- Then in 2011 a contract was signed to upgrade the existing Mirage-2000 jets to Mirage 2000-5 Mk, increasing the life of the jets that are now ready to serve till 2030.
- Dassault built an estimated 580 Mirage-2000s over a course of 30 years before replacing it with the Rafale MMC jets.

## Specifications

- The Mirage-2000 uses a single shaft engine that is light and simple as compared to other fighter jet engines and is called SNECMA M53.
- The engine was first tested in 1970 and was not made initially for the Mirage jets. In 1974, Dassault Aviation conducted flight tests of the M53-2 version using its Mirage F1E testbeds.
- The majority of the Mirage 2000 is powered by the SNECMA M53-P2 engine.



- The Mirage is ideally designed to seat a single fighter pilot, but can be made into a twin-seat jet depending on the armed forces' requirements. It has a length of 14.36 metre and a wingspan of 91.3 metre.
- The plane weighs 7500 kg (dry) and has a total takeoff weight of 17000 kg.
- The Mirage 2000 has a maximum speed of Mach 2.2 (2336 kmph) and can travel 1550 km with drop tanks.
- The flight height is capped at 59000 ft (17km).
- In comparison, India's other fighter and more advanced fighter jet - the Russia made Sukhoi Su30MKI has a speed of 2120 kmph (Mach 2), slower than the Mirage-2000 and is heavier too. This gives the Mirage-2000 an advantage in quick operations.
- The Mirage 2000 has a fly-by-wire flight control system and has a Sextant VE-130 HUD, which displays data related to flight control, navigation, target engagement, and weapon firing.
- In terms of the armament, the Mirage 2000 can carry laser guided bombs, air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles and has a Thomson-CSF RDY (Radar Doppler Multi-target) radar on board.

## Countries using Mirage 2000

- Apart from India, Dassault sold the Mirage 2000 to 8 other countries, including the home country of France, Egypt, UAE, Peru, Taiwan, Peru, Greece and Brazil.
- While Brazil has retired the Mirage 2000, other countries are still using this jet.
- A total of 583 Mirage-2000 fighter jets were built over a course of 30 years and its successor Rafael has already been ordered by the IAF.
- Not only is the Mirage-2000 a trusted partner in India's previous success in Kargil, it is also immensely capable to carry out Surgical Strikes and attacks whenever possible.

## Miscellaneous

### 20. World's largest Bhagavad Gita:

#### Context:

The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the world's largest and heaviest Bhagavad Gita at the Delhi ISKCON temple.

#### Key facts:

- The book measures 2.8 meters by 2 meters and has 670 pages and weighs at 800 kg.
- It is also the world's largest sacred book.
- The book has been printed in Milan, Italy, on YUPO synthetic paper so as to make it untearable and waterproof.

The **International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)**, known colloquially as the Hare Krishna movement, is a worldwide confederation of more than 400 temples and runs 100 vegetarian restaurants and a wide variety of community-serving projects.

### 21. In News- 'riceXpert':

- The ICAR-NRRI 'ricexpert' App provides information to farmers in real time on insect pests, nutrients, weeds, nematodes and disease-related problems, rice varieties for different ecologies, farm implements for different field and post-harvest operations.
- It is a web-based application systems which facilitates flow of information from the farmer to the farm scientist and get their instant solution.
- Farmers can use this App as a diagnostic tool in their rice fields and make customize queries for quick solution of their problems by sending text, photo and recorded voice and solution received through SMS.

### 22. Exercise Sampriti – 2019:

- As part of the ongoing India Bangladesh defence cooperation, a joint military exercise Sampriti-2019 will be conducted at Tangail, Bangladesh.
- Exercise Sampriti-2019 is an important bilateral defence cooperation endeavour between India and Bangladesh and this will be the eighth edition of the exercise which is hosted alternately by both countries.
- The exercise is aimed to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in a counter insurgency and counter terrorism environment under the UN mandate.

## 23. 'Delhi Declaration' on digital health:

- Delhi Declaration on digital health was adopted at the concluding session of the '4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit.
- It calls for WHO's leadership in digital health and for it to establish a specific mechanism to centrally coordinate digital health to assist its Member States.

## 24. Modi opens War Memorial

### Context:

PM Modi inaugurated the country's National War Memorial (NWM) adjoining the iconic India Gate complex in the heart of the capital, nearly 60 years after it was mooted to honour the fallen soldiers after Independence.

### Key Facts:

- The National War Memorial, near India Gate in New Delhi, is a fitting tribute to our soldiers who laid down their lives defending the nation, post-independence.
- The National War Memorial will not replace the Amar Jawan Jyoti which was built in 1972 underneath the India Gate arch to commemorate soldiers killed in the Indo-Pak War of 1971.
- The National War Memorial also commemorates the soldiers who participated and made the supreme sacrifice in Peace Keeping Missions, and Counter Insurgency Operations.
- Spread over an area of approximately 40 acres, the memorial comprises four concentric circles, namely- the 'Amar Chakra', the Veerta Chakra, the 'Tyag Chakra' and the 'Rakshak Chakra' with names of 25,942 soldiers inscribed in golden letters on granite tablets.

- 1. Amar Chakra:** it is the innermost circle, with a granite Obelisk topped with a bronze Lion Capital. The Obelisk has a hollow centre where an eternal flame is lit.
- 2. Veerta Chakra:** It has 6 bronze murals depicting 6 major battles fought by the three forces, namely –Gangasagar (1971), Longewala (1971), Tithwal (1947), Rezang la, and Operations Meghdoot 1984) and Trident (1971) which was an offensive operation launched by the Indian Navy on Pakistan's port city of Karachi during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971.
- 3. Tyag Chakra:** this commemorates all those soldiers who fell in the major wars and operation namely – 1947 J&K operation, 1962 China War, 1965 Pakistan war, 1971 Bangladesh liberation War, Indian peace Keeping Force (IPFK) operation Pawan in Sri Lanka, 1999 Kargil War, Operation Meghdoot (Saichen), Operation Rakshak (counter insurgency operation in J & K). It is laid with granite tablets, each bearing names of fallen soldier.
- 4. Raksha Chakra:** it has rows of trees symbolizing soldiers who ensure territorial integrity of India.

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# OUR RESULTS - 2017

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Fathima Zeba  
HT No : 786820

83



Srivastava  
HT No : 29379

100



Mourya  
HT No : 255748

105



Mishra  
HT No : 262146

144



149



187



295



296



360



412



417



474



480



548



614



673



713



726



758



761



765



768



769



828



832



872



886

