



An Institute for Civil Services

CURRENT AFFAIRS

ANALYST

— WEEKLY —

Week - 3

MAY, 2019

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— Disclaimer —

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

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

CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYST
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FOUNDATION 2020-21

1 Yr. & 2 Yrs.

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10 JUNE

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OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

GEOGRAPHY

By: Rohit Lodha

21
JUNE

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

By: Ashutosh Pandey

24
JUNE

POLITICAL SCIENCE

By: Dr. Piyush Choubey

24
JUNE

HISTORY

By: Piyush Kumar

26
JUNE

SECTION: A

(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

FISCAL SLIPPAGE CAUSED BY GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

CONTEXT

- 15th Finance Commission headed by Chairman N.K. Singh held a detailed meeting with Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das and deputy governors.
- The RBI has voiced its concern over government schemes such as income support schemes, Uday scheme (revival package for power distribution companies) and farm loan waivers as such schemes lead to fiscal slippages.
- The central bank noted that outstanding debt as percentage of GDP had been rising despite moderation in interest payment as percentage of revenue receipts.

◎ ABOUT:

Income support schemes:

- In the Interim Budget presented in February, the government announced a cash transfer scheme (PM-KISAN), for small and marginal farmers with landholdings of up to two hectare, of ₹6,000. The government had allocated ₹75,000 crore towards the scheme for financial year 2020.
- Odisha's Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income (KALIA), inclusive of landless households, proposes to transfer ₹5000 to every family in every cropping seasons for five seasons.
- Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme grants ₹4000 per acre per farmer each season to purchase agricultural inputs.
- Jharkhand Mukhya Mantri Krishi Yojna proposes to grant ₹5000 per acre per farmer for Kharif crops.
- The Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana by the state government of Madhya Pradesh transfers the price differential between the crop's minimum support price and the selling price, to the beneficiaries account.
- Congress party in its manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections promises of NYAY (Nyuntam Aay Yojana). Conceived as a minimum income guarantee, the NYAY promises unconditional transfer of ₹72,000 annually to 20 per cent of the poorest families for reduction of poverty in the country.

Uday scheme:

- Ujjwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) is the financial turnaround and revival package for electricity distribution companies of India (DISCOMs) initiated by the Ministry of Power with the intent to find a permanent solution to the poor financial health and operational efficiency of India's debt-ridden power distribution companies.
- It allows state governments, which own the DISCOMs, to take over 75 percent of their debt

and pay back lenders by selling bonds. DISCOMs are expected to issue bonds for the remaining 25 percent of their debt.

- The other objectives of the scheme are:
 - Operational improvement
 - Reduction of cost of generation of power
 - Development of Renewable Energy
 - Energy efficiency & conservation
- Under UDAY, discoms can convert their debt into state government bonds, but are required to fulfil certain conditions - reduce the average aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses to 15%, maintain commercial sustainability, and bring down the gap between average cost of supply (ACS) and average revenue realized (ARR) to zero.
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

◎ ANALYSIS:

Rationale of introducing such schemes:

- The success of already existing income support schemes of some states like Telangana's Rythu Bandhu, Odisha's KALIA has inspired the central government to take this scheme at national level.
- The government may be advocating these schemes in the face of rural distress and agitations.
- These populist economic measures announced ahead of the general elections shows that the government is giving unemployment benefit as bribe to the marginalised sections, including the farmers and the poor to garner more votes.

Impact on Indian economy and society:

- **Positive:**
 - The income transfer will **reduce the inequality between the rich and the poor**. To fund the support scheme government will increase the tax percentage, taking out a good amount of

money from the rich and will distribute it to the poor and needy.

- ▶ With additional amount of money made available to the needy, they will spend it on **meeting their family's food requirement** now with more nutritious and diversified variety. They will have adequate resources to meet their **health expenditure** demands. They will provide their children with good **quality education**.
- ▶ It enables households to **afford goods and services** that are available in the market. It gives people purchasing power to access services in the market.
- ▶ Overall we can say that the standard of living of the lower strata of our society will improve. They will be able to maintain a **minimum quality of life**.
- ◉ **Negative:**
 - ▶ Given that the transfer is linked to size of the farm holding, it may result in sharpening **rural inequality and exclusion of landless farmers** from such a subsidy.
 - ▶ With food being the largest part of consumption spending across low income segments, an impact on the food economy is appreciable. One way this could play out is that demand for basic food items like milk, meat and eggs, as well as fruits and vegetables will rise. This in turn will cause the **inflation to increase**.

RBI opinion about these measures:

- ◉ It has termed these schemes as "poor fiscal marksmanship".
- ◉ It says that the **outstanding debt** as percentage of GDP has been rising despite moderation in interest payment as percentage of revenue receipts.
- ◉ It has raised concerns that these unemployment benefits to the marginalised sections will **stretch the fiscal position of states**. The states' fiscal position was stretched due to the UDAY bonds for the power sector.
- ◉ It has flagged these concerns for a long time fearing the impact of these schemes on inflation rates. With more available money in the economy there will be **increase in inflation**.

Impact of income support scheme on other world economies:

- ◉ **Mexico:**
 - ▶ Procampo, one of the cash transfer programs introduced by the Mexican government in 1994 to negate the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) used cultivated crop area as the basis of the cash transfer.

- ▶ On an average, a transfer of \$1 resulted in additional income of \$2 — \$1 directly and \$1 indirectly, depending on quantum of land that the farmer had. While the smallest farmers generated an equal amount in income effect, small and medium farmers were able to multiply income faster as they did not have to consume the transfer immediately on account of having existing assets.
- ▶ In Programa de Apoyo, yet another food aid program, recipients received either cash or food equal to about 10 percent of the household income.
- ▶ Food-producing households benefited under cash transfers by selling their crops at higher prices and were worse off under in-kind transfers as they were selling their crops at lower prices.

◉ **Brazil:**

- ▶ Bolsa Familia, a direct transfer program has been one of the biggest and used up 0.5 percent of Brazil's GDP annually.
- ▶ Household consumption increases as the direct income transfer allows for higher consumption across goods and services.
- ▶ However, this increase in consumption is offset by a decrease in investment if higher taxes are levied to collect the amount transferred.
- ▶ The higher household consumption will cause higher imports and lower exports, deteriorating trade balance further.

◉ **WAY FORWARD:**

- ◉ Cash versus non-cash transfers:
 - ▶ For goods and services that can be efficiently provided through markets, cash transfers are always better than transfers in kind.
 - ▶ However, markets are not always efficient for example, in health or education. Such sectors require non-cash transfers in terms of discounted fees.
- ◉ Providing the people of country with income support will only provide them a minimum quality of life. A better option is to train and skill them with which they will be able to earn much higher and thus will have a good standard of living.
- ◉ So, once the person is skilled, s/he would stand a better chance of earning market-linked wages and breaking out of poverty.
- ◉ People cannot be kept out of poverty by giving cash. Poverty reduction needs sustainable livelihoods. And so the problem that public policy needs to and should resolve is: How to supply the appropriate skills imparting infrastructure.

- Some people opine that why can't the poor just work hard; why the government should give the money. For them we can say that everyone employed in the technology sector does not becoming as rich as Narayan Murthy or Nandan Nilekani and not everyone in the manufacturing

sector becomes as rich as Anand Mahindra or Kiran Mazumdar Shaw.

- Lastly, we have too many people in farming. To solve this problem, we should focus on diverting people to non-agriculture sectors- manufacturing, services, and, information and technology sectors.



Practice Question

- There has been an increase in launch of income support schemes by the government both at the state and national level. Critically analyse their impact on the Indian economy and society.

MAINS TEST SERIES 2019

GS MAINS TEST SERIES 2019



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TEST
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16 JUNE

ETHICS

TEST SERIES

by: MANOJ K. JHA

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22

JUNE

&

ESSAY

TEST SERIES

by: MANOJ K. JHA

STARTS:

29

JUNE

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

GEOGRAPHY Test Series

by: Rohit Lodha

22 JUNE

POL SC. Test Series

by: Dr. Piyush Chaubey

23 JUNE

PUB ADM. Test Series

by: Ashutosh Pandey

22 JUNE

HISTORY Test Series

by: Piyush Kumar

23 JUNE

US-CHINA TRADE WAR

CONTEXT

- Recently, the US President Donald Trump's administration raised import tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese imports from 10% to 25%, effectively making them 25% more expensive for US consumers.
- China said it will raise tariffs on \$60 billion worth of U.S. goods from June 1, in retaliation to this U.S. tariff hike. The new rates will target a number of American imports with tariffs ranging from 5% to 25%. In addition, China may stop purchasing U.S. agricultural products and energy, reduce Boeing orders and restrict the bilateral service trade.
- Further, US Trade Representative has published plans to increase tariffs on another 3805 Chinese imports valued at \$300 billion hence covering almost all of China's import products.

● ANALYSIS:

Origin of this US-China trade war:

- Since 1990s, the Chinese government has been consistently declining the value of its currency, the yuan against US dollar. This artificial cheapness of yuan gave Chinese exporters an advantage in world markets and harmed the US exports.
- The currency devaluation is similar to sales stores which are able to sell more of their products due to cheap rates. As the yuan gets cheaper from the perspective of American consumers, the dollar gets more expensive from the perspective of Chinese consumers. That means it's getting more expensive for Chinese people to import American-made goods, so they're likely to import fewer of them. Lower demand for US goods would slow down the economic growth in the US.
- The US launched an investigation into Chinese trade policies in 2017. It imposed heavy tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of steel and aluminium items from China in March last year, and China responded by imposing tit-for-tat tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of American imports.

US TRADE IN GOODS WITH CHINA			
Year	Exports	Imports	Balance
2019*	25,994.4	105,973.9	-79,979.5
2018	120,341.4	539,503.4	-419,162.0
2017	129,893.6	505,470.0	-375,576.4
2016	115,545.5	462,542.0	-346,996.5
2015	115,873.4	483,201.7	-367,328.3
*January-March			
Source: US Census Bureau All figures are in millions of US dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified			

- This dispute escalated after US demanded that China reduce its **\$375 billion trade deficit** with the US (2017), and introduce verifiable measures for protection of Intellectual Property Rights,

technology transfer, and more access to American goods in Chinese markets.

- In 2018, the US imposed three rounds of tariffs on more than \$250bn worth of Chinese goods. The duties of up to 25% cover a wide range of industrial and consumer items - from handbags to railway equipment.
- China hits back with tariffs on \$110bn of US goods, accusing the US of starting the largest trade war in economic history. China has targeted products including chemicals, coal and medical equipment with levies that range from 5% to 25%.

Impact on US economy:

- Tariffs imposed on Chinese goods, in theory, make US-made products cheaper than imported ones, and encourage consumers to buy American goods. This will boost the consumption of domestic products and increase the profits of American manufacturers rather than Chinese manufacturers.
- The increased tariffs by China could hamper the US export industry, as the products of these US industries will now have to compete with locally available cheaper products of China.

Impact on Chinese economy:

- The biggest Chinese import sector impacted by the fresh round of tariff hikes is the \$20 billion-plus category of Internet modems, routers, and other data transmission devices segment.
- This is followed by about \$12 billion worth of printed circuit boards used in a vast array of US-made products.
- Furniture, lighting products, auto parts, vacuum cleaners, and building materials also will face higher levies.
- The increased tariffs will lower the demand of Chinese products in American market thereby decreasing the profits earned by the Chinese companies.

Impact on world:

- The IMF has lowered its forecast for global growth this year and next. It said that a full-blown trade war between the US and China would put a significant dent in economic recovery.
- Global economic growth is now expected to reach 3.7% in 2018 and 2019, down from the IMF's previous prediction of 3.9% in July.
- This also exacerbates the uncertainty in the global trading environment, affects global sentiment negatively, and adds to risk aversion globally.
- The higher tariffs could lead to the repricing of risk assets globally, tighter financing conditions, and slower growth.
- The trade tensions could result in an increasingly fragmented global trading framework, weakening the rules-based system that has underpinned global growth, particularly in Asia, over the past several decades.
- Of the \$300 billion in Chinese exports that are subject to US tariffs, only about 6% will be picked up by firms in the US.
- EU members are expected to benefit the most, as exports in the bloc are likely to grow by \$70 billion; and Japan and Canada will see exports increase by more than \$20 billion each. Other countries set to benefit from the trade tensions include Vietnam, with 5% export gains, Australia (4.6%), Brazil (3.8%), India (3.5%), and Philippines (3.2%).

Impact on India:

- The US manufacturers are setting up their bases in India, in addition to already existent bases in China. This will provide them an alternative source for export of their products to deal with such trade wars like situations. For India, this will be beneficial as it would create more jobs for us.
- There is a possibility that China could soon start flooding excess steel and aluminium into India's market after this raised tariffs on Chinese products by US.
- Besides the steel sector, products in other sectors like mobile phones, refrigerators, washing machines, ACs, water purifiers, and possibly electric vehicles will now see increased investment flow directed towards India.

- The Indian consumers will get the products at a cheaper rate but the domestic producers of India will have to compete with the Chinese imports or else face loss.
- With this increased tariffs on Chinese products by the US, the Indian producers will get an opportunity to fill this generated gap and penetrate in the US market. This will increase their trade and profit.
- Besides this, there will be a short-term impact on the stock markets. The benchmark Sensex at the Bombay Stock Exchange has been falling in line with global markets that have been spooked by the escalating trade war between the US and China.

Possibility of this trade war to be taken up at WTO level:

- While it is not clear yet whether the matter would go to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), data show that the US generally wins trade disputes, particularly against China, before the global trade arbitrator. In the last 16 years, the US has challenged Chinese practices 23 times in the WTO, with a win-loss record of 19-0 — with four cases pending.
- In the most recent decision, the WTO panel found that China's agricultural subsidies were inconsistent with WTO rules, and upheld US claims.

◎ WAY FORWARD:

- The head of the WTO has said that global free trade is facing its worst crisis since 1947 due to the protectionist nature of this US-China trade war.
- Both the countries- US and China should hold talks and deliberate on a better course of action.
- The US is a developed country, hence, it is no longer in the stage of primary and secondary based economy. Neither its people are poor enough, they have an appreciable standard of living. Hence the US companies should not fear of the competition from their Chinese counterparts. They should make themselves competent enough that their government need not to impose protectionist measures..

**Practice Question**

- Recently, US has increased tariffs on \$200 billion worth imports from China and in retaliation China has increased tariffs on \$60 billion worth of imports from US. Discuss, how these actions would impact the global economy

NSSO DATA AND MCA21

CONTEXT

- A National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) report has highlighted deficiencies in key government database of Indian companies.

◎ ABOUT:

- A technical study conducted by the NSSO between June 2016 to June 2017, examined parts of the corporate affairs ministry's database, found **that 37% of the companies could either not be traced, had shut down or were wrongly classified in terms of what sector they belonged to.**
- The quality of ministry's company database, often referred to as '**MCA-21**', has been in the spotlight over the last four years, after the **Central Statistics Office** made it a key component of how it calculated the new GDP series.
- The survey office observations on the MCA-21 database, however, came while it was collecting a wide range of economic and operational data on service sector enterprises in India, a broad effort that the organization says was conceived as "a prelude to a proposed Annual Survey on Services Sector".

- **NSSO:** The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) headed by a Director General is responsible for conduct of large scale sample surveys in diverse fields on All India basis.
- Primarily data are collected through nation-wide household surveys on various socio-economic subjects, Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), etc.
- National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), Government of India, has been conducting nationwide integrated large scale sample surveys, employing scientific sampling methods, to generate data and statistical indicators on diverse socio-economic aspects.
- **MCA21** is an e-Governance initiative of Ministry of Company Affairs (MCA), Government of India that enables an easy and secure access of the MCA services to the corporate entities, professionals and citizens of India.

◎ BACKGROUND:

NSS 74th ROUND: Technical Report on Services Sector Enterprises in India

- Though the services sector in India has the largest share in the Gross Domestic Product of the country, there is no comprehensive database to monitor

the growth and other related aspects of this sector in India.

- Since there is a strong demand from different quarters to have a comprehensive source of data on a regular basis of the services sector, the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MOSPI) envisaged an Annual Survey of Services Sector (ASSSE) in similar lines as the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) conducted every year by MOSPI.

Scope and Coverage

- **Geographical coverage:** The survey covered the whole of the Indian Union.
- **Subject Coverage:** NSS 74th round (July 2016 – June 2017) was a survey on services sector enterprises.
- **Coverage of services sector:** From the coverage of the services sector, activities of the following enterprises/sectors were excluded:
 - Government Enterprises /PSU; Air Transport; Financial and insurance sector; Private Money Lenders; Self Help Groups (SHG)
- **Under the coverage of the services sector, the following types of enterprises were included:**
 - Proprietary, partnership, limited liability companies, Non-Government companies; Co-operative Societies; Trusts / Non-Profit Institutions

Summary observations:

- Non-response rate as a result of limitations of frame was about one-third of the sample enterprises.
- In the MCA frame, there was no condition on workers since the information was not available in the frame, neither was it updated. In the sample of operational enterprises, about 20% of the enterprises were found to have less than 10 workers.
- The frame, therefore, might be a highly truncated frame and aggregates estimates are likely to be highly underestimated and difficult to interpret.
- There was different proportion of non-response units which might have affected the estimates of each frame differently. The numbers of units in the frames were also different.
- It is not possible to conclude if one set of result is better than the other in absence of any benchmark data on service sector enterprises.

● ANALYSIS

The MCA21 data reliability problem:

- While the government has maintained that using the MCA-21 database allowed for a more granular approach, as it drills down to the level of balance sheet data, some economists have argued that it is untested and may have unknowingly boosted India Inc's contribution to the country's growth figures.

The GDP series issues

- GDP, or gross value added (GVA), is a measure of goods and services produced in an economy in a year, net of intermediate inputs. Broadly-speaking, it is a statistical construct based on innumerable estimations of value addition taking place in an economy.
- GDP is estimated following the UN System of National Accounts (UNSNA) – a global template, revised periodically to account for evolving economic activities. Both models have many accomplishments and impairments.
- GDP is re-based regularly to account for changing production structure, relative prices and better recording of economic activities. Crucially, the re-basing also allows for introducing newer methodologies and improved databases.
- The last revision was somewhat peculiar as it resulted in a 2.3 percentage point shrinkage of the absolute GDP (GVA) size in the base year (2011-12), thus raising India's growth rates in the following years. For instance, in 2013-14, the growth rate of the manufacturing sector swung from (-) 0.7% in the old series to (+) 5.3% in the new series.
- The revision also altered the institutional composition of India's GDP: in particular, the private corporate sector's (PCS) size was enlarged while the unorganized/informal/household sector got contracted (with public sector's share remaining the same) due to the introduction of questionable methodological changes.

What were these changes?

- One example was how data from the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) was replaced with Ministry of Corporate Sector's (MCA's) company financial data

(MCA-21) for estimating manufacturing sector growth. It was claimed that ASI did not capture value addition taking place outside of the factory premises, but within the enterprise (or a firm).

- It is this MCA21 database which has been questioned in the current report.**
- The use of MCA database in particular could have misleadingly enlarged the private corporate sector's share in the Indian economy and its growth rate.

The NSSO's findings:

- The company database was used as a survey sampling frame along with two other sources of data – a list of establishments as per the Economic Census (EC) and list of establishments as per the Business Register (BR).
- According to the NSSO, there were 3, 49,500 enterprises in the frame of the MCA, out of which 35,456 were selected for survey.
- Over 20% of the firms were found to be "out of coverage", which means that they likely no longer operate in the services sector, even though that is how they are registered and thus captured in India's national accounts.
- Nearly 15% of the firms were either untraceable or had closed down.
- To top it off, almost 7% of the companies had been correctly identified but simply chose not to respond to survey questions or had not maintained accounts in a proper format.
- The NSSO notes the issue of non-responses was far worse in the MCA frame when compared to the "EC/BR frame".
- The problem of non-response was severe in case of units chosen from MCA frame. About 45% of MCA units were found to be out-of-survey/casualty while EC/BR frame had about 18% of such cases, the report notes.

What should be done?

- The CSO should have done some kind of critical scrutiny and validation before using the MCA-21 database in the new GDP series, either through quick surveys or by comparing with other databases, or consultations with accountants familiar with company filings.



Practice Question

- GDP measures the monetary value of goods and services produced by a country, mostly for sale in markets. This analysis rests on purity of primary data sources such as that of MCA21 and related NSSO findings. However, recent findings questions the validity of raw data itself. Critically examine the methodology of GDP evaluations.**

GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCE (GSP)

CONTEXT

- A group of 25 influential American lawmakers has urged the US Trade Representative (USTR) not to terminate the GSP programme with India after the expiry of the 60-day notice.
- They urged to continue negotiating the deal as it protects and promotes jobs that rely on trade both imports and exports with India.
- Further, it has been said that, American companies that rely on duty-free treatment for India under the GSP will pay hundreds of millions of dollars annually in new taxes. In the past, even temporary lapses in such benefits have caused companies to lay off workers, cut salaries and benefits, and delay or cancel job-creating investments in the United States.

◎ ABOUT:

More on news:

- India has been the largest beneficiary of this US GSP programme.
- In retaliation to US removing India from the list of GSP beneficiaries, it has proposed higher tariffs on high-value US goods.
- But it has — for an unprecedented seventh time — postponed these proposed higher tariffs on high-value goods from Washington, hoping to get a reversal on the US position.
- The government has decided to extend the deadline one last time as it awaits a final confirmation from the US, set to come in the form of a presidential decree.

◎ BACKGROUND:

- The US last year announced that it will review the eligibility criteria of India currently benefited under the GSP.
- US President Trump in a letter to Congress had said that India's termination from GSP follows its failure to provide the United States with assurances that it will provide equitable and reasonable access to its markets in numerous sectors.
- Hence on March 4, President Donald Trump announced that the US intends to terminate India's designation as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP programme.
- The 60 day notice period is ending this month.
- The USTR through a simple notification in federal register can formally terminate GSP benefits to India.

◎ ANALYSIS:

What is Generalized System of Preference (GSP)?

- It is the largest and oldest United States trade preference program to provide opportunities for many of the world's poorest countries to use trade to grow their economies and climb out of poverty.
- It is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free entry for thousands of products from 120 designated beneficiary countries and territories.
- It was established by the Trade Act of 1974.
- Besides India, some other beneficiaries are- China, Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

Why was it introduced?

- It promotes economic growth and development in the developing world.
- It promotes sustainable development in beneficiary countries by helping these countries to increase and diversify their trade with the United States. The program provides additional benefits for products from least developed countries.
- The U.S. also benefits from this programme as it moves GSP imports from the docks to U.S. consumers, farmers, and manufacturers. It supports tens of thousands of jobs in the U.S.
- The other benefit is that GSP boosts American competitiveness by reducing the costs of imported inputs used by U.S. companies to manufacture goods in the United States.
- The GSP is important to U.S. small businesses, many of which rely on the programmes' duty savings to stay competitive.
- The program also supports progress by beneficiary countries in affording worker rights to their people, in enforcing intellectual property rights, and in supporting the rule of law.

Why is USA removing India from its list of GSP beneficiaries?

- The U.S. conducts periodic reviews of the programme. The review for India, taken up last year, focussed on whether it is meeting the eligibility criterion that requires a GSP beneficiary country to assure the U.S. that it will provide equitable and reasonable access to its market.
- The Trade Representative accepted two petitions asserting that India did not meet the criterion: one from the National Milk Producers Federation and the U.S. Dairy Export Council, and the other from the Advanced Medical Technology Association.
- India wants dairy products, which could form part of religious worship, certified that they were only derived from animals that have not been fed food containing internal organs. Other exporters such as EU nations and New Zealand certify their products, but the U.S. has so far not done so.
- India has recently placed a cap on the prices of medical devices, like stents, that impacts U.S. exports of such devices.
- Hence, as India is not providing equal access of its market to some US products, it is considering to remove India from its list of GSP beneficiaries.

What will be the impact of this termination of GSP on India?

- Some of the Indian export industries may not feel the pinch of the GSP removal for India by the U.S because the loss for the industry amounts to about \$190 million of total \$5.6 billion exports falling under the GSP category which is a small percentage.
- But specific sectors, such as gem and jewellery, leather and processed foods will lose the benefits of the programme.
- Producers from other sectors may be able to bear 2-3% of the loss from the change, but not more than that. The loss, in export in these sectors like some kinds of rice, may even exceed 10%. Hence, it will impact their business.
- The landed price of goods from India will now be higher than it was when GSP was in force.

Hence, consumers of those products in the U.S. would gravitate to exporters that enjoy the GSP benefits and hence are able to offer lower prices. The customers of Indian product will get diverted to other nation and it is difficult to get back a customer that a competitor takes away.

- The most potential competitor is China. Several specific products, such as bulk industrial bags, footwear, and plastics are likely to become less competitive against Chinese products without the GSP benefits. For instance, India and China are the two major suppliers of these FIBC bags to the USA, commanding an almost equal share of the market. Without GSP benefits, exported industrial bags will become less competitive vis-à-vis China, allowing the Chinese to increase their market share.

◎ WAY FORWARD:

- The basic philosophy behind GSP was to provide duty free imports to US from developing countries. India is still a developing country, hence, USTR should continue to include India in this programme which is in line with its founding principle.
- US should certify its dairy products. This is not something which is new neither it is something which is difficult to do. Some European countries and New Zealand are already certifying their dairy products. This certification will not cause any loss to the exporters of US, it will only increase their business and profits.
- The issue of cap on costlier medical devices is reasonable seeing the poverty in India. However, India can allow costlier imports as the rich in India can afford it. Though this step will not benefit the larger chunk of population constituted by the middle and lower class.
- Lastly, if India is removed from the GSP programme, the government should offer fiscal help to the affected sectors. This will save lay-offs and salary cuts for Indian employees.



Practice Question

- US had put India on 60 days' notice for being removed as the beneficiary of Generalized System of Preference. Both India and some US Congress leaders are asking the US President to not terminate this GSP programme for India. Discuss, how this termination if executed will impact both the countries.

VENEZUELA CRISIS AND INDIA

CONTEXT

- In an effort to weaken President Nicolas Maduro's government in Venezuela, the US has implemented sanctions against Petroleos de Venezuela (Venezuelan state oil company), and has been piling diplomatic pressure on nations to cut imports from the firm, deadline for which ended on May 10, 2019.
- India's efforts in cutting down its Venezuelan oil imports has been recently appreciated by the US.

◎ ABOUT

Situation in Venezuela

- Venezuela was once among Latin America's most prosperous nations, holding the world's largest proven oil reserves, but a recent fall in oil prices accompanied by corruption and mismanagement under two decades of socialist rule have left the economy in a historic economic and political crisis.
- Since the beginning of 2019, battle for legitimate President of the nation is underway.
- The US and most Western countries have recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido as Venezuela's head of state, but President Nicolas Maduro retains the backing of Russia and China as well as control of state institutions including the military and judiciary.
- Rampant inflation, along with food scarcity and blackouts have gripped Venezuela under Maduro, while thousands of localities fled to the neighbouring countries as shortages, political turmoil, and crime rates have soared.
- Rejecting offers of assistance, Maduro government is spending its resources on Chinese-made military-grade crowd-control systems to thwart public protests.
- Currently, it has installed an unconstitutional constituent assembly with full powers, deregistered the three main opposition parties, sacked elected mayors and deputies, and stolen three elections.
- Despite massive international diplomatic support, organized political opposition is weak.
- The US has slapped sweeping sanctions on PDVSA, Venezuelan gold, Venezuelan central bank with a view to put pressure on socialist President Maduro to step down.

Magnitude of the politico-economic crisis

- **Wage rate:** The minimum wage, which is earned by the median worker, buys less than 900 calories a day—not enough to feed a person, let alone a family.
- **Food scarcity:** A cup of coffee cost more than 2 million bolivars. The Catholic charity Caritas

Venezuela projects that 280,000 children will die of hunger this year.

- **Inflation:** The country is facing a major economic crisis, with projections that inflation could soar to a mind-boggling 10 million per cent this year sovereign bolivar," the new currency printed with five fewer zeroes in a bid to tame soaring inflation.
- **Oil production:** Oil is the blood of Venezuela's crippled economy, accounting for 96% of exports. Venezuela produces around 1.57 million barrels of oil per day, half of what it produced two decades back.
- **Excessive migration:** As a result, Venezuelans have been leaving for neighbouring countries like Colombia and Brazil on foot, creating a refugee crisis of Syrian proportions, the biggest ever in the Americas. The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) has been urging countries to grant Venezuelans refugee status. The 1984 Cartagena Declaration commits them to it. But countries in the region, fearing a large number of refugees and the impact they might have on government budgets, have opposed such a move. Trinidad and Tobago has even deported Venezuelan refugees.

Indian Stand on Venezuelan crisis

- Maintained neutrality, India has not, till now, officially recognised Guaidó.
- India's position is based on the principles of non-interference and sovereignty.
- However, the recent decision of not purchasing oil from Venezuela tilts the balance in favour of the US and its allies.

◎ BACKGROUND:

Factors contributing to high inflation level

- The government used the oil boom that started in 2004 to disempower society and enhance state control over production and the market, while borrowing massively in international markets.
- By 2013, the government's excessive borrowing had caused it to lose access to international capital markets, triggering the start of the recession.

- In 2014, the price of oil fell sharply, making the previous import level unsustainable and triggering a much deeper collapse.
- Instead of more market-friendly policies and seeking international financial support, Maduro's government deepened distortionary controls on the economy.
- Offers of humanitarian assistance were refused. With imports, output, and tax revenues collapsing, the government opted to print the money needed to cover the fiscal deficit, triggering hyperinflation.

◎ ANALYSIS

India's stake in the crisis

- **Primarily economical:** The trade between Venezuela and India is worth \$6 billion, of which exports from India comprise barely 1%. Crude oil imports mainly dominate the trade. Venezuela's import of Indian drugs, food and textile has fallen in recent years due to its financial crisis.
- **Oil needs:** India importing over 80% of its oil needs and Venezuela is its third largest supplier of oil. India has also invested in oil assets of Venezuela.
- **Costlier:** As US sanctions kick in Iran and Venezuela, Indian refiners will face costly crude prices. This will particularly hurt private refiners like Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy which are importing about 300,000 barrels of Venezuelan oil per day.
- **Outstanding payments:** Doing business in Venezuela and payments against supplies to that country have turned out to be extremely challenging due to the Latin American nation's restrictions on transferring money out after it ran short of foreign exchange.
- **Alternate payment mechanism:** Given the massive American influence on the international financial system, as an alternative oil payment mechanism, India will have to make entire payment in rupees as approved by Venezuela.
- **Preferred destination:** Indian refiners prefer the heavy sweet crude supplied by Iran and Venezuela, which helps them produce low-sulphur fuel oil ahead of new shipping emissions norms that kick in January 2020.

- **Partner:** Venezuela has also joined the International Solar Alliance, cutting it diplomatically and economically will affect its engagement at the platform.

Solution to Venezuelan Crisis

Long term:

- **Re-empowerment of Venezuelans:**
 - ▶ As both, the regime and the economic collapse, are the consequences of the elimination of basic rights. Venezuela's problems will not be solved unless and until there is a regime change.
 - ▶ This will require coordination between the Venezuelan democratic forces and the international community.

Short term:

- **International military intervention:**
 - ▶ Venezuela's National Assembly (VNA) has formally started the procedure to rejoin the **Rio Treaty**, an international pact that would give legal ground to regional military action to oust Nicolas Maduro from power.
 - ▶ Self-declared 'interim President' Guaido, on the other hand, has requested US military cooperation to oust Maduro. US has recently violated Venezuelan waters.
 - ▶ In the past too, Simón Bolívar gained the title of Liberator of Venezuela thanks to an 1814 invasion organized and financed by Colombia.
- **Targeted sanctions:**
 - ▶ Targeted sanctions, managed by the US office of foreign assets control (Ofac), have not been highly successful. Earlier, such sanctions have failed to change regimes in Russia, North Korea or Iran.
 - ▶ Apart from being too slow at best, in Venezuela, they have become a collective punishment and has worsening the on-going humanitarian crisis.
 - ▶ According to Centre for Economic Policy and Research, US sanctions has deprived Venezuela of lifesaving medicines, medical equipment, food and other essential imports and killed over 40,000 Venezuelans since 2017.



Practice Question

- Briefly discuss on-going Venezuelan crisis. Examine how US sanctions on Venezuela will impact India-Venezuela trade.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013

CONTEXT

- Serious allegations of sexual harassment were leveled against Chief Justice of India by someone from within the judicial system.
- The procedure adopted by the in-house panel in arriving at its conclusion has left much to be desired.

◎ ABOUT:

- In the recent past, in the wake of **the #MeToo movement**, no less a person than the Union Minister of State for External Affairs, had to step down because of allegations of sexual harassment against him, pertaining to incidents which happened many years ago.
- This time, the Chief Justice of India was in the eye of a storm. He was accused of sexual harassment.
- On April 20, a complaint of sexual harassment was submitted against the Chief Justice of India by a woman who had been employed in the Supreme Court as a Junior Court Assistant.
- Her complaint contained detailed averments on a sworn affidavit along with corroborating materials including phone logs, video recordings, etc. that supported her allegations of sexual harassment, and asked for an external inquiry into the allegations by retired judges of the Supreme Court.
- What followed thereafter has been a complete travesty of procedural and substantive justice.

◎ BACKGROUND:

- Before one analyzes the current incident, it gets pertinent to explore **Vishaka guidelines** and **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**.

Vishaka judgment (Vishaka guidelines):

- The guidelines date back to 1997 when the Supreme Court laid them down while passing judgment in a public interest litigation filed by Vishaka and other women's rights groups over the infamous Bhanwari Devi gang rape case.
- Bhanwari Devi, a social worker from Rajasthan had in 1992 prevented the marriage of a one-year-old girl, inviting wrath of the villagers. The gang rape was allegedly an act of revenge.
- Hearing the PIL, the apex court took note of the fact that the civil and penal laws of the time did

not adequately provide for specific protection of women from sexual harassment at workplaces, and made it legally binding for employers to observe some guidelines to ensure prevention of sexual harassment of women.

- Prohibition, prevention, redressal — these were the three key obligations that were imposed on institutions as the guidelines defined sexual harassment at workplaces.
- The Supreme Court said every organization must set up an internal complaints committee or ICC to look into matters of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.

What constitutes sexual harassment at workplace?

- Physical contact and advances
- A demand or request for sexual favors
- Sexually coloured remarks
- Showing pornography
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (focus will be on the Complaint mechanisms under the 2013 Act):

- According to the Act, the complaint of sexual harassment has to be made "within three months from the date of the incident".
- If such incidents have taken place over a time, the complaint should be made within three months from the date of the last incident.
- However, the ICC has the discretion to "extend the time limit" if "it is satisfied that the circumstances were such which prevented the woman from filing a complaint within the stipulated period".
- The ICC needs to record these reasons to exercise the right.
- The Act contemplates the constitution of Internal Complaints Committee ("ICC") (Sec. 4) at the work

place and Local Complaints Committee ("LCC") at district and block levels (Sec. 6).

- A District Officer (District Collector or Deputy Collector) shall be responsible for facilitating and monitoring the activities under the Act every workplace employing 10 or more employees is required to constitute an ICC.
- The ICC is required to consist of at least four members, and its presiding officer is required to be a woman employed at a senior level.
- Provisions have been made in case no senior woman employee is available, to nominate a woman presiding officer from another office, administrative unit, workplace, or organization.
- Further, one half of the members must be women. LCCs are to be set up by the appropriate government which shall receive complaints in respect of establishments that do not have ICCs on account of having fewer than 10 employees and to receive complaints from domestic workers.
- Before initiating an inquiry, the ICC or LCC may, at the request of the aggrieved woman, take steps to arrive at a settlement between the parties. However, no monetary settlement can be made as the basis of such conciliation.

Duties of an Employer

- **The Act makes it the duty of every employer to:**
 - ▶ provide a safe working environment at the workplace which shall include safety from all the persons with whom a woman comes into contact at the workplace;
 - ▶ display at any conspicuous place in the workplace, the penal consequences of sexual harassment and the order constituting the ICC;
 - ▶ organize workshops and awareness programmes;
 - ▶ provide necessary facilities to the ICC for dealing with complaints and conducting inquiries;
 - ▶ assist in securing the attendance of the respondent and witnesses before the ICC;
 - ▶ make available such information to the ICC or LCC, as it may require;
 - ▶ provide assistance to the woman if she so chooses to file a criminal complaint;
 - ▶ initiate criminal action against the perpetrator;
 - ▶ treat sexual harassment as a misconduct under the service rules and initiate action for such misconduct; and
 - ▶ monitor the timely submission of reports by the ICC.

© ANALYSIS

On what grounds, are the allegations levied?

- In 1997, in the Vishaka case, the SC laid down that a committee inquiring into allegations of sexual

harassment at the work place should be headed by a woman, and not less than half of its members should be women.

- This was not adhered to by the Panel of enquiry setup to validate the claim.
- To rule out pressure or influence from senior levels, the Court directed that such a committee should comprise a member from a third party. This was not followed either.
- The panel was set up under the SC's own procedure to examine whether the allegations warranted an inquiry.
- The intention behind adopting this procedure is to protect judges from motivated and false allegations.
- By the same logic, many other organizations and institutions may adopt their own set of procedures on the plea that a non-internal inquiry may bring into disrepute not only the individual concerned but also the institution itself.

The complainant has suffered on two counts

- The in-house panel was not constituted as per the law
- The complainant was not allowed the assistance of a lawyer.

What was the actual working of the in-house panel?

- The committee, which comprises Justices Indira Banerjee and Indu Malhotra, has been holding hearings on a daily basis from Monday.
- On the third hearing on April 30, the complainant refused to further participate in the 'informal' proceedings.
- She issued a press statement that said one of the reasons for her withdrawal was that the panel refused her request to have a lawyer or a support person accompany her during the hearings.
- The "**in-house procedure**" presided over by three senior judges – Justices S.A. Bobde, Indira Banerjee and Indu Malhotra – did not follow the guidelines of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.
- The three senior judges chose to not share the committee's final report with the complainant although it gave a copy of it to the CJI, who is an accused in the matter.
- The Indian judiciary is as much a part of this democracy as other organs of the Government.
- With all State action being subject to public scrutiny under the Right to Information regime, it is unclear how the judiciary is claiming the moral high ground to be above this regime.
- Further, the Committee has not provided any justification for not supplying a copy of the same to the Complainant, which is a basic tenet of natural justice.

- There is no recourse available to the Complainant against the alleged report of this Committee except to once again approach the same Supreme Court that has failed her.
- The Supreme Court must provide for an avenue to appeal the findings of the 'Inquiry' before a committee of external persons, preferably retired judges of the Supreme Court.
- In Addl. District & Sessions Judge 'X' v. High Court of M.P.**, the Supreme Court has explicitly held "that those who are liable to be affected by the outcome of the 'In-House Procedure', have the right to seek judicial redressal, on account of a perceived irregularity.
- The irregularity may be on account of the violation of the contemplated procedure, or even because of contemplated bias or prejudice. It may be on account of impropriety.

- The challenge can extend to all subjects on which judicial review can be sought.

What happens to the 'victim' if her complaint is found to be false?

- Section 14 of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act deals with false complainant.
- If the ICC finds the complaint to be false, the Act says, it may recommend action against the woman or the person who has made the complaint.
- The Act, however, makes it clear that "a mere inability to substantiate a complaint or provide adequate proof need not attract legal action.
- Also, no action can be recommended against the complainant unless an inquiry establishes malicious intent on part of the complainant.



Practice Question

- While deciding on the sexual harassment allegations against the CJI, the actions of the Court in the guise of safeguarding judicial independence have greatly jeopardized the credibility of the institution. Critically evaluate.

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INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION (IIP)

◎ CONTEXT:

- Growth in industrial activity dipped to a 21-month low in March, contracting 0.1% due in large part to a continuing slowdown in the manufacturing sector.
- The IIP grew a robust 5.33% in the same month of last year, and 4.39% in March 2017.

◎ ABOUT:

What were the causes of this dip in IIP?

- The government has very little room to manoeuvre on the fiscal side, even though the Reserve Bank of India has done what it can on the monetary policy side with two successive interest rate cuts.
- Contraction in capital resulted in slowdown in the industrial output. The capital goods sector contracted for a third consecutive month, by 8.66% in March compared with a contraction of 8.92% in February.
- Contraction in intermediate goods (indicative of subdued investment activity) further resulted in slowdown in the industrial output. Intermediary goods sector contracted for the fifth consecutive month, by 2.55% in March, compared with a contraction of 5.05% in the previous month.
- On the demand side, the consumer durables sector also contracted in March by 5.07% after being positive for three consecutive months.
- The mining and quarrying sector saw growth slowing to 0.78% in March from 2.18% in February.

What is IIP?

- It is an index which details out the growth of various sectors in an economy such as **mineral mining, electricity and manufacturing**.
- This is a composite indicator that measures the short-term changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products during a given period with respect to that in a chosen base period.
- The base year was at one time fixed at 1993–94 so that year was assigned an index level of 100. The current base year is 2011–2012. So if the IIP reads 150, it means that there has been 50% industrial growth compared to the base year, i.e. 2011–12.
- The Eight Core Industries comprise nearly 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index. These are Electricity, steel, refinery products, crude oil, coal, cement, natural gas and fertilisers.
- The mineral mining, electricity and manufacturing are called broad sectors. The sectors of Basic Goods, Capital Goods and Intermediate Goods included in the index are called use-based sectors.

Who publishes it?

- It is compiled and published monthly by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation six weeks after the reference month ends.

What is its significance?

- The total Industrial sector contributes 27 per cent in the GDP of India.
- Over the last two decades, out of this 27 per cent, the manufacturing sector has contributed 17 per cent and 10 per cent has been contributed by mining, quarrying, electricity and gas.

Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) Vs. Index of Industrial Production (IIP):

The Industrial Output data is captured and monitored, primarily, through two statistical activities – Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

- **ASI:**
 - It is calculated on an annual basis.
 - It is conducted by NSSO.
 - It is conducted under the Collection of Statistics Act, since 1959.
 - Its data is based on the actual book of accounts and other documents maintained by registered factories.
- **IIP:**
 - It is calculated on a monthly basis.
 - It is conducted by CSO.
 - It is compiled on the basis of data sourced from 16 ministries or departments.

WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANISATION (WCO)

- ◎ **CONTEXT:**
- Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) recently organised a meeting of the Regional Heads of Customs Administration of Asia Pacific Region of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) in Kochi from 08th to 10th May.
 - India is hosting this meeting in its capacity as Vice Chairperson of the Asia Pacific region that it assumed in July, 2018 for a two-year period.

◎ **ABOUT:**

Objectives of the meeting:

- To take stock of the progress being made in carrying forward the programmes and initiatives of WCO to promote, facilitate and secure the cross-border trade in the region and the capacity building and technical assistance required to achieve this goal.
- To ensure greater communication and connectivity within the region, harness technology advancements, inclusive approach, and consensus on core issues.
- Implementation of trade facilitation measures, cross-border e-commerce transactions, building capacity of small island economies and the review of the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC).

World Customs Organization (WCO):

- It is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1952, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.
- It works in areas covering the development of international conventions on commodity classification, valuation, rules of origin, collection of customs revenue, supply chain security, international trade facilitation, customs enforcement activities, combating counterfeiting in support of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), drugs enforcement and illegal weapons trading.

How it came into being?

- In 1950, a Convention establishing the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) was signed in Brussels. In 1953, the CCC's inaugural session took place with the participation of 17 founding members. CCC membership subsequently expanded to cover all regions of the globe.
- In 1994, the organization adopted its current name, the World Customs Organization. Today, WCO members are responsible for customs controls in 182 countries representing more than 98 per cent of all international trade.

Objective of WCO:

- Its objective is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of member customs administrations, thereby assisting them to contribute successfully to national development goals, particularly revenue collection, national security, trade facilitation, community protection, and collection of trade statistics.

Instruments adopted by WCO:

- International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS Convention)
- International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs procedures (revised Kyoto Convention or RKC)
- ATA Convention and the Convention on Temporary Admission (Istanbul Convention)
- Arusha Declaration on Customs Integrity
- SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade
- Columbus Program

COASTAL REGULATION ZONE (CRZ)

◎ CONTEXT:

- The Supreme Court recently ordered the demolition of five apartments in Ernakulam's Maradu municipality in Kerala for violation of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules.
- The Bench directed the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority, to clear the buildings within a period of one month and to submit a report before the court. The court said the State cannot bear illegal constructions with the danger of floods and heavy rain looming large.

◎ ABOUT:**Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ):**

- Under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 of India, notification was issued in 1991, for **regulation of activities in the coastal area** by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF).
- As per the notification, the coastal land up to 500m from the High Tide Line (HTL) and a stage of 100m along banks of creeks, estuaries, backwater and rivers subject to tidal fluctuations, is called the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ).
- CRZ along the country has been placed in four categories depending on their land use and regulated developmental activities in the areas:
 - **CRZ-1:** It is the ecologically sensitive area that is essential for maintaining the ecosystem of the coast. It lies between low and high tide line and includes the areas like mangroves, coral reefs and sand dunes. It was off-limits for tourism activities and infrastructure development, except for defence, strategic and rare public utility projects.
 - **CRZ-2:** These areas form up to the shoreline of the coast. Unauthorised structures are not allowed to construct in this zone.
 - **CRZ-3:** Rural and urban localities which fall outside the 1 and 2. Only certain activities related to agriculture even some public facilities are allowed in this zone.
 - **CRZ-4:** It includes the shallow belt of coastal waters extending up to 12 nautical miles. It is a crucial fishing zone for small fishers.
- In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, which killed 10,000 people along the eastern coast, CRZ Notification 2011 was brought in to beef up coastal zone.

2018 Notification:

- It further categorises CRZ-1. It allows eco-tourism activities such as mangrove walks, tree huts and nature trails in eco-sensitive areas, demarcated as CRZ-IA. Sea links, salt harvesting and desalination plants and roads on stilts are also allowed in CRZ-IA.
 - The controversial land reclamation, in which new land is created from oceans or lake beds and is known to have strong impacts on coastal ecology, has been allowed in intertidal or CRZ-IB areas, for ports and sea links.

- In CRZ-II, a substantially built-up area, project developers can now increase the floor area ratio or floor space index, and build resorts and other tourism facilities.
- It drastically shrinks no development zone (NDZ) of CRZ-III from 100m to 50m from HDL in densely populated areas. This technically allows resorts, hotels and tourism facilities to be built right up to HTL.
- In CRZ-IV, it allows land reclamation for setting up ports, harbours and roads; facilities for discharging treated effluents; transfer of hazardous substances; and construction of memorials or monuments.

ABHYAS DRONE

◎ **CONTEXT:**

- Recently, DRDO successfully conducted the flight test of ABHYAS - High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) from a test range in Odisha.

◎ **ABOUT:**

- The trial was carried out by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Balasore.
- It was tracked by various radars and electro-optic systems and proved its performance in fully autonomous waypoint navigation mode.

ABHYAS drone

- It is built by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Armed Forces.
- Abhyas is an evolution of an older Indian target drone, the Lakshya.
- The first experimental launch (without the main engine) of the Abhyas was held at the Chitradurga Aeronautical Test Range in June 2012.
- The configuration of ABHYAS is designed on an in-line small gas turbine engine and it uses indigenously developed micro-electromechanical systems-based (MEMS) navigation system.
- The performance of the system was as per simulations carried out and it demonstrated the capability of 'Abhyas' to meet the mission requirement for a cost-effective HEAT.
- 'Abhyas' is designed for autonomous flying with the help of an autopilot.
- A Luneburg lens in the nose cone improves the radar cross-section of the target for weapons practice. It also has an acoustic miss distance indicator (AMD) to indicate the missed distance.

Functions of ABHYAS

- Abhyas's radar cross-section (RCS) as well as its visual and infrared signatures can be augmented to simulate a variety of aircraft for air-defense weapon practices.
- It can also function as a jammer platform and decoy.
- The HEAT system is utilized to do away with the post-launch recovery mode, which is time-consuming and difficult in a scenario as the sea.
- The Drone has a weather proof drop and vibration proof and a tactic load-tested dedicated box integrated with it that is used for transportation and storage purpose.
- Target missiles and drones serve an important role in the development of a range of interceptors, including surface-to-air systems as well as cruise and ballistic missile defense systems. Abhyas is designed to simulate aircraft for endoatmospheric surface-to-air interception tests as well as air-to-air exercises.

INS VELA

◎ CONTEXT:

- Recently, the Indian Navy's fourth Scorpene-class submarine Vela, constructed by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), was launched at the Kanhoji Angre Wet Basin of MDL.
- The submarine was towed to the Mumbai Port Trust for separation from the pontoon after which she will undergo rigorous trials and tests, both at the harbour and at sea before delivery to the Navy.

◎ ABOUT:

Scorpene Class Submarine:

- These are diesel-electric attack submarines jointly developed by the French company - Naval Group (formerly Direction des Constructions Navales (DCNS)) and the Spanish company - Navantia.
- These submarines can undertake multifarious tasks typically undertaken by any modern submarine which include anti-surface as well as anti-submarine warfare.
- They feature diesel propulsion and additional Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP).
- AIP is a marine propulsion technology that allows a non-nuclear submarine to operate without access to atmospheric oxygen (by surfacing or using a snorkel).
- The system of AIP fitted in this class of submarines is a modified version of nuclear propulsion system with heat being generated by ethanol and oxygen. The combustion of the ethanol and stored oxygen, at a pressure of 60 atm, generates steam which powers a conventional turbine power plant.

INS Vela:

- It is the fourth Scorpene class submarine being built under the project 75I by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd through transfer of technology.
- This involves appropriate technical support by the Naval Group to Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd in the field of construction, integration and tests of the submarines in India which is achieved through transfer of technical data package to MDL through information system as well as on job training to MDL's personnel on critical technologies.
- Leveraging the experience and the transfer-of-technology of the Scorpene project, with enhanced and upgraded infrastructure, MDL, is ready for undertaking construction of the future submarines.
- The AIP fitted in these submarines enables them to operate for more than 21 days under water, depending on variables such as speed.
- The complete list of the submarines of this class are:
 - INS Kalvari - Active
 - INS Khanderi – Sea trials
 - INS Karanj – Sea trials
 - INS Vela – Sea trials
 - INS Vagir – Under construction
 - INS Vagsheer – Under construction

INS Vela (S40):

- It was the lead ship of four diesel-electric Vela-class submarines of the Indian Navy. These Vela-class submarines of the Indian Navy were variants of the later Soviet Foxtrot-class submarines.
- The submarine was commissioned in 1973. After 37 years of service, the submarine was decommissioned in 2010. The submarine was the oldest operational submarine in the world at the time of her decommissioning.

Project 75 and 75I:

- Project 75 was launched in 1997 by the Ministry of Defence to acquire 24 submarines.
- After the Kargil War in 1999, Cabinet Committee on Security approved a 30-year submarine building plan that called for two parallel production lines, each constructing six submarines.
- The older Project 75 was brought under the new plan, with the two production lines to be built under Project 75 and Project 75I using transfer of technology from different foreign manufacturers.
- Under the new project 75I, the Indian Navy intends to acquire six diesel-electric submarines, which will also feature advanced air-independent propulsion systems to enable them to stay submerged for longer duration and substantially increase their operational range.

REMEMBERING MAHARANA PRATAP, TAGORE AND GOKHALE

◎ CONTEXT:

- Nation remembers legendary warrior Maharana Pratap, Rabindranath Tagore and Gopal Krishna Gokhale on their birth anniversaries.

◎ ABOUT:**Maharana Pratap**

- He was a Rajput king of Mewar in Rajasthan area and was famous for his bravery in the region and his fight at Haldighati.
- He was born on May 9, 1540, Pratap was the second son of King Udai Singh-II and Queen Jaiwanta Bai.

Rabindra Nath Tagore

- The 159th birth anniversary of Rabindra Nath Tagore is being celebrated all over West Bengal. A multifaceted personality, his prose, poetry and artwork are brilliant and thought provoking. He enhanced India's pride and richly contributed to the freedom movement.
- He was born on May 7 in the Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta to Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi.
- Tagore is also known as Gurudev, Kabiguru and Biswakabi.
- He began writing poetry when he was just eight years old. He released his first collection of poems under the name Bhanusimha, or Sun Lion when he was 16. Soon, he began writing short stories and dramas under his own name. His writings gave rise to new forms of prose and verse which were different from the traditional models based on classical Sanskrit.
- He attended a number of sessions of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta where he composed songs and sang during India's freedom struggle. He wrote India's national anthem, Jana Gana Mana and in 1911, he sang Jana Gana Mana as the opening song for the second day of the Congress Session. It was later adopted as India's National Anthem.
- He also wrote, Amar Sonar Bangla, the national anthem for Bangladesh. The Sri Lankan national anthem was inspired by his work.
- While Rabindra Jayanti is celebrated on May 7 every year, Bengalis observe it on Pochishe Boishakh, the 25th day of the first Bengali month of Boishakh, and which rarely coincides with May 7.
- He was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.

- Tagore and the world-renowned scientist Albert Einstein were mutual admirers and also have a picture of them alongside each other. Tagore met Einstein at the latter's home in Germany's Caputh in 1930.
- He passed away on August 7, 1941, in Calcutta.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale

- He was a famous social reformer, freedom fighter, scholar and Mahatma Gandhi's political guru.
- He was born on May 9, 1866 in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. He was a professor of history and political economy at the Fergusson College, Pune. He resigned from the job to join active politics.
- He was among the most prominent faces in the Indian National Congress (INC) and a strong advocate for constitutional ways of struggle for gaining independence from the Britishers.
- He also served as the President of the INC and was elected to the post in 1905.
- His deep concern for the marginalised section of the society led him to form the **Servants of India Society**, whose members dedicated themselves to lifelong service for the poor and downtrodden. He also worked for the cause of the oppressed in South Africa.
- He persuaded a young Mohandas Gandhi to return to India from South Africa to help the Congress in struggling for India's independence.
- His rival in the INC was **Lokmanya Tilak**. Both the leaders came to represent the moderate and extremist faction in the party.
- His mentor was Justice **M.G. Ranade** who had started the **Sarvajanik Sabha** Journal with the help of Gokhale.
- He died at the age of 48, on February 19, 1915 in Bombay.

TIWA TRIBE AND WANCHUWA FESTIVAL

◎ CONTEXT:

- Recently, Tiwa tribesmen took part in a dance during the Wanchuwa festival in Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

◎ ABOUT:

Tiwa tribe:

- Tiwa also known as Lalung is indigenous community inhabiting the states of Assam and Meghalaya and are also found in some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.
- They are recognized as a Scheduled tribe within the state of Assam. But they still do not benefit the ST status in the state of Meghalaya.
- They are divided into 2 sub-groups- **Hill Tiwa** and **Plains Tiwa** which have contrasting cultural features:
 - **Hill Tiwa:** They live in the westernmost areas of Karbi Anglong district. They speak a Tibeto-Burman language. In most cases, the husband goes to live in her wife's family settlement (matrilocal), and their children are included in their mother's clan. One-half of them follow their traditional religion. It is based on the worship of local deities. The other half has been converted to Christianity since the 1950s.
 - **Plains Tiwa:** They live on the flatlands of the Southern bank of the Brahmaputra valley. The vast majority speak Assamese as their mother tongue. Their descent system is patrilineal. Their religion shares many elements with Assamese Hinduism but remains specific.
- They practice Jhum or shifting cultivation, where the land is first cleared of any vegetation that is later set on fire (slash-and-burn). The result is a more fertile soil that is freshly enriched with potash, all the more useful for a bountiful crop.

- The main festivals of the Tiwa tribes are: Three Pisu (Bihu), Borot utsav, Sogra phuja, Wanchuwa, Jonbeel Mela, Kabla, Langkhon Phuja and Yangli Phuja.
- Pig is a staple part of their diet and their culture.

Wanchuwa festival:

- This festival is celebrated by Tiwa tribesmen to mark their good harvest.
- It comes with songs, dances, a bunch of rituals and people clad in their native attires.
- The people of Tiwa tribe associate the bountiful harvest with the higher power from nature. This takes the form of pigs' skulls and bones which act as deities and are preserved through many generations.
- People do plenty of make up in the form of paste made of rice powder. They participate in dance with this make up.
- With bamboo sticks in hand, the people proceed to rhythmically beat the rice powder, and occasionally pause to move around the circle.
- Tiwas pray for a bountiful harvest as well as protection from pests and natural calamities.

GANGA JATARA FESTIVAL

◎ CONTEXT:

- The entire Chittoor town of Andhra Pradesh and its surrounding villages are gearing up for the famous Ganga Jatara, scheduled to commence from May 14.
- Thousands of people from Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring States of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are reaching Chittoor town to take part in this festival.

◎ ABOUT:

What is Ganga Jatara festival?

- It is the annual folk festival of Tirupati in Chittoor town of Andhra Pradesh.
- This festival is to offer prayers to Sri Thathaya Gunta Gangamma, the Gramadevata (the goddess looking after the village) of Tirupati.

Why is it celebrated?

- When Tirupati and surrounding areas were ruled by Palegondulu, harassment on women was enormous.
- During this time, in a village - Avilala, the Goddess Gangamma was born and grew into a most beautiful woman.
- When the Palegondulu wanted to harm Goddess Gangamma, she with her grace and power tried to kill him. Palegondulu, fearing her, hid in a remote place.
- To take him out of hiding, the Gangamma planned "Ganga Jathara" where the people in Tirupathi do vichitra veshadarana and curse Gangamma for a period of 7 days.
- On the seventh day, the Palegondulu came out of hiding and was killed by Goddess Gangamma for the LokaKalyanam (well-being of all people).
- This festival celebrates this killing.

The Celebrations: It is a week-long event which falls on second week of May every year.

- The festival begins with Chatimpu (the official announcement) during midnight of 2nd Tuesday of the month of May by playing musical instruments known as Dappu. Town folk stay away from streets during Chatimpu.
- **Day 1: Bhairagi Vesham:** People used to smear their body with white colour paste (Namam Kommu) and wear a garland made of fruit Rella Kaya. They hold neem leaves with the hand and also tie their waist with neem leaves. They walk to the temple through the city and leave those neem leaves and Rella Kaya garland there at the temple after the darshan of the Goddess.
- **Day 2: Banda Vesham:** On this day devotees use to smear their body with kumkum colour paste and tie a ribbon to the head.

- **Day 3: Thoti Vesham:** On this day devotees used to smear their body with charcoal and wear a garland made out of neem leaves.
- **Day 4: Sunnapu Gandalu:** Devotees smear their body with white colour paste and apply dots with charcoal and carry a pot (Veyyi kalla Dutta) on their head.
- **Day 5: Dora Vesham:** On this day devotees use to smear their body with sandal paste (Chandanam) and wear a garland made out of neem leaves and lemons.
- **Day 6: Mathangi Vesham:** Gangamma who killed Palegadu in Dhora Vesham, consoles Chieftain's wife in Mathangi Vesham.
- **Day 7: Gangamma Jatara:** The last day of the festival is celebrated as Ganga Jatara. During this day, all Gangamma temples in Tirupati are flocked with lakhs of devotees.
 - People use to visit temple and offer Pongallu and/or Sarees to Gangamma.
 - Few Devotees use to have darshan of Gangamma by wearing Sapparalu (A special gopuram like object made of bamboo) along with Dappu Vaidyam (a musical instrument).
 - Ragi Ambali is served to the devotees visiting temples all over the city.
 - After the midnight, a clay idol of Gangamma (Viswaroopam) is installed in front of the Temple. The portico is smashed into pieces.
 - Devotees then clamour around to get the clay smithereens, which they consider as sacred, to be either preserved in the 'Puja' room or consumed by mixing it in water. The clay is believed to have curing powers.
 - By this event the entire seven-day Jatara will come to an end.

SUPREME COURT FROWNS ON FOREIGNERS' TRIBUNALS PLAN

◎ CONTEXT:

- Recently, the Supreme Court questioned a proposal by the Assam government to quickly open 1,000 foreigners' tribunals all over the north-eastern State to try suspected illegal immigrants.

◎ ABOUT:

- The Supreme Court has questioned the feasibility of setting up such foreigner's tribunals and appointed judicial officers to preside over them.
- The CJI hinted at the possible flood of petitions which would hit the foreigners' tribunals once the final NRC was published on July 31. These petitions would be from people who had not been able to prove their Indian citizenship.

Foreigners Tribunal (FT)

- FT was set up in Assam in 1964 through the Foreigners Tribunal Order 1964. The tribunals are mandated with identifying the legal status of suspected foreigners in Assam.
- At present, there are 100 FTs in Assam; of these 64 were set up in 2015, to expedite the exercise of determining illegal immigrants in the state through the NRC.

IMDT Act

- The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act was an Act of the Parliament of India enacted in 1983 by the Indira Gandhi government. It was struck down by the Supreme Court of India in 2005 in *Sarbananda Sonowal v. Union of India* known as the IMDT Act.
- Assam also had Illegal Migrants Determination Tribunal which was established in 1985 under the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) (IMDT) Act, 1983. This tribunal only considered the cases of those who had allegedly entered India after March 25, 1971.
- IMDT Act was enacted to put forward the procedures to detect illegal immigrants (from Bangladesh) and expel them from Assam.

National Register of Citizens (NRC):

- It is a register which contains the name of all citizens of India residing in Assam. The process of NRC update in Assam has been taken up as per a Supreme Court order in 2013.

UK TO FUND ANTI-SLAVERY PROJECTS

◎ CONTEXT:

- The UK backed Modern Slavery Innovation Fund (MSIF) is set to fund six anti-slavery projects around the world.

◎ ABOUT:

- The MSIF was set up in 2016 with a corpus of 33.5 million pound and is managed by the UK Home office.
- It supports international projects to find innovative ways of stopping modern slavery. It primarily focus on high risk countries from where victims are regularly trafficked to the UK.
- The latest funding marks the second phase of the MSIF and will run until 2021. The first phase included 6 million pounds spend during 2017-2019.
- A grant of up to 800,000 pounds has been announced for new projects, including one in India (**Freedom Fund**).
- The funding will also be used :
 - to run workshops on modern slavery in South Africa,
 - improve support for survivors in India,
 - develop an online data hub to boost anti-slavery policies.

Modern Slavery

- Different from earlier slavery, modern slavery is defined as "situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, and abuse of power or deception."
- It is blooming in seafood industry, cannabis factories, forced begging, and sex industry.
- As per ILO's Global Estimate of Modern Slavery, globally, there are 40 million in modern slavery and 152 million in child labour.
- Estimating around 8 million people living in modern slavery in India, **Global Slavery Index 2018** ranked India 53th along with North Korea.
- **Indian laws**
 - **Indian Penal Code of 1861:** Abolished slavery in British India making enslavement of humans a criminal offense.
 - **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976:** As a means for sustenance, allows transfer of minor capital to every person coming out of slavery.
- **Target 8.7 under SDG 8:** Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

ARTEMIS-NASA'S NEXT MOON MISSION

◎ CONTEXT:

- NASA has announced new plan to establish a permanent lunar presence and put an American on the Moon. The project is named Artemis.

◎ ABOUT:

Project Artemis:

- It is \$1.6 billion project of NASA to send the next man and first woman to the moon by 2024.
- Its timing is in synchronisation with the Apollo lunar project of 1969, the 50th anniversary of the culmination of which is this year.
- Under the plan, a mission to land on the moon would take place during the third launch of the Space Launch System. Astronauts, including the first woman to walk on the moon would first stop at the orbiting lunar outpost. They would then take a lander to the surface near its south pole, where frozen water exists within the craters.
- NASA is seeking \$132 million from the country's Congress for developing technologies like converting ice within craters at the moon's poles to water and \$90 million for robotic exploration of the moon.

Why this particular name?

- The mission is named Artemis after the twin sister of Greek god Apollo, whose name was used by NASA for the series of spacecraft that first landed Americans on the moon in 1969.
- In Greek mythology, Artemis was the Moon goddess. It is also the nomenclature for the goddess of the hunt. Her faithful hunting companion was named Orion — just like the multi-purpose spacecraft the agency is developing right now.
- NASA has announced that Artemis would refer to the major upcoming missions concerned with establishing a permanent presence on the Moon. This includes all the major missions to explore the lunar surface, as well as any constructing infrastructure there or in lunar orbit, for example the planned Lunar Orbital Platform-Gateway.

How this project is different from earlier moon missions?

- The femininity of the name is a deliberate choice as well. The Apollo missions were crewed exclusively by men, though they relied on many women for their success.
- This time things are different. Both women and men have explored and set records in space, and no doubt those of other identifications will do so soon as well.
- In the history of Moon landings, it was test pilots from the 1960s and 1970s, fighter pilots, and there were no opportunities for women back then. This program is going to enable a new generation of young girls to pursue their dream of touching down on moon.

CHANDRAYAAN-2 WILL CARRY 14 INDIAN PAYLOADS

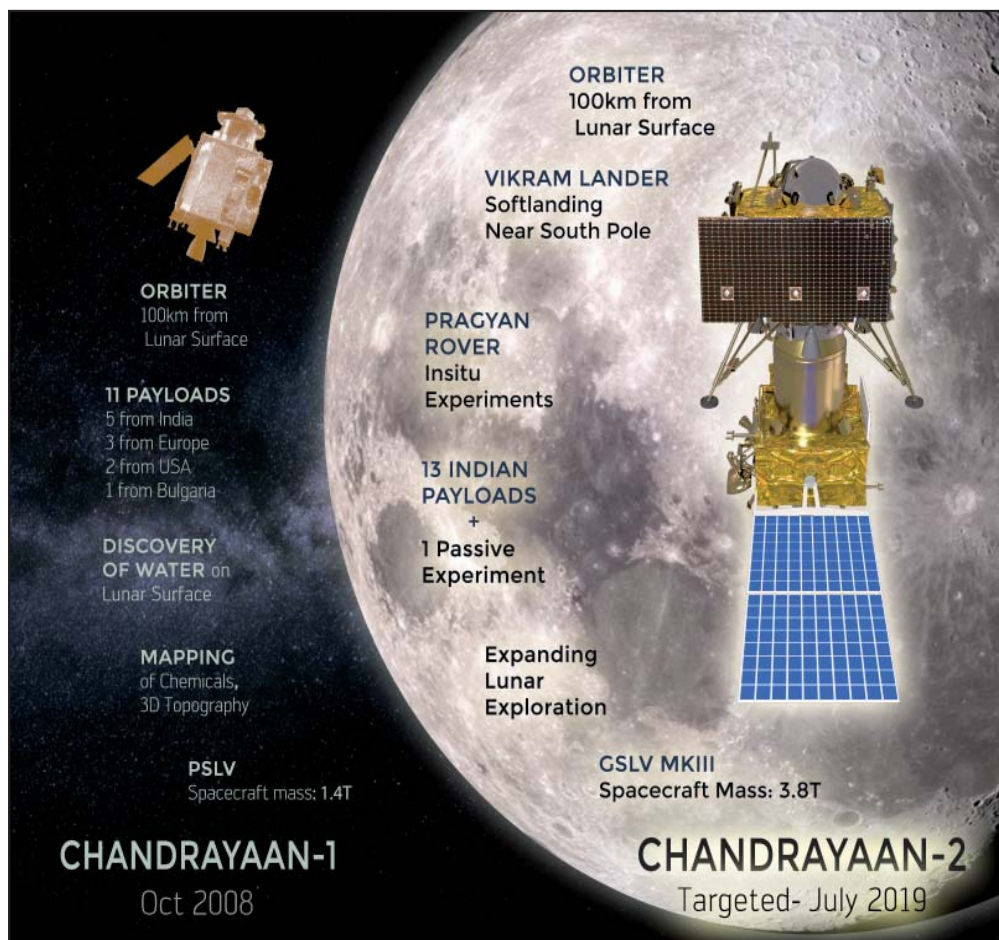
◎ CONTEXT:

- ISRO plans to launch Chandrayaan-2, the lunar lander mission during July 9-16 which will carry 14 Indian payloads or study devices.

◎ ABOUT:

Chandrayaan-2

- Chandrayaan-2 will be India's second mission to the moon and is totally an indigenous mission. ISRO will send the mission on its heavy lift booster, the MkIII, from Sriharikota.
- The 3,800-kg spacecraft includes an orbiter which will circle the moon at 100 km; a five-legged lander called **Vikram** (named after Vikram Sarabhai, who is widely regarded as the father of the Indian Space Programme) that will descend on the moon on or around September 6; and a robotic rover, **Pragyan**, that will probe the lunar terrain around it and will be used mostly for in-situ experiments, mainly for science.



- While the orbiter will carry 8 payloads, the Vikram will have four and the Pragyan will have two payloads.
- Chandrayaan-2 would orbit around the moon to collect scientific information on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice.
- The Orbiter and Lander modules will be interfaced mechanically and stacked together as an integrated module and accommodated inside the GSLV MK-III launch vehicle. The Rover is housed inside the Lander.
- It will launch aboard a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III, (GSLV -MK III) rocket. The GSLV-Mk III is a three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle that has been designed to carry four-tonne class satellites into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

Background:

- In October 2008, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had launched its orbiter mission **Chandrayaan-1** on its PSLV booster. The spacecraft had 11 payloads. One of the U.S. payloads shares credit with Chandrayaan-1 for confirming the presence of water ice on the moon. Before that, the Moon Impacter Probe carrying the Indian tricolour image was made to hard-land on the lunar South Pole.

WHO FOR ELIMINATING INDUSTRIALLY PRODUCED TRANS-FAT BY 2023

© CONTEXT:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has partnered with International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA) to eliminate industrial trans-fat not exceed 2 gram per 100 g fat/oil globally by 2023.

◎ **ABOUT:**

- The WHO has welcomed its partnership with the International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA) to eliminate industrial trans fats, and reduce salt, sugar and saturated fats in processed foods and to ensure that the amount of industrial trans-fat in their products does not exceed 2 gram per 100 g fat/oil globally by 2023.

Aim

- The other aim is to bring regulatory action on labelling, marketing and urged industry for full adherence to the WHO code of marketing of breast milk substitutes.
- In line with the **REPLACE initiative**, WHO has called on all food producers and oil and fat manufacturers, not only IFBA members, to commit to elimination of industrial trans-fat from the global food supply.

- **REPLACE** provides a six-step action package for the global elimination of trans-fat. This package supports governments to ensure the prompt, complete, and sustained elimination of industrially-produced trans-fat from the food supply. The practical, step-by step action package is supported by an overarching technical document that provides a rationale and framework for this integrated approach to trans-fat elimination.

Trans-fat

- Trans-fat, also called trans-unsaturated fatty acids or trans fatty acids, is a type of unsaturated fat that occurs in small amounts in nature, but became widely produced industrially from vegetable fats starting in the 1950s for use in margarine, snack food, packaged baked goods, and for frying fast food.
- It is also called the worst form of fat in food, which is responsible for over 5,00,000 deaths globally from coronary heart disease each year. Eliminating industrially produced trans-fat is one of the simplest and most effective ways to save lives and create a healthier food supply.

WORLD RED CROSS DAY, 2019

◎ **CONTEXT:**

- World Red Cross Day or Red Crescent Day is annually observed on May 8.

◎ **ABOUT:****World Red Cross Day**

- It is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swiss businessman, **Henri Dunant**.
- This year's theme is "love", which mainly focused on asking people about what they love about Red Cross and Red Crescent.
- It is celebrated across the world by the National Societies affiliates to the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross).
- **Aim of the day:** To pay tribute to the volunteers participated in the event as well as welcome their precious contribution for helping people in need.

Red Cross symbol

- It is an inversion of the **Swiss flag** (white cross on a red background).
- In February 1863, a five-member committee met to study Dunant's proposals like:
 - Single distinctive symbol backed by the law to indicate respect for army medical services, volunteers with first aid societies and the victims of armed conflicts.
 - The symbol needed to be simple, identifiable from a distance, known to everyone and identical for friend and foe.
 - The emblem had to be the same for everyone and universally recognizable.

- An **International Conference** convened in October 1863 adopted ten resolutions for the establishment of relief societies for wounded soldiers and the **Red Cross**.
- In August 1864, the Diplomatic Conference, convened for the purpose of transforming the resolutions adopted in 1863 into treaty rules, adopted the First Geneva Convention.
- The **Geneva Convention** also recognized the **Red Cross** on a white background as a unique distinctive emblem.

Henri Dunant

- He had witnessed the suffering of wounded soldiers abandoned on the battlefield of Solferino in northern Italy in 1859. He became the recipient of 1st Nobel Peace Prize.
- When he returned to Geneva, he wrote **A Memory of Solferino** about the horrors of war.
- His efforts led to the creation of the **International Committee of the Red Cross** (dedicated to helping the war wounded soldiers), adoption of **Geneva conventions** and creation of the iconic **Red Cross symbol**.

Indian Red Cross Society

- The Indian Red Cross is a voluntary humanitarian organization providing relief in times of disasters/emergencies and promotes health & care of the vulnerable people and communities.
- It is a leading member of the largest independent humanitarian organization in the world, the International Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement.
- Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) was established in 1920 under the Indian Red Cross Society Act and incorporated under Parliament Act XV of 1920. The act was last amended in 1992 and of rules was formed in 1994.
- Red Cross on a white background is the Emblem of Red Cross, recognized in 1864 as the distinctive sign for medical relief teams on the battle field.
