June (1-15, 2017)





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Urban Land Acting as Death Trap for Birds

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COVER STORY

Issue of Child Marriage in India



Children are the future of our society and child marriages create a number of negative consequences for young adults and their families which in turn affect development of society.

Recently Justice A.K. Sikri released a Report on Child Marriages in India. Report consists of statistical analysis of prevalence of such marriages, their genesis and geographical spread in India.

The report has been prepared by Young Lives India, an NGO researching in international childhood poverty, in collaboration with NCPCR. Report finds that despite the decline in child marriage, particularly in the age group of 10-14 years, there are 1.1 million boys and 1.8 million girls who were reported married in the mentioned age group.

The present article highlights the key points of the report besides analyzing the issue of child marriages in India. It mentions the root causes of this social menace, how does it impacts their social life and where is the scope of improvement in governance to deal with the situation.

Introduction

Early and child marriage has been a prevalent practice at different points in the history of almost all societies around the globe. In India, the practice has origins going back to ancient times and it continues to persist today.

Child marriage is most common in the world's poorest countries. The highest prevalence rates of women in the age group 20-49 years reporting entering marriage before 18 years are in South Asia (56%), followed by West and Central Africa (46%), Eastern and Southern Africa (38%), Latin America and the Caribbean (30%).

According to a UNICEF report (2014), one in three of all child marriages globally take place in India and rates are highest among the poorest and most socially disadvantaged sections of society. Child marriage has been declining slowly over the years, but numbers of girls and boys getting married before their respective legal ages remain large.

In the 2011 Census, 12 million child marriages were reported for girls aged less than 18 and boys below 21 years. High variance has been noted across regions, states and between urban and rural areas in the prevalence of child marriage within India.



Why was it in the news recently?

Recently, Young Lives Foundation released a report which finds that despite the decline in child marriage, particularly in the age group of 10-14 years, there are 1.1 million boys and 1.8 million girls who were reported married in the mentioned age group. The report highlights both increasing and decreasing trends in population as well as in the incidence of child marriage across 70 districts. It also identifies the causes, drivers and triggers of child marriage in India. Best practices in curbing child marriage from States as well as civil societies have also been highlighted in the report.

According to the report:

- There is a declining trend in terms of child marriage incidence at the National level.
- While 13 districts in Rajasthan continue to figure prominently amongst the highest incidence districts with respect to child marriage (amongst the 70), it is important to note that other than Banswara (with reference to girls), all the other districts show a positive declining trend in child marriage over the decade (2001-2011)
- In Madhya Pradesh, 7 out of 9 high incidence districts are showing a declining trend in the incidence of child marriage among girls.
- Urban districts such as Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, Rangareddy and Hyderabad in undivided Andhra Pradesh (now in Telangana) and Davangere in Karnataka reveal an increase in marriage of girls below the legal age during the period 2001-2011.
- Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, Gandhinagar in Gujarat, Ahmednagar in Maharashtra and Dakshin Dinajpur in West Bengal are the districts where despite a decrease in population from 2001 to 2011 (as per the Census data), incidence of child marriage among girls increased.
- Gaya in Bihar, Bagalkot in Karnataka, Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, Ajmer in Rajasthan and Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh registered an increase in population from 2001 to 2011. Despite this fact, the incidence of child marriage among girls registered a decrease for the same period.
- Jehanabad in Bihar, Davengere in Karnataka, Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh, Chittaurgarh in Rajasthan and Bhirbhum in West Bengal are districts that registered a decrease in population as well as the incidence of child marriage among girls, between Census 2001 and 2011.
- 16 urban and rural districts of Maharashtra feature in the list of districts that have shown an increase in the incidence of child marriage for both boys and girls between 2001 and 2011 (Ahmednagar, Bhandara, Chandanpur, Dhule, Pune, Sangli, Jalgaon, Jalna, Kolhapur, Latur, Mumbai, Mumbai suburban, Prabhani, Satara, Sindhudurg and Thane).
- Out of 640 districts in India, 70 districts have emerged with high incidence of child marriage. These 70 districts together had 14% of India's population below the legal age but contribute to 21% of child marriage in the country.

Child Marriage - a Human Right Violation

In India a marriage is considered illegal, if a girl gets married before completing 18 years of age and if a boy gets married before reaching the age of 21 years.

Child marriage is a result of various socio-cultural, economic and political factors, which are inter-linked and shape trajectories of children.



Girls in particular are married off because they are considered as 'paraya dhan' or somebody else's wealth/ property. This is a reflection of the patriarchal norms that still govern our society.

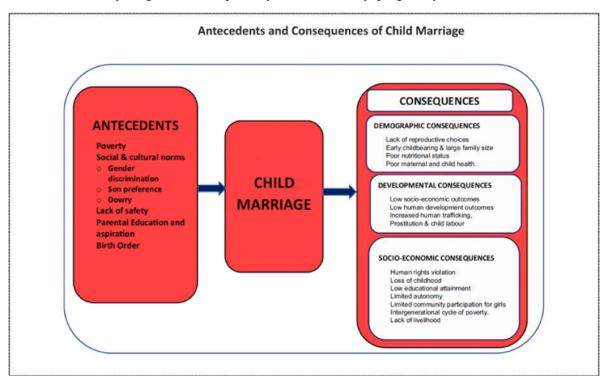
Child marriage is often seen by families as a way of protecting young girls from premarital sex, pregnancy outside of marriage and the need to preserve 'family honor' which takes precedence over the rights of the girl to a childhood.

Girl children from poor households are at higher risk of becoming child brides. Where resources are limited, gendered social risks become more acute and opportunities more constrained, forcing parents to make decisions which disadvantage girls.

Young Lives longitudinal data collected from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana finds that girls from the poorest households were twice as likely to be married before age 18 as those from the least poor households. Rural girls were more likely than urban girls to marry young and that these decisions reflect gendered social norms and structural factors that limit girls' future opportunities.

Consequences

Early and child marriage creates a number of negative consequences for young adults and their families. Of these, the development sector currently focuses on two primary impacts: on education, as girls are forced to drop out of school; and on the health of young women, especially linked to early pregnancy.



A study conducted by NCBI in 2009 suggests that a significantly larger number of women in India married as minors are less likely to use contraception in their first year of marriage (thus leading to higher fertility), when compared to women who married as adults. They have limited or no access to contraception and also displayed higher incidence of rapid repeat childbirths, higher unwanted pregnancies and hence, higher rates of pregnancy terminations (which has health complications of its own). Furthermore, women who have undergone multiple childbirths at a young age are also more likely to get sterilised. Approximately, one in ten women reporting both child marriage and sterilization (9.7%) were sterilized prior to age of 18 years. Thus, child marriage has considerable immediate and long-term impact on the reproductive health of women's bodies, often causing permanent damage to their health.



Different dimensions related to Child Marriage

Economics of Marriage

Patriarchal Indian society views women as an economic burden. Through marriage this burden is transferred to the marital family. Dowry is then expected from the girl's family as support for bearing this burden. For families that struggle with poverty, this one-time cost is very high, and the decisionmaking around a girl's marriage is done based on a desire to minimize this cost. Costs of weddings are viewed similarly, and multiple sisters may be married in one ceremony to capitalize on economies of scale.

Sexuality

- Control over women's sexuality is central to a society that is both patriarchal and divided by class and caste.
- These boundaries are kept in place by restricting women's sexuality and ability to procreate in order to limit inheritance of wealth and maintain "caste purity." This places a premium on the virginity and chastity of young women, such that even a forced sexual encounter is seen as tarring the image of the woman, leaving her less worthy of marriage.
- The overall attitude toward sexuality is negative, and there is no space to acknowledge adolescent sexuality and desires without being shamed or facing severe consequences.

Gender Norms and Masculinity

Women are socialized to believe that their primary role in society is in relation to others—as a daughter, a daughter-in-law, a wife and a mother. These norms restrict women from having aspirations beyond marriage. Similarly, for men, gender norms are constructed around masculinity, and a man's sense of self hinges on his ability to control women, particularly daughters. Until the daughter is married, her protection and chastity is considered a marker of the father's honour and masculinity. Losing control over his daughter can bring a man shame and exclusion from the community, and this motivates men to marry their girls early.

Educational and Institutional Gaps

For those parents who wish to send their daughters to school, and for girls who wish to study, accessing education is not always easy. Over and above restrictive norms, girls often have to travel long distances to find institutional education. Sometimes, lack of schools ends girls' education. A lack of institutions exaggerates the fact that a girl's education is viewed as a secondary priority to her labour in the household. It also reduces the bargaining power of young girls to resist marriage and to find alternative activities and aspirations.

Centrality of Marriage

Across all social boundaries, marriage is considered to be the most important part of the lives of young people. Both men and women are encouraged to aspire to it from a young age, each in his or her own way. This centrality of marriage is also accompanied by specific norms around marriage. These norms dictate what is and is not an "ideal" marriage. Because social norms require everyone to marry, and because marriage is governed by rigid rules, families fear that their child might not have an "ideal" marriage or will not find the "ideal" match. In such cases, marrying early is the way parents secure the future of their children.



Risk, Vulnerability and Uncertainty

For many families that live amid growing uncertainty, there is a strong anxiety about the future: a sense of "who knows what tomorrow will bring." Structural factors like poverty, agrarian crises and migration exacerbate the vulnerability of families to severe and life-changing situations. In such cases, marriage is seen as a way to bring certainty and insurance to an otherwise volatile environment. This is also why families that migrate, or are under threat of communal violence, or live in areas prone to floods or other natural disasters, are more likely to marry their children young—as a way to avoid greater uncertainty and as a way to mitigate risks by using marriage to strengthen social networks.

Age as an Axis of Power

Young people, children particularly, are viewed as naïve and innocent and lacking the capacity to fend for themselves. This is why society creates mechanisms to protect them from harm. In many cases, this is the explanation used to separate young people marrying underage out of choice. However, the same is not as problematic when it takes place with parental consent, within societal norms and boundaries. This difference shows that young people lack agency not because they are unable to make good decisions. Instead, agency comes with age: those who are older generally have greater power over decision-making.

Interventions

Constitutional Provision

- The Constitution of India recognizes the vulnerable position of children and their right to protection. Therefore, following the doctrine of protective discrimination,
- It guarantees in Article 15 special attention to children through necessary and special laws and policies that safeguard their rights. The right to equality, protection of life and personal liberty and the right against exploitation enshrined in Articles 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23 and 24 further reiterate India's commitment to the protection, safety, security and well-being of all its people, including the girl child. Article 39 enjoins that the State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that "children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment".

Policy Framework, Strategy and Plans

- National Policy for Children, 2013: Replacing the outdated National Policy for Children 1974, the Government of India adopted a new policy in April 2013. MWCD is the nodal Ministry for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of this Policy. Within its objective to strengthen the overall child protection framework, the policy provides for tracking, rescuing and rehabilitating out school children, including married children and ensuring them access to their right to education.
- National Strategy on Child Marriage The MWCD has proposed a National Strategy on child marriage dated 14 February 2013 that reflects the commitment of the Government of India to curb child marriage. It has suggested ensuring linkages with the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) structures and statutory bodies to ensure detection and prompt referral of cases that require care and protection. One of the strategic directions is: 'In cases in which children have already been married, they should not be





discriminated when accessing services such as health, nutrition, education and employment programmes'.

Programmes and Schemes

- **Sabla:** A comprehensive scheme for the holistic development of adolescent girls aged 11-18 years, called the 'Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls - Sabla' was introduced in the year 2010.
- Dhanalakshmi: In 2009, the MWCD introduces a pilot scheme (Dhanalakshmi) in selected backward districts of the country, as a conditional cash transfer scheme providing cash to the family of the girl child (preferably the mother) on fulfilling certain conditionalities for the girl child, such as birth registration; immunisation; enrolment retention in school; and delaying the marriage age beyond 18 years.
- **Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS):** The scheme was launched in the XIth Five Year Plan (2007-2012) to strengthen families of children at risk, as a measure to prevent children from falling out of the social security and protective net and also to strengthen structures and institutional and non-institutional mechanisms to protect children who come in contact with the law as victims of crimes or as children in conflict with the law.
- BAL Vivah Virodh Abhiyan (Campaign against Child Marriage): In 2005 a nationwide awareness-raising programme against child marriage was started by the National Commission for Women. It focused particularly on the states of Rajasthan, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA)

- It defines a child, if female, as one who has not completed 18 years of age and if male, as one who has not completed 21 years of age. It includes punitive measures against all those who perform, permit and promote child marriage. The law also has a provision for annulment of a child marriage and gives a separated female the right to have a residence and maintenance costs (from her husband if he is above 18 years of ages, and from her inlaws, if the husband too is a minor), until she is remarried
- However, there are major loopholes in the PCMA.
- Most importantly, it makes a distinction, declaring some marriages void (in cases where the marriage is conducted by use of force, fraud, deception, enticement, selling and buying or trafficking) but in other cases simply giving the option that one may declare one's marriage "voidable" even up to two years after attaining adulthood. This is a contradiction, for if the law doesn't see a 'child' as capable of consent, then every act of child marriage must by definition involve force, fraud, deception or enticement, and thus, must be void.
- In this context, it becomes crucial to redefine child marriage as a form of severe gender violence, thus understanding the practice as not just a restriction of a girl child's choices in marriage, but as violence inflicted on female bodies and minds.
- There is also no provision of marital rape. While marital rape is a threat all married women face, and legal debates pushing for the criminalisation of marital rape still rage in India, in the context of child marriage, this can be viewed as a contradiction in laws. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, amended Section 375 of the IPC to redefine 'rape', but Exception to this amendment states that sexual intercourse or acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under 15 years of age, is not rape. Thus, all married



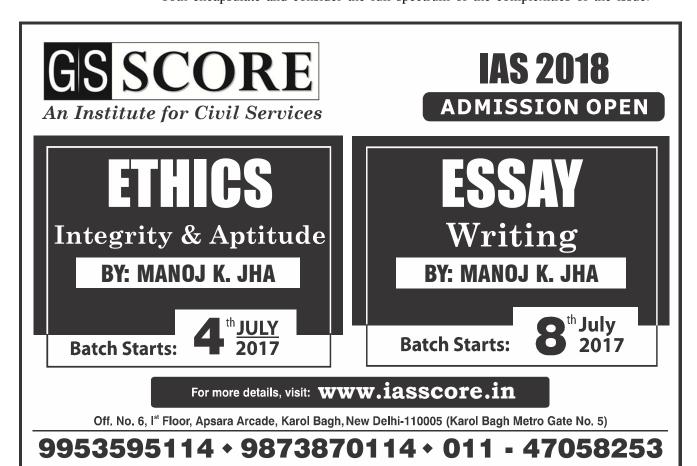
women, between the ages of 15 and 18, who are child brides under the PCMA 2006, if subjected to marital rape, cannot consider it a criminal violation. This brings into question the legal concept of 'consent' which is considered implicit in a marriage and is incidentally the argument given for not criminalising marital rape.

Recommendations

- ▶ Promoting free and compulsory secondary education
- ➤ Prevent trafficking
- ➤ Promote gender equity
- ➤ Compulsory registration of marriages
- ► Awareness generation
- ► Mobilization of religious leaders and community elders
- ▶ Provision of relevant economic support to the poorest households
- ▶ Using the power of Mass Media
- ▶ Strengthening the legal system and its implementation
- ▶ Appointment of full-time Child Marriage Prohibition Officers
- ► Evaluate and scale up successful interventions
- ▶ Monitor and focus on districts with high incidence of child marriage
- ➤ Support married adolescent girls

Conclusion

India has the highest number of child brides in the world. It is estimated that 47% of girls in India are married before their 18th birthday. The rates of child marriage vary between states and are as high as 69% and 65% in Bihar and Rajasthan. By broadening the community's understanding of the impacts of the practice of early and child marriage, we can bring about a change in the way goals and strategies are designed, ensuring that both encapsulate and consider the full spectrum of the complexities of the issue.





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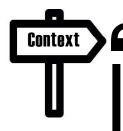


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ECONOMIC ISSUE

Strategic Partnership Policy to **Boost Defence Manufacturing**



Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Shri Arun Jaitely, had cleared the 'Strategic Partnership Policy' on 25th May 2017. This policy was supposed to be part of the new Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) which was released in 2016, but was stuck due to objections from various sectors. This would boost the Domestic Private Sector capability in production of cutting edge weapon systems and would also reduce India's dependency on the imported arms and ammunitions.

What is Strategic Partnership Policy?

- It is basically a policy decision in defence acquisition, where the private sector would be roped in as a strategic partner for making of advanced weapons system for armed forces of India.
- It has been released as a part of 'Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)' which is the policy document for acquisition of capital assets for the Armed forces of India.
- Currently, Defence Manufacturing in India is largely dominated by public sector entities like DRDO and its 50 labs, Factories under Ordnance Factory boards and other Defence PSUs.
- It was felt that these public sectors entities were not efficient in their functioning, and therefore **Dhirendra Singh Committee on defence acquisition** (July 2015) advocated for strategic partnership with private entities for defence manufacturing.

Features of the Policy

- Initially 4 major sectors viz. fighter jets, helicopters, submarines and armoured vehicles (tanks and infantry combat vehicles) would be opened for private sector for strategic partnership.
- One private entity would be chosen as the strategic partner for one of the above mentioned sectors, so as to avoid the monopolistic situation.
- Global OEM can also apply for strategic partnership, provided they agree for 'Transfer of Technology' agreement with the domestic entities.
- After shortlisting of the foreign vendors, Indian pool would be invited to plan collaborations and present joint proposals.

The Roadmap Ahead

- The proposal of 'Strategic Partnership' would be placed before the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) for the final approval.
- A pool of Indian companies having turnover of Rs 4000 Crore in last 3 years, and the capital assets worth Rs 2000 crore would be created to accord special status of Defence Manufacturing entities.



Other parameters like demonstrable manufacturing and technical expertise, existing infrastructure and the ability to absorb technology from their foreign partners, would be taken into consideration for creating the pool of eligible domestic private entities for defence manufacturing.

Benefits of the Strategic Partnership Policy

- Strategic partnership policy will lay a strong defence industrial foundation by making long-term investment on production and R&D infrastructure.
- The policy is aimed at developing the defence industrial ecosystem in the country through the involvement of major Indian corporates as well as the MSME sector.
- It would help in creating a pool of skilled workforce on cutting edge technologies, and thus would improve the employment scenario in the country.
- It would also increase competition in the domestic defence manufacturing arena, and Defence PSUs and Ordnance Factories boards would be compelled to increase their efficiency in order to survive.
- The crucial aim of this policy is to enhance India's self-reliance in defence procurement which continues to remain at an abysmally low level (30-35%) despite a huge defence industrial complex in public sector.
- With a stated policy measure, private sector would get more confidence in investing in the long-gestation Defence manufacturing Projects.

Points of Concern

- There might be issues of lack of institutional capacity in the private sector for running projects of such a large magnitude, as the sector was hitherto kept in isolation with Defence Manufacturing.
- Though Dhirendra Singh committee recommended against cross holding of two or more Strategic Partners by one parent company, the MoD's notified model has left this issue open. This may result in monopolistic domination by one large conglomerate.
- Given the sectors open for strategic partnership currently, it will fail to deal with one of India's more pressing defence shortfalls in ammunitions.
- The eligibility criteria of turnover of Rs 4000 crore, would result in hardly any MSME qualifying for the Strategic Partnerships.
- The government may still prefer to procure from PSU, and in that case, an export policy for Strategic Partners needs to be evolved.

Conclusion

Strategic Partnership Policy is a much awaited initiative for revitalizing the domestic defence manufacturing segment in India. On one hand, it would provide incentives to corporate for investing in state-of-art cutting edge technologies and on the other hand it would result in reducing the import dependency of the armed forces, which could become a disadvantage during time of conflicts.

As of now, only the broad contours of the policy have been unveiled, and the actual understanding can only be developed after the release of the fine prints. It can be hoped that gradually many other sectors would be opened under the strategic partnership model, which would lead to creation of a robust ecosystem of defence production. The onus would also be on Defence PSUs to improve their performance in order to remain relevant in the changing scenario.

Any shortcomings or deficiency in the policy can be addressed by mutual consultation between the government and industry. If implemented in true spirit, this could be the greatest exponent of 'Make in India' policy of the government.



GOVERNANCE ISSUE

Concept of Preventive Detention: Gross Misuse



Preventive detention has been in dual controversies since its inception in India. One section favours it for effective maintenance of law and order while others consider it as a gross violation of human rights. Recent past have witnessed the gross misuse of the provision in terms of harassment of ordinary people, breach of individual rights, suppressing of dissenting voice by the political parties etc.

Introduction

Article 22(3) of the Indian constitution states that if a person is arrested or detained under a law providing for preventive detention, then the protection against arrest and detention under Article 22(1) and 22(2) shall not be available.

The Article 22(1) and 22(2) states the following provisions:

- A person cannot be arrested and detained without being informed why he is being arrested.
- A person who is arrested cannot be denied to be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice. This means that the arrested person has right to hire a legal practitioner to defend himself/herself.
- Every person who has been arrested would be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours.
- The custody of the detained person cannot be beyond the said period by the authority of magistrate.

However, Article 22(3) says that the above safeguards are not available to the following:

- If the person is at the time being an enemy alien.
- If the person is arrested under certain law made for the purpose of "Preventive Detention".

A detainee under preventive detention can have no right of personal liberty guaranteed by Article 19 or Article 21.

Why in News?

Several states have enacted the laws popularly known as the 'Goondas Act' aimed at preventing the dangerous activities of specified kinds of offenders.



- Recently the Supreme Court has questioned the use of words such as 'Goonda' > and 'Prejudicial to the maintenance of public order' as a 'rhetorical incantation' solely to justify an arbitrary detention order.
- The Court termed the arrest of a person who allegedly sold spurious chilli seed in Telangana, detained under goonda act as a gross abuse of statutory powers.
- Similar cases happened in Chennai where four political activists were detained under the Goonda Act which is a direct result of a pathological tendency to crack down on any kind of political activity.
- The detention of Thirumurugan Gandhi, leader of the 'May 17 Movement', a pro-Tamil Eelam group, and three of his associates under the Goonda Act is a brazen violation of their fundamental rights and another instance of abuse of the law.
- The Goonda Act is meant to be invoked against habitual offenders, but in practice it is often used for a host of extraneous reasons. The police tend to use it to buy themselves more time to investigate offences and file a charge sheet. At times, it is used merely to send out a "tough message".
- Supreme Court has found the preventive detention as a violation of Fundamental Rights and said that exercise of power under these acts is colourable use of power.
- Supreme Court termed the use of preventive detention acts as illegal when other sufficient legal provisions exist. Supreme Court is of the view that preventive detention should be minimal and exceptional. It should be used only in certain unavoidable cases.
- The Supreme Court said that "An order of preventive detention, though based on the subjective satisfaction of the detaining authority, is nonetheless a serious matter, affecting the life and liberty of the citizen under Articles 14, 19, 21 and 22 of the Constitution."
- The court cautioned that, if the power is misused or abused, it will stand vitiated as being in colourable exercise of power.

Preventive Detention and its Objectives

- The existence of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious society in India prompts very common chances of inflicting frequent communal violence which requires pre-emptive approach to deal with the situation.
- A person can be put in jail / custody for two reasons. One is that he has committed a crime. Another is that he is potential to commit a crime in future. The custody arising out of the later is preventive detention and in this, a person is deemed likely to commit a crime. Thus Preventive Detention is done before the crime has been committed.
- The object of preventive detention is not to punish but to intercept to prevent the Detenu from doing something prejudicial to the State. The satisfaction of the concerned authority is a subjective satisfaction in such a manner.
- Such laws confer extraordinary discretionary powers on the executive to detain persons without bail for a period that may extend to one year and courts tend to review them on the touchstone of strict adherence to the prescribed procedure.
- Arrest as laid down in Chapter V of the Code of Criminal Procedure Code 1973 initiates preventive detention which questions one's right to liberty and freedom.
- The justification for preventive detention is suspicion or reasonable apprehension, reasonable probability of the impending commission of an act prejudicial to the state.



What are the types of detention?

- **Punitive detention:** It is a punishment for illegal acts done.
- Preventive detention: It is imprisonment of a person beforehand to prevent possible commitment of crime. Preventive detention thus is action taken on grounds of suspicion that some wrong actions may be done by the person concerned.

Vagueness in the Clauses of Article 22

However, several words in the clauses of Article 22 bring vagueness which breeds the abuse of Preventive Detention Laws such as:

- Article 22 (1) No fixed time to inform the person for which s/he is arrested.
- Article 22 (4) Detention for a period of more than 3 months.
- Article 22 (5) No time frame to inform the person the grounds on which the order has been made and no fixed time of providing him/her opportunity of making a representation against the order.
- Article 22 (7) A centre or state law is needed to be passed to exercise the Preventive Detention provision. Arbitrariness of the clause 7 which provides Parliament the authority to decide the law to be declared as preventive detention, time period for detention and procedure to be followed by an Advisory Board in an inquiry etc.
- It obviates the Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which permits that rights can only be limited "in time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation" because it allows detention in peacetime as well.
- In the absence of proper safeguards, preventive detention has been misused, particularly against the Dalits and the minorities.

However, apart from these, Schedule 7 also provides an exclusive grounds for **Preventive Detention such as:**

- Entry 9 of Union List which deals with the defence, foreign affairs and security of India.
- **Entry 3 of Concurrent List** which deals with the security of state, public order, supply of essential items.
- Centre has upper hand in enacting Preventive Detention Laws as states can only pass laws with respect to entry 3 of concurrent list which are popularly known as Goonda Acts.
- The authorities and the police have used such laws to bypass the normal legal procedure such as to avoid quick bail or to buy more time for investigation.
- Such laws are also being used to send a tough message to habitual offenders and prevent them from committing crime.

Conclusion

- The Preventive Detention Law is a necessary evil also termed as lawless law which is very much required in Indian scenario for maintaining law and order. However, it should be the responsibility of the detaining authority to detain a person with a view to prevent him from acting in a manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order and not for biased and political reasons.
- Thus, it may be derived that those who are reasonable for the national security or for the maintenance of public order must be the sole judges of what the National Security or Public order requires and imposes the preventive measures accordingly keeping in mind the rights of the person and overall not punishing those who are not guilty.





ECONOMIC ISSUE

Concept of Crypto-Currencies



Recently crypto-currencies were in news as demanders of ransom for unlocking computer devices infected by Wannacry ransom ware demanded ransom in Bitcoins. On the other hand, China, South Korea and Japan have adopted use of Bitcoins with regulations. In the wake of these two developments it is important to understand cryptocurrencies, benefits and risks associated with them and regulatory framework across world in general and in India in particular.

What is a Crypto Currency?

A crypto-currency is a medium of exchange like normal currencies such as Rupees, but designed for the purpose of exchanging digital information through a process made possible by certain principles of cryptography. Cryptography is used to secure the transactions and to control the creation of new coins. The first crypto-currency to be created was Bitcoin back in 2009. Today there are hundreds of other cryptocurrencies, often referred to as Altcoins.

Unlike centralized banking, where governments control the value of a currency like USD through the process of printing fiat money, government has no control over crypto-currencies as they are fully decentralized.

Most crypto-currencies are designed to decrease in production over time like Bitcoin, which creates a market cap on them. That's different from fiat currencies where financial institutions can always create more, hence inflation. Bitcoin will never have more than 21 million coins in circulation. The technical system on which all cryptocurrencies are based on was created by Satoshi Nakamoto.

Benefits

- **Freedom in Payment:** With Crypto-currency it is very possible to be able to send and get money anywhere in the world at any given time without third party like bank as intermediary; there is no intermediary in Crypto-currency exchange.
- Low collapse risk: Regular currencies depend on governments which fail ocassionally. Such events either cause hyperinflation or a complete collapse of a currency, which can wipe out savings of a lifetime in day. Bitcoin is not regulated by any one government. It's a virtual global currency.
- **Transparent and safe:** All finalized transactions are available for everyone to see, however personal information is hidden. Your public address is what is visible; however, your personal information is not tied to this. Bitcoin protocol cannot be manipulated by any person, organization, or government. This is due to Bitcoin being cryptographically secure.

Risks

Untraceable: This feature of crypto-currencies of also attracts crime. People can buy and sell drugs and other illegal items with significantly less risk of being



traced by authorities. Transactions that occur through the use and exchange of these altcoins are independent from formal banking systems, and therefore can make tax evasion simpler for individuals. Since charting taxable income is based upon what a recipient reports to the revenue service, it becomes extremely difficult to account for transactions made using existing crypto-currencies.

- Volatility: Bitcoin has volatility mainly due to the fact that there is a limited amount of coins and the demand for them increases by each passing day. Currently, Bitcoin's price bounces everyday mainly due to current events that are related to digital currencies.
- There is no easy way to buy them or sell them. There aren't a lot of places where Bitcoins or other crypto-currencies are accepted as payment.
- **Still Developing:** Crypto-currencies are still at its infancy stage with incomplete features that are in development. To make the digital currency more secure and accessible, new features, tools, and services are currently being developed.

Regulatory Framework

The legal status of crypto-currencies varies substantially from country to country and is still undefined or changing in many of them. While some countries have explicitly allowed their use and trade, others have banned or restricted it. China, South Korea and Japan have adopted use of bitcoins with regulations. In Russia, though cryptocurrencies are legal, it is illegal to actually purchase goods with any currency other than the Russian Ruble. On July 1, Australia will follow suit. Chinese authorities have aggressively stepped in, when needed, to ensure crypto-currency exchanges function well.

The circulation of virtual Currencies which are also known as Digital/Crypto Currencies has been a cause of concern. In order to examine the existing framework, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance has constituted an Inter- Disciplinary Committee chaired by Special Secretary (Economic Affairs) and representatives from Department of Economic Affairs, Department of Financial Services, Department of Revenue (CBDT), Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Reserve Bank of India, NITI Aayog and State Bank of India. The Committee will:

- Take stock of the present status of Virtual Currencies both in India and globally;
- Examine the existing global regulatory and legal structures governing Virtual Currencies:
- Suggest measures for dealing with such Virtual Currencies including issues relating to consumer protection, money laundering, etc; and
- Examine any other matter related to Virtual Currencies which may be relevant.

The Committee has been tasked to submit its report within three months.

Conclusion

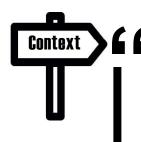
Crypto-currencies are not perfect. It does have many advantages that physical currencies do not provide its users; however, it also has its disadvantages. This is mostly due to the fact that crypto-currencies are still a relatively young and new currency. However, lead role in their success depends on regulatory framework which keeps an oversight on them.





ECONOMIC ISSUE

Privatization of Air India: Critical Analysis



Government think tank NITI Aayog has recommended that the privatization of Air India should be done. The NITI Aayog's recommendation comes against the backdrop of the government considering selling loss-making Air India, which has a 14% domestic market share and around Rs. 50,000 crore in accumulated debt.

This is a step in the right direction and the government should now actively look for a buyer for a variety of reasons.

Introduction

Air India is the flag carrier airline of India. It is the third largest domestic airline in India in terms of passengers carried, after IndiGo and Jet Airways with a market share of 13% as of May 2017.

The Air India is neck deep in debt; on the contrary private sector is flourishing. AI has debt of around Rs. 60,000 crore, which includes around Rs. 21,000 crore of aircraft-related loans and around Rs. 8,000 crore working capital.

Why privatization of Air India

- Huge debt: It is operationally inefficient, has been grossly mismanaged and is unable to compete with private sector operators. Due to this it is consistently making losses and is dependent on the government for survival. It has a debt of close to Rs. 50,000 crore.
- **Overstating profit:** Analysts strongly believe that the Air India is overstating its operational profit as due to its poor service it has been losing market share. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) questioned its operational profit of Rs. 105 crore for 2015-16.
- Failure of 2012 bailout package: The 2012 turnaround plan (in which the airline was provided with a bailout package of Rs. 30,000 crore) has not shown the desired results. Air India has failed to meet the operational targets as well as target of raising Rs 500 crore annually through monetization of assets in the four-year period from 2012-13 to 2015-16 (the company managed to raise only Rs. 64.06 crore).

Wastage of tax payers money:

- If the status quo exists then the government will have to keep bailing out Air India leading to wastage of tax payers money.
- It will also affect the fiscal health of the government.
- Also this amount can be used in other important areas such as health and education.



Against the principles of market economy:

- Going by the established norms of market economy, the government should not be providing goods and services where the private sector has a vibrant presence.
- Presence of state-owned companies having access to government finances and practically no fear of failing affects price discovery in the market and can hurt private sector operators in the business.

Will give a push to pending reforms:

- This will send a strong signal to investors that India is serious about reforms.
- This will also set an example and pave the way for disinvestment of other loss-making companies, such as Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) which can't compete in India's hyper-competitive telecom market.

Difficulty in privatization of Air India and way-out

It will not be easy for the government to privatize the debt-laden Air India. It will have to work with professionals and investment bankers to find ways and make the deal reasonably attractive for a prospective buyer. It will have to bring down the level of debt in the company. This can possibly be done by selling non-core assets. For example, one of its subsidiaries—the Hotel Corporation of India—runs hotels which can be sold to reduce debt. The government can infuse equity capital one last time to bring down the debt and make it attractive for potential buyers. If the financial institutions are willing, a part of the debt can be converted into equity. The government could also choose to start by selling a minority stake in the company and bring in a professional management.

The process of Air India assets sale is another big challenge. Air India has 4 subsidiaries— Air India Express Limited (AIEL), Air India Engineering Services Limited (AIESL), Air India Transport Services Limited (AISTL) and Alliance Air. Each subsidiary has different valuation with experts estimating Air India Express Limited valuation at Rs. 8,000 crore, AIESL at Rs. 3,000 crore and AITSL valued at roughly Rs. 2,000 crore. It also has a joint venture with AISATS which provides ground handling for domestic airports, with rough estimated worth at Rs. 1000 crore.

The NITI Aayog has said that all non-aircraft related debt should be written off to make it attractive for investors. But it will be difficult to convince banks, financial institutions, oil companies and the Airports Authority of India to agree to such a massive write-off.

Further Air Corporation Employees' Union has warned the government of a "major confrontation" if it decides to go ahead with this disinvestment.

Conclusion

Privatization of Air India will be a big challenge for the present government. If at all it happens, it may bring a relief to the government. Air India hardly earns profit; on the contrary other private players are going well. It has become a liability of the government rather than an asset. However, the process of privatization must make sure worthy price for the rich company. In the past, blue chip companies are sold at throw away price. The proceeds of the divestment must not be used for meeting the fiscal deficits of the government, but may be used for asset creation and welfare of the people.





ECONOMIC ISSUE

NITI Aayog Report on Agriculture

As a source of livelihood, agriculture (including forestry and fishing) remains the largest sector of Indian Economy. While its output share fell from 28.3% in 1993-94 to 14.4% in 2011-12, employment share declined from 64.8% to 48.9% over the same period. Therefore, almost half of the workforce in India still remains dependent on agriculture. Given the low share of this workforce in the GDP, on average, it earns much lower income than its counterpart in industry and services.

In this article we shall look at some major impediments in the growth of Agriculture sector and ways in which these impediments could be diluted and consequently eliminated.

What are the impediments in Agriculture growth?

Progress in agriculture has a bearing on the fate of the largest proportion of the low income population in India. There are five important aspects of agriculture that need immediate attention to bring economic advantages to millions of farm families.

First, output per hectare, which is a common measure of agricultural productivity, remains low for many crops when compared to many other countries. There are also large regional variations within the country. Reasons include low and faulty input uses, poor access to modern technology and no real technological breakthrough in recent times.

Second, on average, farmers do not realize remunerative prices due to limited reach of the minimum support prices (MSP) and an agricultural marketing system that delivers only a small fraction of the final price to the actual farmer.

Third, the farm size of the majority of the household has declined to unviable levels inducing farmers to leave land and look for better job opportunities elsewhere. Because land leasing laws make it risky to lease land, increasingly, productive land is being left uncultivated.

Changes in the land leasing laws may bring consolidation of land holding at operational level and attract better investment along with access to credit and relief to tenants.

Fourth, relief measures in the event of natural disasters are inadequate and suffer from procedural inefficiencies and delays. The risk adaptation measures are poorly executed and have not worked effectively. This situation needs to be rectified with at least minimum quick relief to farmers for crop loss in case of natural calamities.



Finally the potential of the eastern region needs to be harnessed with suitable interventions. This region is unique for its suitability to the production of certain commodities. However, taking advantage of this potential would require institutional support and investment in technological innovations.

What are the ways to counter impediments in Agriculture?

Despite rising scarcity and stress on water resources, India uses irrigation water very inefficiently. Area under irrigation can be doubled in the country without requiring extra water if we attain water use efficiency level of countries like China, USA, and Brazil. We need to learn from and adopt irrigation technologies used in the other countries and adopt new agronomic practices.

To ensure that the farmer can buy subsidized urea when he needs it, decanalize its imports, allow transactions to take place at the import price and pay fertiliser subsidy directly to farmers and domestic urea producers.

The success of Bt cotton in India and many more GM seeds elsewhere in the world testifies to the potential of GM technology in giving a major boost to productivity in agriculture. India should explore selective use of transgenic seed varieties with the necessary safeguards in areas where conventional technology is not yielding much needed gains like pulses and oilseeds. Transgenic seed varieties can also help in addressing adverse effect of pesticide on human health and environment, food safety, abiotic stresses and vitamin and nutrient deficiencies in diets.

Realign fertilizer use recommendations to emerging fertilizer products such as neemcoated urea and urea briquette. Provide information to farmers on the optimal use of different fertilizers according to soil type, crop and water usage. Farmers must be encouraged to better calibrate the balance as well as level across different fertilizers.

Due to several weaknesses that have crept into ICAR and State Agricultural Universities and low participation of private sector in R&D and technology generation, India is falling behind in agricultural technology. If public sector does not deliver and private sector is not welcome, both farmers and consumers will suffer. Urgent steps are needed to overhaul, reform, restructure and revitalise National Agricultural Research System to make it effective. Public sector alone cannot meet future challenges and requirements of agriculture. There is a need to create favourable environment for private sector participation in agricultural research and technology development.

Demand side factors are highly favourable for diversification towards high value horticultural and livestock products and attribute-based products. However, infrastructure, institutions and public policy are not very favourable towards them. There is a need for measures to improve health and hygiene of the livestock for improved quality of meat and meat products, expand cold storage facilities and provide market finance to farmers. We must also exploit more fully the potential of inland fisheries reinforced by post-harvest management and export-oriented fish farming in brackish water. Above all, policies that facilitate the development of food processing industry will go a long way towards creating demand at lucrative prices for high value commodities. Turning food-processing industry into a major export industry can also create vast employment opportunities for workers since it is a labour-intensive industry.

Liberalised land lease market offers solution to several problems of Indian agriculture like consolidation of operational holdings, fallow lands, access to institutional credit, and productive use of land belonging to farmers unwillingly engage in farming. A transparent land leasing law that allows the potential lessee or tenant or sharecropper to engage in written contracts with the landowner is a win-win reform. Under the law, the landowner will also be able to lease land without fear of losing it to the lessor. The biggest advantage of liberalised and secure land lease market will be that it will ease





the exit of those farmers who find farming unattractive or non-viable and economically strengthen those farmers who want to stay in the farming and raise the scale of operational holdings. Among other things, this will also permit the consolidation of operational land holding so essential in the face of declining size and fragmented land holdings. Another instrument for creating vibrant land lease market is land bank held by a public agency. Interested landowners may deposit their land parcels in the bank and potential cultivators may lease in land from it.

Agricultural markets in India have witnessed at best limited reforms during the last three decades and the mandi system is characterised by inefficient physical operations, excessive crowding of intermediaries, long and fragmented market chains and low scale. This is depriving farmers of fair share of the price paid by the final consumer. Consequently, farmers are seeking MSP for almost all crops and everywhere, which is not feasible. There is a need for paradigm shift from price centric direct intervention to non-price policy instruments. The aim should be to create enabling market environment for produce for higher price realization for farmers. Many of the steps necessary to achieve this are related to the reform of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees Acts in the states. The farmer must be given the full right to sell their produce to whomsoever they wants in virtually all products. This would allow the farmer to minimize the number of intermediaries and receive a higher fraction of the price paid by the ultimate consumer.

A well-functioning system of contract farming will go some distance towards providing a guaranteed price as well as necessary technical support to the farmer. With the corporate sector keen on investing in agribusiness to harness the emerging opportunities in domestic and global markets, time is opportune for reforms that would provide healthy business environment for this sector. Institutional arrangements such as contract farming, producers' organizations, and cooperatives that provide farmers easy access to markets, distribute price risks, and reduce marketing and transaction costs can go a long way in pushing high value agriculture.

There is a need for reorientation of price policy if it is to serve the basic goal of remunerative prices for farmers. This goal cannot be achieved through procurement backed MSP since it is neither feasible nor desirable for the government to buy each commodity in each market in all regions. One possible way to keep a check on prices falling below threshold level is to adopt system of "Price Deficiency Payment". While MSP may still be used for need-based procurement, the remainder of the produce may be covered under "price deficiency payment". This approach would help prevent unwanted stocks and spread price incentives to producers in all the regions and all crops.

Organic farming in eastern and north-eastern States could be rewarding. The appropriate support for quality input supply, quality testing and certification and processing would be pre-requisites. Value addition in the produce can be achieved with appropriate branding for export promotion.

A mechanism is required to bring quick relief to all those impacted directly or indirectly by natural disaster. It may be best to conduct the relief transparently as an emergency social program. The government should create a database that identifies farmers and corresponding Aadhar seeded bank accounts. In case of a natural disaster, transparently identified by weather data and a set of weather related criteria, the government should then transfer a minimum specified sum of cash immediately into these accounts.

Conclusion

Agriculture in India is going through tough times with back to back two drought years (2014-15, 2015-16) and falling agriculture prices due to bumper crop in 2015-16. The level of stress in agriculture could be gauged from rising cases of farmer suicide. There is a need for undertaking measures on multiple fronts as discussed above. This is essential to realize the goal of doubling farm income by 2022.



SOCIAL ISSUE

Oxford Survey on Kids



The new report by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) on multi-dimensionally poor people reveals startling facts about the kids residing in India in particular and in world in general. Despite the plethora of programmes and welfare schemes, the conditions of the kids are not improving in India.

The report is a wakeup call for the government of India which has adopted the global Sustainable Development Goals and takes seriously Goal1, the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions. If this continues, our dream of skimming off dividend from young India would go awry.

Introduction

OPHI develops and implements multi-dimensional measures of poverty, wellbeing and inequality. These measures go beyond traditional one-dimensional approach to incorporate dimensions such as health, education, living standards, quality of work and more innovative dimensions.

According to OPHI a "multi-dimensionally poor" child is one who lacks at least onethird of ten indicators, grouped into three dimensions of poverty: health, education and standard of living. The health dimension comprises indicators such as nutrition, child mortality, and education. Under standard of living are indicators such as access to cooking fuel, improved sanitation, safe drinking water, electricity, flooring, and asset ownership.

What is multidimensional poverty?

Poverty is often defined by one-dimensional measures, such as income. But no one indicator alone can capture the multiple aspects that constitute poverty.

Multidimensional poverty is made up of several factors that constitute poor people's experience of deprivation – such as poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standard, lack of income (as one of several factors considered), disempowerment, poor quality of work and threat from violence.

A multidimensional measure can incorporate a range of indicators to capture the complexity of poverty and better inform policies to relieve it. Different indicators can be chosen appropriate to the society and situation.

Main findings of the OPHI report

- A total of 689 million (68.9 crore) children live in multidimensional poverty.
- About 31% of the world's "multidimensionally poor" children live in India.
- India is followed by Nigeria (8%), Ethiopia (7%) and Pakistan (6%).
- Nearly 50% of the children in 103 countries are multidimensionally poor.



- > Of the 1.45 billion (145 crore) people (from the 103 countries) who are multidimensionally poor; 48% are children.
- In terms of the number of such multidimensionally poor children as a proportion of the total population, India stood 37th among 103 countries. Out of India's 217 million (21.7 crore) children, 49.9% were multidimensionally poor.
- About 87% of the multidimensionally poor children lived in South Asia (44%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (43%).
- In Ethiopia, Niger, and South Sudan, over 90% of the children are MPI poor.

Why use a multidimensional approach?

- **Income alone can miss a lot.** For example, economic growth has been strong in India in recent years. In contrast, the prevalence of child malnutrition has remained at nearly 50 per cent, which is among the highest rates worldwide. Multidimensional measures can complement income.
- Poor people themselves describe their experience of poverty as multidimensional. Participatory Exercises reveal that poor people describe illbeing to include poor health, nutrition, lack of adequate sanitation and clean water, social exclusion, low education, bad housing conditions, violence, shame, disempowerment and much more.
- The more policy-relevant information there is available on poverty, the betterequipped policy makers will be to reduce it. For example, an area in which most people are deprived in education is going to require a different poverty reduction strategy to an area in which most people are deprived in housing conditions.
- Some methods for multidimensional measurement, such as the OPHI-developed Alkire Foster method, can be used for additional purposes. In addition to measuring poverty and wellbeing, OPHI's method can be adapted to target services and conditional cash transfers or to monitor the performance of programmes.

Why is this better than the Human Poverty Index (HPI) previously used in the Human Development Report?

- The MPI replaced the HPI, which appeared in the HDR from 1997-2009. Pioneering in its day, the HPI used country averages to reflect aggregate deprivations in health, education, and standards of living. It could not identify which specific individuals, households or larger groups of people were poor.
- The Global MPI addresses this shortcoming by identifying each person as pooror non-poor based on how many deprivations they face, then aggregates this information into an overall set of intuitive statistics such as the percentage of people who are MPI poor.
- The MPI can be broken down by indicator to show how the composition of multidimensional poverty differs across regions, ethnic groups and so on with useful implications for policy.

Conclusion

The survey report reveals a grim picture of the conditions of the children in India and world. The whole international community need to work for the betterment of these children. The report is a wakeup call for the policy makers. India severely lacks high quality human capital and it can be met by new generation. Hence, there is a greater need to invest more especially in education and health.



SOCIAL ISSUE

Draft Social Security Code



Ministry of Labour & Employment has prepared a Preliminary draft of the Code on Social Security & Welfare by amalgamating all existing Labour Laws related to Social Security.

Comments/suggestions of all concerned stakeholders/other members of the public are invited on this draft Code for consideration in the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

The proposed draft code on Social Security and Welfare with an aim to provide social security cover the entire workforce in the country of about 47.41 crore workers.

Introduction

In line with the recommendations of the 2nd National Commission on Labour, Ministry of Labour & Employment has taken steps for simplification, amalgamation and rationalization of Central Labour Laws and replacing them with 4 Labour Codes viz. Code on Wages, Code on Industrial Relations, Code on Social Security & Welfare, and Code on Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions.

Ministry has prepared a Preliminary draft of the Code on Social Security & Welfare by amalgamating all existing Labour Laws related to Social Security (total 15 Labour Laws including EPF Act, ESI Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, Employees Compensation Act, Unorganized Social Security Act, and various Welfare Cess /Fund Acts).

What is social security?

According to a definition given in the ILO publication, "Social security is the security that society furnishes through appropriate organization against certain risks to which its members are exposed. These risks are essentially contingencies of life which the individual of small means cannot effectively provide by his own ability, or foresight alone or even in private combination with his fellows".

The action programs of government related to Social Security is intended:

- To promote the welfare of the population through assistance measures guaranteeing access to sufficient resources for food and shelter, and
- To promote health and well-being for the population at large and potentially vulnerable segments such as children, the elderly, the sick and the unemployed.

Social security benefits may be provided in cash or kind for medical need, rehabilitation, and domestic help during illness at home, legal aid, or funeral expenses.

It acts as a facilitator - it helps people to plan their own future through insurance and assistance.

Social Security and labour welfare falls under Concurrent list; it means both union and state Government can make laws regarding these topics.



Issues with present Social security schemes in India

- Instead of launching so many schemes on social security the numbers of Indians who are covered or benefitted from these schemes are very less. The situation is much worse in unorganized sector. Most of our social security schemes face weak beneficiary selection criteria, age old storage infrastructure, ineffective implementation and wide scale corruption. Further most of the pension or insurance schemes in India are run by different ministries and they follow a silo approach. There is hardly any coordination among ministries. This adversely effects the implementation of the schemes.
- India spends 1.4% of its GDP on social protection, among the lowest in Asia, far lower than China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and even Nepal.

Features of Social Security Draft Code

- It will cover every working person whether he/she belongs to the organised sector or the unorganised sector in the country under it. Thus, for the first time, agricultural workers along with self-employed people will be covered under the social security cover.
- According to the proposed law, factories employing even a single worker will have to contribute towards social security benefits.
- Also, even households employing domestic help will also have contribute towards schemes including provident fund and gratuity for the worker.
- Self-employed persons, including agricultural labourers, will also make contribution towards the schemes on their own.
- Significantly, casual, part-time or self-employed workers earning less than the stipulated minimum wages will not have to pay any contribution towards the social security schemes but will be entitled to these benefits through a fund set up by the government, according to another proposal.
- It will cover any factory, mine, shop, plantation, charitable organisations and all establishments or households employing casual, fixed-term, part-time, informal, apprentice, domestic and home-based workers.
- If such establishments or factories fail to contribute towards the social security schemes of the workers, they will be liable to pay compensation.
- It proposes, National Social Security Council (NSSC), chaired by the Prime Minister to streamline and make policy on social security schemes related to all the Ministries.
- NSSC's other members will include Union Finance Minister, Labour Minister, Health and Family Welfare Minister along with employer and employees' representatives. It will co-ordinate between central and State governments, monitor the implementation of social security schemes, regulate funds collected under various social security schemes, among others.
- When the draft code takes final shape in the form of a law, there will be universal coverage of social security schemes guaranteeing equal treatment to all the workers.

The proposed code on 'Social Security and Welfare' intends to make a drastic shift in the social security framework of the country from an employment-based approach to a rights-based approach followed by some developing countries such as South Africa.



Flaws in Social Security Code

- ➤ The Centre's draft Social Security Code, purportedly consolidating labour laws, has created doubts about its efficacy, as it has retained the drawbacks of earlier legislations and is evasive about the benefits accruing to workers in the unorganised sector.
- The International Social Security Association (ISSA) in its 'Social Security Coverage Extension in the BRICS' report said that the best way to describe the social security coverage in India "is a patchwork" as there was a "total mismatch between the labour market realities and the history of social security laws."
- ➤ The Code does not define "social security" nor provide the components of social security and the percentage benefits under each component.
- ➤ There are huge concerns about the funds for delivering varieties of benefits that the Code talks about.
- The code requires every employer, employee and each employer-employee relationship to be registered. The vagueness and complexity of the registration process indicates that it will potentially leave out a large majority of workers from the informal and unorganised sectors.
- ➤ The code does little to take into account the perspectives of workers, particularly workers from the informal and unorganised sectors who are the most vulnerable of all.
- ➤ The most regressive dimension in the code is undoing the role of trade unions that has been a part of the constitutional scheme of things in the post-independence era in the form of tripartite negotiations for workers rights.
- ➤ One fears that the burden will be shifted from the employers to the wage earning class through higher taxes.
- ➤ The Code lists numerous functions for each body (some over-lapping) and bureaucratisation will be its greatest hazard. The tax mop-up required to support these bodies raises concerns. The composition of these bodies needs a rethink; it omits employers or does not give adequate representation to unions.
- The top-down approach of this Code is a serious limitation. The law needs to be preceded by a fantastic and wide ranging dissemination and consultations exercises.





ECONOMIC ISSUE

Government Rule on Capital **Gains Tax**

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has come out with a final notification specifying the securities transactions that would attract capital gains tax where the securities transaction tax (STT) hasn't been paid.

An amendment has been made in the Finance Act 2017 to curb the declaration of unaccounted income as exempt long-term capital gains under the previous provisions of the Income Tax Act by entering into fake transactions. The amendment notification specifies the transactions on which the tax would apply and those on which tax would be exempt. Thus, hereby analysing the new rules and its significance.

What is a 'Capital Gains Tax'?

A capital gains tax is a type of tax levied on capital gains, profits an investor realizes when he sells a capital asset (land, building, house property, vehicles, patents, trademarks, leasehold rights, machinery, stocks, bonds and jewellery) for a price that is higher than the purchase price. Capital gains taxes are only triggered when an asset is realized, not while it is held by an investor. The most common capital gains are realized from the sale of stocks, bonds, precious metals and property.

Some assets are considered short-term capital assets when these are held for 12 months or less. The assets are:

- Equity or preference shares in a company listed on a recognized stock exchange in India.
- Securities (like debentures, bonds, govt securities etc.) listed on a recognized stock exchange in India.
- Units of UTI, whether quoted or not.
- Units of equity oriented mutual fund, whether quoted or not.

Short-term capital asset - An asset which is held for not more than 36 months or less is a short-term capital asset.

Long-term capital asset – An asset that is held for more than 36 months is a longterm capital asset.

From FY 2017-18 onwards - The criteria of 36 months have been reduced to 24 months in the case of immovable property being land, building, and house property. For instance, if you sell house property after holding it for a period of 24 months, any income arising will be treated as long-term capital gain.



Tax on Short-Term and Long-Term Capital Gains

Tax on long-term capital gain: Long-term capital gain is taxable at 20% + surcharge and education cess.

Tax on short-term capital gain when securities transaction tax is not applicable: If securities transaction tax is not applicable, the short-term capital gain is added to your income tax return and the taxpayer is taxed according to his income tax slab.

Tax on short-term capital gain if securities transaction tax is applicable: If securities transaction tax is applicable, the short-term capital gain is taxable at the rate of 15% + surcharge and education cess.

Assets	Duration (Short Term)	Duration (Long Term)	Short Term Capital Gains Tax	Long Term Capital Gains Tax
Stocks/shares	Less than 12 months	More than 12 months	15%	Nil *
Equity oriented mutual funds	Less than 12 months	More than 12 months	15%	Nil *
Debt oriented mutual funds	Less than 36 months	More than 36 months	Slab rate	20% with indexation
Bonds	Less than 12 months	More than 12 months	Slab rate	10% without indexation
Real estate/ property	Less than 36 months	More than 36 months	Slab rate	20% with indexation
Gold	Less than 36 months	More than 36 months	Slab rate	20% with indexation

Recent Notification by CBDT

An amendment has been made in the Finance Act 2017 to curb the declaration of unaccounted income as exempt long-term capital gains under the previous provisions of the Income Tax Act by entering into fake transactions. The amendment notification specifies the transactions on which the tax would apply and those on which tax would be exempt.

According to the notification, the chargeability to STT provision will not apply to all transactions of acquisitions of equity shares entered into on or after October 1, 2004, except the acquisition of listed shares in a preferential issue of a company whose shares are not frequently traded in a recognised stock exchange, the acquisition of existing listed equity shares in a company not through a recognised stock exchange of India, and the acquisition of shares of a company while it is de-listed.

Accordingly, certain acquisitions like acquisition by way issue of shares by a company, acquisition under employee stock option scheme or employee stock purchase scheme, acquisition by any non-resident in accordance with foreign direct investment guidelines of the Government of India acquisition by an investment fund or a venture capital fund or a qualified institutional buyer, acquisition by mode of specified transfer which are exempt.

This notification comes as a breather for foreign investors and venture capital houses as well as shareholders who have acquired shares upon corporate restructuring undertaken vide court-approved schemes on which no STT was paid. On the other hand, The CBDT notification appears to be significantly unfair for shareholders of companies whose shares are not frequently traded on stock exchanges.

Conclusion

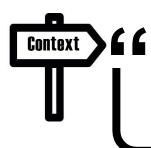
The new rule is a continuation of government fight against unaccounted/ Black money. This shall curb unaccounted income. At, the same time exemptions have been maintained for genuine transactions, however, this will disincentives trade in share of those companies which are not frequently traded on stock exchange.





ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

Urban Land Acting as Death Trap for Birds



Birds face a range of threats in today's times, among which habitat loss is the most common. Rapid urbanisation in the last three decades is responsible for the disappearance of over 70% species of migratory and endemic birds in south Haryana's Aravalli range. Thus, hereby analyzing the impact of urbanization on Birds.

Introduction

Birds are often considered to be outstanding indicators of the health of the overall environment. They are readily affected by physical and chemical impacts on their ecosystems, whether these are caused by natural or man-made influences.

The factors like habitat destruction and unsustainable development over the last couple of decades is leading to decrement in their population.

Reasons for decline in the population of the birds:

- Crop residue burning around Delhi in the summer and beginning of winter is a potential threat to avian livelihood. It has not only aggravated deterioration of air quality and choking of birds, but is also a threat to their habitat during the breeding period.
- Air pollution, degradation of water sources, alien urban planning that includes high-rises and ample use of glass, and the noise levels near urban areas.
- Chemical fertilisers in agricultural produce: Heavy use of chemical fertilisers leads to agricultural produce being laced by them, hence ruining the food of birds.
- Chemical scourge in wetlands: Wetlands are among the main habitats of birds in India about 20 per cent of birds depend on them. These aquatic areas are under serious pressure.
- **Widespread use of concrete**: Birds like Sparrows are known to take two types of bath—one with water and one with dust. With the extensive use of concrete in urban areas, the species are unable to take dust baths.
- **Cell phone radiation**: The electromagnetic fields and radiation created by mobile towers are known to affect sparrows. The effects range from damage to the immune and nervous system of sparrows to interference with their navigating sensors.
- Communication towers are particularly hazardous to birds that migrate at night. Many species of birds migrate just above the treetops, and collide with towers and guy-wires. On misty overcast nights, the lights on the towers disorient the



- birds, and as they fly around the towers, many are killed by collisions with the guy-wires.
- With the coming of technology and match-box type buildings replacing the old flat roof houses with spaces for birds to make nests or lay eggs. Thus making it difficult for the bird to build nests.
- The climate factor: Rivers getting flooded during breeding season nests in colonies on low sandbanks are destroyed. This is commonly attributed to deforestation in watersheds of major rivers and consequently rapid runoff. But another reason cannot be ruled out changing climate and consequent glacier retreat and change in monsoon patterns.
- Birds are also prone to respiratory infections due to the poor air quality in NCR, with survival rate as low as 5%. It is speculated that more than 70% of birds around this area have vanished.
- Habitat fragmentation and chemical contamination have proved hazardous for those that have a short range and also a short life span. Birds which require specific habitats are threatened when their habitats get degraded due to developmental activities.
- Felling of trees: The spike in the felling of trees in the urban areas is a major reason why sparrows and other birds are facing a loss of habitat.
- Increased use of packaged food: Modern grocery stores with air-conditioning and plastic packaging take away any chance of finding food grains to feed on.
- Absence of native plants: Native plants are outdone by fancy non-native ones, as the trend of modern landscaping catches on. Native plants are the natural habitats of birds, providing them insects. Birds need a diet of insects in their formative years to grow into healthy adults.
- More than 57 million birds are killed each year from collisions with vehicles. This averages out to about 15 bird deaths per mile per year.
- Nearly a million songbirds are killed each year by collisions with lighted tall buildings. Once again, birds that migrate at night suffer the most.
- The continued loss of critical breeding and migratory stopover habitat to human development poses a devastating threat to wild bird populations.
- In addition to collisions with glass, the extraordinary growth of wind energy represents a growing threat to birds. By 2030 or before, a 10-fold increase in turbines is expected to boost annual bird mortality to 1.4 to 2 million. Hundreds of thousands or millions more could be killed by collisions with the associated power lines and towers being built to carry electrical energy into the grid.

Solutions

- **Habitat protection**: As the loss and destruction of habitat is the most serious threat faced by many bird species, conservation organisations and government agencies tasked with protecting birds work to protect areas of natural habitat.
- **Kitchen waste** can be utilised to make birds feed by making microbes through decomposition.
- Reintroductions of captive bred populations can occur to replenish wild populations of an endangered species, to create new populations or to restore a species after it has become extinct in the wild.
- **Artificial nests** outside our homes could be build for a safe breeding and roosting place.





- ➤ Translocations involve moving populations of threatened species into areas of suitable habitat currently unused by the species.
- ➤ Setting up a water bath, especially in summer, to allow the birds to drink and bathe.
- Adopting a nest box and a feeder with the right kind of grain in it, to encourage sparrows to feed. This way, constant source of food for them is ensured.
- ➤ Captive breeding: Captive breeding, or ex-situ conservation, has been used in a number of instances to save species from extinction. The principle is to create a viable population of a species in either zoos or breeding facilities, for later reintroduction back into the wild.
- ➤ Cultural connect: There is a tradition of offering water and grains to animals and birds. Hospitals dedicated to birds and wild animals are a unique feature in the NCR and its surrounding areas, which signify regional sensitivity toward birds.
- ▶ Planting native species of plants to help build a sparrow-friendly habitat and to espouse insect population.

Current initiatives

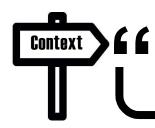
Save the sparrow: World Sparrow Day, celebrated on March 20 annually, is an initiative of the Nature Forever Society. In less than four years, this popular event has been celebrated in more than 50 countries around the world; including in Europe and parts of South Asia. World Sparrow Day is not only about house sparrows. It includes all 26 species of sparrows found in the world.

Seminary hills in Nagpur is designated as a sparrow conservation site.



INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and India



India and Pakistan have joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Key Facts

- It is a Eurasian political, economic, and security organisation.
- Formed in 2001.
 - SCO was formed by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in 2001 in Shanghai.
 - SCO superseded Shanghai Five group, founded on 26 April 1996 by these countries, except for Uzbekistan.
- HQ: BEIJING, China.

Membership



Member states



Observer states

Afghanistan, Iran, Mongolia and Belarus.

Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)

- To fight against the 'three evil' forces of terrorism, extremism and separatism, SCO has also set up Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) at Tashkent for information sharing and for jointly fighting terrorism.
- RATS is manned by 30 professionals analysing key intelligence inputs on the movements of terror outfits, drug-trafficking, cyber security threats and public information in the region.



Why Shanghai 5 was Formed?

- China had territorial issues with the former Soviet Union, which culminated in the Sino-Soviet rift and border skirmishes in 1969.
- After the Soviet disintegration in 1991, Sino-Soviet border was divided between four independent countries, namely Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In 1990s, China signed separate pacts with each of these republics, and 'demarcated' the border. In the process, some of these republics had to cede territory to China. In 1996, 'Shanghai Five' was created by China and four former-Soviet Republics that shared border with China.
- Core motive behind this grouping was ensuring security and reduction of military forces at the borders. Through this initiative, China permanently 'stabilized' its western border.

Benefits to SCO by Including New Members

- Entry into South Asia: SCO has been mainly a Eurasian organization, which is expanding in South Asia with the inclusion of India and Pakistan.
- **Increase in influence:** Inclusion of the new members has expanded organization's geographical outreach, and has raised its international stature. SCO now represents 42% of world's population, 20% global GDP, and 22% land.
- India's membership in the SCO will add significant heft and muscle to the **Organization** particularly in the backdrop of the anaemic international economy. India is one of the fastest expanding major global economies today.

Opportunities and Challenges for India

From India's point of view, this membership brings some challenges and a lot of opportunities.

Opportunities

- Deeper engagement with CARs: Indian Prime Minister will get the opportunity to visit CARs, and meet the Central Asian heads, as part of SCO's annual summits. Four of the Five Central Asian Republics (CARs) are the members of SCO, which puts Central Asia at the key position within the organization. These are geostrategically significant countries.
 - Firstly, Central Asia is centrally located and links other regions of Asia and Europe. All international, inter-regional and inter-continental land routes pass through this region, making it extremely important in connectivity projects.
 - Secondly, these republics are abundant in natural resources including oil, natural gas, uranium, gold, silver, copper and hydropower, which are lifelines of economic growth in modern times.
 - Lastly, three CARs share border with and have ethnic link with Afghanistan, making them vulnerable to the spillover effects. They have themselves been affected by radicalization and violent extremism.

Foothold in Eurasian region:

- SCO is one of the most influential regional organizations in the Eurasian region.
- India would be introduced to the Eurasian political, security and economic environment, which will be helpful in enhancing bilateral relationships.

Terrorism:

India can cooperate with the SCO members in terms of counter-terrorism efforts, information sharing and joint security exercises.



- India can also enhance its engagement with the "Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)" based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- SCO will need to assume responsibility for providing security in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the withdrawal of US and NATO ISAF forces.

Improvement of India-Pakistan relations:

At the same time, SCO might provide a rare opportunity for the militaries of Pakistan and India to share several multilateral tables – antiterrorism structure, military exercises etc. - under the SCO framework, which in many ways might change the regional climate and have a positive impact on Indo-Pak relations.

Challenges

Probable China-Pakistan-Russia axis: Presence of big powers like Russia and China may add another angle to the Indo-Pak scenario. In recent years, China and Pakistan have come closer, and they are also trying to build China-Pakistan-Russia axis, which could be disastrous for India.

OBOR:

- SCO was the key motivator behind China's BRI concept. With Pakistan also in the BRI, the SCO is fully aligned with China's vision, which may be showcased at the upcoming summit.
- India is the only country in the SCO that has not endorsed the OBOR project. India might be forced to endorse OBOR. On this backdrop, India has to act consciously and should try not to get isolated within the forum.

Conflicting interests:

- Multiple conflicting interests would intersect at the SCO forum, ranging from regional and global issues to combating terrorism.
- India's positions may sometimes be at odds with those of other countries which have been going along with the Chinese viewpoints.

Way Ahead: Carry Forward the Integration with Eurasia

FTA with EEU:

India should carry forward the Eurasia integration path by seeking an early conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in order to enable unhindered flow of goods, raw-materials, capital and technology.

Complete the connectivity projects:

- The commissioning of the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) along with the proposed Chabahar project would enable Indian goods to gain better access to the untapped markets of the entire Eurasian region including Russia's Far East.
- To raise its standing in the SCO in a more meaningful way, India should rope in one or more SCO countries, preferably Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, in its effort to project Chabahar as India's gateway to Eurasia.
- India should use the SCO atmosphere for building better convergences with China and Russia as well as to minimise the intensity of China-Pakistan alignment which actually undercuts India's direct access to Eurasia.





INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

70 Years of Indo-Russia Ties



2017 marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Russia. In the backdrop of the meet the two nations has signed five agreements in sectors covering nuclear energy, railways, traditional knowledge, cultural exchanges and gems & jewellery.

It is often said that India and Russia share longstanding ties that are durable. However, India and Russia need to once again fix a partnership that is badly in need of repair. There is an urgent need to revitalize the relation. Energy co-operation and defence deal can be the game changer.

Hereby discussing the St. Petersburg declaration.

India - Russia Relationship Backgrounder

- A cordial relationship with India that began in the 1950s represented the most successful of the Soviet attempts to foster closer relations with Third World countries.
- The relationship began with a visit by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the Soviet Union in June 1955 and Khrushchev's return trip to India in the fall of 1955. While in India, Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union supported Indian sovereignty over the disputed territory of the Kashmir region and over Portuguese coastal enclaves such as Goa.
- The Soviet Union declared its neutrality during the 1959 border dispute and the Sino-Indian war of October 1962, although the Chinese strongly objected.
- Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in August 1971, became the milestone in relation.
- However, with the fall of USSR, the Indo-Russia relation saw a sea change. India inclined towards West.
- Traditionally, the Indo-Russian strategic partnership has been built on five major components: politics, defence, civil nuclear energy, anti-terrorism cooperation and space. However, in recent years a sixth component, economic, has grown in importance with both countries setting a target for US\$30 billion in bilateral trade by 2025.

Growing distance between Delhi and Moscow

Bilateral trade is not gaining traction between the two countries. There is an urgent need to prioritize economic ties, which have been going downhill for some time. Though the two nations have set a target for their bilateral trade of \$30 billion by 2025, it was a measly \$7.8 billion in 2015.



Russia's growing tilt towards Pakistan

- There is concern in New Delhi that Moscow's decision to side with China would help Pakistan get away from global isolation.
- At the 2016 BRICS summit in Goa, Russia did not back India's demand to name two Pakistan-based terror groups as perpetrators of terrorism against India, thereby shielding Pakistan from censure.
- On Afghanistan issue, Russia wants to give greater role to Pakistan and China, unlike India.
- Pakistan is becoming potential buyer of Russian arms, which would provide elixir to the dying economy of the latter.
- Moscow and Islamabad held their first joint military exercise in September 2016 and their first bilateral consultation on regional issues in December.
- Russia lifted an arms embargo against Pakistan in 2014 and will send four Mi-35M attack helicopters this year. Russian troops participated in this year's Pakistan Day military parade.
- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor linking Xinjiang to the Pakistani port of Gwadar could be merged with the Russia-backed Eurasian Economic Union.

St. Petersburg's declaration

Sanskriti se Suraksha

- PM Modi said the ties between India and Russia span the spectrum from Culture to Defence (Sanskriti se Suraksha).
- It covers all areas of cooperation, including in the spheres of political relations, security, trade and economy, military and technical field, energy, scientific, cultural and humanitarian exchanges, and foreign policy.

Energy bridges

- Energy cooperation is one of the cornerstones of the relationship between India and Russia.
- Both sides strive to **build an "Energy Bridge"** by having energy cooperation in all areas including nuclear, hydrocarbon, hydal and renewable energy sources.
- **Nuclear power:** The growing partnership in the nuclear power sector provides an opportunity for developing advanced nuclear manufacturing capabilities in India in line with the "Make in India" initiative. Both sides have committed themselves to implement the "Program of Action for Localization in India" which was signed in 2015.
- **Exploration of Arctic shelf:** India is interested in launching joint projects on exploring Hydrocarbons in the Arctic shelf of the Russian Federation.

Economic ties

- **Diversification (High Technology Products):** The two sides should diversify their trade in goods and services with special focus on high technology products.
- **Investment target:** India and Russia are close to achieving the target of 30 billion US dollars worth of investment by 2025.
- **Joint projects in other countries:** The two sides have decided to undertake joint development projects in other countries.





- Eurasian Economic Union: The two sides will commence discussions on a Free Trade Agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Republic of India.
- **Startups:** PM Modi mentioned the "bridge to innovation" to promote startups and entrepreneurship

Strategic ties

- Joint exercises: The two countries will hold the first tri-Services exercises. named 'Indra-2017,' in 2017.
- **Defence production:** The two sides have decided to jointly produce Kamov 226 helicopters and frigates.

Cooperation on International issues

- Asia Pacific region: To build well-balanced security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region, the two sides have decided to develop a relevant dialogue in the framework of the "East Asia Summit".
- **Afghanistan:** The two sides have decided to coordinate for achieving national reconciliation in Afghanistan.
- UN: Russia reiterated its support for India's candidature for a permanent seat in a reformed United Nations Security Council.
- Cooperation in other forums: To establish a multi-polar global order and have a influential role in global affairs, the two sides will continue to cooperate in other multilateral organizations including Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS, Russia-India-China cooperation, WTO and G20.
- Export control regimes: Russia reiterated its support for India's earliest admission to the export control regimes namely Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement.
- Connectivity: The two countries are cooperating in the International North South Transport Corridor.
- **Terrorism:** The two sides asserted their willingness to fight international terrorism.

Cultural ties (soft power)

- There exists deep awareness of Yoga and Ayurveda in Russia.
- We should further develop bilateral contacts in the sphere of culture and sports by organizing annual festivals and exchanges.
- Bilateral cooperation in the sphere of education offers great opportunities which should be explored by promoting direct contacts among universities and providing assistance to students from the two countries.

Exploring new avenues of cooperation

Transportation

- India should utilize the strength of Russia in shipbuilding, river navigation and desalination technologies to develop it's inland waterways.
- The two sides have also decided to cooperate in development of high speed railways. For this they have signed an agreement for implementation of the high-speed service at the Nagpur-Secunderabad section.



Science and technology:

- Bilateral cooperation in the sphere of Science & Technology offers great opportunities, since both sides are committed to address global challenges like Climate change and Cyber security.
- Cyber security: India has much to learn from the Russian experience of cyber security. Russia, home to leading cybersecurity companies like **Kaspersky**, has also built considerable state capabilities towards establishing an effective and robust cyber force.
- **Space:** There are ample opportunities for bilateral cooperation in space research.
- High-technology products: Special emphasis should be on increasing the share of high-technology products in bilateral trade. The two countries have already established a High Level Committee on Cooperation in High Technologies.

Conclusion

- It is a trying time in the relation between India and Russia. Both the countries are going through rough patches in old romance they have had in the past.
- It is high time for India to redefine its relation with Russia in its greater interest.
- Energy co-operation and defence deal can be the game changer.
- Changing geo-political scenario in the world over will have the final say in this bilateral relation.





GOVERNANCE ISSUE

Review of Swachh Bharat Mission

As per Census 2011, India has 16,78,26,730 rural households. Out of these, 67.3% rural households defecate in the open and only 35% have drinking water available within the premises. A record 17.6 million IHHLs were built and the coverage of households increased from 42.12% to 51.83% during the first 18 months of the Swachh Bharat Mission-SBM (Gramin).

In this article we shall look at history of sanitation program in India, features and objectives of SNM and impediments in implementation of SBM and possible solutions to these impediments.

Background

The rural sanitation programme in India was introduced in the year 1954 as a part of the First Five Year Plan. Government of India introduced the Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) in 1986 primarily with the objective of improving the quality of life of the rural people and also to provide privacy and dignity to women. From 1999, a "demand driven" approach under the "Total Sanitation Campaign" (TSC) emphasized more on Information, Education and Communication (IEC), Human Resource Development (HRD), Capacity Development activities to increase awareness among the rural people and generation of demand for sanitary facilities. Financial incentives were provided to below Poverty Line (BPL) households for construction and usage of individual household latrines (IHHL).

The "Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan" (NBA) the successor programme of the TSC, was launched from 2012 onwards. The objective was to accelerate the sanitation coverage in the rural areas so as to comprehensively cover the rural community through renewed strategies. Under NBA, the incentives for IHHLs were enhanced and further focussed support was obtained from MNREGA.

Swachh Bharat Mission

To accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation, the Prime Minister of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission on 2nd October, 2014 with two Sub-Missions, the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) and the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), which aims to achieve Swachh Bharat by 2019, as a fitting tribute to the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. In rural areas it will improve the levels of cleanliness through Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities and making Gram Panchayats Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitised. The Mission shall strive for this by removing the bottlenecks that were hindering the progress, including partial funding for Individual Household Latrines from MNREGS, and focusing on critical issues affecting outcomes. The mission



enhanced the "incentive" for constructing each individual household latrine (IHHL) from Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 for most states in India, and this is shared by the central and respective state governments in the ratio of 75:25. Few states like Andhra Pradesh are offering an additional Rs3,000 from the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) for building IHHLs with bathing facilities.

The main objectives of the SBM(G) are as under:

- Bring about an improvement in the general quality of life in the rural areas, by promoting cleanliness, hygiene and eliminating open defecation.
- Accelerate sanitation coverage in rural areas to achieve the vision of Swachh Bharat by 2nd October 2019.
- Motivate Communities and Panchayati Raj Institutions to adopt sustainable sanitation practices and facilities through awareness creation and health education.

Implementation Issues

The three major bottlenecks that the SBM (Gramin) is facing are the lack of doorstep water supply affecting the initial acceptance of IHHL and their usage later; the need for partial initial investment on construction by the beneficiary households; and the existence of many defunct IHHLs in villages.

In the absence of complementary water supply, villagers may go back to open defecation practice due to inadequate water supply, especially when droughts and water shortages stare at them.

The release of incentive has been simplified in SBM with the total payment made in only two instalments. After the officers of sanitation department approve the sanction of IHHL to a particular household, a family needs to invest Rs.6,000 on its own to build the substructure of the toilet for receiving the first instalment of incentive of an equal amount. The final instalment of incentive is given after the structure is completed and the department records the physical measurements of the structure. Thus poor families, particularly those belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities, have to invest their own funds first to build the IHHL. This is a bottleneck that is slowing down the progress of coverage.

As on 2 October 2014, 42.12% of the rural households in India had toilets. But it does not necessarily mean that all those physical structures were in a functioning condition. Some field studies indicated as high as 35% defunct IHHLs in some of the villages. Many latrines funded by the previous government's schemes remained incomplete and after some time became defunct.

There are cases where coercive tactics are employed to achieve ODF tag by 2019. For ex – In rural Chhattisgarh, poor households have received notice ordering each family in the village to construct a toilet as part of a national government sanitation scheme. Non-compliance would incur huge fines and suspended entitlements. Though coercion works and people start building toilets but problem now was that beyond the ethical implications, everyone was in debt which was perpetuating migration. There have been incidences where people had to sell off farm stock, pawn jewellery, and take out a debt for building toilet.

Conclusion

For households without a doorstep water connection, SBM (Gramin) should bundle and offer both IHHL and a doorstep water connection. In addition to investing the funds of National Rural Drinking Water Programme in a synchronised manner with SBM (Gramin), innovative provisions of Swachh Bharat Kosh may be effectively used by the states towards this objective. In order to tackle the problem of upfront contribution of Rs. 6000 by poor households, Micro Finance Institutions ecosystem could be mobilized and funds from Swachh Bharat Kosh could be utilized to revive defunct IHHLs. Better training and sensitization of field staff shall reduce coercive tactics.





DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Lessons for Disaster Management from Odisha: Case Study

Credited with pioneering works in the field of disaster management in the country, Odisha may impart lessons on cyclone preparedness to 14 Pacific island nations that are hit by tropical cyclones at regular intervals. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had approached the State to give training to executives from these nations.

In this article we shall look at reasons for such a sound disaster management approach of Odisha and key lessons which other countries and Indian states could follow.

Background

The state of Odisha, located on the eastern coast of the Indian subcontinent, is highly prone to disasters. Due to its sub-tropical littoral location, the state is predisposed to tropical cyclones, storm surges and tsunamis. Between 1991 and 2000, 98 cyclones/ severe cyclones crossed the coast of Odisha, the most for any state in the country.

The Super Cyclone that struck Odisha in 1999 resulted in the death of nearly 10,000 people. But, impact of cyclone Phailin, that struck Odisha on 12 October 2013 was very limited, one of the reason being, State Government took advance steps to ensure the evacuation of people from vulnerable locations in the districts that were likely to be impacted. Forty four deaths were reported but this remained significantly lower than compared to disasters of similar magnitude.

This was possible because of the efforts of the State Government, which has been in 'preparation mode', since the 1999 cyclone. In response to the 1999 super cyclone, the State Government set up the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), the first state level agency, in India, focused exclusively on disaster management. The state has also been investing in building cyclone shelters, planning evacuation routes and strengthening coastal embankments. Mock drills have been conducted each year in Odisha's coastal districts. Communities have also come to respect and act according to instructions issued by the OSDMA and state authorities in an emergency.

Key learning from the State

Disaster of 1999 ushered a change in people's perception and the approach of the Government regarding the management of natural disasters.





The approach to disaster management has now shifted from the prevailing emergency management framework to Disaster Risk Management (DRM), which calls for proactive disaster management activities, with the involvement of local communities.

The state government has developed a holistic approach to disaster management, by incorporating a growing concern for the environment, focusing on risk assessment and risk reduction, and by trying to ensure peoples' participation, so as to create a disaster resilient Odisha.

The Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) programme was launched in 2001 with support from UNDP. After the success of CBDP, GoI-UNDP DRM Programme was implemented in 16 districts between 2002 and 2009. The overall goal of the programme was to sustainably reduce disaster risk in some of the most hazard-prone districts of the country.

There are many lessons on disaster preparedness and community participation that can be learnt from the Odisha experience that are highly relevant for India and other countries in the world.

- Minimize loss of life and hardship through timely early warning, planning and preparedness: Early warning, quick response and preparedness both by the Government and the community have been the key to the remarkable success. Detailed planning at the state, district, block and village levels minimized the loss of life and hardship.
- Use multiple channels to disseminate information: Multiple channels for dissemination of information on the impending disaster ensured that people were aware of the impending cyclone. Loudspeakers, radio and television are use to spread the news of the cyclone and direct people to move to safe shelters.
- Build institutions and train disaster management team (DMT) members: The State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), set up as part of the Government of Odisha and UNDP partnership was used effectively, especially for disseminating warnings, managing information and coordinating between inter-departmental control rooms and District Emergency Operation Centres (DEOCs).
- Link with institutions and further professionalize activities: Future Community Based Disaster Management Plans (CBDMPs) should be linked with grassroot institutions. Village disaster management committees and teams should be provided adequate equipment, infrastructure and training.
- Ensure optimal utilization of resources through effective Government-NGO coordination: Government-NGO coordination was evident at the state level and in some of the severely affected districts.
- Ensure continuous training and capacity building: The study underscores the importance of periodic training and capacity building activities on preparation of disaster management plans, search and rescue, first aid, and shelter and relief management. Training and capacity building activities need to be organized, periodically, to refresh the skills of village volunteers, PRI members, Government officials as well as CSOs.

Conclusion

The success of Odisha model rests on community participation, wide dissemination of information & warnings using variety of media, preparedness at district level and human capacity building. These basic lessons are the key to reducing any kind of disaster risks and there is a need to imbibe these lessons in other States and countries, disaster management strategies.





INTERNAL SECURITY

Women in Combat Role: Critical Analysis

- Army Chief General Bipin Rawat stated that Army will soon open up combat positions for women and the matter is being taken up with the government.
- As a first step in this direction, initially women will be recruited in military police. The role of military police include the following:
 - Policing the cantonments and Army establishments,
 - Maintaining movement of soldiers as well as logistics during peace and war,
 - Prevent breach of rules and regulations by soldiers,
 - Handling prisoners of war, and
 - Extending aid to the civil police whenever required.

Evolution and Present Status of Women in Armed Forces

- Historically, armed forces have employed women only as nurses/doctors.
- In 1990s Indian armed forces allowed them to serve as short commissioned officers but not as permanent commissioned officers.
- At present women are allowed only in a number of select areas including in educational, medical, legal, signals and engineering wings of the Army.
- They are not allowed in combat role in army and navy. Army doesn't allow them into infantry, artillery similarly navy doesn't allow them on warships.
- Airforce in October 2015 announced that it will induct women as fighter pilots. In June 2016, three women were commissioned as India's first women fighter pilots in the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Arguments in Favor of Inclusion of Women in Combat Roles

- Gender equality: Women must get equal opportunities in the services. Women have proved their mettle in every field. Then why shouldn't they allowed to serve in army. It is time to 'conquer the last male bastion'.
- On physical nature of combat:
 - Physical fitness is of lesser importance in modern fighting. Nature of fighting is changing; its more technology driven instead of hand-hand combat.



Then we should remember that Women doctors/nurses are already involved in combat. Lt. Colonel Mitali Madhumita (a doctor) won a gallantry award for saving the lives of 19 people during a February 2010 terror attack on Indian embassy in Kabul.

Armed forces in other countries include women officers

- Countries such as Australia, Israel, Canada, the U.S., Britain, Germany, France, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have allowed women in combat roles.
- The US had deployed a large number of women soldiers for fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They played an important role in gathering intelligence from children and women as in these areas males are not permitted to talk to women.

Inclusion in paramilitary forces:

- They are included in paramilitary forces (except Assam rifles) which are also physically demanding in nature.
- Even BSF have an all women battalion to guard border.

Arguments Against Inclusion of Women in Combat Roles

Counter-argument to gender equality:

- The concept of equality of sexes is unquestionable. However two points need to be highlighted here.
 - First, the armed forces are constituted for national defence and there can be no compromise on that issue.
 - Secondly, the armed forces are not a 'ROZGAR YOJANA' to provide employment to all segments of the society in equal proportion. Defence matters cannot be treated as publicity gimmick to 'FLAUNT SEXUAL EQUALITY'.
- As it is a question of nation's defence, the best man or woman should be selected for every job. In other words, women should be inducted in the services only if they add value to the service.

Counter-argument to physical nature of combat:

- It is a biological reality that female soldiers are on average, shorter and smaller than men, with less upper body strength and aerobic capacity, which is essential for endurance.
- In the case of women officers, Indian army (and even other armed forces in the world including U.K., U.S.) has lowered the standards to appallingly low levels while screening them.
- Requirement for physical prowess undoubtedly reduces as the armies advance technologically. In a high-tech army like the US, a woman sitting in the US mainland can effectively guide drone attacks in Afghanistan. India on the other hand is still a second generation technology force and is even now man-power intensive.

Counter-argument to inclusion of women in other armed forces:

Countries in the Nordic regions, Canada and Australia face no internal or external threat from their neighbours. Their militaries are generally in peacetime mode with routine passive duties. Thus situation in India can't be compared with these countries.





Although a large number of women have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, their employment has been confined to support functions like intelligence gathering, medical etc. functions, not in combat duties (which can be seen by the fact that not a single woman has lost her life in the Afghanistan in Combat duties.

Harassment of women officers:

- Within forces: Also women continue to be confronted with social, behavioural and psychological problems at all levels including high incidence of sexual harassment (of various degrees) within the armed forces.
- As prisoners of war: Then there is fear of women being caught as prisoner of wars, who will be vulnerable to sexual harassment.

Effect on the cohesion of units:

- Also, Junior officers, who have a patriarchal mindset won't like taking orders from a women officer.
- Many duties (like night duty officer) cannot be assigned to women, male officers have to be given additional work load, which they may resent.
- There are also concerns, based on Israeli studies, that soldiers first instinct may be to defend the women in their ranks rather than to fight the enemy.

Counter-argument to women fighters in LTTE and Naxalite outfits:

- It is illogical to compare a lawfully structured formal organisation to follow the footsteps of illegal and irregular forces.
- In any case, even LTTE recruited women only after it fell short of male volunteers.
- There is a secondary concern that romantic relationships between men and women on the front lines could disrupt a unit's fighting capability.

Counter-argument to if BSF can have an all women battalion to guard border, why not the Indian Army. Following important facts need to be highlighted:

- Women are not on the front in combat role. They are mainly assisting the male officers.
- Their task is akin to what CISF women have been carrying out at the airports for long - frisking of women.
- There will be frequent disruption in service due to marriage and family obligations and child bearing.

Concluding Remark:

- It should never be forgotten that the primary reason for the constitution of the armed forces is to ensure security of the country.
- Decisions which have a far reaching effect on the defence potential of the armed forces must be taken with due diligence. Instead of replicating a model, India must chart its own policy by taking an honest feedback.



GOVERNANCE ISSUE

Media's Role in the Political **Process**



The right to freedom of expression enshrined in the constitution gives the media a primary role and responsibility of expressing public opinion through a written word. The media has been made the essential instrument for ensuring openness in society in an attempt to polish, develop and civilize it by the process of analysis, discussion and synthesis.

In this article we shall try to understand various facets of independent media in political process within democracy.

Media: Is it always good?

The role of media in a democracy assumes even greater significance when we recognize the fact that in a society where an overwhelming majority of people are silent listeners, to access to a forum that constantly reaches others has to be viewed as a trust on their behalf for their progress and prosperity.

An independent media is a vital feature of any liberal democracy. If the government was able to control all the information regarding its own actions then it could most certainly escape all accountability and even have an unacceptable level of influence over its citizen's actions. This is why the importance of a free press cannot be underestimated. In a liberal democracy, the aim of a free press is to continually scrutinize the government and provide people with accurate and impartial information so that they can act on it accordingly.

Thus, the media acts as an effective check on government power and influence over its citizens. In the last few decades, there has been an unprecedented growth in mass media accompanied by the falling costs of radio, TV, satellite and Internet services. This phenomenon has helped in bringing political information to a much wider audience. On the other hand, the boom in media services has also allowed various organizations from all over the political spectrum to quickly and effectively reach their target audiences.

Criticism

A common charge against the media is that it increasingly seems to lack the principles of objective and impartial reporting. Instead, many major organizations seem to be taking one side of the political spectrum and at best provide relatively biased coverage or at worse act like virtual propaganda machines for a particular political party. Certainly, some issues are subjective, hence there can be no universal line of thought, and requiring all news organizations to passively report only what they see and not include an analytical perspective, would to a certain degree, defeat the purpose of having a free press.



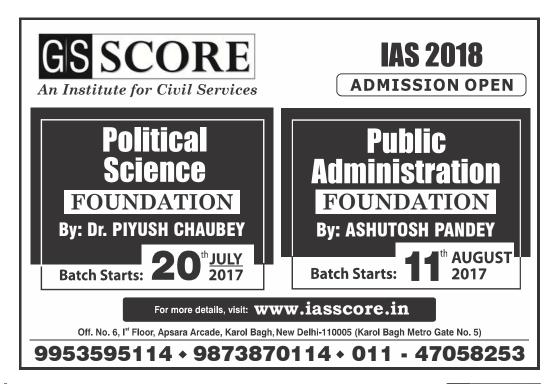
In theory, this could provide healthy debate because at any given point of time some news organizations will be supporting or opposing government policies. However, sometimes there is a thin line between healthy debate and active intervention and it is common for media organizations to often cross this line. In the process, a negative consequence would be the degradation of accurate political information. Therefore, some issues that can be objectively reported are often distorted to a point that it causes more confusion than clarity to the general audience.

A major concern in many liberal democracies is the emergence of media empires, where a few individuals have managed to concentrate vast amounts of media assets and use them to actively influence political opinion. Thus, these individuals, from whichever point of the political spectrum, can deliver a powerful political message on behalf or against a political establishment through their respective media empires. This is especially damaging if parts of the general public are more exposed to one particular media empire either due to its high popularity or the lack of alternative media sources.

Furthermore, these individuals possess the ability to provoke people or interest groups into mobilizing, simply by highlighting a particular issue. For example, horrific images from the battlefield or a controversial medical study can invoke a massive response. Therefore, even if it could be argued that the media cannot exactly influence people directly, they can most certainly have a strong influence on what issues people are made aware of or exposed to. Yet, nationalizing major broadcast networks or heavyhanded regulation can open up the media to government intervention or censorship, which is highly damaging as well.

Conclusion

While some of the general problems regarding the media and liberal democracies today can be easily identified, it is much harder to come up with an effective remedy. It is very difficult to completely remove political influence and enforce a perfectly neutral position. However, regulation could be counterproductive as it may require media to fall in line with political party in power. However, strong transparency and accountability mechanism within media groups could be most effective model which shall serve the idea of free press.





GOVERNANCE ISSUE

The Role of States in India's Foreign Policy



The discussion on para-diplomacy is gaining ground in Indian politics due to increasing capacities among Indian states with their region specific economic advantages. This increasing capacities at local level promotes the decentralized policy making in global politics as it offers states (local bodies) a chance to advance their interest.

India's growing international engagement at present focusing towards brighter future mandates the discussion on the importance of para-diplomacy a 'neoligism' which forms not just a quintessential part of the country's foreign policy analysis but also makes space for a subsequent and crucial shift in India's strategies in conducting international relations.

However, the sub-national diplomacy among South Asian countries seems to be difficult not only because of the geographical, historical and cultural complexity of the region, but more so because of the lack of stable leadership emanating from the bigger states like

What is Para-diplomacy?

- Para-diplomacy allows the Federal States to broker international relations directly (without central interference) for advancing their own interest in this globalized world.
- This is the opposite of 'Conventional Diplomatic Relations' which fall under the exclusive domain of sovereign nation states exercised by central governments, para-diplomacy, a 'neologism' makes space for 'external relations' of sub-national or federal units which might indulge themselves in international activism in order to promote their own interests.

Why it evolved in India?

- With the advent of globalization and the region specific economic advantages which mandates the decentralized policy making in global politics as it offers states (local bodies) a chance to advance their own interest.
- Subsequently, over the years, different states of India have formulated their respective economic policies to promote foreign investment, resulting in direct economic relations of regional states with respective foreign investors along with the increasing power of regional parties.



This has, in turn, led to increasing assertiveness by different states, especially the Border States, in the political arena with issues relating to the foreign policy of India. Be it Tamil Nadu advocating its own foreign policy towards Sri Lanka, or West Bengal towards Bangladesh, this conflict occurring in most of the border states remain an area of concern for India's foreign policymakers.

Why Smaller States wants its own foreign policy despite it being the Central Government's Subject?

- In Indian scenario the Central Authority alone is not very much capable in dealing with geographically vast size of India added with huge population, diversity in language and culture which essentially dominates the foreign policy at least towards their immediate neighbours (with same culture and language).
- Cultural similarities, regional potentialities added with region specific quality production has given fuel to Indian states to negotiate international relations especially in trade and commerce area apart from others.
- With the growth of the economy, the exposure of ordinary Indians to international affairs is increasing. Citizens hold an opinion and viewpoint vis-à-vis India's policies. In such a scenario, building domestic consensus on foreign policy decisions has become increasingly crucial by the federal states.

What went wrong in past years?

- With lack of control at the Line of Control (LoC), tensions between **India and** Pakistan have been escalating on account of continuous terror attacks. This continued security skirmishes along the border have spooked both countries.
- The current regime of Pakistan restraint in granting India the Most Favoured > Nation (MFN) trade status, and suspension of trade dialogues under which India promised to supply energy-starved Pakistan with 500 MW of power, stand testimony to the big moments both these nations have lost to reconcile their lingering impasse.
- With Bangladesh, India failed to secure the Teesta Agreement from the clutches of West Bengal Chief Minister. Though it was a bold effort for a comprehensive overhaul of bilateral relations with Bangladesh, it ended only when the government backed off amidst domestic opposition.
- With regard to Sri Lanka, The UPA Government voted against Colombo at the UNHRC succumbing to the state polity of Tamil Nadu. This shows centre's not been able to work out a significant understanding with state governments on the balance between local politics and national interest.
- Problems at the domestic front have kept India busy, forcing regional diplomatic ties to take a backseat.

States' Assertiveness and the Constitution of India

- The Constitution clearly defines India as a quasi federal state through different mechanisms, which empowers the centre over the states and hence formulation and implementation of foreign policy is clearly a central government subject.
- For instance, the Constitution clearly delineates a Union List of 97 items, a State List of 66 items, and a Concurrent List of 47 items which are both the states' and the centre's jurisdiction. However, the centre prevails whenever there is any conflict over the laws within the concurrent list.
- Article 248 allows the Parliament to legislate on items in the State List. With regards to conducting foreign affairs, Article 246 in Schedule 7, List I (Union List) of the Constitution defines foreign affairs as "all matters which bring the union into relation with any foreign country."



- Therefore, the Constitution puts the onus of conducting foreign policy on the centre, leaving little room for individual states.
- Despite this clear demarcation of subjects and the role of the centre in conducting foreign policy issues, states that share an international border and those with commercially-driven agendas are playing an increasing role in foreign policy matters.
- Foreign Policy have taken centre stage in electoral campaigns at the state level. Some regional parties have promised for a train service between Rajasthan and Sind that is between Indian and Pakistan.
- Similarly, in 2007, the INC in Punjab included the agenda to improve relations between West Punjab in Pakistan and East Punjab in India in its election manifesto. In the South, issues relating to fisherfolk operating between India and Sri Lanka have never taken a backseat in the politics of Tamil Nadu.
- It has been observed that states have focused more on co-ethnic activities as compared to economic activities
- Economic activities are well codified and hence, difficult to undertake without the centre's approval; for example, there would be no mechanism to enforce a water sharing treaty between a state and a neighbouring country in the absence of a convertible currency, and without the participation of centrally regulated banks that would transmit funds.
- On the other hand, co-ethnic activities, such as the release of fisherfolk or release of militants, are non-codified, not involving bodies that the centre regulates or controls.

Economic Imperatives

- Post 1991 reforms, the nation witnessed for the first time in its history that individual states began pushing their economic agendas with respective potential foreign partners.
- Chief Ministers have increasingly participated in forums like the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and various other places. For Example-
- Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and in recent times, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Bihar, which have been aggressive to say the least, in their economic diplomacy and wooing of foreign governments.
- The bi-annual investor summit, "Vibrant Gujarat," launched by the state government, is an initiative to showcase it as a business-friendly destination. It could be deceptive to interpret that these investor summits are a mere game of economics.
- With the then United States' (US) Secretary of State John Kerry, United Nations' (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, among others, joining the summit, it is worth noting that this is equally a political game.
- This has not only helped lure foreign investors, but has also sparked off competition among different states across the country. While as Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi was able to exert pressure on the then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, to stop all dialogue with Islamabad and not hand over Sir Creek to Pakistan.
- This is testimony to the fact that individual states can exert pressure on the centre and that regional leaders can use their clout on foreign policy issues to climb up the political ladder, as Narendra Modi has done by eventually becoming Prime Minister.





- In addition, there has been an increase in the number of negotiations and > agreements signed between various state governments and the World Bank.
- While the external debt of Indian states is being financed by the World Bank, the legal nature of these agreements puts the central government in a position of great leverage.
- If the practice of Chief Ministers flying across national boundaries in an endeavour to woo foreign investors is allowed to continue, there is a distinct possibility of state governments lobbying for more autonomy in many areas which fall exclusively under the control of the central government.
- States are assuming new roles vis-à-vis their encounters with external actors multinational capital and international financial institutions. But it needs to be noted that this does not represent a net gain in autonomy from the centre, as regulatory powers, in most cases, remain with the central government. There is a shifting pattern of central restraint, but not its outright reduction.

Conclusion

- India's foreign political and economic policies are being increasingly shaped by regional governments, political parties and leaders. The increasing ease with which regional players consult, exert pressure and influence the centre poses both opportunities and risks for India's foreign policy strategy.
- There is no doubt that India needs to stick to the Constitution—the centre has to be the vanguard of foreign policymaking—but a collaborative and non-conflictridden centre-state relationship could do wonders for India's neighbourhood policy.
- Border States have a common history, common geography, common frustrations and common aspirations with their immediate neighbours. For their greater interests, stakeholders can more often than not, go farther than the policymakers per se. So, can the foreign policy be rolled the new way.



INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

Qatar Diplomatic Crisis



Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen have announced that they are suspending diplomatic ties as well as sea and air travel to and from Qatar.

Saudi Arabia urged other countries to take similar step.

What are the Reasons for this Move?

Qatar has had differences with other Arab governments on a number of issues:

- Qatar broadcasts Al-Jazeera which seen to be biased against Saudi led countries.
- Al-Jazeera claims that the recent dispute stems from a May 2017 hack of Qatar News Agency. Iran blamed it on United States President Donald Trump.

Iran:

- Qatar continues to maintain sound economic and diplomatic ties with Iran which is resented by Sunni majority nations.
- This should also be seen in the background of President Donald Trump's recent visit to Saudi Arabia who is for an anti-Iran agenda. Thus, it can be seen as a step towards Saudi Arabia's renewed attempt to rally Sunni countries under its leadership against Iran.

Muslim brotherhood:

- Qatar has supported the Muslim Brotherhood in the past.
- The ideology of the Brotherhood opposes the concept of absolute monarchy. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies see the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat to hereditary rule.

Terrorism:

- Arab countries also accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism. In the past Qatar has allowed the Afghan Taliban to set up a political office inside the country. Qatar has been accused for funding rebel groups in Syria, including Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, the Al-Nusra Front.
- But such allegations can be leveled against most Gulf countries as they back their proxy militant groups throughout West Asia. E.g. in Syria, the Saudis back Salafi groups such as Ahrar al-Sham.
- These countries have also accused Qatar of interfering with their internal affairs.



What can be the Potential Impact of this Move?

On Qatar:

- Economic impact will be significant due to cancellation of transport to and from these five countries. Egyptian banks have halted dealings with Qatar's bank. It will also impact the supply of construction material which is required for completing projects esp. for 2022 FIFA world cup.
- It will also impact food supply as it receives 40% of its food supply from Saudi Arabia via roads. This will lead to inflation.

On geo-politics in Middle East and its relationship with U.S.:

- In this background; Qatar can grow further close to Iran.
- Qatar is a United States ally, hosting the largest United States Military base (Al Udeid Air Base) in the Middle East. But if Qatar further grows close to Iran then it can trigger a confrontation with U.S.

On war against Islamic state:

- Gulf countries should remember that Qatar is an economic powerhouse. Also, it hosts the headquarters of the U.S. military's Central Command, the Al Udeid Air Base (largest in middle east) which has been used by the United States in the past its campaigns in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.
- So any prolonged attempt to isolate the country would complicate the fight against the IS yet more. At present West Asia requires a united front against terror which involves lowering of Saudi-Iran tensions. Opening any new fronts in the rivalry at this moment will further destabilize the region.

On energy supplies:

- In 2016, Qatar was the biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas, accounting for 30% of global supplies.
- This move can shake the natural gas market.

How can the Recent Development Impact India's Ties with Qatar?

- With nearly 6.5 Lakh Indians living in the Qatar, India has the largest expatriate community in Qatar, making up around 24% of Qatar's population. Annual remittances from Qatar in 2015 were estimated to be nearly \$ 4.2 Billion.
- India is also eagerly seeking investment from Qatar's Sovereign Wealth Fund [Qatar Investment Authority (QIA)] and private investors in Qatar. In words of former PM Manmohan Singh, "The investment requirements of a large emerging economy like India (requiring \$1 Trillion in next five years in infrastructure alone) and the vast financial surpluses of an energy rich economy such as Qatar can be married to create a win-win situation for both the countries."
- Impact on jobs for Indian expatriates: Saudi Arabia has asked other nations to also snap ties with Qatar and freeze investments in that country. If that happens then the job market could be negatively impacted. There might be some implications on investments, and the movement of labor could become difficult, apart from endangering security of Indian expatriates over there.

Way ahead for India

Balancing the relationships in the region would require "diplomatic finesse" of a high order. India should maintain a close watch in the region by staying in regular touch with the Indian community over there.



INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

USA out of Paris Pact



Recently, US president has announced that USA shall pull out of Paris climate deal. This action will nullify what has been achieved in Obama's regime. Nevertheless other big polluters like China, EU and India have affirmed there resolve to stick to Paris deal despite USA's withdrawal.

In this article we shall try to understand reasons for USA withdrawal, it's likely implication on Paris deal future, impact on USA and likely impact on India.

What is the Paris Climate Agreement?

Key facts:

- The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance.
- As of June 2017, 195 UNFCCC members have signed the agreement, 148 of which have ratified it.

Salient features of the agreement:

- It calls for holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- To achieve the goal, countries should reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible
- The agreement acknowledges the importance of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.
 - However, this provision "does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation," as wealthy nations do not want to be held financially liable for climate change.
- The agreement requires all countries to submit updated plans for reducing their greenhouse gas pollution through 2025 or 2030.
- The deal requires a global "stocktake" an overall assessment of how countries are doing in cutting their emissions compared to their national plans - starting in 2023, every five years.
 - The deal requires countries to monitor, verify and report their greenhouse gas emissions using the same global system.
- The agreement sets up a "Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency" to help developing countries meet a new requirement that they regularly provide a national



"inventory report" of human-caused emissions, by source, and track their progress in meeting their national goals.

- The agreement, which takes effect in 2020, calls on nations to establish "a new collective quantified goal" of at least \$100 billion a year in climate-related financing by 2020.
- When countries update their commitments, they will commit to the "highest possible ambition," but the agreement does not set a numeric target. It acknowledges "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances."
 - Countries like India & China argue that they need some time before it can reach peak emissions, given the need to provide millions of people with electricity.
 - The agreement calls on rich countries to engage in "absolute" reductions in emissions, while calling on developing ones to "continue enhancing their mitigation efforts."

Why USA is out of Deal?

Trump has called the pact a "bad deal" for the United States and has made withdrawing from it as a key component of his "America First" campaign platform. Trump has accused that Paris climate agreement gives undue advantage to India and China at the cost of the Unite States' interests. According to Mr. Trump, the Paris agreement would lead to a redistribution of American wealth to other countries and transfer of American jobs abroad. So, reason for pulling out is that Paris deal is unfair to USA.

But India and China have been unfairly accused, Paris deal is based on well-accepted principle of 'Common but Differentiated Responsibility' (CBDR). The principle was formalized in United Nations Framework of Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, 1992.

The Principle acknowledged disparity of economic development between developed and developing countries. Industrialization proceeded in developed countries much earlier than it did in developing countries. CBDR is based on relationship between industrialization and climate change. The more industrialized a country is, more likely that it has contributed to climate change. States came to an agreement that developed countries contributed more to environmental degradation and should have greater responsibility than developing countries. CBDR principle could therefore be said to be based on polluter-pays principle where historical contribution to climate change and respective ability become measures of responsibility for environmental protection. Breaking off Paris deal by USA is an example of not committing to this well accepted principle.

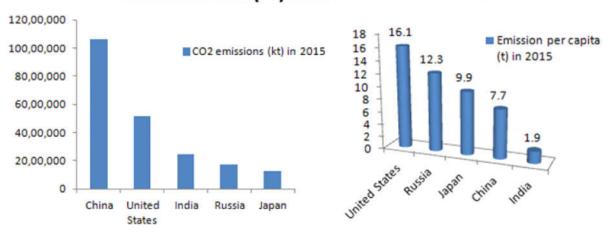
Impact Analysis

The U.S. is the second biggest polluting country in the world, contributing 16% of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2015. In per capita terms it is the biggest polluter. So even with every other nation in the Paris deal banded together, the whole plan holds less impact without the United States involved. Withdrawal will make it more difficult for the world to reach the goals that it set for itself in the Paris agreement. There's also a question of moral leadership the deal largely depends on superpowers like the United States taking the lead.



CO2 emissions (kt) in 20:

Emission per capita (t) in 2015



Trump wants his presidency to be about jobs and his decision to be viewed as an economic win for the United States. A recent report commissioned by the oil industrybacked American Council for Capital Formation found that the deal would eliminate \$3 trillion in GDP and 6.5 million jobs by 2040. A Heritage Foundation paper last year didn't go quite as far. It predicted that the agreement would prevent 400,000 jobs and cause a GDP loss of \$2.5 trillion.

Yet there are also economic arguments for staying in the pact. The International Renewable Energy Agency estimated recently that the pact would make the world \$19 trillion richer by 2050. The Department of Energy (USA) says 3 million Americans worked in clean energy last year, a number that would be threatened by a Paris pullout. To environmentalists and other Paris agreement supporters, Trump would be ceding American international dominance in clean energy industries like wind, solar and carbon capture technology to other major powers like China and Europe.

Withdrawing from the Paris climate deal will earn the president bad reviews from allies in France and Germany who have urged Trump to take a more proactive approach to climate change. American and international officials warn that leaving will hurt the country on the diplomatic stage. Leaving Paris would create a leadership vacuum that adversaries like China and Russia could enter into in the U.S.'s place.

To understand the actual implications of US probable exit on the functioning and future of Paris Agreement and on the financial and technological flows in the market that shapes the global climate change fight, one would have to wait.

Further it is a huge setback to effective climate action because small countries may also mimic the U.S. in walking away arguing that why they should act when they are less responsible for the problem and the U.S. has chosen to abdicate responsibility. Trump in his speech rejected clean energy and instead is prioritising coal and other fossil fuels.

What should India do?

India should abide by its existing commitments under the Paris Agreement despite the US President Donald Trump pulling out from the global climate change pact.

In 2015, India announced that by 2022, India would install 175 GW of renewable based electricity capacity. It should abide by that to act as role model.

Cost of technology (which accounts for the largest share of the tariff) should be reduced by either consumer subsidies or by competitive bidding.





In November 2015, India and France launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) which aims at aggregating demand to drive prices down, scale up technologies currently available, and pool resources to invest in solar R&D. Thirty one countries have signed its Framework Agreement. Other countries should also join it. India along with China and the EU, should form an alliance to lead implementation of the Paris Agreement.

India should play a leadership role in mobilising the climate-vulnerable countries to recommit to the Paris Agreement. India should make the case for the merits of a clean energy transition, given her recent track record of falling solar prices and declining estimates of coal needs.

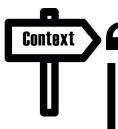
Conclusion

Reversing climate change is a common cause for all countries to give a better future to coming generations. Being a common cause it is the responsibility of all countries as per their wherewithal. However, US pulling out of deal break the fibre which binds all countries to take action against climate change.



SCIENCE ISSUE

New Technologies for Sewage Waste Management



Waste management is the generation, prevention, characterization, monitoring, treatment, handling, reuse and residual disposition of solid wastes. There are various types of solid waste including, municipal, agricultural, and special like hazardous and household

The term usually relates to materials produced by human activity, and the process is generally undertaken to reduce their effect on health, the environment, or aesthetics.

Thus, hereby discussing the new technologies which are used for waste management.

Introduction

An inevitable consequence of development and industrial progress is generation of waste. Therefore, efficient waste management is a matter of international concern and countries have set up robust regulatory waste management regimes for balancing the objectives of development and environment sustainability. In India, the National Environment Policy, 2006 while suggesting measures for controlling various forms of environmental pollution lays emphasis on the need for collection and treatment systems for recycling wastes and devising measures for environmentally safe disposal of residues.

In India, waste management is governed by various sub-ordinate legislations and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India ("MoEF") in conjunct with State Pollution Control Boards of different states ("SPCB") administer the gamut of waste management regulations.

New technologies

India and the European Union have developed a cost-effective technology for treatment of sewage waste for irrigation, especially in rural areas, using natural filters like sand and plants.

Process:

- The project involves collecting the sewage waste before it reaches the water bodies and then treat it using natural filters like sand, gravel, pebbles and plants to remove the impurities.
- Under the project, many wetland plant species, such as Canna indica, lemon grass, Napier, para grass, typha, water hyacinth, water lettuce and a weed species Agaratum conyzoides, have been identified for purifying the waste-water.



- They are helpful in reducing the nutrient load in the free-water surface and sub-surface constructed wetlands.
- It would cost anywhere between Rs.3 lakh and 5 lakh to build a facility like this in an area housing 2000 people.
- The project has been undertaken in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Use:

- This is a cost-effective method to not only use the sewage, but also effectively use the water in rural areas.
- A septic tank is used where waste water is treated using an environmentfriendly German technology

Process:

- The plant is designed on the tried and tested Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR) method, where 98 per cent of purification is achieved in just six hours, and without any chemical treatment.
- The waste water goes through a precise sequence of aeration, sedimentation and clear water removal, using gravity to separate waste particles of varying density. All three sequences happen in a single tank rather than three tanks.
- Aeration is the most important of the operations, and creates a suitable environment for natural bacteria to digest the waste in water.
- Two separate chambers are used one is where the waste water is collected and the other is the SBR tank where the water is transferred for the actual biological process to happen.
- Here, short cycles of aeration and rest happen alternatively, resulting in the production of millions of micro-organisms that treat the water thoroughly.
- The price ranges from about Rs.1 lakh for a small plant that services a family of six to Rs.65 lakh for a plant used for 1,000 people.

Use:

- The recycled water can be used to raise garden of fruit-bearing trees and other plants.
- The power consumed by the plant is about 8W per person, in other words, it's roughly equal to a family using one 40W bulb.
- The technology is apparently one of the few that offers fully automated sewage treatment for single homes, apart from being suitable for apartment and commercial complexes, colleges, hospitals and resorts.

The Membrane Bio-Reactor or MBR system

Process:

- A small MBR system capable of treating 1.50 million litres per day of wastewater has been installed in Cubbon Park, Bengaluru, and has been continuously operational since June 1, 2005. Having completed more than 10 years of operations and still working successfully, the plant has many lessons to offer not only to Bengaluru but other cities in India as well.
- The plant has a very small footprint, meaning the land required for setting it up is occupying only 1.2 acres and the actual footprint of the plant is 0.8 acres.
- The plant blends into the landscape and does not smell at all. The MBR plant at Cubbon Park is visually appealing and there is no odour.



- As the membrane technology is constantly improving, the life of the membranes is increasing and cost of the membranes decreasing.
- The cost of the treated waste-water including capital cost and running cost results in the treated waste-water costing about Rs. 15 a kilo-litre though in much smaller plants the cost could go up to Rs. 40 a kilo-litre.

Use:

- The plant delivers a very high quality of treatment. In fact it meets and exceeds the norms for treated waste-water as set by the Pollution Control Board and with a very small tweak can meet drinking water standards of BIS 10500 as prevalent in India.
- Sulphur from a contaminated pond has been successfully recovered and used in a high-performance battery. This waste-to-wealth feat was achieved by a group of researchers from CSIR-Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CECRI), Karaikudi, in Tamil Nadu.

Process:

- Bio-electrochemical process: Sulphate-reducing bacteria (SRB), which have a natural ability to convert sulphate to sulphide, were used in the biological treatment process.
- The bacterias are capable of using sulphate instead of oxygen for their energy source. Due to reduced nutrients, the conversion rate to sulphide was very low in the pond.
- When the researchers simulated the micro-environment where oxygen supply is less by keeping the bacteria without oxygen for 20 days and added iron powder, the bacteria liberated hydrogen sulphide gas.
- The gas was collected and dissolved in sodium hydroxide to form sodium sulphide. The sulphide was further oxidised to elemental sulphur using an electrochemical process.
- A double-compartment cell was constructed, and on passing current, the elemental sulphur precipitated at the electrodes. Though the bacterias are used to treat industrial wastes, this is the first time an electrochemical approach is applied to further convert sulphide to elemental sulphur.

Use:

- This sulphur can be used in various applications such as production of sulphuric acid and liquid sulphur dioxide. Since the cost of pure sulphur is high, the new approach can help recover sulphur from waste and turn it into a resource.
- When the recovered sulphur was used as cathode in lithium sulphur (Li-S) battery, a current of 1050 mAh/g was produced. After 10 cycles the current produced reduced to 840 mAh/g.

Conclusion

Civic bodies have to redraw long term vision in solid waste management and rework their strategies as per changing lifestyles. They should reinvent garbage management in cities so that we can process waste and not landfill it (with adequate provisioning in processing and recycling). To do this, households and institutions must segregate their waste at source so that it could be managed as a resource. Compost pits should be constructed in every locality to process organic waste.

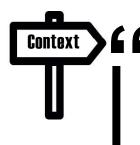
Community participation has a direct bearing on efficient waste management. Recovery of e-waste is abysmally low, steps need to encourage recycling of e-waste on a very large scale level so that problem of e-waste disposal is contained.





INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

Concept of Middle Power **Coalition**



India and other Asian powers are threatened by the rise of China, and the potential European members are more concerned with Russian behaviour on their periphery. Thus, with the unpredictability of top level powers-the US, China and Russia-India need to do well to explore complementarities with middle level powers such as the UK, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

Meaning

In international relations, a middle power is a sovereign state that is neither a superpower nor a great power, but still has large or moderate influence and international recognition.

Origin of concept

- The concept of the "middle power" was given by the 16th century Italian political thinker Giovanni Botero who divided the world into three types of states -
 - Grandissime (empires),
 - Mezano (middle powers), and
 - Piccoli (small powers).

Features of middle power

No agreed standard method defines which states are middle powers.

Original notion of middle powers: Under the original sense of the term, a middle power was one that had some degree of influence globally but did not dominate in any one area. However, this original notion is not universal.

Today following broad consensus has reached among the international experts on the notion of middle power

- Economy: Just like great powers, middle powers must have sufficient control over material (and non-material) resources.
- **Leaders in regional affairs:** Middle powers must be willing to exercise some form of responsibility in regional affairs, e.g. by successfully taking a diplomatic lead on important issues or using their means to shape other nations' behaviour in order to contribute to regional stability.
- Military strength: With regards to security, a middle power must be militarily self-sufficient enough to inflict great costs upon an actively aggressive great power.



- ➤ **Middle power diplomacy:** Middle powers are identified most often by their international behaviour called 'middle power diplomacy' which has following features:
 - The tendency to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems,
 - The tendency to embrace compromising positions in international disputes.
 - They act as 'moral actors' in particular issue areas, such as human rights, environment, and arms regulations.

List of middle powers

There is no unanimous agreement among authorities as to which countries are considered middle powers. Also, not all middle powers are of equal status.

At this juncture the world order seems to be split vertically. In the top league are the United States, China and Russia (Russia, counts only because it has military capacities that allow it to punch above its weight. Otherwise, in terms of an economic or demographic future, it has little to show).

In the second league are a range of the so-called "middle powers", from Germany, France, India, Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and even Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

Why is there a need of middle power coalition?

➤ U.S. Factor:

- U.S. foreign policy under Donald Trump (who is following an American first policy) is becoming unpredictable.
- This can be seen from U.S. exit from TPP and Paris climate agreement. In May 2017 he told NATO members to increase their financial contribution. In this background, Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel remarked that Europe should seek out new friends.

China Factor:

- China is as usual, very assertive in South China Sea.
- Although many countries are participating in One Belt One Road initiative, but there is fear of increasing debt and subsequent economic imperialism in disguise.

➤ Russia factor:

As for Russia, it is moving inexorably into the Chinese zone. According to experts, Russia has made it plain that on Central Asia and even Afghanistan, the Russians would adapt to Chinese cues.

Way ahead for India

- ► There is no grand alliance and never will be. It is a network of transactional arrangements that India can use for its own benefit.
- ▶ India needs capital, technology and strategic/military capacities for its modernisation. There are about a dozen countries that can help India in this regard. Germany, France, Japan, Singapore but also the UAE and Canada as sources of long-term infrastructure capital. The UK too holds promise.
- A number of these middle powers are exiting the manufacturing game but are repositories of sensitive technologies that India can use and deploy for an effective Make in India strategy, or even to re-imagine cities, waterways and public spaces and resources.
- ► India is a potential pivot of this loose middle-powers' coalition. Government needs to grab these opportunities.





ECONOMIC ISSUE

Reason for Farmers' Unrest



India has witnessed enumerable number of farmers' unrest in past several years due to the ever increasing amount of debt.

Madhya Pradesh farmers have dumped vegetables and spilled milk on roads and cut off supplies to cities, including Bhopal and Indore, to express their outrage. In Maharashtra the Devendra Fadnavis government, after messing up the farmer agitation, has announced a partial loan waiver. The drought-hit farmers of Tamil Nadu, who had agitated in Delhi for a month and a half, have been pacified with Rs 1,712 crore Central relief against their demand for a Rs 40,000-crore package. In Haryana farmer distress erupted in the form of a reservation agitation, resulting in unprecedented violence.

Thus, hereby analyzing the reasons for farmer distress and steps needed.

Backgrounder

- The recent agitation of farmers are from relatively most prosperous belt of India - the stretch from Nashik, Ahmednagar and Pune to Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur in Western Maharashtra and Neemuch, Mandsaur and Ratlam in MP's Malwa region are in protest for their grievance redressal.
- The unrest is mainly due to wrong procurement policy of the government. Since Madhya Pradesh was doing seemingly well in wheat production, the state government encouraged farmers to adopt crop diversification. As a result, many farmers opted for onion production. However, due to bumper production last year, the farmers didn't get the right price for their produce. After much pressure, the government in the state last year announced Rs 6 per kg as one-time minimum support price (MSP). This has been increased to Rs 8 this year after the protests.

Reasons for the apathy of farmers

- The single common factor behind the current wave of farmers' protests in several states is the deep-rooted economic distress due to market failings and flawed government policies.
- Further income returns are very low, irrigation facilities are inadequate and supporting infrastructure is largely absent or of poor quality.
- There is no lack of schemes for the farmer National Food Security Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and Gramin Bhandaran Yojana, to name just a few. However, most farmers don't benefit from them. As per the survey the proportion of farmers who have benefited was less than 1/10th for each of these schemes. The need is to improve the delivery of these rather than to initiate new ones.



- The scarcity of financial resources for farming is another major issue.
- The lack of expert advice is another nagging issue.

Criticism of Agriculture Price Policy

Agricultural price policy plays an important role in achieving growth and equity in Indian economy in general and agriculture sector in particular. The major underlying objective of the Indian government's price policy is to protect both producers and consumers. Currently, price policy basically consists of three instruments: procurement prices/minimum support prices, buffer stocks and public distribution system (PDS). Agricultural price policy is one of the important instruments in achieving food security by improving production, employment and incomes of the farmers.

Agricultural prices have three functions viz., (1) to allocate resources, (2) to distribute income, and (3) to induce capital formation. As allocator of resources, agricultural prices give signals to both producers and consumers regarding the level of production and consumption. Changes in the relative prices of the various agricultural commodities affect the allocation of resources and agricultural commodities by the consumers. If the price of a given commodity increases relatively to all other agricultural commodities, then the producers would be allocating more resources, i.e., land and other inputs, for the production of that commodity. To the extent substitution is possible; the consumer would try to substitute high-priced commodities by cheaper commodities.

Agricultural prices, on the one hand, determine the income of the farmers and, on the other, affect the levels of living of the people engaged in the other sectors of the economy, as agricultural commodities from part of wage goods. Changes in agricultural prices thus affect a transfer of income between the agricultural and the non-agricultural sectors of the economy.

Some critics argue that a rise in the MSP will lead to increase in food inflation, while others argue that it will augment farmers' income.

Both arguments rest on the mistaken notion that the MSP is a remunerative price. It is actually an insurance price, a sort of floor price. Besides, a vast majority of the farming population is unaware of its existence.

The Government of India has an MSP for 23 crops, but official procurement at the MSP is effectively limited to rice and wheat, and that too concentrated in a few States only.

Awareness about the MSP is limited to States such as Punjab, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh where such procurement takes place. According to the National Sample Survey's (NSS) Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households 2013, even for paddy and wheat, less than one-third of farmers were aware of the MSP; for other crops, such awareness was negligible.

Further, a substantial proportion of crops are sold to local private traders and input dealers to whom the resource-poor marginal and small landholders are obligated to sell their crops due to tie-up with credit.

Agricultural distress has become a permanent feature due to the failure of not only elected governments to find a lasting solution but also local institutions such as community or social networks which are supposedly weakening because of increasing individualisation. The consequence is that helpless farmers are increasingly pushed to the brink of committing suicides.





Measures for overall agriculture development

- Irrigation is the best insurance against crop failure.
- Encourage crop diversification (natural insurance against failure of one crop).
- Reform in APMC Act This will remove corruption and middlemen and ensure better prices for farmer's produce.
- Land reforms to increase average land farm size to boost mechanization.
- Efficient delivery of crop insurance against bad weather, disaster and post-harvest losses.
- Reform in agricultural land lease This will allow tenant farmers to avail insurance and credit.
- Provide alternative sources of livelihood to needy farm households.
- Ensuring availability of good quality of seeds at reasonable price.

Conclusion

- The farmers demand a reasonable price for their produce, better marketing facilities, institutional credit, irrigation, quality seeds and fertilisers, procurement during times of market glut and a social safety net during natural calamities. These are the basic inputs and services farmers need to continue to engage in agricultural production.
- Recent policy pronouncements have added to the woes of already beleaguered farmers.
- These developments do not augur well for rural youth whose interest in farming is already dwindling. While other developing countries are moving towards modernization of agriculture which would reduce dependence of labour force and enable a rise in productivity, Indian agriculture is cluelessly plodding ahead.



INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

India-Germany Relations



After mammoth celebrations across the country to mark three years of the PM Narendra Modi government, the Prime Minister embarked on a four-nation visit to Germany, Spain, Russia and France. This European tour started with Berlin.

Both the nations discussed the key issues like trade, skill development and climate change. PM Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel underlined their common concern about the threat and global reach of terrorism and extremism and vowed to take strong measures against it.

PM Modi said pace of development of our relations is fast, direction positive and destination clear. Germany will always find India as powerful, prepared and capable partner.

Introduction

India and Germany have been strategic partners since 2000. But at the core of the relationship is a strong economic partnership. Many of the things that make up Modi's vision of India - Skill development, Digital India, Make in India and giving an impetuous to small and medium-sized business — encompass what Germany can provide. In fact India's needs and Germany's expertise are a perfect fit. So India hopes to further strengthen and expand this relationship.

Germany is India's largest trading partner within the EU. It is also one of the leading foreign direct investors in the country, with as many as 1,600 German companies operating in India. Six hundred joint ventures are already in place.

Recently, Indian PM Modi visited Germany and during the visit Terrorism was the big part of conversation between two nations as terror strikes have become a global phenomena. The latest attack in Manchester is just one of the many deadly strikes across Europe. The Prime Minister discussed about the terror emanating from Pakistan as well as his take on what is happening in Afghanistan. Both leaders exchanged views on how best the international community can work together against this common issue.

Why strong India-Germany bilateral ties are important for our country?

As the two countries discuss various issues, it is worth looking at how India's bilateral ties with Germany — India's largest trading partner within the European Union have evolved over the years.

Historically: As far as the history of India-Germany ties are concerned, India was one of the first countries to diplomatically acknowledge and accept the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War in 1945. It was in 1951 that the two countries decided to establish an economic relationship.



Economic Relations:

- A strong economic partnership with Germany means that the country can provide for many schemes and programmes devised by Modi like Digital India, Make in India and Skill India.
- The German embassy in Berlin had launched the Make in India Mittelstand (MIIM) Programme in September 2015 to facilitate the German Mittelstand (SMEs) to do business in India.
- Currently, 73 German Mittelstand (SMEs) companies are being facilitated through MIIM Programme for their market entry and investment in India. Out of these, 46 companies have progressed well in India investment plan.
- Germany is currently also one of the leading foreign direct investors in India, with around 1,800 German companies operating in India. As per data with Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Germany is the seventh biggest FDI source for India.
- From April 2000 to March 2017, various German companies have invested about \$9.7 billion in India, which is about 3 percent of total FDI flows the country has witnessed. Indian corporate entities have also invested over \$7 billion in Germany.
- 600 joint ventures are also in place.
- Exports: Textiles, metal and metal products, electro-technology, leather and leather goods, food and beverages, machinery, pharmaceuticals, auto components, chemicals, gems and jewellery, and rubber products are the main exports to Germany.
- **Imports:** The key items imported from there are machinery, electro-technology, metal and metal products, chemicals, auto components, measurement and control equipment, plastics, medical technology, pharmaceuticals, paper and printing materials.
- Strategic Partners: India and Germany have been strategic partners since 2000. The website of the Indian Embassy in Berlin explains that the Intergovernmental Consultations (IGCs) between India and Germany is meant for a review of cooperation and provides a platform for fresh ideas. India is one of the few countries with whom Germany has such a dialogue mechanism.
 - The third IGC before the current one was held in New Delhi on 5 October, 2015. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has also visited India in 2007, 2011 and again in 2015 for the third IGC. On the other hand, Modi visited Germany in April 2015 whereas External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj visited Germany in August 2015.
- **UN Security Council:** India and Germany also cooperate closely on the issue of the expansion of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) within the framework of G-4 with Japan and Brazil. Both countries seek to become permanent members of the UNSC.
- **Defence Cooperation:** The India-Germany Defence Cooperation Agreement, established in 2006, provides a framework for defence cooperation. The High Defence Committee meetings at the Defence Secretary level take place annually and atlernately in New Delhi and Berlin.
- Science and Technology: Moreover, there are currently over 150 joint science and technology research projects and 70 direct partnerships between universities of both countries.



- Geopolitics: In the context of China's One Belt One Road initiative, Modi and Merkel are converging on working together in Africa, focusing on renewable energy, connectivity, vocational training, and have called on businesses to collaborate on promoting trade and development.
- Climate change is an important focus area. India has made it clear that it is committed to the Paris Agreement. The two countries remain committed to work with Afghanistan to tackle terrorism, thus containing Pakistan.

Current Challenges

- Over the last six years, the total trade between the two nations has been on a decline. From a high \$23.5 billion in 2011-12, the total trade has come down to \$18.73 billion in 2016-17. India has a trade deficit with Germany. As trade is on a decline, the deficit too has declined from \$7.6 billion to \$4.2 billion over the last six years.
- The strategic partnership between India and Germany is also limited because Germany does not have a lot of geopolitical influence in South Asian affairs.
- During the current visit, India stressed on the need for counter-terrorism efforts in Europe as the terrorism is the "gravest challenge facing humanity".
- Free Trade Agreement: With fears of countries leaving the EU after Britain now having receded, a free trade agreement with Europe will be now being looked at with fresh enthusiasm. So far, 16 rounds of negotiations have been completed and both India and the EU are keen to get this agreement signed and sealed. No dates are yet on the horizon as yet, because the EU must now go through the arduous process of untangling Britain from the bloc. It will take more time to materialize.

What are the outcomes of the recent visit?

- India and Germany discussed on a host of key issues like trade, skill development and climate change
- MOUs: The two sides also signed 12 MOUs/agreements in fields like
 - Cyber policy,
 - Development initiatives,
 - Sustainable urban development,
 - Continued development of cluster managers and skill development,
 - Digitalisation,
 - Railway security, and
 - Promoting Vocational training.
- **Intergovernmental Consultations:** The two sides also issued a joint statement after Modi and Merkel held the fourth India-Germany Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC).
- The two leaders underlined their common concern about the threat and global reach of terrorism and extremism while condemning terrorist violence in all its forms and manifestations.
- Both the nations agreed on the need to take strong measures against all those who encourage, support and finance terrorism, provide sanctuary and safe havens that sustain and support terrorist groups and organisations.





India and Germany pledged to "chart out a future roadmap of cooperation with > focus on trade and investment, security and counter-terrorism, innovation and science and technology, skill development, urban infrastructure, railways and civil aviation, clean energy, development cooperation, health and alternative medicine.

Conclusion

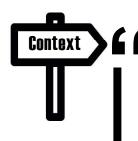
This Modi-Merkel meeting was about continuing with the partnership, and putting it on firmer ground. Both countries will work together on issues such as UN reforms, expansion of the UN Security Council, India's inclusion in export control regimes such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, tackling terrorism, and the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

In the future, India and Germany has the opportunity to deepen this partnership when they meet for the G-20 summit in July in Hamburg. It will be another chance to demonstrate why India and Germany are good for each other.



GOVERNANCE ISSUE

All India Judicial Services



On June 11, 2017, the Union government has proposed a NEET-like examination to recruit judges to the lower judiciary.

The proposal to Supreme Court (SC) comes after several States are opposing the formation of an all-India Judicial Service. As of December 31, 2015, there were vacancies of 4,452 judges in subordinate courts.

Historical background:

- Original constitution didn't provide for the creation of an AJIS.
- The proposal for its creation was first suggested in the Chief Justices' Conference in 1961.
- After the Swaran Singh Committee's recommendations in 1976, Article 312 was modified by the 42nd Constitution (Amendment) Act in 1977 to provide for an AIJS. But it excluded anyone below the rank of district judge. Therefore, the trial courts are completely eliminated.
- Law Commission of India (LCI) in its 14th Report, 77th Report and 116th report recommended the creation of AJIS. Also, our constitution provides for its creation.

All-India Judicial Services: Constitutional Provision

Article 312: All-India Services

- Notwithstanding anything in Chapter VI of Part VI or Part XI, if the Council of States has declared by resolution supported by not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest so to do, Parliament may by law provide for the creation of one or more all India services (including an All India Judicial Service) common to the Union and the States, and, subject to the other provisions of this Chapter, regulate the recruitment, and the conditions of service of persons appointed, to any such service.
- The services known at the commencement of this Constitution as the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service shall be deemed to be services created by Parliament under this article.
- The all-India Judicial Service referred to in clause (1) shall not include any post inferior to that of a district judge as defined in article 236.
- The law providing for the creation of the all-India judicial service aforesaid may contain such provisions for the amendment of Chapter VI of Part VI as may be necessary for giving effect to the provisions of that law and no such law shall be deemed to be an amendment of this Constitution for the purposes of article 368.

How will it work?

Law commission in its 116th report suggested the following framework:

Direct recruitment of judges from the entry level onwards would be handled by an independent and impartial agency.





The process of recruitment would be through open competition, and if designed with the right incentives of pay, promotion and career progression, it could potentially become an attractive employment avenue for bright and capable young law graduates.

Arguments in favour of All India Judicial Services:

- Existing system has led to shortage of judges. There are always 20 per cent vacancies in the courts.
- Also, under the existing system, judiciary is unable to attract talent. The brighter law students do not join the state judicial services because they are not attractive. With no career progression, no one with a respectable Bar practice wants to become an additional district judge, and deal with the hassles of transfers and postings. Consequently, the quality of the subordinate judiciary is by and large average. As a result, the litigants are left to suffer.
- In a longer-term perspective, uniformity in selection processes and standards, as offered by an AIJS, has many advantages. It will improve the quality of judicial officers in high courts, and one-third of the judges would enter the high court through the route of promotion from subordinate courts. By extension, judges of the Supreme Court are drawn from the high courts. In this process, the persons eventually selected into the judiciary would be of proven competence.
- Simultaneously, the quality of adjudication and the dispensation of justice would undergo transformative changes across the judicial system, from the lowest to the highest levels.
- It will make the judiciary more accountable, more professional, and arguably, also more equitable.
- Today the subordinate judiciary depends entirely on state recruitment. Under Article 235, the entire judicial machinery at the subordinate level is under the control of the high courts.
- In India, judiciary appoints judiciary through the collegium system, which has been facing lot of criticism because of its lack of objectivity and impartiality. It will remove any scope for judicial or executive intervention in the appointments to the judiciary.
- In France, the judiciary is operated by a career judicial service.
- Our constitution provides for its creation. Law Commission of India (LCI) in its 14th Report, 77th Report and 116th report recommended the creation of AJIS. The Supreme Court has itself said that, in two of its judgments in 1991 and 1993, that an AIJS should be set up, and has directed the Union of India to take appropriate steps in this regard.

Arguments against All India Judicial Services: Some states and High Courts have opposed its creation on the following grounds:

- First, that lack of knowledge of regional languages would affect judicial efficiency;
- Second, that avenues for promotion would be curtailed for those who had already entered through the state services; and
- Third, that this would lead to an erosion of the control of the high courts over the subordinate judiciary, which would, in turn, affect the judiciary's independence.

Concluding remark:

- Without a push from the judiciary, the AIJS will never come to fruition.
- The Prime Minister and the Supreme Court are in favour of AJIS. There is no time better than now to start doing something about these problems.



INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

India-Japan Civil Nuclear Energy Deal



Japan's Parliament, the Diet, had recently approved the India-Japan civil nuclear energy deal which will allow the nation's firms to export nuclear materials and technology to India for non-military use.

It's the first such pact Japan has concluded with a country outside of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime. Agreement is designed to promote exports of the Japan's nuclear power plant technology, but the feasibility of Japanese firms' overseas nuclear power business is increasingly in doubt.

The deal is also significant in the present international scenario as Chinese influence has grown significantly in the region. The step is being seen as the first big move to build India into a regional counterweight to China.

Introduction

India and Japan signed a historic bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Tokyo in November 2016. Bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement is seen as crucial for energy-starved India to access sensitive nuclear technologies to generate clean electricity. It's a move that will boost bilateral economic and security ties and facilitate leading U.S.-based players to set up atomic plants in India.

Recently, Japan's Parliament, the Diet, had recently approved the India-Japan civil nuclear energy deal which will allow the nation's firms to export nuclear materials and technology to India for non-military use.

What is India's energy scenario?

India currently has 5.7 Gigawatts (GW) of nuclear power generation capacity. This accounts for 2% of the total power capacity, but this is expected to change with a sharp increase in power generation from atomic plants over the next 16 years as Asia's third largest economy moves away from fossil fuels for its energy needs. India's Department of Atomic Energy's target is to have 63 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2032.

In the face of surging power demand due to rapid economic and population growth, India is seeking to build more nuclear reactors. The population of the country is now predicted to reach 1.4 billion by 2022, which will make it the world's most populated nation.





To meet its energy needs, India would like to partner Japan on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, with the recently concluded civil nuclear agreement between India and Japan, the negotiators faced the challenging task of harmonizing a pacifist principle with a pragmatic policy.

Key highlights of the Civil Nuclear Agreement

- The 'Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy' pact provides for the development of nuclear power projects in India and thus strengthening of energy security of the country.
- The present agreement would open up the door for collaboration between Indian and Japanese industries in India's Civil Nuclear programme.
- The pact enables India to obtain high-quality components for nuclear reactors, especially ones that we are negotiating for with Westinghouse (Electric Co.) and Areva SA (French). Westinghouse Electric Company is a subsidiary of Japan's Toshiba Corp. Areva, too, accesses key reactor components from Japanese firms.
- Among the other agreements signed was one to skill 30,000 Indian youth in the Japanese styled manufacturing in the next 10 years. This would be achieved through the programmes of Japan-India Institute for Manufacturing (JIM) and the Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC) in selected Engineering colleges.
- Pacts on cooperation in space, earth sciences, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, transport and urban development and sports were also signed.
- In fact, India and Japan share many multilateral platforms, including membership of the G-4 group that is knocking at the UN Security Council's door for reform.

The accord stipulates nuclear fuel and equipment provided can only be used for peaceful purposes, and a separate document signed alongside the nuclear agreement has a clause allowing Japan to terminate the pact if India conducts a nuclear test.

Approval by DIET

Seven years of negotiations over an India-Japan civil nuclear energy deal came to fruition with Japan's Parliament, the Diet, approving the pact. Opposition parties voiced protest against the deal, highlighting concerns that India has provided insufficient guarantees for Japan's right to terminate the agreement in the event of New Delhi conducting a nuclear test. Nonetheless, the ruling coalition pushed the accord through with a majority vote. The agreement is set to take effect in early July.

What are the Implications?

- Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe believes that nuclear exports are key to kick-starting a Japanese economy stuck in a holding pattern for more than two decades. For India, the deal represents hope that the 2008 waiver it received from the Nuclear Suppliers' Group might finally begin paying off given that so far it has had limited tangible benefits for the country's power industry. The deal with Japan is also a necessity for enabling India's bilateral nuclear deals with other countries. Key elements of certain reactors like the AP 1000 and EPR, including safety components and domes, are a near-Japanese monopoly.
- Japanese PM believes that nuclear exports are key to kick-starting the Japanese economy.
- It is also a necessity for enabling India's bilateral nuclear deals with other countries.



- The deal is critical to India's renewable energy plans. Japanese companies that produce cutting-edge reactor technology were previously not allowed to supply parts to India.
- This is Japan's first nuclear deal with a non-signatory to the Non Proliferation Treaty, and it recognises India's exemplary record in nuclear prudence. It is indeed a much-needed moral boost as New Delhi strives for membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- The present agreement would open up the door for collaboration between Indian and Japanese industries in India's Civil Nuclear programme. Japanese companies in possession of critical technologies, such as steel shields covering a nuclear reactor core, an accord with Japan was pivotal for India.
- The move will boost the meagre, and dipping, bilateral trade of \$15 billion, and lift the strategic military and defence relationship.
- This deal will help guarantee Japan's continued support to India's civil nuclear programme for generation of clean and cheap power.
- Japan now follows eight other nations, including the US, France and Russia, in entering into a pact with India. It signals a wider acceptance of India's status as a responsible actor.

Why does the India-Japan nuclear deal is today less significant than it would have once been?

- Circumstances in the nuclear industry, both globally and specifically in Japan, are undergoing tumultuous changes, making the India-Japan deal less significant than it would have once been. Recent developments have diminished Japan's previously formidable nuclear capabilities, calling into question its very survival as a nuclear exporter of heft.
- The most dramatic example is that of Toshiba, once a titan of the Japanese nuclear reactor industry that is currently struggling to stay afloat following the enormous losses and eventual bankruptcy of its U.S. nuclear unit, Westinghouse Electric. After writing down Westinghouse's value (the U.S. company had a total debt of \$9.8 billion), Toshiba declared a net loss of \$9.9 billion for the fiscal year that ended on March 31.
- At a news conference, Toshiba stated that they have completely pulled out of the nuclear business overseas. A decade ago, Toshiba was dreaming of a big global expansion when it bought Westinghouse for \$5.4 billion with plans to install 45 new reactors worldwide by 2030.
- Hitachi Ltd., another nuclear heavyweight, also booked 'an estimated ¥65 billion (\$588 million) write-down for fiscal 2016 related to a stalled laser-based uranium enrichment joint venture with General Electric in the United States'. The company said 'demand for nuclear fuel in the U.S. was unlikely to grow as strongly as had been expected'.
- Meanwhile, Japan's third major, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, is in trouble too. Its French partner, Areva, is mired in losses and undergoing a major restructuring. Areva logged losses equivalent to more than \$700 million in 2016, marking its sixth year in the red.
- In the aftermath of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, the nuclear industry is facing a global crisis. Stricter safety regulations have spiked the costs of constructing plants and 'some countries have become more cautious about new reactors.





- > In Japan there has been no domestic construction on a new reactor for the past eight years, since a unit at the Tomari plant on the island of Hokkaido came on stream in 2009. Hitachi, Mitsubishi and Toshiba are all focussing on repair and maintenance of existing plants (most of which are idle) rather than on construction of new ones.
- Emergence of viable options 'The emergence of cheap shale oil and gas has made competition in the energy sector tougher than ever, while wind and solar power generation are also growing as viable, alternative energy sources'.
- According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), just three nuclear reactors started construction worldwide last year, and only 51 were begun between 2010 and 2016. In contrast 20 to 30 new were being built every year in the 1960s and 1970s.

Conclusion

The pact is a major achievement for India as it is Japan's first civilian nuclear cooperation pact with a country that has not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This will certainly help energy-starved India to access sensitive technologies to generate clean electricity in the future. The deal would further strengthen the relation between the two in many other fields and can materialize the complementary situation. The deal would be further strengthening the ties against the dominance of China in the region.



Prelims News



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

Indian Culture

KHEER BHAWANI FESTIVAL

Context:

- ▶ Due to unrest in the Kashmir valley, number of Kashmiri Pandit visitors have reduced drastically in the annual pilgrimage to the Kheer Bhawani shrine.
- ▶ In 2010 mela at Kheer Bhawani shrine, 40,000 Kashmiri Pandits arrived. In 2017, the number has reduced to 1,000, the lowest in the past one decade.

Kheer Bhawani temple:

► Location: In the Tulmul village, near Srinagar (J&K).

▶ Deity:

- The temple is dedicated to the Goddess Kheer Bhawani (originally just Bhawani)
- The deity has many names: Maharagya Devi, Ragnya Devi, Rajni, Ragnya Bhagwati, and so on.
- The term *kheer* refers to rice pudding that is offered in the spring located in the temple to propitiate the Goddess.

HOYSALA ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Context

- ➤ A public trust in Venkatpura (Karnataka) has commissioned the construction of Lord Venkateshwara temple at Venkatapura. The foundation stone was laid on June 14, 2017.
- ▶ It will be built in a Hoysala-Style architecture.
- ▶ Venkatapura is a village in the Gadag district of Karnataka State in India.

Hoysala architectural style

- ➤ The Hoysala architectural style is considered an intermediate between the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian traditions.
- ➤ The Hoysala rulers had erected a number of shrines around Mysore between 1050 and 1300.
- Distinctive features of this style?
 - Star shaped base: Temples have a star shaped base; main structure stands on a raised platform.
 - Three shrines: Three shrines structured around a central pillared hall, each with a tower.
 - Pillars with horizontal mouldings: There are Pillars with horizontal mouldings, produced by a mechanical process.
 - Intricate grille windows: There are intricate grill windows with an abundance of sculptural details.
 - Horizontal Tiers Sikharas: The sikharas are constructed in well defined horizontal tiers unlike the northern style (parabolic).
 - Soap Stone: The temples are almost entirely covered with intricate sculptural carvings. It was because temples were constructed out of a very fine grained soap stone (chloritic schist). It was much easier to work on this stone unlike granite or sand stone.

Names of temples of this style?

- Chennakesava temple, Belur
- Hoysaleswara temple, Halebid
- Kesava temple, Somnathapura.





CINGIREDDI NARAYANA REDDY

➤ About him:

- He was better known as C. Narayana Reddy or Cinare. Ghazal Srinivas referred to him as Viswambharudu while Reddy gave him the title Ghazal Raraju.
- He was a famous Telugu and Urdu poet and writer.

> Awards won by him:

- He won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1973 for his poetry collection Mantalu Manavudu.
- He won the Jnanpith Award in 1988.
- In 2014, he was conferred with the Sahitya Akademi fellowship.
- The Government of India honoured him with the second and third highest civilian awards, Padma Shri (1977) and Padma Bhushan (1992).
- He was nominated to the Rajya Sabha in

Science and Environment

GSLV MK III-D1/GSAT-19 MISSION

Context

- ► GSLV Mk III-D1 has launched GSAT-19 from the Second Launch Pad (SLP) at Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR (SDSC SHAR), Sriharikota.
- ➤ GSLV-Mk III-D1 is the first developmental flight, carrying 3136 kg GSAT-19 satellite to a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

GSAT-19

➤ Launch Mass: 3136 Kg ➤ Mission Life: 10 years

Type of Satellite: Communication Satellite

➤ Payload:

- GSAT-19 carries Ka/Ku-band having high throughput communication transponders.
- Besides, it carries a Geostationary Radiation Spectrometer (GRASP) payload to monitor and study the nature of charged particles and the influence of space radiation on satellites and their electronic components.

GSLV Mk III: About the launch vehicle

> Introduction:

- GSLV Mk III is a three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle developed by ISRO.
- The vehicle has two solid strap-ons, a core liquid booster and a cryogenic upper stage.

■ GSLV-Mk III is capable of launching 4 tonne class of satellites to Geosynchronous Transfer orbit (GTO).

Significance of launch of GSLV Mk III

- Self-sufficiency in launching heavy satellites:
 - Launch of GSLV Mk III finally makes India somewhat self-sufficient in launching heavier communication satellites, which are generally in this weight range.
 - Until now, India had to rely on foreign rockets such as the French Ariane 5 to launch heavy satellites. This has been expensive for India, with each launch costing India's exchequer about INR 400 crore.

➤ Commercial dimension:

■ The multi-billion international satellite market is a big attraction. A successful launch of GSLV Mk III could give India significant cost advantages in this market, making it a preferred destination for many countries that need to launch heavier satellites in the coming years.

Demonstration of indigenous technology:

■ It is a demonstration of Indian indigenous space technology, particularly of its cryogenic engines. The GSLV Mk-III is also a test for ISRO's new cryogenic engine, the C-25, which will power the third stage of the GSLV.

GRAVITATIONAL WAVE

Context

➤ For the third time, scientists have detected gravitational waves.

Who detected the gravitational waves?

- ➤ The discovery was made once again by LIGO. or the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory Scientific Collaboration in U.S.
- ➤ This discovery opens a new avenue for space exploration. Primary tool for exploring the universe is observation through telescopes that rely only on light waves reaching earth from outer space. But objects like black-hole and dark matter do not emit light and there is no easy way to detect them.

What are gravitational waves?

➤ Gravitational waves are ripples in the space time curvature traveling outward from the source produced by violent events such as collision of 2 black holes or by supernova



explosion. They are produced by accelerating masses just the same as accelerating charged particles produce radio waves (electrons in antennas).

➤ GW are akin to Electromagnetic Waves (EM) waves, but emitted by gravitating bodies in motion such as black holes, spiraling towards each other in binary orbits.

How are they generated?

- ▶ These gravitation waves stemmed from two dense black holes merging billions of light-years away.
- ▶ When Black holes merge they rapidly spin around each other - up to several times per second — before joining to form one single super-dense object.
- ▶ These rotations produce gravitation waves.

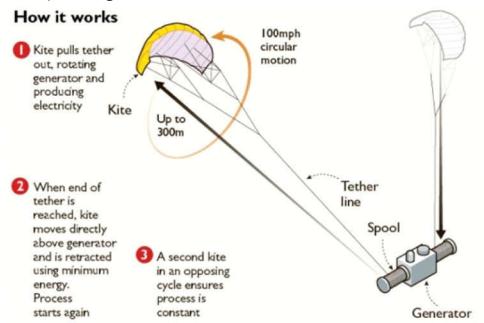
What is Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO)?

- ▶ It is a large-scale observatory to detect cosmic gravitational waves.
- It is located in U.S.

WIND POWER THROUGH KITES

Working

➤ The basic idea is to locate the kites, which are essentially light and controllable aerodynamic flying devices, in a formation at heights of around 750 metres and more in order to harvest the strong and consistent winds available in that region of the atmosphere (wind velocity at those heights is twice that at the ground level) and thus generate low-cost energy.



➤ The system is operated in periodic pumping cycles, alternating between reel-out and reel-in of the lines attached to the kite and the drum on the ground.

Advantages

 Advantage of this technology over conventional turbines include: reducing the cost of generating wind energy, negligible noise emission and bird hits, do not need huge concrete foundations and tonnes of steel for the tower and the blades. etc.

Present status of its use:

The concept has been in existence for a while and many European firms are involved in developing this technology.

➤ The UK government has been the first to give the green light to launch the country's first kite power plant by awarding a contract to Kite Power Systems (KPS).

TCS GEN Z SURVEY

Context

- ➤ Tata Consultancy Services conducted the 'TCS Gen Z Survey,' to "capture the changing trends of the youth across the nation with a focus on technology."
- → 'Gen Z' (the Generation Z) in the title is a reference to the 12-18 age group. It has been "defined as the group born after 1995 - the current youth generation."



Key findings of the report:

- ➤ Choice of gadget: Smartphones are considered to be most important gadget.
- ▶ Internet usage: The students consider the Internet to be of most use in doing school assignments.
- ➤ Social media disconnect: A fourth of those surveyed said they found social media to be a waste of time. Due to this they have deleted their account atleast once.

COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR)

Context

- ► Chief of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has told the directors of all of the organisation's 38 labs says that this year there is financial crunch and the labs will have to look outside of the CSIR to meet their expenses.
 - Reason for this year financial crunch is increased salary and financial outgo due to implementation of the 7th Pay Commission.
- ► Chief of CSIR also said that by 2020, 50% of CSIR's budget would come from external sources.
 - Under the Dehradun Declaration of 2015, CSIR decided that it will generate about 50% of its budget through external sources.

About Council of Scientific And Industrial Research (CSIR)

➤ Established in: 1942.

Location: Delhi.

Chairman: Prime Minister > Status: Autonomous body. ■ Although it is mainly funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, it operates as an autonomous body through the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

➤ What is it?

- It is the largest research and development organisation in India.
- The R%D activities of CSIR include aerospace engineering, structural engineering, life sciences, metallurgy, chemicals, mining, food, petroleum, leather, and environmental science.

Key achievements:

- Developed India's first synthetic drug, methaqualone in 1950.
- Developed first Indian tractor Swaraj in 1967 completely based on indigenous know-how.
- Established first ever in the world 'Traditional Knowledge Digital Library' accessible in five international languages, English, German, French, Japanese and Spanish. it has been established by CSIR in collabration with ministry of AYUSH.
- In 2009, completed the sequencing of the Human Genome.
- In 2011, successfully tested India's 1st indigenous civilian aircraft, NAL NM5 made in association with National Aerospace Laboratories and Mahindra Aerospace.

CSIR Laboratories

CSIR runs more than thirty-five laboratories. Some of the key laboratories which are frequently in news are as follows:

CSIR laboratory	Location
Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB)	Hyderabad
Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI)	Mysore
North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST)	Jorhat
National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)	Goa
National Chemical Laboratory (NCL)	Pune
National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL)	Bangalore
National Physical Laboratory (NPL)	Delhi
Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) National Physical	
Laboratory (NPL) has established an atmospheric monitoring station in the	
campus of Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) at Palampur	
(H.P.) for generating the base data to serve as reference for comparison of	
polluted atmosphere in India.	Palampur, HP
National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources	
(NISCAIR)	New Delhi
It publishes the monthly magazine "Science Reporter"	



Dehradun Declaration for CSIR Labs - 2015 In 2015, 'Dehradun Declaration' was adopted at the end of two day conference of CSIR Directors held at CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum in Dehradun.

Key highlights of the declaration are as follows:

- ➤ Technologies for National missions: CSIR labs will develop Technologies for National missions like Swachh Bharat, Swasth Bharat, Skill India, Smart Cities, Digital India, Namami Ganga.
- ▶ Industry driven technologies: CSIR labs will devise ways to develop industry driven technologies.
- ➤ Technology in strategic sector: Each CSIR lab would develop at least one technology in strategic sector for India.
- > Self-financing: All CSIR labs should make efforts to be self financing in next 2-3 years.
- Develop atleast 12 game changing technologies every year.
- ▶ Develop entrepreneurship in small, medium and big industry.

LOPINAVIR/RITONAVIR (LPV/R)

Context:

- ▶ The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has registered the formulation of a child-friendly HIV drug lopinavir/ ritonavir (LPV/r) in oral pellet form.
- ▶ This was done in the background of Cipla the sole manufacturer of the drug - stopping it's production due to non-payment by the Health Ministry.

Lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r)

- ▶ It is a fixed dose combination medication for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS.
- ▶ It combines lopinavir with a low dose of ritonavir.
- It is sold under the brand name Kaletra among

Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)

- ➤ Parent body: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ➤ What is it? It is the national regulatory body for Indian pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Major functions of CDSCO include Regulatory control over the import of drugs, approval of new drugs and clinical trials.

- ➤ Drug Controller General of India (DCGI):
 - It is a body within the CDSCO.
 - Objective: It regulates pharmaceutical and medical devices, under the gamut of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
 - Advisory bodies: The DCGI is advised by the Drug Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) and the Drug Consultative Committee (DCC).

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

Context

► The World Health Organization (WHO) has divided the antibiotic drugs into three categories.

CATEGORY	TYPE OF ANTIBIOTICS COVERED UNDER THIS CATEGORY
➤ Access	Commonly used antibiotics. These Antibiotics would be available at all times as treatment for a wide range of common infections.
➤ Watch	The second line of antibiotics which are slightly more potent.
➤ Reserve	Potent drugs which are to be used only as a "last resort".

> Why this has been done?

- This has been done to curb antibiotic resistance which is on rise. The rise in antibiotic resistance is because of misuse of these medicines.
- The new WHO list will assist prescribers to ensure that people who need antibiotics have access to them and get the right one.

Anti-microbial resistance

➤ What is it?

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change in ways that make the antibiotics to cure the infection caused by them ineffective.

▶ What are Superbugs?

■ When the micro-organisms become resistant to most antimicrobials they are often referred to as "superbugs".

> Reasons for its spread?

■ Antimicrobial resistance is facilitated by the inappropriate use of medicines, for example, when taking sub-standard doses or not finishing a prescribed course of treatment.



- Low-quality medicines and wrong prescriptions also contribute to it.
- Lack of government commitment to address these issues, poor surveillance and a diminishing arsenal of tools to diagnose, treat and prevent also hinder the control of antimicrobial drug resistance.

➤ Why is it a concern?

- This is a major concern because a resistant infection may kill, can spread to others.
- New resistance mechanisms are emerging and spreading globally, threatening our ability to treat common infectious diseases, resulting in prolonged illness, disability, and death.
- Without effective antimicrobials for prevention and treatment of infections. medical procedures such as organ transplantation, cancer chemotherapy, diabetes management and major surgery (for example, caesarean sections or hip replacements) become very risky.
- Antimicrobial resistance increases the cost of health care with lengthier stays in hospitals and more intensive care required.
- Antimicrobial resistance endangers achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ▶ Global action plan by WHO: In May 2015, the World Health Assembly endorsed a global action plan to tackle antimicrobial resistance.
- > National Programme for Containment of AMR: it was initiated by government of India in 12th Five Year Plan with the following objectives:-
 - To establish a laboratory based surveillance system by strengthening laboratories for AMR in the country and to generate quality data on antimicrobial resistance for pathogens of public health importance.
 - To strengthen infection control. For this government has launched Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Mission Indradhanush, so that needs of antibiotics are avoided at the first place.
 - Promote rational use of antibiotics.
 - For this The Drugs and Cosmetic Rule, 1945 was amended in 2013 to incorporate a new Schedule H1 which contains certain habit forming drugs. There will be strict control over the sale of these drugs.

■ For this there is need to generate awareness among healthcare providers and in the community regarding rational use of antibiotics.

What is the difference between antibiotic and antimicrobial resistance?

- ➤ Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in response to the use of antibiotics used to treat bacterial infections (such as urinary tract infections, pneumonia. bloodstream infections) making them ineffective.
- Antimicrobial resistance is a broader term, encompassing resistance to drugs that treat infections caused by other microbes as well, such as parasites (e.g. malaria or helminths), viruses (e.g. HIV) and fungi (e.g. Candida).

OXYTOCIN

Context:

➤ The Drug Controller has decided to restrict manufacturing Oxytocin to public sector undertakings (PSUs). Earlier it has banned it in retail markets.

What is Oxytocin?

 Oxytocin is a hormone known to trigger a wide variety of physical and psychological effects. It is commonly used to facilitate childbirth.

What are the Reason for restrictions on this drug?

- ➤ The controversial hormone drug is being used by diary owners and farmers to boost milk production and make vegetables look bigger and fresher.
- ➤ This is causing irreversible hormone damage like early sterility in Milch animals at an unprecedented rate.
- ▶ In humans it is causing reproductive complications and hormonal imbalances.

ORANG TIGER RESERVE

Context:

- ➤ During phase IV of the All-India Tiger Estimation Programme of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) it was revealed that the Orang. the tiger reserve in Assam has the highest tiger density with 35.44 tigers per 100 sq. km.
- ▶ It is followed by
 - Kaziranga National Park (12.72 per 100 sq. km.) in Assam,



- Jim Corbett National Park (11) in Uttarakhand and
- Bandipur National Park (10.28) in Karnataka.

Orang tiger reserve

- ➤ Orang Tiger Reserve is the 49th tiger reserve in the country. It was notified in February 2016. Kamlang Tiger Reserve in Arunachal is the 50th and latest to be notified.
- ▶ Location:
 - It is spread over Darrang and Sonitpur districts in Assam.
 - It is located on the north bank of the Brahmaputra River.



Location in Assam, India

NILGIRI TAHR



Context:

Following below are the findings of the survey conducted by the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department on Nilgiri Tahr,

- ➤ Total population of the Niligiri tahr in Kerala: 1.420.
- ▶ Of this 664 are found at the Eravikulam National Park in Munnar.

Nilgiri Tahr

- ► They are a Goat specie.
- > Habitat and distribution:
 - The Nilgiri tahr is found at high elevations on cliffs, grass-covered hills, and open

- terrain (i.e. open montane grassland habitats ay higher evelation (generally above 2000 m) of the South Western Ghats.
- The present distribution of the Nilgiri tahr is limited to approximately 5% of the Western Ghats in southern India, in Kerala and Tamil Nadu in southern India.
- Eravikulam National Park is home to the largest population. The other significant concentration is in the Nilgiri Hills, with smaller populations in the Anamalai Hills, Periyar National Park, Palni Hills and other pockets in the Western Ghats south of Eravikulam, almost to India's southern
- ➤ Population: Around 2,500 in Wild.
- Conversation status:
 - Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act. 1972 and
 - Listed as Endangered on IUCN Red List.
- Threats:
 - Principal threats are habitat loss and poaching

ECONOMY

INAM-PRO +

Context:

Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping launched INAM-Pro +.

What is INAM-Pro+?

- ▶ It is an upgraded version of INAM-Pro.
- ▶ INAM-Pro is a web-portal which acts as a common platform to bring cement buyers and sellers together.
- ▶ INAM-Pro was launched by Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping in 2015.
- ► The web portal has been designed by National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL).

What National is Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL).

- ➤ Parent agency: It is a fully owned company of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- ➤ Task: The Company promotes, surveys, establishes, designs, builds, operates, maintains and upgrades National Highways and Strategic Roads.



MEGA FOOD PARK

Context

- ➤ Union Minister of Food Processing Industries has inaugurated the MITS Mega Food Park at Rayagada, Odisha.
- ▶ It is the first Mega Food Park in the state of Odisha.
- ➤ This is the 7th Mega Food Park operationalized in the last 3 years by the present government.

Mega food park scheme

- ➤ Objective of scheme: Creating modern infrastructure for development of food processing sector.
- ➤ How does a mega food park works?
 - Mega Food Parks function on a cluster based approach based on a hub and spokes model.
 - Primary Processing Centres (PPCs) and Collection Centres (CCs) will be located near farms for collecting, basic processing like cleaning, grading, sorting, packing and then providing raw material to the processing units located in the Central Processing Centre (CPC).
 - Central processing centers (CPC) will common, core processing infrastructure like modern warehousing, cold environmental protection systems, quality control labs, trade facilitation centres, etc.

MILK PRODUCTION IN INDIA

Context

- ➤ World Milk Day was observed on June 1.
- ➤ Objective: Is it recognize the importance of milk as a global food and to bring attention to activities that are connected with the dairy sector.

What is the present status milk production in India?

- ▶ India is a World leader in Milk Production for the past 15 years.
- ▶ In the year 2014-17, milk production increased by 16.9% to 465.5 million tonnes as compared to 398 million tonnes during 2011-14.
- ▶ In the year 2014-17, income of farmers increased by 13.79% to Rs.33 per litre as compared to Rs.29 per litre during 2011-14.

What are the reasons behind this achievement?

- ➤ Our achievement is primarily due to the contribution of smallholder dairy farmers, milk producers, milk processing and marketing organisations.
- ▶ Besides this government has taken various steps to increase milk production.

What are Steps taken by government of India for dairy sector?

- ▶ National Mission for Bovine Productivity (NMBP): It has been approved by the government of India to make milk production more profitable.
- ➤ Rashtriya Gokul Mission: Its objective is to preserve and develop indigenous bovine. Activities to be taken under this mission are establishment of Gokul Gram, awarding farmers and institutes involved in the scientific rearing of Indigenous animals and inducting high genetic merit Bulls of Indigenous Breed into Semen Stations.
- ➤ E-Pashu Haat portal: It has been established under Rashtriya Gokul Mission. Objectives of this portal:
 - Helping the livestock rearers and the farmers to sell and purchase Cattle and Buffaloes of Indigenous Breeds.
 - Ensuring availability of quality bovine germplasm by linking farmers with livestock rearers.

▶ National Kamdhenu Breeding Centres:

- Two National Kamdhenu Breeding Centres are being established (one in Madhya Pradesh and the other in Andhra Pradesh).
- These will be centres of excellence for preservation and development Indigenous Breeds in a scientific way.
- They would be a storehouse of Indigenous Germplasm as well as a source of proven genetics.
- ➤ Awards: Government has introduced two awards in 2017 to award dairy farmers. These are:
 - National Gopal Ratna and
 - Kamdhenu Awards

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE TASK REDUCED

Context:

The Commerce Ministry will no longer be involved in the following tasks:





- ➤ Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) implementation, and
- ➤ Administrative control over commodity boards and certain Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) such as MMTC, STC and PEC.

Now it will only be involved in 'core focus areas' which includes:

- ➤ Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) formulation, and
- ▶ India's trade talks with other countries (bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements) and at the World Trade Organisation (WTO)-level.

Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation of India (MMTC Ltd)

- ▶ It is the largest trading company of India.
- ▶ MMTC is one of the two highest foreign exchange earner for India (after petroleum refining companies).

State Trading Corporation (STC) of India Ltd

- ▶ It is a premier International trading company of the Government of India engaged primarily in exports, and imports operations.
- ▶ It was set up in 1956.
- ▶ It is registered as an autonomous company under the Companies Act, 1956.

PEC Limited

- ▶ It is a premier International trading company of the Government of India engaged primarily in exports, and imports operations.
- ▶ It was incorporated in 1971 as "The Project & Equipment Corporation of India Limited" as a Subsidiary of State Trading Corporation of India Limited, to handle canalised business of the export of Railway Equipment, Engineering Equipment & Turn key Projects.
- ▶ In 1991 it became an Independent Company.
- ➤ The name was changed to PEC Limited in 1997.
- ▶ Now it has diversified into Agro Commodities, Industrial Raw Material, Manufactured Goods and Bullion.

RURAL SELF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING INSTITUTES (RSETI)

Context

➤ On June 7, 2017, The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) celebrated 4th RSETI Diwas in recognition of outstanding performance of RSETIs in various states.

About Rural Self Employment and Training Institutes (RSETI)

- ▶ Under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is undertaking two initiatives in skill development. These are:
 - Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY): It is a Placement linked skill development program which allows skilling and assured wage employment.

Rural Self Employment and Training Institutes (RSETI):

- RSETI provides skilling to youth, thereby enabling the trainee to take bank credit and start his/her own Microenterprise.
- It offers skilling in 56 NSQF aligned specially designed entrepreneurship development.

E-CHOUPAL 4.0

Context:

▶ ITC is planning to launch E-Choupal 4.0 by October-December 2018. At present, prototype models are being tested.

Salient features of E-Choupal 4.0:

- E-Choupal 4.0 will be a fourth-generation model of E-Choupal.
- It will be an aggregator of agricultural services.
- It will offer a range of farm-focused services (such as crop management & farm mechanisation) as well as non-farm services (such as health care, banking, and insurance).
- Almost every service would be priced. However, some such as information and teaching, will be free.
- Ultimate objective is to support the government's vision of doubling farmers' income by 2022.

E-Choupal

➤ An E-Choupal is a service offered to farmers by ITC since 2000 to help them work their way around market intermediaries and weak infrastructure.

➤ How does it work?

- It is basically a computer with internet facility that allows users to access the E-Choupal website run by ITC.
- A local farmer acting as a coordinator or 'Sanchalak' runs this amenity. He receives



- a small commission from farmers who wish to use this facility.
- A local commission agent or 'Samyojak' assists the Sanchalak by providing logistical support.
- They usually serve an average of 600 farmers within a five km radius.
- ▶ What are the Services provided by Echoupal website?
 - Accessing information: Farmers use the computer to access information about daily closing prices of local mandis, international prices and details about new farming techniques.
 - Purchasing from ITC: The computer at the e-Choupal may also be utilized for ordering seed, fertilizers and other products from ITC or its partners at discounted prices.
 - During the harvest season, ITC proposes to buy the crop directly from farmers at the previous day's closing price. If the farmers agree, their crop is transported to an ITC processing centre, where it is weighed, assessed and paid for.
 - Farmers who sell through E Choupals usually receive a higher price for their produce than those who use the traditional Mandi system.

> Success story:

- According to ITC website, E choupal has already become the largest initiative among all internet based interventions in rural India.
- E choupal services today rach out to over 4 million farmers growing a range of crop soyabean, coffee, wheat, rice, pulses, shrimp - in over 40,000 villages through 65,000 kisoks across 10 states (Uttarakhand, UP, Haryana, Rajasthan, MP, Maharashtra, Karnataka, AP, Tamil Nadu, Kerala).

AADHAAR AND PAN CARD

Context:

➤ The Supreme Court upheld the validity of an Income Tax law amendment (Section 139AA (1)) linking PAN with Aadhaar for filing tax returns and making Aadhaar compulsory to apply for a Permanent Account Number (PAN) card.

Arguments by Supreme Court while passing the judgment:

- ➤ Section 139AA (1) was not violative of the right to trade and profession under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution.
- Section 139AA is not discriminatory.
- Parliament was fully competent to enact Section 139AA.

Welfare of masses is priority over privacy of elite:

- ➤ Centre, while calling Aadhaar "transformational homegrown IT project", stated that the various e-governance initiatives of the government to provide food security, livelihood, jobs and health to the "teeming masses" cannot be sacrificed at the altar of right to privacy of an "elite" few who have neither applied for nor want Aadhaar.
- Government also argued that the standard definition of 'human rights' as protection of individual freedom against state intrusion requires a radical revision. According to government, Human rights went beyond the right to be left alone or the right to privacy.

FINANCIAL RESOLUTION AND DEPOSIT **INSURANCE BILL 2017**

Context:

 Cabinet has approved the proposal to introduce a Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.

Objective of the bill:

➤ To provide for a comprehensive resolution framework to deal with bankruptcy situation in banks, insurance companies and financial sector entities. For achieving this objective, the proposed will set up the Resolution Corporation.

It would:

- protect the stability and resilience of the financial system;
- protect the consumers of covered obligations up to a reasonable limit; and
- protect public funds, to the extent possible.
- ▶ to inculcate discipline among financial service providers in the event of financial crises by limiting the use of public money to bail out distressed entities.
- ▶ to strengthen the current framework of deposit insurance for the benefit of a large number of retail depositors.
- ➤ To decrease the time and costs involved in resolving distressed financial entities.



How does the proposed bill will complement the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 ("Code"):

➤ The proposed Bill complements the Code by providing a resolution framework for the financial sector. This Bill together with the Code will provide a comprehensive resolution framework for the economy.

INTEREST SUBVENTION SCHEME (ISS)

Context:

▶ Union Cabinet has approved the Interest subvention scheme for farmers for the year 2017-8.

Objective of the scheme:

➤ To make agricultural credit for Short Term crop loans at an affordable rate to give a boost to agricultural productivity and production in the country.

Salient features of the scheme:

- ➤ Short-term crop loans: The Central Government will provide interest subvention of 5 per cent per annum to all prompt payee farmers for short term crop loan upto one year for loan upto Rs. 3 lakhs borrowed by them during the year 2017-18. Farmers will thus have to effectively pay only 4% as interest.
- ▶ In case farmers do not repay the short term crop loan in time they would be eligible for interest subvention of 2% as against 5% available above.
- ➤ Financial institutions involved? The interest subvention will be given to Public Sector Banks (PSBs), Private Sector Banks, Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) on use of own funds and to NABARD for refinance to RRBs and Cooperative Banks.
- ➤ Post-harvest loans: As a measure to check distress sale, the scheme also provides postharvest loans at 7% interest rate for storage in warehouses accredited by Warehousing Development Regulatory Authority (WDRA) for upto 6 months post harvest.

OPTIONS TRADING RULES

Context:

➤ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has laid out rules for the introduction of commodity options (or better to say, SEBI has laid out rules to allow commodities exchanges to launch options).

What are the salient features of the rules?

- > At present, only one commodity option will be allowed per exchange on a pilot basis.
- ➤ Agricultural commodity options would need to be based on a commodity which has an average daily turnover of at least Rs200 crore.
- ➤ Non-Agricultural commodity options would need to be based on a commodity which has an average daily turnover of at least Rs1,000 crore.

Benefits of this move: The launch of options will:

- ▶ boost overall market participation,
- complement the existing futures, and
- ▶ make the commodities market more efficient.

The combination of futures and options can give market participants the benefit of price discovery of futures and simpler risk management of options".

What is an option?

- ▶ An option is a contract giving the buyer the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset (a stock or index) at a specific price on or before a certain date.
- ► An option is a derivative. That is, its value is derived from something else. In the case of a stock option, its value is based on the underlying stock (equity). In the case of an index option, its value is based on the underlying index (equity).
- ➤ An option is a security, just like a stock or bond, and constitutes a binding contract with strictly defined terms and properties.

Comparison between options and stocks:

➤ Similarities:

- Listed Options are securities, just like stocks.
- Options trade like stocks, with buyers making bids and sellers making offers.
- Options are actively traded in a listed market, just like stocks. They can be bought and sold just like any other security.

Differences:

- Options are derivatives, unlike stocks (i.e., options derive their value from something else, the underlying security).
- Options have expiration dates, while stocks do not.
- There is not a fixed number of options, as there are with stock shares available.



■ Stockowners have a share of the company, with voting and dividend rights. Options convey no such rights.

Type of options: There are two kinds of options:

- ▶ Call option: A Call option is an option to buy a stock at a specific price on or before a certain date. In this way, Call options are like security deposits.
- > Put options: Put options are options to sell a stock at a specific price on or before a certain date. In this way, Put options are like insurance policies.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POOR CHILDREN IN INDIA

Context:

➤ Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has released a new report titled 'Global Multidimensional Poverty Index [MPI], 2017' which focused on multi-dimensional poverty among children.

Key findings of the report:

- Globally, 689 million multi-dimensional poor children in the world.
- > Of these.
 - 31% live in India.
 - 8% live in Nigeria,
 - 7% live in Ethiopia
 - 6% live in Pakistan.
- ▶ Out of India's 217 million children, 49.9% were multi-dimensionally poor.
- ➤ Health dimension: It comprises indicators such as nutrition, child mortality, and education.
- > Standard of living dimension: it comprises indicators such as access to cooking fuel, safe drinking water, improved sanitation, flooring, electricity and asset ownership.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

- Multi-dimensionally poor" is one who lacks at least one-third of ten indicators, grouped into three dimensions of poverty: health, education and standard of living.
- ▶ It was developed in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Program.

Dimensions and indicators:

▶ The index uses the same three dimensions as the Human Development Index: health, education, and standard of living.

➤ These are measured using ten indicators.

Dimension	Indicators	
Health	•	Child Mortality
	•	Nutrition
Education	•	Years of schooling
	•	School attendance
Living Standards	•	Cooking fuel
	•	Toilet
	•	Water
	•	Electricity
	•	Floor
	•	Assets

RASHTRIYA VAYOSHRI YOJANA

Context:

▶ Union government has launched Rashtriya Vayoshri yojana.

Parent ministry:

➤ Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment.

What is it?

▶ It is a scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-Living Devices for Senior Citizens belonging to BPL Category.

What kind of devices will be provided under the scheme?

▶ Under the Scheme, the following Aids and Assisted-Living Devices will be provided to eligible elderly beneficiary senior citizens, depending upon their physical impairment :-Walking sticks, Elbow crutches, Walkers / Crutches, Tripods / Quadpods, Hearing Aids, Wheelchair, Artificial Dentures and Spectacles.

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS-2018

Context:

- Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) world university rankings 2018 were published in early June 2017.
- ▶ QS World University Rankings is an annual publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).
 - It is a British company specialising in education and study abroad. It offers publications and events to broaden the scope of study abroad.
 - The company was founded in 1990 by Nunzio Quacquarelli and Matt Symonds.
- Methodology of QS World University Rankings:



QS World University Rankings-2018 Top 10 universities in the world:

Top 10 universities in the world

Rank	Institutions	Country
1	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	US
2	Stanford University	US
3	Harvard University	US
4	California Institute of Technology (Caltech)	US
5	University of Cambridge	UK
6	University of Oxford	UK
7	University College London	UK
8	Imperial College London	UK
9	University of Chicago	US
10	ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)	Switzerland

Top 10 universities in India:

Top 10 universities in India

Global ranks		
2017	2018	Institutions
185	172	IIT-Delhi
219	179	IIT-Bombay
152	190	IISc Bangalore
249	264	IIT-Madras
302	293	IIT-Kanpur
313	308	IIT-Kharagpur
399	431-440*	IIT-Roorkee
501-550	481-490	Delhi University
481-490	501-550	IIT-Guwahati
NA	601-650	Jadavpur University

*After 400 individual ranks, QS puts insitutions under groups

- ▶ For the first time in 14 years, three Indian institutions have made it to a list of world's top 200 universities.
- ➤ Furthermore, IIT Delhi replaces IISc Bangalore as India's highest-ranked university for the first time.
- ▶ Five Indian universities features among the global 100 for research indicator.

TELE-LAW LAUNCHED

Context:

➤ Government of India has launched the 'Tele-Law'.

Objective of Tele-law:

▶ Under this legal aid services will be provided through Common Service Centres (CSC) at the Panchayat level, spread across the country.

How will it work?

➤ Under the scheme, a portal called 'Tele-Law' will be launched, which will be available across the Common Service Centre (CSC) network.

- ➤ This will connect the citizens to legal service providers. People will be able to seek legal advice from lawyers through video conferencing available at the Common Service Centres (CSC).
- ➤ The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) will provide a panel of lawyers from State capitals, who will be available through video conferencing to provide legal advice and counselling to the applicants.

What will be the role of a Para Legal Volunteer (PLV)?

- ➤ Every Common Service Centre (CSC) will also engage a Para Legal Volunteer (PLV), who will be the first point of contact for the rural citizens.
- ➤ These PLVs will help the applicant connect with a lawyer through the video conferencing facility at the CSC, will help them in understanding the legal issues, explain the advice given by lawyers and assist in further action required in cases as per the advice of the lawyer.
- ▶ They will also keep a track of the progress of the applicants' cases and grievances and maintain a record. These records will be submitted to the District Legal Service Authority every week.

Agencies involved:

- ▶ It Is a collaboration between the Ministry of Law and Justice and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), which runs the Digital India programme.
- ➤ In the first phase, a pilot project is being rolled out across 1000 Common Service Centres (CSC) in Uttar Pradesh & Bihar.

Access to Justice Project for Marginalized Persons

- ➤ This scheme is a continuation to the Access to Justice Project for Marginalized Persons.
- ➤ This scheme is being implemented by Department of Justice and United Nation Development Programme (UNDP).

ANUYATRA

Context:

 Vice-president of India launched inaugurated 'Anuyatra' campaign of Government of Kerala.

Anuyatra:

▶ It is a comprehensive project for making Kerala a disabled-friendly State.

www.iasscore.in



- ➤ The project adopts a rights-based life cycle approach to disability management, from primordial prevention to organising sustainable rehabilitation programmes for the disabled.
- > Primordial and primary prevention of disabilities will be ensured through awareness creation regarding pre-natal determinants of disability. In this context, the government would take steps to introduce universal and mandatory screening of newborns to check for any hearing disabilities.
- ➤ Secondary and tertiary prevention will include early identification through screening disability management, including rehabilitation and palliative care services.
- ➤ The government would also establish District Early Intervention Centres (DEIC) with all facilities in all districts for the early management of disabilities.

REVIVAL OF AUTONOMOUS BODIES

Context:

▶ Now government has announced the plans to review and restructure autonomous bodies.

Detail:

- ▶ In January, 2017, government commenced the review of 679 existing autonomous bodies. The review is being conducted by officials of the NITI Aayog and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).
- ▶ It has started with review of those autonomous bodies constituted under the Societies Registration Act. Under the first phase 114 bodies across seven ministries/departments have been covered.
- ▶ Now government has announced the following plans
 - Three institutes will be "corporatized" namely the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute and the Delhi Public Library. Their "corporatisation" would either make them independent companies or a special purpose vehicle (SPV) could possibly be formed shortly to take over their functioning.
 - Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) with be merged with either the Jamia Millia Islamia or the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

- In total, 42 almost one-third have been listed for "reduction" by being
 - wound up entirely or
 - merged with other entities or
 - reorganised under a common umbrella
 - corporatised.

CHILD LABOUR CONVENTION RATIFIED

Context:

- ▶ India has ratified two core ILO conventions on child labour:
 - Conventions 138: It is regarding minimum age at which a person may begin work;
 - Convention 182: It is regarding the hazardous industries where she may not.

What is the status of India's ratification of ILO's convention?

- ▶ With ratification of these two core ILO conventions, India has ratified 6 out of 8 core ILO conventions, thus reaffirming India's commitment for right at work.
- ▶ Earlier India has ratified the ILO conventions relating to abolition of forced labour, equal remuneration and no discrimination between men and women in employment and occupation.

Critical Comment

- ▶ Inspite of this ratification, the scepticism aroused by the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016 over the government's commitment towards complete abolition of child labour will persist.
- ➤ Conventions 138 and 182 of the ILO leaves it to the member-states to determine what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable work for children at different ages. Such flexibility has given the Indian government room in adopting the international standards in question.
- ➤ The Child Labour amendment act, 2016 falls short of comprehensive prohibition of child labour because it allows employment of children below 14 years under the rubric of family enterprises. It has also declassified several industries as hazardous occupations.
- Also due to problems in monitoring activities of traditional households, effective enforcement will pose a challenge.



Miscellaneous News

CHINA-NEPAL HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

Context:

➤ On June 5, 2017, Nepal and China Gezhouba Group Corporation signed an agreement to build the 1,200 megawatt Budhi-Gandaki hydroelectric project.

Comment:

- ▶ It will be the largest hydroelectric plant in
- Nepal has signed it because it suffers from a chronic energy shortage. Water-rich Nepal has a mountain river system that could make it a hydro-electric producing powerhouse. But still it imports much of its electricity from neighbouring India.
- ▶ Both India and China are competing in Nepal by investing in large-scale infrastructure projects.
- ▶ In Nepal-India is also involved in two large projects whose construction is expected to begin later this year after years of delays.

ICMR-INDIA DIABETES STUDY

Context:

- ➤ The findings of the Indian Council of Medical Research-INdia DIABetes study were published in the international medical journal Lancet.
- ➤ The study is being funded by
 - Indian Council of Medical Research and
 - Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Key findings of the study?

- ▶ The overall prevalence of diabetes in all 15 states of India was 7.3 per cent.
- ➤ The prevalence of diabetes was higher in urban areas (11.2 per cent) than in rural areas (5.2 per cent).
- ➤ Richer states generally have a higher prevalence of diabetes overall.
- ➤ Chandigarh has the highest prevalence (13.6 per cent) and Bihar the lowest (4.3 per cent).
- ▶ Diabetes is becoming common among people of "Low Socio-Economic Status (SES)" living in cities and towns in the more affluent states. The disease is disproportionately catching up with the urban poor in the country's developed states. This shows that as the overall prosperity

of a region increases, the diabetes epidemic is likely to disproportionately affect the poorer sections of the society.

Diabetes in India

➤ Prevalence of diabetes in India: According to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Diabetes Atlas, 7th Edition, the prevalence of diabetes in India is 69.2 million in 2015.

➤ NPCDCS:

- Government of India is implementing National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer. Diabetes. Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) for interventions up to District level under the National Health Mission.
- Under NPCDCS, diagnosis and treatment facilities for Diabetes are provided through different levels of healthcare by setting up Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) Clinics in District Hospitals and Community Health Centres (CHCs).

REDINK AWARDS

Context:

➤ RedInk Awards for Excellence in Indian Journalism, 2017, were presented.

About Redink awards:

- ➤ Objective: Redink awards recognize India's best journalist.
- > Presented by the Mumbai Press Club.
- ➤ Criteria for presenting the award: Winners are chosen by their peers.

Key winners of Redink awards, 2017:

- ► Lifetime Achievement Award: Vinod Dua.
- ➤ Journalist of the Year award: Raj Kamal Jha (Chief Editor of the Indian Express)

'SELFIE WITH DAUGHTER'

Context:

▶ The President of India launched a mobile Application 'Selfie with Daughter' on June 9, 2017.

About Selfie with Daughter:

- ▶ When launched? The 'Selfie with Daughter' campaign was started by Shri Sunil Jaglan in June 2015 in village Bibipur, Jind, Haryana.
- ➤ Objective of the campaign: To motivate society to feel proud to be parents of a girl child which will result in improving the child sex ratio.



THE SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE (SLD)

Context:

- ▶ India has pulled out of the annual Shangri-La Dialogue.
- ➤ Reason for India pulling out is that the Indian Minister which would have represented India at Shangri-la dialogue was not ranked as highly as Pakistan's Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Zubair Mahmood Hayat in order of speakers.

IISS Asia Security Summit: The Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD)

- ▶ What is it? It is a "Track One" intergovernmental security forum held annually which is attended by defense ministers and military chiefs of 28 Asia-Pacific states.
- ➤ The forum is held by International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).
 - IISS is a British research institute (or think tank) in the area of international affairs.
 - It is headquartered in London, England.
- ▶ Where is the forum held? The forum gets its name from the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore where it has been held since 2002.

Track 1 diplomacy

➤ These are Official discussions which involve high-level political and military leaders and focusing on cease-fires, peace talks, and treaties and other agreements.

NATIONAL PHYSICAL LABORATORY (NPL)

Context:

- NPL has decided to start charging for it's service of providing accurate Indian standard time (IST) to Airports, Parliament, banks, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- ▶ It is because it's parent organization the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has funds crunch.
- > Services provided / Contribution:
 - SI units: The laboratory is maintaining at present six out of seven SI base units. These are metre, kilogramme, second, kelvin, ampere and candela. R&D work is under way for realizing and establishing the seventh SI base unit of mole (mol).

Metre	The standard unit of length.
Kilogramme	The Indian national standard of mass.
Second	The national standard of time interval.
Ampere	The unit of electric current.
Kelvin	The standard of temperature.
Candela	The unit of luminous intensity.
Mole	The SI unit for amount of substance.NPL has initiated Experimental work to realize mole.
Radiation	The NPL does not maintain standards of measurements for ionizing radiations. This is the responsibility of the Homi Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai.

- Weighs: It calibrates the national standards of weights and measures. The weights and measures used in daily life are tested in the laboratories and certified.
- Indelible ink for elections: NPL has devised the chemical formula for the indelible ink which is being used in the Indian elections to prevent fraudulent voting. This ink is manufactured by the Mysore Paints and Varnish Limited.
- Air-Quality Monitoring Station at Palampur: NPL has established an atmospheric monitoring station in the campus of Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) at Palampur (H.P.) for generating the base data which can serve as a reference for comparison of polluted atmosphere in India.
- Bharatiya Nirdeshak dravaya (BND) 4201): In may 2017. NPL in collaboration with BARC and IGM has unveiled Bharatiya Nirdeshak dravaya (BND 4201). It is an Indian standard bar of gold.

BHARATIYA NIRDESHAK DRAVYA (BND-4201)

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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).

BOSPHORUS STRAIT

Context:

▶ In early June 2017, colour of the Bosphorus Strait transformed from normal blue to milky turquoise.

Reason for change in colour of Bosphorus Strait?

- ➤ The cause was a surge in numbers of the microorganism Emiliania huxleyi, across the black
- ▶ It is plated with white calcium carbonate and, when present in large numbers, tend to turn the water to milky turquoise.

Emiliania huxleyi (EHUX)

- ► Emiliania huxleyi is also known as Ehux.
- ▶ It is a species of coccolithophore.
- ▶ It is a single-celled organism visible only under a Microscope.
- ▶ Due to it's astonishing adaptability, it can thrive in waters from the equator to the sub-Arctic thus this phytoplankton forms the basis of virtually all marine food webs.

Bosphorus strait

- ▶ It is a strait located in northwestern Turkey.
- ▶ It connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara.
- ▶ It is the world's narrowest strait used for international navigation.

INTENSIFIED DIARRHOEA CONTROL FORTNIGHT (IDCF)

Context:

- ▶ In June 2017, Health Ministry has launched Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF).
- ▶ Objective is to intensify efforts to reduce child deaths due to diarrhoea.

DIARRHOEA:

- ▶ Diarrhoea is defined as the passage of three or more loose or liquid stools per day (or more frequent passage than is normal for the individual).
- > Integrated Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (IAPPD):

■ It was launched by government of India in 2014 under the National Health Mission to undertake collaborative efforts towards prevention of diarrhoea and Pneumonia related under-five deaths.

INDO-MYANMAR BORDER (RINA MITRA **COMMITTEE**)

Context:

➤ The Union Home Ministry has constituted a committee (under the chairmanship of Rina Mitra, Special Secretary-Internal Security) to examine methods to curb the misuse of free movement along the Myanmar border.

What are the reasons behind constituting this committee?

- ▶ India and Myanmar share an unfenced border of 1,643 km and unhindered movement of people across the border.
- ➤ This Free movement regime is being misused by militants & trans-border criminals who smuggle weapons, fake Indian currency notes. Militants also occasionally enter India, commit crimes and escape to their relatively safer hideouts in Myanmar.

R.N. Ravi committee:

- ▶ This is the second time a committee is being constituted by NDA government to study the free movement across the Myanmar border.
- ▶ In 2015, NDA government constituted a highlevel committee under R.N. Ravi.

Recommendations made by the committee:

- ➤ Employ the Indo-Tibetan Border Police on the sensitive India-Myanmar border by replacing Assam Rifles. It is because:
 - ITBP had a very good record in guarding the international border with China, and
 - Being a mountain force, it had substantial border exposure.
- ➤ Change the "misnomer" related to "free border movement";
 - Replicate the model prevalent in villages and areas along the Bangladesh border;
 - Have dedicated crossing points in border villages. At these crossing points, policemen would be made in charge of regulating the movement of people; and
 - Every citizen would need to have an identity proof like a passport.

