

COVER STORY

ISSUES RELATED TO GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD

NPA resolution policy

Government has introduced Ordinance for NPA resolution hereby, analysing reasons for such policy and its implications.

Social Cost of Tiger Conservation

The coercive, top-down approach to manage protected areas creates socio-cultural disruption and even fail to conserve biodiversity.

Mob Lynching and Rule of Law

India has witnessed many incidences of Mob Lynching in recent pasts which have questioned the enforcement of law and order in India.

Special Issues

ECONOMIC ISSUE

Practice of Agriculture Loan Waiver: Critical Analysis
About Phased Manufacturing Programme
Issue of Farm Suicide in India
Micro-irrigation: Status in India
Real Estate Act's Rules Notified
Revision of WPI Series and Index of Industrial Production

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Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces - 2017

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Climate Change Impact Small on Island Developing States
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Urban Mega Crisis and Alternative Transport

SOCIAL ISSUE

'Political Manipulation Threatens Free Press'

INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

One Belt One Road (OBOR) and India
India-Sri Lanka Ties



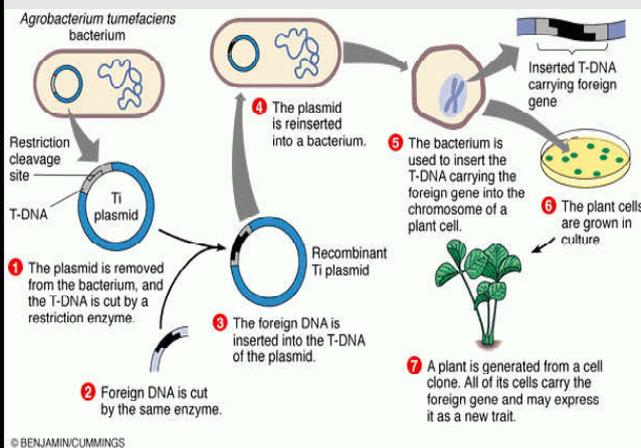
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- South Asia Satellite: Significance

SOUTH ASIA SATELLITE

- Has 12 Ku-band transponders, each country can use one
- India will extend know-how on ground infrastructure
- Cost of launch and satellite to be borne by India

BENEFICIARIES

India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Afghanistan

AREAS IT WILL HELP IN: Education | Telemedicine | Disaster Response | Resource Management | Weather Forecasting | Communication

Launch vehicle: GSLV Mk-II
Weight 2230-kg
Mission life 12 years
Cost of satellite ₹ 235 cr
Total cost ₹ 450 cr

Source: IPI

- Mob Lynching and Rule of Law
- Issue of Farm Suicide in India
- EC Proposal for Countering bribe-for-votes
- Micro-irrigation: Status in India
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GSAT-9 LAUNCH SUCCESSFUL

PRICELESS GIFT TO NEIGHBOURS

ISRO's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F09) successfully carried South Asia Geostationary Communication Satellite (GSAT-9). Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described the satellite as India's "priceless gift" to its SAARC neighbours.

GSAT-9, also called 'South Asia' satellite, was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on May 5, 2017

- Project cost ₹ 450 crore
- Mission life 12 years
- Lift-off mass 2,230 kg
- Objectives
 - To provide improved communication
 - Help in mapping terrain and natural resources
 - Disaster prediction and management
 - Increase information sharing
 - Help in telemedicine and education
- Transponders: 12 Ku-band transponders to improve connectivity within the SAARC region

Seven out of the eight SAARC countries are a part of the project, with Pakistan deciding to opt out

KBK Infographics

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COVER STORY

Issues Related to GM Food and Regulatory Mechanism in India

Context

With the rapid advances in biotechnology, a number of genetically modified (GM) crops or transgenic crops carrying novel traits have been developed and released for commercial agriculture production.

Recently the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee has cleared GM mustard for environmental release and use in farmer fields for four years subject to certain field conditions.

Hereby analyzing the meaning of GM crop and its socio-economic impact alongwith the critical analysis of the regulatory mechanism in India.

What are Genetically Modified Mustard (GM Mustard)?

- ▶ A genetically modified organism (GMO) is an organism in which one or more genes (called transgenes) have been introduced into its genetic material from another organism using recombinant DNA technology.
- ▶ Foods produced from or using GM organisms are often referred to as GM foods.
- ▶ Dhara Mustard Hybrid-11 (DMH-11) is a genetically modified variety of mustard.
- ▶ It has been developed by the Delhi University's Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants under a government-funded project.

Recent approval by GEAC

- ▶ On May 11, 2017, The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) has cleared GM mustard for environmental release and use in farmer fields for four years subject to certain field conditions
- ▶ According to GEAC Chairperson, "It was a unanimous decision with no dissent and all safety concerns were discussed with experts".
- ▶ However, the approval is contingent on a final nod from Environment Minister, who can say no.
- ▶ In the past also, environment ministry has blocked the crops approved by GEAC. In 2010, GEAC cleared Bt Brinjal but its release was blocked by then Environment Minister, Jairam Ramesh, on the ground of a paucity of safety tests.

Arguments for GM Crops

The arguments that have been put forward for the use of GMOs in agriculture include:

- ▶ **Potential benefits for agricultural productivity:**
 - ❑ **Better resistance to stress:** If crops can be made more resistant to pest outbreaks and severe weather (such as frost, extreme heat or drought), then it would reduce the danger of crop failure.
 - ❑ **More nutritious staple foods:** By inserting genes into crops such as rice and wheat, we can increase their nutritious value which can solve the problem of malnutrition.
 - ❑ **More productive farm animals:** By inserting genes into cattle we can, for example, raise their milk yield.
 - ❑ **Longer shelf lives:** The genetic modification of fruits and vegetables can make them less likely to spoil in storage or on the way to market. This could expand trade opportunities as well as reduce massive wastage incurred in transport and supply.
 - ❑ **More food from less land:** Improved productivity from GMOs might mean that farmers in future won't have to bring so much marginal land into cultivation.
- ▶ **Potential benefits for the environment:**
 - ❑ **GMOs might reduce the environmental impact of food production and industrial processes:** Genetically engineered resistance to pests and diseases could greatly reduce the use of pesticides and insecticides needed for crop protection. This could not only reduce environmental impact - they could also improve the health of farm and industrial workers.
 - ❑ **Rehabilitation of damaged or less-fertile land:** Large areas of crop-land in the developing world have become saline by unsustainable irrigation practices. Genetic modification could produce salt-tolerant varieties.
 - ❑ **Bioremediation:** Rehabilitation of damaged land may also become possible through organisms bred to restore nutrients and soil structure.
 - ❑ **Biofuels:** Plant material fuel, or biomass, has enormous energy potential. For example, the waste from sugar cane or sorghum can provide energy, especially in rural areas. It may be possible to breed plants specifically for this purpose.
- ▶ **Potential benefits for human health**
 - ❑ **Pharming (Vaccines and Medicines):** Plants are being engineered to produce vaccines, proteins and other pharmaceutical products not only for humans but also for farm animals. This process is called "Pharming".
 - ❑ **Hunger:** According to data from the World Food Programme, around 795 million people do not have enough food to live a healthy life. So many people are still suffering from starvation and malnutritions and this can become even worse in future.

Arguments against GM crops

The main arguments that have been put forward against the use of GMOs in agriculture include:

- ▶ **Potential negative effects on the environment:**
 - ❑ **Genes can end up in unexpected places:**
 - Through "gene escape" they can pass on to other members of the same species and perhaps other species.

- **Genes can mutate with harmful effect:**
 - Artificial insertion of genes could destabilize an organism by encouraging mutations.
- **Interaction with wild and native populations:**
 - GMOs could compete or breed with wild species.
 - GM crops could pose a threat to crop biodiversity, especially if grown in areas that are centres of origin of that crop.
 - In addition, GM crops could compete with and substitute traditional farmers' varieties and wild relatives that have been bred, or evolved, to cope with local stresses. If genetically modified crop varieties substitute them, they could be lost.
- **Impact on birds, insects and soil biota:**
 - Potential risks to non-target species, such as birds, pollinators and micro-organisms, is another important issue.
 - Besides, it is feared that widespread use of GM crops could lead to the development of resistance in insect populations exposed to the GM crops.
- ▶ **Potential negative effects on human health:**
 - **Allergenicity (Transfer of allergenic genes):** These could be accidentally transferred to other species, causing dangerous reactions in people with allergies.
 - **Outcrossing:** The migration of genes from GM plants into conventional crops or related species in the wild (referred to as "outcrossing"), as well as the mixing of crops derived from conventional seeds with GM crops, may have an indirect effect on food safety and food security. Cases have been reported where GM crops approved for animal feed or industrial use were detected at low levels in the products intended for human consumption.
 - Studies in the U.S. have shown a strong correlation between growth of GM crops, and diseases such as acute kidney injury, diabetes, autism, Alzheimer's and cancers in the past 20 years in the U.S.
- ▶ **Potential socio-economic effects:**
 - **Loss of farmers' access to plant material:**
 - Biotechnology research is carried out predominantly by the private sector and there are concerns about market dominance in the agricultural sector by a few powerful companies.
 - This could have a negative impact on small-scale farmers all over the world.
 - Farmers fear that they might even have to pay for crop varieties bred from genetic material that originally came from their own fields when they buy seeds from "**companies holding patents**" on specific genetic modification "events".
 - **Intellectual property rights could slow research:** The proprietary nature of biotechnology products and processes may prevent their access for public-sector research.

Arguments related to GM mustard**► Introduction of GM crop may reduce dependence on edible oil:**

- The increased yields will help lessen India's dependence on the rising imports of edible oil.
- India is the world's second largest consumer of edible oil after China, and 14.5-15.5 million tonnes of the total 20-21 mt annual consumption is imported.
- In 2014-15, India imported 14.5 million tonnes of edible oils valued at \$10.5 billion. India's own annual edible oil production stuck at below 7.5 million tonnes, of which mustard's share is roughly a quarter.

► Counter-arguments to GM mustard's high yield

- **Yields claims are not reliable:** The yield claims on which GM mustard has been cleared are not reliable. They are based on comparisons with 30-year-old cultivars, and not on more recent high-yielding hybrids.
- **Top producers do not use GM mustard:** According to data provided by FAO, the highest yields in mustard are from the five countries which do not grow GM mustard — U.K., France, Poland, Germany and Czech Republic — and not from the GM-growing U.S. or Canada.
- **Alternative to GM mustard exist:** If India wants to increase mustard production yield rapidly and safely, then the government can adopt the practice of "**System of Mustard Intensification**", for which successful trials have been done in Bihar through a World Bank project. Results showed higher yields and better income. And all of this was done without the spraying of any toxic herbicides.

Regulatory mechanism for GM crop in India

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and crops are regulated under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and rules notified under it.

The regulatory mechanism to enforce these rules consists of six committees, which are as follows –

	Name of body	Parent agency	Task
1	Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)	It functions under the Ministry of Environment and Forests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► It is the apex body to accord environmental approval of activities involving large scale use of hazardous micro-organisms and recombinants in research and industrial production. ► It is also mandated with approving the release of genetically engineered organisms and products into the environment, including experimental field trials.
2	Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM)	It functions under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► RCGM is mandated with monitoring and regulating safety related aspects of ongoing research projects and activities, including small scale field trials.
3	Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee (RDAC)	It operates under the DBT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► It's functions are mostly advisory in nature. ► It reviews developments in biotechnology, nationally and internationally.
4	State Biosafety Coordination Committees (SBCC)	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► It is tasked with monitoring at the state level. ► It has the power to investigate and take punitive action in case of violations of statutory provisions.

5	District Level Committees (DLC)	—	▶ It is responsible for monitoring at the district level.
6	Institutional Biosafety Committees (IBSC)	The Committee is established under the institution engaged in GMO research.	▶ It oversees this research and acts as an interface between the institution and RCGM.

Of these, GEAC and RCGM are most crucial for regulation of GM Food.

Issues with respect to the regulatory mechanism

▶ **Problems with GEAC:**

- **Organizational problem:** GEAC suffers from poor infrastructure and shortage of bio-technology scientists.
- **Conflict of interest:** GEAC only approves the crop as well as evaluates it's own decision thus leading to conflict of interest. To avoid it, it's approval should be evaluated by **CSIR (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research)**.
- **Not autonomous:** GEAC is under ministry of environment and thus not independent.
- **Not legal:** GEAC at present has no statutory backing. It should be constituted under an act to **give it status, power and autonomy to function.**

▶ **Consultation with States:**

- In spite of agriculture being state subject, state governments are not mandatorily consulted for field trials.
- Thus mandatory consultation with state governments should be built into the regulatory process.
- ▶ Concern are also there regarding the capacity of a country as large and diverse as India to monitor the use of restricted GM technology in the context of reports of unauthorised cultivation of GM cotton in Gujarat. Several farmers in Gujarat had purchased GM seeds from Navbharat, a company based in Ahmedabad, which is thought to have developed the seed as a hybrid from GM seeds imported from the U.S. The unauthorised use of GM seeds over the past three years, even as field trials were under way to determine their safety raises serious concerns about the feasibility of using this technology in a contained and restricted manner.
- ▶ There is a need for an over-reaching legislation on bio-safety to ensure that biotechnology is introduced without compromising the safety of biodiversity, health etc.
- ▶ A shortage of skilled personnel - from laboratory researchers to extension service officers - can seriously constrain a country's ability to create a strong regulatory system.

Way ahead

▶ **Problem is not production:**

- According to **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, the problem is not in food production. There is enough food for everybody.
- But millions of people still do not have access to food due to various reasons:
 - Firstly, millions of people are poor and simply do not have the money to buy food;

- Secondly, there are huge post-harvest losses due to poor storage and transportation along with under-developed food processing facilities in developing countries; and
- Thirdly, there exist leakages in public distribution system.
- Thus, **in words of FAO “we do not need GMOs to resolve the current world hunger problem”**. Instead we should focus on above problems to improve access to food.
- ▶ **FAO’s view on use of GMOs in agriculture:**
 - FAO recognizes that genetic modification can help in some circumstances to increase production & productivity and thus contribute to food security. However, FAO is also aware of the concern about the potential risks that GMOs pose regarding the effects on human and animal health and the environment.
 - Thus FAO underlines the need to carefully evaluate the potential benefits and possible risks associated with the application of modern technologies to increase plant and animal productivity and production.
 - However, the responsibility for formulating policies and making decisions regarding these technologies rests with the **Member Governments** themselves.
- ▶ **Explore other agricultural biotechnologies:**
 - We should give more focus to other biotechnologies especially the ‘low-tech’ one such as biofertilizers, biopesticides or tissue culture in crops/trees; artificial insemination in livestock; fermentation and use of bioreactors in food processing.
 - Benefits of these technologies are:
 - They carry negligible risk;
 - Do not normally require any specific regulatory approval, meaning that they can be quickly adopted by farmers;
 - the costs of release are low; and
 - maintain the natural resource base
- ▶ **Role of the government:**
 - Governments need to develop their own national policy for the role of agricultural biotechnologies;
 - Effective communication and participation strategies with the public are necessary, thus government should develop them; and
 - Develop stronger partnerships among and within countries which will facilitate the development and use of biotechnologies.
- ▶ **Promote Organic farming:**
 - Along with this, we should get back to basics by promoting organic farming.
 - Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, which was launched by the government in 2015 is a right step in this direction, which should be properly implemented.

ECONOMIC ISSUE

Practice of Agriculture Loan Waiver: Critical Analysis



The Recent incidents – the Government of Uttar Pradesh waiving the farmers' loan, dramatic protests by Tamil Nadu farmers at Jantar-Mantar, Delhi and a warning from the RBI Governor against loan waivers - have once again brought farm loan write-offs under public glare.

Hereby, analyzing the concept of agriculture loan waiver and its impacts.

Issue faced by farmers in India

- ▶ The farmers in India are in chronic debt problems. Lack of money prompt farmers to take loans for growing crops and are over debt due to crop failure year by year.
- ▶ The data suggest the farmers are undergoing through very stressful situations as 9,000 farmers have taken their lives in Maharashtra alone in the three years since 2014. Similar scenarios are said to have happened in other states too.
- ▶ Costs of inputs have been increasing, along with the reduction in the prices of agricultural produce in real terms. Apart from it, climate change is causing too frequent crop failures and farming is becoming a loss-incurring business.
- ▶ Some surveys and agricultural censuses show that there is excessive pressure on land, with unabated fragmentation leading to decreasing sizes of average landholdings.
- ▶ The real crisis for Indian farmer is that s/he is not in control of the produce, unlike other businesses, and is dependent on cartel of traders to fetch a decent price. The cartel makes money in case of good or bad crop season as their margins remain intact. In fact, in case of a crop failure the trader profit margin rises whereas the farmer is in distress without remunerative price.
- ▶ The demonetisation has have a short term affect as it compelled farmers to throw away their produce as when the traders refuse to sell them with no alternative available for use in the food processing industry.

Arguments in favour of agriculture loan waivers

- ▶ Objective of loan waiver is to provide relief to the ailing rural economy and bring some respite to the distressed farmers as a large population is dependent on agriculture.

- ▶ Farmer suicides are rising and one of the main reasons is indebtedness. Nothing is more important than saving the life of a farmer and thus one shouldn't question loan waivers.

Arguments against agriculture loan waivers

Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor and State Bank of India Chairman expressed their reservations over waiving crop loans in U.P.

Following arguments are raised against loan waivers:

- ▶ **Negative effect on economy:**
 - **Rising NPA's:**
 - This scheme had made people unenthusiastic about repaying their loans in anticipation of future write-offs especially when assembly elections are due.
 - This has increased the rate of non-repayment and thus has contributed to the rise of non-performing assets which is not good for economy. In 1990, there was a loan waiver by the VP Singh government, and it took almost nine years for banks to recover from this scheme worth Rs.10,000 crore.
 - **Leads to fiscal deficit:**
 - Loan waivers cost tax payers. For instance, about Rs.525 billion was spent on the loan waiver of 2008, as per the International Council for Research on International Economic Relations. This increases government's fiscal deficit.
- ▶ **Might be good for individual farmers, but not for agriculture**
 - **Non-productive use of credit:**
 - CAG report found that many beneficiaries took loans for non-agricultural purposes. About Rs.20.5 crore was spent on debt waivers for these kinds of loans.
 - Farmers can never repay a loan if a major portion of loan credit is used for unproductive purpose.
 - So, the loan waiver scheme might be good for 'farmers' as individuals, but not for 'agriculture'.
 - **Priority Sector lending targets not met:**
 - Major reason for banks to violate priority sector and other guidelines is the non-repayment of loans by farmers. Thus, banks will become reluctant in future to give loans for agriculture sector.
 - **Over-emphasis of credit:**
 - Credit in agriculture has been given too much importance while other factors responsible for productivity (like ensuring irrigation, timely inputs and technology) and improved market opportunities have been ignored.
 - According to the 'Report of Expert Group on Indebtedness' chaired by R Radhakrishna, indebtedness is just a symptom and not the root cause of this crisis. The factors contributing to this crisis are "stagnation in agriculture, increasing production and marketing risks, institutional vacuum and lack of alternative livelihood opportunities."

- **Short-term:**
 - The benefits of the loan waiver scheme would be very short-term, and the same problem of indebtedness might arise in the next season also.
 - This is because of the lack of a long-term solution in this approach, the productivity and the yield will not increase and many farmers would continue to be defaulters.
 - “Loan waiver is an attempt to cure the symptom and not the disease.”
- ▶ **Flaws in the concept of loan waivers**
 - **Land holding is the wrong criteria:**
 - The scheme aims to help the small and marginal farmers, but the definition on the basis of the size of land holdings does not make much sense. According to MS Swaminathan, in rain-fed, arid, and semi-arid areas, income from agriculture is very uncertain even for farmers having 4 or 5 hectares of cultivatable land and is closely dependent on the behaviour of monsoon.
 - **Discouraging the honest farmers:**
 - Loan waivers create a moral hazard by effectively punishing those who repay their loans.
 - The farmers who have invested out of their savings rather than borrowings would be deprived of the benefit of this scheme.
 - Also, the scheme covers only crop loans, and farmers who have invested in infrastructure would be discriminated against even though they have to pay back the loans out of crop yields only.
 - **Ignores informal source of credit:**
 - Informal sources of credit outweigh the formal sources in case of small and marginal farmers.
 - Still, the problem of indebtedness due to informal sector lending is not considered in the loan waiver scheme.
 - **Ignores landless laborers:**
 - Landless laborers are even more vulnerable as they do not even have the option to sell land. There is no respite for the landless laborers in the loan waiver scheme.

Flaws in the implementation of loan waivers

Following are the findings of the CAG performance audit of the Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 –

- ▶ **Inclusion, exclusion errors:** 13.5% of the eligible beneficiaries were excluded from the list of eligible farmers, while 8.5% of the beneficiaries were not eligible for debt waiver.
- ▶ **Ineligibility to get fresh loans:** In almost 6% of the audited accounts, farmers were not extended relief in accordance with their entitlements i.e. they were deprived of their rightful benefits.
- ▶ **Extension of fresh credit:** After extending benefits under the scheme, the lending institutions were required to issue certificates to farmers to ensure that the farmer was eligible for applying for fresh loans from the institution. However, in many cases it was not done. And due to this, farmers could not apply for a fresh loan.

- ▶ **Monitoring:** There was Lack of independent checks by RBI and NABARD on the lending institutions.

Way ahead

Agriculture is still the mainstay of our economy. Every effort should be made by allocation of sufficient funds to agriculture.

Short-term measures:

- ▶ In the short term an attempt can be made to restructure bad farm loans (particularly in regions where farmers' suicides have taken place), as in the case of industry, before writing them off.
- ▶ 'Report of Expert Group on Indebtedness' chaired by Radhakrishna has recommended (i) Rescheduling of Loans of Farmers Affected by Natural Calamities; and (ii) Formalization of Informal Credit to solve the problem of rural indebtedness are very relevant.

Medium-Long term measures (alternative use of resources):

- ▶ There could have been an alternative use of the huge amount of government resources that have been spent on the loan waiver scheme, to help all the farmers in general that are suffering due to the 'Agricultural Crisis'.
- ▶ The budget should give a large push to core issues like public investment in infrastructure, land and water management including rain water conservation and watershed development, research and extension, price stabilisation etc., to make cultivation viable and profitable.
- ▶ Various studies have shown that improved accessibility due to investment in rural roads gave the farmers a chance to learn about modern agro-economic practices, improved the accessibility to input markets and has reduced transportation costs.
- ▶ Apart from this, crop insurance should emerge as the main vehicle to cope with rural distress. Instead of stressing on loan waivers, government should ensure proper implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

Conclusion

The idea of loan waiver seems to be bad politics as well as bad economics because it may win the political party some votes but is not suitable in the long run. Waiver of loan is a plain action where the credit climate is hampered. It will be counter-productive not only for the state but also for the entire credit market.

Apart from being an effective political weapon, waivers promise instant relief to farmers. But they punish farmers who have been diligent with repayments and encourage all sorts of wrong behaviour—lax credit discipline and the use of borrowed funds for non-agricultural purposes.

The problems related to agriculture need creative engagement through which the surplus workers in the farming sector can be taken away to more productive sectors through education and skilling thereby making farming more profitable and sustainable for all stakeholders.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces - 2017

**Context**

A revised version of the Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces- 2017 (the first version was released in 2006 and it is a classified document) has been released by Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) and Chief of the Naval Staff. This document offers insight into the principles that guide the Indian military's approach to war-fighting.

The document focuses on India's conception of its national security and its strategy for managing threats across the "full spectrum of military conflict." In this sense, the document addresses the principles guiding the Indian military's approach to everything from nuclear war to internal security and counter-insurgency.

What is Military doctrine?

Doctrines are generic and basic documents without going too much into specifics. Military doctrine is a guide to action, rather than hard and fast rules. It is Fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. A Joint Armed Forces Doctrine coalesce, synthesise and harmonize the tenets, beliefs and principles of the different Services into one common, officially enunciated and accepted guideline for carrying out Joint Operations. Doctrines is derived from various sources such as history, nature of threats, political decisions, technology, inter-service relationships, as well as strategy.

Concerns raised in the Doctrine

- ▶ The fragile security environment in the Af-Pak region and neighbouring support to proxy war in Jammu & Kashmir, lends a possibility of it being a conduit for eastward spread of fundamentalist and radical ideologies.
- ▶ India remains concerned about the presence and role of external powers in the Indian Ocean Region, adding security challenges are exacerbated by several countries vying to acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- ▶ India's threats primarily emanate from the disputed land borders with certain neighbours and that the need to address consequences of instability and volatility in parts of India's extended and immediate neighbourhood remains a priority.

Some salient features of Doctrine

- ▶ The doctrine explicitly acknowledges that so-called "surgical strikes" will, going forward, be a formal part of India's retaliatory toolkit against "terror provocations." India claimed to demonstrate this in September 2016, after the deadly Uri attack.

- ▶ The joint doctrine proposes joint training of personnel, unified command and control structure besides pushing for a tri-service approach for modernisation of the three forces. On operational issues, it said, in case of war the land, air and naval commanders will have to jointly formulate, orchestrate and implement war plans to ensure a well-oiled fighting machinery.
- ▶ The doctrine will facilitate establishment of a broad framework of concepts and principles for joint planning and conduct of operations across all the domains such as land, air, sea, space and cyber-space.
- ▶ The doctrine also talked about the steps initiated for establishment of the 'Defence Cyber Agency', 'Defence Space Agency' and 'Special Operations Division'.
- ▶ Higher Defence Organisation will foster further inter-Service coordination in planning, execution of operations and force planning.
- ▶ Coordination with relevant agencies like RAW, Intelligence Bureau and Intelligence organisations of the para-military forces as part of the Joint Intelligence Committee under the National Security Adviser is an imperative to the intelligence structure.
- ▶ Given recent debates on potential shifts in Indian nuclear strategy, the presentation of India's nuclear strategy in the document is revealing. First, this may be the first authoritative document released by the Indian government to drop the phraseology of "credible minimum deterrence" (CMD) for "credible deterrence" (CD) instead. CMD has been a mainstay in India's nuclear strategy since the release of its draft nuclear doctrine in 1999 and so its omission in the 2017 joint doctrine stands out.

Indigenization of Procurement

Another important pronouncement under the "National Military Objectives" is: "Enable required degree of self-sufficiency in defence equipment and technology through indigenization to achieve desired degree of technological independence by 2035." This probably presents the biggest challenge of all given the fledgling state of the domestic defence-industrial complex.

Critical analysis

- ▶ The doctrine fails to mention anything about the jointness within the Indian military. Doctrine stated this issue as "Jointness implies or denotes possessing an optimised capability to engage in Joint War-Fighting and is not limited to just Joint-War Fighting (Joint Operations)" with limited clarity.
- ▶ It creates an unnecessary controversy about India's nuclear doctrine by describing it as "credible deterrence" instead of "credible minimum deterrence". This distinction is crucial as India's draft nuclear doctrine specifically mentions the latter.
- ▶ The doctrine also reiterates the basic tenets of the Indian nuclear doctrine, no-first use (NFU) and credible deterrence, contrary to recent calls to revise the NFU and speculation in the West that India would resort to a first strike.
- ▶ It adds that conflict will be determined or prevented through a process of credible deterrence, coercive diplomacy and conclusively by punitive destruction, disruption and constraint in a nuclear environment across the Spectrum of Conflict.
- ▶ Further Special Forces units will be "tasked to develop area specialisation in their intended operational theatres" to achieve an optimum effect.

Conclusion

The Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces will serve as a cornerstone document for application of Military Power in a synergized manner leading to enhanced efficiency, optimum utilization of resources and financial savings. It will also establish a broad framework of concepts and principles to understand India's approach to Joint Planning and conduct of operations across all the domains of conflict i.e. land, air, sea, space and cyber-space, In addition, the Doctrine will also serve as a reference document for all the three Services to plan integrated operations.

However, achieving these broad objectives requires seamless synergy between the three services which is difficult to achieve in present scenario.

ECONOMIC ISSUE

About Phased Manufacturing Programme



In a bid to make India a mobile manufacturing hub of the world over a period of next few years, the Centre has introduced Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP). The scheme would promote domestic production of mobile phones by providing tax relief and other incentives on components and accessories used for the devices.

In this article we shall look at meaning of Phase Manufacturing Program and its implication on local manufacturing and why there is a need to introduce it in Cell phone Industry. At last we would try to decode this announcement with broad policy prevailing to boost manufacturing.

What is phase Manufacturing Program?

As per definition given in 8th five year plan, a phased manufacturing programme is one under which domestic manufacturers were hitherto required to increase the domestic input-content of their products in a specified time period.

In the context of recent notification by government on cell phone manufacturing the Phased Manufacturing Programme has been notified with the objective of substantially increasing the domestic value addition for establishment of a robust Cellular mobile handsets manufacturing eco-system in India.

The PMP aims to take this growth story to a new level and it is estimated that the value of India's domestic mobile handset manufacturing industry would grow exponentially over the next 5-10 years.

Why phased manufacturing in Cell phone?

Some companies have the potential to create many "good jobs" in the formal manufacturing sector for relatively unskilled workers. Indeed, improving employment prospects and wages was the primary motivation for countries like China and states like Tamil Nadu to embrace manufacturing Products such as mobile phones.

Recent economic research argues that "what you export matters", because exporting develops a country's local know-how and supply chain networks, bringing it closer to the global frontier for the exported good. These skills may be more transferable across certain industries than others. For example, it may be easier to make cars—a complex product—once a country has developed expertise in making motor bicycles—a simpler but related product. Similarly, developing cell phone industry through phased manufacturing may make India ready for higher end Electronics manufacturing. In this sense, what a country manufactures today matters not just

because it affects employment and growth today, but also because it shapes the set of products a country can profitably produce tomorrow.

The idea that producing certain goods may allow one to later branch out into other related but higher growth areas is borne out in China's history. When China first entered the mobile phone assembly space, it was producing only electrical connectors and cables; now it is producing sophisticated, high growth and high valued-added products such as smart phones and tablets.

How would phase manufacturing program spur local industries?

To promote indigenous manufacturing of Cellular mobile handsets, in the Budget 2015-16, a differential Excise Duty dispensation, i.e. Countervailing Duty (CVD) on imports @12.5% of mobile handset and Excise Duty @1% without input tax credit was made available to domestic manufacturers of Cellular mobile handsets. Parts, components and accessories for the manufacture of Cellular mobile handsets; Parts/sub-parts/ inputs for the manufacture of such parts and components were exempted from Basic Customs Duty (BCD), CVD/ Excise Duty and Special Additional Duty of Customs (SAD). This gave an impetus to the Assembly, Programming, Testing and Packaging (APTP) model of manufacturing Cellular mobile handsets.

To promote depth in manufacturing of domestically manufactured Cellular mobile handsets, a phased manufacturing roadmap has been prepared keeping in view the state of play of the design/ manufacturing ecosystem in the country, wherein through appropriate fiscal and financial incentives, indigenous manufacturing of Cellular mobile handsets and various sub-assemblies that go into the manufacturing of Cellular mobile handsets shall be promoted over a period of time. The intention is to substantially increase value addition within the country.

At present, India imports basic chipset for mobile handsets but there has been a spurt in the production of other mobile components. Over the next 10-12 years, PMP aims to make India a manufacturing hub of mobile components. With PMP, the share of locally-procured components in the manufacturing of feature phones will go up from about 15 to 37 per cent and for smart phones from about 10 to 26 per cent, leading to the setting up of a "robust indigenous mobile manufacturing ecosystem in India."

Conclusion

In order to create jobs for more and more number of youth joining labour force India need to create formal sector jobs. The highest employment potential is in manufacturing sector which currently accounts for 16% of GDP and 42% in China. This highlights the need for giving impetus to manufacturing and increasing its share in GDP. 'Make in India' intend to increase the share of manufacturing to 25% of GDP by 2020. Similarly, Foreign Trade Policy 2015-2020 entails boosting domestic content in manufacturing and creating strong domestic base in high value goods like electronics. Introduction of Phase Manufacturing program should be seen as a stem in a small step in this direction.

ECONOMIC ISSUE

New NPA Resolution Policy



It has now been eight years since the NPA problem or more loosely twin balance sheet problem first materialised, and still no resolution is in sight. Public sector banks are grappling with non-performing assets or bad loans amounting to Rs. 6 lakh crore and on other hand the financial position of the stressed debtors is deteriorating, the ultimate cost to the government and society is rising – not just financially, but also in terms of foregone economic growth and the risks to future growth.

The recent Ordinance has given approval to new NPA resolution policy and in this article we shall look at ingredients of this policy, reasons for such a policy and its implication.

What does Ordinance provides for?

The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017, empowered the central bank to issue directions with regard to stressed assets. The Union Cabinet approved a set of key measures to tackle the non-performing assets (NPA) mess in the banking system. The measures — widely expected as a new NPA resolution policy — involve amendment to the Banking Regulation Act. The amendment is being made through an ordinance route. Under the agreed policy, the oversight committee (OC) will have special powers to resolve NPAs. So, RBI can now direct banks to initiate insolvency proceedings with respect to specific borrowers who are in default, and can appoint OC to advise banks on the resolution of stressed assets.

Indications are that the new policy will allow banks to take a haircut within permissible limit. A new formula to give effect to this is being put in place. The OC will recommend the extent of haircuts that banks can take using this formula. These measures aim at encouraging banks to be more proactive in NPA resolution as well as improve co-ordination among banks.

Why there is a need to give more power to RBI?

Stressed assets are concentrated in a remarkably few borrowers, with a mere 50 companies accounting for 71 percent of the debt owed by IC1 debtors. On average, these 50 companies owe Rs 20,000 crores in debt, with 10 companies owing more than Rs 40,000 crores a piece.

The RBI has over the past few years introduced a number of mechanisms to deal with the stressed asset problem. Three of these mechanisms are particularly notable. For some time, the RBI has been encouraging the establishment of private Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs), in hope that they would buy up the bad loans of the commercial banks. This strategy, however, has had only limited success.

Many ARCs have been created, but they have solved only a small portion of the problem. So the RBI has focussed more recently on two other, bank-based workout mechanisms. In June 2015, the Strategic Debt Restructuring (SDR) scheme was

introduced, under which creditors could take over firms that were unable to pay and sell them to new owners. The following year, the Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A) was announced, under which creditors could provide firms with debt reductions up to 50 percent in order to restore their financial viability. Their success, however, has been limited because of following problems:

- ▶ **Acute coordination failures** - Large debtors have many creditors, who need to agree on a strategy. This is often difficult when major sums are involved.
- ▶ **Serious incentive problems** - Public sector bankers are even more cautious in granting debt reductions in major cases, as this may attract the attention of not only the investigative agencies, but also the wider public.

Is there any other Alternative?

One possible strategy would be to create a 'Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency' (PARA), charged with working out the largest and most complex cases. Such an approach could eliminate most of the obstacles currently plaguing loan resolution. It could solve the coordination problem, since debts would be centralised in one agency and incentive problem as it could be set up with proper incentives by giving it an explicit mandate to maximize recoveries within a defined time period.

However, government has opted for giving more teeth to RBI oversight committee. As RBI shall look at all big cases this shall also solve coordination problem.

What are the implications of the ordinance for the bank NPAs?

The Union government has now empowered itself to direct the RBI to take necessary steps to initiate the NPA resolution process once a default has been established. The earlier provisions of the Banking Regulation Act did not allow the government to direct the RBI to enforce NPA resolution for cases of default. This is a significant change. At one level, it allows the Union government a toehold into an area that was strictly the domain of the central bank. This might be objectionable on the ground that it undermines the central bank's authority over such matters.

At another level, it projects the role of the political establishment as a proactive agent in bank NPA resolution.

Conclusion

It is important to solve NPA problem as this problem has impeded GDP growth as stressed balance sheet of both corporate and banks has reduced investment in the economy. The ratio of investment to GDP is declining since 2011 and unless the trend is reversed it is difficult to achieve fast (double digit), inclusive and sustainable growth.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

Climate Change Impact on Small Island Developing States

Context

Due to the rising sea level caused by global warming, other low-lying island nations such as Kiribati, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Micronesia and Nauru may get drowned.

High sea levels have already resulted in displacement of people in several small island nations. These island nations require immediate remedies, including migration, compensation and reduction in GHG emissions.

Hereby, analysing the impact of climate change on Small Island Developing States.

About Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

- ▶ Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are maritime countries that tend to share similar sustainable development challenges. These countries are across the globe in the Caribbean, the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and the Mediterranean and South China Sea. An estimated 60 million people live in Small Island Developing States. These are broken down into three geographic regions, with each region having its own regional cooperation body. These are:

Regions	Regional cooperation body
Caribbean	The Caribbean Community
Pacific	The Pacific Islands Forum
Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS)	The Indian Ocean Commission

- ▶ The SIDS was first recognized as a distinct group of developing countries at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.
- ▶ Subsequently following key documents have been produced to assist the SIDS in their sustainable development efforts –
 - Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) of 1994,
 - Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) of 2005 and
 - SAMOA Pathway of 2014.
- ▶ They face various challenges like Small but growing populations, Limited resources, Remoteness, Susceptibility to natural disasters, Vulnerability to external shocks, Excessive dependence on international trade and Fragile environments. But the most burning challenges at present faced by them is that of climate change.

Challenges faced by climate change

Although these countries emit less than 1% of global greenhouse gases (GHGs), they are likely to suffer most from its adverse effects and could in some cases even become uninhabitable. Ninety per cent of the SIDS are in the tropics. And thus many are seasonally affected by extreme weather events – tropical storms, cyclones and hurricanes. Climate variability, droughts and flooding are also features of their weather pattern.

Potential impact of climate change

- ▶ **On Human settlement (displacement):**
 - In most SIDS, narrow coastal plains provide attractive locations for human settlements.
 - In some countries, particularly low islands and microatolls, resettlement outside the national boundary may have to be considered. Implementing this could become extremely complicated, however, especially for densely populated coastal lowlands.
- ▶ **On Water resources:**
 - Climate change and sea-level rise are likely to threaten freshwater resources through saltwater intrusion within freshwater aquifers.
- ▶ **On Food security:**
 - Subsistence agriculture is under stress due to shortage of freshwater, heat stress, changes in extreme weather events, such as tropical cyclones, floods and droughts.
 - The availability of fish can be affected by changes in water temperatures
- ▶ **On biodiversity:**
 - Global warming can threaten the diversity of marine ecosystems such as coral reefs (due to coral bleaching), the habitats of endangered species and the breeding sites of sea birds.
- ▶ **On Economy:**
 - Coastal erosion (The loss of land along coastlines due to sea-level rise) will have profound adverse impacts on the tourism industry and on infrastructure.
 - For most SIDS, tourism is an important contributor to national economies. For example, tourism accounts for 95 per cent of the gross national product in the Maldives. Tourism could be disrupted through the loss of beaches, coastal inundation, degradation of coastal ecosystems, saline intrusion, damage to critical infrastructures, and the bleaching of coral reefs.
- ▶ **Human health:**
 - Many SIDS lie in the tropical zone, where the climate is favourable for the transmission of tropical diseases. With a warming climate there could be even more of an increase in the incidence of these diseases.
- ▶ **On Socio-cultural resources:**
 - Sea-level rise and climate change, coupled with other environmental changes, have already damaged some coastal protected areas and traditional heritage sites in several Pacific islands.

Way ahead

- ▶ **Need of an integrated approach:** SIDS require integration of appropriate risk reduction strategies with other sectoral policy initiatives in areas such as

sustainable development planning, disaster prevention and management, integrated coastal management, and health care planning.

- ▶ **Recognize it as a global problem:** It is not just island people who are at risk from climate change: 60% of humanity live in coastal areas and therefore share vulnerability to climate change and sea level rise. Low lying coastal areas in all countries are threatened, including agriculturally productive river deltas.
- ▶ **Reduction in GHG emissions:** GHG emissions are projected to grow by 50% by 2050. Any amount of decrease in GHG emissions cannot save the islands from sinking, but a significant decrease in emissions could delay the island nations from becoming uninhabitable, thereby postponing the burden of accommodating mass migration.
- ▶ **International assistance:** Some of the adaptation options identified by SIDS may be costly and beyond their financial capacity. The governments of these countries will therefore need international assistance
- ▶ **Focus on adaptation & mitigation:** Adapting to ongoing and future climate change is critically important for SIDS. At the same time, focus on mitigation also by focusing on activities which reduce fossil fuel dependency and increase electricity services are vital for SIDS to meet their sustainable development objectives, especially on energy security.
- ▶ **Have adequate data for effective adaptation planning:** Most SIDS have not yet been able to undertake an in-depth, nationwide climate change impact and vulnerability assessment in an integrated manner. Without such national assessments decisions on adaptation will be problematic.
- ▶ **Facilitate migration:** More people are likely to migrate from coastal areas of SIDS. Thus the international community should be ready to share the responsibility of domestic as well as cross-border migration.
- ▶ **Need of a single-purpose forum:** For facilitating migration we need a forum to enable negotiations regarding the legal status of migrants and develop adaptive strategies in the destination country to guarantee and to protect dignity and cultural identity of the displaced in the destination country.

Key bodies related to SIDS

UN-OHRLLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. ▶ It is an office of the UN Secretariat. It was founded in 2001. ▶ UN-OHRLLS represents SIDS group of states. it carries out relevant advocacy and seeks international support for its client group with the UN.
ASOIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) is an intergovernmental organization of low-lying coastal and small island countries. Established in 1990. ▶ It performs lobbying functions for the SIDS within the United Nations system. ▶ AOSIS has a membership of 44 states, of which 39 are members of the United Nations and 5 observers from all around the world.

SCIENCE ISSUE

South Asia Satellite: Significance

Context

India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F09) has successfully launched the 2230 kg South Asia Satellite (GSAT-9) into its planned Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO). South Asia Satellite is a communication satellite built by ISRO to provide a variety of communication services over the South Asian region.

Hereby, analyzing the benefits of launching the South Asia Satellite.

About the satellite

- ▶ It is a geosynchronous communications and meteorology satellite by the ISRO for the **South Asian region**.
 - ▣ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka are the users of the facilities provided by the satellite.
- ▶ It was launched on GSLV Mark-II rocket (GSLV-F09) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- ▶ The South Asia Satellite has 12 Ku band transponders which India's neighbours can utilise to increase communications.

Applications

- ▶ **Communication:** The satellite will facilitate DTH television, VSAT links, tele-education and telemedicine.
- ▶ **Disaster management support:** The satellite will facilitate DTH television, VSAT links, tele-education and telemedicine.
- ▶ **Meteorology:** It is also equipped with remote sensing technology and thus enables the real time data weather condition and help in observations of the geology of the South Asian nations (i.e. mapping of natural terrain and resources).
- ▶ **Improve governance:** It will help in better governance, better banking and education in remote areas and linking people with top-end medical services through telemedicine. Its benefits also include deeper IT connectivity and fostering people-to-people contact.

Timeline

- ▶ During the 18th SAARC summit held in Nepal in 2014, Indian PM Modi mooted the idea of a satellite serving the needs of SAARC member nations as a part of his **Neighbourhood first policy**.
- ▶ But India rejected Pakistani offers, saying that it wanted the project to be a **"Gift"** and multi-national collaboration would be time consuming. As a result, Pakistan declined to participate in the project.
- ▶ Since Pakistan opted-out of the satellite project, so it couldn't be called a SAARC satellite. Thus it was renamed as **South Asia satellite**".

Significance of the launch

The significance of the launch has been discussed below:

► **Neighbor-first policy:**

- India has gifted regional communications satellite worth Rs. 450 crore for free to our neighbors without asking anything in return. This shows that not only shows that India is willing to use its space capabilities as a tool of diplomacy, but also shows that we have a large heart.

► **Development of south Asia:**

- SAARC nations – which are economically lagging with limited technological resources – would receive in communication, telemedicine, meteorological forecasting and broadcasting.
- By this it will not only solve the problems of the region but will also spur economic growth in the region.

► **New frontier of cooperation among SAARC nations:**

- In the words of PM, “With this launch we have started a journey to build the most advanced frontier of our partnership. The South Asia Satellite tells us that even the sky is not the limit when it comes to regional cooperation.”
- The sentiments were equally shared by Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani who stated that “If cooperation through land is not possible (because of Pakistan’s reluctance to grant transit rights for Afghanistan-India trade), we can be connected through space.”

► **If not SAARC, then SAARC-minus one:**

- Pakistan opted out of the project on the ground that India refused to technical help from her (even though everyone knows that Pakistan’s space program is primitive as compared to India).
- But still India went ahead without Pakistan. This shows that India will continue to cooperate with its neighborhood – be it in the form of SAARC, or in the form of SAARC-minus one. By this India have silently told Pakistan that its obstructionist attitude (whether in motor vehicle agreement or south Asia satellite) will not stop India from carrying out its neighbor-first policy – be it in the form of SAARC, or in the form of SAARC-minus one.

► **Containing China in South Asia:**

- This is also one of the many steps towards containing China’s growing influence in the region.
- Even in pace also, China is gradually entering south Asia. SupremeSAT (Pvt) Limited, a Sri Lankan satellite operator has partnership with China’s state-owned satellite manufacturing institution China Great Wall Industry Corporation.

► **Techno-diplomacy is the new frontier:**

- By launching south Asia satellite, India has taken the first step in techno-diplomacy.

Conclusion

The new satellite would change the face of South Asia and expand connectivity from land and water to space. The launch has also added yet another feather to ISRO’s cap. India created space history and broke record by launching 104 satellites from a single rocket in one go in mid-February, this year. So far, ISRO has ferried 226 satellites into orbit, including 180 from abroad. ISRO is attempting to increase its capacity to deliver by scaling up the frequency of launches to 12 per year from the seven, currently, by building more satellites and lowering the cost of access to space.

GOVERNANCE ISSUE

Mob Lynching and Rule of Law

Context

India has witnessed many incidences of Mob Lynching in various parts of the country in pasts such as Dadri Lynching 2015, Hotel Hayat Rabbani Lynching in Jaipur 2017, Mob Lynching of rape accused in Nagaland, Vandalising of Church by some radical groups in Delhi, Torching of a Hospital in Bihar etc. which were totally against the law of the land, detrimental to society and catastrophic to personal and cultural liberty.

Such incidences have questioned the enforcement of law and order in India and growing discontent among masses who take law and order in their hand subverting the legal procedures and institution, inciting the situation of great injustice and mass suffering.

What is Mob Lynching?

- ▶ Mob means crowd and Lynching means to punish (a person) without legal process or authority, especially by hanging, beating or any other means for a perceived offense or as an act of bigotry. Putting together the words, Mob Lynching means putting aggrieved person to death or punishing him/her by the crowd subverting the legal procedures and taking the law into their hand.
- ▶ The act takes many forms and shapes: flogging suspected robbers to death; slashing suspected criminals; stripping suspects naked and beating them with blocks, sticks and iron rods till they die; subjecting suspects to humiliating and degrading treatments and sometimes setting them ablaze.
- ▶ Mob Lynching is more than just a murder. A murder may occur in private, but a lynching is a public spectacle which demands an audience (a mook crowd).
- ▶ In India, Mob Lynching is more due to communal violence among the ethnic groups. Such as the Dadri mob lynching which is due to suspicion over beef eating by a Muslim family in which the head of the family was lynched to death by the mob. Similar incident happened in Hotel Hayat Rabbani Jaipur where the mob stormed the hotel over the rumors of serving beef.
- ▶ Mob lynching can also be due to cooked story as in the case of Nagaon, Assam where two men killed by mob for allegedly trying to steal cows. In West Bengal the rumours of child dacoits, child lifters and molesters has resulted in mob lynching of two men and brutally beating up two women (one NRI).

How it violates Rule of Law?

- ▶ Mob action, put bluntly, is an embarrassment to our democracy. It casts an ugly slur on our national identity. It represents imprints of visible tokens of incivility and brutishness and violates rule of law.

- ▶ Such an act raises a question on the use of Police and Judiciary when the Justice is being delivered by the crowd.
- ▶ The modern concept of Rule of Law considers the accused as not guilty until proven and gives fair chances to the person accused to represent their point of view in a fair manner, but such mob lynching infringes the rights of person and thus violating the Articles of Fundamental Rights and DPSPs guaranteed by our Constitution.
- ▶ Mob lynching perpetuates a cycle of violence, creates a culture of fear, and rejects personal accountability for violent acts that are committed in the name of justice. Such an unruly behaviour is motivated by emotional outburst (revenge, retaliation and anger) of mob or community which brings bad perception about India questioning its law and order situation and the issue of human rights violation across the globe.
- ▶ The Rule of Law expresses society's values, its ideas, conception of justice as such it reflects the society that endangers it.

Present scenario

- ▶ The reason pointed out is rapid urbanization which creates divides between people in economic and social arena. However, Mob justice is a result of a severe lack of faith in local police forces and judicial systems.
- ▶ It appears that, we, the people of India are driving themselves back to the Hobbesian State of Nature with the height of our lawlessness.
- ▶ The law has made wide provisions to punish anyone that's found criminally liable. Yet, it is not for the common man to punish another citizen. By doing so the crowd is violating the Article 21 of Indian Constitution and the set precedence of Human Value also recognized by UNHRC, and various others international laws.
- ▶ Mob Lynching as a matter of fact violates the two cardinal principles of natural justice: *audi alterem partem & nemo iudex in causa sua*. The former implies that no one must be judged or condemned without fair hearing or trial, while the latter means that you cannot be a judge in your own cause.

Conclusion

- ▶ In order to truly combat mob justice, one has to combat the blatant ineffectiveness of local and regional authorities. Effectiveness of the Rule of Law is solely dependent on the trust and confidence of the people in the legitimacy of these institutions.
- ▶ Spreading awareness of human rights and the need to allow the system to take care of alleged criminals is one sure way of mentally sensitizing the populace to see what makes mob lynching wrong. This can only sink deep into the populace if all stakeholders such as the NHRC, Various Law enforcement agencies, Department of Social Welfare and others put the necessary measures in place to aid the justice delivery system in becoming a force to reckon with when there is a crime.
- ▶ As we continue to toot that justice delayed is justice denied, let us also be conscious of the fact that justice rushed is justice crushed.

ECONOMIC ISSUE

Issue of Farm Suicide in India



The recent growing clamour of farm loan waiving across several states of India and an ongoing petition in the Supreme Court (by Centre on Farmers' suicide) have given fuel to the debate on Farmers' suicide once again.

A study conducted across 13 states by the Union Agriculture Ministry throws up the all too familiar reasons that drive farmers' suicide in India which include frequent crop failure, vagaries of the monsoon, absence of assured water resources, attacks of pests and diseases, debts, farming and social causes etc.

On the basis of analysis done by National Crime Record Bureau, several commentators and researchers have claimed for long that farmers are the most distressed group in the country as their suicide rates are higher than that of others.

Hereby, analyzing the reasons for farmer suicide and steps needed.

Agricultural Labourers (Non land holders) Suicide:

- ▶ Agricultural Labourers are those who do not have any land holdings and are dependent on work done on other's farm for their livelihood.

Why do Farmers' suicide?

- ▶ There is a wide array of factors that has led to the increasing spate of farmer suicides in India. The lands are not as productive as before, the markets are failing, the debts are piling up, and the pests cannot be kept at bay. More than an economic problem, this has now assumed political and humanitarian dimensions, especially since the past decade.
- ▶ NCRB reports up to 2015 reveal identical causes of suicides among farmers — bankruptcy, farming-related issues, family problems, illness, drug abuse or alcoholism.
- ▶ A widespread drought and rising indebtedness led to 12,602 suicides by farmers and agricultural labourers in 2015, shows data released by the National Crime Records Bureau.
- ▶ **Other problems faced by farmers in India:**
 - ▣ Problems in maintaining farm livestock owing to increasing costs.
 - ▣ Problems in getting credit at good terms and conditions because of reluctance of commercial banks.
 - ▣ Lack of proper irrigation facilities and bad monsoon.
 - ▣ Absence of mechanization.

- ❑ Insufficient transport facilities.
- ❑ Farm population per hectare increased whereas per capita income has declined.
- ❑ Diversion of farm land into non agricultural land.
- ❑ APMC and local traders exploiting farmers.
- ❑ High input cost and worsened quality of soil due to excessive use of fertilizers.
- ❑ Political incentives given to the farmers' family after suicidal death by politicians further motivates other farmers to take the step at the cost of family welfare.

National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) Report

- ▶ Farmers' suicide saw a spike of 41.7 % in 2015 from 2014. The year 2015 saw 8,007 suicides by farmers compared to 5,650 in 2014.
- ▶ The report says less than 2% of farmers who committed suicide were large farmers with more than 10 hectares of land.
- ▶ More than 72% of farmers who commit suicide have less than two hectares of land.
- ▶ Medium farmers, who have between 2 hectares and 10 hectares of land, contributed a fourth of the 8,007 farmer suicides in the country in 2015.
- ▶ Farm labourers are also more likely than farmers to fall into the trap of moneylenders and end their lives.
- ▶ Small farmers were 45.2% of all farmer victims, while marginal farmers made up 27.4%.
- ▶ The recent data is interesting because all of us thought that moneylenders were the culprits of the piece. Even today, more than half the people take loans from moneylenders.
- ▶ Moneylenders were more flexible compared to banks and microfinance institutions. The organised sector is less flexible because rules don't permit them flexibility. The microfinance sector is worse. They put pressure by telling others in self-help groups that their share would be cut if one person does not pay loans in time. This creates social pressure, as well. Many also send goons to the neighbourhood to scare borrowers.

State wise distribution

- ▶ Agricultural labourers in Maharashtra were the most suicide prone, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Kerala.
- ▶ These states together accounted for 82.6% of all such suicides (3,797 out of 4,595) in the country during 2015.
- ▶ Goa, Manipur and West Bengal, besides all Union Territories except Puducherry, reported no incident of suicide by agricultural labourers during 2015.
- ▶ Among suicides committed by "Small Farmers" — Maharashtra again topped with a 35.5% share, followed by Karnataka which accounted for 20% of such suicides.

Affidavit in Court

- ▶ In an affidavit filed in SC, the Centre agrees that the deaths of farmers are an unfortunate issue, but it can only formulate a line of action to resolve the issue, the actual implementation at the ground level is the responsibility of the individual states.

- ▶ Affidavit is filed on the basis of a petition filed by the organisation, Citizens Resource and Action Initiative (CRANTI) against Gujarat. The court expanded the ambit of the petition to farmers' suicide across the country and had asked the centre to provide an action plan to end the human tragedy.
- ▶ The affidavit suggests crop insurance, crop and enterprise diversification, government intervention through minimum support price (MSP) covering cost of production plus a reasonable profit margin, establishing farmers' welfare cells as support groups and regulating informal credit market as remedies.
- ▶ The Centre controls most important policies pertaining to farm livelihoods whether it is minimum support price, credit, crop insurance, disaster compensation, trade policies and so on. Often, the States are not consulted on these matters. The activists demand for a 'Permanent Farm Income Commission' to assess the income of farmers and adopt suitable measures.

Relief Measures by the Government

- ▶ The government affidavit, however, points to relief measures such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, which provides farmers' full insurance and had 390.02 lakh farmers covered and 386.75 lakh hectares insured with a sum of Rs.1,41,883.30 crore during Kharif 2016. The Agriculture Ministry said 172.94 lakh farmers had been covered with a total sum of Rs.69,851.37 lakh crore during Rabi 2016-17.
- ▶ In the budget 2017-18, the government had increased the target of agriculture credit from Rs. 9 lakh crore to Rs. 10 lakh crore.
- ▶ Besides, the Reserve Bank of India has allowed State and district level banks to take a lenient view on rescheduling of loans if crop loss is 33% or more.
- ▶ The government has highlighted the Kisan Credit Card scheme and the e-National Agricultural Market Scheme launched on April 14, 2016 to "create a single unified market for the State and ultimately for the nation for agricultural commodities."

What can help the Farmers?

- ▶ Farmers' need to be educated about various facets of modern farming and facilities, and centres of excellence need to be set up within their reach to help them.
- ▶ Agricultural universities need to discover new science-based practices and technologies.
- ▶ Farmers' need to be given better access to credit and at better terms and conditions.
- ▶ Markets should be regulated properly.
- ▶ Direct provision of capital to farmers by government.
- ▶ Encouraging integrated, contract, and cooperative farming.

Conclusion

- ▶ Successive governments have focused more on control rather than prevention. It will take more than short-term measures and disproportionately implemented programmes to wade through the crisis. For Example: The wave of farmer suicides that hit Marathwada last year could have been avoided if there was a proper irrigation system, weather forecast information, competent crop insurance and buffer stocks in cold storage facilities to distribute to the families in their time of need. A concrete reorientation of policy is crucial to stopping this depressing trend.

GOVERNANCE ISSUE

EC Proposal for Countering bribe-for-votes


Context

The Election Commission has sent a proposal to the government seeking permanent legal powers to cancel elections in case there is credible evidence of voters being bribed.

The Commission was seeking the power to debar the candidate(s) from contesting polls for five years if found bribing voters which the Law Ministry has shot down the proposal.

The Commission was asking to bring changes in the Representation of the People Act to ensure that candidates contesting Lok Sabha and Assembly polls are disqualified once they are charge-sheeted by a court.

Introduction

The Election Commission has asked the government to disqualify candidates listed in charge sheets for bribing voters (for up to five years), a move which comes after it found that “innovative ways” were used for luring electors in a Tamil Nadu byelection.

The Recent Incidents

- ▶ In a recent Radhakrishnan Nagar (Tamil Nadu) Assembly Bypoll (after the demise of TN Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha), the Election Commission had indefinitely cancelled the polling after it found that money power was used to influence the voters.
- ▶ In its lengthy order, the panel had pointed out that political parties and their top leaders used “innovative ways” to bribe voters in the Assembly seat to outwit law enforcement authorities mandated with keeping an eye on poll expenditure.
- ▶ Many complaints were received by the panel on possibilities of inducement of electors by distributing cash and gifts in innovative forms like tokens, prepaid phone recharge coupons, newspaper subscription, milk tokens, money transfer in no-frill accounts in banks and even mobile wallet payment to mobile numbers.

Proposals of Election Commission

- ▶ The Election Commission (EC) has proposed disqualification of sitting MPs and MLAs charge-sheeted for the offence of bribery or undue influence in polls under Sections 171B and 171C of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- ▶ Currently, Section 8 of RP Act enlists several offences, including poll graft, for which a legislator can be removed and barred from contesting polls for six years only if convicted. Such a disqualification will operate until an acquittal by the trial court or for six years, whichever is earlier.

- ▶ At present, the Election Commission can countermand an election for use of muscle powers and wants more power under the election law to countermand an election where money power is used.
- ▶ It can use its constitutional powers under **Article 324** to countermand a poll over use of money power, but it wants the power to be vested to it under law. The logic behind such demand is that it does not want to use its constitutional powers too frequently.
- ▶ EC says Article 324 is an extraordinary power which should be used sparingly and not to counter a common malpractices like bribery.
- ▶ The EC wanted to amend the Section 58A of the Representation of the People Act-1951 which empowers the election watchdog to adjourn or cancel election in case of booth capturing. The Commission wanted to insert a new section, 58 B, to enable it to take similar action if voters of a constituency are bribed by political parties.
- ▶ The EC had earlier suggested to the home ministry to make poll bribery a cognizable offence by amending the Criminal Procedure Code, apart from asking the law ministry to consider including large scale poll bribery as a valid ground for countermanding of poll.
- ▶ EC wants the government to bring bribery and undue influence in elections, under Sections 171B and 171C of IPC, under the ambit of the Law Commission's proposal even though the maximum punishment for it is imprisonment of up to one year only. "The proposal is based on the premise that bribery of electors is a serious offence, which needs to be dealt with firmly.
- ▶ The Home Ministry is learnt to have accepted this and is currently working on a CrPC amendment Bill.

Argument put by the Law Ministry

- ▶ The Ministry state that it may not be advisable to compare booth capturing with allegations of bribery of voters since the circumstances are incomparable. Allegations of bribery are always a matter of investigation and proof. Besides, the Commission has been dealing with such situations in the past under powers vested in the Article 324 of the Constitution. Therefore, the Ministry advised to maintain the status quo.
- ▶ However, in recent (January) decision the Law Commission, which felt the current provisions, was incapable of curbing the growing criminalisation of politics owing to long delays in trials and rare convictions, had recommended that disqualification should kick in even if a court frames charges for offences punishable by a jail term of five years.

Section 58A of the Representation of People Act 1951:

Adjournment of poll or countermanding of election on the ground of booth capturing:

- ▶ If at any election:
 - Booth capturing has taken place at a polling station or at a place fixed for the poll (hereafter in this section referred to as a place) in such a manner that the result of the poll at that polling station or place cannot be ascertained; or
 - Booth capturing takes place in any place for counting of votes in such a manner that the result of the counting at that place cannot be ascertained, the returning officer shall forthwith report the matter to the Election Commission.

- ▶ The Election Commission shall, on the receipt of a report from the returning officer under sub-section (1) and after taking all material circumstances into account, either:
 - Declare that the poll at that polling station or place be void, appoint a day, and fix the hours, for taking fresh poll at that polling station or place and notify the date so appointed and hours so fixed in such manner as it may deem fit; or
 - If satisfied that in view of the large number of polling stations or places involved in booth capturing the result of the election is likely to be affected, or that booth capturing had affected counting of votes in such a manner as to affect the result of the election, countermand the election in that constituency.

Conclusion

The poll watchdog's proposal is the latest in a series of demands made by EC to deal with rising incidents of graft in elections in recent years.

However, considering the growing incidents of poll bribe, there is a need to provide more teeth to the EC so that it can ensure the free and fair elections in the time to come. Now the decision lies on the central government to move for amending the RP Act.

ECONOMIC ISSUE

Micro-irrigation: Status in India



With distribution of subsidy for drip and sprinkler irrigation and propagation of advanced technologies, farmers having small land holdings in rain-fed areas have managed to raise crops and earn a decent income.

Major beneficiaries are horticulturists raising sapota, mango, lemon, banana, guava, cashew, papaya, hybrid amla, drumstick and vegetables, and floriculturists raising jasmine, rose, tuberose and other flowers.

Hereby, analyzing the meaning and benefits of micro-irrigation.

Introduction

Water is considered as the most critical resource for sustainable agricultural development. However, the increasing population, and more erratic rainfall, is likely to reduce the water supply for agriculture. Therefore, as the water is a precious and limited resource so it should be conserved and handled carefully in the most efficient manner, to minimize the dependence of agriculture on monsoon. The solution lies in examining the innovative models for their contribution to higher efficiency of water usage.

There are few methods to minimize water use in agriculture. (a) Cropping system needs to be changed by developing seeds which can be grown with minimum water. (b) By recharging the groundwater aquifers by preserving the rain water. (c) By use of micro irrigation system in agriculture.

What is micro-irrigation?

Micro irrigation is a scientific method of irrigation carrying desired water and nutrients direct to the root zone of the plant, drop by drop. The system has extensive network of pipes at operated at low pressure. At pre-determined spacing outlets are provided for emission water generally known as emitters.

- ▶ Micro irrigation has seen a steady growth over the years. Since 2005, area covered under micro irrigation systems has grown at a CAGR of 9.6 percent Geographically, states with the largest area under micro-irrigation include: Rajasthan (1.68 mh), Maharashtra (1.27 mh), Andhra Pradesh (1.16 mh), Karnataka (0.85 mh), Gujarat (0.83 mh) and Haryana (0.57 mh).
- ▶ Majority of the area covered under micro irrigation systems comes under sprinkler irrigation with 56.4 percent, while 43.6 percent comes under drip irrigation.
- ▶ Area under drip irrigation has shown stronger growth in recent years, growing at a CAGR of 9.85 percent in the 2012-2015 period while sprinkler irrigation has grown at a pace of 6.60 percent in the same time period. Overall, the area under micro-irrigation has grown at a CAGR of 7.97 percent in this time frame.

- ▶ India now has close to 8 mh under micro-irrigation. This is attributed to the large cultivable area and area under irrigation.
- ▶ Penetration of micro irrigation systems is still very low in India. With half the cultivable land in the country still being rain-fed, there is mammoth potential for promoting micro irrigation in India.

Advantages of Micro Irrigation Systems:

The benefits are:

- ▶ As a result of the low-application rate of irrigation systems, water is applied slowly allowing it to be absorbed rather than quickly result in surface runoff.
- ▶ It reduces salinity hazards to plants. Minimizing the salinity hazard to plants irrigated by drip irrigation can be attributed to dilution of the soil solution's salt concentration, elimination of leaf damage caused by foliar salt absorption with sprinkler irrigation.
- ▶ Drip irrigation offers considerable flexibility in fertilization. However, fertilizers must be completely soluble in water in order to be distributed evenly through the drip system.
- ▶ Labour and operational costs can be reduced by simultaneous application of water, fertilizer, herbicide, insecticide, fungicide and other additives through the drip irrigation system. Localized dry and wet patterns facilitate these simultaneous operations. Further drip irrigation systems can be easily automated where labour is limited & expensive using simple automation equipment such as electrical, mechanical or battery operated time clocks that activate pumps and solenoid valves at selected time during the day.
- ▶ Not only will the low-application rate reduce operating costs, the lower operating pressure means a reduction in the pumping head requirements, which will result in pumping energy savings.

Government programme

Recognising the importance of micro irrigation, the government has taken various initiatives since 1992. The first real thrust however came in 2006, when the government launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for micro irrigation. This was later upgraded to the National Mission on Micro Irrigation (NMMI) and was implemented through the year 2013-14. For the year 2014-15, NMMI was subsumed under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) and was implemented under the On Farm Water Management (OFWM) component of the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna (PMKSY) was launched in 2015, integrating micro irrigation in the flagship scheme as an integral component. The scheme focusses on providing an end-to-end solution to the irrigation supply chain. One key differentiator for micro irrigation is that when compared to other components of this scheme, which include creating infrastructure to bring water to farms and watershed development, micro irrigation presents a quick-win opportunity for all the stakeholders where the implementation can be seen on ground within months. Developing infrastructure takes years while bringing area under micro irrigation is a task that only requires a few months.

Apart from various schemes, there have also been large-scale projects taken up at the state level that have seen success for example Gujarat Green Revolution Company (GGRC) and Andhra Pradesh Micro Irrigation Project (APMIP). The common thread running through these are the presence of a team dedicated to promote micro irrigation and strong information technology (IT) backed operations.

Policy proposals in Union Budget 2017-18

A micro-irrigation fund under National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) will be set up with an initial corpus of Rs 5,000 crore. The long term irrigation fund which was set up under NABARD in 2016-17 has been provided with an additional Rs 20,000 crore in this year.

Issues

While each government initiative in the past decade has had its own merits and shortcomings, there are a few fundamental challenges that have not yet been dealt with, which include the following:

- ▶ **Lack of dedicated team and IT-backed operations:** Tracking the installation of a micro irrigation system, step by-step, from initiation of work order to installation and payment is still not possible in a majority of states, which is a major source of inefficiencies in the system where IT can play an important role. Also the teams that are implementing the micro-irrigation schemes in various states (with an exception of few) are not dedicated for the said implementation, hence a focused approach is missing.
- ▶ **Delay in release of guidelines/government orders, uncertainty and sporadic changes in scheme guidelines:** The lack of smoother/ longer-term guidelines pose a major challenge as evidenced by the fact that operational period of the schemes, on an average, is only 5 months where the farmers miss the utilisation of the micro irrigation system during the peak demand season.
- ▶ **Subsidy disbursement process:** Continues to be a big impediment in the growth of the industry. Unavailability of subsidy funds for installations already approved, delayed release of funds, identification of beneficiaries among others, leading to significant delays.
- ▶ **Absence of easy financing mechanisms for farmers:** Farmers face major challenges in finding financing option for the micro irrigation products and in case they do find a financing source, there are high collateral demands.

Way ahead

- ▶ In order to achieve desired outcomes in the micro-irrigation sector institutional capacities must be enhanced especially in relation to developing appropriate managerial and technical skills for facilitating effective irrigation management.
- ▶ Building capabilities for the formulation of district plans for effective irrigation through adequate coordination amongst various district level departments and convergence between various programs is vital.
- ▶ Further, appropriate/adequate incentives, credit and/or subsidies will have to be provided for adoption of micro-irrigation and aligning cropping patterns with water.

GOVERNANCE ISSUE

Supreme Court Verdict on Misuse of PILs


Context

Frivolous and groundless filing constitutes a serious menace to the administration of justice. They consume time and clog the infrastructure. The Supreme Court has asked all courts to impose "exemplary costs" on people who file frivolous petitions.

This will make habitual PIL petitioners stop in their tracks and think twice before moving a petition before the SC and HCs.

Hereby, analyzing the concept of PILs and issue related to its misuse.

Introduction

Public Interest Litigation means litigation for the protection of the public interest. It is litigation introduced in a court of law, not by the aggrieved party but by the court itself or by any other private party.

Public interest litigation is the power given to the public by courts through judicial activism. Indian judiciary has used the tool of PIL quite effectively for the cause of environmental protection. But the judiciary has shown wisdom in denying false petitions seeking to advanced private interests through PIL as, evident from the decision of the Supreme Court.

This also led to the dismantling of the traditional concept of locus standi. The courts could be approached by persons espousing the case of the underprivileged, who were by themselves not in a position to access the courts. The rules of procedure in technicalities were loosened, justice became flexible and the courts became accessible. As a result, one has seen a surge in public causes being taken up in various the High Courts as well as in the Supreme Court. The use of public interest litigations in matters pertaining to the environment, including clear air and preservation of forests, has led to dramatic and palpable improvements in the environment

However, it is shocking to note that the courts (SC and HC's) are flooded with large number of so-called public interest litigations. The parameters of public interest litigation have been indicated in large number of cases, yet, unmindful to the real intentions, objectives, courts are entertaining such petitions and wasting valuable judicial time, which could be otherwise utilized for disposal of genuine cases.

Misuse of the PIL's

The public interest litigations, misuse comes in various forms. Publicity, private interest, political rivalry, or other oblique motives can be a motive for its misuse. The tragedy is that it retards the flow of justice delivery system.

In PIL cases, the most crucial question for the court is to measure the seriousness of the petitioner, and to see whether he is actually the champion of the cause of the

persons or groups he is representing. The effect of public interest litigation should go beyond the sphere of the parties present in the proceedings, and it is to be noted that public interest litigation must be accompanied by adequate judicial control so as to prevent this technique from being used as an instrument of coercion, blackmail or for other motives.

Highlight of the recent SC verdict

About petition

After 64 Public Interest Litigation petitions (PILs) making “scandalous” insinuations against a former Chief Justice of India and judges of the Supreme Court and the Rajasthan High Court in the past 10 years, the Supreme Court finally lost patience and imposed Rs. 25 lakh costs on an organisation, Suraz India Trust, and its chairman Rajiv Daiya, and banned them from ever approaching a court in the country.

The court asked Mr. Daiya to explain the reason and circumstances behind filing each of these petitions.

According to Dahiya, none of his 64 PILs was heard properly. His petitions, filed in public interest, were thwarted by the Supreme Court. The judges had kept dismissing them, saying they were “not inclined” to hear them.

Verdict

The court noted that courts have to filter out such frivolous petitions and dismiss them with costs so that the “message goes in the right direction that petitions filed with oblique motive do not have an approval of the court.

“People must not rush to courts to file cases in profusion under the attractive name of public interest. They must inspire confidence in courts and amongst the public. Time has come to weed out the petitions, which though titled as public interest litigations are in essence something else.”

Significance

Frivolous and groundless filing constitutes a serious menace to the administration of justice. They consume time and clog the infrastructure. Productive resources, which should be deployed in the handling of genuine causes, are dissipated in attending to cases filed only to benefit from delay, by prolonging dead issues and pursuing worthless causes.

Thus SC in its judgment said exemplary costs were inevitable and even necessary because the liberal access to justice had led to chaos and indiscipline. “The sanctity of the judicial process will be seriously eroded if such attempts are not dealt with firmly. A litigant who takes liberties with the truth or with the procedures of the court should be left in no doubt about the consequences to follow.”

Guidelines by Supreme Court

- ▶ Encourage genuine and bonafide PIL and discourage and curb those filed for extraneous considerations.
- ▶ Instead of every individual judge devising his own procedure for dealing with public interest litigation, it would be appropriate for each HC to properly formulate rules for encouraging genuine PILs and discouraging PILs filed with oblique motives. HCs should frame rules in this regard within three months.
- ▶ Verify credentials of petitioner before entertaining a PIL.
- ▶ Ascertain correctness of facts mentioned in PIL.
- ▶ Check whether substantial public interest is involved.
- ▶ Give priority to PILs involving larger public interest.

- ▶ Ensure that the PIL seeks redressal of a genuine public harm or injury and that there is no personal gain, private motive or oblique motive behind it.
- ▶ Impose exemplary cost on busybodies and frivolous PILs.
- ▶ Courts' directions have immensely benefited marginalized sections of society in a number of cases. It has also helped in protection and preservation of ecology, environment, forests, marine life and wildlife.

Conclusion

Right judicial instinct and the skill of the judiciary may stop the misuse of public interest litigations and restore it to its pristine and useful character. Courts have to filter out such frivolous petitions and dismiss them with costs so that the “message goes in the right direction that petitions filed with oblique motive do not have an approval of the court.”

However, PIL does require a complete rethink and restructuring as the overuse and abuse of it can only make it ineffective. There is a need for some strong measures to promote and protect the actual purpose for which the PIL came into being, i.e. the enforcement and other legal rights of the people who are poor, weak, ignorant of legal redressal system or otherwise in a disadvantageous position, due to the social and economic background.

This tendency can be curbed only if courts across the system adopt an institutional approach which penalises such behavior.

GOVERNANCE ISSUE

NITI Aayog – Three Year Action Plan

Context

NITI Aayog has recently come up with three year action Plan for the year 2017-2020; this action plan is a sub-component within fifteen year vision document to transform Indian Economy.

The Three-Year Action Agenda covers the last years of the Fourteenth Finance Commission i.e.the period from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

This three-year action plan will be part of a seven-year strategy paper and a fifteen-year vision document (spanning 2017-18 to 2031-32), which are in progress.

The Action plan recommends policy changes and programs for different sectors ranging from Agriculture to Governance, Sustainability, etc.

However, two recommendations related to education and local manufacturing have far reaching implications to achieve the Goals of Make in India. i.e. to increase the share of manufacturing to 25% by 2020. Hereby, in this article we are focussing on that.

Benefits of Three Year Agenda over Five Year Plans

The Three Year Action Agenda has replaced the five year plans – an economic approach adopted by PM Nehru – which became history when the 12th Plan, the last of the Five-Year Plans, came to an end on March 31.

The benefits of this move are:

- ▶ In a country as big and diverse as India, centralized planning could not work beyond a point due to its one-size-fits-all approach. Thus it was time to come out of the legacy of five-year plans which are reminiscent of centrally planned economies like the Soviet Union and Romania.
- ▶ **Better accountability with responsibility:** The cycle of five year plan and the term of government are not synchronous. Thus if there is a new government in power then it will be implementing the priorities set by earlier government and the previous government is not held accountable for the targets set in the five year plan. With the three year cycle, government is held more accountable for its action on the plan.
- ▶ **Equal focus on present and future:** By making this three-year action plan a part of a seven-year strategy paper and a 15-year vision document, government can focus on short-term goals which can be changed from time to time in a dynamic environment with eyes firmly stuck on the long-term policy objectives.

- ▶ **Combines domestic aspiration with global aims:** According to NK Singh (member of erstwhile planning commission), the new format of three, seven, fifteen combines domestic aspiration with global aims as the fifteen-year vision is coterminous (to a certain extent) with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ▶ With the old distinction between “Plan” and “non-Plan” expenditure gone, India is now on the road of becoming a full-fledged market economy. Thus we don’t need detailed planned targets, rather we just need to set broad priorities.
- ▶ It will focus on shorter goals which can be reviewed after every three years to ensure that they are relevant to the demand of time.
- ▶ They will also be aligned with the Finance Commission recommendations as the finances would be provided through the Finance Commissions.
- ▶ **Flexibility:** The document is not required to be approved by the Union Cabinet which also does not make it binding for the government and its ministries and departments which was in the case of five year plans. Also the three-year strategic paper would not be as comprehensive as the five-year plan and is not expected to go into minute details of each sector.

Important Recommendations

- ▶ **NITI Aayog for abolishing 2% Custom Duty on mobile circuits**

The Budget had imposed a 2% special additional duty (Custom duty) on imports of populated printed circuit boards (PCBs) used for mobile phones, as a measure to push the Make in India campaign.

The duty is aimed at providing ‘adequate protection to domestic industry,’ so that local manufacturers of PCBs get an incentive of sorts. Handset prices were expected to rise by over 1% owing to the duty.

Calling for a ‘low or no duty regime’ for key inputs of electronic products, 2% customs duty on PCBs would provide modest protection to domestic manufacturers, but hurt the mobile phone manufacturers.

Implication of rolling back of custom duty on manufacturing

In its three year action plan 2017-2020 NITI aayaog has noted “At this stage, it is best for us to let mobile phone manufacturing flourish and not be handicapped by tariffs on its components. As this happens and we begin to export mobile phones in large volumes, the way to the manufacture of other components will be automatically paved,” thus it is required to return to zero duty on PCBs.

The world market in electronic products is \$2 trillion compared with only \$65 billion in the domestic market. Therefore, an aggressive export strategy is essential to credibly prepare ourselves for the fourth Industrial Revolution. To increase India’s electronic manufacturing volumes and create jobs in the sector, we must address the high costs of inputs, reduce the administrative burden and provide appropriate incentives to producers.

Though India has the potential to become a large electronics manufacturer and exporter due to its large labour force, a growing domestic market and proximity to other economies on the electronics value chain, the sector accounted for just 3% of India’s merchandise exports in 2015.

- ▶ **Less Teaching & More research in Universities**

The goal of Make in India is to make India a hub of Manufacturing, Design and Innovation. The innovation part shall require a transformation in current system

governing Universities. Universities are nursery of Innovation like Universities in USA are pioneer in research and Innovation. Success of higher education system in Innovation sector rests on less regulation, autonomous governance, transparency and outcome.

NITI Aayog in its recently released three Year Action Plan has highlighted the issue of ensuring that investments in research better translate to more products and bolster “innovation and development”. It has recommended that faculty at “world class” institutions prioritise research and be allowed to “reduce their teaching responsibility,” if required.

This will give faculty and researchers required Time and Space to dedicate towards Research and Innovation and enter into collaboration with Private sector to serve their specific needs. More Innovation means more new form of Niche Products to serve local and Global needs, and higher manufacturing activities.

Other Recommendations

- ▶ Such universities also ought to be allowed to recruit research staff from abroad and be encouraged to compete for research projects from industry. The so-called ‘world class universities’ are part of a government-outlined plan to raise funding for 10 public and 10 private universities and mould them into institutions that rank among the world’s best.
- ▶ The NITI Aayog also pitches for a new ‘National Science, Technology and Innovation Foundation’ headed by a distinguished scientist. This will coordinate with science and technology departments, ministries, governments and private sector bodies and deliberate on national issues and recommend interventions.
- ▶ Universities ought to be ranked according to metrics such as teaching, research output and funding won from the private sector.

Conclusion

The above inputs to reduce custom duty and enhance innovation have a common thread to boost manufacturing and increasing rate of economic growth. Both measures are required within the holistic framework as envisaged in Action Plan. However, the quantum by which Manufacturing will increase due to reduction in custom duty and how well Universities become innovation oriented depends majorly on time bound implementation.

Thus to ensure that it doesn’t meet the same fate of the five year plans (targets which remain on paper), NK Singh committee has recommended the following measures:

- ▶ Firstly, in the case of five year plans, Parliament gave little time in analyzing the broader issues of the five-year plans. Thus we should constitute a separate parliamentary committee on planning, which could meaningfully engage with the NITI Aayog’s policy prescriptions.
- ▶ Secondly, for fostering cooperative federalism in true spirit, we should create state level bodies on the line of NITI Aayog to ensure that the state-level policies are in sync with the “Three Year Action Agenda”.

The beginning is in right spirit, but only time will tell that how many of its proposals are actually implemented and most importantly how effectively the Trimurti’s – three year action agenda, seven-year strategy paper and a fifteen-year vision document are linked together to present a holistic vision for the country.

SOCIAL ISSUE

'Political Manipulation Threatens Free Press'

Context

- ▶ *The word Media defines a 'medium, signifying mode or carrier which is intended to reach and address a large target group or audience in order to disseminate information.*
- ▶ *As the fourth pillar of democracy along with judiciary, executive and legislature, media of today has an all embracing role to act against the injustice, oppression, misdeeds and partiality of our society.*
- ▶ *Today when politicians are taking full advantage of their positions, an evil nexus of mafia and crime syndicate is making the life of the common man miserable, taxpayer's money is siphoned out for the personal gain of the influential and ordinary people are a mere spectator.*
- ▶ *To suppress the Media, the law of the defamation or the law of the contempt or laws of sedition all of these are routinely and worryingly used against the press in India by the political bosses' mis-utilizing/over utilizing their powers.*
- ▶ *Hereby, analyzing how political manipulation threatens free press.*

Suppression of Media

- ▶ With the advent of variety of digital devices and many other sources to read and watch the news/information, the role of media has increased widespread. With modern Information and Communication Technology the events are being disseminated live which reaches to the masses on current time. With these developments, media now possess the ability to influence comparatively more number of masses in quick time.
- ▶ Since last few years the tendency of suppressing news (truth) is on the rise in India. Those who criticize or oppose the government over an issue are declared 'anti-nationals' and their voices are being suppressed.
- ▶ But what India, and many other countries where populist parties promoting a nationalist agenda, are failing to recognise is that 'a free and independent media is essential in a healthy democracy - where questions must be asked, issues should be debated and policies are required to constantly evolve'.

Findings of World Press Freedom Report

- ▶ The incidences of Hindu nationalists trying to purge all manifestations of "anti-national" thought from the national debate, self-censorship is growing in the mainstream media which is being evidenced from slipping India's rank down

three places to 136th among 180 countries in the 2017 World Press Freedom Rankings.

- ▶ In the index released in April, India was ranked just three places above Pakistan and was one notch below violence-torn Palestine. India's neighbours Bhutan and Nepal were placed at 84th and 100th rank, respectively.
- ▶ The report says that the journalists were increasingly targeted on online smear campaigns and threats. Prosecutions are also used to gag journalists who are overly critical of the government, with some prosecutors invoking Section 124A of IPC (Sedition which is punishable by life imprisonment).
- ▶ The watchdog was also critical of a social media and internet gag in Kashmir due to the absence of any protective mechanism, during coverage in sensitive regions.
- ▶ Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark took the first four positions in the rankings. The United States was at the 43rd position. Large swathes of sub-Saharan Africa, including dictator-ruled Zimbabwe, performed better than India.
- ▶ China was 176th among 180 countries and was described as the "world's leading prison for citizen journalists". North Korea was at the bottom of the index.

Press freedom 'never under so much threat'

Media rights watchdog Reporters Without Borders' world rankings



Legal Sanction over Freedom of Press in India

- ▶ In a democratic country like India, Media is like a sword arm which acts as a watchdog to protect public interest against malpractices and create public awareness.
- ▶ Democracy has its own importance for Media, that's why it is known as its fourth pillar. The **Indian constitution** extends the right to freedom of speech and expression under **Article 19** and, by proxy, to the press or media as well.
- ▶ However, even this provision in the constitution comes with a clause. Similar to individual rights of expression, the Indian press is barred from reporting an incident or expressing an idea if it violates the integrity and sovereignty of the nation, the security of the State, Public Order, Preserving Decency, Preserving Morality, in relation to contempt of the court, defamation, or incitement to an offense.

- ▶ This legal right also applies in instances that jeopardize India's friendly relations with foreign nations, disrupt public order and are capable of inciting offences. Additionally, the Indian press is also governed by certain other laws, including the **Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act (POTA)** and the Official Secrets Act-1923.
- ▶ For the first half-century of independence, media control by the state was the major constraint on press freedom. Former Prime of India, Indira Gandhi famously stated in 1975 that All India Radio is "a Government organ, it is going to remain a Government organ..." With the liberalization starting in the 1990s, private control of media has burgeoned, leading to increasing independence and greater scrutiny of government.

Issues

- ▶ The media in South Asian countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh has never been more obedient to corporate and political forces as it is today. As these countries are scrutinized for human rights violations and atrocities committed against minority groups, the freedom of journalists to objectively report is ceasing to exist, with governments and legal systems failing to protect or rescue them.
- ▶ Every day, journalists' battle for autonomy, fight for their rights to speak out freely, protect media pluralism and counter the ills of monopolies.
- ▶ While Pakistan and Bangladesh have been well-known press freedom battlefields in recent years, with many journalists and bloggers killed, wounded or sued for speaking the truth.
- ▶ Being a country of over 1.25 billion people where the media was until recently deemed free and fair with equal access the question arises over India's position on World Press Freedom Report 2017.
- ▶ Today, prominent Indian politicians and corporate entities are making increasingly underhanded investments in news media, and the press is failing to serve as a potent, unbiased tool to inform public perception. In this way, it is also increasingly unable to provide an arena for public debates where issues of shared interest can be represented and discussed.
- ▶ The main casualty has been the ability of the citizen to find out the objective truth, as different media outlets divide into camps on any major issue, polarizing the reporting and their readerships.
- ▶ This has become so evident that in a report to the government, India's regulatory body, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), recommended legislation to empower journalists for free and fair expression.
- ▶ The TRAI Report suggests that Indian journalism, with its lack of freedom and self-regulation, cannot be trusted now and — it is currently known for manipulation and bias. The report also says that "the Instances of irresponsible reporting and sensationalization are common these days when controversial news stories are bandied in the public domain through media outlets."
- ▶ Persecution is fast becoming the norm for Indian journalists. "What was earlier intermittent is now increasingly taking the shape of a distinct trend in the targeting of journalists. While more journalists want to expose corporate corruption and crony capitalism, it is increasingly being seen that corporations are openly intimidating writers and journalists."
- ▶ In this environment, how can journalists not be forced—or feel compelled for the sake of job security—to report in ways that reflect the political opinions and corporate interests of shareholders?

Conclusion

- ▶ It is true that media is playing an outstanding role in strengthening the society. Its duty is to inform, educate and entertain the people in impartial manner presenting the truth as it is without the influence of majority or minority and power or powerless upon it.
- ▶ “If writing and reportage are shackled, it is democracy which gets undermined. It is the people who lose their unfettered right to know thus freedom of press should be maintained.

ECONOMIC ISSUE

Real Estate Act's Rules Notified



In a step that will bring the Real Estate Act closer to implementation, the union government has notified the rules under the Real Estate Act, however only 13 states and Union Territories (UTs) have so far notified rules. In this article we shall look at changes incorporated in the Rules, how shall this act change Real estate scenario in India and some issues which need to be rectified.

Introduction

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 is an Act of the Parliament which seeks to protect home-buyers as well as help boost investments in the real estate industry. The bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 10 March 2016 and by the Lok Sabha on 15 March 2016. The Act came into force from 1 May 2016 with 59 of 92 sections notified. Remaining provisions will come into force from 1 May 2017. The Central and state governments are liable to notify the Rules under the Act within a statutory period of six months.

Changes Incorporated in the Notified Rules

Some changes have been made in the Draft Rules by incorporating some suggestions received from consumer associations and real estate bodies. Notable among them are:

- ▶ Developers have to open an escrow account for all sales proceeds and use this account for all payments for the particular project. 70% of the money collected, has to remain in the escrow account, to facilitate all project-related expenses and the rest of the money can be taken out by the developer to use as they deem fit
- ▶ Projects can only be launched, upon receiving the relevant approvals from the concerned authorities. These approvals have to be put up on the RERA website, along with all the pertinent project details and the project has to be approved by the regulatory authority. Customers can log onto the RERA website, to see the project's details.
- ▶ Sale of properties will strictly be on the basis of carpet area.
- ▶ To incentivize registration of projects and Real Estate Agents with Regulatory Authorities, fee for the same has been reduced by half based on suggestions.
- ▶ Developers will be required to refund or pay compensation to the allottees with an Interest Rate of SBI's highest Marginal Cost of Lending Rate plus 2%.
- ▶ Under the Rules, Adjudicating Officers, Real Estate Authorities and Appellate Tribunals shall dispose of complaints within 60 days.
- ▶ To enable informed decisions by buyers, Real Estate Regulatory Authorities shall ensure publication on their websites information relating to profile and track record of promoters, details of litigations, advertisement and prospectus issued about the project, details of apartments, plots and garages, registered agents and consultants, development plan, financial details of the promoters, status of approvals and projects etc.

- ▶ RERA also states that any structural or workmanship defects brought to the notice of a promoter within a period of five years from the date of handing over possession must be rectified by the promoter, without any further charge, within 30 days, he added. If the promoter fails to do so, the aggrieved allottee is entitled to receive compensation under RERA.
- ▶ There will be imprisonment of up to three years for developers and up to one year in case of agents and buyers for violation of orders of appellate tribunals and regulatory authorities.

Is it a Game Changer?

- ▶ The new real estate act, aimed at bringing transparency and accountability to the sector, protection of interests of both the buyers and builders.
- ▶ The act defines the rights and obligations of both the buyers and developers. Moreover, RERA is likely to bring in more transparency in the Real estate sector, it shall lead the sector to be able to attract more FDIs.
- ▶ This is set to improve the feasibility of financing options availability in the market leading to increased investments and propelling more FDIs and thereby making the system more efficient and home-buyers friendly.
- ▶ Along with making the mechanism transparent, the Bill seeks to establish fast track dispute resolution mechanisms for settlement of disputes through adjudicating officers and Appellate Tribunal. The bill bars civil courts from taking up matters defined in it. Moreover, promoters are barred from changing plans and design without consent of consumers. As there are only 644 consumer courts in the country, more grievance redressal systems would help reduce the litigation costs for the buyers.

Issues to be Rectified

- ▶ **Delay from government agencies:** There can be delays caused by the government, which sometimes takes a lot of time to clear a project. It is up to government bodies to follow strict time frames to approve projects, so that developers can launch, complete and deliver them on time.
- ▶ **No compulsory regulation for projects less than 1000 square meter:** Registration with the regulator will not be mandatory for projects less than 1000 square meter. So, small developers will not be bound to register.
- ▶ **Implementation issues** - Many states are far from ready with the infrastructure and resources to implement it. So far, only 13 states and Union territories have notified the new rules, while most builders and real estate agents said they are still struggling to understand the regulations and are in early stages of preparing themselves to comply with the new Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act.

Conclusion

The Act provides transparency and accountability in the realty sector. The Act set the regulatory oversight and ensures rules are followed by all stakeholders and promote affordable housing for everyone.

However, the recent floods in Chennai and studies in various cities, especially Chennai and Bangalore, show that pressures on space have led to approvals for real estate projects in defiance of environmental objectives. Marshlands and lake beds have given way to apartment blocks. While these homes may be perfectly well-built and legal, environmental and housing ministry has to work together for maintenance of other critical basic amenities.

GOVERNANCE ISSUE

Sharada Prasad Committee Report on Skill Councils


Context

Currently India is young country with 65% of population below the age of 35 years. This means we have more hands to support high growth rates but window of opportunity is nearing a closing point as India is half way through Demographic dividend and it will last till 2040 after which it would taper off. In this context, it is important to skill the young population to make them meaningful contributors to growth story.

To impart sector specific skills Sector Skill Councils started setting up in 2010-11 but they created more confusion and mess than solving the problem. The Government of India, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship constituted a Review Committee for Rationalisation and Optimization of the Functioning of the Sector Skill Councils (SSC).

In this article we shall look at mandate of Sector Skill Councils and try to understand how conflict of interest affect their working and recommendations given by the committee to rectify them.

What are Sector Skill Councils?

Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) are industry-led and industry governed bodies which have been mandated to ensure that skill development efforts being made by all the stakeholders are in accordance with the actual needs of the industry. Presently, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has approved formation of 40 SSCs in different sectors. In order to ensure convergence and optimal functioning of the SSCs as per mandate given under the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015, it has been decided to constitute a Committee to review the functioning of the SSCs and provide a road map for their harmonious growth so as to ensure effective development of skilling eco system in the country

In order to mobilize the private sector to participate in skill development, a public private partnership company, National Skill Development Corporation was created in 2008. The Corporation was supposed to mobilize resources to assist the private sector industry to create training infrastructure and provided training to large number of youth.

Issues Facing the Sector Skill Councils – Conflict of Interest

The committee has come out with various issues which are affecting the effectiveness of SSC these among others include **Conflict of Interest** among various stakeholders.

The SSCs are required to be employer -led and employer-governed bodies and it is expected that the employers of high repute, standing and integrity will form part of

the governing council. They will be able to attract and influence other sectoral employers because of their stature to participate in the SSCs. However, serious issues of conflict of interest have been observed some of which are given as follow:

- ▶ In many cases that a person is holding a governance position and at the same time is also a beneficiary of public funding, primarily, under PMKVY either as a training partner or an assessing body.
- ▶ One CEO has been found to be son in law of Chairman.
- ▶ Many CEOs have been found to be promoting organizations.
- ▶ Many Governing Council members have been found to be training partners.
- ▶ Many SSCs have employees from their parent sponsoring organizations.
- ▶ Two NSDC board members have been found to be SSC promoters and training partners.
- ▶ One NSDC Board member is promoter of 11 SSCs and the only assessing body in many SSCs.

It would appear from analysis that though the SSCs were setup with very high goals and ideals, they have turned into hotbed of crony capitalism. It appears that many of them have tried to extract maximum benefit from out of the public funds and it has all been happening under the nose of NSDC. In many cases, the NSDC itself has promoted them as the governance mechanism of NSDC fosters such functioning. It happened, primarily, because NSDC is hundred percent funded by the government but accountable to its board which consists of majority of private sector industry associations and there has been no strong oversight mechanism created by the Government.

In fact, from the time of its establishment, it was kept away from Parliamentary oversight, audit by Comptroller and Auditor General of India and supervision by Reserve Bank of India. It is using the funds from the Consolidated Funds of India, through NSQF and should have, therefore, been accountable to Parliamentary oversight and audit by the CAG.

It is non-banking financial company and therefore, should have been under the supervisory control of RBI. Board members of the NSDC are the representatives of various industry associations and these associations themselves have sponsored/promoted SSCs. Many of these associations and individuals have also doubled up as Vocational Training Providers and assessing bodies in various SSCs.

All these public funds have been used without serving the two basic objectives of meeting the exact skill needs of the industry and providing employment to youth.

The NSDC was required “to establish, manage, run and promote institutes and polytechnics for imparting skills; to play the role of market maker by establishing a price mechanism, correlating and bridging demand-supply asymmetries and creating a viable skill development chain and to perform the role of multiplier organization by engaging with the best and the most innovative on-the-ground practioners from different fields as the sources of both innovation and practice dissemination”. However, it appears that NSDC has failed to discharge its responsibilities and deviated from its original role.

Recommendations

- ▶ The Committee recommends that the Government should review NSDC role and functioning comprehensively with reference to its Memorandum of

Association and create a strong oversight mechanism to ensure that such conflicts of interest do not arise in future.

- ▶ The NSDC is a public private partnership with 51% equity of the private sector. It is essentially a private sector body and, therefore, not competent to undertake regulatory functions. NSDC has not been able to discharge the responsibility given to it for setting up SSCs effectively. There have been lots of instances of conflict of interest and unethical practices (as mentioned above). The work of setting up of SSCs, therefore, should be transferred to the regulator, NSDA and their Memorandum of Association amended accordingly.

GOVERNANCE ISSUE

Urban Mega Crisis and Alternative Transport



The Increasing population in urban cities and the stressed facilities to cope up with such as transportation, sanitation, water availability, health issues etc. indicates the symptoms of growing Urban Mega Crisis across various cities in India.

The growing income and the buying capacity among masses have enabled them to buy more vehicles causing traffic congestion, pollution, issue of parking, issue of fuel etc.

Considering these factors, there is an immediate need to shift to such a transportation system which is free from pollution with improving our health.

In this situation, promoting cycling in the cities seems to be more suitable in order to cope up with the growing environmental problems, traffic congestion and growing health related issues.

Urbanisation: the Mega Crisis:

- ▶ At 300 million, the urban population of India is still less than one third of its total population. It is projected that by 2045 nearly 800 million Indians will be living in its cities - more than the total population of the whole of present-day Europe.
- ▶ With such a pace of urbanisation, it is inevitable that the number of metros and soon-to-be metros is substantially higher than the official tally.
- ▶ Already, the infrastructures of all the six mega- and 40 million-plus cities of India are under very severe stress. The ground water is depleting rapidly, pollution is reaching crisis levels, the transportation system is in disarray, and sewerage and sanitation are in a shambles, all of which is affecting public health and hygiene which are the great concern for developing cities.
- ▶ According to a new study by consultancy EY (India's growth paradigm, March 2017), India already has two more metros — Jaipur and Surat (apart from 4 Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai) — as well as 10 'high potential' cities which will soon grow to metro-hood: Bhopal, Chandigarh, Indore, Jabalpur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Nagpur, Patna, Vadodara and Visakhapatnam.
- ▶ This mega crisis is leading to the issue of transportation.

Tackling the growing transportation issues:

- ▶ To solve the growing issues of transportation with curbing pollution and health issues, there is need to shift to an eco-friendly means of transportation such as bicycle, E-Rickshaw, and other no-burning-fuel vehicles.

- ▶ Invented in the 19th Century, Bicycles are an important means of transport in almost all urban areas of the world, with large number of people commuting in a big way.
- ▶ Developed countries in Europe have brought back the bicycle as a mode of urban commuting with huge success, while middle-income countries in Latin America are trying to replicate the model.
- ▶ It is time for India to promote bicycle culture as well, so that we burn less fossil fuels, protecting environment while improving our health. Medical experts view cycling as an exercise which, while being less strenuous on the body, is a workout for all the major muscles.

Why Cycling?

- ▶ Urbanization and economic development is increasing the purchasing power of Indian citizens. Although, only 18 out of 1000 are capable of owning a vehicle, India's roads are already overstressed and emission levels are reaching at alarming point.
- ▶ Air pollution is breaking records in India. Delhi, the capital of India, has earned the reputation of being the most polluted city in whole world.
- ▶ Lack of parking space and increasing fuel rates as fossil fuel resources are drying and continuous rise in number of vehicles on road, clearly, the concern here is air pollution, over-crowding and traffic congestion.
- ▶ It cuts traffic trouble and struggle for parking space. A space required to park a car can accommodate 15-20 cycles. There are no fuel expenses, no maintenance cost, no emissions, lesser accident rate, lower road maintenance and many other benefits.
- ▶ Using bicycle cut usage of metal, rubber, steel etc. as less number of vehicles will be manufactured. In every aspect, cycling reduces carbon footprint.

Cycling Culture in World:

- ▶ **Amsterdam** with an urban area population of over 1.1 million people, is the most bicycle-friendly city in the world. As is common in Dutch cities, Amsterdam has a wide net of traffic-calmed streets and world-class facilities for cyclists. All around are bike paths and bike racks, and several guarded bicycle parking stations.

Cycling Culture in India:

- ▶ Raahgiri-Apni Rahen, Apni Azaadi is India's first sustained car-free citizen initiative that began in Gurgaon on Nov 17, 2013. The movement was conceived and is trademarked with the Raahgiri Foundation, consisting of local inhabitants from five organizations – EMBARQ India, I Am Gurgaon, Pedalyatri, Heritage School Gurgaon, Duplays Gurgaon. The initiative needs more expansion.
- ▶ There were some attempts like 'Cycle Chalao' venture that started in 2010 in Mumbai and operated for sometime before its funds dried up.
- ▶ Recently, Delhi Metro launched its first public bicycle sharing scheme for its users to provide last-mile connectivity. The user can either register online or visit a metro station to obtain a smartcard. With this smartcard, user can rent a cycle at rate of Rs.10 per hour.

What India can learn from Bogota?

- ▶ Bogota, Colombia's capital, started a weekly programme called Ciclovía in 1974. Sections of roads were closed on Sundays for motor vehicles for half a day and

only cycles, joggers and walkers were allowed. What started as a small exercise now covers more than 121 km of Bogota's roads, with the participation of one-fourth of its population of eight million, every Sunday and on other holidays, covering around 68 days of the year.

- ▶ Many cities in Colombia and Latin America have adopted Bogota's Ciclovía. Encouraged by the people's response to cycling, Bogota has also developed 400 km of cycle routes and is adding another 120 km.
- ▶ Around 7,00,000 trips are made by bicycle every day, constituting 6 per cent of all journeys. Seeing the popularity of Ciclovía, both public and private institutions sponsor events for spreading their particular messages.
- ▶ In India, a start has been made through "Raahgiri" in certain areas of Delhi, Gurgaon, etc, but the initiative has room for expansion. This will require the involvement of the city administration as it needs some management of routes and traffic.
- ▶ Like in Bogota, other public bodies, such as water boards and health departments, will also have to make their services available to ensure drinking water and health facilities in emergencies.
- ▶ Also, we must keep in mind the weather in various Indian cities. In India, cities in the North Indian plains can have more cycle days in winter, while the hills can have more cycle days in summer.
- ▶ Building cycle tracks must be a part of new town planning. The national highways, like in Colombia and several cities of Europe, could also have separate cycle lanes. Cycling culture, which existed in the 1970s and 1980s in India, before the arrival of cars in big numbers, can be revived.
- ▶ This revival will not mean that we do away with motorised transport. We should look forward to a combination, where some journeys will be by public transport, others by car, others still by bicycle. If there is safety in cycling, many will use it as their prime mode of transport.

Conclusion:

- ▶ It is found in the comparative study of cities that most of the medium and large cities have about 50-75% trips below 5 km trip length. This means there is a considerable number of trips which have the potential to be shifted to the cycle.
- ▶ The conversion of potential cycle trips from other modes is highly likely, if a favourable cycling infrastructure is made available. This requires revising the current design standards to make them bicycle compatible and sustained efforts of capacity building of implementing agencies like municipalities, transport department and public works departments to implement the bicycle friendly infrastructure.
- ▶ The strong initiatives from the government side and active participation from all stakeholders will certainly bring the positive result in the near future to come.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

Impact of Water Crisis on Industrial Development



- “
- ▶ *India is now facing a water crisis situation that is significantly worse than any that previous generations have had to face.*
 - ▶ *Since past several years various cities across India are struggling with clean water availability, the reason being poor water management, lack of technical expertise and fund with municipal bodies and over use of fresh water by industrial bodies.*
 - ▶ *The relationship between availability of water and functioning of industries is quite important as the industries are heavily dependent on water. Drought caused by lack of monsoonal rain, political and institutional incompetence, indifference at central, state and municipal levels make the situation even worst for the Industries across various cities.*

The recent issues and impact:

- ▶ With drought in 10 of the 29 states in 2017, mainly due to poor rainfall in much of the country for two consecutive years, dams and reservoirs are left with unusually low levels of water.
- ▶ The simultaneous effects of agricultural growth, industrialization and urbanization coupled with declining surface and groundwater quantity, intra and interstate water disputes, and inefficiencies in water use practices are some of the crucial problems faced by India's water sector.
- ▶ Owing to a growing imbalance of supply and demand, several industries depend on supply from these reservoirs and due to the shortage; water is being rationed in both residential and industrial areas. Several factories have been shut down in the region due to no availability of water or the increasing cost of water rationing.
- ▶ With civic bodies imposing cuts on water supplied to industrial belts across several states, the resultant shortage could pull down **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** growth by around 40-50 basis points, while the manufacturing sector alone could take a hit of about 50-75 basis points. (100 bps = 1 percentage point).
- ▶ In the state of Maharashtra, one of the most industrialized states in the country is expected to have a negative impact on industrial production in the next 2-3 months.
- ▶ There are three industry categories - food products & beverages, textiles, and paper & paper products - that will get affected the most from this water shortage. These three industry categories weigh 14.4% in IIP-Manufacturing.

- ▶ These three industry segments may push down IIP-Manufacturing growth by around 50-70 basis points. Since the manufacturing segment has a 75.5% weight in IIP, the overall impact on the IIP could be about 40-50 basis points.
- ▶ Economists also pointed out that water crisis hitting India's industrial sector is an emerging phenomenon. "While adverse weather conditions playing spoilsport for agriculture is widespread. The current situation can potentially act as a headwind for manufacturing in certain pockets of the country.

Data on water usage of industries

- ▶ According to Ministry of Water Resources, about 40 billion cubic meter water is used in industrial areas of the country, which is about 6 per cent of total availability of water.
- ▶ According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) of India, about 500 billion cubic meter water out of the total available fresh water is used in industries annually. Out of this, about 10 billion cubic meters water is used by processing industries and 30 billion cubic meters is used for refrigeration purposes.
- ▶ On the other side, according to World Bank, the demand of water for industrial use and power generation is increasing at the rate of 42 per cent per annum.
- ▶ By the year 2025 it would become 228 billion cubic meters as compared to only 67 billion cubic meters in 1999. Thus, water used in industries is about 13 per cent of total available fresh water at present. It is clear from different estimates that demand for water in industries has been continuously increasing.
- ▶ The sectors that could be hit by water crisis are: Food products and beverages, textiles, paper products, cold storage, etc.

Possible Solutions to Water Crisis in India:

- ▶ The effect of increasing demand for water by industries is caused on balanced availability of water resources in two ways- first, to maintain organized supply of its increasing demand and second, to maintain the quality of water in its natural form, so that balanced availability is maintained in all sectors.
- ▶ Thus proper water management is the key to all the problems we face today. The following could be the possible ways to solve water crisis in India.
- ▶ **Imparting awareness on consumption and lifestyles:**
 - ▣ Awareness about water issues is increasing, but translating this into action is progressing slowly. Solutions to managing water responsibly need to involve everyone. There is a need for individuals to be re-educated on traditional methods of farming, and knowledge to businesses and households about how to use water responsibly.
- ▶ **Water Pricing:**
 - ▣ Water pricing and rights go hand in hand with consumers questioning the benefit of higher prices. According to experts from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an international economic forum of 31 of the world's richest countries, raising prices will help lower waste and pollution. In India pricing on water should be implemented on the big industries using higher amount of water.
- ▶ **Developing Water Grid Network:**
 - ▣ We can solve the problem on permanent basis by creating a **Water Grid network** throughout India just like we have created electric grid by which the electricity produced in one part of the country can be quickly transmitted to other part of the country.

- ▶ **Recycling:**
 - People should be taught to reuse water by recycling it for non-drinking purposes. Several low cost technologies are available that can be implemented in group housing areas. The same should be promoted in industries.
- ▶ **Making Mandatory Water Harvesting:**
 - Water harvesting should be made mandatory all over the country. Rainwater harvesting provides an independent water supply during regional water restrictions and in developed countries is often used to supplement the main supply. It provides water when there is a drought, can help mitigate flooding of low-lying areas, and reduces demand on wells which may enable groundwater levels to be sustained. Rooftop rainwater harvesting is another adaptable technique that can be implemented in villages and cities.
- ▶ **Improve irrigation and agricultural practices:**
 - Irrigation accounts for 55-70% of water usage in India. Nearly 60% of the water used in irrigation is wasted. Efficient water use in irrigation should be promoted - be it ground water or surface water. Over drawing of ground water by farmers should be checked properly by efficient mechanism. Government should also think about removing subsidies for drawing ground water.
- ▶ **Increasing Green Cover:**
 - Planting more and more trees maintains water table underground as well as preventing water from evaporating. Newer industries should be asked mandatorily to plant trees in their vicinity to cope up with the developing pollution and water scarcity.

Conclusion

- ▶ The analysis of the spacial and temporal distribution of India's rainfall suggests that while many parts of India can provide for water needs through small scale catchment, there are areas that require larger, longer-term storage infrastructure to buffer precipitation variability.
- ▶ India had been a country where we held our water resources very precious. Such is their place in our society that we even worship them. If we need to deal with this crisis effectively, we need to treat our water bodies with the same reverence which we show in our rituals.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

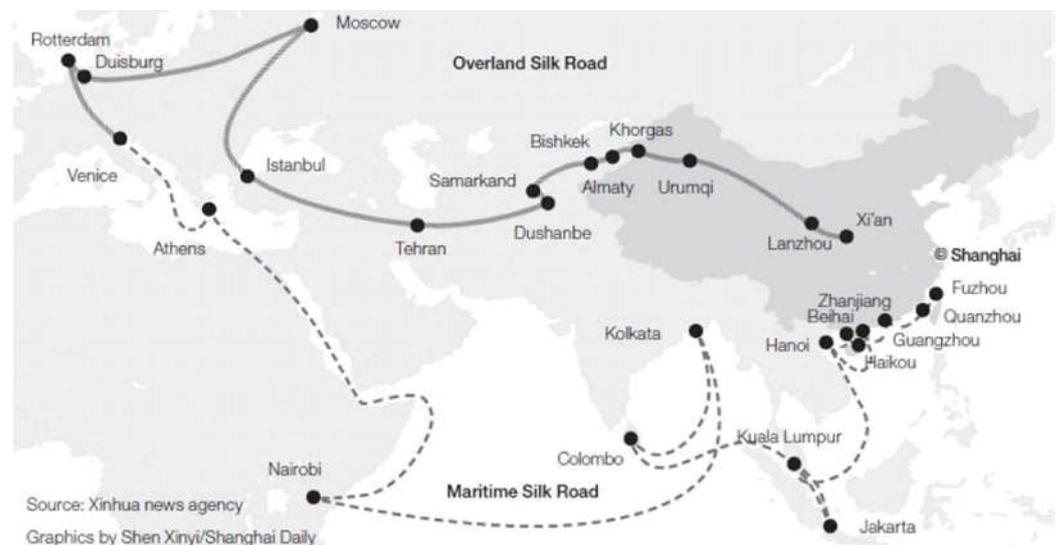
One Belt One Road (OBOR) and India



China hosted the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) from May 14 to May 15 in Beijing where high-level delegations, including 29 Heads of State gathered to discuss China's strategy on belt and road initiative. However, India has boycotted the Summit. Hereby analyzing the OBOR and its implications on India.

Introduction

- ▶ The Belt and Road Initiative, also known as the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project was launched by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013.
- ▶ The project intends to link Asia with Europe and Africa through an overland “belt” and a maritime silk “road”.
- ▶ The project consists of two main components: land-based “Silk Road Economic Belt” (SREB) and Ocean going “Maritime Silk Road” (MSR).



Why has China launched it?

- ▶ **Bridging the infrastructure gap in Asia:**
 - According to China, the Belt and Road Initiative will bridge the ‘infrastructure gap’ and thus accelerate economic growth across the Asia Pacific area and Central and Eastern Europe.
- ▶ **Economic motives of China:**
 - OBOR is aimed at boosting domestic growth in China which has slipped in recent years. In 2016 China grew by 6.7% which is the lowest since 1990.

- According to experts OBOR is a second phase of 'opening up'. Experts also believe that China feels "isolated" as it is not involved with G7, and is limited to the BRICS countries. Thus OBOR provides China another window to continue its economic expansion.
- OBOR also provides China a market to sell its products esp. steel. With the massive demand created by the BRI project, China will solve the problem of huge overcapacity in its domestic industries, especially steel.

Key highlights of the recent forum:

- ▶ Agreement was signed to deepen cooperation on China-Europe railway.
- ▶ China pledged additional RMB 100 billion (\$14.5 billion) into the Silk Road Fund.
- ▶ China Development Bank and Export-Import Bank will set up new lending schemes of 250 billion (\$36.2 billion) and RMB 130 billion (\$18.8 billion), respectively, for Belt and Road projects.
- ▶ China will also provide RMB 60 billion (\$8.7 billion) for humanitarian efforts focused on food, housing, health care, and poverty alleviation.

India and BRI

Why India has not joined BRI?

India didn't attend the Belt and Road forum, not even as an observer as India is apprehensive about the Belt and Road initiative. India's reservations, according to the Ministry of External Affairs, are threefold:

- ▶ The primary objection is that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (part of BRI) passes through Gilgit-Baltistan region and thus ignores India's "sovereignty and territorial integrity". According to political commentators, merely changing the name of CPEC to CSEC (China South Asian Economic Corridor) – as China has offered to India – will not address India's grievances.
- ▶ Second, BRI would lead to Chinese neo-colonialism causing:
 - Unsustainable **debt** burden for communities; and
 - An adverse impact on the environment in the partner countries.
- ▶ There is a lack of transparency in China's agenda. Some experts believe that B&RI is not just an economic project but one that China is promoting for political control.

Criticism of India's decision

Few experts have criticized India for not joining BRI as:

- ▶ India may also face some difficult choices in the road ahead, because as a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and a co-founder of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank it will be asked to support many of the projects under the B&RI.
- ▶ By this India will isolate itself amidst the apparently growing international support for the ambitious project.
- ▶ The partner countries will benefit as this will lead to inflow of billions of dollars in loans for projects.
- ▶ Even countries such as U.S. and Japan, which are not a part of the B&RI have sent official delegations.

Challenges posed by BRI to India

However, the challenges posed by BRI to India are:

- ▶ **China in Kashmir:** China is gradually emerging the real third force in Kashmir. Since 1950s, China is in occupation of Aksai chin; in 1963, Pakistan ceded Trans-Karakoram Tract (Shaksgam Tract) to China; China’s first trans-border infrastructure project in Kashmir — the Karakoram Highway — dates back to the late 1960s and now it’s presence is increasing further with CPEC. Thus China looms larger than ever before over J&K.
- ▶ **China in South Asia:** BRI will massively strengthen China’s commercial, economic, political and security influence in South Asia which will marginalize Delhi’s regional primacy.

Way ahead for India

- ▶ **Improve infrastructure in frontier regions:** Whether it is in Kashmir, Arunachal, the Andamans or the neighbourhood, India’s neglect of its frontier regions has weakened its regional position. Thus, India should improve infrastructure in frontier regions.

Kashmir	▶ Delhi must step up the effort to modernize and deepen J&K’s connectivity with the rest of India.
Arunachal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ While China asks India to downplay the sovereignty argument in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, but it objects to India’s activity in Arunachal Pradesh. ▶ In Arunachal, India should accelerate the state’s economic development and its connectivity to the rest of India.
Andaman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ India should realize the strategic importance of Andaman and Nicobar islands that sit across China’s planned maritime silk routes in the eastern Indian Ocean. ▶ Thus we should devote high-level political attention to the long-neglected islands. By that only we can cope with the maritime dimension of China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

- ▶ **Improve internal connectivity:**
 - India should improve internal connectivity in line of China’s BRI which was built on the existing internal “Go West” strategy launched two decades ago, that has focused on unifying China’s domestic market and connecting its developed east coast with the interior provinces.
- ▶ **Improve connectivity with neighbors**
 - India should modernize connectivity across its land and maritime frontiers with its neighbors in the Subcontinent, South East Asia and the Gulf by completing projects in these regions.
- ▶ **Collaborate with Japan for Quality Infrastructure:**
 - India can work with nations like Japan and multilateral institutions in developing regional connectivity in the Subcontinent and beyond.
 - Japan has already outlined a Belt and Road initiative of its own, called the Partnership for Quality Infrastructure under which Japan has put up nearly \$150 billion to support infrastructure projects all across the Indo-Pacific and Eurasia.
 - India should also improve access to Europe by expediting projects like INSTC and others.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

Social Cost of Tiger Conservation


Context

The coercive, top-down approach of managing protected areas has created socio-cultural disruption and often even failed to conserve biodiversity. This top-down conservation approach has led to management decisions seriously threatening the livelihood and cultural heritage of local people, such as the resettlement programme established to move people from villages inside the park, and the reduction of access to resources and traditional rights.

These policies have very often ignored the dependence of local communities on the environment, and have taken little heed of the knowledge and traditions of the rural populations in the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity.

About Project Tiger

Tigers are both a Flagship and Umbrella species. As a Flagship species they are important for conservation and as an Umbrella species, conservation of tigers leads to conservation of other species. Tigers and high intensity biotic disturbances such as poaching and stealing of kills do not go together. If the tigers in the wild have to survive, it is imperative that other species of wild animals that are directly or indirectly a part of the food chain must also thrive. Therefore, the survival of the tiger is an important yardstick to measure the existence of a healthy forest ecosystem.

Project Tiger, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Government of India, was launched on the 1st of April, 1973 for in-situ conservation of wild tigers in designated tiger reserves. Under this project the strategy involves exclusive tiger agenda in the core/critical tiger habitat, inclusive people-wildlife agenda in the outer buffer, besides fostering the latter agenda in the corridors.

Displacement due to tiger conservation

In many developing countries, official policies and laws governing wildlife and the conservation of ecosystems have had adverse social consequences on native populations.

A tiger reserve consists of two parts, viz., 'a core or critical tiger habitat', and 'a buffer or peripheral area'. Core is identified as areas of National Parks and Sanctuaries to be kept inviolate for tiger conservation, without affecting the rights of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers.

'Buffer' consists of the area peripheral to the critical tiger habitat or core area, where a lesser degree of habitat protection is required to ensure the integrity of the critical tiger habitat, providing supplementary habitat for dispersing tigers, besides offering scope for coexistence of human activity. The limits of the buffer / peripheral area are

to be determined on the basis of scientific and objective criteria in consultation with the concerned Gram Sabha and an Expert Committee constituted for the purpose.

According to the rules, voluntary relocation of people needs to be carried out only in the identified core / critical tiger habitats of a tiger reserve as per provisions contained in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006, read with the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

Since the launching of Project Tiger, till now, 105 villages have been relocated from various tiger reserves over successive plan periods. The draft guidelines, however, specifically said that “relocation must be purely voluntary and must not in any manner use force or coercion”. However, in reality the displacement is forced.

Negative impacts of relocation

The relocating of villages from the core area without settlement of rights guaranteed under the FRA lead to violation of the Act. Even under the Wildlife Protection Act, before relocation, scientific studies are required to prove that co-existence between tribals and wildlife is not possible. There seems to be no such research for most of the tiger reserves.

As compensation for displacement, tribals are entitled Rs 10 lakh per family, according to the 2005 recommendations of the Tiger Task Force. The compensation amount has not increased in all these years. Further they have to live under plastic sheets with lack of basic amenities.

The lack of security in land ownership and the erosion of local statute laws have diminished the capacity of communities to stand up to outsiders, like poachers and wood smugglers, and have also contributed to the loss of biodiversity. In India, moreover, communal land surrounding villages is being increasingly privatised, which leads to the dwindling of the little parcels of communal land available to farmers.

This deteriorates their living condition. It creates a kind of ‘socio-cultural stress’-relocated populations lose not only the economic base of their survival, but also undergo a “considerable reduction of their cultural heritage, due to the temporary or definitive loss of their behavioural models, their economic activities, their institutions and their symbols”. Indeed, they are generally relocated in inadequate areas that provide opportunities for subsistence that are often entirely insufficient for them.

Unfortunately conservation projects and programmes that fail to consider the interest of local residents, undermine existing indigenous management systems, and restrict local authorities in their decision making on resource management, only intensify the loss of biological diversity.

In recent times, concern has been raised on the best practices that can be adopted within protected areas for the sustainable conservation of natural resources.

Way Ahead

The conservative strategy should seek to integrate the indigenous communities into the conservation scheme. The bottom-up management approach will enable communities surrounding protected areas to be actively involved in the management and administration of their regions.

The appropriateness of community-based conservation will depend on five factors: nature of community participation, objectives of conservation, incentive for conservation, community structures, historical and cultural linkages of the adopted conservation strategies.

Further changing the current mentality of conservation authorities would require measures at the institutional level. Developing skills among forest officers to work with communities, enhancing forms of cooperation and facilitating a learning process in a spirit of mutual trust and respect is very important in order to promote effective conservation measures.

ECONOMIC ISSUE

Revision of WPI Series and Industrial Index

Context

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) series has been revised by the Office of Economic Advisor (OEA), Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Also the Central Statistics Office (under ministry of statistics & program implementation) has revised the base year of the all-India Index of Industrial Production (IIP) from 2004-05 to 2011-12.

Hereby analyzing its implications.

Revision of WPI series

Introduction

- ▶ The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) series in India has undergone six revisions in 1952-53, 1961-62, 1970-71, 1981-82, 1993-94 and 2004-05 so far. The current series is the seventh revision.
- ▶ It has been done to capture structural changes in the economy and improve the quality, coverage and representativeness of the indices.
- ▶ The revision has been done on the advice of the Working Group, which was constituted in 2012 and was chaired by Late Dr. Saumitra Chaudhuri (Member of erstwhile Planning Commission).

What are the key highlights of the new WPI series?

- ▶ **Shift in base year:**
 - The base year of All-India WPI has been revised from 2004-05 to 2011-12.
 - This has been done so as to align it with the base year of other macroeconomic indicators like the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- ▶ **Changing the basket of commodities** (Increase in number of items from 676 to 697); **assigning new weights to the commodities and increase in number of quotations** (from 5482 to 8331): The major changes between WPI 2004-05 and WPI 2011-12 are given in the table below:

MAJOR GROUP	WEIGHTS		NO. OF ITEMS		NO. OF QUOTATIONS	
	2004-05	2011-12	2004-05	2011-12	2004-05	2011-12
All commodities	100.00	100.00	676	697	5482	8331
Primary Articles	20.12	22.62	102	117	579	983
Fuel & Power	14.91	13.15	19	16	72	442
Manufactured Products	64.97	64.23	555	564	4831	6906

- ▶ **WPI food index:**
 - A new “WPI Food Index” will be compiled to capture the rate of inflation in food items. This is being compiled by combining the “Food Articles”

Use-Based Classification

The Use-Based Classification has been re-framed to ensure better representativeness. Two new categories have been introduced in the new series namely:

	NEW CATEGORY INTRODUCED	EXPLANATORY NOTE
1	Primary goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This category will replace the existing category 'Basic goods'; ▶ Primary goods category will consist of Mining, Electricity, Fuels and Fertilizers. ▶ It has been done to improve clarity on the movement of IIP of Primary Goods in industry.
2	Infrastructure/ Construction goods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This categorization assumes significance in wake of growing importance of infrastructure sector;

A brief table giving the use based classification is given below:

New Series (base 2011-12)	Old Series (base 2004-05)
Primary goods	Basic Goods
Intermediate goods	Intermediate goods
Capital goods	Capital goods
Infrastructure/ construction goods	NA
Consumer durables	Consumer durables
Consumer nondurables	Consumer nondurables

Item Basket Selection at digit level

- ▶ Selection of items has been done at 3-digit level of NIC 2008 from the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) data. In comparison, the items in 2004-05 series were selected at 2-digit level of NIC. The selection at more disaggregated level will make the index more representative.

What is the growth rate according to new series?

- ▶ The new series show higher growth rates in the period April 2012 – March 2017, as compared to the existing series.
- ▶ This is because of following reasons:
 - Shifting of base to a more recent period;
 - Increase in number of factories in panel for reporting data and exclusion of closed ones; and
 - Inclusion of new items and exclusion of old ones.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

India-Sri Lanka Ties

Context

In recent years, the relationship between India and Sri Lanka has been marked by close contacts at the highest political level, growing trade and investment, cooperation in the fields of development, education, culture and defence, as well as a broad understanding on major issues of international interest. The significant progress in implementation of developmental assistance projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and disadvantaged sections of the population in Sri Lanka has helped further cement the bonds of friendship between the two countries.

Recently, PM Modi visited Sri Lanka for a two-day visit starting 11th May. This was his second bilateral visit there in two years which shows a sign of strong relationship between both the countries. He visited the Island on the eve of Buddhists Vesak Day celebrations (12th - 14th May) linking two nations on the religious lines. Besides he also visited Kandy in central Sri Lanka to address the tea plantation laborers and inaugurated the Dickoya hospital built with Indian assistance.

Introduction

Indian Prime Minister has recently visited the Island on the eve of Vesak Day celebrations (May 12th-14th, 2017), the biggest festival of Buddhists in order to strengthen the relationship of shared heritage of Buddhism between two countries. Further he inaugurated the Dickoya Hospital, a hospital built with Indian assistance and addressed the Indian-origin Tamil Community and tea plantation labourers in Kandy.

India Sri Lanka relationship

India Sri Lanka Economic partnership

- ▶ New Delhi and Colombo, appear keen to cooperatively address issues of the welfare and wellbeing of displaced Tamils. India has provided massive relief assistance to the Jaffna Tamils, including building 50,000 homes, establishing the Vocational Training Centre and Agriculture Research Institute, while expanding scholarship programmes.
- ▶ Rail and road infrastructure have been re-established, linking Jaffna to Colombo, while port and airport facilities are being refurbished.
- ▶ India is today Sri Lanka's largest trade partner globally. Indian investments in Sri Lanka exceed \$1 billion, in areas ranging from telecommunications and tourism to railways, power and food processing.
- ▶ Sri Lanka has consistently maintained the highest growth rate amongst SAARC nations. But, given the volatility in the global situation and the slowing of growth in western economies, India has stepped forward with a \$1.5 billion 'currency swap' agreement between the Reserve Bank of India and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to facilitate stability in the Sri Lankan rupee.

- ▶ The importance of expanding utilisation of Trincomalee port in the Bay of Bengal in this effort cannot be ignored. India is ready to “make Trincomalee a petroleum hub”. India would do well to undertake such projects in collaboration with Japan and even perhaps ASEAN members such as Singapore.

MoUs signed in Jan 2017:

- ▶ In January, 2017, both the country has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to construct 3000 rain water harvesting system in Rin Jaffna District of Sri Lanka at a cost of 300 million Rupees.
- ▶ The project aims to assist resettlement efforts of people especially internally displaced families in Jaffna by providing modern rain water harvesting systems for clean drinking water supply facility to households.
- ▶ The scope of the project also includes training of the households on operation and maintenance (O&M) of the rain water harvesting systems. It will also generate employment opportunities in Sri Lanka.
- ▶ This project was approved by the Union Government in response to a request received from Sri Lanka’s National Unity and Reconciliation of Government.

MoUs signed in Feb 2017:

- ▶ In a high level bilateral meeting in Feb 2017, India and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to construct a new Multi-Ethnic Tri-Lingual secondary school in Polonnaruwa District of island nation.
- ▶ The school will be constructed using a grant of Rupees 30 crore from the Government of India which will provide opportunities to Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students to learn in a Multi-Ethnic, Multi-Cultural environment.
- ▶ The project envisages construction of class rooms, laboratories and library, as well as procurement of furniture and other equipments.

Recent visit of PM Modi

- ▶ Prime Minister visited Sri Lanka on May 11 to attend the biggest Buddhist festival, ‘Vesak Day’. The ‘International Day of Vesak’ celebrations held in Colombo from May 12 to 14, included an International Buddhist Conference in which over 400 delegates from more than 100 countries participated. Vesak, the most important day in the Buddhist calendar, marks commemoration of Lord Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and passing away.

Significance of Vesak Festival

Vesak is the name used for the 2nd month in Sri Lankan traditional Moon calendar (Lunar calendar) which corresponds with the month of May in the Gregorian calendar (Solar calendar). It was on the full moon day in the month of Vesak, Prince Siddharta was born, became enlightened and attained Mahaparinibbâna. The full moon day of Vesak is celebrated by Buddhists honouring these three important occasions of the life of the Buddha. The significance of Vesak lies with the Buddha’s teaching of cessation of suffering and universal peace to all humankind. It is a message to urge followers to do that which is good and to turn away from evil. It is a message of peace and perfect harmony between human beings and nature. Vesak is associated with three important locations of Buddhist history –

- ▶ Lumbini in Nepal, the birth place of Prince Siddharta,
- ▶ Bodh Gaya (Buddha Gaya) Bihar State in India where The Buddha attained the most exalted Enlightenment under a Bodhi Tree; and
- ▶ Kushinagar (Kusinara) in Uttar Pradesh, India where The Buddha attained Mahaparinibbâna.

These three incidents in the life of Buddha is known in Sri Lanka as “The three Buddhist auspicious events – Birth, Enlightenment and Mahaparinibbâna of The Buddha and celebrated on large scale in Sri Lanka and other Buddhist countries.

The United Nations General Assembly accepted the importance of “Vesak” and in 1999 by its resolution 54/115 acknowledged that Buddhism as one of the oldest religions in the world contributing to the spirituality of humanity for over two and half millennia and is commemorated annually at the United Nations Headquarters and UN Offices.

In 2017, United Nations International Day of Vesak was hosted by Sri Lanka under the theme “***Buddhist Teachings for Social Justice and Sustainable World Peace***”. The events included an International Buddhist Symposium in which 400 delegates from 100 countries participated.

- ▶ This visit brings to the fore one of the most abiding links between India and Sri Lanka - the shared heritage of Buddhism. During his last visit in 2015, PM Modi visited Anuradhapura, a UNESCO world heritage site and a leading centre of Buddhism for centuries. This time, he payed respect at the revered Sri Dalada Maligawa in Kandy, also known as the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic.
- ▶ PM also visited the Seema Malaka at the Gangaramayya temple in Colombo.
- ▶ Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Tamils working in tea and rubber plantations. He pledged to support a five-year plan to improve the living standards of communities in Sri Lanka’s plantations.
- ▶ PM Modi announced the construction of 10,000 houses in upcountry areas, and vocational training centres and 10 engineering training centres and labs to impart suitable skills, as well as computer and science labs in schools in tea plantation areas.
- ▶ India has decided to extend 1990 Emergency Ambulance Service, currently operating in western and southern provinces, to all other provinces.

Conclusion

- ▶ The relationships between both the countries have flourished since ancient times and should continue flourishing in the future also. As a prominent Asian nation with critical national interests in South Asia, India has a special responsibility to ensure peace and stability in its closest neighborhood.
- ▶ As a part of India’s initiative of ‘Sabka Saath Sabka Vikash’, India should actively be engaged with the island nation to strengthen its sovereignty in the Indian Ocean and accordingly participate in SL’s development.
- ▶ India needs the support of SriLanka to emerge as a Blue water navy in the Indian Ocean and as a leader in the South Asian region; it should take concern of interest of both the nation to flourish together.

Prelims News



Hereby, compiling the important short notes of May (1 to 15), 2017.

Indian Culture

THAKURANI JATRA FESTIVAL

What is Thakurani Jatra festival?

- ▶ **Held at:** Berhampur.
- ▶ **Frequency:** It is held once in two years.
- ▶ **Duration:** The festival is 21-day-long.
- ▶ **Dedicated to** Goddess Budhi Thakurani.
 - The Mother Goddess is worshipped in the Maa Budhi Thakurani Temple in Berhampur town in Orissa.
- ▶ **Ghata Parikrama:** It is the most important ritual of the festival, which begins on the third day. In this the garland dedicated to Goddess Budhi Thakurani is put inside a decorated earthen pot, called Ghata.

PANCHAVADYAM

What is Panchavadyam?

- ▶ **Literal meaning:** An orchestra of five instruments.
- ▶ **Belongs to which region?** It is basically a temple art form that has evolved in Kerala.
- ▶ **What is it?** It is a rhythmic orchestra that may feature more than 100 artists, playing five (pancha) different kind of instruments

Instruments used in it

- ▶ Of the five instruments, four belong to the percussion category, while the fifth is a wind instrument.
- ▶ The four percussion instruments are:
 - Timila,
 - Maddalam,
 - Ilathalam and
 - Idakka

- ▶ The wind instrument is
 - Kombu

Taal

- ▶ Panchavadyam bases itself on the 7-beat thripuda taal but amusingly sticks to the pattern of the eight-beat chempata taal – at least until its last parts.

When performed?

- ▶ Panchavadyam is still largely a temple art, but it is also performed during non-religious occasions like cultural pagentry.
- ▶ It is one of the major ingredients of the Pooram festivals.

Comparison between Chenda Melam and Panchavadyam

- ▶ **Similarities:** Both are characterized by:
 - A pyramid-like rhythmic structure.
 - A constantly increasing tempo and a proportional decrease in the number of beats in cycles.
- ▶ **Differences:**
 - Both uses different instruments (though ilathalam and kompu are common to both).
 - Panchavadyam is not related very closely to any temple ritual.
 - Panchavadyam permits a lot of personal improvisation while filling up the rhythmic beats on the timila, maddalam and idakka.

250th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF TYAGARAJA

Context

- ▶ 2017 is the year of 250th birth anniversary of Tyagaraja.

Tyagraja

- ▶ **Lifespan:** 4 May 1767 – 6 January 1847.
- ▶ **Also known as:**
 - Kakarla Tyagabrahmam
 - Tyâgayya
- ▶ **Who was he?**
 - He was one of the greatest composers of Carnatic music.
 - He composed thousands of devotional compositions in praise of Lord Rama.
- ▶ **Language:** He composed mainly in Telugu.
- ▶ Tyagaraja saw the reigns of four kings of Maratha dynasty –
 - Tulaja II (1763-1787),
 - Amarasimha (1787-1798),
 - Serfoji II (1798-1832) and
 - Sivaji II (1832-1855).

Panchratna Kritis

- ▶ **What is it?** It is a set of five kritis (songs) in Carnatic classical music, composed by Tyagaraja.
- ▶ **In which language did he composed them?** Of the five Pancharatna Kritis, four are in Telugu and one in Sanskrit (the first one).
- ▶ **In which ragas are they?** They are set to music in five ragas Nata, Goula, Arabhi, Varali and Sri.
- ▶ **What are the names of five kritis?** The Pancharatna Kritis are:
 - Jagadananda Karaka - Ragam Natai
 - Duduku gala - Ragam Goula
 - Sadhinchane - Ragam Arabhi
 - Kanakana Ruchira - Ragam Varali
 - Endaro Mahanubhavulu - Shree Ragam

THRISSUR POORAM

About Thrissur Pooram

- ▶ **What is it?** It is a Hindu temple festival.
- ▶ **Where held?** At the Vadakkunnathan Temple in Thrissur city, Kerala.
- ▶ **When celebrated?** Every year in the Malayalam month of Medam (April-May).
- ▶ It is the largest and most famous of all Poorams and is regarded as the mother of all poorams.
- ▶ **Origin of this festival:** 'Thrissur Pooram' was introduced by Maharaja of Cochin Raja Rama Varma, also known as Sakthan Thampuran in AD 1798.

- ▶ **Which are the two groups in the festival?**
 - 10 temples around Vadakkunnathan Temple are Classified as two groups: Western and Eastern.
 - The Western group consists of four major temples such as Kanimangalam, Laloor, Ayyanthole and Neythilakkavu. Thiruvambadi Sri Krishna Temple is the group leader of the West.
 - While the Eastern group is led by Paramekkavu Bhagavathi Temple. It includes major temples such as Karamukku, Chembukkavu, Choorakottukavu and Panamukkampilly.
- ▶ **What are the key highlights of the festival?**
 - A tough fight between these two groups by displaying fireworks and caparisoned elephants (decorating elephants) is the highlight of 'Thrissur Pooram'.
 - The friendly battle between West and East will enthrall the crowd.
 - The spectacular show called 'Kudamattom' will be another speciality. The parasols of myriad numbers in numerous designs and colours will be exchanged by people atop the elephants.
 - The Percussion maestros are another attraction on the Pooram day. One will get to enjoy choicest rhythms of Pandi Melam and Panchavadyam at the 'Thrissur Pooram'.

SARASWATI

Context:

- ▶ Committee of secretaries – from the Water, Environment and Rural Development ministries – has been constituted to decide how to use funds under MGNREGS for reviving Palaeo-channels (like Saraswati).

What are Paleo-channels? Palaeo-channels are old rivers that have dried up and filled with sediment.

What is the significance of reviving of paleo-channels? Reviving them may not be useful for irrigation but it could improve groundwater storage.

What is K.S. Valdiya committee?

- ▶ Water Resources Ministry a committee of hydrologists, geologists and archaeologists under the chairmanship of K.S. Vladiya (of the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)).
- ▶ It submitted it's report in October 2016. Following were the key highlights of the report:

- It reported evidence on the course of the Saraswati river (This river is mentioned in the Rigveda and Hindu mythology).
 - **Western branch:** Sutlej river “represented the western branch of the Saraswati.”
 - **Eastern branch:** The Markanda and the Sarsuti (now called the Ton-Yamuna rivers) represented the eastern branch of the river.
- These branches met in Shatrana (25 kilometres south of Patiala) and “flowed as a large river” emptying into the Rann of Kutch.
- Building on the report of **K.S. Valdiya committee** a committee was tasked with scouting palaeo-channels across the country.

Science and Environment

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

Context:

- Rajasthan government has decided to setup the following in the next one year for conservation of Great Indian Bustard.
 - A captive breeding centre will come up at Sorsan in Kota district, and
 - A hatchery will come up at Mokhala in Jaisalmer district.
- Under the program, the eggs would be fetched from the captive breeding centre and would be brought to the hatchery.
- After the chicks are raised, they would be transported to the desert for reintroduction in the wild.
- An MoU for establishing the two facilities would be signed between the Union government, and the State government of Rajasthan in about two months.
 - Wildlife Institute of India (WII) would be the scientific arm of the centre.

Why is the government doing this?

- It is an attempt to boost the wild population of the bird.
- It is the country’s most critically endangered bird with around only 200 species left.

About Great Indian bustard

- It is the State bird of Rajasthan.
- Characteristics
 - Black crown on the forehead contrasting with the pale neck and head.
 - The body is brownish and the wings are marked with black, brown and grey.
- **Conservation Issues:** Threat to this species include:
 - Occasional poaching outside Protected Areas.
 - Collisions with high tension electric wires, fast moving vehicles and free-ranging dogs in villages.

- Habitat loss due to widespread agricultural expansion, infrastructural development such as irrigation, roads, electric poles, as well as mining and industrialization.
- **Conservation status**
- Listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
 - Listed in CMS Convention
 - Listed in Appendix I of CITES
 - Listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016).
 - Identified as one of the species for the recovery programme under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

TRANSRELOCATION FOR CONSERVATION OF TIGERS

Context:

Six tigers would be relocated to Buxa Tiger Reserve (BTR) in north Bengal from neighbouring Assam as part of a plan for augmentation of tiger population in the reserve which was approved by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

What is transrelocation?

This means the movement of individuals from its natural habitat, or from captivity, to another habitat. Translocations are carried out in connection with introductions or reintroductions, and should be handled with extreme caution.

They are generally justified when:

- Land development will definitely destroy wildlife habitat and translocation is the only way of preserving the animals in the area.
- Boosting the numbers of a threatened wild population to ensure its survival by adding other individuals of the same species.
- Splitting an existing population that is at risk, to prevent losing the entire population.

These operations are carried out often with support from international captive breeding programs and receive the cooperation of zoos, aquaria, etc. Such programmes have to be carefully planned and carried out to ensure success. The success rates of the establishment of translocated species vary. Overall, the translocation of game species (species used for hunting) appears to have been more successful than efforts connected with threatened or rare species. The success rates of establishment for translocated amphibians and reptiles are particularly low at 19% and 25% respectively.

Issues

- ▶ Relocation can be stressful to wild animals. They may experience elevated heart rates and breathing rates, high blood pressure, acute changes in blood chemistry and depressed appetites. These factors in turn may make them more vulnerable to disease or predation.
- ▶ Relocated animals have no prior experience with their new homes which immediately puts them at a disadvantage in finding food and shelter.

DHOLES

Context

- ▶ The Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (IGZP) is planning to reintroduce a pack of 16 Endangered dholes in the Eastern ghats forest.
- ▶ IGZP is running a conservation breeding centre for the species when it adapted the dhole in 2014 under the Central Zoo Authority's mandate.

About dholes

- ▶ **Conservation status:**
 - Protected under Schedule 2 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
 - Listed as 'endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
 - Global Population is Fewer than 2,500 mature individuals
- ▶ **Physical description:**
 - The fur on the back and flanks is reddish brown
 - The neck, chest and undersides are white or lightly coloured.
 - Has a bushy tail.
- ▶ **Habitat:**
 - It is found in a wide variety of habitat types, including deciduous and evergreen forests and alpine steppe.

▶ **What are the threats to dhole?**

- Ongoing habitat loss, depletion of prey base, persecution and disease transfer from domestic and feral dogs.
- The main prey for the dhole are 'Ungulates', which have also suffered high depletion of their population across the dhole's range.

GANGA JYOTI YATRA

Context

- ▶ To give a further push to Namami Gange, government is planning to launch a rebranding exercise over the next few months which includes:
 - Involving advertising agencies to give a public relations push;
 - Launching of Ganga Jyoti Yatra (like an Olympic torch run) from Kolkata to Varanasi and
 - Roping in Ambassadors on the list for campaign.
- ▶ Objective is to go for a more participatory approach to the Namami Gange by evoking a long-lasting strong soul connect with the Ganga.
- ▶ It is because at present, the emotional connect with the Ganges is restricted to personal ritualistic moments and becomes passive once it is over.

What is Namami Gange programme?

- ▶ **Objectives:** Effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.
- ▶ **What are the key pillars of this programmes?**
 - Sewage treatment infrastructure
 - River surface cleaning
 - Afforestation
 - Industrial effluent monitoring
 - River front development
 - Bio-diversity
 - Public awareness
 - Ganga gram
- ▶ **Implementation mechanism?**
 - The program would be implemented by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), and its state counterpart organizations i.e., State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).

- ▣ The program also focuses on involving the grassroots level institutions such as Urban Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions in implementation as well as people living on the banks.

INDIAN STAR TORTOISES

Context

- ▶ In 2015 Kerala Forest Department launched a project at the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) to rehabilitate Indian star tortoises seized from smugglers.
- ▶ The project is a success with at least 450 such tortoises seized from poachers in less than two years.

Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS)

▶ Location:

- ▣ Idduki district of Kerala
- ▣ It forms an integral part of the block of protected forests straddling the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border in the Annamalai Hills.

▶ Surrounding parks:

- ▣ It is under the jurisdiction of and contiguous with Eravikulam National Park to the south.
- ▣ Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary is to the north.
- ▣ Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary is to the east.

▶ Which Rivers pass through the sanctuary?

- ▣ The Chinnar River and Pambar River are the major rivers passing through the sanctuary.

▶ CWS and Indian star tortoise:

- ▣ The CWS is the only place in Kerala where star tortoises are known to occur in the wild.
- ▣ CWS is the only rehabilitation centre for star tortoises in the country.

INSA MEDAL

Context:

- ▶ Sanjay Pratihar has bagged the prestigious Indian National Science Academy (INSA) medal for the Young Scientist Award for the year 2017.
- ▶ He is a scientist at Tezpur University (Department of Chemical Sciences)
- ▶ He has been awarded for his contribution to multi-metal complexes.

Indian National Science Academy (INSA)

- ▶ **What is it?** It is the apex body of Indian scientists representing all branches of science and technology.
- ▶ **Objective:** Promoting science in India and harnessing scientific knowledge for human welfare.
- ▶ **HQ:** New Delhi.
- ▶ **Awards by it:** To promote excellence in the field of 'Science and Technology', the academy has instituted 59 awards, placed in 4 categories, namely
 - ▣ International Awards,
 - ▣ General Medal & Lecture Awards,
 - ▣ Subject-wise Medals/Lectures and
 - ▣ Awards for young scientists.

TARANG SANCHAR

What is it?

- ▶ It is a web portal to check mobile-tower radiation level.

How does it works?

- ▶ This portal will allow people to check if the radiation from a mobile tower in an area are compliant with the electromagnetic field (EMF) emission norms as defined by the government.
- ▶ People even request for a test to be conducted on a particular site via this portal.

Why launched?

- ▶ To allay public concerns over radiation emitted from mobile towers even though studies so far have not revealed any health hazards.

Coverage:

- ▶ The portal gives information on the radiation levels of 4.40 lakh mobile towers and 14 lakh base stations all across the country.
- ▶ WHO has conducted around 25,000 studies on this issue and none of them found any ill-effects on the health of people.

THALASSAEMIA

Context

- ▶ On May 8, 2017, World Thalassaemia will be observed.

What is Thalassaemia?

- ▶ Thalassaemia a rare genetic blood disorder.
- ▶ It is a genetic blood disorder commonly characterised by the abnormal production of haemoglobin in the body.

- ▶ The abnormality results in
 - destruction of red blood cells and
 - improper oxygen transport
- ▶ It can cause Iron overload, bone deformities and can even cause heart diseases.

What is the scenario in India?

- ▶ India is regarded as the Thalassaemia capital of the world.
- ▶ **Why is it called so?**
 - Some 40 million Thalassaemia carriers exists in India.
 - Every year 10,000 children with thalassaemia major are born in India.
- ▶ **What should be done?**
 - Need of the hour is to have a national policy on Thalassaemia. This will help in:
 - creating awareness about the disease,
 - ensuring treatment for all, and
 - ensuring strategies to prevent its spread.
 - We can learn from our neighbour Pakistan, which passed a Bill in February making carrier testing compulsory for relatives of thalassaemia patients. A similar system is in place in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

MYCOBACTERIUM INDICUS PRANII (MIP)

Context

- ▶ Union Health Minister has launched **Mycobacterium Indicus Pranii (MIP)** as a part of a pilot program in several districts of Gujarat and in Bihar.
- ▶ It was launched after receiving approval as a leprosy vaccine from the Indian drug regulator, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

What is it?

- ▶ MIP is a non-pathogenic bacteria which in its heat-killed form spruces up the body's immunity.
- ▶ It is a vaccine against Leprosy.
- ▶ Apart from leprosy, it is also being tried as a vaccine against other diseases bladder cancer, warts, lung cancer and TB which are collectively known as Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD).

Who has developed it?

- ▶ The vaccine has been developed entirely at the National Institute of Immunology (NII).

Named after:

Mycobacterium	Mycobacterium stands for a genus of gram-positive, aerobic, acid fast bacteria, occurring as slightly curved or straight rods.
Indicus	Indicus stands for India, where the bacterial species was isolated.
Pranii	Pranii stands for the person who discovered the species (Prof. Pran Talwar) and National Institute of Immunology (nii), where trials were conducted (pran + nii)

Significance:

- ▶ It is the first vaccine in the world developed to eliminate leprosy.
- ▶ If the program proves to be successful then it would speed up the process of eliminating leprosy.

PNEUMOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINE (PCV)

Context:

- ▶ Union Health Minister launched Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) under Universal Immunization Program (UIP) in a function at Mandi.

What is Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)?

- ▶ PCV protects children against severe forms of pneumococcal disease, such as pneumonia and meningitis.

Why is it being launched?

- ▶ Pneumococcal disease is the leading cause of vaccine-preventable deaths in children under five years of age globally and in India.
- ▶ Pneumonia kills more children under five years of age in India than any other infectious disease.
- ▶ India accounts for nearly 20% of global pneumonia deaths in this age group.
- ▶ In 2010, pneumococcal pneumonia accounted for approximately 16% of all severe pneumonia cases and 30% of pneumonia related deaths in children under- five years of age in India.

What is the coverage area?

- ▶ Phase 1: Currently, the vaccine is being rolled out in parts of Himachal Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
- ▶ Phase 2: Next year it will be introduced in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

- ▶ Phase 3: Then in a phased manner it will be expanded to the country.

BHARATIYA NIRDESHAK DRAVYA (BND-4201)

Context:

- ▶ Indian scientist's unveiled Bharatiya Nirdeshak dravya (BND 4201).

What is it?

- ▶ It is an Indian standard bar of gold.
- ▶ The bar weighs 20 gram.
- ▶ It is 99.9% pure and can be used to verify the purity of gold sold in shops.

Who developed it?

- ▶ It is a joint collaboration of:
 - India Government Mint (IGM),
 - Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and
 - CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL)

What is the Significance of release of BND 4201?

- ▶ It will reduce dependency on foreign countries (at present we import most of our gold reference bars from Switzerland and Canada).
- ▶ It will save our foreign exchange (this gold bar would be 25% cheaper than the imported version).
- ▶ It will contribute to Make in India campaign.

India Government Mint (IGM)

- ▶ IGM is a unit of Security Printing and Minting Corp of India Ltd.

CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL)

- ▶ The NPL is the repository of standard units — such as the kilogram, the second, the centimetre — in India and provides calibration services.

SPYDER

Why is it in news?

- India test fired SPYDER missile system from integrated test range (ITR) at Chandipur.

What is SPYDER?

- SPYDER stands for 'S'urface-to-air 'PY'thon and 'DER'by.
- It is a surface-to-air missile system.
- This launcher is designed to launch Python-5 and Derby surface-to-air missile system.
- Key features:
 - It is a lower-level quick reaction surface-to-air missile system.
 - It is of short & medium range.
 - It is fitted atop a truck (Tatra, Mercedes-Benz etc.)
- Developed by Rafael advance defense system and Israel aerospace industries.

India and SPYDER?

- India and Singapore are current operators of SPYDER.
- India inked a deal in 2008 to acquire it and it was delivered by 2013.

CYBER SECURITY (WANNA-CRY)

Context:

- ▶ Wannacry, a malware spreading across the globe since may 12, 2017 has hit government & private companies and universities nearly 100 countries.

What is it's full name?

- ▶ WannaCryptor 2.0 'ransomware'.

What is a Ransom-ware?

- ▶ Ransomware is a malware that encrypts the files on an infected system and then demands a ransom to decrypt them, with escalation in the demand over time.
- ▶ The ransom demand is in Bitcoins.
- ▶ It often reaches victims as mail attachment. Once opened, it spreads to other computers in the network exploiting the Windows vulnerability. It spreads using a flaw in older Microsoft windows system.

Economy News

E-KRISHI SAMVAD

What is it?

- ▶ It is an online interface which farmers and other stakeholders in agriculture can use to get direct & effective solutions to the problems faced by them.
- ▶ Under this people can directly connect to the ICAR website and get the appropriate solutions

from the subject matter specialists and institutes through web or SMS. Stakeholders can upload photographs related to diseases of the crops, animals or fishes for diagnostics and remedial measures instantly from the specialists.

- ▶ e-Krishi Samvad is useful to get information pertaining to welfare and development of agricultural stakeholders.

**PROPOSAL FOR JANUARY –
DECEMBER FINANCIAL YEAR****Context**

- ▶ The Madhya Pradesh has decided to shift the financial year to January-December from the existing April-March cycle.
- ▶ Now, the Budget session of the next financial year will be held either in December 2017 or January 2018.
- ▶ It has become the first state to switch to the January-December financial Year.

Is union government also planning to do so?

- ▶ Yes. Recently, during the NITI Aayog's governing council meet in April 2017, Prime Minister called for shifting the financial year to the January-December period.
- ▶ The central government had constituted a committee under Shanker Acharya (former Chief Economic Advisor) to examine "desirability and feasibility" of shifting to a new financial year. The report hasn't been made public yet.

If the financial year is to start on 1 January, then the Union Budget will have to be presented in late November.

Why to shift from April-March cycle to January-December cycle?

In 2016, Shankar Acharya committee recommended changing the fiscal year to January-December. A NITI Aayog concept paper written by Bibek Debroy (its member) also favored changing the financial year cycle.

- ▶ **Colonial hangover:**
 - India has been following the present financial year cycle since 1867, mainly to align it with that of Britain.
 - Thus present system is just another 150 year old colonial hangover on India's administration.
- ▶ Such a shift will help in **better economic and political management** of the country
- ▶ **Economic sense:** Changing the fiscal calendar to January-December makes more economic sense.
 - This is when the festive season is over.
 - It is more suited to India's cropping pattern.
 - Weather forecasts will be available by this time. Thus the administration can prepare for a flood or a drought.

▶ Integrating with global economic architecture:

- It will help the Indian economy to integrate with the global economic architecture.
- Most other countries follow a January-December financial year. And thus it becomes difficult to sync with the global accounts which have a calendar year.

SAMPADA (SCHEME FOR AGRO-MARINE PROCESSING AND DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO-PROCESSING CLUSTERS)**Context:**

- ▶ Union Cabinet has approved a new central Scheme by the name of "Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters (SAMPADA)".

Implementation period

- ▶ This will be coterminous with the 14th Finance Commission cycle.

Objectives of SAMPADA

- ▶ To supplement agriculture, modernize processing and decrease agri-waste.

Components of scheme

- ▶ SAMPADA is an umbrella scheme.
- ▶ It incorporates various ongoing schemes of the Ministry like Mega Food Parks, Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure, Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure, etc.
- ▶ It also includes new schemes like Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters, Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages, Creation / Expansion of Food Processing & Preservation Capacities.

Expected benefits from the scheme

- ▶ Creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.
- ▶ Reducing wastage of agricultural produce, increasing the processing level, availability of safe and convenient processed foods at affordable price to consumers and enhancing the export of the processed foods.
- ▶ Providing better prices to farmers
- ▶ Creation of huge employment opportunities especially in the rural areas.

Targets

- ▶ Leverage investment of Rs. 31,400 crore.
- ▶ Handling of 334 lakh MT agro-produce valuing Rs. 1,04,125 crore.

- ▶ Generate 5,30,500 direct/ indirect employment in the country.

What are the other steps taken by government to boost food processing sector?

- ▶ Allowing 100% FDI in trading including through e-commerce, in respect of food products manufactured and/or produced in India.
- ▶ Setting up of a Special Fund of Rs. 2000 crore in NABARD to make available affordable credit to food parks.
- ▶ Inclusion of Food and agro-based processing units and cold chain infrastructure under the ambit of Priority Sector Lending (PSL).

NATIONAL STEEL POLICY 2017

Context:

- ▶ Union Cabinet has approved the National Steel Policy (NSP) 2017.

What are the Objectives of the NSP 2017?

- ▶ Create self-sufficiency in steel production by providing policy support & guidance to private manufacturers, MSME steel producers, CPSEs.
- ▶ Encourage adequate capacity additions.
- ▶ Development of globally competitive steel manufacturing capabilities.
- ▶ Facilitate R&D in the sector through the establishment of Steel Research and Technology Mission of India (SRTMI).
- ▶ Cost-efficient production.
- ▶ Domestic availability of iron ore, coking coal & natural gas.
- ▶ Facilitating foreign investment.
- ▶ Asset acquisitions of raw materials.
- ▶ Enhancing the domestic steel demand.

Key targets to achieve

- ▶ Achieve 300MT of steel-making capacity by 2030. This would translate into additional investment of Rs. 10 lakh Crore by 2030-31. At present it is 100MT.
- ▶ Reduce import dependence on coking coal from present 85% to 65% by 2030-31.
- ▶ Increase per capita steel consumption to 160 Kgs by 2030 from existing level of around 60 Kg.

Key facts about Indian steel sector

- ▶ India is the third largest steel producer globally,
- ▶ Steel sector contributes to about 2% of the country's GDP.
- ▶ In 2016-17, India crossed the 100 MT mark for production for sale.

- ▶ The sector employs about 5 lakh people directly and about 20 lakh people indirectly.

MASALA BONDS

Context:

- ▶ The Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping has launched the NHAI Masala Bond issue at the London Stock Exchange.

What is a Masala bond?

- ▶ These bonds issued outside India but denominated in Indian Rupees, instead of the local currency.

How are they different from dollar bonds?

- ▶ In Dollar bonds, the borrower takes the currency risk.
- ▶ In Masala bonds, the investors bear the currency risk.

Why named Masala?

- ▶ International Finance Corporation (IFC) used this term to evoke the cuisine and culture of India.
- ▶ Masala, a Hindi word, means spices.

What is the History of Masala bonds?

- ▶ The first Masala bond was issued by IFC in November 2014 to fund infrastructure projects in India.
- ▶ In August 2015 IFC issued green Masala bonds to fund climate change initiatives in India.
- ▶ In July 2016 HDFC became the first Indian company to issue Masala bonds. It raised Rs. 3,000 crore rupees from Masala bonds.

EXPANSION OF INDIA-CHILE PTA

Context

- ▶ The Expanded India-Chile Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) is being implemented on 16th May, 2017.
- ▶ India and Chile had earlier signed a PTA in 2006 which came into force in 2007.
- ▶ But this PTA included only a limited number of tariff lines.
- ▶ Thus in 2016, India & Chile signed an expanded PTA which is being implemented on may 16, 2017.
- ▶ This expanded PTA has a wider coverage of tariff lines.

Significance

- ▶ It will help in increasing trade with Chile (is the fourth largest trading partner of India in LAC region after Brazil, Venezuela and Argentina), with whom our trade is declining offlate.

- ▶ It could also deepen its engagement with Pacific Alliance (an emerging trade bloc), as Chile is its founding member. India is an observer member of Pacific Alliance.

LABOUR CODE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

Context

- ▶ Labor Ministry is thinking about implementing the social security code in a phased manner.

What is the background to the proposed labor code on social security by labor ministry?

- ▶ In March 2017, the Labor Ministry proposed a labor code on social security.
- ▶ Under this:
 - ▣ Social security cover will be provided to the entire workforce in the country, including self-employed and agricultural workers.
 - ▣ Factories with even a single worker will have to contribute towards social security benefits.
- ▶ **Why is it being done?**
 - ▣ Universal social security to all workers has been one of the key demands of the central trade unions.
 - ▣ At present, the provident fund & pension contribution, administered by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), is mandatory only for factories employing at least 20 workers.
- ▶ **What is the opposition to it?**
 - ▣ Small and medium enterprises opposed it arguing that it will impose a financial burden due to contribution (towards social security schemes).
 - ▣ **How many of the establishments – both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors – employ less than 10 workers?** According to the Sixth Economic Census, 98.62% of the establishments employ less than 10 workers.
- ▶ **Labour ministry has proposed to implement it in two phases:**

- ▣ **Phase 1:** Factories employing more than 10 workers and informal sector workers can be covered in the first phase.
- ▣ **Phase 2:** After two years, factories employing less than 10 workers will be covered in the phase 2.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Context:

- ▶ The initial public offering (IPO) for IRB InvIT, India's first infrastructure investment trust fund opened for subscription from May 3 to May 5.

What are InvITs?

- ▶ InvITs are similar to mutual funds. While mutual funds provide an opportunity to invest in equity stocks, an InvIT allows one to invest in infrastructure projects such as road and power.

How do InvITs work?

- ▶ InvITs raise funds from a large number of investors and directly invest in infrastructure projects or through a special purpose vehicle.
- ▶ Two types of InvITs have been allowed: one, which invests in completed and revenue generation infrastructure projects; the other, which has the flexibility to invest in completed or under-construction projects.
- ▶ InvITs which invest in completed projects take the route of public offer of its units, while those investing in under construction projects take the route of private placement of units. Both forms are required to be listed on stock exchanges.

What do InvITs mean for investors?

- ▶ According to SEBI rules, at least 90% of funds collected, after paying for expenses, taxes and repayment of external debt, should be passed on to investors every six months. IRB InvIT is expected to pay about 12% as returns to investors. Dividend income received by unit holders is tax exempt. Short-term capital gain on sale of units is taxed at 15%, while long-term capital gains are tax exempt. Interest distributed to unit holders is taxed.

Polity and Governance

SCHEMES FOR MINORITIES

Context

- ▶ Ministry of Minority Affairs has proposed for launch two schemes in 2017.

Which two schemes will be launched?

- ▶ **USTTAD Samman Samaroh:** Under this, artisans & craftsmen of the minorities will be honored. It will be launched during Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya birth centenary.
- ▶ **Tehreek-e-Taleem:** It will be launched on the birth anniversary of former president APJ Abdul

kalam (on October 15, 2017) in 100 districts. It will be an educational scheme to provide every needy person with resources and facilities to pursue education.

SANITATION: SWACHH SURVEKSHAN-2017

Context

- ▶ Ministry of Urban Development announced the results of the Swachh Survekshan-2017.
- ▶ It was conducted in 434 cities and towns.

Agencies involved?

- ▶ It was commissioned by the Ministry of Urban Development during January – February, 2017.
- ▶ It was conducted by Quality Council of India.

Objective

- ▶ To capture the improvement in sanitation scenario, primarily based on making cities and towns Open Defecation Free and improvement in processing of municipal solid waste.

What were the criteria's used?

Criteria and weightages for different components of sanitation related aspects used for the Survey are:

Criteria	Weightage
Solid Waste Management including Door-to-Door collection, Processing and Disposal, ODF status, etc	45%
Citizen feedback	30%
Independent observation	25%

Rankings

- ▶ **Top 5 Cleanest cities are:** Indore, Bhopal, Visakhapatnam, Surat and Mysuru.
- ▶ **Worst 5 cities and towns:** Katihar (Bihar), Hardoi (U.P), Bagaha (Bihar), Bhusawal (Maharashtra), Gonda (U.P).

Level	Type of behavior	Example
Level 1	Disruptive behavior	Such as physical gestures
Level 2	Physically abusive behavior	Such as pushing, kicking and sexual harassment
Level 3	Life- threatening behavior	Including damage to aircraft systems

▶ National No-fly List:

- It will be a database maintained by the Airlines which will contain list of:
 - unruly/disruptive passengers.
 - Individuals identified by MHA as national security threats.

▶ **Cleanest Medium City in Medium Category:** Tirupati.

▶ **Cleanest City in Small Cities category:** Ambikapur (Chattisgarh).

▶ Gujarat has the maximum of 12 cities among the top 50, closely followed by Madhya Pradesh with 11 and Andhra Pradesh with eight.

Quality Council of India (QCI)

▶ **When setup?** 1997.

▶ It was setup by Government of India jointly with Indian Industry as a non-profit autonomous society registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.

▶ It is an autonomous body under the administrative control of the Department of industrial policy & promotion (DIPP).

▶ Objectives:

- To establish and operate the National Accreditation Structure for conformity assessment bodies;
- Providing accreditation in the field of education, health and quality promotion.

DRAFT 'NO FLY' RULES

Context

▶ Ministry of Civil Aviation has issued the Draft Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) on "Handling of unruly/disruptive passengers".

▶ Objective behind issuing it is to enhance the safety and security of passengers, crew as well as airlines.

▶ The draft rules have been placed in public domain for getting suggestions and it is hoped that the matter would be finalized by the end of June, 2017.

What are the salient features of the proposed CAR?

▶ **Levels of unruly behaviors:** Three levels of unruly behaviors defined viz.

- Airlines can bar the unruly passenger from taking flights to/from/within India for a period ranging from three months to a maximum of two years depending upon level of unruly behavior.
- For every subsequent offence, the person will be banned for twice the period of previous ban.

- ▶ **Complaint handling mechanism:** There will be two tiers of complaint handling mechanism in such cases, viz.
 - **Tier 1:** initial inquiry at airlines level by an internal committee headed by a retired District & Sessions Judge and
 - **Tier 2:** Appeal at Government headed by Retired Judge of a High Court of India.

Individuals identified as national security threat would have no right to appeal.

First nation

- ▶ According to Civil Aviation Ministry, by this India would become the first country to frame a National No-Fly List related to aviation security as other countries, at present have a No-Fly List for “safety-related issues”.

INTEGRATED CASE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (ICMIS)

Context:

- ▶ Prime Minister Modi has inaugurated Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS) by uploading it on the Supreme Court website.

What is ICMIS?

- ▶ It is a digital filing application which will allow a litigant to digitally file a case and watch its progress on a real-time basis.

What is its significance?

- ▶ It is an important step towards paperless Supreme Court.
- ▶ It would help bring in transparency, reduce manipulation and will help the litigant to track the progress of a case on a real time basis.

Way ahead?

- ▶ Chief justice of India has proposed to integrate ICMIS with all the 24 High Courts and the subordinate courts.
- ▶ It is also a boon to the environment as thousands of trees and Millions of liters of water can be saved which are used to make paper.

ICT 2025 VISION DOCUMENT OF EC

Context:

- ▶ ECI has released ICT 2025 vision document.

What is it?

- ▶ It contains the strategy of adopting ICT in conduct of elections.

Components

The ICT 2025 Projects which capitalise on Digitalization, will capture both Electoral Process and the conduct of elections. There are four major components of the ICT 2025.

- ▶ Integrated Software application
- ▶ GIS, Analytic and Integrated Contact Centre
- ▶ IT infrastructure including data center, IT security, disaster recovery
- ▶ Knowledge Management, Capacity building and social media engagement

NATIONAL CONTACT CENTRE LAUNCHED BY ELECTION COMMISSION

Context

- ▶ ECI has launched a national contact center.

What is it and how will it work

- ▶ The National Contact Centre is operated on a National Grievance Redressal System Software.
- ▶ This software is a single window platform to manage complaints and feedback received through calls, emails, sms and website access in an integrated and time-bound manner.
- ▶ Callers may connect with the executives to register a complaint and know about its status of receipt and disposal as well as to give suggestions and feedback at every step of the way.
- ▶ The Contact Centre is Commission’s step forward towards bringing about electoral reforms where citizens and officials are empowered to monitor and report any anomaly or violation of ECI instructions in the field before, during or post elections.
- ▶ Each state and UT will also soon setup and operationalize dedicated State Contact Centre (SCC) and District Contact Centre (DCC) to ensure seamless flow of information across the contact centers for handling issues/ query from citizens.
- ▶ National Contact Centre will build IT protocols to ensure that any call landing at NCC are properly redirected to the respective State Contact Centre.

Miscellaneous News

EDUCATION: VIDYA VEERTA ABHIYAN

- ▶ **Launched by:** Ministry of Human Resource Development.

- ▶ **Objective:** To revive the patriotic fervour in our youth.
- ▶ **Funding:** This will be built on contributory funding by students and teachers on voluntary basis.

► **What will be done under this campaign?**

- Under this a wall of valour will be built in colleges and universities across the country
- This wall will be 15X20 feet in size.
- It will depict the portraits of all the 21 Paramveer Chakra recipients.

NEW NATIONAL YOUTH AWARDS

► **Context:** Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports has announced the formalization of new National Youth Awards.

► **Objective:** To make the National Youth Awards (NYA) more broad-based and to promote transparency in the selection process.

► **Salient features of new national youth awards?**

- **Increase in the number of the award**
 - **25 awards for Individual:** Award in the Individual category will be given to 25 individuals.
 - **10 awards for organization category:** Earlier, only one Award was given under Voluntary Organization Category, working with the youth. The number of Awards in the Organization category **has now been increased from 1 to 10.**
- **Expansion of field of activities**
 - The NYA was earlier conferred for excellent work done in the field of social service and youth development activities without specifying the individual fields thereby making it more general and less focused.
 - But now the field of activities for conferring the NYA has been categorically specified. The fields of activities are health, research and innovation, culture, promotion of human rights, active citizenship, art and literature, tourism, community service, traditional medicines, sports and academic excellence & smart learning and any other similar field.
- **Pan-India advertisement**
 - **Pan-India advertisement to be Released** to address the drawback of limited awareness of the NYA. Thus more nominations can be received.
- **Online application:**
 - Nomination for the National Youth Awards (NYA) will now be received

through online mode, on the lines of the Padma Awards, so as to cover the people on pan-India basis. Earlier, the nominations were received only through State/UT Governments.

BHILAR

► **Context:** Maharashtra Chief Minister inaugurated India's first 'village of books' in the village of Bhilar

► **Bhilar boasts collection of over 15,000 rare books and old magazines in Marathi. With this it aims to be the one-stop destination for lovers of vernacular literature.**

► It is located in Satara district of Maharashtra in Sahyadri hills.

► It is a major producing-hub of strawberries.

OKINOSHIMA

► **Context:** A UNESCO advisory body - International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) - has recommended adding Okinoshima to its World Heritage list.

► **Okinoshima:** It is a Japanese island located in the Munakata region in Fukuoka prefecture.

► **What is the cultural significance of this site?**

- It was the site of successful exchanges with the people of China and the Korean Peninsula between the fourth and ninth centuries.
- **National treasure:** Some 80,000 artefact brought as gifts from overseas (Korean peninsula & Persia) have been uncovered on the island
- Okinoshima still follow strict taboos from ancient times. These includes:
 - ban on women from entering the island;
 - Men setting foot on the island are first required to strip all clothes and perform a cleansing ritual.

INDIA BECOMES UN-HABITAT PRESIDENT

► **Context:** India has been elected as the president of the UN-HABITAT.

► **Duration of India's Presidency:** 2 years.

► This is the third time that India has been elected as it's president. Earlier it was elected in 1988 and 2007.

United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat)

- ▶ **What is it?** It is the United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development.
 - ▶ **HQ:** Nairobi, Kenya.
 - ▶ **When was it established?** 1978.
 - ▶ **Parent agency:** It report to the UN General Assembly.
 - ▶ It is a member of the **United Nations Development Group.**
- ▶ **Objectives?** To promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns & cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.
 - ▶ **What is Habitat Agenda?** The mandate of UN-Habitat derives its mandate from the Habitat Agenda.
 - Habitat Agenda was adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996.
 - The twin goals of the Habitat Agenda are
 - Adequate shelter for all.
 - Development of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world.