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### A. GS1 Related

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Category: **POLITY**

#### 1. [Rajasthan govt. grants quota for Gujjars](#)

##### In news:

- The present-day BJP government in Rajasthan has decided to increase reservation for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from the present 21% to 26%.
- The BJP government intends to provide reservation in proportion to the increase in the OBC population.
- A Bill to this effect will be tabled in the upcoming monsoon session of the State Assembly.
- **Changes made:** the revised OBC quota would be split to grant 5% reservation to the "Most Backward Classes".
- The new "Most Backward Classes" category will include **Gujjars** and four other castes "Banjara, Gadia-Lohar, Raika and Gadaria".
- This decision will take the total reservation in the State to 54%, going beyond the Supreme Court mandated 50% cap.

##### Earlier attempts:

- The State government had earlier tried thrice to grant 5% reservation to Gujjars and four other castes.
- Rajasthan High Court struck down the legislation, observations:
- Quota exceeded the 50% limit.
- Lack of quantifiable data supporting the claim of Gujjars' backwardness.

#### 2. [Bengal not for central recruitment of judiciary](#)

##### Context:

- **Proposed reforms:** Central selection mechanism for appointing judicial officers in State subordinate judicial services.

##### West Bengal Government Response: Negative.

- **Reason given:** against the principle of federalism practised in Indian democracy.
- **Senior advocate response:** central mechanism would encroach upon the constitutional duty of the State High Courts under **Article 233** of the Constitution. This constitutional duty was the cornerstone of independence of State judiciary.

##### Basic Information:

#### Article 233: Appointment of district judges

(1) Appointments of persons to be, and the posting and promotion of, district judges in any State shall be made by the

**Governor of the State** in consultation with the **High Court** exercising jurisdiction in relation to such State

(2) A person not already in the service of the Union or of the State shall only be eligible to be appointed a district judge if he has been for not less than seven years an advocate or a pleader and is recommended by the High Court for appointment

## Category:Â BILATERAL ISSUES

### 1. [NHRC issues notice on Rohingyas](#)

#### In News:

- Union Ministry of Home Affairs plans to deport 40,000 Rohingya immigrants from Myanmar.
- **NHRC Observation regarding the deportation issue:**
- Refugees are no doubt foreign nationals but they are human beings.
- **Fear of Persecution:** Before taking a big step, the Government of India has to look into every aspect of the situation, keeping in focus the fact that the members of the Rohingya community, who have crossed into India and are residing here for long, have a fear of persecution once they are pushed back to their native country.
- Highlighted the Supreme Court's decisions: the **Right to Life and Personal Liberty** under Article 21 of the Constitution apply to all, irrespective of their citizenship.
- **Key Fact:** India is not a signatory to the **1951 Convention on Refugees and the 1967 Protocol**

#### Basic Information:

- **Rohingya people**
- The Rohingya people are **Muslim Indo-Aryan peoples** from the **Rakhine State**, Myanmar.
- According to the Rohingyas and some scholars, they are indigenous to Rakhine State, while other historians claim that the group represents a **mixture of precolonial and colonial immigrations**.
- The official stance of the **Myanmar government**, however, has been that the Rohingyas are mainly **illegal immigrants** who migrated into Arakan following Burmese independence in 1948 or after the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971.
- **The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**
- **The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**, also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention, is a United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who is a refugee, and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum.
- The Convention also sets out which people do not qualify as refugees, such as war criminals.
- The Convention also provides for some visa-free travel for holders of travel documents issued under the convention
- The Refugee Convention builds on Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. A refugee may enjoy rights and benefits in a state in addition to those provided for in the Convention.
- **Definition of refugee** – A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.
- **NHRC**
- The Rights Commission (NHRC) of India is an autonomous public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993
- The NHRC is the National Human Rights Commission of India, responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the Act as "rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants".

### 2. [No data from China on Brahmaputra this year](#)

#### In news:

- India blames China for the current spate of floods across the northeastern States
- **China's responsibility:** It should share water-related data about the Himalayan Rivers. But in the current year it has not shared any data with India.

#### Agreement between India and China: India-China Expert-Level mechanism

- Started in 2006, China had committed to share hydrological data during the flood season for Brahmaputra and Satluj rivers.
- The hydrological data is to be shared between May 15 to October 15 every year.

## Category:Â HEALTH ISSUES

### 1. [North States reel under swine flu](#)

#### In news:

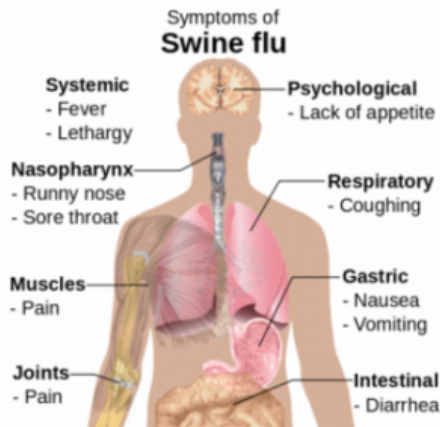
- **States worst-hit by swine flu this year:** Gujarat (highest with 242 deaths), Rajasthan, Punjab and Delhi

#### Basic Information:

- **Swine influenza**
- Swine influenza, also called pig influenza, swine flu, hog flu and pig flu, is an infection caused by any one of several types of swine influenza viruses. Swine influenza virus (SIV) or swine-origin influenza virus (S-OIV) is any strain of

the influenza family of viruses that is endemic in pigs.

- **The swine flu virus (H1N1):**



- **Influenza A (H1N1)** virus is the subtype of influenza A virus that is the most common cause of human influenza.
- It is an **orthomyxovirus** that contains the glycoproteins haemagglutinin and neuraminidase. For this reason, they are described as H1N1, H1N2 etc. depending on the type of H or N antigens they express with metabolic synergy. **Haemagglutinin** causes red blood cells to clump together and binds the virus to the infected cell. **Neuraminidase** is a type of glycoside hydrolase enzyme which helps to move the virus particles through the infected cell and assist in budding from the host cells.
- Some strains of H1N1 are endemic in humans and cause a small fraction of all influenza-like illness and a small fraction of all seasonal influenza. Other strains of H1N1 are endemic in pigs (swine influenza) and in birds (avian influenza).
- **Orthomyxoviruses**
- The Orthomyxoviruses are a family of RNA viruses that includes seven genera: Influenza virus A, Influenza virus B, Influenza virus C, Influenza virus D, Isavirus, Thogotovirus and Quarantavirus.
- **Endemic**
- Endemism is the ecological state of a species being unique to a defined geographic location, such as an island, nation, country or other defined zone, or habitat type; organisms that are indigenous to a place are not endemic to it if they are also found elsewhere.
- **Pandemic:**
- A pandemic is an epidemic of infectious disease that has spread through human populations across a large region; for instance multiple continents, or even worldwide.

## Category:Â ECONOMY

### 1. [Draft pharma policy calls for trade margins cap](#)

#### Draft Pharmaceutical Policy 2017 highlights:

- **Key objective:** to make essential drugs accessible at affordable prices to common people while providing a long-term stable policy environment for the pharmaceutical sector.
- **cap on "unreasonable trade margins":**
- The government is planning to fix the trade margins on drugs.
- Impact: move is aimed to bring down the costs and create a level-playing field for the pharma industry.
- **Ending "unethical marketing practices":** of pharmaceutical firms and marketing companies by luring doctors to recommend particular brands through all-expenses-paid "educational conventions" and other incentives.
- **New Agency for regulation of marketing:** regulation for marketing practice which is at present voluntary will be made "mandatory" and an agency for the implementation would also be assigned.

#### Practice at present:

- The government fixes **ceiling prices** of all drugs **under the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)**.
- **Price fixation** of these drugs is carried out by **the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)**.

### 2. [Cause for caution, not gloom](#)

#### Context:

- Economic Survey II presents a mixed picture of the Indian economy.
- It highlights some obvious strengths but **optimism about the medium-term is moderated by a near term deflationary impulses**

#### Key Highlights:

##### Growth

- Volume 1 forecast real GDP growth of 6.75%-7.5% this year, it suggests that the balance of risk has shifted to the downward side of the range. This means a **sub-7% rate of growth**.
- Medium-Term Expenditure Framework statement in pursuance of the FRBM Act, 2003 assumes that nominal GDP growth for the current (2017-18) and subsequent two years would be 11.75%, 12.3% and 12.3%, respectively.
- Assuming inflation to be in the acceptable range of about 4%, the expected growth would be 7% plus.
- The projections also implicitly accept the fiscal deficit of 3.2% in the current year and 3% for the subsequent two years.

- Savings and investment ratio has declined in recent years. To sustain the projected rates of growth, the **savings-investment ratio would need to be increased**

### **Savings and investment ratio:**

### **Structural reforms**

- Reducing public dissavings through privatisations such as Air India and other measures mid-thirties.
- The demand boost inevitably comes from domestic consumption which accounted for about 96% of GDP growth in FY 2017

### **Inflation targets**

- Economic Survey seeks to demonstrate that for sustained 14 quarters the actual inflation (WPI-CPI) has undershot the projections made by the Reserve Bank (RBI).
- It argues that India has moved to a low inflation trajectory

### **Reasons:**

- Supply-side elasticity in agriculture
- Long-term softening of global oil prices due to alternatives such as shale and
- Increasing competitiveness of renewable fuels, particularly solar.

### **Measures that could be taken:**

- A deeper cut in the interest rates would be warranted, given that current inflation at 1.5% is running well below the 4% target.

### **Exchange rate**

- Real effective interest rates have appreciated significantly.
- The RBI has the challenge of managing significant inward capital flows with exchange rates.
- However, export competitiveness needs interventions which go beyond dependence on the exchange rate by way of improved logistics, infrastructure and altering the mix of commodities and destinations to meet new demand preferences.

### **Deflationary pressures-Causes**

- Fiscal tightening by States due to Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY),
- Farm loan waivers
- Declining profitability of some key sectors like power and telecom
- Unresolved twin balance sheet problems
- Transitional issues of the GST are contributory to deflationary pressures.

### **Stabilise farm incomes:**

- Fertilizer mix through extensive soil-testing along with the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana
- Extending assured irrigation benefits
- Better market linkages for producers to prolong the shelf life of perishable commodities
- Improving the sale of commodities deserve priority action.

### **Way forwards:**

- Faster resolution of the twin balance sheets is critical to rekindling private investment.
- Accelerating the pace of agricultural reforms
- Targeted capital expenditure
- Improving ease of doing business and the multiple infrastructure initiatives, particularly in roads and power, are integral to any coherent action.
- Stressed sectors like telecom and power need speedier resolution

## **Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **1. [Getting charged up](#)**

#### **Context:**

- India's ambitious electric vehicles target

#### **Government's announcements:**

- The Government has recently announced that only electric vehicles (EVs) will be sold in India from 2030
- The current National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) has set a sales target of only 5-7 million EVs and hybrid electric vehicles annually by 2020

#### **Requirements:**

- The Indian automobile market is expected to increase to an annual sales figure of around 23 million by 2030
- Replacing these with EVs would require a significant push as far as vehicle-charging infrastructure and batteries are concerned
- Technical Requirement: The transition would require a battery capacity of about 400 GWh (gigawatt hours) each year

- It is equivalent to increasing the current global EV battery production by a factor of five, just to cater to the Indian EV market

### **Can this target be achieved by imports?**

- The annual EV battery market is expected to be around \$30-55 billion
- India cannot afford to fulfil the demand solely through imports

### **Batteries used:**

- Variants of lithium-ion batteries such as lithium-titanate, lithium-cobalt, and lithium-sulphur are predominantly used in electric vehicles

### **Highlights of the Study by Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)**

- According to a study on India's critical non-fuel minerals by the CEEW, manufacturing lithium-ion batteries would require critical minerals
- These minerals include cobalt, graphite, lithium and phosphate
- Among them, lithium is of particular importance

### **Issues with lithium Prices**

- 95% of global lithium production comes from Argentina, Australia, Chile and China
- The recent demand surge in the electric mobility market has already resulted in a twofold increase in lithium prices
- It is estimated by the CEEW that India would require about 40,000 tonnes of lithium to manufacture EV batteries in 2030
- It is important that India secure mineral supplies for its domestic industry by acquisition of overseas assets such as mineral reserves and the associated production

### **The Way forward**

- There is a need to formulate policies which can encourage domestic public and private mining companies to invest in overseas lithium mining assets
- Also, India must focus on creating a vibrant battery research and development ecosystem domestically
- Research should focus on developing alternative technologies containing minerals with low supply risks
- And battery recycling techniques to recover associated minerals and materials
- Recycling lithium batteries will significantly reduce the burden in procuring fresh resources

***Nothing here for Today!!!***

### **E. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam**

### **F. UPSC Mains Practice Questions**

#### **GS Paper 2**

1. Critically analyze various issues involved in the recently proposed Central selection mechanism for appointing judicial officers in State subordinate judicial services?

#### **GS Paper 3**

1. "The regulator and the government would be two distinct agencies. The government shall not be the regulator and the regulator shall not be the government." Evaluate.

Also, check previous [Daily News Analysis](#)