Mains Based Current Affairs

15/06/18 to 12/07/18

1. Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission

Context:

- The Government has recently announced **two major initiatives in health sector, as part of Ayushman Bharat programme.**
- The Union Minister for Finance while presenting the **General Budget 2018-19** in Parliament announced the scheme and said that this was aimed at making path breaking interventions to address health holistically, in **primary, secondary and tertiary care systems**, covering both **prevention and health promotion**.

The initiatives are as follows:-

(i) **Health and Wellness Centre**:
- The **National Health Policy, 2017** has envisioned Health and Wellness Centres as the **foundation of India's health system**.
- Under this 1.5 lakh centres will bring **health care system closer to the homes of people**. These centres will **provide comprehensive health care, including for non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services**.
- These centres will also **provide free essential drugs and diagnostic services**.
- The Budget has allocated Rs.1200 crore for this flagship programme. **Contribution of private sector through CSR and philanthropic institutions** in adopting these centres is also envisaged.

(ii) **National Health Protection Scheme**:
- The second flagship programme under Ayushman Bharat is National Health Protection Scheme, which will **cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families** (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
- This will be the **world's largest government funded health care programme.** Adequate funds will be provided for smooth implementation of this programme.
- It will **subsume the on-going centrally sponsored schemes - Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).**

Around 20 states have so far signed memoranda of understanding to implement Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission which aims to provide health protection to around 10 crore poor families in the country.

Highlights of the scheme:

Coverage:
- The scheme provides a **benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.**
- To ensure that **nobody is left out (especially women, children and elderly) there will be no cap on family size and age** in the scheme.
- The benefit cover will also **include pre and post-hospitalisation expenses**.

Target:
- The target beneficiaries of the scheme will be more than **10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database**.
- Benefits of the scheme are **portable across the country**.
- A beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take **cashless benefits from any public/private empanelled hospitals** across the country.

Role of state governments:
- One of the core principles of Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission is to promote **co-operative federalism and flexibility to states.**
- State Governments will be **allowed to expand AB-NHPM both horizontally and vertically**.
- States will be **free to choose the modalities for implementation**. They can implement through insurance company or directly through Trust/ Society or a mixed model.
- States would need to have **State Health Agency (SHA)** to implement the scheme.

Council:
- For giving policy directions and fostering coordination between Centre and States, it is proposed to set up **Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Council (AB-NHPMC) at apex level Chaired by Union Health and Family Welfare Minister**.
- In partnership with **NITI Aayog**, a robust, modular, scalable and interoperable IT platform will be made operational which will entail a paperless, cashless transaction.

Who is eligible?

- It will be an **entitlement based scheme** with entitlement decided on the **basis of deprivation criteria in the SECC database.**
- The different categories in rural area include families having only one room with kuccha walls and kuccha roof; families having no adult member between age 16 to 59; female headed households with no adult male member between age 16 to 59; disabled member and no able bodied adult member in the family; SC/ST households; and landless households deriving major part of their income from manual casual labour.

- Also, automatically included families in rural areas having any one of the following: households without shelter, destitute, living on alms, manual scavenger families, primitive tribal groups, legally released bonded labour. For urban areas, 11 defined occupational categories are entitled under the scheme.

Implementation Strategy:
At the national level to manage, an Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Agency (AB-NHPMA) would be put in place. States/ UTs would be advised to implement the scheme by a dedicated entity called State Health Agency (SHA). They can either use an existing Trust/ Society/ Not for Profit Company/ State Nodal Agency (SNA) or set up a new entity to implement the scheme. States/ UTs can decide to implement the scheme through an insurance company or directly through the Trust/ Society or use an integrated model.

Benefits of the scheme:
This will lead to **increased access to quality health and medication**. In addition, the unmet needs of the population which remained hidden due to lack of financial resources will be catered to. This will **lead to timely treatments, improvements in health outcomes, patient satisfaction, improvement in productivity and efficiency, job creation** thus leading to improvement in quality of life.

Way ahead:
- The scheme, if implemented properly could be **a game changer by enhancing access to health care including early detection and treatment services** by a large section of society who otherwise could not afford them. The identification of beneficiaries can be done by **linking with Aadhaar** and similarly following up for services received and health outcomes achieved, thereby helping to **monitor and evaluate the impact** of the programme.
- Ultimately, the scheme could help the country **move towards universal health coverage** and equitable access to healthcare which is **one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs.**

2. The Plastic Challenge

Introduction:
- **Plastic pollution** has become **an epidemic.** Every year, we throw away enough plastic to circle the Earth four times.
- Much of that waste **doesn't make it into a landfill, but instead ends up in our oceans**, where it's **responsible for killing** one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals every year. For the good of the planet, **it's time to rethink how we use plastic.**
- **Every piece of plastic** ever disposed of (this includes the toothbrush your great-grandfather used) is **damaging the earth**. It's lying somewhere in the earth, floating in the ocean, or been **broken down into micro particles and in the food chain**.

- Although a fraction of the plastic disposed of is recycled, most of it eventually **ends up in the ocean or in dump sites outside city limits.**

Common sources of Plastic pollution:
- **Merchant ships** expel cargo, sewage, used medical equipment, and other types of waste that contain plastic into the ocean.
- The largest ocean-based source of plastic pollution is **discarded fishing gear** (including traps and nets).
- **Continental plastic litter** such as Food Wrappers & Containers, Bottles and container caps, Plastic bags, Straws and stirrers etc. enters the ocean largely through **surface water runoff**.

Environment Ministry notified Plastic Waste Management (amendment) rules in 2016:
The amended Rules lay down that the **phasing out of Multi-layered Plastic (MLP)** is now applicable to MLP, which are "**non-recyclable, or non-energy recoverable, or with no alternate use**."
- Prescribe a **central registration system** for the registration of the producer/importer/brand owner.
- Any mechanism for the registration should **be automated** and should take into account ease of doing business for **producers, recyclers and manufacturers**.
- The centralised registration system will be evolved by **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** for the registration of the producer/importer/brand owner.
- A **National registry** has been prescribed for producers with presence in more than two states
- A **state-level registration** has been prescribed for smaller producers/brand owners operating within one or two states

Rules to be followed to reduce Plastic usage:
- **India's Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016** called for a ban on plastic bags **below 50 micron thickness** and a phasing out, within two years, of the manufacture and sale of non-recyclable, multi-layered plastic (plastic that snacks come in).
- **More than 20 Indian States** have announced a ban on plastic bags. Cities such as Bengaluru announced a complete ban (gazette notification), in 2016, on the manufacture, supply, sale and use of thermocol and plastic items irrespective of thickness. Maharashtra being the recent state to announce a ban.
- These include carry bags, banners, buntings, flex, flags, plates, clips, spoons, cling films and plastic sheets used while dining. The **exceptions are plastic for export, packaging material for use in forestry, milk packets and hospitals**. There are stiff fines that cover manufacturing and disposal.
- We also **need strategies to deal with the plastic that has already been disposed of**. The CPCB report says that as mentioned in the **Solid Waste Management Rules 2016**, waste has to be **segregated separately at source.** This includes **separation of dry (plastic, paper, metal, glass) and wet (kitchen and garden) waste at source.**
- The **primary responsibility** for collection of used plastic and multi-layered plastic sachets (branded chips, biscuit and snack packets) **lies with their producers, importers and brand owners**.
- However, none of this has happened at any perceivable scale. Companies say that **plastic waste is too complex** or pretend to be completely unaware of these rules.

From pollution to solutions:
- Admittedly, the **complexity** of dealing with plastic waste is because of its **ubiquity and distributed market.**
- Several companies produce the same type of packaging so it is impossible for a given company to collect and recycle only its own packaging.
- Instead, these companies can **collectively implement EPR(extended producer responsibility)** is a strategy designed to promote the **integration of environmental costs associated with goods throughout their life cycles** into the market price of the products, by **geographically dividing a region** into zones and handle the waste generated in their designated zones.
- This strategy was **used in Switzerland to recycle thermocol** used for insulation of buildings.
- This also **reduces collection, transportation and recycling costs.** Companies and governments should interact and research on how to implement such plans.

Private sector Participation in Recycling plastic:
- In India, some companies have helped **empower the informal recycling sector,** giving waste pickers dignity and steady incomes. Another firm has worked with the informal sector and engineered the **production of high quality recycled plastic.** These companies, large corporates and governments could cooperate to **implement innovative means** to realise the value of plastic disposed of while simultaneously investing in phasing it out.
- For example, **a Canadian company monetises plastic waste** in novel ways. It has one of the largest chains of waste plastic collection centres, where waste can be exchanged for anything (from cash to medical insurance to cooking fuel). Through this, multinational corporations have **invested in recycling infrastructure** and in providing a steady and increased rate for waste plastic to incentivise collection in poor countries.
- Such collection centres, like the ones **operated by informal aggregators in India**, can be very low-cost investments (a storage facility with a weighing scale and a smart phone).

Plastic: A wealth from the waste:
India generates an estimated **16 lakh tonnes of plastic waste annually**. If sold at the global average rate of 50 cents a kg, it can generate a **revenue of ₹5,600 crore a year.** Why then is most of this waste around us? In order to realise the potential for recycling, **waste must first be segregated at source**. This segregated waste should be then **transported and treated separately.** If plastic waste is mixed with organic and sanitary matter, its recyclability drastically reduces and its value lost.

Conclusion:
- **Local actions are required** for mitigating plastic pollution, using mechanisms such as bans on plastic bags, maximum daily limits for emissions into watersheds, and incentives for fishing gear retrieval.
- **Countries should come together** to establish measurable reduction targets for plastic waste. A **meaningful international agreement**—one with clearly defined waste reduction targets is the need of the hour.
- **Effective policies** must take into account all stages of the lifecycle of plastic—connecting producers to users and ultimately to waste managers.
- **Fossil fuel subsidies incentivise** the plastic market. Hence, Countries should end fossil fuel subsidies. Annually, **4–8% of oil is used to produce raw plastic**.

- India has a major problem dealing with plastics, particularly **single-use shopping bags** that reach dumping sites, rivers and wetlands along with other waste.
- The most efficient way to deal with the pollution is **to control the production and distribution of plastics.**
- **Banning single-use bags** and making consumers pay a significant amount for the more durable ones is a feasible solution.
- Enforcing the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, which require **segregation of waste will retrieve materials** and greatly reduce the burden on the environment.
- Waste separation can be achieved in **partnership with the community**, and presents a **major employment opportunity.**
- The **best way to reduce plastic pollution** is **to reduce and phase out its consumption**. Solutions range from **carrying your own reusable steel glass, box, spoon and cloth bag** while eating out or shopping for groceries to using alternatives to plastic for household items.
- Additionally, there should be **research on ways to implement** these rules, waste generation quantities and trends and find **innovative alternatives to plastic.**
- It is time we **rethink, reduce, reuse, segregate and recycle** every time we encounter a piece of plastic so that it stops damaging our environment and our lives.

3. NITI Aayog Governing Council

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently chaired the fourth meeting of Governing Council of NITI Aayog. The meeting was yet another attempt to take **India – a federation of states** - forward with **equal participation of all the stakeholders**.

About NITI Aayog:
- The Government, in **January 2015**, **replaced Planning Commission with NITI Aayog** (National Institution for Transforming India).
- It was established with the **aim to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and to enhance cooperative federalism** by fostering the involvement of State Governments of India in the economic policy-making process using a **bottom-up approach.**

Role of NITI Aayog:
- The institution has to **provide governments at the central and state levels with relevant strategic and technical advice** across the spectrum of key elements of policy.
- This includes matters of national and international import on the economic front, dissemination of best practices from within the country as well as from other nations, the infusion of new policy ideas and specific issue-based support.
- The institution has to be able to respond to the changing and more integrated world that India is part of.

Composition of NITI Aayog:

- **Chairperson:** Prime Minister of India as the Chairperson.
- **Governing Council** comprising the Chief Ministers of all the States and Lt. Governors of Union Territories.
- **Regional Councils** will be formed to address specific issues and contingencies impacting more than one state or a region. These will be formed for a specified tenure. The Regional Councils will be convened by the Prime Minister and will comprise of the Chief Ministers of States and Lt. Governors of Union Territories in the region. These will be chaired by the Chairperson of the NITI Aayog or his nominee.
- Experts, specialists and practitioners with relevant domain knowledge as special invitees nominated by the Prime Minister.

The full-time organizational framework will comprise of, in addition to the Prime Minister as the Chairperson:

- Vice-Chairperson: To be appointed by the Prime Minister.
- Members: Full-time.
- Part-time members: Maximum of 2 from leading universities research organizations and other relevant institutions in an ex-officio capacity. Part time members will be on a rotational basis.
- Ex Officio members: Maximum of 4 members of the Union Council of Ministers to be nominated by the Prime Minister.
- Chief Executive Officer: To be appointed by the Prime Minister for a fixed tenure, in the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.
- Secretariat as deemed necessary.

4. India – Seychelles Relations: Assumption Island

Context:

- After growing political opposition, Seychelles President Danny Faure had proposed the cancellation of the agreement with India for the development of Assumption Island.
- But India has managed to convince Seychelles otherwise as seen during the recent visit of President Danny Faure to India.

Why should India be worried about this?
- The decision by the Seychelles President to drop the deal in the face of protests over a **perceived loss of sovereignty** is a **blow to the government's "SAGAR" (Security and Growth for All in the Region) programme**, announced by PM Modi during a visit to Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) countries in March 2015.
- It also comes amid India's troubles with another IOR country, the **Maldives**, where the government has demanded that **India withdraw two helicopters, pilots and personnel from its atolls** that had been sent there to help with maritime patrols. Instead Maldives seems to be growing closer to China and Pakistan as seen from the recent interactions and deals signed with them.

Background:

Discussions regarding development of Assumption Island began in 2003, but were formalised in 2015. The deal was to include a **20-year access to the base**, as well as **permission to station some military personnel on ground with facilities on the island funded by India**, **owned by the Seychelles and jointly managed by both sides.**

Why A Base On Assumption Island Is Crucial For Securing The Indian Ocean Region?

- The deal is seen as important for India because it **enhances its surveillance capabilities** over the Indian Ocean.
- In concert with a **coastal surveillance radar station already operating in Seychelles**, a **naval base at Agalega in Mauritius**, a **coastal radar station in Madagascar**, an **array of radars in Maldives**, and a **strong presence in the littoral waters of Mozambique**, Delhi's acquisition of facilities on one of the 67 raised coral islands of the **Aldabra group** will create an **impermeable surveillance net in the southwestern and central Indian Ocean.**
- **Assumption Island's position dominating the Mozambique channel**, a key sea lane for merchant ships, adds to India's kitty **a second potential choke point after the Strait of Malacca**; the latter is dominated by India's augmented presence in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands chain as well as recent naval agreements with Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore.

The Indian Ocean is important for the following reasons:

- It enjoys a **privileged location at the crossroads of global trade**, connecting the major engines of the international economy in the **Northern Atlantic and Asia-Pacific**. This is particularly important in an era in which global shipping has burgeoned.
- Indian Ocean is also **rich in natural resources**. 40% of the world's **offshore oil production** takes place in the Indian Ocean basin. **Fishing** in the Indian Ocean now accounts for almost 15% of the world's total.
- **Mineral resources** are equally important, with **nodules** containing nickel, cobalt, and iron, and massive sulphide deposits of manganese, copper, iron, zinc, silver, and gold present in sizeable quantities on the sea bed. Indian Ocean coastal sediments are also important sources of titanium, zirconium, tin, zinc, and copper. Additionally, various **rare earth elements** are present, even if their extraction is not always commercially feasible.

SAGAR Doctrine (Security and Growth for All in the Region):

It is a maritime initiative which **gives priority to Indian Ocean region** for ensuring peace, stability and prosperity of India in Indian Ocean region. The goal is to seek a **climate of trust and transparency**; respect for international **maritime rules and norms** by all countries; sensitivity to each other`s interests; peaceful resolution of maritime issues; and increase in maritime cooperation.

June 2018 visit of Seychelles President to India:

- India and Seychelles will ensure mutually beneficial steps regarding stalled plans for a military base at the island of Assumption. India will **respect the sovereignty of Seychelles** and **work at a pace comfortable to Seychelles** and direct efforts towards **mutual welfare**.
- India announced a **$100 million Line of Credit** for Seychelles that it can use to **buy military hardware** from India for building its maritime capacity.

- Both sides would intensify cooperation to carry out **hydrographical studies** of the maritime region and have declared **exchange of necessary oceanic maps** between two sides.
- India also **gifted a Dornier aircraft** to Seychelles for enhancing maritime surveillance.
- India is ready to **finance three civilian infrastructure projects** in Seychelles under Special Grant. Government House, New Police Headquarters and the Office of the Attorney General are included in this.

5. How digitisation can drive growth in India

Context:
- The central theme of the recent report on **'Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India', released by OECD development centre**, is **fostering growth through digitisation.**
- The report indicates that **ICT (information and communication technology)** services embodied in manufacturing and services account for a considerable share of the **value of exports** from China, India and other Asian nations.

Digital Economy and its necessity as of Today:
- Improved **telecom and Internet penetration**, availability of **skilled manpower** for providing IT services, entrepreneurship exhibited in building **ICT start-ups**, along with **government embracing ICT** in its operations and services are enabling India to play a significant role in the **digital economy.**
- The **digitisation embodied in manufacturing and services** improves efficiency, total factor productivity, spill-over effects, **transparency and accountability.**
  For example, **e-commerce** has improved **logistics and supply chains**;
  - **Digital payment services** have provided flexibility and transparency;
  - **Digital identification services** have enabled de-duplication and prevention of fraud; and
  - **Digital learning platforms** have augmented literacy.

- Though **India pioneered offshore IT services** to contribute to exports worth $150 billion, it is this **wave of digitisation that has brought ICT services to the domestic market** at large.
- There have been many studies that analyse the impact of ICT stock variables such as mobile and broadband penetration, on economic development. However, there are not many studies that analyse digital data flows that characterise digital economy.
- For example, when we use Ola app to hail a cab, there are data flows pertaining to: fetching map data on vehicle location; direction data that shows the cab driver the pick-up location; navigation data that shows the cab location in real time; and algorithmic data that gives the shortest path between source and the destination.
- Global brokerage company **Morgan Stanley** said that India is expected to be a **$6 trillion economy – the third largest in the world** – in the next decade.
- In the report, Morgan Stanley said **India's digitisation drive** would provide a **boost** of **50-75 basis points to GDP growth** in the coming decade.

Digital flows rising in recent time:

- In one of the first studies, **McKinsey Global Institute (MGI)** pointed out in its report on **'Global flows in a digital age'**, how apart from goods and services, **digital flows across countries do contribute to economic development**.
- It points out that cross-border goods, services and financial flows contribute to about $30 trillion and about 40 per cent of world GDP, there is **increasing trend in knowledge intensive data flows compared to capital and labour intensive flows.**
- These flows typically have **high research and development (R&D) component and intellectual property, and enable exchange of ideas, thoughts and expressions, facilitated by the digital platforms.**
- Examples include: **courses offered through digital platforms** attended by students from around the world; global collaborative design of a 3D printing artefact; tele-medicine by expert doctors; and robotics programming done by AI programmers around the word.
- Analysis of a panel data from 2000-2015 across all countries of the world, comprising goods, services, people, and digital flows. They found that a 10 per cent increase in digital flows increases country GDP by 0.2 per cent.

Policy implications:

Given this **emerging potential of digital flows and economies**, what are the policy implications?

- **First**, the use of digital technologies requires **higher-order cognitive, socio-emotional, and technical skills** that help respond to fast-changing technologies and their adoption at scale. As per **2016 'World Development Report'**, this **multiplicity of skills** has always been important, but it is now essential. It is time that our **technical and management institutes revamp their curriculum** to integrate all the above features **instead of promoting rote learning.**
- **Second**, **movement of information across borders** is crucial to the operation of the digital economy, and thus to the producers of goods and services that rely on it. Any **barriers to free information flow are likely to have adverse impacts**. For example, recent initiatives by the government on **"data localisation"** are likely to **inhibit digital flows in and out of India**.
- While **security and data protection** are of paramount importance, **merely restricting digital flow is not likely to guarantee the same**.
- **Stricter data protection laws** that govern such cross border digital flows is the answer.
- **Third**, since the digital economy is heavily **based on intellectual property,** we should enforce **strict protection to patents and copyrighted work**, whether produced in India or elsewhere. For example, the **Indian Patent Act** does not allow **patenting "software per se".**
- We also need to augment the **infrastructure and capability at the patent offices in the country** so that Indian inventors consider patenting in India seriously, before proceeding to file their patents in the **US Patent and Trademark office**. Since **patents are jurisdictional in nature** there are merits to **encouraging and incentivising patent filing in India.**
- **Fourth**, digitisation is pervading **from enterprises to the common man**. The cognitive skills of people, especially in India, is quite varied due to varying literacy levels, Hence there should be **conscious effort** by product/service designers, developers and project managers to ensure that **digitisation does not leave behind masses and create a massive digital divide.**
- At the same time **Data protection laws should act as Firewalls for personal and Privacy issues.**

Seven key principles suggested by **Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee** to guide the **data protection framework** in the country:

1. **Technology agnostic:** The data protection law must take into account the continuous change in technology and standards of compliance.

2. **Holistic application:** The law must **cover both the private sector and the government sector**, maybe with different obligations though.
3. **Informed consent:** The consent should be not just consent but "**informed and meaningful**".
4. **Data minimisation:** The data collected or being processed should be minimal — only that data which is necessary for the purpose for which it is being sought.
5. **Controller accountability:** The committee is clear on **fixing accountability of data controllers.** It says, "The data controller should be held accountable for any processing of data, whether by itself or entities with whom it may have shared the data for processing."
6. **Structured enforcement:** The committee proposes to set up **"a high-powered statutory authority"**, which "must co-exist with appropriately decentralised enforcement mechanisms." It envisions **three main objectives** of a data protection authority: **monitor, investigate and enforce the laws; set the standards; and generate awareness** in an increasingly digitised society.
7. **Deterrent penalties:** It proposes for "adequate" penalties for "wrongful processing" to ensure deterrence.

Conclusion:

▪ To some extent, **start-ups** such as **Paytm, Ola and Flipkart** have enabled inclusion of most sections of the society to participate in **their digital products and services**.
▪ However, **quality of digitisation of government services** is sometimes pathetic. They are **difficult to navigate even for digital-savvy urban users**; not to mention, semi-literate or illiterate masses for whom it is supposed to be more beneficial.
▪ It is time governments took notice of this and improved their services and programmes for **digital inclusion of the society at large**.
▪ Instrumentally, a **firm legal framework for data protection** is the foundation on which data-driven innovation and entrepreneurship can flourish in India. Fostering such innovation and entrepreneurship is essential if India is to lead its citizens and the world into a **digital future committed to empowerment, experiment and equal access.**

'Cop Connect'

▪ It is a **mobile application developed by Telangana police** for their **internal communication purpose**. It has been developed **on the lines of WhatsApp**.
▪ Police have developed this app keeping in view the **safety of their information besides having hassle free communication**.

Features:
▪ The app is **a secure communication channel**, with **no limit on the number of members** in any individual group (unlike the regular WhatsApp which has a restriction) and has all the features of WhatsApp.
▪ Other features of the Cop-Connect app are **chatting, group chats, file sharing (image, audio, video and documents) and location sharing**. A unique feature, **i-Meeting**, can help in creating and scheduling department meetings in an easy way.

Benefits:
- The app will help in connecting 60,000 plus police force, spanning over 31 revenue districts across the state.
- COP Connect has **end-to-end encryption with the server being located in the Police Department** and it ensures absolute **security and confidentiality** of internal police communication.

6. Governor's rule in J&K

Context: The state of Jammu and Kashmir is all set to see a governor's rule following the sudden break in ties between BJP and PDP and subsequent resignation of chief minister Mehbooba Mufti.

What's so special about this?
- The imposition of **governor's rule in J&K is slightly different than that in other states**.
- **In other states, the president's rule is imposed under the Article 356 of Constitution of India. In J&K, governor's rule is mentioned under Article 370 section 92** – 'Provisions in case of failure of constitutional machinery in the State.'

Article 370 section 92: Provisions in case of failure of constitutional machinery in the State:
1. Governor's Rule can be imposed only after the consent of the President of India in case of failure of constitutional machinery.
2. If at any time, the **Governor is satisfied** that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, the **Governor may by Proclamation**-
3. **Assume to himself** all or any of the functions of the Government of the State and all or any of the powers vested in or exercisable by anybody or authority in the State.
4. Make such incidental and consequential provisions as appear to the Governor to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the Proclamation, including provisions for suspending in whole or in part the operation of any provision of this Constitution relating to anybody or authority in the State.
5. Any such Proclamation may be revoked or varied by a subsequent Proclamation.
6. Any such Proclamation whether varied under subsection (2) or not, shall except where it is a Proclamation revoking a previous Proclamation, **cease to operate on the expiration of six months from the date on which it was first issued.**
7. If the Government or by a Proclamation under his section assumes, to himself any, of the powers of the Legislature to make his laws, any law made by him in the exercise of that power shall, subject to, the terms there of continue to have effect until two years have elapsed from the date on which the proclamation ceases to have effect, unless sooner.
8. No Proclamation under this section shall, except where it is a Proclamation revoking a previous Proclamation, be laid before each House of the Legislature as soon as it is convened.
9. **If the Constitutional machinery in the state is not restored before the expiry of this six month period, the provisions of Article 356 of the Constitution of India are extended to J&K and the President's rule is imposed in the State.**

What is President's Rule under Article 356?
The imposition of Article 356 of the Constitution on a State following the **failure of constitutional machinery** is called President's Rule in India. Once the President's Rule has been imposed on a state, the **elected state government will be temporarily dissolved, and the Governor, who is appointed by the government at the Centre, will replace the Chief Minister as the chief executive** of the State.

- The **state will fall under the direct control of the Union government**, and the Governor will continue to be head the proceedings, representing the President of India – who is the Head of the State.
- The **imposition of the President's rule requires the sanction of both the houses of Parliament**. If approved, it can go on for a **period of six months**. However, the imposition **cannot be extended for more than three years**, and needs to be **brought before the two houses every six months for approval.**

7. National targets for off-shore wind power

Context: To give confidence to wind industry, Government has declared national targets for off-shore wind power.

The targets:
- Medium target of 5 GW by 2022.
- Long term target of 30 GW by 2030.

Significance of the move:
Offshore wind power would add **a new element to the already existing basket of renewable energy** for the country.

Why off- shore wind farming is beneficial?
The offshore wind faming is **attractive because of several reasons such as stronger winds** for efficient generation of power; **no impact on real estate value** of land as in case of onshore wind farming; its ability to **fulfil the demand of the heavily populated coastal regions** and **no significant environment costs.**

Challenges:
- It is **difficult to install large wind power turbines in open seas**. Offshore wind turbines are of much larger dimensions and capacities than onshore turbines.
- The **PLF (plant load factor)** of off-shore wind turbines will be higher than the on-shore projects.
- The **cost per MW** of off-shore wind power project **will be higher by 50-100%** as compared to on-shore projects depending on the water depth.
- Further deep sea wind farms come with the challenges of assigning **no-go areas for commercial shipping**. There would be a **need to devise new lanes, proper lightning** for ships to pass on.

National Off-Shore Wind Policy:
- The **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy** had notified **National Off-Shore Wind Policy in October 2015** to realize the offshore wind power potential in the country.

- With this, the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) has been authorized as the Nodal Ministry for **use of offshore areas within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** of the country and the **National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) has been authorized as the Nodal Agency** for development of offshore wind energy.
- Government has paved way for development of the **offshore wind farms up to the seaward distance of 200 Nautical Miles (within its Exclusive Economic Zone) from the base line.**

Way ahead:
- India is making significant progress in the development of the onshore wind power plants. However, so far progress in the **offshore wind power generation has been almost nil**.
- Since India has more than **7600 Kilometres of coast**, the prospects of development of offshore wind power are very bright.
- **At global level, it has been observed that, offshore wind energy while being better than onshore wind in terms of efficiency is also becoming competitive and comparable in terms of tariffs.**
- With the introduction of the National Offshore Wind Energy Policy, India is trying to replicate the success of the onshore wind power development in the offshore wind power development.

8. Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK)

Context: The **Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), India and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** have jointly started the pilot "Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on Civilian Protection and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)" in Delhi.

Key facts:
- The course is being attended by 30 officers including eight from **Friendly Foreign Countries**.
- The course is designed for mid-level military officials from the countries that are active **"Troop Contributing Countries" to the UN peacekeeping operations.**

About CUNPK:
The Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), has been set up in **New Delhi**, drawing on **India's vast experience in the field of UN Peacekeeping**. It functions under the directions of a Board of management under the Chairmanship of Vice Chief of the Army Staff.

Role and important functions:
- The **Centre conducts International Training Capsules** for Military Contingent Officers, Military Observers, and Staff and Logistics Officers.
- The Centre regularly **organizes Seminars**, Joint Working Groups and Command Post Exercises at the National and International level.
- It is also a **repository of information on India's involvement in UN Peacekeeping** and is continuing to build and update its research on peacekeeping related issues.

What you need to know about UN Peacekeeping?
- United Nations Peacekeeping was created in **1948**. Its first mission involved the establishment of the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which served to **observe and maintain ceasefire during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.**
- UN Peacekeeping maintains **three basic principles**: **Consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of Force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.**
- The UN Peacekeepers are led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DKPO).
- There are **currently 17 UN peace operations deployed on four continents**.
- UN Peacekeepers are from diverse backgrounds, from areas all around the world. They include **police, military and civilian personnel**. They are often referred to as **Blue Berets or Blue Helmets** because of their light blue berets or helmets.
- The UN Peacekeeping Force won the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1988**.
- The **United Nations Charter gives the United Nations Security Council the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security**. For this reason, the international community usually looks to the **Security Council to authorize peacekeeping operations.**

Key Points:
- **The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect** seeks to transform the principle of the Responsibility to Protect into a practical guide for **action in the face of mass atrocities.**
- The Global Centre was **founded by a number of supportive governments, leading figures from the human rights community**, as well as by International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam International, Refugees International, and WFM-Institute for Global Policy.

9. Social media communication hub

Context: Public sector firm Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Ltd., which is supposed to be **handling the Social media communication hub project**, has extended the last date for tenders. This is the fourth time the date has been extended.

What is Social media communication hub?
- The **hub proposes to monitor social media** (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and even email) **handles at the very local level in multiple languages** to carry out **"sentiment analysis",** track down the influence-making social media users and to **categorise the conversations on social media into positive, negative and neutral sections.**
- It is also aimed to **track in real time the way social media receives news on government's schemes and announcements and also political events.**

Social media managers:
- As per the proposal, the **project is meant to strengthen the social media division** and **recruit social media managers to be deployed in all the districts** of the country.
- **Each district will have one social media manager** who will be entrusted with the tasks of keeping a **close eye on the regional and local media, collecting data of regional media and of local events, providing content for social media** and supporting media units at the regional level for social media publicity.

Role of social media managers:
- These social media managers will **also monitor local editions of newspapers, local cable channels, local audio channels (FM) and key local social media handles** for important local developments. They will make a **daily analysis report** incorporating local sentiments to be **sent to region head in the PIB as well as the media hub (command centre).**

Concerns:
The proposal to set up such a hub had **turned controversial**, as many called it an **indirect measure to "snoop" on and influence voters.**

10. Nuclear arsenals around the globe
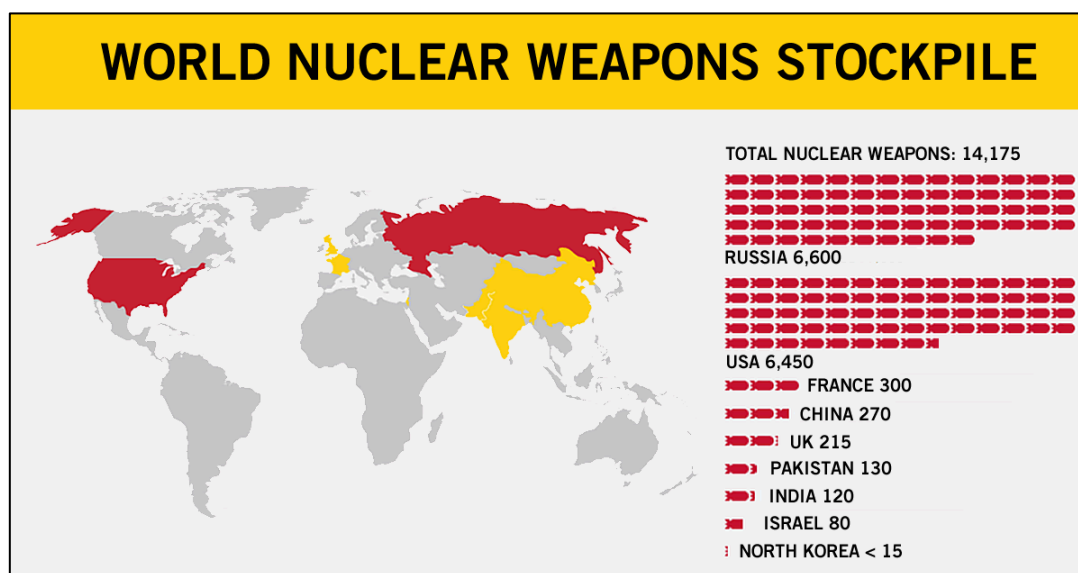
Context: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released its 2018 edition of the yearly report on the current state of armaments, disarmament and international security.

Key findings:
- There are **nine countries** which have nuclear warheads. They include **Russia, the US, the UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea.**
- **China continues to modernise** its nuclear weapon delivery systems and is **slowly increasing the size of its nuclear arsenal**. The country now has an estimated 280 nuclear warheads. In 2017 report, the number was 270.
- The **US and Russia still constitute a major share** of approximately 14,465 nuclear weapons that exist in the world. Both **together account for nearly 92% of all nuclear weapons** despite reducing their strategic nuclear forces pursuant to the implementation of the **2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.**
- Despite the overall decrease in global nuclear weapons year-on-year, **India and Pakistan have increased their stockpiles**. India, which had an estimated 120-130 nuclear warheads as per 2017 report, now has 130-140 warheads. Similarly, Pakistan, which had 130-140 warheads now

has increased to 140-150 warheads. **Both countries are also developing new land, sea and air-based missile delivery systems.**
▪ Nuclear warheads in other countries: UK (215 warheads), France (300 warheads), Israel (80 warheads) and North Korea (10-20 warheads). The figures for North Korea are uncertain.

Way ahead:
▪ Nuclear weapons remain **uniquely dangerous because they are highly destructive**. The **renewed focus on the strategic importance of nuclear deterrence** and capacity is a very worrying trend.
▪ The **world needs a clear commitment from the nuclear weapon states** to an effective, **legally binding process towards nuclear disarmament.**

Key Points:

▪ **SIPRI** is an **independent international institute** dedicated to **research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.**
▪ Established in **1966**, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.
▪ **Based in Stockholm**, SIPRI also has a presence in Beijing, and is regularly ranked among the **most respected think tanks worldwide.**

11.UN Human Rights Council

Context: The **United States withdrew from the United Nations Human Rights Council** accusing it of a "**chronic bias against Israel**". Washington's withdrawal is the **latest US rejection of multilateral engagement after it pulled out of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.**

Why does the US have a problem with the UNHRC?
▪ The US problem with the body is twofold: the make-up of its membership and what it considers a disproportionate focus on allegations of human rights abuses committed by its ally, Israel.
▪ In 2006, when the council was established, then-US President **George W Bush refused to join because the organisation included members accused by Washington of human rights violations.**
▪ The country **changed tack under the former Obama administration**, but the ascent of Trump put Washington's continued membership back under the spotlight.

Concerns:
▪ **Rights groups have criticized the Trump administration** for not making human rights a priority in its foreign policy. Critics say this sends a message that the administration turns a blind eye to human rights abuses in some parts of the world.
▪ The US withdrawal from the body could bolster countries such as Cuba, Russia, Egypt and Pakistan, which resist what they see as UN interference in sovereign issues.

About UNHRC:
- The UN body was **established in 2006** with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights around the globe, as well as investigating alleged human rights violations.
- It is made up of **47 member states**, which are **selected by the UN General Assembly on a staggered basis each year for three-year-long terms**.
- Members meet around three times a year to debate human rights issues and **pass non-binding resolutions and recommendations by majority vote.**
- The council also **carries out the Universal Periodic Review of all UN member states**, which **allows civil society groups to bring accusations of human rights violations** in member states to the attention of the UN.

12.Cross-Border Insolvency

Context:
- The **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)** is planning to introduce a globally accepted and well-recognised **cross-border insolvency framework**, fine-tuned to suit the needs of aspirational Indian economy.
- The Government has taken initiative for Cross-Border Insolvency **within the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (the Code) to provide a comprehensive legal framework.**

Need for cross-border insolvency framework:
- As the size of the Indian economy grows, **business and trade have adopted an increasingly international character.**
- **Creditors and corporates** frequently transact business in **more than one jurisdiction.**
- **Foreign banks and creditors finance Indian companies** and **Indian banks have foreign exposure**.
- Also, as part of its **Ease of Doing Business** and **Make in India** policies, **India seeks to attract foreign companies to set up manufacturing facilities** in India.
- Besides, global experience demonstrates that cross-border investment decisions and their outcomes, are considerably affected by the insolvency laws in force in a country.
- Towards this end, **even though the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 has resulted in significant improvement in India's insolvency regime, there is a need to include cross-border insolvency in the Code** to provide a comprehensive insolvency framework.

Benefits associated:
- Inclusion of cross-border insolvency framework **will further enhance ease of doing business**, provide a **mechanism of cooperation between India and other countries in the area of insolvency resolution**, and **protect creditors** in the global scenario.
- Also, it will **make India an attractive investment destination** for foreign creditors given the increased **predictability and certainty of the insolvency framework.**

Global scenario:
- On the global scale, the **UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency, 1997**.

- It has emerged as the **most widely accepted legal framework** to deal with cross-border insolvency issues while **ensuring the least intrusion into the country's domestic insolvency law**.
- Due to the growing prevalence of multinational insolvencies, the **Model Law has been adopted by 44 States till date, including Singapore, UK and US.**

13. Countering China in the Indo-Pacific

Introduction:

- India appears to have set a **long-term plan** during which it will **build its capabilities**—economic and military strength, network of military facilities and agreements to access military facilities in countries **across the Indo-Pacific**, expanding economic and military ties.
- The **Wuhan summit** and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at **the Shangri La Dialogue** in Singapore laying down **India's vision in the Indo-Pacific region** indicate that **India is going to bide its time and avoid direct confrontation with China** but will be **proactive in building various capabilities.**
- **Japan, India, the US and Australia** will also join **Rim Pac (Rim of the Pacific) exercises in 2018**.
- India and the US are planning to hold the **first two-plus-two dialogue** (between their foreign and defence ministers) in Washington very soon.

India: As a link between Indo-China border area and the East China Sea:

- Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's stand on **need for open and secure seas and skies, freedom of navigation and a rules-based order** which is under threat from China.
- **India not taking military action in the Maldives** despite a strong case to do so because of Chinese threats and playing down **China's build up in Doklam** in Bhutan after the disengagement last year is **indicative that India does not want to get into a confrontation with China right now**, though it may risk ceding strategic space to it.
- India is targeting a **sustained 7.5-8% economic growth** and aims to be **a $5 trillion economy by 2025.** It plans to spend over $250 billion in **military modernization** over the next decade.
- India is developing **robust military partnerships across the Indo-Pacific**, from **getting access to military facilities to bilateral, trilateral and multilateral military exercises to training and capacity building of the militaries of friendly countries.**

Developing infrastructure in countries of the Indo-Pacific region:
- **Bangladesh** has already chosen **Japan's Marta Bali port project** instead of **China's Sonadia port project**. If the **Trincomalee port project**—involving Japanese assistance—in Sri Lanka succeeds, then the importance of **China's Hambantota port will decline.**
- Similarly, the **Chabahar port project in Iran** can mitigate the importance of the **Chinese Gwadar port in Pakistan**.
- The **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC),** a result of Indo-Japanese cooperation, will also counter China's growing influence in Africa.
- India has secured access to **Duqm port in Oman** for military use and develop the **Agalega Island in Mauritius**.
- The Indian Navy has secured **a logistics facility in Singapore** that will allow it to refuel and rearm and has similar facilities in Vietnam.
- India's **recent logistics agreement with France**, **just like the one with the US**, allows it to access France's military bases across the Indo-Pacific.
- **India and Indonesia** have decided to work on the development of **a port at Sabang close to the Malacca Strait**. China was quick to warn India against militarization of the port.
- The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** are strategically important. These islands are near the Malacca Straits, providing an excellent location for **tracking China's submarine activities**.
- India is **modernizing infrastructure** to deploy more and larger warships and planes in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- In addition, **Japanese investment in India's strategic road project** in the latter's North-East region will help increase **India-South-East Asia trade.** There is a possibility that **growing India-South-East Asia trade could reduce China's influence in South-East Asia.**
- India has been conducting a number of **bilateral and multilateral military exercises.** The **Malabar naval exercises** with the US and Japan are the largest and the most complex series of naval exercises that India engages in, developing interoperability with two of the most powerful navies in the Indo-Pacific.
- **The Quad,** while not being given a military dimension yet, will be the most important grouping in the Indo-Pacific. It will have to **set an economic programme to help smaller countries** of the region. India will continue to expand its military exercises and develop bilateral and multilateral groups as Modi said at Shangri La.

ASEAN role in Indo-Pacific:
- Central to Modi's speech was the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) unity**, which he said was essential for a **stable future for the region** and that Asean lies at the **heart of the new Indo-Pacific.**
- **India's stress on the centrality and unity of Asean** for securing the region and maintaining a **rules-based order** is important.
- A **united Asean backed by major powers** will be able to counter an expansionist China. It can ask for joint exploration and utilization of the **natural resources**, and a freeze on making **artificial islands** and their militarization. It will be a counter to China's own use of legal warfare as part of **its three-warfare strategy** on the **legal, media and psychological fronts**. India backing a united Asean in its dealing with China furthers its own interests in the region, which has **abundant natural resources,** without getting into a direct conflict with Beijing.
- China, which is looking to expand its **footprint in the Indian Ocean**, will be forced to focus **more on South China Sea**. Smaller countries are susceptible to China if larger countries like India avoid confrontation. This can be offset if countries like India, the US and Japan work together to **build infrastructure** and provide **development assistance** to these countries to prevent them from falling under Chinese influence.

Conclusion:
- **Economically and strategically,** the global centre of gravity is shifting to the **Indo-Pacific.** If the region's stakeholders don't act now to fortify an open, rules-based order, the security situation will continue to deteriorate—with consequences that are likely to reverberate worldwide.
- Groups like ASEAN will have **to collectively approach** China. Standing up to it and physically **stopping illegal Chinese construction** will gain international attention and the sympathy and backing of major powers.
- **China's aggression and debt trap diplomacy**, which impinge sovereignty, is going to test Indian diplomacy. The various consultation groups will help India develop common strategies to keep the seas open and secure and preserve a rules-based order.
- With **joint military exercises**, India will develop **interoperability and standard operating procedures**, which will help in any joint military operation or even possibly a military alliance in the future.
- Nowadays, **further security cooperation** among Japan, India, the US and Australia is increasingly plausible. The time has come to proactively further this cooperation **to ensure prosperity and stability in the whole of Indo-Pacific.**

14.Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

Context: The **Centre has banned terror organisation Al-Qaida in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)** and all its manifestation under the stringent anti-terror law – Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. A notification in this regard has been issued by the **home ministry**.

Background:

- Both **Al-Qaida in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)** and the **Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham-Khorasan (ISIS-K), an Afghanistan-based affiliate of ISIS**, have been **declared unlawful by the Union home ministry** as they were **found to be radicalizing Indian youths for 'global jihad'** and encouraging terror acts on Indian interests.
- Currently, **39 terror outfits** including ISIS, LeT, Jaish and BKI have been banned under the UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act).

About the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA):

- This law is **aimed at effective prevention of unlawful activities** and associations in India.
- Its main objective is to **make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India.**
- The Act **makes it a crime to support any secessionist movement or to support claims by a foreign power to what India claims as its territory.**
- The UAPA, framed in 1967, has been **amended twice since: first in 2008 and then in 2012.**

The draconian provisions of the UAPA:

- The Act introduces a **vague definition of terrorism** to encompass a **wide range of non-violent political activity, including political protest**.
- It **empowers the government to declare an organisation as a 'terrorist organisation' and ban it**. **Mere membership** of such a proscribed organisation itself **becomes a criminal offence**.
- Furthermore, it **allows detention without a charge sheet for up to 180 days** and **police custody can be up to 30 days.**
- It also **creates a strong presumption against bail** and anticipatory bail is out of the question.
- It **creates a presumption of guilt for terrorism offences merely based on the evidence allegedly seized.**
- In addition, the Act authorises the creation of special courts, with wide discretion to hold in-camera proceedings (closed-door hearings) and use secret witnesses but **contains no sunset clause and provisions for mandatory periodic review.**