

CURRENT AFFAIRS

WEEKLY

WEEK - 4 JULY, 2019

MAINS

ART & CULTURE

UNESCO World Heritage Sites (MCQ)

ECONOMY

'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' (MCQ)

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MCQ)

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (MCQ)

'Utkarsh 2022' (MCQ)

GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT

Plastic Pollution (MCQ)

Sea Level Increase (MCQ)

Polavaram Irrigation Project (MCQ)

'SATAT initiative' (MCQ)

INTERNAL SECURITY

National Repository of Photographs (MCQ)

POLITY

Article 370 (MCQ)

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Human Atlas (MCQ)

NASA's mission to launch Dragonfly (MCQ)

SOCIAL ISSUES

Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019 (MCQ)

PRELIMS

GEOGRAPHY

➤ Dam Safety in India

INTERNAL RELATIONS

➤ Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement and India's interest in it

INTERNAL SECURITY

➤ Illegal Migration in India

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

➤ Single Tribunal to hear water disputes

➤ The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019

➤ Uniform Civil Code in India

➤ Wage Code Bill

GSSCORE
An Institute for Civil Services

www.iasscore.in

— **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 (JULY, 2019)

CONTENTS

Section - A: Mains Current Affairs

Area of GS	Topics in News	Page No.
Geography	• Dam Safety in India	06
Internal Relations	• Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement and India's interest in it	10
Internal Security	• Illegal Migration in India	14
Polity & Governance	• Single Tribunal to hear water disputes	19
	• The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019	22
	• Uniform Civil Code in India	25
	• Wage Code Bill	29

Section - B: Prelims Current Affairs

Area of GS	Topics in News	Page No.
Art & Culture	• UNESCO World Heritage Sites	34
Economy	• 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora'	35
	• Multidimensional Poverty Index	36
	• Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban	38
	• 'Utkarsh 2022'	39
Geography & Environment	• Plastic Pollution	41
	• Sea Level Increase	43
	• Polavaram Irrigation Project	44
	• 'SATAT initiative'	46
Internal Security	• National Repository of Photographs	47
Polity	• Article 370	48
Science & Technology	• Human Atlas	50
	• NASA's mission to launch Dragonfly	51
Social Issues	• Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019	53
Miscellaneous	• World Population Prospects 2019	54

GS SCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

 www.iasscore.in



CLASSROOM PROGRAMME



LIVE/ONLINE CLASSES

IAS 2020 MAINS TEST SERIES

GS MAINS Q & A

“COMPLETE GS & ESSAY through TEST SERIES”

1500+ Topics of GS Paper 1, 2, 3, 4 and Essay covered

Concept Classes after Every Test (4-5 Hrs.)

Batch Starts

10 AUGUST

IAS 2020

GS MAINS Advance

GS Paper 1, 2, 3, 4 + Essay + Mains Test Series

**4 MONTHS
CLASSES**

Batch Starts 28 JULY

Regular & Weekend Classes

SECTION: A
(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

DAM SAFETY IN INDIA

CONTEXT

- More than 900 people from over 50 villages of Madhya Pradesh staged a dharna outside the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) office in Indore, fearing flooding of their villages if the Sardar Sarovar Dam was filled to its brim.

◎ BACKGROUND

- Dam is defined as a barrier built across a stream, river or estuary to confine and check the flow of water for such uses as human consumption, irrigation, flood control and electric-power generation. Lately, dams are seen more as hydropower generators with flood mitigation, irrigation and drinking water supply only being additional benefits.
- However, globally about 2.2% of dams build before 1950 have failed mainly due to flooding, inadequate spillway capacity, bad workmanship etc. India ranks third globally with 5264 large dams in operation and about 437 are under construction. But, India too has had its share of dam failures. There are more than 36 reported failures cases so far.
- First failure recorded in Madhya Pradesh during 1917 when the Tigra Dam failed due to overtopping. The worst dam disaster was the failure of Machu dam (Gujarat) in 1979 in which about 2000 people have died. Recently, the breach in Tiware dam in Maharashtra's Konkan region swept away more than 20 people.

Types of dam in India

- **Earth dam:** Earthen dam utilizes natural materials with a minimum of processing. In India most of the dams are earthen dam.
- **Gravity dam:** A gravity dam is a dam constructed from concrete or stone masonry and designed to hold back water by primarily utilizing the weight of the material. Gravity dams provide some advantages over embankment dams.
- **Composite dam:** It is an earthen dam which is provided with a stone masonry or concrete overflow (spillway) section.

Dam Safety Framework in India

- **National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS)**
 - Constituted by Govt. of India in 1987.
 - Chaired by Chairman, CWC and is represented by all the States having significant number of large dams and other dam owning organizations.
 - Suggest ways to bring dam safety activities in line with the latest state-of-art consistent with the Indian conditions.
 - Acts as a forum for exchange of views on techniques adopted for remedial measures to relieve distress in old dams.
- **Central Dam Safety Organization (CDSO)**
 - Central Dam Safety Organization was established in CWC, in 1979
 - The objective of Central DSO was to:
 - Assist in identifying causes of potential distress;
 - Perform a coordinative and advisory role for the State Governments;
 - Lay down guidelines, compile technical literature, organize trainings, etc.; and create awareness in the states about dam safety.
- **State Dam Safety Organizations (SDSO)-**
 - DSO/Cell established in 18 States and 5 dam owning organizations
- **Routine Periodic Inspection**
 - Done by trained and experienced engineers from DSO
 - At least twice a year : pre monsoon and post monsoon
 - Examination of general health of the dam and appurtenant works
 - Preparedness of dam and hydro mechanical structures for handling expected floods
- **Comprehensive Dam Safety Evaluation**
 - Once in a 10 year
 - More comprehensive examination

- Multi-disciplinary team for holistic view
- May order additional field and laboratory investigations as well as numerical simulations

● **ANALYSIS**

Significance of Dams in India

- Dams supply the wealth of water to the parched fields of millions of farmers.
- They meet the domestic, municipal and industrial water needs of urbanized and rural areas.
- They form the backbone of India's Power Grid Management because they generate cheap and eco-friendly hydro power across the country.
- Dams also sustain the growth of flora and fauna in many of the degraded forests.
- Dams offer a viable solution for checking unsustainable depletion of ground water, which may be inching towards tripping point under the tremendous pressure of growing population.

Need for Dam Safety in India

- Over 75% of the country's dams are over 25 years old and about 164 dams are more than 100 years old. With the increasing number of dams becoming older and older, dam failures are more expected now.
- Ensuring Dam Safety is essential for safeguarding huge investments in infrastructure.
- It is also crucial for safeguarding human life, and properties of the people living downstream of the dams.
- Many dams have varied structural deficiencies and shortcomings in operation and monitoring facilities, while few do not meet the present design standard- both structurally and hydrologically.
- Most of the States have been failing to provide sufficient budgets for maintenance and repair of the dam. Many States also lack the institutional and technical capacities for addressing dam safety issues.

Government Initiatives

● **Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)**

- Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation through Central Water Commission, in 2012, launched the six year Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) with World Bank with an objective to improve safety and operational performance of selected dams, along with institutional strengthening with system wide management approach.
- In 2018, the government approved the extension of DRIP Project for two more years with the revised scheduled closure June 2020.
- Presently 198 dam projects are being rehabilitated under the DRIP Project.

● **Dam Safety Bill**

- Union Cabinet in June 2018 approved proposal for enactment of Dam Safety Bill, 2018.
- The Bill provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of specified dams across the country.
- The Bill also provides for the institutional mechanism to ensure the safety of such dams.

● **Dam Health And Rehabilitation Monitoring Application (DHARMA)**

- It is web-based software package to support the effective collection and management of Dam Safety data in respect of all large dams of India.
- The software is designed for users at Central, State and Dam level, with user permission rights governed by their respective licenses.

● **Seismic Hazard Mapping along with development of Seismic Hazard Assessment Information System (SHAISYS)**

- It is also web based interactive application tool being developed in CWC under Dam Safety Organisation (DSO) to estimate the seismic hazard at any point in Indian region.
- The SHAISYS shall be capable of estimating seismic hazard using the deterministic as well as probabilistic approach.

● **Other Initiatives**—Other important activities include Design Flood Review, publication of important Guidelines as well as Manuals dealing with Dam Safety Management, preparation of O&M Manuals, Emergency Action Plans.

Issues

- Current legal framework does not have any provision for penalizing the owner in case

of a dam failure causing a disaster in the upstream or downstream of the dam.

- Lack of systematic assessment and monitoring coupled with inadequate resources is the primary cause of poor maintenance of dams and appurtenant works.
- Real time inflow forecasting systems are not in place even in important reservoirs. Such systems can add to dam safety measures besides improving operational efficiencies.
- The procedure requires that revision study of dam hydrology needs to be completed much in advance of any rehabilitation exercise but this not being the case has led to delays in DRIP implementation
- Dam design drawings or drawings as constructed are not available with project authorities in many cases.
- Dam Safety Organizations (DSO) in states is short of adequate man power and need to be strengthened.
- Siltation of reservoir is a serious issue, though in most cases the extent of siltation continues to remain unknown. De-siltation of reservoir is difficult in many a cases owing to environmental concerns related to sediment disposal.
- Appropriate Interventions for Sediment Management is not available in most cases. In few cases river sluices are available in dams, but they have not been operated for long periods, and are no more functional.

Dam Safety Bill, 2018 - Key Provisions:

- Dam Safety Bill 2018 will empower the dam safety institutional set-ups in both the Centre and States
- It will help in standardizing and improving dam safety practices across the country.
- It will address all issues concerning dam safety including regular inspection of dams, Emergency Action Plan, comprehensive dam safety review, adequate repair

and maintenance funds for dam safety, Instrumentation and Safety Manuals.

- The bill will constitute National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS), National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA), and State Dam Safety Organization (SDSO) with well defined duties and functions.
- The Bill provides for comprehensive safety evaluation (CSE) by independent panel of expert. First CSE within 5 years, and thereafter at regular intervals specified by NCDS.
- Comprehensive Safety Evaluation would be compulsory in case of major modification to structure or design criteria; discovery of unusual condition at dam or reservoir rim; an extreme hydrological or seismic event.
- The Bill provides for punishment / penalty if the dam safety provisions are not followed
- The Bill provides for an emergency action plan to combat any disaster arising out of dam failures.

Recommendations

- A Standing Committee Report has recommended that a penal provision for dam failures should be incorporated in the law and compensation should be provided to the affected families.
- Latest technologies should be adopted not only at the time of constructing the dam, but also during periodic review of the dams.
- Institutional Capacity building is needed in design flood estimation and flood routing for most of the states.
- A well planned monitoring system based on data collection and evaluation using modern instrumentation is the key to early detection of defects and ageing scenarios.
- Rehabilitation of old dams using the latest materials and technologies can enhance the life of a dam for many more decades.



Practice Question

- Discuss the need for dam safety in India and how Dam Safety Bill 2018 can suitably address structural and operational deficiencies in the present dm safety framework of India.

Dam Safety in India

GS SCORE

Learning Aid

CONTEXT

The Centre is set to introduce the Dam Safety Bill, 2019 in Parliament after it was cleared by the Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)

(Various editions of the Bill have been introduced since 2010 but it has never been successfully passed, largely due to opposition by States at various times. Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Odisha have opposed the Bill on the grounds that it encroaches upon the sovereignty of States to manage their dams)

Need for enhanced regulations for dam safety in India

> 75 % of these are more than 25 years old and some 160 are more than 100 years old → hence, with time their proper regulation and maintenance becomes even more important

India is 3rd in the world in terms of no. of large dams which stands at around 5600

The current dam safety organisations like 'National Committee on Dam Safety' have no statutory recognition and are only recommendatory bodies and hence, are **not suitably empowered** to ensure dam safety

In **absence of a proper regulatory framework**, they pose danger to human life, property and the benefits derived from them

There has been a **lack of funds** for repair and maintenance of dams

To address this issues, Dam Safety Bill has been envisaged

Dam Safety Bill 2018

States and UTs to adopt uniform dam safety procedures



Constitution of National Committee on Dam Safety to evolve dam safety policies



Establishment of National Dam Safety Authority to implement the policy & guidelines



Mandatory surveillance, operation & maintenance of all specified dams to ensure safe functioning



Constitution of State Committee on Dam Safety by respective States

It aims to put in place a systematic procedure to ensure that India's 5,600 dams are made and maintained safely.

This body will **recommend** necessary regulations

provisions will include emergency action plan, funds for repair, etc

every state shall establish a '**State Dam Safety Organisation**' which will be manned by officers from the field dam safety.

examine causes of dam failures

penalise states for not following safety standards

This will be **regulatory and implementing** body. Inter alia, it will

maintain national level database of dams

provide technical and managerial assistance to states

These will be responsible for surveillance, inspection and maintenance of dams

The Bill lays the onus of the dam safety **on the dam owner** and provides for penal provisions for wilful "commission and omission of certain acts."

Latest technologies should be adopted not only at the time of **constructing** the dam, but also during **periodic review** of the dams

A Standing Committee Report has recommended that a **penal provision for dam failures** should be incorporated in the law and **compensation** should be provided to the affected families

What else can be done?

Institutional Capacity building is needed in designing **flood estimation** and flood routing for most of the states

Rehabilitation of old dams using the latest materials and technologies can enhance the life of a dam for many more decades.

A well planned **monitoring system** based on data collection and evaluation using modern instrumentation is the key to early detection of defects and ageing scenarios

AFRICA CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT AND INDIA'S INTEREST IN IT

CONTEXT

- The 12th Summit of the African Union (AU) which concluded at Niamey, the capital of the Niger Republic, saw 54 of 55 of its member states signing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) for goods and services and out of these countries, 27 have already ratified it.

◎ BACKGROUND

- The African countries are set to launch the African Continental Free Trade Area or AfCFTA, the biggest free trade agreement in the world since the World Trade Organization was created in the 1990s.
- The first step towards continental integration was the establishment of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1958.
- The vision of "pan-Africanism" and "collective self-reliance" has long been an integral component of attempts by African leaders and policymakers to find Africa-driven solutions to African problems.
- However, due to weak political, economic and governance structures, these attempts have largely failed to facilitate a structural transformation of the continent and today, the African nations continue to be fragmented economies working in isolation.
- In order to achieve an African resurgence, virtually all the African countries have embraced the notion of "regionalism" and "regional integration" as part of their broader aspirations towards continental integration.
- Over the years, various pan-African organisations have been working towards deepening economic, social and political integration in Africa.
- One such attempt was made at the 18th ordinary session of the African Union (AU), held in Addis Ababa in January 2012, with a decision to launch a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by 2017.
- A major breakthrough was achieved in 2018 when leaders from 44 African countries met in Kigali, Rwanda, and signed a framework agreement to establish what is being called one of the world's largest trade blocs.
- The agreement declared that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) would "come into effect 30 days after ratification by the parliaments of at least 22 countries. Each country has 120 days after signing the framework to ratify the agreement

Analysis and Challenges being faced by the continent

- The African continent has a relatively small share of world output and an even smaller one of world exports and global foreign direct investment (FDI) net flows yet the continent was among the fastest growing region in the world in 2013, closely followed by Asia and the Pacific
- It is the fourth regional cluster in terms of output volume, smaller than Asia and the Pacific, North America and Europe
- Africa is a vast continent indeed. It has an expanse representing 1/5 of the planet's landmass, roughly equivalent to three times the size of Europe, with a formidable variety of geographies, cultures, languages, traditions, and historical trajectories though Africa has the world's largest concentration of least developed countries, low human development index and low income and lower middle-income countries.
- Political instability and at times armed conflicts have reduced the health, education, public services, justice and security systems of some African countries.
- These realities serve as a warning that no single, off-the-rack solution will prove effective for socioeconomic development in all jurisdictions.
- Most of the 54 African Union member countries are members of more than one regional trade bloc and intergovernmental organization, setting out conflicting disciplines and benefits
- Africa is still heavily reliant on commodity and agricultural exports while importing capital goods or food products predominantly from outside the continent.
- With a global trade share of less than 3 per cent, export diversification has yet to be achieved, as many African countries still rely on rents from extractive exports, whilst falling behind on industrialisation efforts.

Aims and objectives of AfCFTA along with its core idea

- The CFTA is an attempt by the African governments to "unlock Africa's tremendous potential" to deliver prosperity to all Africans.

- It seeks to create a single continental market for goods and services with free movement of business people and investments.
- By 2030, the African market size is expected to reach 1.7 billion people, with a combined and cumulative consumer and business spending of US\$6.7 trillion.
- The CFTA aims to expand intra-African trade through better harmonisation and coordination of trade liberalisation and facilitation regimes and instruments across subregions (RECs) and at the continental level.
- As part of the agreement, "countries have committed to remove tariffs on 90 percent of goods with the remaining 10 percent of items to be phased in at a later stage
- A study by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) estimates that successful completion and implementation of the CFTA agreement – complemented with efforts to improve trade-related infrastructure, reduced import duties and transit costs could lead to a 52.3 percent increase in intra-African trade by 2022, from the 2010 levels.
- An increase in intra-African trade will "drive the structural transformation of economies from low productivity and labour intensive activities to higher productivity and skills intensive industrial and service activities
- This will subsequently help in generating better paid jobs, leading to poverty alleviation.
- The AfCFTA also seeks to "foster a competitive manufacturing sector and promote economic diversification
- the continental free trade area is expected to offer substantial opportunities for industrialisation, diversification and high skilled employment
- It is an opportunity to accelerate the manufacture and intra-African trade of value-added products, moving from commodity based economies and exports to economic diversification and high-valued exports

Intra-African Trade Initiatives

- **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD):** The New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) is an example of an African initiative with a continent-wide focus. It was ratified by the AU in 2002 and provides a comprehensive integrated development strategy to bring about a holistic socio-economic development of Africa.
- **The African Free trade Zone (AFTZ):** The African Free Trade Zone (AFTZ), also known as the African Free Trade Area, was announced at the EAC-SADC-COMESA Summit in October 2008. The agreement marked a milestone in Africa's journey towards

regional and continental integration as, for the first time a truly transcontinental union from north to south was established.

- **Minimum Integration Programme (MIP):** In 2009, the AUC along with the RECs signed the Minimum Integration Programme (MIP) as a mechanism for convergence among the RECs to focus on key areas of concern, both at the regional and continental levels. The MIP "embodies the activities of the project and the programmes which require quick implementation in order to speed up and ensure the successful completion of regional and continental integration process
- **Boosting Intra-African Trade (BITA):** The African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government Summit, held in January 2011, decided to hold the next summit in 2012 under the theme of "boosting intra-African trade" to deepen Africa's market integration and significantly increase the volume of intra-African trade. An action plan was drafted to "enhance the levels of intra-African trade from current levels of 10-13 percent to 25 percent or above within the next decade
- **Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA):** Its launch demonstrated the possibility of a collective action among several heterogeneous nations and showcased the feasibility of harmonising three different preferential trade regimes into one unified scheme.
- **South African Customs Union (SACU):** The SACU is one of world's oldest customs unions. It lasted till 1969, agreed on a "Common External Tariff (CET) on all goods imported into the union from the rest of the world and a common pool of customs duties. It also included provisions for free movement of SACU manufactured products within SACU and revenue-sharing formula (RSF) for the distribution of customs and excise revenues.
- **Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM):** The Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), a 'flagship project of AU under Agenda 2063' aims at "creating a single unified air transport market in Africa and liberalise civil aviation in Africa.

Opportunities from AfCFTA

- A bigger and integrated regional market for African products.
- Improved conditions for forming regional value chains (RVCs) and integration to global value chains (GVCs).
- Consumer access to cheaper imported products from other African countries.
- Benefits to producers from economies of scale and access to cheap raw materials.
- Better allocation of resources leading to faster economic growth.

- Higher intra-African and external direct capital flows to African countries.
- Elimination of challenges associated with multiple and overlapping trade agreements.
- The structural transformation of the African countries from resource and low technology-based economies to more diversified, knowledge-based economies.
- Stronger cooperation in other areas, such as technology transfer, investment, innovation and continent wide infrastructure development.

India-Africa and AfCFTA

- Africa is already an important economic partner for India with total annual merchandise trade estimated at \$70 billion or nearly a tenth of our global trade.
- India's engagement with African nations remains at three levels: Bilateral, Regional and Multilateral.
- India is Africa's third largest trading partner.
- Africa still has unfulfilled demand for Indian commodities, especially foodstuff, finished products (automobiles, pharmaceuticals, consumer goods) and services such as IT/IT-Enabled Service, health care and education, skilling, expertise in management and banking, financial services and insurance.
- Africa is a continent which receives nearly 20% of our pharmaceuticals. Many of our Pharma

companies have established units in various parts of Africa, including Ethiopia, Uganda, DRC, Zambia and Ghana.

- Our medicines and medical equipment such as Bhabhatrons and phototherapy machines are saving lives in Africa. Many of our hospitals have entered into joint ventures for establishing health care facilities.
- India is also helping the African countries to bridge the digital divide. "We have launched 2nd phase of the Pan Africa e-Network project – e-VidhyaBharati and e-ArogyaBharati Network Project (E-VBAB), which aims to provide 5 years free tele-education to students, free medical education to doctors/nurses/paramedics and free medical consultancy.
- During the Third India-Africa Forum Summit, India offered USD 10 billion for development projects over the next five years.

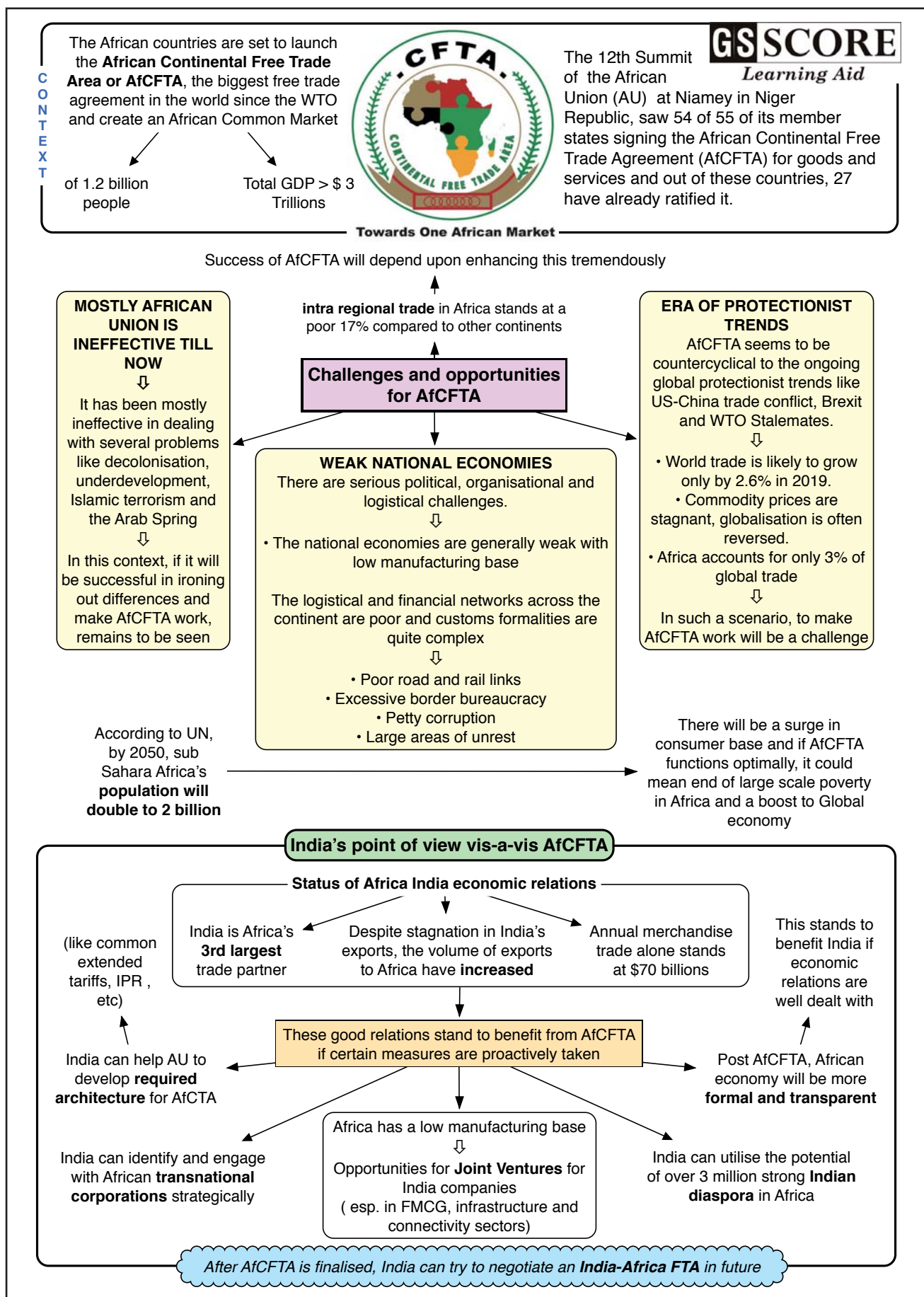
Conclusion

- The AfCFTA agreement represents a historic development in Africa's journey towards creating a single, common and integrated market for the continent. To achieve this goal, it is imperative that the African countries develop the ability to produce and manufacture goods on their own, which will subsequently increase intra-African trade.



Practice Question

- Discuss current scenario in India-Africa trade ties. Also, analyse impact of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on India-Africa trade.



ILLEGAL MIGRATION IN INDIA

CONTEXT

- A petition was filed by two Rohingya men against the government's proposed move to deport their 40,000-strong community back to their native land of Myanmar. In this backdrop, the Supreme Court is now examining, whether the illegal immigrants can even be considered for 'refugee' status or not

◎ BACKGROUND

- India is often described as a land of migrants, which over centuries, has attracted streams of immigrants from different races and cultures and assimilated them to build a composite civilisation.
- India has been witnessing immigration since independence. People who have faced religious and political persecution, economic and social discrimination, cultural repression and curbs on personal freedom have made India their home.
- Many others have entered India to escape abject poverty and economic stagnation in their country, and to build a better future for themselves. Of all kinds of migration, illegal migration has become the most volatile and contentious issue in Indian polity today because of the socio-political conflicts it has brought in its wake. Illegal migration comprises of people across national borders in a way that violates the immigration laws of the destination country.
- Despite such unabated illegal migration from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and other bordering countries, there are no authentic official statistics to ascertain the actual number of illegal migrants in India. Nonetheless, the Government of India has periodically provided statistics on the estimated number of illegal migrants in India. In 2004, the Union Minister of State for Home told Parliament that the country had 1.2 crore illegal immigrants. Currently, India is home to over two crore illegal migrants.

Understanding Refugee, Asylum – Seeker and Migrant

• Refugee

- Refugees are persons who are outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection. The refugee definition can be found in the 1951 Convention and regional refugee instruments, as well as UNHCR's Statute.

• Migrant

- While there is no formal legal definition of an international migrant, most experts agree that an international migrant is someone who changes his or her country of usual residence, irrespective of the reason for migration or legal status. Generally, a distinction is made between short-term or temporary migration, covering movements with a duration between three and 12 months, and long-term or permanent migration, referring to a change of country of residence for a duration of one year or more.

• Asylum-seeker

- An asylum-seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. Seeking asylum is a human right. This means everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum.

• Pattern of Illegal Migration since Post-Independence

- The independence of the country in 1947 was preceded by intense violence between the Hindus and the Muslims, and led to the partitioning of the Indian subcontinent into two dominions—India and Pakistan—on religious grounds. Creation of India and Pakistan meant that the movement of people which was hitherto taking place between two provinces and was legal became movement between countries and was therefore illegal.
- The riots of 1964 and the India–Pakistan War of 1965 yet again resulted in the out-migration of large numbers of Hindus from East Pakistan.
- Then, the genocide perpetrated by the military junta in East Pakistan and the subsequent War of Liberation in 1971 triggered unrelenting migration into Assam, Tripura, West Bengal and other North Eastern Countries.
- The Rohingya, Muslims from Rakhine province on Myanmar's western coast, started arriving in sizeable numbers in India's Northeast in late 2011 following stepped-up persecution by the

Myanmar armed forces. As per Home Ministry data, there are more than 14,000 UNHCR-registered Rohingya in India. However, security agencies estimate the number of Rohingya living illegally in India at 40,000.

Reasons for Illegal Migration in India

• Political Factors

- Political factors have been one of the major reasons in forcing the Bangladeshi Hindus out of the country and into India. The riots of 1964 and the India–Pakistan War of 1965 yet again resulted in the out-migration of large numbers of Hindus from East Pakistan.
- Another massive out-migration from East Pakistan was triggered in 1971 when the Pakistani military establishment tried to suppress Bengali nationalism through brutal military force.

• Religious Discrimination

- In Bangladesh, the already discriminatory land laws were further manipulated by vested interest groups and corrupt administrators to dispossess and alienate the Hindus from their own land and property.
- Religion has a particular effect in the case of the Rohingya Crisis. The so-called War on Terror—waged primarily against Muslims around the world—has made it easier for Myanmar's elites to label the Rohingya as terrorists.
- The Rohingya Army's attacks on government targets further validated many citizens' belief that Islam is inherently violent and poses an existential threat to Buddhism, Myanmar's majority religion.

• Growing Population

- Growing population creates greater demands on resources such as land, food, energy, water and forest products, and their consequent overuse results in deterioration of quality.
- This process, in turn, encourages inequality in resource distribution among the rich and poor as the rich corner them and deny the poor their share.

• Stagnant Economic Growth and Lack of Employment

- Industrialisation in India's neighbouring countries has not been able to keep pace with the growing labour force and as a result, the unemployment rate is declining.
- The working-age people who are unable to find jobs in the country look outside for employment opportunities.

• Facilitating Factors

- Porous Borders: India shares long and porous international border with Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The border traverses a range of natural and cultural landscapes, which pose a challenge to its effective management.
- Ethnicity: The ethnic composition of the people is similar on both sides of the borders and it is quite difficult to differentiate between the citizens of India and other countries.
- Fertile Land: The flat and fertile land along the border supports dense human settlements right up to the border. There are many villages located right along the borders.
- Social network: The social networks established between the old immigrants and new immigrants over decades are extremely vital for the clandestine movement of people across the border.
- Corruption by Security Personnel: The border-guarding personnel often collude with the smugglers and touts for economic benefits. The Army personnel have been notorious for demanding money from migrants to look the other way when these undocumented migrants cross the international border.
- Political patronage: Political parties have always exploited the vulnerability of the illegal migrants for their own vested interests and benefits. The main reason that the political parties protect the illegal migrants is that they consider the illegal migrants as potential vote banks.

Legal Framework in India

- Article 51 states that the state shall endeavour to foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized people with one another.
- As the Citizenship Act 1955, an illegal immigrant can be:
 - Foreign national who enters India on valid travel documents and stays beyond their validity, or
 - Foreign national who enters without valid travel documents.
- The Foreigners Act, 1946, gives the central government the right to deport a foreign national.
- India is not a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, and it does not currently have a national law on refugees.
- While law and order is a State subject under the Indian Constitution, international relations and international borders are under the exclusive

purview of the Union government. This has resulted in a variety of agencies, both of the Central as well as the State governments, having to deal with refugee matters connected with law enforcement.

- In 2011, the Union government circulated to all states and Union Territories a Standard Operating Procedure to deal with foreign nationals who claimed to be refugees.
- So, in a nutshell, India does not have on its statute book a specific and separate law to govern refugees.

Impact of Illegal Migration in India

Such a huge influx of illegal migrants has had grave consequences on the socio-cultural, economic and political life of the receiving states.

- **Clashes due to Insecurity:** Illegal migration has resulted in periodic clashes between the citizens of India and migrants, leading to their loss of life and property, and thereby violating their constitutional rights.
- **Political Instability:** Conflict over scarce resources, economic opportunities and cultural dominance ensues between the locals and migrants, along with the resultant political instability caused by the mobilisation of popular perception against the migrants by the elites to grab political power.
- **Disturbance in Law and Order:** The rule of law and integrity of the country are undermined by the illegal migrants who are engaged in illegal and anti-national activities, such as entering the country clandestinely, fraudulently acquiring identity cards, exercising voting rights in India and resorting to trans-border smuggling and other crimes.
- **Rise of Militancy:** The persistent attacks against the Muslims perceived as illegal migrants in Assam has given way to radicalisation within certain sections of the Muslim community with the formation of militant organisations, such as the Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA).
- **Human trafficking:** In the recent decades, trafficking of women and human smuggling have become quite rampant across the borders. Poverty and hunger forces either the parents to sell the girls to traffickers or the girls themselves leave home and fall prey to traffickers.

Response by the Government

Since the threats and challenges to the stability and security of the country as a result of illegal migration were varied, the state response to them was also a mix of targeted interventions.

- **The Land Acquisition Acts:** The Government reserved lands for the tribals by creating tribal belts

and blocks through land revenue acts, but, initiative hardly addressed the problem of land alienation amongst the tribals as the lands earmarked for them were in remote and barren areas.

- **NRC in Assam:** A National Register of Citizens (NRC), containing information for each individual such as the father's name or husband's name, nationality, sex, age, means of livelihood, was prepared by the Assam government in 1951. The NRC was aimed to help identify and verify genuine Indian citizens and repatriate foreigners. Now, the Assam government has recently released the updated version of NRC.
- **The Foreigner's Tribunals of 1964:** These tribunals had the power to take up cases to decide whether a person is foreigner or not, as specified in the Foreigners Act of 1946. Recently, the Assam government has decided to establish 200 Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs) for handling cases of people to be excluded from the final National Register of Citizens (NRC).
- **Operation Push Back:** It called for forcible deportation of illegal migrants in India. The fundamental objective of "Operation Push Back" was to deter any potential Bangladeshi migrant from illegally crossing the border and settling in India.
- **Tighter Border Controls:** Indian government implemented a series of schemes, such as augmenting the manpower of the border-guarding force, increasing the number of border outposts along the border, constructing fences and issuance of multiple identity cards to border population.
- **The India-Bangladesh Border Fence:** Fences or barriers are described as "fortified boundaries" and are constructed for enhanced border controls. India is perhaps the first country which has built a border fence to prevent illegal migration.
- **Multipurpose Identity Card:** In 2010, Aadhar Project was launched to provide a unique identity number to each resident of India and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) was set up to implement the project, which has, till now has generated 19.67 crore Aadhar numbers.
- **Amendment to Citizenship Act:** The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 aims to provide citizenship to those who had been forced to seek shelter in India because of religious persecution or fear of persecution in their home countries. They are primarily Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Recent Developments

- **RIIN of Nagaland:** Recently, the Nagaland Government is implementing a localised version

of NRC, the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN). The aim behind this move is to prevent outsiders from acquiring fake indigenous inhabitant certificates for seeking jobs and be beneficiaries of government schemes.

- Demand by Karnataka: Recently, demands are being raised to extend the National Register of Citizens (NRC) to Karnataka because illegal immigrants from Bangladesh had become a security threat to Bangalore and the entire State.

◎ WAY FORWARD

- Even though India is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention on refugees and also the 1967 Protocol, it is a signatory to a number of United Nations and World Conventions on Human Rights, refugee issues and related matters. Hence its obligations in regard to refugees arise out of the latter. India has also voted affirmatively to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms rights for all persons, citizens and non- citizens alike.



Practice Question

- Critically examine whether India should ratify the Convention on Refugees 1951 in the context of unabated illegal migration in India since independence.

GSSSCORE



Illegal Migration in India

GS SCORE
Learning Aid

CONTEXT

A petition was filed by two Rohingya men against the government's proposed move to deport their 40,000-strong community back to their native land of Myanmar.

In this backdrop, the Supreme Court is now examining, whether the illegal immigrants can even be considered for 'refugee' status or not.

Illegal migration comprises of people across national borders in a way that violates the immigration laws of the destination country

India has been facing illegal migration since independence

It is (*unofficially*) estimated that India is home to over **2 crore illegal migrants**

Growing population and lower economic growth

When economic growth is unable to keep up with rising population, people are forced to look for opportunities in neighbouring countries

Reasons for illegal migration to India

Political factors and religious discrimination

for e.g., migrants from 'East Pakistan' and more prominently, Rohingyas from Myanmar these days

There are various factors facilitating this migration

porous borders

A large part of India's borders traverse natural landscapes which are difficult to manage

corruption by certain security personnel by providing passage in lieu of money

similar ethnicities on both sides of the border make it difficult to differentiate the migrants

political patronage

some political parties consider illegal migrants as potential vote banks

The illegal migration has several **adverse impacts** like

Disturbance of law and order

periodic clashes between citizens and migrants

Stress on resources

support to militancy by a section of the migrants

Political instability

acquisition of fraudulent identity cards and voting rights

politicians pitting both sides against each other for political gains

Similar demands are being raised from other corners of the country like Karnataka

NRC is being updated in Assam to identify foreigners

Citizenship Amendment Bill aims to provide shelter to "genuine" refugees who have sought shelter due to persecution in their countries

What have been the various responses ?

They decide if a person is foreigner or not as specified in the Foreigners Act of 1946
(Recently, Assam govt has set up 200 FTs for handling cases of people excluded from NRC)

Foreigner's Tribunals

Tighter Border Controls

Govt has been upscaling its border infrastructure, esp. with Bangladesh in terms of

manpower

border outposts and fence construction

issuing multiple identity cards to its border population

Even though India is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention on refugees and also the 1967 Protocol, it is a signatory to a number of United Nations and World Conventions on Human Rights, refugee issues and related matters. Hence its obligations in regard to refugees arise out of the latter. India has also voted affirmatively to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms rights for all persons, citizens and non-citizens alike.

SINGLE TRIBUNAL TO HEAR WATER DISPUTES

CONTEXT

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The bill help adjudicate disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers and river valleys.

◎ ABOUT:

- The Bill seeks to amend the Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.
- It intends to streamline the adjudication of inter-state river water disputes.
- A key feature of the bill is the constitution of a single tribunal with different Benches, and the setting of strict timelines for adjudication.

◎ BACKGROUND:

Inter-State Water Disputes

- India has 2.4% of the World's land, 18% of the world population but only 4% of the renewable water resource. If sufficient steps are not taken, the uneven water distribution will increase the possibility of water conflicts.
- The current allocation of surface water by the Tribunals is based on "dependable flow" concept which is fundamentally flawed.
- What is ironical at times is the fact that the total allocated water is even greater than entire flow of river during many years.
- If the state refuses to comply with the award at times of low flow, the Judiciary and the losing state considers the act as contempt (examples of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu antagonism over river Cauvery).
- Due to this reasons, the Inter-state river water disputes hinder the cooperative federalism
- Water is a State subject as per entry 17 of State List and thus states are empowered to enact legislation on water.

Constitutional provisions:

- Entry 17 of State List deals with water i.e. water supply, irrigation, canal, drainage, embankments, and water storage and water power.
- Entry 56 of Union List gives power to the Union Government for the regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys to the extent declared by Parliament to be expedient in the public interest.
- In the case of disputes relating to waters, Article 262 provides:
 - Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-State river or river valley.

- Parliament may, by law provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint.

Parliament has enacted two laws according to Article 262:

- **River Board Act, 1956:** The objective of Boards is to advise on the inter-state basin to prepare development scheme and to prevent the emergence of conflicts.
- **Inter-State Water Dispute Act, 1956:** If a particular state or states approach to Union Government for the constitution of the tribunal, Central Government should try to resolve the matter by consultation among the aggrieved states. If it does not work, then it may constitute the tribunal.

The composition of the River Water Tribunal: Tribunal is constituted by the Chief Justice of India and it consists of the sitting judge of Supreme Court and the other two judges who can be from Supreme Court or High Court. Supreme Court shall not question the Award given by tribunal but it can question the working of the tribunal.

◎ ANALYSIS

There are about a dozen tribunals that now exist to resolve disputes among States on sharing water from rivers common to them.

Active River Water sharing Tribunals in India

- Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal II (2004) – Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra
- Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (2018) – Odisha & Chattisgarh
- Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal (2010)- Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra
- Ravi & Beas Water Tribunal (1986)- Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan
- Vansdhara Water Disputes Tribunal (2010)- Andhra Pradesh & Odisha

Apart from delay in submission of award, other challenges are:

- Often there have been extraordinary delays in constituting the tribunal. Take for example the case of Godavari water dispute. The request was made in 1962. The tribunal was constituted in 1968 and the award was given in 1979 which was published in the Gazette in 1980.

- Similarly, in Cauvery Water Dispute, Tamil Nadu Government requested to constitute the tribunal in 1970. Only after the intervention of Supreme Court, the tribunal was constituted in 1990.
- Tribunals have failed to identify the availability of water through sources such as groundwater.
- Due to delay in constituting the tribunal, state governments continue to invest resources in the construction and modification of dams, thus strengthening their claims.

Actions Taken:

- An Amendment was made in the Act by which the tribunal has to be constituted within a year of getting the request.
- It has been mandated that the tribunal should give the award within 3 years. In certain situations, two more years can be given. Thus the maximum time period was 5 years within which the tribunal should give the award.
- If the award is not immediately implemented. Concerned parties may seek clarification within 3 months of the award.
- It has also been clarified that the Tribunal Awards will have the same force as the order or decree of Supreme Court.

Arguments - in Favor and Against the Centralized Tribunal

- Making sub-tribunals under a single tribunal will make no substantial difference. This is because different dispute scenarios will call for unique and sometimes out of the box contextual solutions.
- However, the Centralized Tribunal system will be more tilted towards a bureaucratic angle thus seeking rules and procedures based on common and uniform architecture.
- What is positive with Centralization is that this system will create a large common database for all the cases relating to the disputes.
- This will help better in planning and adjudicating scheduled tasks based on advanced data analytics.
- Moreover, India is placed at the heart of a geopolitical landscape. Its vulnerability to water disputes with China (Brahmaputra) and Pakistan (Indus) is well known.
- A centralized tribunal will help set a base for international discussions.
- What is to be noted is that the Water has a direct connectivity with livelihood and therefore measures must be taken to ensure a contingency on availability of water to address climate change

adaptability.

- This makes the matter related to water more important than the river dispute.
- As of now, the tribunal structure is procedurally indifferent to the overall sustainability plan.
- Tribunals and its process are part of the problem of water sharing rather than solution.

WAY FORWARD:

- Considering the ineffectiveness of tribunals in the past there is a need to look for alternative dispute redressal mechanism, something which goes beyond formal structure - yet is guided by the rule bound and predicted path. Community-based approach herein can help resolve water related disputes effectively, amicably and sustainably.
- The government must have a process on following pointers before rushing to form the single tribunal:
 - ▶ How to present a robust institutional architecture
 - ▶ To understand the significant changes on water flow
 - ▶ And the relation between groundwater and surface water.

Case Study:

- The '**Cauvery Family**' was one such attempt. Formed in 2003, it brought together farmers from both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to initiate a farmer-to-farmer dialogue and solve the dispute
- The Cauvery Family was able to create an atmosphere wherein farmers of both the states would sit down and hear out each other's concern. In fact, a water-sharing formula was also created.
- Experts from nine east African countries visited Cauvery Family to learn from this initiative and apply the knowledge to resolve dispute over sharing Nile river water.
- These initiatives indicate that water solutions cannot be long-lasting if it is not adapted locally.
- This is precisely why water experts have been advocating for decentralization of powers: involving districts, blocks, municipalities, panchayats, and gram Sabha and making them the owners of water resources, rather than vesting all powers with the Centre or a state.
- Collaborative solutions, rather than hostility; cooperation, rather than conflict is the way out.



Practice Question

- **Making sub-tribunals under a single tribunal will make no substantial difference. Within the context of centralized approach to solve water disputes, examine the causal factors of such disputes, past remedial measures and analyze if the present centralization move will make any qualitative difference.**

Single Tribunal to hear Water Disputes



CONTEXT

The Union Cabinet has approved the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

GSSCORE
Learning Aid

The Bill seeks to amend the **Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956** to streamline the adjudication of various **inter-state river water disputes**

Key features of the bill include **constitution of a single tribunal** with different benches and setting up of **strict timelines for adjudication**.

Current status

Article 262 of constitution

"Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-state river or river valley"

accordingly, Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956 (IRWD Act) was enacted

whenever riparian states are not able to reach amicable agreements on their own in sharing of interstate river waters

the Act provides for dispute resolution process in the form of **ad-hoc tribunal**

The tribunal consists of a sitting SC judge and 2 other SC/HC judges

No court (including SC) can be moved to w.r.t. a dispute referred to a tribunal under IRWD Act during the course of proceedings

The verdict of tribunal becomes law and binding on the states

Tribunal Awards have the same force as the order or decree of Supreme Court

Bottomline

Considering the ineffectiveness of tribunals in the past there is a need to look for alternative dispute redressal mechanism, something which goes beyond formal structure - yet is guided by the rule bound and predicted path. Community-based approach herein can help resolve water related disputes effectively, amicably and sustainably.

Tribunals have failed to identify the availability of water through sources such as groundwater and often times suffer from lack of an all round expertise

Multiplicity of tribunals : There are about a dozen tribunals that now exist to resolve disputes among States on sharing water from rivers common to them

Constituting tribunals for each dispute separately eats up valuable resources and time and could be unnecessarily repetitive in many of its procedures

Issues with ad-hoc Tribunals

Delays

There have been extraordinary delays in constituting many of the tribunals

During the delay, the state govts continue to invest resources in construction/modification of dams, strengthening their claims and complicating the process

to solve most of these issues

The bill proposes

constitution of a single tribunal with different benches

setting up of strict timelines for adjudication

advantages of these amendments

Centralized Tribunal system will be more tilted towards a bureaucratic angle, thus seeking rules and procedures based on **common and uniform architecture**

will create a large **common database** for all the cases relating to the disputes.

will help better in planning and adjudicating scheduled tasks based on advanced data analytics

However, it must be noted that different dispute scenarios will call for unique and sometimes out of the box contextual solutions.

The government should have a process on following pointers before rushing to form the single tribunal

How to present a robust institutional architecture

To understand the significant changes on water flow

The relation between groundwater and surface water

THE UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2019

CONTEXT

- In a move that may result in India designating individual terrorist like Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Maulana Masood Azhar and LeT's Hafiz Saeed, the union home ministry introduced the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019.

◎ BACKGROUND

- The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (the Act) was enacted to provide for more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations, and for dealing with terrorist activities, and for matters connected therewith.
- The said Act has been amended in the years 2004, 2008 and 2013 to add certain provisions relating to various facets of terrorism.
- Its main objective is to make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India.
- The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2011 was introduced to make it more effective in preventing unlawful activities, and meet commitments made at the Financial Action Task Force (an intergovernmental organization to combat money laundering and terrorism financing).
- It expands the definition of 'terrorist act' to Acts that threaten the economic security of India and damage its monetary stability by production, smuggling or circulation of 'high quality' counterfeit currency. The security features that define 'high quality' are laid down in the Third Schedule.

◎ ANALYSIS

- Presently, the National Investigation Agency faces many difficulties in the process of investigation and prosecution of terrorism related cases.
- With a view to overcome such difficulties being faced by the National Investigation Agency in the investigation and prosecution of terrorism related cases due to certain legal infirmities.
- Also to align the domestic law with the international obligations as mandated in several Conventions and Security Council Resolutions on the issue.
- Will allow the Central government to designate individual terrorist and bring in embargo on arms/assets seizures.
- The individual however can appeal against the inclusion of his/her name and seek a hearing

before the review committee, constituted by the Central government under UAPA.

- The provisions, similar to UN sanction is used by the Security Council to apply pressure on a State or entity to comply with the objectives set by the UN without resorting to the use of force.
- The designation, offer Security Council an important instrument to enforce its decisions. As per UN, when a person is designated as a global terrorist under the UN 1267 ISIL and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, a travel ban is imposed on the subject.

Main features of the bill

- Amendment to Schedule 4 of the Bill will allow the NIA to designate an individual suspected to have terror links as a terrorist. As of now, only groups are designated as "terrorist organisations".
- Empowering the Director General, National Investigation Agency to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is investigated by the said agency.
- Amending section 35 of the Act to empower the Central Government to add to or remove from the proposed Fourth Schedule, the name of an individual terrorist and other consequential amendments relating thereto.
- Inserting a new clause (ba) in section 43 of the Act to empower an officer of the rank of Inspector of National Investigation Agency to investigate the offences.
- The government believed in "zero tolerance" towards terrorism and a provision is needed to designate "individual terrorist" in law.

Concerns of the bill

- It is been claimed that in the name of tackling terror, fundamental rights of an individual are been foregone.
- There is no clarity on government's claims that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) finds it difficult to deal with such individuals at present and demanded the government can't keep the House in the dark on the so-called difficulties.
- There are several provisions in the law to go after individuals and the government is failing to take pre-legislative consultation.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act is an Indian law aimed at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India. Its main objective was to make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India.
- The object of this bill was to make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India. The bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament and received the assent of the President in 1967. The Amending Acts are as follows:
 - The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 1969
 - The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1972
 - The Delegated Legislation Provisions (Amendment) Act, 1986
 - The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2004
 - The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2008
 - The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2012

Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002

- The Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002 (POTA) was an Act passed by the Parliament of India in 2002, with the objective of strengthening anti-terrorism operations. The Act was enacted due to several terrorist attacks that were being carried out in India and especially in response to the attack on the Parliament. The Act replaced the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO) of 2001 and the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) (1985–95).
- The Act defined what constituted a "terrorist act" and who a "terrorist" was, and granted special powers to the investigating authorities described under the Act. In order to ensure that discretionary powers granted to the

investigating agencies were not misused and human rights violations were not committed, specific safeguards were built into the Act.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Democracy

- As the second branch of government, the purpose of the legislature is to make laws that uphold the fundamental rights of all citizens.
- However, when met with extraordinary circumstances, the Indian legislature has made laws that have not only neglected fundamental rights, but also contradicted them.
- they have endowed the state with excess powers to violate constitutionally guaranteed rights at both the individual and community level.
- Usually, these unconstitutional laws are designed with a protectionist rhetoric against a threat.

India's draconian laws are sometimes mobilised to serve partisan interests.

- 'National Security' Laws to Suspend Fundamental Rights
- Detaining Kashmiris in the Name of 'Public Safety'
- 'Anti-Terrorism' Laws to Repress Dissent
- Terrorism Laws to Target Minorities and Marginalised Groups

Way forward

- A comprehensive non discriminatory definition of terrorist must be defined.
- Those crimes which are defined under any other existing law must be removed from UAPA.
- The court proceeding must be open and transparent.
- Clear reason must be given before banning any organization.
- Action against the security forces misusing the law must be ensured.



Practice Question

- The ambivalent essence of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) gives vexatious power to authorities. Examine. Also, scrutinize how Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) impinges on the personal liberty of citizens of India..

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 [UAPA]**CONTEXT**

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 was enacted to provide for more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations, and for dealing with terrorist activities, and for matters connected therewith.



In a move that may result in India designating **individual terrorists** like Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Maulana Masood Azhar and LeT's Hafiz Saeed, the union home ministry introduced the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019**

GS SCORE
Learning Aid
UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT 1967**Offences:**

- Terrorist acts
- Membership of terrorist organisations
- Funding, support and recruitment for terrorist organisations

As of now, only groups are designated as "terrorist organisations"

allow the NIA to designate an **individual** suspected to have terror links as a terrorist.

empower the Central Government to add to or remove from the proposed Fourth Schedule, the name of an **individual terrorist** and other consequential amendments relating thereto.

What are the proposed amendments ?

empower the Director General of NIA to grant approval of **seizure or attachment of property** during an investigation

empower an officer of the rank of Inspector of National Investigation Agency to investigate the offences.

Concerns related to the Amendment

There is no clarity on government's claims that the NIA finds it difficult to deal with such individuals at present

A section of media claims that in the name of tackling terror, fundamental rights of an individual are being foregone

There are several provisions in the law to go after individuals and the government is failing to take pre-legislative consultation

Way Ahead

A comprehensive non discriminatory definition of terrorist must be defined.

Those crimes which are defined under any other existing law should be removed from UAPA

Clear reason must be given before banning any organization

The court proceedings must be open and transparent

Action against the security forces misusing the law must be ensured

Bottomline

As the second branch of government, the purpose of the legislature is to make laws that uphold the fundamental rights of all citizens



However, when met with extraordinary circumstances, the Indian legislature has made laws that have not only neglected fundamental rights, but also contradicted them



They have endowed the state with excess powers to violate constitutionally guaranteed rights at both the individual and community levels



India's draconian laws are sometimes mobilised to serve partisan interests as visible in certain cases



So, although such amendments if needed should be brought in, but not without undergoing a wider public debate on various features of the proposed amendments and their implications

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE IN INDIA

CONTEXT

- The issue of framing a Uniform Civil Code is about to be placed for consideration before the 22nd Law Commission. The issue was considered by the 21st Law Commission, which sought the views of various stakeholders and met several religious groups.

◎ BACKGROUND

- The term Civil Code means to cover the entire body of laws governing rights relating to property and other personal matters like marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption and inheritance. Uniform civil code essentially means unifying all these "personal laws" to have one set of secular laws dealing with these aspects that will apply to all the citizens of India irrespective of the community to which they belong.
- During the debates in the Constituent Assembly, B.R.Ambedkar had demonstrated his will to reform Indian society by recommending the adoption of a Civil Code of western inspiration. But he had to face extensive criticism from both Muslim and Hindu Representatives for making an attempt to reform the traditional religious laws. As a result, Ambedkar's efforts merely found a place in the Directive Principles of the State Policy of the Constitution.
- Article 44 of the Indian Constitutions says that the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India. While more than seven decades have passed since the enactment of the Constitution, this particular provision has remained a dead letter.

Personal Laws Framework in India

Currently, the citizens of India are governed by different sets of personal laws in respect of matters relating to family affairs, i.e., marriage, divorce, succession, etc.

• Marriage & Divorce

- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
- The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986.
- The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936
- In Muslims, marriages are governed by the Mohammedan Law prevalent in the country
- In case of Jews, there is no codified law in India. Even today, they are governed by their religious laws

• Adoption

- Although there is no general law of adoption, it is permitted by the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956 amongst Hindus

- Muslims, Christians and Parsis have no adoption laws and have to approach the court under the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890

- **Maintenance** - Obligation of a husband to maintain his wife arises out of the status of the marriage. Right to maintenance forms a part of the personal law.

- Under Hindu Law, the wife has an absolute right to claim maintenance from her husband. But she loses her right if she deviates from the path of chastity.

- Under the Muslim Law, the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 protects rights of Muslim women who have been divorced by or have obtained divorce from their husbands

• Succession

- A vast majority of Muslims in India follow Hanafi doctrines of Sunni law.
- The law relating to intestate succession among Hindus is codified in the Hindu Succession Act, 1956

Present Secular Laws in India

- CrPC: In India, we have a criminal code that is equally applicable to all, irrespective of religion, caste, gender and domicile.
- Special Marriage Act, 1954: Its objective is to provide a secular legislation under which individuals from two separate communities can solemnize their marriage, thus liberating people from the traditional coercive requirements of marriage under separate personal laws.
- Uniform Civil Law in Goa: Goa is the only state in India that has uniform civil code regardless of religion, gender, caste. Goa has a common family law. In Goa Hindu, Muslim, Christians all are bound with the same law related to marriage, divorce, succession.

◎ ANALYSIS

Need for UCC in India

- **Gender Inequality:**

- ▶ **In Marriage:** Various aspects of prevailing marriage personal laws discriminates against women, like Sharia law allows a Muslim male to solemnize up to four marriages without taking consent of his existing wives. This blanket immunity enables husbands from other communities to desert their wives by converting to Islam and escape from the legal proceedings.
- ▶ **In Divorce:** Until the recent judgment by the Supreme Court on Triple Talaq, a Muslim man could divorce his wife by simply stating the word 'talaq' thrice. Unfortunately, the practice of Nikah Halala, under which one cannot remarry his divorced spouse until and unless she has married and divorced another man, still continues to put worst form of trauma and indignation for a woman.
- ▶ **In Maintenance:** In the famous Shah Bano Case, after 14 years of married life, when the husband brought his second wife, he refused to maintain Shah Bano, who was 62 years old.
- **Inequity among different Religions:** Till recently, a Jew, Muslim or Christian in India did not have the right to adopt, owing to the restrictions imposed by their personal laws. They only had the power of guardianship in which one possesses only a legal right over the child until he or she becomes an adult. Moreover, Muslims in India have vehemently opposed the application of law of adoption.
- **Aspirations of the young population:** A contemporary India is a totally new society with 55% of its population is below 25 years of age. Their social attitudes and aspirations are shaped by universal and global principles of equality, humanity, and modernity. Their view of shedding identity on the basis of any religion has to be given a serious consideration so as to utilize their full potential towards nation building.
- **National Integration:** The Supreme Court of India has opined that UCC can serve as an instrument for national integration by removing disparate loyalties to law which have conflicting ideologies.

Secularism Vs UCC

- Preamble of the Constitution states that India is a Secular democratic Republic. The word Secular was inserted by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment, 1976. This mean there is no state religion. The process of secularization is intimately connected with the goal of Uniform Civil Code like a cause and effect.

Arguments against UCC

- **Virtue of being DPSP:** Article 44 is just one of the several other directive principles of state policy, so it carries only a persuasive force for the

legislature. Moreover, Articles 25, 26 and 29 which deal with religious and cultural freedom are the fundamental rights and both conflict with each other. In such conflicting situation, fundamental rights are mandated to prevail constitutionality.

- **Opposition from Muslim Community:** The most radical stand against Article 44 is that it is opposed to the Shariat and it directly challenges Islam.
- **Threat to Harmony:** A common code anywhere can harm national integration, for true integration in a democracy stands for tolerance and coexistence of various communities Wrenching the laws and culture that are beloved to a community and deriving it to adopt alien laws can hardly create goodwill or harmony between communities.
- **Ethno-Cultural Diversity of India:** The diversities of family law of different communities, the tribal's own laws and customs, the belief of the people about the source of law and religion are intermixed and interwoven. This has prompted people to oppose the Uniform Civil Code from its very inception.
- **Against Democracy:** India is a secular state, but it is also a plural society with diversity of culture. Democracy gives full play to pluralism, in cultural matters which require a regime of legal pluralism.

Recent Developments

• By Judiciary

- ▶ **Marriage & Divorce:** The Supreme Court in Sarla Mudgal v. Union Of India held that every citizen who changed his religion could not marry another woman unless he divorced his first wife because Marriage is a secular institution and the obligations attached to it should be one and the same in all religions. Moreover, Instant triple talaq was declared unconstitutional by the apex court in 2017.
- ▶ **Adoption:** The Supreme Court held that one could adopt under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 irrespective of the restrictions imposed by one's personal laws.
- ▶ **Maintenance:** The Delhi High Court has recently observed that the husband cannot avoid undertaking the responsibility of maintaining his children merely because his wife is earning.

• By Law Commission

- The 21st Law Commission said that a uniform civil code "is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage" in the country because cultural diversity cannot be compromised to the extent that our urge for uniformity itself becomes a reason for threat to the territorial integrity of the nation. It also held that Secularism could not contradict the plurality prevalent in the country.

- Key Suggestions by 21st Law Commission:
 - ▶ Codification - The commission has called for the codification of all personal laws. This would help in bringing to light the prejudices and stereotypes in all religion. They can eventually be tested on the anvil of fundamental rights of the Constitution.
 - ▶ Universal principles - Codification of different personal laws could help arrive at certain universal principles. These may facilitate prioritising equity rather than imposition of a Uniform Code. A uniform code would only discourage many from using the law altogether.
 - ▶ Amendments - The commission thus suggested certain measures in marriage and divorce. These should be uniformly accepted in the personal laws of all religions. These amendments in personal laws include
 - Fixing the marriageable age for boys and girls at 18 years so that they marry as equals
 - Making adultery a ground for divorce for men and women
 - Simplifying divorce procedure

Recommendations

- Although the state is reluctant to impose Uniform Civil Code on diverse people, the minimum it should do to generate those conditions that will make a progressive and broad minded outlook of the people.
- Since the Muslims are the most backward among the minorities in India, the long term solution to the problem of reform in Muslim Personal Law lies

in spreading education among Muslim masses

- To gauge the feelings of the community the government should hold the referendum in the minority communities in which all adult men and women can participate.
- An optional Uniform Civil Code could be enacted to coexist with the various religious personal laws.
- Before enacting a Uniform Civil Code throughout the territory of India the government must also keep in mind the religious freedom guaranteed under 'Article 25' and 'Article 26' of the Constitution.

About Law Commission

- India's first Law Commission was established in 1834 via Charter Act of 1833 under the Chairmanship of Lord Macaulay.
- Law Commission of India is neither a constitutional body nor a statutory body.
- It is truly an ad hoc and advisory body whose work is to do research and make recommendations for law reforms such as amendments and updations of prevalent and inherited laws.
- None of the recommendations is binding upon the Government.
- Law Commission of is established by an order of central government.
- Who will head the law commission is completely at the discretion of the Government. However, it is a convention that a retired judge of Supreme Court heads India's Law Commission.
- The Commission is headed by a full-time Chairperson. Its membership primarily comprises legal experts, who are entrusted a mandate by the Government.

Practice Question

- Critically analyze the feasibility of implementing Uniform Civil Code in India in present times.



CONTEXT

The issue of framing a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is about to be placed for consideration before the 22nd Law Commission. Earlier, the issue was considered by the 21st Law Commission, which sought the views of various stakeholders and met several religious groups.

GS SCORE
Learning Aid

will **simplify legal system** of country by bringing uniformity in personal laws just like the criminal code

CRACKING THE CODE

UCC is mentioned as a **DPSP** in **Article 44** of the constitution
(“State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a UCC throughout the territory of India”)

The term ‘**civil code**’ covers the entire body of laws governing rights related to property as well as personal matters like marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption and inheritance

There are **different laws** governing these aspects for different communities in India.

Thus, for example, the laws governing inheritance and divorce among Hindus would be **different from those pertaining to Muslims and Christians**

The demand for a UCC essentially means **unifying all these personal laws** to have **one set of secular laws** dealing with those aspects that will apply to all citizens of India irrespective of their community or religion

A practical difficulty will be to come up with a **methodology** to decide so as to which rules are fair or not

EFFECT

Pave way for national integration
Each person will be treated equally & everyone be protected by just, fair and predictable laws.

Remove the contradictions based on ideologies

Interference in religious dogma

Resistance by religious minorities

Positive

Negative

can be seen as **state interference** in religious affairs and going against secularism

NEED

Religious diversity

Personal Laws various groups are inherently unequal

Personal Laws are inconsistent with morality and human rights

Constitutional guarantees to every Indian - Equality, Justice, Right to life

Personal laws pose a contradiction

Example - A divorcee in Muslim Law is entitled to different things than in Hindu Law.

bring about **gender parity and social justice** as a good no. of personal laws are gender biased

Some important SC Judgments on UCC

Shah Bano Case (1985)

Shah Bano had moved SC seeking maintenance after her husband divorced her

SC ruled in her favour and also directed Parliament to frame a Uniform Civil Code

“Common Civil Code would help the cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties to law”

John Vallamattom Case (2003)

“It is a matter of regret that Article 44 of the Constitution has not been given effect to. Parliament is still to step in for framing a common civil code in the country.”

UCC “is **neither necessary nor desirable at this stage**” in the country because cultural diversity cannot be compromised to the extent that our urge for uniformity itself becomes a reason for threat to the territorial integrity of the nation

Recommendations of 21st Law Commission

They can eventually be tested on the anvil of fundamental rights of the Constitution

The commission has called for the **codification** of all personal laws.

This would help in bringing to light the prejudices and stereotypes in all religions

suggested certain amendments in marriage and divorce for all religions

Fixing the marriageable age for boys and girls at 18 years so that they marry as equals

Making adultery a ground for divorce for men and women

Simplifying divorce procedures

WAGE CODE BILL

CONTEXT

- The Union Cabinet approved the Wage Code Bill which seeks to subsume 13 existing laws related to workers remuneration and enable the Centre to fix minimum wages for workers in un-organised sector.
- The bill also raises the national minimum wage by ₹2 to ₹178 per day, despite an internal labour ministry committee recommending a much higher amount of ₹375.

◎ BACKGROUND

- One of the biggest issues faced by employers in India is the number of laws governing the employer-employee relationship. This issue has been on the government's radar for a very long period of time.
- The government is in the process of introducing four codes that would subsume 44 labour laws with certain amendments such as (i) industrial relations, (ii) wages, (iii) social security, (iv) safety, welfare and working conditions. This would also allow for uniformity in the coverage of various labour laws that are in force.
- Notably, the Centre started notifying a uniform national floor level minimum wage from 1996, which is non-binding on states.
- The national floor level was last revised by 10% to Rs 176 a day in July 2017.
- The Government has recently introduced The Code on Wages Bill, 2017, which is regarded as the significant step towards reduction in number of labour laws in India.
- It will codify relevant provisions of four existing laws like The Minimum Wages Act, 1948, Payment of Wages Act 1936, Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and Equal Remuneration Act 1976. After the enactment of the Code on Wages, all these four Acts will get repealed.
- The bill is expected to benefit over 50 crores employees across the country.

◎ ANALYSIS

Issues in Current Framework

• Multiplicity of Labour Laws

- Labour is in the concurrent list. Hence, more than 40 Central laws and around 100 state laws govern the subject of labour welfare in the country. India has a very pernicious set of labour laws and that is the reason why Indian firms have remained so small on average.
- As our economy evolved and the labour force grew, the government kept adding new laws without considering that contradictions might

arise with older laws. So, 2014-19 saw a repeal of over 10 laws seen as redundant.

• Worker's Issues

- Wages had always been the central concern of workers and entrepreneurs. The provisions of the Minimum Wages Act and the Payment of Wages Act do not cover substantial number of workers, as the applicability of both these Acts is restricted to the Scheduled Employments / Establishments.
- Laws on wages do not cover workers getting monthly wage of more than Rs 18,000.
- Even there are about half a dozen definitions of wages in various acts across the Centre and states, which employers have to grapple with.
- Present minimum wage system in India has 1,915 minimum wages for various scheduled job categories across states.
- 1 in every 3 wage worker in India is not protected by the minimum wage law.

• Variations in wage rates

- The current system has led to over 1,700 minimum wage rates, fixed by both states and the Centre. Different rates turn out as a huge compliance burden on industries.
- It has the potential of unleashing inspector raj, and largely works against the welfare of workers. The variations call for a statutory floor across the country.

• Lack of a uniform criteria for fixing the minimum wage rate:

- Different minimum wages for the same occupation across different states, along with a wide range between the lowest and highest minimum wages, trigger migration of industries towards low wage regions.
- This can also cause distress migration of labour to better paying states.

• Gender Bias

- Analysis of minimum wage data also shows a systemic gender bias. For example – male-dominated job of security guards pays better than being a domestic worker, most of whom are women.

Significance of the Bill

• Improves Worker's Condition

- The labour code on wages has a provision for a minimum wage. Hence, it brings uniform standard of living across the country
- It is expected to treat contract labour on par with regular employee to have dignified life. The wage conditions of unskilled workers will also improve.
- Sets overtime wage at two times the normal wages.
- This bill ensures timely payment of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector of employment without any wage ceiling.
- Thus, this bill ensures labour welfare and wage and social security for workers.

• 'Mandatory national wage floor'

- It will ensure decent minimum wage for all which will result into increase in disposable incomes, which in turn help in eradicating poverty and hunger.
- Thereby enabling us to achieve SDGs goals.
- This bill seeks to define the norms for fixing minimum wages that will be applicable to workers of organised and unorganised sectors, except government employees and MNREGA workers.
- As per the bill, the minimum wages across the country would be only linked to factors of skills and geographical regions, while the rest of the factors have been removed.

• Reduces Regionalism

- A National Floor Level Minimum Wage will be set by the Centre to be revised every five years, while states will fix minimum wages for their regions, which cannot be lower than the floor wage. It will help in reducing wage disparity across different regions.
- The bill provides that the central government will fix minimum wages for certain sectors, including railways and mines (except members of armed forces), while the states would be free to set minimum wages for other category of employments.

• Easier compliance

- Bill would allow for easier implementation and compliance with the minimum wage law. Thereby aligning with the international practices like the United States of America and United Kingdom which has a single minimum wage

• Influence on Indian Economy

- The bill is expected to go for digital mode/cheques as the mode of payment of wages.

This would promote digitization. It will also lead to formalisation of economy.

- National minimum wage is mandatory to ensure that India will touch its ambitious mark of \$5 trillion economy.

• No Gender bias

- The Code prohibits gender discrimination on wage-related matters. It will enhance India's ranking in Global Gender gap Report, which is currently 108 out of 149 countries.

• Penalties

- Employers who pay less than what is due under the Code will pay a fine of up to Rs 50,000. If an employer is guilty of repeat offence within five years, penalties include imprisonment up to three months or a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh or both.
- Employers who do not comply with any other provision of the Code will pay a fine of up to Rs 20,000. If an employer is guilty of the same offence again within five years, penalties include imprisonment up to one month or a fine of up to Rs 40,000 or both.

• Bonus

- All employees, whose wages do not exceed a particular monthly amount to be notified by the central or state governments, will be entitled to a minimum bonus of 8.33% of their annual wage. The bonus cannot exceed 20% of the annual wage of the employee. This is similar to current provisions.
- It regulates bonus payments in all employments where any industry, trade, business or manufacturing is carried on.

• Inspections

- Bill provides appointment of a Facilitator to carry out inspections, and information to employers and employees for better compliance.
- Inspection will be done on the basis of an inspection scheme, which will include a web-based inspection schedule. The inspection scheme will be decided by the central or state governments.

• Ensures Ease of Doing Business

- The proposed bill prescribes one registration for an establishment, one license, one return and this will help save time, resources and other efforts of the organisations.
- Earlier, out of the 13 labour laws six required separate registration. With the proposed 'one licence one return' businesses will save considerable time and resources.

• MSME cope up with new laws

- Any legislation requires lots of discussion and debate.

- ▶ Convincing trade unions is an on-going event.
- ▶ Industry wants the minimum wages to be low while the trade unions want it to be higher.
- ▶ Since the subject is in the concurrent list various states have amended various laws to meet its demands in states.
- **Removes Multiplicity of definitions**
 - ▶ The codification of labour laws will remove the multiplicity of definitions and authorities that will facilitate easier compliance by establishments.
- **Role of Technology:**
 - ▶ Technology will play an important role in both the processing of information around wages as well as tracking compliance.
 - ▶ Networking technologies could facilitate the collection and analysis of labour statistics, assist with the dissemination of information about labour laws and policies, reduce costs and improve transparency.

Key Issues with the bill

- **Implementation:** This bill sets separate national minimum wages for different states or regions. In this context, two questions arise: (i) the rationale for a national minimum wage, and (ii) whether the central government should set one or multiple national minimum wages.
- **Conflict between centre and state:** States have to ensure that minimum wages set by them are not lower than the national minimum wage. If existing minimum wages set by states are higher than the national minimum wage, they cannot reduce the minimum wages. This may affect the ability of states to reduce their minimum wages if the national minimum wage is lowered.
- **Time Period:** The time period for revising minimum wages will be set at five years. Currently, state governments have flexibility in revising minimum wages, as long as it is not more than five years. It is unclear why this flexibility has been removed, and five years has been set for revision.
- **Gender Bias based on recruitment:** The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, prohibits employers from discriminating in wage payments as well as recruitment of employees based on gender. While the Code prohibits gender discrimination on wage-related matters, it does not include provisions regarding discrimination during recruitment.
- **Variations in consumer's needs:** There is a major difficulty in constructing the National Minimum Wage as there are large variations in consumption patterns of persons in different regions, the wide variety of items used by them, regional price variations and so on.
- **Determination of minimum wages:** The Code stipulates that minimum wages will be determined by skill, arduousness at the workplace, and geographical peculiarities. Employers have been calling for fixing minimum wages on the basis of paying capacity of the industry and productivity of workers.
- **Bad legal principle:** The Code leaves a lot to the discretion of the administrators to determine minimum wages and thus temporal or spatial differences will emerge.
- **Inspection problem:** The Code labels inspectors as "facilitators" and provides for web-based transparent and accountable inspection and a responsive prosecution system. The organisational measures to reform inspection and prosecution prevent harassment, remove discretion at the lower levels and pave the way for a persuasive/educative system. But the reforms shift the probability of incidence of discretion to the higher officials in the hierarchy, hence abuse is still possible.
- **Failure of digitization:** Digitization is unlikely to be successful for several reasons, primarily the lack of adequate banking/digital infrastructure, awareness on the part of workers and inspection mechanisms. Envisaging digital payments to construction workers or even domestic workers in rural areas shows up its impracticality.

◎ WAY FORWARD

- National minimum wage is prerequisite to a productive workforce and economic growth of the country. The employers too will benefit from a more productive workforce and avoid loss due to any untoward incident.
- With such enactment, it will ensure to the country to achieve its pioneering rank in Ease of doing business in country.
- It helps in building consensus with labour unions & industries.
- Scientific criteria need to be looked at in order to determine a national minimum wage.
- The minimum salary needs to be adjusted regularly to keep pace with inflation. A mechanism should be developed to adjust minimum wages regularly and more frequently.
- A national level dashboard can be created at the centre with access to state governments whereby states can regularly update notifications regarding minimum wages and the portal must be made available at Common Service Centres and rural haats.



Practice Question

- Do you think that Wage Code Bill is a positive step towards improving of India's ranking in Ease of doing Business?

Wage Code Bill**GS SCORE****CONTEXT**

The Union Cabinet recently approved the Wage Code Bill which seeks to **subsume 13 existing laws** related to workers remuneration and enable the Centre to fix minimum wages for workers in un-organised sector. The bill also raises the national minimum wage by ₹2 to ₹178 per day, despite an internal labour ministry committee recommending a much higher amount of ₹375

*Learning Aid***Need for the Bill**

No. of laws governing the employer-employee relationship is huge and hinders ease of doing business

The govt is in the process of introducing **four codes** that would subsume 44 labour laws with certain amendments

- industrial relations
- social security
- safety, welfare and working conditions
- wages

The Government has recently introduced The Code on Wages Bill, which will subsume many existing laws and bring about uniformity in minimum wages across the country

minimum wages will be linked only to factors of skill and geographic regions, while the rest of factors have been removed

A National Floor Level Minimum Wage will be set by centre, while states will fix minimum wages for their regions which can't be lower than floor wage

This will help reduce disparity across different regions

contract labour will be treated on par with regular employees

prohibits gender discrimination on wage related matters

Technology will be used for processing wage information and tracking compliance



There are also various provisions like bonus for employees, penalties for erring employers,

prescribes one registration, one licence, one return for establishments

↓
This will save considerable time and resources for businesses

All in all, the bill ensures labour welfare and social security for workers while simplifying procedures for the employers for easier compliance and ease of doing business

Scientific criteria need to be looked at in order to determine a national minimum wage.

The minimum salary needs to be adjusted regularly to keep pace with **inflation**.

The Code leaves a lot to the discretion of the administrators to determine minimum wages and thus **temporal or spatial differences will emerge** → This needs to be addressed

The **time period** for revising minimum wages has been set at five years. Currently, state governments have flexibility in revising minimum wages, as long as it is not more than five years. It is unclear why this flexibility has been removed, and five years has been set for revision → this needs to be sorted out

A **national level dashboard** can be created at the centre with access to state governments whereby states can regularly update notifications regarding minimum wages

Way Ahead**BOTTOMLINE**

National minimum wage is prerequisite to a productive workforce and economic growth of the country. The employers too will benefit from a more productive workforce and avoid loss due to any untoward incident. It will help in building consensus with labour unions & industries. Such enactment ensure better ease of doing business and in turn attract investments.

SECTION: B
(PRELIMS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

————— To Attempt —————
Weekly Current Affairs Test, Visit

www.iasscore.in

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

◎ CONTEXT:

- UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) declared the **Prosecco Hills of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene** as a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the 43rd agency's meeting in Baku (capital of Azerbaijan).

◎ ABOUT:

More on News:

- Italy has more UNESCO sites than any other European country—and it ties only with China globally.
- The hills of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene is located north-east of Venice in Italy. It is home to the world-famous sparkling wine Prosecco.
- The landscape is characterized by Cigloni, a small plots of vines on narrow grassy terraces, forests, small villages and farmland.
- These hills are the eighth UNESCO World Heritage site in the Veneto region, the 55th site in Italy, and the 10th site in the world to be registered under the category of "cultural landscape" in recognition of their unique interaction between man and the environment.
- The new World Heritage Site status is expected to promote awareness, encourage tourism and boost the local economy.
- Earlier in this month, UNESCO also added The Twentieth Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright as another cultural site to its list of World Heritage properties.

UNESCO's World Heritage Site list

- The list of World Heritage Sites is maintained by the international 'World Heritage Programme' which is administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is composed of 21 UNESCO member states, elected by the General Assembly.
- A World Heritage Site is a place that is listed by UNESCO for its special cultural or physical significance.

Criteria for inclusion in List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- Any heritage or any historical site has to be first on the tentative list to be a part of UNESCO's World Heritage sites. Once it makes it to the tentative list, then the proposal is sent to the UNESCO for inclusion in the final List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, only if the site:
 - Contains significant natural habitats for conservation of biological diversity, including threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.
 - Associates with events, living traditions, ideas, beliefs, and artistic & literary works of outstanding universal significance etc.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India

There are 37 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India. The sites are broken down into the following categories: 29 cultural sites, seven natural sites, and one mixed site.

Cultural Sites	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agra Fort (1983) • Ajanta Caves (1983) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic City of Ahmadabad (2017) • Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1993) 18. Jaipur City, Rajasthan (2019)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar (2016) • Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989) • Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (2004) • Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004) • Churches and Convents of Goa (1986) • Elephanta Caves (1987) • Ellora Caves (1983) • Fatehpur Sikri (1986) • Great Living Chola Temples (1987,2004) • Group of Monuments at Hampi (1986) • Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram (1984) • Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (1987) • Hill Forts of Rajasthan (2013) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khajuraho Group of Monuments (1986) • Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodhi Gaya (2002) • Mountain Railways of India (1999,2005,2008) • Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi (1993) • Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell) at Patan, Gujarat (2014) • Red Fort Complex (2007) • Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003) • Sun Temple, Konârak (1984) • Taj Mahal (1983) • The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (2016) • The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur (2010) • Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (2018) |
|--|---|

Natural Sites

- Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (2014)
- Kaziranga National Park (1985)
- Keoladeo National Park (1985)
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985)
- Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988,2005)
- Sundarbans National Park (1987)
- Western Ghats (2012)

Mixed Site

- Khangchendzonga National Park (2016)

‘MERI FASAL MERA BYORA’

◎ CONTEXT:

- The Haryana government announced the launch of ‘Meri Fasal Mera Byora’ portal whereby farmers can avail benefits of several government schemes directly after uploading their crop-related details.

◎ ABOUT:

‘Meri Fasal Mera Byora’ Portal

- It is a multi-level transparent system and this initiative is a step forward towards doubling of farmer's income by 2022.
- This simple system will enable farmers to self-report their land and crop details and help them receive benefits of several government schemes directly.
- The portal, www.fasalhry.in, has brought the departments of agriculture and farmer's welfare, revenue, food civil supplies and consumer affairs and science and technology on a single platform for the betterment of the farmers.

- The portal has been designed to ensure that the farmers get the benefits offered by the State Government including insurance cover, compensation on account of crop damage due to natural calamities and other financial assistance under different schemes.
- Through the portal, the government will also get the accurate data of area and name of crop cultivated in various parts of the state.
- The farmers will be required to upload information like the name of crop sown, area under cultivation, cropping month, bank account number and mobile number on the portal at the nearby Common Service Centres (CSCs) or Atal Seva Kendras with the help of Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) by July 31.
- The farmer would also be required to fill the details about the non-cultivated land in case he has not sown any crop yet.
- E-girdawari (harvest inspection) would be conducted under this system and while conducting girdawari, the concerned officer or official would have to remain physically present at the field.
- Thereafter, the registration would be done by the departments.
- When the crop is ready for harvesting, satellite photography of the field would be conducted by the Science and Technology Department. These images would also be enclosed with their registration. In case any discrepancy is found in the girdawari, a special girdawari would be got conducted by the Deputy Commissioner concerned
- Financial incentive of Rs 10 per acre or part thereof, subject to minimum of Rs 20 and maximum of Rs 50, would be provided to each farmer for registering on the portal.

Significance of portal

- **Subsidy:** Portal would help farmers to avail subsidy on agricultural implements in an easy manner.
- **Relief:** This system would also make crop damage assessment during natural calamities and disbursement of relief easier.
- **Information:** Also, the information relating to sowing, harvesting season and mandi related information would be provided on real time basis on this portal. Besides, it would make the distribution of seeds, fertilizers, farm loans more transparent and easy.
- **Collaboration:** Various Departments will work in coordination to ensure accuracy of data submitted by the farmers. The portal has brought the departments of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Revenue, Food Civil supplies and Consumer Affairs and Science and Technology on a single platform for the welfare of the farmers.
- **Time Saving:** With the help of this system, registration of entire land whether cultivated or not would be done at a single time.
- **Cross-checking:** With the submission of data related to crop cultivation, the Government will also keep a check on farmers coming from other states in Haryana to sell their production. At mandis, records of the farmers from Haryana who are coming to sell their production will be crosschecked with the area cultivated.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX

◎ CONTEXT:

- The 2018 global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) projected that about 1.3 billion people live in multidimensional poverty globally.

◎ ABOUT:

Highlights of UN Report

- The report shows that the experience of poverty can differ within the same household, and that half of children and young people under the age of 18 are considered to be 'multi-dimensionally poor'.

- The report not only considers income indicators but also indicators of health, education, and standard of living, thus providing a single 'headline measure' of countries progress on at least seven different SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).
- It uses ten indicators namely nutrition, sanitation, child mortality, drinking water, years of schooling, electricity, school attendance, housing, cooking fuel and assets to assess the severity and nature of deprivation around the world.
- It draws on a study of 101 countries, of which 31 are low-income countries, 68 are middle-income, and 2 are high-income, covering more than three-quarters of the global population.
- The report identifies 10 countries, with a population of around 2 billion people, which have shown statistically significant progress towards achieving SDG 1, namely "in all ending poverty its forms, everywhere". The 10 countries are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru and Vietnam.
- The report also showed that children suffer poverty more intensely than adults and are more likely to be deprived in all 10 of the MPI indicators, lacking essentials such as clean water, sanitation, adequate nutrition or primary education.
- Child poverty fell markedly faster than adult poverty in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Haiti, India and Peru. But children fell further behind in Ethiopia, and their progress—together with that of adults—stalled in Democratic Republic of the Congo and Pakistan.
- The vast majority of these children, around 85 per cent, live in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, split roughly equally between the two regions.

India's Context

- India and Cambodia reduced their MPI values the fastest — and they did not leave the poorest groups behind. India's MPI value reduced from 0.283 in 2005-06 to 0.123 in 2015-16.
- India lifted 271 million people out of poverty between 2006 and 2016, recording the fastest reductions in the multidimensional poverty index values during the period with strong improvements in areas such as "assets, cooking fuel, sanitation and nutrition.
- According to the report, Jharkhand in India reduced the incidence of multidimensional poverty from 74.9 % in 2005-06 to 46.5 % in 2015-16. Mondol Kiri and Rattanak Kiri in Cambodia reduced it from 71.0 % to 55.9 % between 2010 and 2014.
- In 2005-2006, the population in India living in multidimensional poverty stood at about 640 million people (55.1 %) and this reduced to 369 million people (27.9 %) living in poverty in 2015-16.
- India saw significant reductions in number of people who are multidimensionally poor and deprived in each of the 10 indicators over this time period.
- India reduced deprivation in nutrition, child mortality, people deprived of cooking fuel, deprivation in sanitation and those deprived of drinking water.

MPI Index

- It is an international measure of acute multidimensional poverty covering over 100 developing countries.
- It complements traditional monetary-based poverty measures by capturing the acute deprivations that each person faces at the same time with respect to education, health and living standards.
- The global MPI was developed by OPHI with the UNDP for inclusion in UNDP's flagship Human Development Report (HDR) in 2010.
- It is based on the idea that poverty is multidimensional.

Major Poverty Alleviation Programs in India

- Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)
- Launched in 1975, the scheme is the foremost symbol of country's commitment to its children and nursing mothers, as a response to the challenge of providing pre-school non-formal education on one hand and breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality on the other.

MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act)

- It was enacted in 2005, which provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.
- The Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) is monitoring the entire implementation of this scheme in association with state governments

National Food Security Act, 2013

- It was enacted with the objective to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.

Deendayal Upadhyay Antyodaya Yojana (DAY)

- The scheme was launched in 2014 for upliftment of urban and rural poor through enhancement of livelihood opportunities through skill development and other means.

PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA-URBAN

◎ CONTEXT:

- The government has received complaints of banks either not sanctioning or delaying disbursement to applicants of the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)

◎ ABOUT:**More on News:**

- Some complaints have been received about Primary Lending Institutions (PLIs) not sanctioning of credit linked subsidy or delaying the subsidy under CLSS component of PMAY-U.

Category of PLI
Public Sector Banks
Private Sector Banks
Regional Rural Banks
Co-operative Banks
Housing Finance Companies
Small Finance Bank
Non Banking Finance Company - Micro Finance Institution

- Complaints against the banks were sent to the two nodal agencies — National Housing Bank and Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd. (HUDCO), which take up the grievances with the banks.
- The agencies had sensitised the banks about implementation of the scheme through training, and State-level banker's committee meetings.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Programme

- It was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA). It envisions provision of Housing for All by 2022, when the Nation completes 75 years of its Independence.

- Beneficiaries include Economically weaker section (EWS), low-income groups (LIGs) and Middle Income Groups (MIGs).
- "Housing for All" Mission for urban area is being implemented during 2015-2022 and this Mission will provide central assistance to implementing agencies through States and UTs for providing houses to all eligible families/beneficiaries by 2022.
- Mission will be implemented as Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) except for the component of credit linked subsidy which will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme.
- The Mission seeks to address the housing requirement of urban poor including slum dwellers through following programme verticals:
 - Slum rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers with participation of private developers using land as a resource
 - Promotion of Affordable Housing for weaker section through credit linked subsidy
 - Affordable Housing in Partnership with Public & Private sectors
 - Subsidy for beneficiary-led individual house construction /enhancement.
- CLSS is a component of PMAY under which, not only economically weaker sections, but also middle-income groups can avail of home loans at reduced EMIs.
- The aim of this scheme is to construct more than two crore houses across the length and breadth of the nation.
- Government provide subsidy ranging between 1 lakh to 2.30 lakh to people from above categories in order to make them secure.
- The government provide an interest subsidy of 6.5% on housing loans availed by the beneficiaries for a period of 15 years from the start of loan.
- The houses under this yojana would be allotted to preferably the female member of the family.
- It covers the entire urban area consisting of 4041 statutory towns with initial focus on 500 Class I cities.

National Housing Bank (NHB)

- It was a wholly owned subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India, which was set up on 9 July 1988 under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987.
- It operates as a principal agency to promote housing finance institutions both at local and regional levels and provides financial and other support to such institutions.

Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd (HUDCO)

- It is the premier techno-financing public sector enterprise, in the field of housing and infrastructure development in our country.
- The corporation is headquartered in the national capital, New Delhi and operates through a strong and multi-disciplinary work force placed over its nationwide network of regional and development offices.
- With its corporate vision of being among the world's leading knowledge hubs and financial facilitating organizations for habitat development, HUDCO is on the mission of promoting sustainable habitat development to enhance quality of life.

‘UTKARSH 2022’

◎ CONTEXT

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) board, which met in New Delhi, finalised a three-year roadmap to improve regulation and supervision, among other functions of the central bank.

© **ABOUT:**

- It is a three-year road map for medium term objective to be achieved for improving regulation, supervision of the central bank
- This medium term strategy — named Utkarsh 2022 — is in line with the global central banks plan to strengthen the regulatory and supervisory mechanism
- It is a roadmap to improve regulation and supervision, currency management and payment system etc.
- An internal committee was formed, which was anchored by outgoing Deputy Governor Viral Acharya, to identify issues that needed to be addressed over the next three years.

Need for Utkarsh/Objectives:

- Worldwide, all central banks strengthen the regulatory and supervisory mechanism, everybody is formulating a long-term plan and a medium-term plan. So, the RBI has also decided it will formulate a programme to outline what is to be achieved in the next three years.
- The idea is that the central bank plays a proactive role and takes preemptive action to avoid any crisis highlighting the IL&FS debt default issue and the crisis of confidence the non-banking financial sector faced in the aftermath.
- Further, the board has also approved the RBI's budget for the July 2019 to June 2020 period.
- The objective of the policy is to improve regulation and supervision of the central bank.

About RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India was established on April 1, 1935 in accordance with the provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- The Central Office of the Reserve Bank was initially established in Calcutta but was permanently moved to Mumbai in 1937. The Central Office is where the Governor sits and where policies are formulated.
- Though originally privately owned, since nationalisation in 1949, the Reserve Bank is fully owned by the Government of India.
- The Reserve Bank's affairs are governed by a central board of directors. The board is appointed by the Government of India in keeping with the Reserve Bank of India Act.

Main Functions of RBI:

- **Monetary Authority:** Formulates, implements and monitors the monetary policy.
- **Objective:** maintaining price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth.
- **Regulator and supervisor of the financial system:** Prescribes broad parameters of banking operations within which the country's banking and financial system functions.
- **Objective:** maintain public confidence in the system, protect depositors' interest and provide cost-effective banking services to the public.
- **Manager of Foreign Exchange:** Manages the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999.
- **Objective:** to facilitate external trade and payment and promote orderly development and maintenance of foreign exchange market in India.
- **Issuer of currency:** Issues and exchanges or destroys currency and coins not fit for circulation.
- **Objective:** to give the public adequate quantity of supplies of currency notes and coins and in good quality.

- Developmental role: Performs a wide range of promotional functions to support national objectives.
- Regulator and Supervisor of Payment and Settlement Systems: Introduces and upgrades safe and efficient modes of payment systems in the country to meet the requirements of the public at large.
- Objective: maintain public confidence in payment and settlement system

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regulates and supervises Public Sector and Private Sector Banks. Under the Provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949:

- Inspect the bank and its books and accounts
- Examine on oath any director or other officer of the bank
- Cause a scrutiny to be made of the affairs of the bank
- Give directions: (a) in public interest (b) in interest of banking policy (c) in the interest of the depositors (d) in the interest of the bank and (e) to secure proper management of the bank
- Call for any information of account details
- Determine the policy in relation to advances by the bank
- Direct special audit of the bank
- Direct the bank to initiate insolvency resolution process in respect of a default, under the provisions of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016
- Issue directions to banks for resolution of stressed assets
- Direct changes in management of the bank
- Caution or prohibit banks in particular against entering into any particular transaction or class of transactions, and generally give advice to any bank
- Give assistance to any bank by means of the grant of a loan or advance
- Direct banks to call a meeting of its directors for the purpose of considering any matter relating to or arising out of the affairs of the bank; or require an officer of the bank to discuss any such matter with an officer of the RBI
- Appoint one or more of its officers to observe the manner in which the affairs of the bank or of its offices or branches are being conducted and make a report thereon.

PLASTIC POLLUTION

◎ **CONTEXT:**

- More than 300 women will join a round-the-world voyage known as Exxpedition, launching in October to highlight the devastating impact of plastic pollution in the oceans and conduct scientific research into the escalating crisis.

◎ **ABOUT:**

More on news:

- Millions of tonnes of plastic, from food packaging to fishing gear enter the sea each year, leading some marine experts to warn that there could be more plastic than fish in our oceans by 2050.
- The two-year all-female voyage comprises scientists, teachers, filmmakers, product designers, photographers and athletes will collect samples from some of the planet's most important and diverse marine environments to build a picture of the state of the seas.

- The 38,000 nautical mile trip will cover the Arctic, the Galapagos Islands, the South Pacific islands and central ocean areas where plastic accumulates because of circulating currents.

WWF (World Wide Fund) Report 2019 on plastic waste pollution

- The Report describes a rather alarming scenario:
- 75% of the plastic ever produced in the world is already waste and almost half of the plastic that exists today was produced after the year 2000,
- In 2016, the production reached 396 million tons (53 kg/person), resulting in the emission of 2 billion tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere, and it is expected that by 2030 plastic production could increase by a further 40%,
- Given that only 20% of plastic waste is recycled, Carbon dioxide emissions from burning – one of the most popular methods of disposal for end-of-life plastic, could triple.

Where does ocean plastic come from?

- According to the National Ocean Service, the vast majority of ocean pollution around 80 % comes from the land. It's often caused by something called nonpoint source pollution, which occurs when the rain or melting snow picks up garbage on the ground, carrying the runoff into waterways.
- Smaller waterways like rivers tend to wash a ton of plastic into the ocean, with 10 of these rivers doing most of the destructive work.
- World Economic Forum reports that 90 % of the plastic in our oceans comes from just eight rivers in Asia and two in Africa: the Yangtze, Indus, Yellow, Hai He, Ganges, Pearl, Amur, Mekong, Nile, and Niger.
- All of these rivers lie near communities with high populations and lacklustre waste management systems, making it easy for plastic waste to drift into the water.

Key facts related to ocean pollution

- Since the 1950s, humans have generated about 8.3 billion metric tons of plastic. The substance has now outpaced all man-made materials besides steel and cement, and most of it turns into trash.
- About half of the plastic produced was made in the past 13 years. By 2050, around 12 billion metric tons of plastic could wind up in landfills or the natural world.
- The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that every square mile of ocean contains roughly 46,000 pieces of floating plastic.
- The world's largest collection of floating trash is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a collection of debris that lies between California and Hawaii.
- Up to 85 % of plastic pollution found on shorelines is microplastics. These tiny fragmented pieces of plastic break off when the material is left to degrade under the sun's UV rays, and they are often consumed by animals that live near or in the ocean.
- According to UNESCO, plastic waste accounts for the deaths of more than a million seabirds every year, along with over 100,000 marine mammals.

What can ocean plastics be used for?

- Clothing companies are spinning ocean plastics into new threads, shoes, and accessories. Adidas has found enormous success with its Boost line of running shoes, sourced from plastic and fishnet fibers, while Timberland has long used recycled plastic bottles to form the soles of their boots. Fashion brands have also turned ocean plastic into yoga pants, swim trunks, jackets, jeans, bracelets, and sunglasses.
- Soma and Parley made noise this spring when the companies collaborated on a limited-edition reusable glass bottle featuring a soft blue sleeve. The sleeve was molded from ocean plastics collected near islands or coastlines, and through this little blue accent, Soma and Parley hoped to spark conversations about pollution. A portion of all sales went towards Parley's plastic program.

- Through the collective NextWave Plastics, major furniture and electronics retailers are also adding ocean plastics to their manufacturing process. The group's mission is to create supply chains out of the trash in our oceans, and it's already off to a great start.
- Members like HP are making printer ink cartridges out of plastic bottles from Haitian waterways, while recent additions like IKEA are seeking to use ocean pollution as a raw material in home goods and furnishings. General Motors, Dell, and six other companies also belong to the collective.

How can we stop ocean plastic pollution?

- Replace single-use plastics, like water bottles, disposable cutlery, bags, and straws as we can with reusable options.
- Ocean advocacy groups also recommend ditching microbeads, the tiny plastic particles embedded in many soaps, scrubs, and toothpastes. Because they're so small, microbeads are especially harmful pollutants. Marine animals can easily gobble them up once they enter the ocean, so when you're shopping for beauty and hygiene products, avoid those problematic little beads.

SEA LEVEL INCREASE

◎ CONTEXT:

- According to Ministry of Earth Sciences, Diamond Harbour, which is one of the major port in West Bengal located at the mouth of river Hooghly, has recorded the maximum sea level increase.

◎ ABOUT:

More on news:

- While recent studies reveal that sea level rise in the country has been estimated to be 1.3 mm/year along India's coasts during the last 40-50 years.
- At Diamond Harbour, the rise was almost five times higher at 5.16 mm per year. The mean sea level rise for this port was based on recordings over the period from 1948 to 2005.

Sea level rise

- It is said be linked with global warming and as per the fifth assessment report of the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change (UNIPCC), the global sea level was rising at an average rate of 1.8 mm per year over the last century.
- Rising sea levels can exacerbate the impacts of coastal hazards such as storm surge, tsunami, coastal floods, high waves and coastal erosion in the low lying coastal areas in addition to causing gradual loss of coastal land to sea.
- According to the data from the Ministry of Earth Sciences, four ports namely Diamond Harbour, Kandla, Haldia and Port Blair recorded a higher sea level rise than the global average.
- Chennai and Mumbai recorded a sea level rise far below the global and the national averages at 0.33 mm per year (1916-2005) and 0.74 mm (1878-2005) respectively.
- The sea level rise is higher in West Bengal, particularly in the Sunderbans delta is because of the deltaic sediment deposition as a result of the mixing of fresh water and saline water, according to experts.

Concerns over rising sea level

- On results of studies on the impact of global warming, the ministry said heavy rainfall and temperature extremes like heat waves and shifts in semi-arid regions were some of the recent findings which may have linkages with climate change and global warming.
- Studies over Indian region have shown a warming trend of 0.6°C on all India average basis, mainly contributed by maximum temperatures.

- If the global warming exceeds 2°C by 2100, about 80 % of global coastline could see a 6-ft rise in sea levels.
- Increase in temperatures due to human-induced global warming can cause melting of ice caps and glaciers which primarily drive increase in sea levels.
- Warming of oceans causes excessive flooding, destructive erosion and agricultural soil contamination in coastal regions. Even the US is facing the heat with Louisiana, the southeastern state, losing 75 sq km of coastal terrain every year.
- Talking about the reason for the nature influencing rise in sea levels centuries ago, ENSO (El Niño / Southern Oscillation) played a big role. ENSO is characterised by changes in sea surface temperatures that influence climatic conditions all over the globe.
- Southeast Asia is one of the most densely populated parts of the world, with a large chunk of people living in low-lying coastal areas. Hence, in future, Southeast Asia could see a magnitude of sea-level rise that far exceeds what has already been projected.

Sinking Chain of Atolls of India

- Due to constant rising sea level, many small atolls (circular coral colonies) of Indian archipelago are sinking.
- Parali I Island of Lakshadweep has already sunk and Parali II has sunk almost 80% of its total area. Thinkara (14.38%) and Parali III (11.42%) are eroding at fast pace.
- UNIPCC in its fifth report has stated that sea level in Lakshadweep has risen up to 0.6 m in last 20 years. This will not only cause loss in livelihood to the native people but also loss of biodiversity as large number of flora and fauna inhabit these Islands along with Particularly Vulnerable Tribal groups (PVTGs).
- El-Nino event has also weakened coral colonies to a larger extent.

POLAVARAM IRRIGATION PROJECT

◎ CONTEXT:

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti has constituted a committee to examine the cost escalation of the Polavaram irrigation project under the instructions of the Ministry of Finance.

◎ ABOUT:

More on news:

- Revised Cost Committee has been formed to rework the cost of Polavaram Irrigation Project (PIP) in Andhra Pradesh, under the chairmanship of a joint secretary of the Finance Ministry.
- The revised cost estimates is being assessed by the Technical Advisory Committee.
- Ministry of Finance has also asked the state government to soon send an audit of Rs 5,000 crore spent prior to 2014, as an audit of Rs 3,000 crore spent has been held so far.

Compensation to affected people

- Compensation package of Rs. 6,36,000 has been fixed for per affected family and those whose cattle is also affected, they will get another Rs. 25,000, as per the package decided.
- There is no complaint pending with the Government of India. To ensure rehabilitation and resettlement of those affected by the project, committees have been formed by state governments and are headed by collectors to look into grievances. Even, a committee has also been set up under the Secretary of Ministry of Tribal Affairs to redress the grievances of tribal people.

Funding Issue of PIP

- The Government of Andhra Pradesh submitted Revised Cost Estimates (RCE) for Rs 57,297.42 crore at 2017-18 price level to Central Water Commission (CWC) in January, 2018.
- The Advisory Committee on Irrigation, Flood Control & Multipurpose Projects of the Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti in its 141st meeting held in February, 2019 accepted the RCE of the PIP for Rs 55,548.87 crore at 2017-18 Price level (PL) of which cost of irrigation component is Rs.50,987.96 crore
- The approved RCE has reduced mainly on account of reconciliation in estimated cost of certain land under submergence, land for which compensation is payable, cost of remaining works as per relevant schedule of rates.

Polavaram Irrigation Project (PIP)

- This project is located in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, which will also interlink several rivers in the state.
- It has been accorded national project status by the Centre. Its implementation is monitored by the Central Water Commission.
- The project involves relocation of about 50,000 families especially in Khammam, East Godavari and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh, besides 2,000 families in Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

Aim of the Project

- Purpose of this multi-purpose project is to facilitate irrigation and it will also help in the supply of drinking water to Visakhapatnam and water for industrial purposes.
- It also endeavours hydropower to regions of East Godavari, Vishakhapatnam, Krishna and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh.
- It seeks to address the challenges of flooding and droughts witnessed in the respective basins.
- The project also aims to help the Rayalaseema region (comprising Anantapur, Chittoor, Kadapa and Kurnool districts out of the total 13 districts) get more water.

Issues with the project

- **Displacement:** The environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the project says 276 villages will be affected. The Polavaram Project Environmental Impact Appraisal Report of 1985 expected 150,697 people to be displaced in 226 villages. Of the displaced population, tribals constitute 50%. With inadequate resettlement and rehabilitation measures, this has severe implications on the socio-economic life of the displaced populations.
- **Changes to the ecology of the region:** Environmental activists argue that the project will submerge forests, wildlife sanctuaries and as a result disturb the ecology.
- **Too costly:** The project will heavily burden the exchequer and low-cost alternatives for flood and drought prevention should be explored.

Criteria for selection as National Project

- Any state project can be regarded as a national project where planning and early completion of the project is necessary in the interest of the country.
- Inter-State projects which are dragging on due to non-resolution of Inter-State issues relating to sharing of costs, rehabilitation and aspects of power production etc.,
- Intra-State projects with the additional potential of more than 2,00,000 hectare (ha) and with no dispute regarding sharing of water and where hydrology is established.

As of 2016, there are 16 Dam projects which have received the status of National Project.

‘SATAT INITIATIVE’

◎ **CONTEXT:**

- The government is expanding its search for alternative sources of energy, including biomass, wind, solar and hydel power, in order to safeguard India's energy sources.
- In this direction, oil PSUs had launched 'Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation' (SATAT) initiative on 1 October 2018.

◎ **ABOUT:**

- Launched by petroleum ministry, it is aimed at providing a Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) as a developmental effort that would benefit both vehicle-users as well as farmers and entrepreneurs.
- It aims to tap the potential of Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants as it has the potential to replace CNG in automotive, industrial and commercial uses in the coming years.

Objectives

- Compressed Bio-Gas plants are proposed to be set up mainly through independent entrepreneurs.
- CBG produced at these plants will be transported through cascades of cylinders to the fuel station networks of OMCs for marketing as a green transport fuel alternative.
- The entrepreneurs would be able to separately market the other by-products from these plants, including bio-manure, carbon-dioxide, etc., to enhance returns on investment.
- This initiative is expected to generate direct employment for 75,000 people and produce 50 million tonnes of bio-manure for crops.

Benefits

There are multiple benefits from converting agricultural residue, cattle dung and municipal solid waste into CBG on a commercial scale:

- Responsible waste management, reduction in carbon emissions and pollution
- Additional revenue source for farmers
- Boost to entrepreneurship, rural economy and employment
- Support to national commitments in achieving climate change goals
- Reduction in import of natural gas and crude oil
- Buffer against crude oil/gas price fluctuations

Production Process

Bio-gas is produced naturally through a process of anaerobic decomposition from waste / bio-mass sources like agriculture residue, cattle dung, sugarcane press mud, municipal solid waste, sewage treatment plant waste, etc. After purification, it is compressed and called CBG.

Properties

- Compressed Bio-Gas is exactly similar to the commercially available natural gas in its composition and energy potential.
- It has pure methane content of over 95%.
- With calorific value (~52,000 KJ/kg) and other properties similar to CNG, Compressed Bio-Gas can be used as an alternative, renewable automotive fuel.

India's Potential

- The potential for Compressed Bio-Gas production from various bio-mass/waste sources, including agricultural residue, municipal solid waste, sugarcane press mud, distillery

spent wash, cattle dung and sewage treatment plant waste in India is estimated at about 62 million tonnes per annum.

Other related Initiatives

- The National Policy on Biofuels 2018 emphasises active promotion of advanced bio-fuels, including CBG.
- GOBAR-DHAN (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources) scheme was launched to convert cattle dung and solid waste in farms to CBG and compost. The programme will be funded under Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) component of Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) to benefit households in identified villages through Gram Panchayats.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has notified Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of Rs. 4 crore per 4,800 kg of CBG per day generated from 12,000 cubic metres of biogas per day, with a maximum of Rs.10 crore per project.
- Other waste streams, i.e, rotten potatoes from cold storages, rotten vegetables, dairy plants, chicken/poultry litter, food waste, horticulture waste, forestry residues and treated organic waste from industrial effluent treatment plants (ETPs) can be used to generate biogas.

Way forward

- Compressed Bio-Gas networks can be integrated with city gas distribution (CGD) networks to boost supplies to domestic and retail users in existing and upcoming markets.
- Besides retailing from OMC fuel stations, Compressed Bio-Gas can at a later date be injected into CGD pipelines too for efficient distribution and optimised access of a cleaner and more affordable fuel.

NATIONAL REPOSITORY OF PHOTOGRAPHS

◎ CONTEXT

- The Central government wants to create a “repository of photographs of criminals” in the country.

More on News

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has invited bids for Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS).
- To begin with, a repository of 1.5 crore ‘criminals’ is being planned.
- The primary objective was to track missing children and identify unclaimed bodies through the photo records.

Concerns

- **Data Protection:** The data protection law must be passed by the Parliament because this crucial data needs to be protected against threats like unauthorised access to database or application, accidental modifications or deletions, confidentiality, encryption/decryption engine etc.
- **Secured Access:** The Access Control Policy of the system must be based on the use of logins, passwords, fingerprint login and multi-layered security.
- **Privacy:** The authorities must place suitable safeguards in the system so that the fundamental right to privacy of the citizens is not violated.
- **Dynamic Aspect:** The system should be able to “add photographs obtained from newspapers, raids, sent by people, sketches etc in real time. Also, the system should be able to generate quick alerts if any of the subject images matches with the registered faces in the database.

About Facial Recognition Technology

- Facial recognition is a way of recognizing a human face through technology. A facial recognition system uses biometrics to map facial features from a photograph or video.
- It compares the information with a database of known faces to find a match. Facial recognition can help verify personal identity.

Working of Facial Recognition Technology

- **Step 1:** A picture of a face is captured from a photo, video or directly.
- **Step 2:** Facial recognition software reads the geometry of your face. Key factors include the distance between your eyes and the distance from forehead to chin. The software identifies facial landmarks that are key to distinguishing your face. The result: your facial signature.
- **Step 3:** Your facial signature — a mathematical formula — is compared to a database of known faces.
- **Step 4:** A determination is made. The faceprint may match that of an image in a facial recognition system database.

◎ SIGNIFICANCE

- The repository shall act as a foundation for a national level searchable platform of facial images
- The system would also enable handheld mobile with applications to capture a face on the field and get the matching result from the backend server.

Other E- Governance Initiatives for Crime Management

- **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems**
 - CCTNS is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan of Govt of India.
 - The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) project was launched in 2009 in the aftermath of the 26/11 attacks.
 - It aims at establishing seamless connectivity among 15,000 police stations across the country, and an additional 5,000 offices of supervisory police officers.
 - It keeps track of the progress of Cases, including in Courts.
 - It also reduces manual and redundant records keeping.

ABOUT NCRB

- NCRB is nodal agency under Union Home Ministry for authentic source of data on crime on various parameters including accidents, suicides from across all the states of the country and prisons for policy matters and research.
- It was established in 1986 as the central police organisation.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- It also imparts training in Information Technology (IT) and Finger Print Science for Indian Police Officers as well Foreign Police officers.
- NCRB publishes 4 annual publications on Crime, Prison Statistics, Accidental Deaths & Suicides and Finger Prints. These publications serve as principal reference points on crime statistics.

ARTICLE 370

◎ CONTEXT:

- The government has informed Parliament that “no foreign government or organisation has any locus standi” in repealing Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) as matters relating to the Constitution of India are internal and only for the Indian Parliament to deal with.

© ABOUT:

Article 370

- According to the Constitution of India, Article 370 provides temporary provisions to the J&K, granting it special autonomy. The article says that the provisions of Article 238, which was omitted from the Constitution in 1956 when Indian states were reorganized, shall not apply to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- When India became independent, the state of J&K was not part of its territory. Following a tribal invasion by (North-West Frontier Province) NWFP raiders on October 22, 1947, Maharaja of J&K Hari Singh asked for troops from India to assist.
- In turn of getting assistance from India, the instrument of accession was signed. However, it was limited to Defence, External Affairs, Communications and some other issues, with respect to which the Indian legislature could make laws for J&K.

Salient features

- Parliament has very limited jurisdiction in case of J&K. Residuary powers rest with J&K. The Parliament has no power to legislate Preventive Detention laws for the state; only the state legislature has the power to do so.
- Centre has no power to declare financial emergency under Article 360 in J&K. It can declare emergency in the state only in case of war or external aggression. The Union government can therefore not declare emergency on grounds of internal disturbance or imminent danger unless it is made at the request or with the concurrence of the state government.
- Part IV (dealing with Directive Principles of the State Policy) and Part IVA (dealing with Fundamental Duties) of the Constitution are not applicable to J&K. In addition to other fundamental rights, Articles 19(1)(f) and 31(2) of the Constitution are still applicable to J&K; i.e., the Fundamental Right to property is still guaranteed in this state.
- The High Court of J&K has limited powers as it can't declare any law unconstitutional. Under Article 226 of the Constitution, it can't issue writs except for enforcement of Fundamental Rights.
- Urdu is the official language of the state
- Certain special rights have been granted to the permanent residents of J&K with regard to employment under the state, acquisition of immovable property in the state, settlement in the state, and scholarship and other forms of aid as the state government may provide.
- J&K citizens have an implicit dual citizenship, i.e., though there is no specific provision of dual citizen, there are certain rights that only an original resident of Kashmir enjoy. Even the voters' lists for State elections and for Parliament elections are not common.

Consequences of Article 370

- It bars the people from outside the state to buy immovable and movable property here, set any industry or manufacturing unit, while no other state bars any state subject of J&K to invest there, acquire land or set business establishment.
- It act as obstacle in attracting the flow of investment from big business houses which are running mega projects and giving employment to thousands of educated youth according to their academic, professional, skilled, and non-skilled capabilities.
- Due to this lack of job avenues to the educated unemployed youth of state is forcing them to move out to other states for finding suitable source of bread earning. If this silent migration of youth continues, it will convert the state into a land of old and aged people in next 15-20 years, which is indeed a very serious matter and need to be taken note of by the government.
- Unemployment in J&K has promoted militancy. A poor youth after completing education with limited resources, after sitting idle for long, gets easily lured by the people who push them into anti-national activities by giving few thousands of rupees.
- It is a source of gender bias in disqualifying women from the State of property rights.
- It was and is about providing space, in matters of governance, to the people of a State who felt deeply vulnerable about their identity and insecure about the future. It was

about empowering people, making people feel that they belong, and about increasing the accountability of public institutions and services.

- It is synonymous with decentralization and devolution of power, phrases that have been on the charter of virtually every political party in India.

HUMAN ATLAS

◎ CONTEXT:

- A new human atlas initiative known as Manav has been launched by the Department of Biotechnology and Persistent Systems, a biotechnology company to create a unified database of molecular network of all the tissues in the human body and to derive a holistic picture of working of the human body.

◎ ABOUT:

More on News:

- This mega project will collate and integrate molecular information on human tissues and organs that currently lie hidden in research articles in an unstructured and disorganised form.
- It would utilise large biological community, both students and scientists, for extracting and adding the information from scientific literature at the level of cells and organs.
- The undergraduates and postgraduates from the various distinct fields of biology such as zoology, biotechnology, botany, biochemistry, pharmacology and medical sciences can register and contribute to this project

Background

- The idea emerged from the success of Smart India hackathon, a nationwide contest in which large number of engineering students are being encouraged to find solutions to pressing problems.
- In the same way, Manav will engage biology students to build their skills in reading scientific literature and deepen their understanding of biological system.

Aims of Manav

- To orient students involved in biological courses towards an aim that will train them to read scientific literature, analyse it and also the knowledge on how to design experiments.
- This initiative will not only seal the gaps in knowledge on human body but will also create a trained population of biologists.
- The project aims to create a unified database, which would eventually help researchers in identifying gaps in current knowledge and help in future projects in diagnostics and disease biology.

Features of Manav

- In this public-private venture, Department of Bio-Technology (DBT) and Persistent Systems will invest Rs 13 crore and Rs 7 crore respectively.
- The project will be executed by Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) and National Center for Cell Sciences (NCCS) based in Pune.
- While the institutes will train students, the technology platform and data management will be provided by the private partner.
- Students and faculty from DBT Star colleges and Biotechnology Information network system (BTIS) network will also be involved.

Other Similar Projects

- Human Cell Atlas project was launched in 2016 as a collaborative effort between scientists.

- This project is designed to generate data pertaining to cellular and molecular activities of various cell types in the body in both its normal and disease state using techniques such as single cell genomics.
- The Indian project, on the other hand, depends on the knowledge already available in scientific literature to derive information on cellular network.

Way Ahead

- The project team is in talks with other scientific agencies such as the All India Council of Technical Education, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), University Grants Commission and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for possible collaboration.
- The general methodology of acquiring and visualizing data methodology and technical platform developed during this project can be extrapolated to do other science project on biodiversity, ecology, environment etc. which may be relevant nationally or globally.
- The information gathered in the project will help scientists to understand the differential molecular factors which vary between diseased states versus a healthy state of an organ. Further, it will bring out the cross-talk of molecular factors in various organs helping in understanding the networking between organs in a better way.
- With the data curation and analysis skills imparted during this project, students will have better opportunities for jobs in life science sector.

Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs)

- It is the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister. Five such Institutes have already been established at Kolkata, Pune, Mohali, Bhopal and Thiruvananthapuram.
- The vision of these institutes encompasses creation of research centres of the highest caliber in which teaching and education in basic sciences will be totally integrated with state-of-the-art research.
- These Institutions are devoted to under-graduate and post-graduate teaching in sciences in an intellectually vibrant atmosphere of research and make education and career in basic sciences more attractive by providing opportunities in integrative teaching and learning of sciences.

National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS)

- It is an autonomous organisation aided by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, was established with a tripartite mandate of:
 - Serving as a national repository of animal cell cultures.
 - Undertaking research in cell biology.
- Human resource development.
- NCCS has been carrying out cutting-edge research in cell biology, has been providing valuable services as a national animal cell repository and has been supporting human resource development through various teaching and training programmes.

NASA'S MISSION TO LAUNCH DRAGONFLY

◎ CONTEXT:

- NASA will launch a robotic mission to Titan, the largest moon of Saturn, in 2026.
- The mission, named Dragonfly, will deliver a drone like spacecraft to the surface. The space copter, which indeed resembles its eponymous insect, will hop from one spot to another, making measurements of the ground and the atmosphere as it goes.
- Dragonfly marks the first time NASA will fly a multi-rotor vehicle for science on another planet; it has eight rotors and flies like a large drone. It will take advantage

of Titan's dense atmosphere – four times denser than Earth's – to become the first vehicle ever to fly its entire science payload to new places for repeatable and targeted access to surface materials.

Why was Titan chosen:

- For a moon, Titan has quite a few things in common with Earth.
- Titan is among one of the best candidates for extraterrestrial life in the solar system.
- It has an atmosphere and weather. Liquid rains down from thick clouds, filling basins and canyons, then evaporates back into the sky, where the process starts over.
- On Earth, this loop involves water. On Titan, it involves methane. Temperatures on the moon are so extreme that the gas flows as a liquid there, producing bodies of liquid as big as the Great Lakes of North America.

Previous mission:

- NASA's first observations of Titan date back to the Voyager missions that toured the outer planets and moons in the 1970s and '80s. The spacecraft's cameras couldn't penetrate Titan's atmosphere, the thickest in the solar system.
- A European spacecraft arrived on Titan in 2005. From beneath the haze, the Huygens probe captured photographs and beamed them back to Earth.
- There were picture of gullies. On Earth, flowing water carves gullies into rocky landscapes. On Titan, methane was considered responsible.
- Huygens was dropped off by Cassini, a NASA spacecraft that remained in orbit around Saturn until 2017, occasionally swinging by the moon to collect data and pictures.

What are the prospects over Titan?

- Dragonfly will search for signs of life, ancient and present. In Titan's atmosphere, spacecraft have detected carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, ethane, and other elements on which life on Earth depends.
- They've even found a compound that could interact with the methane and ethane to create cell-like membranes. Scientists suspect that Titan might even have water—real, actual H₂O—lurking beneath its surface.
- In just a few flights, Dragonfly will be able to go farther than the Opportunity rover on Mars has in the last 12 years.

What will the Dragonfly mission do?

- During its 2.7-year baseline mission, Dragonfly will explore diverse environments from organic dunes to the floor of an impact crater where liquid water and complex organic materials key to life once existed together for possibly tens of thousands of years.
- Its instruments will study how far prebiotic chemistry may have progressed. They also will investigate the moon's atmospheric and surface properties and its subsurface ocean and liquid reservoirs.
- Additionally, instruments will search for chemical evidence of past or extant life.
- Dragonfly took advantage of 13 years' worth of Cassini data to choose a calm weather period to land, along with a safe initial landing site and scientifically interesting targets.
- It will first land at the equatorial "Shangri-La" dune fields, which are terrestrially similar to the linear dunes in Namibia in southern Africa and offer a diverse sampling location.
- Dragonfly will explore this region in short flights, building up to a series of longer "leapfrog" flights of up to 5 miles (8 kilometers), stopping along the way to take samples from compelling areas with diverse geography.
- It will finally reach the Selk impact crater, where there is evidence of past liquid water, organics – the complex molecules that contain carbon, combined with hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen – and energy, which together make up the recipe for life.

- The lander will eventually fly more than 108 miles (175 kilometers) – nearly double the distance traveled to date by all the Mars rovers combined.

Additional Pointers and other related programmes:

- There's OSIRIS-REx, which recently sidled up to a nearby asteroid and discovered that it was mysteriously spewing bits of itself into space.
- There's Juno, which circles Jupiter and regularly delivers stunning photographs of the giant planet's shape-shifting clouds.
- New Horizons, the spacecraft that captured close-ups of Pluto and, more recently, an icy object at the edge of the solar system.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY ANALYSIS, INDIA, 2019

◎ CONTEXT

- A new report, 'Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019', authored by the Government of India and the UNWFP has been released.

Status of Nutrition coverage in India

- Malnutrition, in all its forms, includes undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight) inadequate vitamins or minerals, overweight, obesity, and resulting diet-related non-communicable diseases.
- India has long been home to the largest number of malnourished children in the world. The highest levels of stunted and underweight children are found in Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Some progress has been made in reducing the extent of malnutrition.
- United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP), paints a picture of hunger and malnutrition amongst children in large pockets of India.
- The report shows the poorest sections of society caught in a trap of poverty and malnutrition, which is being passed on from generation to generation.
 - **Malnutrition:** The proportion of children with chronic malnutrition decreased from 48% percent in 2005-06 to 38.4% in 2015-16.
 - **Underweight:** The percentage of underweight children decreased from 42.5% to 35.7% over the same period.
 - **Anaemia:** Anaemia in young children decreased from 69.5% to 58.5% during this period.
 - **Stunting:** In India over 40% of children from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are stunted. Close to 40% of children from the Other Backward Classes are stunted.

Lacunas in Government Initiatives

- The government's National Nutrition Mission (renamed as Poshan Abhiyaan) aims to -
 - reduce stunting (height below the norm for age) by 2% a year
 - bring down the proportion of stunted children in the population to 25% by 2022
- But even this modest target will require doubling the current annual rate of reduction in stunting.
- The minutes of recent meetings of the Executive Committee of Poshan Abhiyaan do not inspire much confidence about whether this can be achieved.
- A year after it was launched, State and Union Territory governments have only used 16% of the funds allocated to them.
- Fortified rice and milk were to be introduced in one district per State by March this year, but officials in charge of public distribution had not yet got their act together.

- The matter is under active consideration of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution”.

Impact of Malnutrition

- Mothers who are hungry and malnourished produce children who are stunted, underweight and unlikely to develop to achieve their full human potential.
- The effects of malnourishment in a small child are not merely physical.
- A developing brain that is deprived of nutrients does not reach its full mental potential.
- Under nutrition can affect cognitive development by causing direct structural damage to the brain and by impairing infant motor development.
- This in turn affects the child's ability to learn at school, leading to a lifetime of poverty and lack of opportunity.
- These disadvantaged children are likely to do poorly in school and subsequently have low incomes, high fertility, and provide poor care for their children, thus contributing to the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

About UN World Food Programme

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food assistance branch of the United Nations, established in 1961.

- It is the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.
- The WFP strives to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, with the ultimate goal in mind of eliminating the need for food aid itself.
- It is a member of the United Nations Development Group and part of its Executive Committee.
- The WFP operations are funded by voluntary donations from world governments, corporations and private donors.
- WFP food aid is also directed to fight micronutrient deficiencies, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat disease, including HIV and AIDS and derive Zero Hunger by 2030.

Important Definitions

- **Stunting:** Calculation is based on height-for-age. It is associated with an underdeveloped brain, poor learning capacity, and increased nutrition-related diseases.
- **Wasting:** Calculated by weight-for-height. It is associated with decreased fat mass. Also known as wasting syndrome, it causes muscle and fat tissue to waste away.
- **Underweight:** Calculated by the weight-for-age formula. It is a body weight considered to be too low to be healthy. It can reflect both stunting and wasting.

WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS 2019

◎ CONTEXT

- Recently, United Nations published a report named **World Population Prospects 2019** providing a comprehensive overview of global demographic patterns and prospects.

◎ ABOUT:

- It is been published by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- The World Population Prospects 2019 estimates are based on all available sources of

data on population size and levels of fertility, mortality and international migration for 235 countries or areas.

- The study stated that the world's population could reach its peak around the end of the current century, at a level of nearly 11 billion.
- The report also confirmed that the world's population is growing older due to increasing life expectancy and falling fertility levels, and that the number of countries experiencing a reduction in population size is growing.
- The resulting changes in the size, composition and distribution of the world's population have important consequences for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the globally agreed targets for improving economic prosperity and social well-being while protecting the environment.

Key findings of the report

- The world's population continues to increase, but growth rates vary greatly across regions.
- Nine countries will make up more than half the projected population growth between now and 2050
- Rapid population growth presents challenges for sustainable development
- In some countries, growth of the working-age population is creating opportunities for economic growth
- Globally, women are having fewer babies, but fertility rates remain high in some parts of the world
- People are living longer, but those in the poorest countries still live 7 years less than the global average
- The world's population is growing older, with persons over age 65 being the fastest-growing age group
- Falling proportions of working-age people are putting pressure on social protection systems
- A growing number of countries are experiencing a reduction in population size
- Migration has become a major component of population change in some countries

Key findings on India by the report

- India is expected to show the highest population increase between now and 2050, overtaking China as the world's most populous country, by around 2027
- India, along with eight other countries, will make up over half of the estimated population growth between now and 2050.
- The nine countries expected to show the biggest increase are India, Nigeria and Pakistan, followed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Indonesia, Egypt and the United States of America.
- Health experts have called for more investment in healthcare sector in India
- The employment rates are going down in India and with more younger people, India won't be able to absorb them in workforce and won't be able to reap the benefits of its demographic dividend.
