CURRENT AFFAIRS

WEEKLY

WEEK - 4 AUGUST, 2019

MAINS

ENVIRONMENT

- World Elephant Day: India's Jumbos Stare at a Worrying Future

POLITY

- Article 370 Abrogated
- Status of India's Fast Track Courts

SOCIAL ISSUES

- Migration

INTERNAL SECURITY

- National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)

POLITY

- Consumer Protection Bill 2019

SECURITY

- Procurement By Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- Ebola Viruss

SOCIAL ISSUES

- Fertility Rate And Population Explosion
- Foreign National Prisoners
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)

PRELIMS

CULTURE

- Kolam Maps
- Ropeway Project To Elephanta Caves

INDIAN ECONOMY

- Approval Of $200 Million Loan From Asian Development Bank
- Changes In Prevention of Money Laundering Act
- GI Tag
- Sandbox Model Of Reserve Bank Of India

ENVIRONMENT

- Chilika Lake
- Pet Bottles
- Proposal to Change IUCN Status of Some Species
- New Frog Species Confirmed
- New Species Discovered
- World Biofuel Day

GEOGRAPHY

- Gibraltar
- Gulf Of Guinea

GOVERNANCE

- Breastfeeding
- Jaljeevan Mission

HEALTH

- Child Care Leave

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

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— Disclaimer —

The current affairs articles are segregated from prelims and mains perspective, such separation is maintained in terms of structure of articles. Mains articles have more focus on analysis and prelims articles have more focus on facts.

However, this doesn't mean that Mains articles don't cover facts and PT articles can't have analysis. You are suggested to read all of them for all stages of examination.

CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYST

WEEK-4 (AUGUST, 2019)

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SECTION: A

(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

WORLD ELEPHANT DAY: INDIA'S JUMBOS STARE AT A WORRYING FUTURE

CONTEXT

- **Today only about 27,000 wild elephants remain in India, as opposed to a million a decade ago. There has been a 98 per cent nose-dive in their population, according to research**

⊙ BACKGROUND

- India is one of the 17 mega diverse countries of the world.
- It is home to 7-8 per cent of the world's recorded species from top predators such as the Asiatic lions, Bengal tigers to large herbivores such as the Asian elephant and one-horned rhino.
- This rich fauna has not just been an integral part of India's environmental history but has also been instrumental in shaping several indigenous cultures. In fact, many religions in India stem from animism, which entails that soul exists in animals and plants.
- Elephants have enjoyed a special place in India's culture and tradition. They were used as a means of transport for the royalties and to fight battles, as has been captured by various frescoes.
- Most important, however, is the status of elephant as a deity in the form of Lord Ganesha. For over 70 per cent of the people in the country, elephants hold a religious importance.
- According to this, one might presume that India's elephants enjoy a high degree of protection. While elephants do enjoy the highest status in the Wildlife Protection Act of India, 1972, as Schedule-I species, unfortunately the situation on the ground paints a different picture altogether.
- India is home to over 50 per cent population of Asian elephants in the world, making it the last strong-hold of the species. However, their condition seems dire, as they face an all-encompassing threat such as shrinkage of their forest ranges, habitat defragmentation, poaching for their body parts and captivity, and anthropogenic pressure.
- Wildlife SOS, established in 1995, started working with elephants in 2010 to save the species in India. The initial efforts of the project were focused on rescuing captive elephants across India that was facing severe abuse and cruelty by their captors.
- Unlike their African cousins, poaching of elephants for captivity is a serious threat to the survival of the species. An elephant removed from the wild is simply an elephant that could have bred in the future and contributed to the strengthening of the wild elephant population.
- In captivity, an elephant tends to face unfavorable and stressful conditions which greatly hamper their physical and mental well-being. Captive elephants are routinely found to be suffering from health issues such as foot-rot, arthritis and compromised nutrition.

Some Facts

- There are 2,454 captive elephants in India, according to the census conducted by Project Elephant in 2018.
- This number is likely to decrease as the elephants will subsequently age and the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, forbids the capture of new calves to keep the captive elephant population afloat.

⊙ ANALYSIS

- Access to veterinary aid is a rarity for most keepers. Often, simple injuries become chronic due to untimely or lack of treatment.
- Another big challenge that elephants in India face is the increasing space crunch. With an exploding population, more and more invasions are being made into the historical habitats of elephants, which have led to increasing habitat fragmentation.
- For large herbivores such as elephants who consume an equivalent of 5-10 per cent of their body mass in terms of food, they require large swathes of forests to sustain their herds and migrate to continuously feed and to also give a chance for the vegetation to re grow.
- Shrinking forests means lesser availability of food, which incentivizes the movement of elephants out of forested lands to crop lands. Thus, they indulge in crop raiding, which brings them into conflict with people. This often ends with both humans and elephants dying, and a quick change in the discourse of elephants takes place as they become 'nuisances' from 'deities.'
- When grazing goes unchecked, it can quickly eliminate grass in an area. This means less food for both livestock and wildlife, including elephants, and leads to soil erosion that impacts the growth of grass in the future. It is important to identify and allocate grazing land for livestock away from wildlife areas, unless tight controls can be established.

- The ivory trade is fuelling organized crime and insecurity as traffickers smuggle tusks through the same networks as other high value illegal goods such as drugs. Ultimately the trade is driven by demand for ivory in consumer countries, mostly in the East, where it is sought after as a status symbol and an investment.

Conservation efforts

- Elephant homelands must necessarily be interconnected and vast given their vast size, they need large quantities of food, and this inevitably translates to vast homelands.
- Right of passage, unlike many other mammals, elephant is nomadic in habit. They have to move peripatetically as the food around them is exhausted.
- Security blanket, the killing of elephants may have started in the Neanderthal times. Reasons were and are varied including human security, food, trinkets, medicine and ornamentation. The animal possesses one of the most stunning pairs of incisors that the animal world produces, tusks that man has considered white gold. The illegal poaching of elephants for their tusks has fuelled an incessant and increasing slaughter of animals making many, if not most populations of elephants insecure.
- Reduce human conflict, as human dwellings and livelihoods creep inexorably towards and into wild lands, the encounters between humans and elephants are bound to increase. Under such conditions, man-elephant interaction is more often than not termed man-elephant conflict.
- Recognize their societies; Elephants are big, intelligent and nomadic. They are also highly social beings. Any human-led management effort that attempts to alter such societies and kinships among elephants is bound to fail. Only long-term studies can lead to better understanding of such clan and kin behavior and thus informed management.
- End their enslavement, intelligent beings such as Homo sapiens consider capture and enforced enslavement as a brutal, inhumane and often unnecessary source of suffering. Elephants must consider it quite similarly, even if they do not possess the language in which they can convey this to the human species.

Conclusion

- Today as our physical world is changing fast, it is important to take a moment to reflect on and reinvent our relationship with elephants.
- Conservation and welfare of elephants in India provides us with a critical lens to develop holistic policies that work both for humans as well as animals. Tied to the survival of elephants in India is the survival of India's biodiversity!

Practice Question

- **In spite of a number of elephant conservation measures being run by India, it has not been able to address the issue of falling numbers of elephants. Critically examine the reasons for it and suggest what else can be done.**

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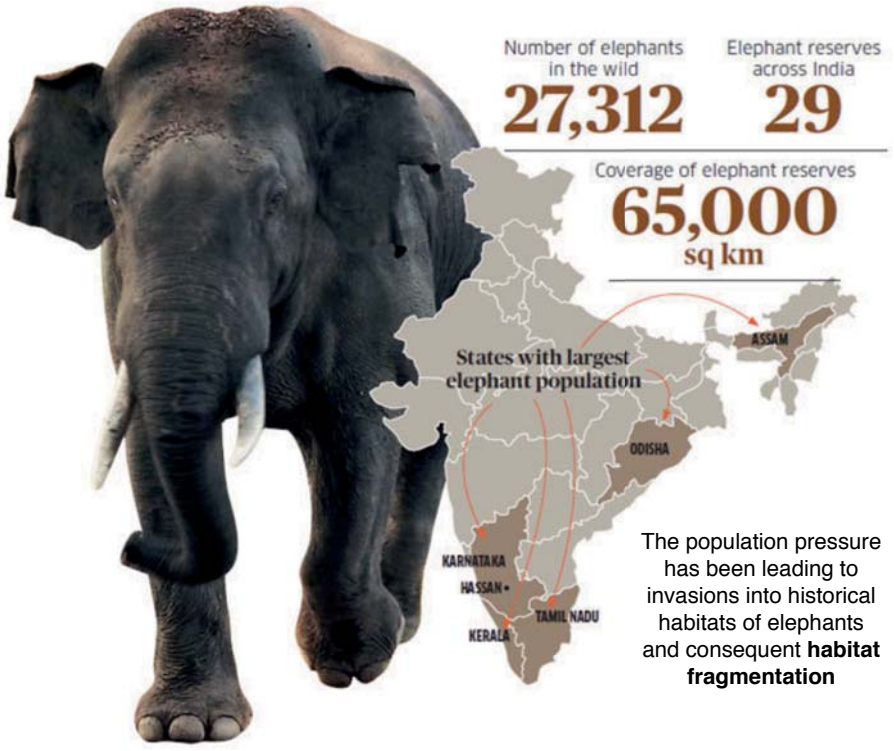
Learning Aid

'India's Jumbo Worries'



Context

The number of elephants in India has been on sharp decline

Poaching and ivory trade is another grave challenge

Threats

They need large swathes of forests **to feed and migrate** to give chance for vegetation to grow

The **shrinking forests** have led to lesser availability of food, and consequent movement to crop lands

The population pressure has been leading to invasions into historical habitats of elephants and consequent **habitat fragmentation**

This brings them in **conflict with people** with adverse ramifications for both

elephants in captivity number about 2400 according to Project Elephant 2018

These elephants face several unfavourable and stressful conditions like lack of access to proper veterinary care

Conservation efforts

elephants are nomadic in habit → They have to move peripatetically as the food around them is exhausted

Human dwellings and livelihoods creep inexorably towards and into wild lands → this needs to be addressed

This calls for long term studies based management of habitats of elephants and short term solutions to minimise adversities faced by elephants

Given their vast size, they need large quantities of food, and this inevitably translates to vast homelands

It is important to identify and allocate grazing land for livestock away from wildlife areas, unless tight controls can be established

One solution is that their homelands could be interconnected

Besides, poaching needs to be dealt with sternly

Elephants have been classified as a **schedule-I species** under the Wildlife Protection Act

Suitable stringent **laws** and more importantly their **implementation** needs to be ensured

Bottomline

As our physical world is changes rapidly, it is important to take a moment to reflect on and reinvent our relationship with elephants.
Conservation and welfare of elephants in India provides us with a critical lens to develop holistic policies that work both for humans as well as animals. Tied to the survival of elephants in India is the survival of India's biodiversity

ARTICLE 370 ABROGATED

CONTEXT

- **The government removed the special status for Jammu and Kashmir in India's Constitution. Special status was withdrawn by abrogating Article 370.**

⊙ BACKGROUND

- **Article 370 grant special autonomous status to Jammu & Kashmir and exempts it** from the Indian Constitution **(except Article 1 and Article 370 itself)** and **permits the state to draft its own Constitution.**
- It **restricts Parliament's legislative powers in respect of J&K.** For extending a **central law on subjects** included **in the Instrument of Accession (IoA)**, mere **"consultation"** with the state government is needed. But for extending it to **other matters, "concurrence"** of the state government is **mandatory.** The IoA came into play when the Indian Independence Act, 1947 divided British India into Independent India and Pakistan.
- Indian Parliament needs Jammu & Kashmir government's nod for applying laws in the state — **except defence, foreign affairs and communications**.

⊙ ANALYSIS

Was Article 370 a temporary provision?

- It is the **first article of Part XXI of the Constitution**. The heading of this part is '**Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions'**.
- Article 370 could be **interpreted as temporary in the sense that the J&K Constituent Assembly had a right to modify/delete/retain it; it decided to retain it**. Another **interpretation was that accession was temporary until a plebiscite.**
- In **Sampat Prakash (1969)** the SC **refused to accept Article 370 as temporary**. A five-judge Bench said "Article 370 has never ceased to be operative". Thus, it **was considered to be a permanent provision.**
- The Supreme Court in **April 2018** said that despite the headnote **using the word "temporary', Article 370 is not temporary**.

Issues due to Article 370

- **Affects unity and integrity:** It wreaks havoc on **the unity and integrity of the country** as it **creates boundaries for the people of J&K** by providing them **with separate constitution and rights.** It builds **emotional and psychological barriers** between the people of Kashmir and the rest of India, thus fostering a psychology of separatism.
- **Rising militancy and separatism:** The separatist lobby in the state **has used this barrier** to build a **mindset of alienation among the people**. The poor and the down-trodden people of the state were exploited by the separatist leaders to keep this special status alive. **It has led to rising militancy in the region.** Most **of youth take to stone pelting, remain unemployed and are devoid of welfare development.**
- **Violation of Right to Equality:** No outsider can settle in the state, own any property and cannot vote in the state. Article 35 A had been used to define **permanent residents**. This violates the **fundamental right to equality** for Indian citizens and creates barriers for investment and thus development.
- **Corrupt and radical administration:** The **state administration** had been completely subverted from **within by the separatist leaders** who had infiltrated into the system over a period of time. This has led to government resources being used to further promote the propaganda of separatists.
- Affects International image: Existence of this statute is used by Pakistan and its proxies in the valley to mock at the very concept of 'India being one from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. This affects India's image on the international platform.

Government's procedure in changing Kashmir's special status overnight

- The President issued **a presidential order under Article 370 (1) of the** Constitution. Since, it can be issued only with the Jammu and Kashmir government's **concurrence**; the notification uses the words "with the concurrence of the Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir". This presumably means the **Governor**, who is now administering the State under **President's Rule**, has given his concurrence on **behalf of the State government**.
- This **Order supersedes the 1954 Order** and declares that all the provisions of the Constitution of India, shall apply to Jammu and Kashmir too.
- However, some special measures were still needed for the scrapping of Article 370 altogether. Therefore, a few clauses were added to **Article 367 of the Constitution**.
  - Article 367 contains "Interpretations". The new clauses say that all references to the State government shall mean "the Governor".
  - The reference to the "Constituent Assembly" in a proviso to Article 370 (3) has been **amended to read "Legislative Assembly of the State".** This is the proviso that says the

President can declare that Article 370 is no more operative only on the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly. As there is no Constituent Assembly in existence now, there is no body to "recommend" the demise of Article 370. Therefore, the State Assembly has to play that role.

- The issuance of the Presidential Order has set the stage for the abrogation of Article 370. Here, the **government has made use of the fact that Jammu and Kashmir is under President's Rule**. Under the Proclamation issued under Article 356 of the Constitution, by which the President takes over the administration of a State, Parliament usually performs the legislative functions of the State Assembly.

- The Union Home Minister **introduced two statutory resolutions:**
  - To recommend that the President issue a notification rendering Article 370 **inoperative**.
  - To accept the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill**. The Bill envisages converting Jammu and Kashmir into a Union Territory with a legislature, and carves out Ladakh region as another Union Territory, but without a legislature.

Concerns regarding the process adopted to abrogate article 370

- The **first concern is due process**. The assembly does not exist at the moment either, and the notification suggests that it was the Governor's concurrence that was obtained to render the provisions irrelevant. **This is clearly not sufficient.**
- The process has been pushed **through without consultations** with Kashmir's political leaders, who have been under detention.
- The **reorganisation of states requires the consent of the state assembly concerned**. In this case, J&K has been bifurcated, and statehood diluted to UT status, **without any deliberations in the assembly.**
- Like all Indian citizens**, Kashmiris seek greater democracy**. Elements keen to destabilise India would **seek to build a narrative that Delhi is taking away powers from the local level.**
- It is important that the process of turning the state into a UT does not lead to alienation.

Development by abrogating article 370

- It would head **towards ending separatism, nepotism and corruption** and would provide welfare to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Women **will enjoy greater rights** as all the laws made at the centre will be implemented without any hindrance.
- SC, ST and individuals from other backward communities in other regions would enjoy special benefits as the central laws for welfare of these communities.
- The **financial benefits for central government employees**, including security forces, like LTC, HRA and more will be provide to those posted in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The **vacant posts** in Jammu and Kashmir will be filled. This will benefit the **youth** of Jammu and Kashmir. **Local youth will receive employment.**
- **State companies as well as private companies** will be encouraged to create jobs for the local youths in the state.
- J&K and Ladakh have the potential to become the biggest tourist destination in the world.
- Film industry would come to J&K for shooting their projects. Sport training, scientific education will help the youth of J&K to showcase their talent across the world.
- **Several herbal and organic products** are spread across J&K and Ladakh. If they are identified and marketed in the global market, then it will greatly benefit the people and farmers of these regions.

⊙ CHALLENGES

- It may swell the ranks of separatists.
- It may feed the rage and increase the distance between Srinagar and New Delhi.
- It may even push mainstream politicians to promote extremists views.
- It could lead to more bloodshed and encourage Pakistan to fish in muddied waters.

⊙ WAY FORWARD

- The government should launch a comprehensive outreach programme to all Kashmiris.
- It must remain on guard to ensure Pakistan, and radical militants, do not take advantage of the situation.
- It should simultaneously engage in dialogue with Kashmiri political actors, civil society, media, citizens and allay their apprehensions.
- The Centre must show to Kashmiris that its intent of removing the special status is to create more opportunities, and prosperity.

Practice Question

- **Examine how far the 'integrationist approach' by abrogating article 370 will be successful in addressing the increasing alienation in the Kashmir Valley and promote inclusive development.**

Article 370

Context: The government **removed the special status for Jammu and Kashmir** in India's Constitution. Special status was withdrawn by **abrogating Article 370**

GS SCORE Learning Aid

Art.370

- granted J&K special **autonomous status**
- permitted to draft its **own Constitution**
- **exemption** from Indian Constitution (except Art. 1 and 370)
  - for extending a central law
    - on subjects included in Instrument of Accession → **only 'consultation'** of with state govt was needed
    - on other subjects → **'concurrence'** of state govt was mandatory

The **temporary/ permanent** debate

The heading of the Part XXI of constitution under which Art.370 lies is '**Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions**'

- **interpretations**
  - temporary in the sense that the J&K Constituent Assembly had a right to modify/ delete/retain it; it decided to retain it
  - accession was temporary until a plebiscite
- **SC's views**
  - 1969: "Article 370 has never ceased to be operative". Thus, it **was considered to be a permanent provision**
  - 2018: It said that despite the headnote **using the word "temporary', Article 370 is not temporary**

Some issues due to Article 370

- It **affects unity & integrity of India** and in a way builds emotional and psychological barriers between Kashmir and Rest of India
- Article 35 A had been used to define permanent residents → **violates the fundamental right to equality** for Indian citizens and creates barriers for investment and development
- This barrier has been used by separatists in J&K to build a mindset of alienation among people and **rising militancy and separatism**

What's in store now

- J&K will now have no separate flag or Constitution and the tenure of the Assembly will be five years, instead of the earlier six years
- The Indian Penal Code (IPC) will replace the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) to deal with criminal cases
- Article 356, under which President's rule can be imposed in any State, will also be applicable to the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh
- People from other States can purchase land and properties and the Right to Information Act will be applicable to the new UTs

There are questions on the way the Art.370 has been revoked → for e.g., the state assembly is in a dissolved state and local leaders were not consulted

The whole situation has both opportunities and threats lurking around the corner

opportunities	**threats**
implementation of central welfare laws for weaker sections	It may feed the rage and increase the distance between Srinagar and New Delhi
opportunity for more investments could bring in better employment opportunities and development	It may be used by separatists and Pakistan to fan more insurgency
if handled well, the various socio-economic and psychological barriers between J&K and rest of India can be bridged	if not handled well, a sense of alienation may prevail amongst Kashmiris

Way forward

A **multi pronged approach** is need of the hour

- The government should launch a comprehensive outreach programme to all Kashmiris
- Centre must show to Kashmiris that its intent of removing the special status is to create more opportunities, and prosperity
- engage in dialogue with Kashmiri political actors, civil society, media, citizens and allay their apprehensions
- ensure Pakistan, and radical militants, do not take advantage of the situation

STATUS OF INDIA'S FAST TRACK COURTS

CONTEXT

- **Minister for Women and Child Development, informed the Rajya Sabha that the government has proposed to set up 1,023 fast-track courts to clear the cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.**

⦿ BACKGROUND

- As per the National Judicial Data Grid, more than 3 crore civil and criminal cases are pending (as of Feb 2019) in the lower courts across the country. This is because of several factors like low per capita number of judges, lack of basic infrastructure for judges, complex appeal mechanism etc. This delayed delivery of justice, especially in sexual assault cases leads to frequent large scale protests, by various groups demanding stricter punishment and speedier trial in such cases.
- In this backdrop, the Fast Track Courts (FTCs) were established in Indian in the year 2000 with an aim to clear the long pending Sessions and other lower judicial cases.
- A total of 1734 FTCs were approved in 2000 following the report of the 11th Finance Commission. Out of this, only 1562 were functional by 2005. The central government in 2005, decided to continue its support for the 1562 functional FTCs for the next 6 years (till 2011). By the end of 2011, only 1192 FTCs were functional.
- Then, the central government constituted Justice Verma Commission in 2012 to suggest possible amendments in the criminal law to ensure speedier disposal of cases relating to sexual assault.
- Finally, after the Nirbhaya Case , the Delhi High Court directed the state government to establish five more Fast Track Courts (FTCs) for the expeditious adjudication of cases relating to sexual assault.
- According to a recently released report by the Ministry of Law and Justice in June 2019, currently, there are 581 fast track courts in the country that are functional.

⦿ ANALYSIS

- **Non-Uniformity in Type of Cases:** In a survey of FTCs conducted by National Law University Delhi, it was observed that there is a huge variation in the kinds of cases handled by these courts across States, with certain States primarily allocating rape and sexual offence cases to them and other States allocating various other matters.
- **Infrastructural Issues:** Most FTCs were not set up with different infrastructure or facilities, but were often housed in an existing court. Moreover, several States appoint FTCs special judges from the current pool of judges. This substantially increases the workload of the remaining judges.
- **Technological Barrier:** Several FTCs lacked technological resources to conduct audio and video recordings of the victims and many of them did not have regular staff.
- **Adhocism:** Setting up of FTCs was not based on actual problems of pendency, but was often in response to specific incidents such as securities scams, rape cases and sexual harassment of children.
- **Lack of Coordination:** In India, tribunals are managed by different ministries, and fast-track courts and special courts are administered under different judicial bodies, with little coordination or uniformity among them.
- **Other Issues:** There are delays in getting reports from the understaffed forensic science laboratories, judges make frivolous adjournments and inadequate staff adversely affect the efficiency of the fast track courts.

Recent Developments to address the issues faced by Judiciary

- **All India Judicial Services** – The government has officially initiated the setting up of All India Judicial Services which will bring much more professional judicial officers and it will help in reducing the deficiency of number of judges in Indian Courts.
- **NALSA** - Financial Assistance provided by the government to NALSA has been increased by 165%. Also, the disposal of cases in Lok Adalats have seen an increase of 670% in 2017-18 from 2013-14.
- **Increase in Strength of Judges** - Ministry of Law & Justice has increased the sanctioned strength of judges in High Courts from 906 in 2014 to 1079 in 2018.
- **Nyaya Vikas Mobile App and Web Portal** – This initiative is aimed for strengthening of infrastructure facilities in Judiciary. This app helps in monitoring the ongoing infrastructure projects. The mobile application allows the surveyor at the ground level to capture images and enter details of the project which can be later reviewed by the moderator.

- **e-Courts Project** – Through this project, case information is available to litigants, advocates and judges through web and email. Also, a Justice Clock setup on top performing district courts provides information about other schemes to the public.
- **Tele Law Services** – This portal helps in mainstreaming Legal Aid to the Marginalised Sections of the society.
- **Alternative Dispute Redressal Mechanism** – Amendment to The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 by the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act 2015 to expedite the speedy resolution of disputes by prescribing timelines.
- **Rationalization of Tribunals** – 36 identified Tribunals have been rationalized to 18.
- **Improving Litigation** – Litigant Legal Information Management & Briefing System (LIMBS) is web portal on which, the Government uploads the details of cases which are pending in various courts and the status of these cases. This helps in effective monitoring of court cases.

WAY FORWARD

- States will need to identify systemic issues and address the concerns for timely disposal of cases
- States need to engage with the principal and senior district judges to get a sense of issues the courts are facing in various districts.
- Equal attention must be paid to both the metropolitan and far-flung non-metropolitan areas.
- In United Kingdom and Canada, one agency is responsible for the administration of various judicial bodies, including tribunals. This ensures that different judicial authorities can be monitored centrally. Conclusion
- For the overall system to work productively, it is important to ensure that its various components work efficiently and without any hindrance. The time is ripe for a lead agency to be established by Central and State Governments to review the functioning of courts, gauge the need for improvements, and allocate adequate resources for their functioning in a systematic and streamlined manner.

Practice Question

- **Discuss how far increasing the number of judges can ensure speedier delivery of justice from the Fast Track Courts in India?**

Status of India's Fast Track Courts (FTC)

GS SCORE Learning Aid

CONTEXT

Minister for Women and Child Development, informed the Rajya Sabha that the government has proposed to set up 1,023 fast-track courts to clear the cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act

Background

According to National Judicial Data Grid

> 3 crore civil and criminal cases are pending (as of Feb 2019) in the lower courts across the country

FTCs were established in India in the year 2000 with an aim to clear the long pending Sessions and other lower judicial cases

A total of 1734 FTCs were approved in 2000 following the report of the 11th Finance Commission

According to a recently released report by the Ministry of Law and Justice in June 2019, currently, there are 581 fast track courts in the country that are functional

Issues plaguing the FTCs

Non-Uniformity in type of cases across various FTCs in various states

Lack of Coordination : Tribunals are managed by different ministries, and FTCs and special courts are administered under different judicial bodies, with little coordination or uniformity among them

Infrastructure

Several FTCs lack technological resources to conduct audio and video recordings of the victims and many don't have regular staff

Most FTCs operate from premises of existing courts and many states appoint judges from current pool of judges which increases workload of remaining judges

delays in getting reports from the understaffed forensic science laboratories

Recent Developments to address the issues faced by Judiciary

Tele Law Services – This portal helps in mainstreaming Legal Aid to the Marginalised Sections of the society

Rationalization of Tribunals – 36 identified Tribunals have been rationalized to 18

e-Courts Project – Through this project, case information is available to litigants, advocates and judges through web and email

Increase in Strength of Judges - Govt has increased the sanctioned strength of judges in HCs from 906 in 2014 to 1079 in 2018

All India Judicial Services

Government has initiated the its setting up. It will bring much more professional judicial officers and help in reducing the deficiency of number of judges in Indian Courts

Alternative Dispute Redressal Mechanism

Amendment to The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 by the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act 2015 to expedite the speedy resolution of disputes by prescribing timelines

NALSA

Financial Assistance to NALSA has been increased by 165%. Also, the disposal of cases in Lok Adalats have seen an increase of 670% in 2017-18 from 2013-14.

Way Forward

States need to work on various aspects

need to engage with district judges to get a sense of issues the courts are facing in various districts

need to identify systemic issues and address the concerns for timely disposal of cases

Equal attention must be paid to both the metropolitan and far-flung non-metropolitan areas

BOTTOMLINE

For the overall system to work productively, it is important to ensure that its various components work efficiently and without any hindrance. The time is ripe for a lead agency to be established by Central and State Governments to review the functioning of courts, gauge the need for improvements, and allocate adequate resources for their functioning in a systematic and streamlined manner

MIGRATION

CONTEXT

- **Recently Census 2011 released migration data.**
- **The data has come at a time when migration is a major phenomenon across the world, and "illegal Bangladeshis" is a hot-button political issue in India.**

⦿ BACKGROUND:

Migration:

- According to Registrar General & Census Commissioner,"When a person is enumerated in Census at a different place than his/her place of birth, he/she is considered a 'migrant'."
- Migration data began to be collected with the Census of 1872, but was not very detailed until 1961.
- Changes introduced in 1961 continued until 2001; in the Census of 2011, a more detailed format for collecting information on migrants was adopted.

⦿ ANALYSIS:

Key inferences regarding migration from the Census numbers:

- Maharashtra had more migrants from Madhya Pradesh than from Bihar, and Gujarat had almost double the number of migrants from Rajasthan than from Bihar.
- Data from Delhi show only 2,321 persons declared Bangladesh as their last place of residence. Over 1.17 lakh said Pakistan — not surprising given the history of Partition.
- Over **45.58 crore** Indians were found to be "migrants" for various reasons during the enumeration exercises of Census 2011. The previous Census (2001) had recorded the number of migrants at 31.45 crore — more than 30% lower than the 2011 figure.
- Marriage and employment are the major reasons for migration.
- The bulk of the migration takes place within individual states — out of the total number of persons registered as "migrants" in the 2011 Census, only 11.91% (5.43 crore) had moved to one state from another, while nearly 39.57 crore had moved within their states.
- Only 63% of internal migrants who wanted to work were employed as full-time workers. Another 25% were working on a part-time basis, while 12% were not employed—despite wanting to be employed—at the time of the Census.
- The finding that only two out of three individuals who left their place of birth in search of work had full-time employment underscores the uncertain journey migrant workers make and the vulnerabilities they face, that too in a place away from home.
- Spread of full-time workers:

In just six of the 640 districts did the figure of full-time workers cross 90%. These are the two districts of Mumbai—Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban—Delhi West, Surat (Gujarat), Daman and Mamit (Mizoram), though the last two draw a lesser number of migrants.	In nearly one-third of the districts (204), full-time work was available to only 50% of migrants who wanted to work. This was true of a majority of districts in Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.	Among the states, the share of workers who found full-time work ranged from 70% to 80% were Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, undivided Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

- Comparison of employment between women and men:

Among men who sought work, 82% got full-time employment, compared to just 49% among women.	In only 20 districts over 85% of women seeking work secured full-time employment. As many as 12 of these districts are in Maharashtra, four in Tamil Nadu, two in Karnataka and one each in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

- Generally in urban areas, 78% of migrants were involved in full-time work, against 58% in rural areas.
- Causes for migration: Causes for migration can be categorized into 2 factors:

Push Factors	Pull Factors
These are reasons for leaving a place, which is called emigration, because of certain difficulties.	These are reasons for moving into a place, which is called immigration, because of an aspiration, dream, or something desirable.
⊙ Crop failure - food shortage ⊙ Calamities - drought, flooding, earthquake ⊙ Lack of safety, high incidents of crime ⊙ Lack of services – education, health ⊙ Poverty ⊙ War with other countries, civil wars	⊙ Higher employment ⊙ Better infrastructure to cope with calamities ⊙ Abundance in food supply ⊙ More safety, lesser incidents of crime ⊙ Better services ⊙ More freedom

Impacts of Migration

Positive impact

- **Avail career opportunities and cheap labour:** Most of the migrants often seek to migrate in their quest for better career opportunities than the ones they have back home. This, in turn, provides the host country with a ready source of cheap labour.
- **Example:** Some of the top electronics industries in the West, owe their success today to migrant labour and the fact that they were able to utilize cheap labour which resulted in them in becoming more competitive.
- **Provide highly skilled labour:** It is a fact that there is an acute shortage of highly skilled labour in certain parts of the world. Immigration enables these countries to get highly skilled labour in the form of doctors, engineers, scientists and much more.
- **Contribution to GDP:** According to a study conducted the estimated contribution of immigrants to gross domestic product (GDP) ranges from about one percent Ghana to 19 percent in Cote d'Ivoire, with an average of 7 percent across the ten countries. The contribution of immigrants to the GDP value added exceeds their population share in employment.
- **Increase cultural diversity:** Migration helps to increase cultural diversity; as people are introduced to newer cultures and customs, they often react along predictable lines. But cultural diversity is good in the sense it enables the community to come together and even helps it to act as a cohesive unit.

Negative Impact

- The loss of a person from rural areas, impact on the level of output and development of rural areas.
- The influx of workers in urban areas increases competition for the job, houses, school facilities etc.
- Having large population puts too much pressure on natural resources, amenities and services.
- Migration changes the population of a place, therefore, the distribution of the population is uneven in India.
- Many migrants are completely illiterate and uneducated, therefore, they are not only unfit for most jobs, but also lack basic knowledge and life skills.Poverty and urban inflation makes them unable to live a normal and healthy life.
- Children growing up in poverty have no access to proper nutrition, education or health.
- Migration increased the slum areas in cities which increase many problems such as unhygienic conditions, crime, pollution etc.
- Migration is one of the main causes of increasing nuclear family where children grow up without a wider family circle.

⊙ WAY FORWARD:

- The government should address the drivers of involuntary migration and create more legal avenues of migration. It should create good job opportunities and increasethem consistently to control regular migration.
- Migrants bring new ideas and high motivation. They contribute to the economy of their host countries and even more to the economy of their countries of origin by sending remittances to their families. They send back home $450 billion every year to put food on the table, for the education of their children, for the people who are sick, and for the elderly. Government should provide better systems to manage migration so that people migrate under safer and better conditions, thereby allowing them to contribute optimally to the development of the communities where they belong.
- The government should work for dispelling the stereotypes - there is nothing on the record that shows that migrants have more criminal tendencies or records than nationals. It is even usually the opposite. There is nothing on the record that migrants bring in diseases. These perceptions need to be changed.

- The government of countries that are not traditional destinations for migrants should learn to manage an extremely growing economic, social, religious and ethnic diversity. People are going to arrive who don't look or speak exactly as we do, but who might be brought to share the same values if they are properly welcomed and integrated.

Practice Question

- **Migration has been a historical process, but nowadays, it is increasing at an exponential rate. Discuss the various reasons for this, how it is impacting the society and how can this process be made beneficial for both migrant and immigrating country.**

Migration

GS SCORE Learning Aid

CONTEXT

Recently, Census 2011 released migration data. This data has come at a time when migration is a major phenomenon across the world, and "illegal migrants" is a hot-button political issue in India

Highlights of the data

According to Registrar General & Census Commissioner, "When a person is enumerated in Census at a different place than his/her place of birth, he/she is considered a migrant"

45.6 crore Indians were found to be 'migrants'

- inter-state (11.9%)
- intra-state (rest)

major reasons

- employment
  - (only 2/3rd of job seekers were employed full time)
    - 82% of male job seekers were employed full time
    - This figure stood at just 49% for women
- marriage

Causes for migration

- Crop failure - food shortage
- Calamities - drought, flooding, earthquake
- Lack of safety, high incidents of crime
- Lack of services – education, health
- Poverty

- Higher employment
- Better infrastructure to cope with calamities
- Abundance in food supply
- More safety, lesser incidents of crime
- Better services

Impacts

Career opportunities

for migrants

Positive

for host place

cheap labour — skilled labour

Contribution to GDP

Increase in cultural diversity

lower output and development of rural areas from where people migrate most

Negative

Enhanced competitiveness for resources and jobs in urban areas

- uneven population distribution
- increase in slums in the cities

lower standards of life for poor/ low skilled migrants

What govt and communities can do ?

They should address the drivers of involuntary migration and **create more legal avenues** of migration

should create good job opportunities and increase them consistently to control regular migration

They should work for **dispelling the stereotypes** about migrants

Myths like migrants having more criminal tendencies or bringing in diseases needs to be dispelled

They should provide **better systems to manage migration** so that people migrate under safer and better conditions

This will allow them to contribute optimally to the development of the communities where they belong

SECTION: B

(PRELIMS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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KOLAM MAPS

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Kolamsmaps are helping women map business potential.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- **Kolamis a traditional drawing found across south India.**
- It is drawn by using rice flour, chalk, chalk powder or rock powder, often using naturally or synthetically colored powders.
- It is a geometrical line drawing composed of curved loops, drawn around a grid pattern of dots.
- Kolams are thought to bring prosperity to homes. Every morning, millions of women draw kolams on the ground with white rice flour.
- Through the day, the drawings get walked on, washed out in the rain, or blown around in the wind; new ones are made the next day

Kolam Maps

- This skill of drawing a sequence of dots and deftly making geometric patterns has been used to **draw the maps in Tamil Nadu**
- It is helping women in Tamil Nadu**to identify lucrative locations to set up businesses**.
- Every single detail on the streets is observed near homes, making notes of the shops, tea stalls, water points, temples and everything. Then it is drawn on the ground and they understand what they have and what they don't.
- The kolam inspired maps are now a ready reckoner for thousands of women, all budding entrepreneurs trapped in low paying jobs, to decide which business to start or where to set up shop.

ROPEWAY PROJECT TO ELEPHANTA CAVES

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Ministry of Culture assured that "full cooperation" will be provided toIndia's first and longest ropeway project over the sea connecting Mumbai with the Elephanta Caves.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- It is pitted as the country's first and longest ropeway project over the sea.
- It is to be executed by the **Mumbai Port Trust, under the Ministry of Shipping**.
- As Elephanta caves is a **world heritage site**, clearance will have to be taken from **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI),** besides the Indian Navy, Coast Guard and the Ministry of Environment.
- The required approval is likely to come soon under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.**

Significance

- The caves see an annual footfall of nearly seven lakh visitors and are one of the must-visit places around Mumbai.
- Presently, it takes around an hour for the 10-km cruise from Mumbai and vice versa.The 14-minute ride by 30-seater cable cars will give a major boost to tourism

Elephanta Caves

- The Elephanta Caves are located in Western India on Elephanta Island (otherwise known as the Island of Gharapuri) in Mumbai Harbour.
- The caves are carved out of solid basalt rock and cover an area of 60,000 sq. ft
- There are two groups of caves on Elephanta Island, each featuring the rock-cut style of architecture.
- The larger one of these two groups has five caves with numerous Hindu sculptures.
- Two Buddhist caves at the site make up the smaller group along with water tanks and a Stupa.
- Each cave has been carved as a rock-cut temple with one main huge chamber, courtyards, two lateral chambers, and minor shrines.
- Cave 1 aka the Grand Cave is the biggest one among these. This cave temple is mainly dedicated to Lord Shiva and has several structures and carvings celebrating the deity and his different forms.
- Today, the magnificent Elephanta Caves count among the top tourist attractions and historical monuments in Mumbai. This architectural marvel was granted the status of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1987.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
- Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the ASI.
- Besides it regulate all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- It also regulates Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972

APPROVAL OF $200 MILLION LOAN FROM ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a $200 million loan for improving road infrastructure in 34 districts of Maharashtra for better connectivity of rural areas with markets and services**

⊙ ABOUT:

More on News

- Although, Maharashtra accounted for almost 15% of the Gross Domestic Product in 2016 17. But economic development is concentrated around the urban centres of Mumbai, Pune, and Thane.
- Moreover, 20 million people, or 17% of the State's population, still live below the national poverty line.
- The project aims to upgrade rural roads in 34 districts of the State of Maharashtra to all-weather standards.
- The roads will improve connectivity between habitations, productive agricultural lands, and economic growth centers across the state.

Significance

- The move will enhance employment opportunities and help reduce poverty, especially in rural areas where about 55% of the state's population lives.
- It will also enhance agricultural productivity, add value to agricultural produce and will contribute to increasing the average growth rate of agriculture and allied activities to more than 5% per year by 2030 target of the state's long-term strategic development plan, Vision 2030.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- The Asian Development Bank was conceived in the early 1960s as a financial institution that would be Asian in character and foster economic growth and cooperation in one of the poorest regions in the world.
- ADB encompasses 68 members—of which **49 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside**.
- India was a **founding member** of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1966 and is now the bank's **fourth largest shareholder** and top borrower.
- Cumulative loan and grant disbursements to India amount to $29.24 billion
- It is headquartered in **Manila, Phillipines**.

CHANGES IN PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **The Centre has issued a notification on certain changes in the Prevention of MoneyLaundering Act (PMLA).**

⊙ ABOUT:

The notification will bring the following changes:

- Money laundering will be treated as a **standalone crime.**
- The ambit of "**proceeds of crime**" to assets thatmay have been derived from**any other criminal activity related to scheduled offences**.
- Under the Act, **only Enforcement Directorate (ED**) isempowered to conduct money laundering investigation. For any other agency to probe into an offence listed in the PMLA Schedule, **a FIR or chargesheet** was required to be filed by that particular agency. This requirement has been done away with.
- All PMLAoffences will be **cognisable and nonbailable**. It implies that ED officers are empoweredto arrest an accused withoutwarrant.
- The jurisdiction of the Special Court, while dealingwith the offence under thisAct shall **not be dependent** upon any orders passed in respect of the scheduled offence.

Enforcement Directorate (ED)

- It is a specialized financial investigation agency under the Department of Revenue, **Ministry of Finance**, Government of India, which enforces the following laws: -
  - **Foreign Exchange Management Act,1999 (FEMA**) - **aCivil Law.**
  - **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)** - **aCriminal Law**.

Difference between Criminal Law and Civil Law

- Criminal law deals with offences which are **regarded in the public as wrong**, **against the state** and are therefore **punished by the state** if found guilty of the offence (even if the victim is an individual)

- Example: kidnapping, Rape, Murder, money laundering
- On the other hand, Civil Law deals with disputes between Private individuals.
- One of the most important distinctions between civil and criminal law is the **standard of proof**.
- In Criminal Cases, the prosecution must prove the case against the defendant beyond reasonable doubt whereas it is not so high in case of Civil Cases.

GI TAG

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **The Geographical Indication (GI) under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade hasrecently registered 4 new GIs.**
- **These latest additions to the list of registered GIs are:**
  - **PalaniPanchamirtham from Tamil Nadu,**
  - **Tawlhlohpuan and MizoPuanchei from Mizoram and**
  - **Tirur Betel leaf from Kerala**

⊙ ABOUT:

Geographical Indication (GI):

- GI is an indication used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- Such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to its origin in that defined geographical locality.

PalaniPanchamirtham:

- It is an abishegaPrasadam, from Palani Town in Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu.
- It is one of the main offerings in the Abisegam of Lord DhandayuthapaniSwamy, the presiding deity of ArulmiguDhandayuthapaniswamy Temple, situated in Palani Hills.
- It is a combination of five natural substances, namely, banana, jaggery sugar, cow ghee, honey and cardamom in a definite proportion.
- It is prepared in a natural method without addition of any preservatives or artificial ingredients and is well known for its religious fervour and gaiety.
- This is the first time a temple 'prasadam' from Tamil Nadu has been bestowed with the GI tag.

Tawlhlohpuan:

- It is a medium to heavy, compactly woven, good quality fabric from Mizoram.
- It is known for warp yarns, warping, weaving & intricate designs that are made by hand.
- Tawlhloh, in Mizo language, means 'to stand firm or not to move backward'.
- Tawlhlohpuan, which holds high significance in the Mizo society, is produced throughout the state of Mizoram.
- Aizawl and Thenzawl towns are the main centres of production.

MizoPuanchei:

- It is a colourful Mizo shawl, from Mizoram, which is considered as the most colourful among the Mizo textiles.
- It is an essential possession for every Mizo lady and an important marriage outfit in the state.

- It is also the most commonly used costume in Mizo festive dances and official ceremonies.
- The weavers insert the designs and motifs by using supplementary yarns while weaving to create this beautiful and alluring textile.

Tirur betel:

- This is a vine from Kerala, which is mainly cultivated in Tirur, Tanur, Tirurangadi, Kuttippuram, Malappuram and Vengara block panchayaths of Malappuram District.
- It is valued both for its mild stimulant action and medicinal properties.
- Even though it is commonly used for making pan masala for chewing, it has many medicinal, industrial and cultural usages and is considered as a remedy for bad breath and digestive disorders.

SANDBOX MODEL OF RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **RBI proposes easing of rules for sandbox model**

⊙ ABOUT:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued the final framework for regulatory sandbox in order to enable innovations in the financial technology space.
- A regulatory sandbox usually refers to live testing of new products or services in a controlled/test regulatory environment for which regulators may permit certain regulatory relaxations for the limited purpose of the testing.
- RBI said the objective of the sandbox was to foster responsible innovation in financial services, promote efficiency and bring benefit to consumers.
- The proposed FinTech solution should highlight an existing gap in the financial ecosystem and the proposal should demonstrate how it would address the problem, and bring benefits to consumers or the industry and/or perform the same work more efficiently.
- RBI will launch the sandbox for entities that meet the criteria of minimum net worth of Rs. 25 lakh as per their latest audited balance sheet.
- The entity should either be a company incorporated and registered in the country or banks licensed to operate in India.
- While money transfer services, digital know-your customer, financial inclusion and cybersecurity products are included, crypto currency, credit registry and credit information have been left out.

CHILIKA LAKE

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Chilika faces oil spillage threat from stuck ship.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- The Indian Coast Guard has issued a warning about possible oil spillage into the ecologically sensitive Chilika lake — the largest brackish water lagoon in the country — from a Malaysian cargo vessel which is stuck in the Bay of Bengal near the lake.
- The barge contains 30,000 litres of diesel, 1,000 litre of lube oil and 200 litres of hydraulic oil. Hence spillage of oil from the aground vessel cannot be ruled out
- Under Section356 of Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, all necessary measures should be undertaken to prevent any leakage of oil from the vessel causing pollution to the area
- The Coast Guard also advised to undertake action on priority basis either through a

local agent or any professional salvor.

- The vessel — Jin Hwa 32 — with deadweight tonnage of 7,500 had sailed from Mongla Port was heading towards Visakhapatnam Port. It was caught in stormy waters and drifted towards Odisha.

About Chilika Lake

- Chilika Lake is a brackish water lagoon, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha state on the east coast of India, at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal.
- It is the largest coastal lagoon in India and the second largest coastal lagoon in the world.
- It is the largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian sub-continent. The lake is home to a number of threatened species of plants and animals.Chilika Lake is an important habitat and breeding ground for both resident and migratory and aquatic birds, most notably flamingos.
- The Nalaban Island within the lagoon is classified as a Bird Sanctuary under the wildlife protection act.
- In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- The lagoon is also home to 14 types of raptors. Around 152 rare and endangered Irrawaddy dolphins have also been reported. Plus, the lagoon supports about 37 species of reptiles and amphibians.
- Microalgae, marine seaweeds, sea grasses, fish and crab also flourish in the brackish water of the Chilika Lagoon.

PET BOTTLES

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **CSIR - Central Food Technological Research Institute(CFTRI) study reveals that Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottles are safe.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- PET is a highly valued packaging material because it is strong yet lightweight, non-reactive, economical, and shatterproof.
- PET is a polymer of **ethylene glycol and terephthalic acid**.
- PET was first synthesized in the U.S. during the mid-1940s by DuPont chemists searching for polymers that could be used to make new textile fibers.
- Till now, it was a common perception that PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) bottles leach harmful chemicals when exposed to high temperatures.
- In order to ascertain the chemical effect of PET, CFTRI conducted a detailed analysis of PET Bottles.

Findings

- Bisphenol-A (BPA), a compound used in polycarbonate, was below its detection limit of 0.02 mg/kg.
- All the metals used in the manufacturing of PET were below their detection limits (BDL) of 0.001 mg/kg.
- They were also below the EU regulation norms of the "specific migration limit".

CSIR–Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI)

- It is a constituent laboratory of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi, which came into existence in 1950.

- It is located in Mysore, Karnataka.
- It comes under the Ministry of Science & Technology.
- The institute develops technologies to increase efficiency and reduce **post-harvest losses,** add convenience, **increase export**, find **new sources of food products**, integrate human resources in food industries and reduce costs to farmers.

Note: The **specific migration limit (SML)** is the **maximum** permitted quantity of a specific substance that can migrate from a food packaging material or food container into food.

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE IUCN STATUS OF SOME SPECIES

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **India has submitted proposals regarding changes to the listing of various wildlife species in the CITES secretariat meeting.**

⊙ ABOUT:

Animal Species Listed by India	Current IUCN Status
• SmoothCoated Otter	**Vulnerable**
• SmallClawed Otter	**Vulnerable**
• Indian Star Tortoise	**Vulnerable**
• Tokay Gecko	**Least Concern**
• Wedgefish	**Vulnerable**

- India has also proposed for the removal of Indian rosewood from CITES Appendix II.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

- CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is also known as the **Washington Convention**) entered into force in 1975
- It is a **multilateral treaty** drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963.
- The species covered by CITES are listed in **three appendices** on the degree of protection they require.
  - **Appendix I** lists species that are the most endangered among CITES-listed animals and plants.
  - **Appendix II** lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled.
  - **Appendix III** is a list of species included at the request of a Party that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation.
- Its aim is to ensure that **international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species in the wild**, and it accords varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 species of animals and plants.
- CITES is **legally binding on the Parties** but it does not take the place of national laws.
- It provides a framework which each party should adopt in its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level.
- It has 181 Parties
- Another Similar treaty is Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants – MIKE

Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC)

- It is a **non-governmental organization** working globally on **trade in wild animals and plants** in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- It is a joint programme of **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and IUCN**.
- It is **complimentary** to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- It was founded in 1976, with **headquarters now located in Cambridge, United Kingdom**.
- Its mission is to ensure that **trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.**

NEW FROG SPECIES CONFIRMED

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **A new species of burrowing frog has been confirmed in Jharkhand's Chhota Nagpur Plateau.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- The frog was first discovered in 2015.
- Its existence was verified and confirmed recently and published in the journal Records of the **Zoological Survey of India.**
- The frog is **endemic** to agricultural areas in Nawadih and Joungi village of Jharkhand's Koderma district.
- It has been named as Spahaerotheca Magadha and will be known by the common name of 'Magadha Burrowing Frog'.
- The discovery points to the fact that new species of frogs can still be found even in the 'Central Indian Landscape' other than the Western Ghats and the Northeast, where most discoveries are currently taking place.

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)

- The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) is the premier taxonomic research organization in India.
- It was **established on 1 July 1916** to promote surveys, exploration and research leading to advancement of our knowledge of various aspects of the exceptionally rich animal life of India.
- The ZSI had its genesis as the Zoological Section of the **Indian Museum at Calcutta in 1875.**
- Since its inception, the ZSI has been documenting the diversity and distribution of the fauna of India towards carrying out its mandate of conducting exploration-cum-taxonomic-research programmes.
- The ZSI has published an extremely large amount of information on all animal taxa, from Protozoa to Mammalia. This information is a boon to researchers, students, conservation managers and amateur naturalists.

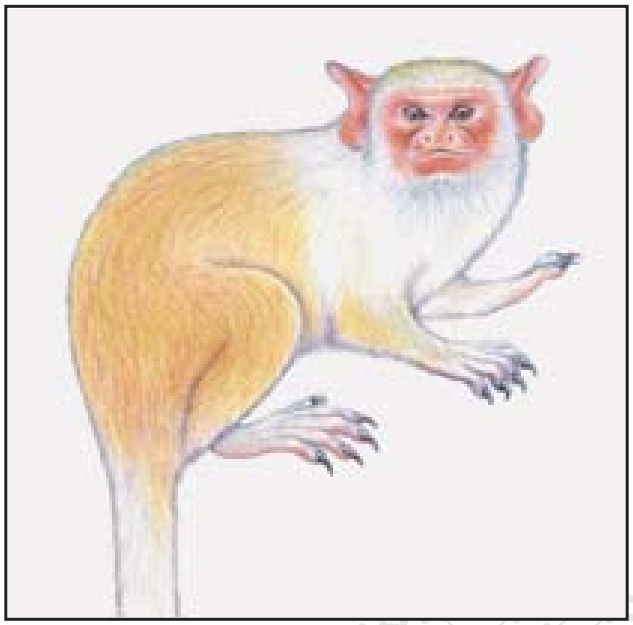
NEW SPECIES DISCOVERED

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **New monkey species discovered in rapidly-deforested area of Amazon.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- A new species of marmoset has been discovered in the south-west of Pará State in Brazil in an area of the Amazon that has suffered extensive illegal logging and agricultural incursion.



- The new species of marmoset was found at Tapajós River.
- The region where the marmoset was discovered is "one of the main fronts of forest destruction within the 'arc of deforestation', a region infamously characterised by fast, intense and disordered conversion of forests to pastoral and agricultural land and human settlements.
- The new species has been named Micomunduruku after the Munduruku Amerindians who live in the area where the monkey was discovered.
- Micomunduruku occurs only within an area in south-western Pará State, Brazil.
- The marmosets' markings and pigmentation were the first characteristics distinguishing them from others in their genus. Aside from having a white tail, the individuals displayed a beige-yellowish back, white hands, white feet, and white forearms with a beige-yellowish patch on their elbow.
- Their DNA was the second difference. Genomes show they are closely related but separate from other known Amazonian marmosets.
- Marmosets have claw-like nails on all digits except the hallux, and the clawed toes are used for the vertical climbing of and leaping between trees. It also has long lower jaw incisors and incisor-like canines used to gouge holes in the bark of trees.

Amazon's 'arc of deforestation'

- Deforestation in the Amazon has accelerated markedly in recent months.
- 88% forest was been cleared within a time span of one year.
- In addition to logging and agricultural expansion, four hydroelectric power plants have been approved for construction that will directly threaten the habitat.
- The region "is also a hotspot for gold miners, so there is dredging and digging of the river bed and its tributaries.

WORLD BIOFUEL DAY

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **In a bid to encourage the biofuel sector, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister announced that the staterun oil marketing companies would procure the entire supply of biodiesel produced from used cooking oil for a threeyear period.**

⊙ ABOUT:

More on News

- Recently, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) directed that Food Business Operators (FBOs), whose consumption of edible oils for frying is **more than 50 litres per day** shall stop reusing the oil **more than three times**.
- Rather this used cooking oil should be used by the Oil Manufacturing Companies (OMCs) to produce Biodiesel.
- As per the order, the staterun oil marketing companies would **procure the entire supply of biodiesel** produced from used cooking oil for a threeyear period.
- The scheme is applicable in 100 cities across the country.

World Biofuel Day

- World Biofuel Day is observed every year on **10th August** to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels and highlight the various efforts made by Government in the biofuel sector.
- This year the theme of the World Biofuel Day is **"Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)".**
- The **National Policy on Biofuels - 2018** envisages a target of **5% blending of Biodiesel** in High Speed Diesel(HSD) by **2030.**

RUCO

- During frying, several properties of oil are altered, **Total Polar Compounds(TPC)** are formed on repeated frying.
- The toxicity of these compounds is associated with several diseases such as hypertension, atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, liver diseases.
- In order to safeguard consumer health, FSSAI has fixed a limit for **Total Polar Compounds at 25 percent** beyond which the vegetable oil shall not be used.
- Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO) is an ecosystem that will enable the collection and conversion of UCO to biodiesel.
- Under this initiative, 64 companies at 101 locations have been identified to enable collection of used cooking oil. For instance: McDonald's has already started converting used cooking oil to biodiesel from 100 outlets in Mumbai and Pune.

GIBRALTAR

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Gibraltar recently allowed a detained Iranian supertankerGrace 1 to leave the British overseas territory after a last-minute U.S. attempt to seize the vessel.**

⊙ ABOUT:

Gibraltar

- Gibraltar is a **British Overseas Territory** located at the bottom of Spain on the narrow gap between Europe and Africa.
- Known as the Gib or the Rock, it is a small 2.5-mile-squared area with a population of just 30,000 - but it has huge strategic importance.
- This is because from this spot a navy can potentially control shipping in and out of the Mediterranean - much of it coming from Asia having travelled through the Suez canal.
- The UK, a key member of NATO, has a naval and military base there for this reason.

History of Gibraltar

- Spain originally began controlling Gibraltar in 1501.
- But the Rock then came under British control during the War of Spanish Succession in 1704.

- Then in 1779 Spain tried but failed to win it back in what was known as the Great Siege of Gibraltar.
- The rock was declared a colony in 1830.
- The people of Gibraltar voted in 1967 to be a dependency of the United Kingdom.
- This effectively guarantees the unique community independence from Spain but allows support from a major Western country.
- In June last year, 99 per cent voted to remain in the UK.

GULF OF GUINEA

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Recently, nine Chinese and eight Ukrainian seamen have been abducted after two merchant vessels came under attack in Cameroonian waters.**
- **The attacks took place off the Port of Douala.**

⊙ ABOUT

Gulf of Guinea

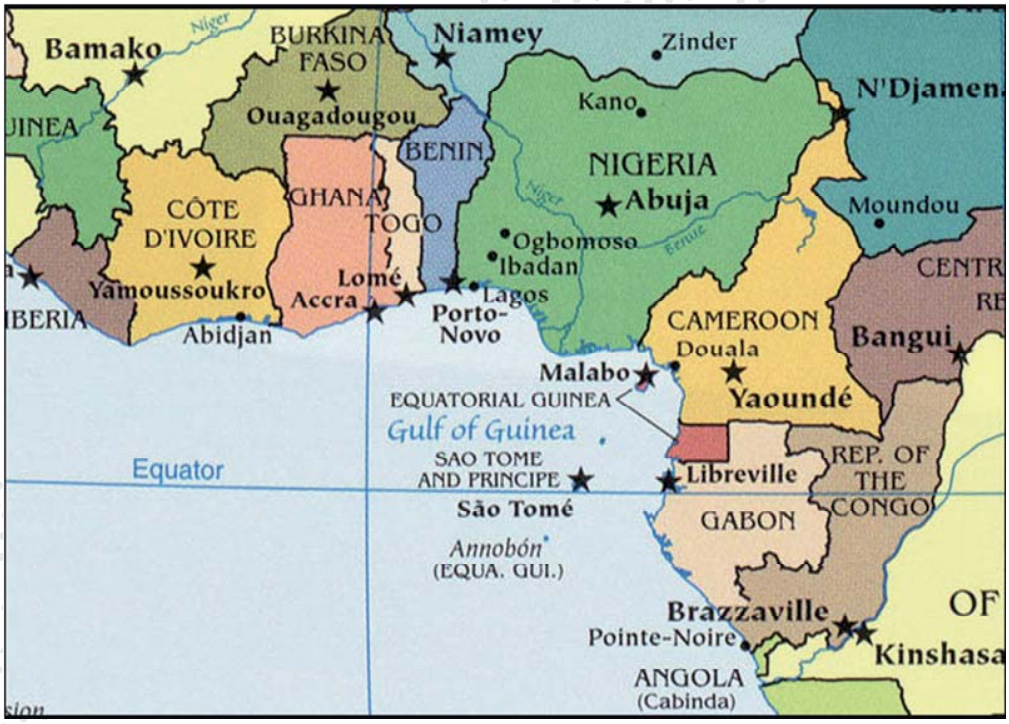
- The **Gulf of Guinea** is the north-easternmost part of the **tropical Atlantic Ocean**.
- The intersection of the Equator and Prime Meridian (zero degrees latitude and longitude) is in this gulf.
- Among the many rivers that drain into the Gulf of Guinea are the Niger and the Volta.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea:

- Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea affects a number of countries in West Africa as well as the wider international community making it becoming an issue of global concern.
- Pirates here are often part of heavily armed criminal enterprises, who employ violent methods to steal oil cargo.
- The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has recently described the Gulf of Guinea as the most dangerous area in the world for shipping.
- According to its estimations, 73 percent of all sea kidnappings and 92 percent of hostage-takings occur there, with pirates normally taking sailors for ransom.

Causes of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea:

- **Youth unemployment and widespread poverty** are one of the main triggering factors for piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and as admitted by the UN Security Council during a meeting set to discuss a mission to the region 'any comprehensive anti-piracy strategy might also need to take into account root causes, including high levels of youth unemployment'.
- **Severe political disputes** are considered another reason contributing to the rise of piracy in the area, and in some cases directly feeding into the piracy activity itself.
- Of particular relevance are the activities of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, in the south of Nigeria; this organization has publicly stated to steal and smuggle oil 'as a form of re-appropriation of wealth and as a form of protest'.
- Another major and relevant controversy has involved the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria; the two countries have been in dispute about the sovereignty over the **Bakassi Peninsula**, which has caused a lack of cooperation between the governments resulting in poor control over illegal activities.
- **Corruption** is another major contributing factor, especially with regards to the case of Nigeria. Attention has been called towards the political protection that some of those who attack installations and personnel of oil companies, especially in the Niger Delta, enjoy protection from certain local authorities.



BREASTFEEDING

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Areport-card on the practice of breastfeeding has been released recently by the Union Health Ministry.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- Breastfeeding is a cornerstonefor child survival and health especially during early life because it provides essential irreplaceable nutrition for a child's growth and development.
- It serves as a **child's first immunization** - providing protection from common childhood illnesses, such as diarrhoea and pneumonia, few of the leading causes of under-five

mortality.

- **Breast milk promotes sensory and cognitive development and is an unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy** growth and development of infants; it is also an integral part of the reproductive process with important implications for the health of mothers.

Report findings

- **Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Punjab** fare the **worst** when it comes to the practice of breastfeeding.
- These states have the lowest rate for breastfeeding within one hour of birth, exclusive breast feeding for six months and complementary breastfeeding from six to nine months.
- Inadequate breastfeeding puts a **huge burden on our health system** and we understand that there is an urgent need to ensure a conducive environment for all mothers to practice breastfeeding at home, outside homes and workplaces.
- States that top the report card include **Mizoram, Sikkim, Odisha and Manipur.**
- These regions also show good indicators in terms of the other parameters where children are breast fed exclusively for six months etc.
- Breastfeeding is one of **the most cost-effective** intervention which **addresses both survival and growth of the child**. Early initiation of breastfeeding within an hour of birth can prevent neonatal mortality; whereas exclusive breastfeeding for six months can reduce under-five deaths significantly.
- Breastfeeding contributes to the **health and well-being of mothers**, it helps to space children, reduces the risk of ovarian cancer and breast cancer, increases family and national resources, is a secure way of feeding and is safe for the environment.
- Health Ministry will be carrying out activities to promote breastfeeding by creating awareness about its multi-fold benefits **from 1st to 7th of every month till 2022**.

Important Facts

- TajMahalis the first Indian monument with breastfeeding room.
- Globally, only 40% infants are exclusively breastfed for the first six months.
- The World Health Organisation says that if breastfeeding was scaled up to near-universal levels, lives of about 8,20,000 children could be saved every year.

JALJEEVAN MISSION

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Rs. 3.5 trillion to be spent under JalJeevan Mission, The NDA government has formed a new ministry to address all water issues that looks at the management of water resources and drinking water supply**

⊙ ABOUT:

- Prime Minister flagged the growing water crisis in the country and said around Rs. 3.5 trillion will be spent under the ambitious JalJeevan Mission aimed at providing potable water.
- Providing safe drinking water to all parts of the country remains a priority.
- Under the JalJeevan Mission, the government will focus on rainwater harvesting and water conservation in 256 districts in the first phase and carry out other initiatives, including renovation of traditional water bodies and tanks, reuse of water and recharge structures, watershed development and intensive afforestation.
- The NDA government has formed a new ministry to address all water issues that looks at the management of water resources and drinking water supply in a holistic manner. The Jal Shakti Ministry, formed by integrating the Water Resources and Drinking Water

and Sanitation Ministries, aims to work with state governments to ensure HarGharJal to all rural households by 2024.

- This assumes importance given that water crisis has presented itself as a clear and present danger to India. Policy think-tank NitiAayog said in a report that nearly 600 million Indians already face "high to extreme water stress.
- Cities, including Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad, will run out of groundwater by 2020, affecting 100 million people.
- Matters are only likely to worsen with the country's water demand likely to double by 2030, indicating there will be a 6% loss in gross domestic product by 2050.
- India's most water-stressed blocks are in Tamil Nadu (541), followed by Rajasthan (218), Uttar Pradesh (139) and Telangana (137), with several states reeling from drought-like conditions.
- To encourage local participation, National Cadet Corps, National Service Scheme and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan will be involved along with non-government organisations (NGOs) and students from local engineering colleges.

CHILD CARE LEAVE

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Defence Minister has recently approved the extension of benefits of Child Care Leave (CCL) to single male service personnel and certain relaxations of CCL provisions in case of women officers of defence forces.**

⊙ ABOUT:

Child care leave was introduced in 2008 with following provisions:

- Child Care Leave can be granted to women employees having minor children below the age of 18 years, for a maximum period of 2 years (i.e. 730 days) during their entire service, for taking care of up to two children whether for rearing or to look after any of their needs like examination, sickness etc.
- The Conditions regarding spell of CCL, imposed upon by the Government are that it may not be granted in more than 3 spells in a calendar year and that CCL may not be granted for less than 15 days.
- As in the case of Earned Leave, we can prefix or suffix Saturdays, Sundays, and Gazetted holidays with the Child Care Leave.
- Under no circumstances can any employee proceed on CCL without prior approval of the Leave sanctioning authority.
- During the period of such leave, the women employees shall be paid leave salary equal to the pay drawn immediately before proceeding on leave.
- Child Care Leave shall not be debited against the leave account. There is also no condition that CCL can be availed only if the employee concerned has no Earned Leave at her credit, Child Care Leave may also be allowed for the third year as leave not due (without production of medical certificate).
- The intention of the Pay Commission in recommending Child Care Leave for women employees was to facilitate women employees to take care of their children at the time of need. However, this does not mean that CCL should disrupt the functioning of Central Government offices. The nature of this leave was envisaged to be the same as that of earned leave.
- LTC cannot be availed during Child Care Leave as it is granted for the specific purpose of taking care of a minor child for rearing or for looking after any other needs of the child during examination, sickness etc.

Extension of benefits of Child Care Leave (CCL):

- Until now, CCL was being granted to woman officers in defence forces. But from now, DoPT has made certain amendments for grant of CCL to civilian employees, whereby

the CCL granted to woman employees till now has been extended to single male government servants also.

- Single male service personnel and women officers of defence forces will also be able to avail CCL in respect of child with 40% disability without any restriction of age limit of the child.
- The age limit of 22 years prescribed earlier in the case of a child with 40% disability has been removed for the purpose of availing CCL.
- The minimum period of CCL that can be availed in each spell has been reduced to five days from the earlier limit of 15 days.

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC)

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **On a request from China, consultations on Kashmir were scheduled by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) recently to discuss Kashmir (India's abrogation of Article 370).**

⊙ ABOUT:

Abrogation of Article 370

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN).
- Like the UN as a whole, it was created following World War II to address the failings of a previous international organization, the League of Nations, in maintaining world peace.
- The council held its first session in 1946.
- It is the **only** body of the UN with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.
- The Security Council consists of **fifteen members**:
  - The great powers that were the victors of World War II – the Soviet Union (now represented by Russia), the United Kingdom, France, Republic of China (now represented by the People's Republic of China), and the United States – serve as the body's five permanent members.
  - These can veto any substantive resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or nominees for the office of Secretary-General.
  - In addition, the council has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve a term of two years.
  - The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.
- Resolutions of the Security Council are typically enforced by UN peacekeepers, military forces voluntarily provided by member states and funded independently of the main UN budget.
- Unlike the General Assembly, the Security Council meets year-round. Each Security Council member must have a representative available at UN Headquarters at all times in case an emergency meeting becomes necessary.
- Due to the public scrutiny of the Security Council Chamber, all of the real work of the Security Council is conducted behind closed doors in "informal consultations".

Functions and Powers of UNSC

- to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;

- to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- to formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
- to determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- to take military action against an aggressor;
- to recommend the admission of new Members;
- to exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas";
- to recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.

NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF TRIPURA (NLFT)

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Four years after the initiation of dialogue, the Central Governmentrecently signed a Memorandum of Settlement with the last remaining faction of the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT).**

⊙ ABOUT:

National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)

- TThe NLFT is a Tripuri nationalist militant organisation based in Tripura.
- It was originally started by DhananjoyReang in March of 1989. Reang was removed from his position by a coup in 1993. After the coup, the group was briefly led by NayanbasiJamatiya, and then BiswamohanDebbarma took command, but some continued to follow Nayanbasi.
- It was formed in the aftermath of one of the worst ethnic riots in Tripura with the backing of the Baptist Church of Tripura.
- It has an estimated 550 to 850 members.
- It seeks to secede from India demanding to establish a separate tribal homeland - an independent Tripuri state.It wants to expand what they describe as the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ in Tripura.
- It is an active participant in the Insurgency in Northeast India. It waged an armed insurgency for over two decades.
- It was until now designated as a terrorist organisation in the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002.

Biswamohan faction

- The Biswamohan faction (NLFT-BM) was earlier headed by BiswamohanDebbarma. In 2017, in a meeting at an undisclosed location, selected SubirDebbarma, as the new 'president' of the organization renaming it as the NLFT SD.
- It later signed a memorandum of Settlement with Government of India to abide by The Constitution of India & join the mainstream on 10 August 2019.
- Upon the surrender of MantuKoloi, second in command, he requested that BiswamohanDebbarma and RanjitDebbarma engage in talks with the Government of India to resolve the crisis.
- This was sparked by the Bangladeshi government's crackdown on hostile groups. The government there were able to do this by extensively searching the Sacherri jungles where the organization had many of its hideouts.

Nayanbasi faction

- The Nayanbasi faction has approximately 50 sophisticated weapons, 50 persons in collaboration with the group, and 150 cadres in active duty.
- In 2004, the Nayanbasi faction group sent a message to the Additional Director of General Police (ADG) with the intention to start peace talks. These meetings ultimately were not successful.
- Later that year it peacefully entered into a Memorandum of Settlement with India.

CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL 2019

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **The Parliament had passed theConsumer Protection Bill, 2019 which aims to protect the rights of consumers by establishing authorities for timely and effective administration and settlement of consumers' dispute. The Bill will replace the more than three decades old Consumer Protection Act, 1986.**

⊙ ABOUT:

Key Provisions of the Bill

- **Definition**
  - A consumer is defined as a person who buys any good or avails a service for a consideration. It **does not** include a person who obtains a good for resale or a good or service for commercial purpose.
- **Consumer Complaints**
  - The Bill sets up **Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions** (consumer courts) to hear complaints by the consumers.
  - These Commissions will be set up at **District**, **State** and **National level**, with pecuniary jurisdiction up to **Rs 1 crore**, **Rs 1 crore to Rs 10 crore**, and **above Rs 10 crore**, respectively.
  - The **District Commissions** will consist of a **President** and at **least two members**. The **State and National Commissions** will consist of a **President** and **at least four members**.
  - Appeals from the District Commissions will be heard by the **State Commission**, and from the State Commission by the **National Commission**. Appeals from the National Commission will be heard by the **Supreme Court**.
  - The Commissions will attempt to dispose a complaint within **three months**, if the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities. If analysis and testing is required, the complaint will be disposed within a period of **five months**.
  - The Bill sets up the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA**) to promote, protect, and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.
- **Product Liability**
  - The Bill allows a person to make a claim of product liability against a manufacturer, seller, or service provider for any defect in a product or deficiency in a service
- **Unfair contracts**
  - A contract is said to be unfair if it causes significant change in the rights of the consumer like demanding excessive security deposits, imposing a disproportionate penalty for a breach in contract etc.
  - The **State and National Commissions** may determine if the terms of a contract are unfair and declare such terms to be **null and void**.
- **Unfair and restrictive trade practices**
  - An **unfair trade practice** includes making a false statement regarding the quality standard of a good or service or selling of goods not complying with standards etc.

- A **restrictive trade practice** is one that imposes **unjustified costs or restrictionsonconsumers**, including delays in supply that lead to increase in price or requiring purchase of certain goods or services as a condition for procuring any other goods or services etc.
- The **CCPA** may take steps to **prevent and discontinue unfair and restrictive trade practices**.

- **Penalties**
  - If a person does not comply with the orders of the District, State or National Commissions, he may face imprisonment **up to three years**, or a fine **not less than Rs 25,000 extendable to Rs one lakh**, or both.

PROCUREMENT BY DEFENCE ACQUISITION COUNCIL (DAC)

CONTEXT:

- **The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved the procurement of a Software Defined Radio (SDR) and the Next Generation Maritime Mobile Coastal Batteries (NGMMCB) for the Navy.**

ABOUT:

More on News

- The Next Generation Maritime Mobile Coastal Batteries (NGMMCB) will be fitted with the **BrahMossurfacetosurface supersonic cruise missiles** and deployed along the coast.
- The SDR has been designed and developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation, Bharat Electronics Limited and the Navy's Weapons Electronics Systems Engineering Establishment (WESEE)**.
- It will facilitate **highspeed data and secure voice communication** with antijamming capability.

BrahMos Missile

- It is a **Supersonic cruise missile**
- It is designed and developed by **BrahMos Aerospace**, a joint venture of India and Russia
- It has derived its name from the names of two rivers, India's Brahmaputra River and Russia's Moskva River.
- It operates on **fire and forget principal**
- It is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against sea and land targets
- It is **two-stage missile**, the first one being solid and the second one ramjet liquid propellant.
- Its range is around 300 km which was extended to 450 km and plan is to increase it to 600km.

Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)

- The DAC is Defence Ministry's **highest decision making body** for capital acquisition proposals forwarded by the Indian armed forces.
- It was set up in **2001** as part of the **post-Kargil reforms** in defence sector
- It approves the long-term integrated perspective plan for the forces, accords acceptance of necessity (AON) to begin acquisition proposals, and grant's its approval to all major

deals through all their important phases.

- It also has the power to approve any deviations in an acquisition, and recommends all big capital defence purchases for approval of the C**abinet committee on security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister**.

EBOLA VIRUS

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Ebola virus is no longer incurable; Congo trial reports over 90 percent success.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- Ebola virus disease (EVD), also known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever (EHF), is a viral hemorrhagic fever of humans and other primates caused by ebolaviruses.
- Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is a rare and deadly disease in people and nonhuman primates.
- The viruses that cause EVD are located mainly in sub-Saharan Africa. People can get EVD through direct contact with an infected animal (bat or nonhuman primate) or a sick or dead person infected with Ebola virus.
- Signs and symptoms typically start between two days and three weeks after contracting the virus with a fever, sore throat, muscular pain, and headaches. Vomiting, diarrhea and rash usually follow, along with decreased function of the liver and kidneys.

Success of two drugs being investigated to treat the Ebola virus

- Two experimental drugs showed survival rates of as much as 90% in a clinical trial in Congo.
- Two experimental drugs – an antibody cocktail called REGN-EB3 developed by Regeneron and a monoclonal antibody called mAb114 – will now be offered to all patients infected with the viral disease in an ongoing outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- The drugs showed "clearly better" results, according to U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).
- The two promising drugs are made from Ebola antibodies – a protein produced by the immune system to defend against infection. Regeneron's product is a cocktail of three Ebola antibodies, while mAb114 is a single antibody developed by scientists at NIAID.

FERTILITY RATE AND POPULATION EXPLOSION

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Prime Minister NarendraModi highlighted "population explosion" and underscored the need for "social awareness" to deal with this concern in his Independence Day address to the nation**

⊙ ABOUT:

- The latest estimates (for 2017) by the **Sample Registration System (SRS)** under the Registrar General of India (RGI) have pegged the **country's TFR at 2.2.** This is only marginally more than the **replacement rate which stands at 2.1.**
- **Seven states** — Uttar Pradesh (3.0), Bihar (3.2), Madhya Pradesh (2.7), Rajasthan (2.6), Assam (2.3), Chhattisgarh (2.4) and Jharkhand (2.5) — that account for about 45 per cent of the total population in the 2011 Census recorded a **higher TFR than the national average**. They are witnessing a declining trend in fertility rates.
- Relatively **well-off states in the south** — Kerala (1.7), Tamil Nadu (1.6), Karnataka (1.7), Maharashtra (1.7), Andhra Pradesh (1.6) and Telangana (1.7) — **demonstrate fertility rates below the rate required** for population replacement.

- An "illiterate" woman is likely to give birth to 2.9 children on average, a "literate" woman will produce fewer (2.1) children. Women with education levels of Class 10 and above have been recorded to have a TFR below the replacement rate (2.1).
- Urban areas have been usually found to have a lower TFR than rural areas. While the TFR declined from 5.4 to 2.4 from 1971 to 2017 in rural areas, the decline in urban areas slipped below the replacement rate from 4.1 to 1.7 during the same period.
- Based on specific age groups in the reproductive span of 15-49, "fertility declined in the older age groups in rural areas while it increased for the corresponding age groups in urban areas in the last decade.
- The decline in fertility is slower in the middle age groups 20-34 for both the areas. The minimum decline of 2.6% has been noticed in the age group 30-34 at national level. Fertility, however, declines from age 30 in all the bigger states/UTs, except Jammu & Kashmir where it declines from age 35.

About Sample Registration System

- Office of the Registrar General, India, under the Home Ministry initiated Sample Registration System (SRS) in 1964-65 on a pilot basis and on full scale from 1969-70.
- The SRS since then has been providing data on regular basis. It provides accurate, up-to-date fertility and mortality data via registration of births and deaths.
- The SRS also looks at other indicators such as total fertility ratio (TFR), age specific/ marital fertility rate, gross reproduction rate along with sex ratio at birth.
- It thus helps in an adequate evaluation of a number of programs in the health sector, including family planning, maternal and reproductive health, and immunization programs.

FOREIGN NATIONAL PRISONERS

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Delhi High court has ordered arrangement for 'speediest communication' based on amicus curiae report stating that 75% of them struggle to gain access to their embassy.**

⊙ ABOUT:

Foreign National Prisoner (FNPs)

- FNPs refer to prisoners who do not carry the passport of the country in which they are imprisoned.
- They are entitled to the basic minimum guarantees as enshrined and carefully set out in the Constitution of India.
- As per Prison Statistics of India 2015, there are 6,185 FNPs in India.

Problems faced by them

- A common grievance among the FNPs is that many a time their consulate officer don't come and they have no one to connect them with their family back home.
- 90% of the foreign prisoners face difficulty in securing bail merely because of their special status while Indian prisoners are able to secure bail more easily even if they have committed the same offence.
- During trial they did not understand the proceedings due to difference in language. In such a situation,
- Although the jail manuals contain provisions for facilitating contact with family for other prisoners, the same provisions either do not extend to FNPs or are too cumbersome to follow.
- The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) report had stated that only 5.7% of FNPs in India — 222 out of 3,908 — have ever received consular access.

- Vienna Convention on Consular Relations
- The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963 is an international treaty that defines a framework for consular relations between independent states.
- A consul performs two functions: protecting in the host country the interests of their countrymen, and furthering the relations between the two states.
- Consular and Diplomat work out of the same premises, and under this treaty they are afforded most of the same privileges.
- Immunity given to consular is similar to diplomat. The treaty has been ratified by 179 states.

Conclusion

- FNPs by virtue of their peculiar status are to be treated with care and caution to avoid any possible discrimination that they may be subjected to during their time in prison. Ministry of External Affairs should request the consulates to visit their nationals and enable them to discharge their duties under Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

PRADHAN MANTRI JAN AROGYA YOJANA (PMJAY)

⊙ CONTEXT:

- **Cancer treatments will soon be covered under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana - PradhanMantri Jan ArogyaYojana (PMJAY)**

⊙ ABOUT:

Facts related to Cancer in India,

- According to the WorldHealth Organisation, therate of mortality due to cancerin India is high, with cancerthe secondmostcommondisease in India with about **0.3 million deaths per year.**
- In India, the risk of developing cancer before the age of 75 years for males stands at 9.81% and females at 9.42%.
- Total deaths due to cancer in 2018 were around 8 lakhs.
- Lung cancer is the most common type of cancer in India, followed by breast cancer and oral cancers.
- Since cancer treatment causes massive financial crisis among the people, so the government is likely to include all types of cancers and their treatment under its healthcare packages.

Cancer

- Cancer refers to the abnormal growth of cell tissue.
- These cells may form a mass called a tumor.
- A tumor can be cancerous or benign.
- A cancerous tumor is malignant, meaning it can grow and spread to other parts of the body.
- A benign tumor means the tumor can grow but will not spread.
- The three main treatments for cancer are:
  - **Surgery:** directly removing the tumor
  - **Chemotherapy:** using chemicals to kill cancer cells
  - **Radiationtherapy:** using X-rays to kill cancer cells

Ayushman Bharat Yojana

- Ayushman Bharat or "Healthy India" is a national initiative launched to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

- It adopts a continuum of care approach, comprising of two inter-related components, which are:
  - Establishment of Health and Wellness Centres
  - PradhanMantri Jan ArogyaYojana (PM-JAY)

PradhanMantri Jan ArogyaYojana (PM-JAY)

- It will provide financial protection to 10.74 crore poor, deprived rural families and identified occupational categories of urban workers' families as per the latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data (approx. 50 crore beneficiaries).
- It will have offer a benefit cover of Rs. 500,000 per family per year (on a family floater basis).
- It will cover medical and hospitalization expenses for almost all secondary care and most of tertiary care procedures. PM-JAY has defined 1,350 medical packages covering surgery, medical and day care treatments including medicines, diagnostics and transport.
- Performance – Till July 2019, 16,000 hospitals have been empanelled, nearly 34 lakh beneficiarieshave been admitted, and 9 crore e-cards have been issued.

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