GS SCORE
An Institute for Civil Services

Week - 1
JUNE, 2019

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DEFENCE

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POLITY & GOVERNANCE

— **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
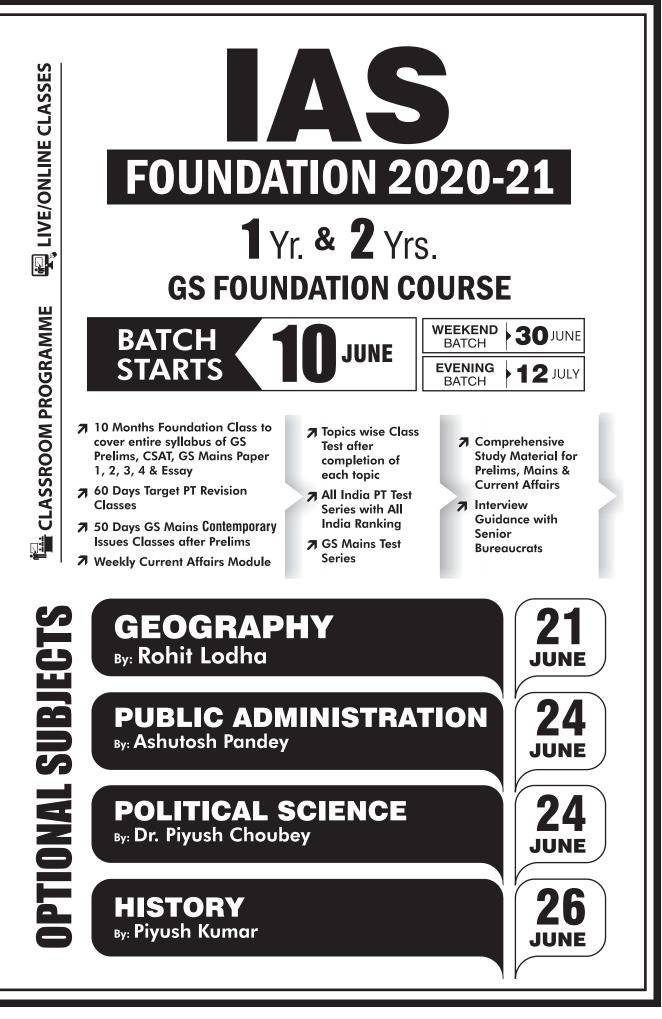## WEEK-1 (JUNE, 2019)

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IAS
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SECTION: A
(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

KERALA MODEL VS GUJARAT MODEL

CONTEXT

- **Ever since they became the issue of debate between Jagdish Bhagwati and Amartya Sen, Kerala model and Gujarat model debate has continued and has remained relevant.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- In a broad sense, the Gujarat model privileges growth and infrastructure development. The underlying logic was that growth and industrial development will play a bigger role in reducing poverty.

- The Kerala model, on the other hand, privileged a rights-based approach to development with a strong emphasis on social and human development.

- Bhagwati was a strong votary of the Gujarat model and Sen, the Kerala model. Bhagwati described the Gujarat model as a metaphor for a primarily growth and private entrepreneurship driven development and the Kerala model for a primarily redistribution and state-driven development.

⊙ BACKGROUND:

- Amartya Sen had upheld what he calls the "Kerala experience" — high social spending resulting in growth — as a role model for other states to follow.

- He is of the view that the Gujarat development model suffered from weaknesses on the social side and could not be considered a success.

- Sen had proposed a multidimensional approach to measuring poverty than based on consumption alone. He also developed the capability approach, along with the likes of Nussbaum, a concept that inspired the creation of the UN's Human Development Index.

- The capability approach brings in various factors, including individual freedoms, which were excluded from welfare economics earlier.

⊙ ANALYSIS

- Both the models are entirely dissimilar in terms of approach to development. Kerala Model focused on marching to economic development through desirable social changes while Gujarat Model tries to bag desirable social changes through sound economic anchor.

- Both models have many accomplishments and impairments. The discussions are on which model of development that India should follow. As far as a national economy is concerned, it is important to derive and prioritize the good aspects of the two models.

- Theoretical and empirical evidences suggest that there is a positive relationship between economic growth and social development. However, the economic development has not been necessarily accompanied adequately by social development, especially in case of Gujarat.

- It is reinforced by the Human Development Index (HDI) position of Gujarat. Kerala has performed positively in terms of social indicators but economy has been in disarray, as it is ranked among bottom half of the country.

- The Kerala Model distinguished all over the world. While Gujarat Model is weak on education-health standards even though improving, Kerala Model made the globally comparable outcomes in it at the backing of poor economic standards.

- At that, Kerala which is blessed with top standard social indicators trails by high crime rate against women and children and suicide rate.

- Biggest paradox in these models of development is highest unemployment rate in Kerala with lowest poverty ratio and lowest unemployment rate in Gujarat with higher poverty ratio.

- Even though these two transverse models lead or trail in transverse indicators of development, lead the national average mostly.

Sector-wise Analysis of Kerala-Gujarat Models of Development

- **Economic Sector Development:**

  ► The investments and incentives in economic sectors like industries and agriculture are required for the development in economic sectors.

  ► Gujarat state economy in terms of NSDP at current price is been much larger than Kerala economy for decades with about one time high.

  ► Although Kerala's NSDP at current price is far below to Gujarat especially since economic reforms initiated in nineties, Kerala is just below to Gujarat in the case of per capita NSDP at current prices.

➤ The betterment of Kerala in per capita NSDP shows its inclusive nature of development while that of Gujarat is more exclusive as its phenomenal economic growth in the current decades has never been accompanied by respective growth of per capita NSDP.

◉ **Agricultural development: Gujarat's sustained growth & Kerala's declining share**

➤ Agriculture and allied sector plays an important role in the State economy.

➤ Though Gujarat was able to maintain a pretty balanced sector-wise development over a period of two decades with about one-fourth of state income come from agriculture and allied sectors and one-third from industrial sector, Kerala agriculture witnessed significant breakup. Contribution of primary sector of Kerala declined sharply from 33.1 per cent in 1993-94 to mere 12.9 per cent in 2013-14.

➤ Even though half of Kerala's working population also resort to agriculture and allied activities, Kerala agriculture suffers from serious drawbacks.

➤ It puts threat over sustainability of the famed inclusive growth model of Kerala.

◉ **Industrial development: Gujarat's success story & Kerala's painful experience**

➤ Gujarat is an industrially sound state unlike Kerala with the large inflow of investment and abundance of entrepreneurs. More than one third of the state income of Gujarat come from industrial sector.

➤ The state of Gujarat is one of the highly industrialized states in India with its reputation of being a highly investor-friendly state.

➤ On the other side, though Kerala economy struggled hard to recover from its chronic industrial backwardness, even economic reforms have never helped the state to flourish investment and industrial production.

◉ **Infrastructure development for sustained growth**

➤ **Power Sector**

● Gujarat is clearly the power house of India with 16 per cent of India's installed capacity while that of Kerala is nominal with mere one per cent in 2015.

● Gujarat with the commendable share of 11.34 per cent was able to diversify its power generation capacity to the renewable resources such as wind, tidal and solar energy while mere 1.24 per cent of Kerala's installed capacity was from it.

● Shortage of power is the prime obstacle in starting new industrial units in Kerala.

Social Sector Development

◉ Kerala's development and achievements on social front has been lauded in both national and international circles. The progress made in the realm of education, health and gender development have been noteworthy.

◉ **Literacy**

➤ While Kerala is at first among Indian states and union territories in adult literacy with 93.91 per cent, Gujarat is far behind at 18th with 79.31 per cent but well above the national average of 74 per cent.

➤ Kerala began with a huge advantage in literacy over the rest of the country at independence.

➤ Both Kerala and Gujarat gained 40 per cent rise in adult literacy in 50 years from 1961 to 2011. While literacy ratio rose from 55.08 per cent in 1961 to 93.91 in 2011, Gujarat managed to elevate the ratio from 39.33 per cent to 79.31 per cent.

➤ In fact growth of these two states in literacy in the same period are less to India which has managed to lift the ratio from mere 12.95 per cent to 74.04 by gaining 61 per cent.

◉ **Health scenario**

➤ Kerala ranks first in India in all major health indicators such as life expectancy at birth (total, male and female), infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, fertility rate and birth rate.

➤ Life expectancy of Kerala which is 74.8 years in 2013 is much better than that of Gujarat and India where it is 68.2 and 67.5 respectively and very much comparable to that of US which is 77.

➤ Gujarat though lies extremely below Kerala, lies little above the national average in all major health indicators.

➤ **Physical quality of life index (PQLI)** of Kerala which measures only major social development indicators such as literacy, life expectancy and infant mortality is highest in India with 92.64 in 2013 while it is mere 77.1 in Gujarat.

➤ At the same time India's national index is 73.88 even lower than Gujarat.

◉ **Women & child care**

➤ The statistics released by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that encroachment and incursion on women is common in India.

➤ Kerala Model praised on women centered development shown by female dominated sex ratio, enrolment in higher education and life expectancy comparable to developed countries is entirely set down in ensuring safety to its mother community.

➤ Crime rate against women in Kerala is 62.43 in 2013 while that of Gujarat is lower i.e. 42.63. While crime rate in Kerala is clearly above the national rate 52.24, Gujarat's crime rate is clearly below that.

Major development issues: Poverty & unemployment

◉ Though Kerala ranked first in case of low poverty ratio, Gujarat is at 14th among Indian states with a higher 16.63 per cent but lower than the national ratio of 21.92 per cent as per Tendulkar Methodology.

◉ The biggest paradox in the Kerala-Gujarat Models can be seen in unemployment and poverty. While Kerala is the state with lowest poverty ratio in the country, it is amongst the states with highest unemployment rate of 98 per 1000.

◉ Similarly, Gujarat is the state with lowest unemployment in the country, it ranked mere 14th among the states in 2011-12.

◉ This is not the most notable issue in the paradox of Kerala Model. The NSSO report shows that Kerala has highest gender disparity in unemployment with 232 females per 1000 are unemployed as per usual status in 2016-17 while 41 males are also unemployed.

◉ In Gujarat, both gender disparity in unemployment and unemployment rate are minimum in the country.

Concluding notes:

◉ Although Kerala Model and Gujarat Model are contradictory to each other, both are inevitable models of the country. While Kerala has advantage in some sectors, Gujarat has advantage in some other sectors.

◉ Obviously both models are different approaches to development. Gujarat, a high income state in the country is a step ahead to Kerala in income per capita.

◉ Gujarat's process and progress in agricultural and industrial sectors have really erected it to the top income generating states. Decent and constant share of these sectors to NSDP of Gujarat economy demarcated it from Kerala.

◉ But Kerala has really done well in improving its per capita NSDP. Unlike Gujarat, Kerala economy really suffered from diminishing share of agriculture and stagnant share of industries.

◉ States of Kerala and Gujarat are more or less ahead of national average in various socioeconomic indicators of development. It depicts obviously the real picture of under-developed India which consists of BIMARU states which are flagrant for deplorable performance in many indicators.

◉ However, Gujarat and Kerala are even below the national average in some indicators. While Kerala and Gujarat are above the national rate in case of suicide rate, it's only Kerala which stands behind India in cases of unemployment rate and, crime rate against women and children.

◉ Starting with decent figures Kerala gets at the stage of exquisite maturity in health and education while Gujarat starts from a lower level and pass by better standards of health and education.

📑 Practice Question

◉ **The Kerala model is as much about growth creating better human development numbers. By implication, it means that if Gujarat continues to grow faster, the social indicators will change here too. Critically evaluate.**

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS WITH REFERENCE TO ODISHA

CONTEXT

- Extremely severe cyclonic storm Fani affected 1.5 crore people in nine districts of Odisha since making landfall near Puri on May 3, 2019 morning.

- It was the strongest tropical cyclone to strike the Indian state of Odisha since Phailin in 2013.

- Though IMD and Odisha government did a good job, but could have done better. It also raise the debate over disaster preparedness in the country.

⊙ ABOUT:

Natural disaster

- A natural disaster is an act of nature of such magnitude as to create a catastrophic situation in which the day-to-day patterns of life are suddenly disrupted.

- People are plunged into helplessness and suffering, and, as a result, need food, clothing, shelter, medical and nursing care and other necessities of life.

- Disaster is dynamic, and with the climate change situation, the intensity and frequency of disaster is changing.

⊙ BACKGROUND:

- Learning its lessons from the super-cyclone of 1999 which claimed 10,000 lives in Odisha, the eastern state has, over the years, emerged as a role model in disaster preparedness.

- With decades of positive intervention by the government, civil society groups, and NGOs, the state has received praise from numerous national and international organizations, including the United Nations.

Disaster Management: Structure at National Level

- The NDMA is the central policy making body for disaster management. Under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, it has an Advisory Committee comprising experts in the field of disaster management.

- The National Plan for disaster management is meant to include measures for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, responsibilities of different Ministries, etc.

- It is to be prepared by **the National Executive Committee (NEC)** and approved by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

- Under the Act, the NEC is responsible for coordinating response in case of a disaster, preparing the National Plan for disaster management, monitoring implementation of disaster management guidelines, etc.

⊙ ANALYSIS:

Disaster Management: A system that works in Odisha

- In 2013, when cyclone Phailin rattled the Indian coasts, the government of Odisha undertook the largest ever evacuation, shifting 11 lakh people into safety.

- The state stood strong as rains lashed the landscape, and death toll was contained to 21. Next year when cyclone Hudhud hit Odisha, the death toll was contained to just two.

Actions taken by the state government

- The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) was established in 1999, much before the Disaster Management Act was passed in 2005.

- OSDMA was the first disaster management authority centre established in India, or perhaps the world, given its scale of operations.

- Odisha, along with Assam, Gujarat, and Bihar are the only states with active State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs).

- These states have their own offices, management, and staff. In most states, SDMAs are still being run out of the State Revenue Department Office, which is a temporary arrangement.

Developing manpower, infrastructure, and skill

- Across the vulnerable areas of Odisha, OSDMA has built close to 800 multipurpose cyclone and flood shelters.

- These shelters are in line with designs proposed by IIT Kharagpur. These silted structures have open spaces in the ground floor for water to fill in as people take shelter on the first floor.

- All vulnerable regions in Odisha have active Cyclone Management Centers, which are community-based organizations with the local Sarpanch as the president.

- At each centre, young volunteers have been trained in rescue operations.

- OSDMA has raised 20 units of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), comprised of highly trained personnel with multi-disaster tackling capabilities. They are trained in tackling floods, building collapses, cyclones, biological and nuclear disasters.

- The state government has also constructed the State Institute of Disaster Management (SIDM) at Gothapatna to train officials, personnel of the ODRAF, fire department, and people living in vulnerable areas in disaster management.

Alertness is the key

- Odisha plans to create a network of weather forecasting doppler radars across the state. The ones in Gopalpur and Paradip are already operational, while two more radars are planned in Balasore and Sambalpur.

- The fishermen are the first to be alerted. "There are radio announcements made a week prior to the onset of the cyclone. The moment the cyclone starts building in the Bay of Bengal, the government starts announcing — keep clear, keep clear.

- In case of river floods, OSDMA receives information 24-48 hours prior to the disaster.

- Odisha has recently implemented its ambitious **Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS).**

- Using the mechanism, OSDMA can activate sirens across 122 towers operational across the state's 480 km coastline, alerting the population at the press of a single button

In contrast to the above pointers, it is pertinent to discuss The Public Accounts Committee's report submitted on December 10, 2015.

- Key Findings then: also remains true of the situation prevalent now

  ▸ **Disaster Planning:** There was a seven year delay, from 2006 to 2013, in finalizing the National Plan. The Committee stated that the plan should be updated on time and this has to be a comprehensive yet regular exercise.

  ▸ **Role of NEC:** It is required to meet at least once in three months. However, the audit found that it had met infrequently even when there had

been disasters. The Committee recommended that the NEC either meet more often to better perform its role, or delegate its responsibilities to another authority.

  ▸ **Functioning of NDMA:** Under the Act, it is to have an Advisory Committee comprising experts in the field of disaster management. It was noted that the constitution of Advisory Committee has remained an ad-hoc exercise.

  ▸ **Funding arrangements:** The Committee noted that the centre, states and districts had not constituted Mitigation Funds from which money could be utilized on disaster preparedness, restoration, etc. The Committee recommended that these Funds be constituted at the national, state and district levels urgently so that mitigation activities may be pursued.

  ▸ **Communication technology:** Projects undertaken for strengthening the communications network for disaster management were either at the planning stage, or were delayed.

  ▸ **Disaster Response:** The Committee noted that in 2012, 27% posts in the National Disaster Response Force(NDRF) were vacant. As of now as well, key functionaries' posts are vacant.

  ▸ **Disaster specific preparedness:** With regard to floods, the Committee observed that there were several deficiencies in the forecasting infrastructure. These include non-functional telemetry systems (used for measurement and communication) and absence of dedicated communication facilities in forecasting stations.

- While domestic capabilities are unevenly adding up, at global scale, India is striving its best to align itself with the higher standards.

- The "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030" was adopted during the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan.

- UNISDR supports the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

UNISDR's vision is anchored on the four priorities for action set out in the Sendai Framework:

- Understanding disaster risk.

- Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk.

- Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience.

- Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Disaster management: India is not completely ready

- After every disaster, its aftermath and adverse impacts raise a lot of questions about the status of preparedness.

- Following the Uttarakhand floods in 2013 and Kashmir floods in 2014, it was only after a lot of questions were raised and criticism directed at preparedness practices that flood forecast stations were set-up in these two states.

- High-tech warning systems on the ground will not be useful until the authorities, key stakeholders and communities are trained to act upon the information obtained from these facilities.

- Different stakeholders need to come together for mapping risks, vulnerabilities, and resources; engage in regular preparedness actions like drills and capacity building; develop and update emergency plans; check the availability of resources at the local level; and act upon early warning intimations.

- While the government works towards strengthening systems and mechanisms for preparedness and response, civil society has a major role to play, at the community level, for disaster preparedness.

📰 Practice Question

- **India continue to follow a relief-centric approach despite enforcing Disaster Management Act, 2005 which focuses on preparedness. Analyze the need for investing in disaster preparedness and mitigation across the country, taking a cue from Odisha model.**

INFOSYS FOUNDATION'S FCRA LICENCE CANCELLED

CONTEXT

- **The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has cancelled the FCRA licence of Infosys Foundation after a request was made by the not-for-profit initiative of the IT major.**

⊙ ABOUT:

What prompted Infosys Foundation to push for de-registration?

- The Foundation was registered under the FCRA Act in January 2016. In May 2016, the Government amended the FCRA Act in the Finance Bill with retrospective effect from 2010 as a result of which the Foundation no longer fell under the purview of the FCRA Act.

- The Foundation thereafter applied for its de-registration from FCRA with an additional request to cancel the FCRA registration in June 2016, and received acknowledgement from the FCRA wing in the same month.

- The Home Ministry in 2018 served show cause notice on 1,755 NGOs, including Infosys Foundation, for failing to submit annual income and expenditure statements on foreign funding electronically on the Ministry's portal even though they received "nil" contributions.

- But the Infosys Foundation claimed that it had requested the Home Ministry to cancel the registration in June 2016.

- The Foundation has submitted its annual returns for FY16, FY17 and FY18, though it did not fall under the purview of Act following its amendment.

- Additionally, the Foundation has also submitted necessary paperwork to the Government in July 2018, to showcase that the Foundation has not received any foreign funding.

Stand of Ministry of Home Affairs

- The federal MHA is the nodal agency responsible for monitoring and implementing the FCRA rules.

- The MHA has cited various compliance failings, including the inability to meet reporting requirements and failure to file financial returns over long periods.

⊙ BACKGROUND:

Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)

- FCRA, 2010 seeks to regulate the foreign contributions or donations to organizations and individuals in India and to curb those contributions which might be detrimental to the national interest.

- **Foreign Contribution** includes currency, articles other than gifts for personal use and securities received from foreign source.

- It was brought in 1976 to check that foreigners are not affecting India's electoral politics, public servants, judges, journalists, NGOs etc. for wrong purposes.

- The FCRA, 2010, the FCRA Rules, 2011, and FCRA Amendment Rules, 2015 were respectively enacted to regulate the inflow of foreign funds received by NGOs.

- **The FCRA, 2010 replaces the erstwhile Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act of 1976.**

- It enables an association or an NGO to receive foreign funds, and they have to mandatorily register under it to receive such funds.

- The term 'foreign source' also has an extensive ambit and includes:
  ➤ Foreign citizens
  ➤ Foreign companies, corporations and MNCs
  ➤ Foreign government and their agencies
  ➤ International agencies other than specified and government notified agencies
  ➤ Foreign trusts, foundations, trade unions, societies, clubs or any other associations of individuals formed outside India

- According to terms stipulated in the FCRA, an organisation cannot receive foreign funding unless it is registered under the 2010 Act, except when it gets government approval for a specific project.

- One of the main requirements under the FCRA is that organisations have to submit their annual return to the government within nine months from the closure of the previous financial year.

- It narrowed the scope and purpose for foreign financing and increased the frequency of reporting it to every three months. But to foster a culture of compliance; the NGO sector was one of the first to feel the brunt of anti-corruption campaign.

⊙ ANALYSIS:

Controversies around FCRA

- Despite being a law related to financial regulation, FCRA does not fall within the purview of the RBI

but under the Home Ministry as it is **internal security legislation**.

- FCRA registration under the earlier law was permanent, but under the new one, it expired after five years, and had to be renewed afresh.

- The new law put a restriction (50 per cent) on the proportion of foreign funds that could be used for administrative expenses.

- The 1976 law was primarily aimed at political parties, the new law set the stage for shifting the focus to "organisations of a political nature". The FCRA Rules, 2010, framed by the United Progressive Alliance government, has served the NDA well as a manual on how to target inconvenient NGOs, especially those working on governance accountability.

United Nation' views on FCRA, 2010

- FCRA provisions "**are not in conformity with international law, principles and standards**".

- The right to freedom of association is incorporated under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which India is a party.

- Access to resources, particularly foreign funding, is part of the right to freedom of association.

- Restrictions in the name of "public interest" and "economic interest" as invoked under the FCRA rules fail the test of "legitimate restrictions".

- The terms are too vague and give the state excessive discretionary powers to apply the provision in an arbitrary manner.

- Besides, given that the right to freedom of association is part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 20), a violation of this right also constitutes a human rights violation.

Role of NGO in our society

- NGO act as service contractors, able to work more efficiently and effectively than government agencies thereby playing an important role in the socio-economic transformation.

- It brings in accountability and transparency to governance. It acts as a human rights watchdog in the society.

- NGOs act as channels for donors to provide international development funds to low-income countries or developing countries.

- FCRA regulates the inflow to and usage of foreign contribution by NGOs by prescribing a mechanism to accept, uses and report usage of the same. This move helped Companies to ease the CSR

(Corporate Social Responsibility) spending as the repetitive consent from the Home Ministry is no longer required for the disbursement of funds by the foreign companies.

- NGOs have got access to foreign funds more easily than before except for the prior permission category NGOs.

Need to govern NGOs

- The major issues with rogue NGOs include lack of accountability, stalling the development projects, threat to internal security etc. According to CBI only 10 % of existing NGOs file return.

- In some state the laws do not require NGO to be transparent. FCRA act seek to address this by registration.

- Few NGOs are used by vested interest to halt developmental project in India as reported by Intelligence Bureau. This was witnessed in Kudankulam protest.

- Thirdly, funds flowing to NGOs can be used for anti-national activity such as economic security. Hence regulation of NGO receiving fund is necessary.

- There are instances where NGOs has violated FCRA but escaped penalty under the pretext of FEMA act which falls under finance ministry. FCRA seek to monitor fund which is not a capital but under FEMA fund is being accorded the status of capital.

⊙ WAY FORWARD:

- FCRA remind us about the draconian features of the colonial laws, which empowers state to repress its critic. Government should repeal these acts so that it can't use the loopholes in the system to exercise authority which ultimately destroys our social fabric.

- Foreign funding should always be monitored carefully to prevent misuse, but opting to put a blanket ban, undermines the democratic ethos and freedom of speech in India. Efforts should be made to bridge the trust deficit between government and civil society.

- If Infosys gets fail, it can be prosecuted, while those that received foreign contributions into multiple bank accounts should also be liable for censure.

- There is no easy way out for Infosys. Given the demanding regulatory environment, and the government's interest in enforcing its difficult regulations, foreign financed NGOs can no longer afford to take compliance lightly.

📰 Practice Question

- Do you think that the Foreign Contribution Act (FCRA), passed in 1976 and amended in 2010, gives excessive discretionary powers to state? Examine.

- Some critics say that FCRA violates the universal declaration of human rights, where right to freedom of association is a part of it. Elaborate it.

HAVE WE MATURED IN POLITICAL CHOICES?

CONTEXT

- **Electoral verdict as delivered in 2019 general elections has shocked and surprised all political pundits.**

- **While the jury is divided, it is important to analyse - within the ambit of this article, if the verdict of 2019 has demonstrated that the electorates have matured in making political choices.**

⊙ ABOUT:

- ⊚ For instance, the divided electoral provided a thumping majority to BJP - rising above caste, dynasty, regional dimensions and the son of the soil narratives.

- ⊚ This is to be contrasted over how they voted in the recently held general elections. In these elections, the long tenured state governments were replaced with change of guards.

- ⊚ Does this imply that the nation is ready for "simultaneous elections" - as envisaged by the political parties and the ECI?

- ⊚ Or, was the outcome due to charismatic oratory skills of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi?

- ⊚ In the analysis part, these are some questions, the article will try and find answers of.

⊙ ANALYSIS:

Lessons from Verdict 2019

- ⊚ A mandate only places a particular politics in power; it does not mean, as in authoritarian regimes such as China, the power to run individual or collective writs.

- ⊚ Today, while political entrepreneurship is alive and vibrant in India – Arvind Kejriwal being the latest – the candidate has been reduced to a vote collecting machine, based on which she/he jumps party brands, but remains irrelevant to the larger political discourse.

- ⊚ In terms of faces and voting thereon, there is only the top job – everyone else, including the candidate, is an adjunct.

Eight pillars of political continuity

- ⊚ One, consolidation of what was an alternative to the Congress – the BJP – becoming the key driver of Indian politics.

- ⊚ Two, a forceful ejection of entitlement-driven, the Gandhi family-dominated politics to one that, looks at the rise of an average person, Narendra Modi, to the top. This is a story of hope.

- ⊚ Three, the rise of a party, the BJP that thinks, governs and articulates itself in Hindi.

- ⊚ Four, delivering a sense of a rising India across the world and a citizenry that basks in that warm-fuzzy idea.

- ⊚ Five, the rebirth of nationalism and patriotism, a sense of going beyond the family, the community and the region to meld into the nation. Clearly, the fragmented ideas have been sidelined for now.

- ⊚ Six – possibly the visible veto – the birth of national security as a political issue. That India can and will use kinetic force to protect itself is now an irreversible political conversation.

- ⊚ The unresolved discourse of no-jobs and undependable-data notwithstanding, a political economy narrative that has been driven by low inflation – this is the only economic indicator that influences the behavior of the voter.

- ⊚ And eight, a corruption-free, family-free, encumbrances-free man – Modi – as brand driver.

Policy stability through six touch points with electorate

- ⊚ Over the past five years, as part of delivering economic governance, the Modi government has made several and regular touch points with the electorate, of which the following six are key:

  - ► The **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana** delivered bank accounts to 355 million unbanked Indians.

  - ► The **Swachh Bharat Mission** has built 92.7 million toilets, with more than 560,000 villages and 617 districts that are open defecation free.

  - ► The **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana** aims to deliver secondary and tertiary healthcare to 100 million poorest and the first flush of 1.8 million beneficiaries are visible to all.

  - ► **Demonetization** seems to have hit the commentators more than those on whose behalf they debunk it.

  - ► Close to 72 million households in 714 districts now have **access to LPG** as cooking gas that has freed women in these households of smoky choolhaas, under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

  - ► More than 100 million individuals have availed of small loans of between Rs 50,000 and Rs 10 lakh under the **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana.**

Minoritarianism doesn't work anymore

- The narrative of Minoritarianism – a crude corollary of democracy that suggests the might of the majority suffocating the minority – has finally been called out. A mandate only places a particular politics in power; it does not mean, as in authoritarian regimes such as China, the power to run individual or collective writs.

- In every mature democracy such as the US or India, in contrast to say those in Pakistan or Turkey, there are institutions and laws that protect minorities. In India, majoritarianism was suspected to be a false narrative; Verdict 2019 has unequivocally proved it to be false.

- Opposition needs a new narrative. But in hindsight, the word 'new' is redundant. Other than 'remove Modi', the opposition had no coherent offer.

- A post-elections Mahagathbandhan may have worked out if the numbers turned in their favour. But as a narrative they could not see beyond 'remove Modi'. For the electorate, this was not enough.

- Now that Verdict 2019 is clear, it is time for the opposition to create a narrative – the need for a strong opposition that checks the government remains. Given the failure of extant family-led parties, this demand may perhaps create its own supply in the form of a new and serious political entrepreneur – the field is open.

- The tragedy at Pulwama made India mourn. The national quest for retribution brought it together. That retribution at Balakot ended Pakistan's nuclear bluff that India and the world had been reeling under for decades.

- Coming barely two months before general elections, there was no way the Modi government would not have reacted with kinetic force.

- When it did, the rhetoric of national security became an electoral issue. On the other side, the opposition first downplayed the Balakot airstrike, then it tried to take the political credit for the strike away from Modi, then said it was not a big deal as it had been done earlier too without the publicity, and finally gave in reluctantly, allowing the issue do die.

Summary note:

- As factored in - in the analysis part, there were multiple narratives at play - which the opposition failed to gauge in.

- Verdict 2019 has hinted at new wave of political maturity - however to sustain this - a stronger and constructive critic - both at media and at the Parliament is essential.

- How quickly this is realized will help capitalize the gains of this critical exercise.

📰 Practice Question

- **As we dissect the elections and engage in deeper analyses around regions, states, genders, first-time voters and so on, more insights will emerge on Verdict 2019 and how it can reshape Elections in 2024. How far do you agree? Discuss.**

SECTION: B
(PRELIMS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

M.P.'S ORCHHA MAKES IT TO TENTATIVE LIST OF UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

⊙ **CONTEXT:**

- **The architectural heritage of Orchha town in Madhya Pradesh which depict peculiar style of the Bundela dynasty have been included in UNESCO's tentative list of world heritage sites following a proposal sent by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to the U.N. body (UNESCO) on April 15, 2019 to include the sites in its list.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

About Orchha

- Orchha is situated on the banks of the Betwa River. It is located around 80 km away from Tikamgarh district in Madhya Pradesh and 15 km from Jhansi of Uttar Pradesh.

- It was built by King Rudra Pratap Singh of Bundela dynasty in the 16th century A.D. The ancient town is famous for its Chaturbhuj Temple, Orchha fort complex, Raja Mahal among others.

- The Bundela architecture has Mughal influence since the two dynasties were very close. The famous King of Bundela dynasty was Veer Singh Dev who was a close friend of Mughal emperor Jahangir and fought wars as Akbar's aid.

- Orchha is also famous for its two elevated minaret called Saavan and Bhadon and its four palaces — Jahangir Palace, Raj Mahal, Sheesh Mahal and Rai Praveen Mahal — and for its concept of open bungalows, stone work windows, animal statues depicting the culture of Bundelkhand.

- It is the only place in India where Lord Ram is worshipped as a king with a dedicated temple in his name called Sri Ram Raja Mandir.

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.

  ◎ Considered as an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or has disappeared.

  ◎ Represents a masterpiece of human creative genius.

  ◎ Represents on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.

  ◎ Exhibits an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world and depicts developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts or town-planning.

  ◎ Contains areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

- ⊙ An archetype of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape that depicts significant stages in human history.

- ⊙ Showcases traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use, which represents cultural or human interaction with the environment.

- ⊙ Represents stages of earth's history - record of life, on-going geological processes, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.

ARMY INVOKES EMERGENCY POWERS FOR MISSILE DEAL

⊙ **CONTEXT:**

- **Recently, Defence Ministry has sanctioned a set of new financial powers for emergency procurements to the Indian Armed Forces to ensure operational preparedness. They have been given a free hand to procure equipment worth up to Rs. 300 crore on a priority basis.**

- **According to it, the Army is in the process of procuring Spike-LR Anti-Tank Missiles from Israel and Igla-S Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORAD) from Russia. Entirely new systems not in use can also be procured under the new powers.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

- The Vice Chiefs of the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force were granted additional financial powers to carry out specific procurement.

- In the wake of the Pulwama terror attack, the government has granted emergency powers to the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force to procure critical weapons and equipment (from a single vendor) to help them effectively deal with any hostilities along the border with Pakistan.

- Deliveries under the emergency route have to be completed in three to six months.

- Relaxations in certain rules were made to cut delays in military purchase.

- For the procurement under the emergency orders, the forces need not even take concurrence of the Integrated Financial Advisor from the defence finance department.

Spike-LR Anti-Tank Missiles (Israel)	Igla-S (Russia)
Portable anti-armour weapon system, which can be operated in fire-and-forget mode and in fire, observe and update mode using the fibre-optic data link.	It is expected to replace the IGLA M systems of Russia that is being used since the 1980s.
It is used by infantry and light combat vehicles.	It is the latest model of Russian MANPADS (Man-portable air-defence system)
It is equipped with a fibre-optic data link guidance system, which sends commands to the missile from the launch system and receives, into the gunner's field of view, images from the seeker.	Igla-S system is designed for use against visible targets as tactical aircraft, helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicle, cruise missile, head-on or receding, in the presence of natural (background) clutter and countermeasures.
It can work in non-line-of-sight (NLOS) mode allowing the gunner to operate from a covered position.	The missile is capable of hitting an aerial target at short range.
Maximum range : 4 km (Long range version)	Maximum Target Range: 6km Maximum Target Altitude: 3km

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF DRDO

⊙ **CONTEXT:**

- Recently, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) test fired guided bomb from Sukhoi combat jet and AKASH-MK-1S missile.

- Parallelly, Indian Army along with Indian Navy and Indian Air Force (IAF) also test fired the aerial version of the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile from a Sukhoi jet at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

⊙ **ABOUT:**

Guided bomb from Sukhoi combat jet

- **Guided bombs** are meant to precisely hit a designated target to minimize collateral damage.

- DRDO test fired an indigenously-developed **500 kg class Inertial Guided Bomb from Su-30 MKI Aircraft** from the **Pokhran test range in Rajasthan**.

- It achieved the desired range and hit the target with high precision.

- It is capable of carrying different warheads.

- The weapon being developed is similar to the **SPICE** (Smart, Precise Impact, Cost-Effective), an Israel made bomb which was used by the Indian Air Force to hit terror camps in Pakistan's Balakot on February 26, 2019.

Supersonic BrahMos cruise missile

- A BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile was successfully test-fired by a Unit of Eastern Command, Indian Army from Car Nicobar Islands as part of joint training by Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, demonstrating high standards of Inter Service Synergy.

- The Combat missile was test fired on a specially designed target chosen at a range of 270 Kms, thus validating deep penetration capability by the supersonic cruise missile and accurate engagement of targets in depth.

- The 2.5 tonne air-to-surface missile has a range of around 300 km, and this step will significantly enhance the IAF's combat capability.

- The BrahMos cruise missile travels at a speed of Mach 2.8, nearly three times that of sound.

- This missile has by now established itself as a major 'Force Multiplier' in modern day battlefield with impeccable multi role and multi-platform launch capabilities furthering the confidence amongst Indian troops.

- The missile is a derivative of the Russian anti-ship cruise missile and it is thought to be one of the world's fastest cruise missiles currently in operational use. The missile was inducted into the Army in 2007.

AKASH-MK-1S Missile

- DRDO has successfully test fired AKASH-MK-1S missile with a strike range of 25 km and capability to carry warhead of 60 kg from Odisha.

- The supersonic missile has a range up to the altitude of 18,000 metres.

- The missile uses high-energy solid propellant for the booster and ramjet-rocket propulsion for the sustainer phase. The missile system is said to be highly mobile.

- The medium range multi-target engagement capable missile was developed as part of the Integrated Guided-Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) other than Nag, Agni, Trishul, and Prithvi missiles.

- AKASH MK-1S is an upgrade of existing AKASH missile with indigenous Seeker.

- It is a surface to air missile which can neutralize advanced aerial targets.

- The Akash weapon system has combination of both command guidance and active terminal seeker guidance.

- Seeker and guidance performance have been consistently established in both the missions.

- The missile is guided by a phased array fire control radar called 'Rajendra' which is termed as Battery Level Radar (BLR) with a tracking range of about 60 km.

- The Akash-MK-1S is capable of striking down enemy fighter jets and drones very effectively and accurately.

Way Ahead

- DRDO is also reportedly developing two such glide bombs named - **Garuthmaa** and **Garuda**.

- **Garuthmaa** is the winged version with a range of 100 km while **Garuda** is the non-winged version with a range of 30 km.

- DRDO is also developing a **Smart Anti Airfield Weapon** (SAAW) which can be used to damage enemy airfields during war.

- It had been bogged in controversies with a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report in 2017 stating that 30% of the missiles failed when tested.

- The Army too had said in 2017 that the missile did not meet its operational requirements due to higher reaction time. India is slowly plugging the holes in its air defence elements by developing the advanced surface-to-air missile named MRSAM — Medium Range Surface to Air Missile in collaboration with Israel.

- Besides that, five regiments of the renowned S-400 air defence system are under procurement from Russia.

CCI APPROVES FORMATION OF A JV FOR CONSUMER HEALTHCARE PRODUCTS BY GSK AND PFIZER

⊙ **CONTEXT:**
- **Recently, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the formation of a joint venture for consumer healthcare products by pharmaceutical giants GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Pfizer.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

Background:

- GSK, in December 2018, has reached an agreement with Pfizer to combine their consumer health businesses into a new joint venture (JV) with combined sales of around $12.7 billion (around ₹88,900 crore).

Proposals by CCI

- The proposed combination involves acquisition of Pfizer's consumer healthcare business by GSK, and the combination of GSK and Pfizer consumer healthcare business into a global consumer healthcare joint venture under the sole control of GSK.

- After the deal, GSK will have a majority controlling equity interest of 68% in the combined consumer healthcare business, while Pfizer will have a minority non-controlling equity interest of the remaining 32%.

- Pfizer will get a much-needed revival through the JV. Pfizer has less brand recall among consumers and is not known for its consumer business in India.

- The JV will be a category leader in Pain Relief, Respiratory, Vitamin and Mineral Supplements, Digestive Health, Skin Health and Therapeutic Oral Health.

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Pfizer
• **GSK** is a British pharmaceutical company headquartered in London, whereas **Pfizer** is a US-based firm with headquarters in New York.   • In consumer healthcare segment, GSK is active in research, development, manufacturing, and marketing of products which are typically available without prescription (over-the-counter) for various indications.   • On the other hand, Pfizer's consumer healthcare segment develops, manufactures and markets non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and nutritional products.
About CCI
• The Competition Act, 2002, as amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007, follows the philosophy of modern competition laws. The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.   • The objectives of the Act are sought to be achieved through the Competition Commission of India, which has been established by the Central Government with effect from 14th October 2003. CCI consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.   • The main goal of CCI is to create and sustain fair competition in the economy that will provide a 'level playing field' to the producers and make the markets work for the welfare of the consumers.

Way Ahead

- According to GSK, the new entity, which will sell over the counter (OTC) drugs and healthcare supplements, will have a combined market share of 7.3% in the OTC market.

- GSK also expects to receive all required regulatory approvals to complete the transaction in the second half of 2019.

Significance

- This step provides a unique opportunity to accelerate GSK's strategy and create substantial value for shareholders.

- It lays foundation for separation of GSK to create two new UK-based global companies focused on Pharmaceuticals/Vaccines and Consumer Healthcare.

- The new Joint Venture will be well-positioned to deliver stronger sales, cash flow and earnings growth driven by category leading Power Brands, science-based innovation and substantial cost synergies.

- It also enhances prospects for consumer healthcare.

ISSUE OF ELEPHANT BONDS

⊙ **CONTEXT:**

- **A high level government-appointed committee on trade and industry has suggested it to issue 'Elephant Bonds' to people for declaring undisclosed income to mandatorily invest 50%.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

Elephant Bonds

- These are the 25-year sovereign bonds in which people declaring undisclosed income will be bound to invest 50 per cent.

- The fund, made from these bonds, will be utilised only for infrastructure projects.

- It is like an Amnesty scheme to help State treasury raising tax revenues, adding beneficiaries in tax base who have not declared their assets previously.

- These bonds will also reduce corporate tax rate, drop tit for tat approach on tariff wars with other countries, and set a target to double the exports (goods and services) to $1,000 billion by 2025.

Other Recommendations:

- The group recommended increasing capital base of EXIM Bank by another Rs 20,000 crore by 2022, setting up of empowered investment promotion agency and seeking inputs from industry and MSMEs before signing free trade agreements (FTAs) and sensitising them of its benefits.

- Further, the seven industry specific suggestion includes separate regulation for medical devices and a single ministry for the sector.

- For textiles and garments sector, it suggested modification in labour laws (like the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947) to remove limitation on firm size and allow manufacturing firms to grow.

- To promote tourism and medical value tourism, the group recommended simplification in medical visa regime, setting up of a pan-India tourism board.

- Similarly, to promote agriculture exports, it has asked for abolishing Essential Commodities Act and the APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee).

Features of this bond:

- This bond will allow joint ventures and wholly owned subsidiaries of Indian parties to invest money in India as foreign direct investment (FDI) through funds earned overseas, under automatic route.

- This will simplify regulatory and tax framework for foreign investment funds and individual investors to enable the on-shoring of fund management activity of India-dedicated offshore funds and attract foreign individual investment into capital markets.

- The other key recommendations include lowering effective corporate tax rate and bringing down cost of capital and simplifying regulatory.

- The report argued that India's competitors have less than 20 per cent effective tax rates.

- These recommendations are part of a report prepared by the 12-member group, set up by the commerce ministry in September last year to look into the challenges arising from the current global trade scenario and suggest ways to boost the country's goods and services exports.

⊙ **SIGNIFICANCE:**
- As this bond promotes exports, so it will help a country to create jobs, boost manufacturing and earn more foreign exchange.

- State governments need to be closely involved in improving the competitiveness of exports by providing support measures in a WTO (World Trade Organisation) consistent manner.

NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

⊙ **CONTEXT:**
- **Recently, government has cleared formation of an overarching body —National Statistical Office (NSO) — through the merger of the NSSO and CSO under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).**

⊙ **ABOUT:**
- The new NSO as an agency was envisaged firstly by **Rangarajan Commission** to implement and maintain statistical standards and coordinate statistical activities of Central and State agencies as laid down by the National Statistical Commission (NSC).

- This commission had also recommended setting up of the NSC, headed by a person with a Minister of State-level designation, to serve as a nodal and empowered body for all core statistical activities of the country.

- According to recent order, NSO will be formed with the merger of NSSO and CSO under MoSPI.

- This recent restructuring seems to be a reaction to the resignations tendered by the member and acting Chairman of the NSC earlier this year.

Composition:

- As per the recent order, there will be three Director Generals —DG (Statistics), DG (Coordination, Administration and Policy) and DG (National Sample Survey) — reporting to the Secretary (S&PI) as against DG (Economic Statistics), DG (Social Statistics) and DG (Surveys) earlier.

- The Field Operations Division (FOD) of the present NSSO will be a subordinate office of the MoSPI and all the other divisions of present CSO, NSSO and administrative wing will exist as divisions of MoSPI.

- The Ministry has also ordered constitution of a committee to recommend the operational level modifications required to give effect to this restructuring.

- The order states that the proposed NSO would be headed by Secretary (Statistics and Programme Implementation), but skips any mention of NSC, which has been the overseeing body for all the statistical work done in the country.

- The order also does not equate the Secretary (Statistics and Programme Implementation) with the Chief Statistician of India as was done in the earlier resolution notified by MoSPI on June 1, 2005.

2005 Resolution:

- It notified initiation of the setting up of the NSC along with proposing the single entity, NSO, as "the executive wing of the government for statistics" which would "act according to the policies and priorities as laid down by the NSC."

- The resolution had proposed NSO with two wings, CSO and NSSO, while recent order states that the "statistics wing, comprising the NSO, with constituents as CSO and NSSO, to be an integral part of the main Ministry, with CSO and NSO to be merged into NSO".

Aim of this step:

- This order aims to streamline and strengthen the present nodal functions of the ministry and "to bring in more synergy by integrating its administrative functions within the ministry."

- This will help in meeting the requirement of the statistical system as a lack of control on these two bodies was one challenge presently.

- It will align India's statistical system with other countries.

- A **Data Quality Assurance Division** has also been set up, replacing the Data Processing Division, which will have the responsibility to bring about improvements in survey and administrative databases. This division will be strengthened through "re-skilling and deployment of existing personnel".

Drawbacks of this step:

- This step is being widely perceived as a dent on autonomy of Indian statistical system.

- The character of NSSO will change by merging it with CSO and will bring it out of NSC's control. Earlier, NSSO was an attached office of MoSPI, which gave it a legally distinct identity from the ministry. NSC used to oversee all technical aspects of the statistical work—which survey needs to be done, when and how it needs to be done. With the merger of NSSO and CSO, the autonomy of NSSO will go away and the NSC's control over NSSO will not be there.

> **NSSO**
>
> - It is 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. Besides these surveys, NSSO collects data on rural and urban prices and plays a significant role in the improvement of crop statistics through supervision of the area enumeration and crop estimation surveys of the State agencies. It also maintains a frame of urban area units for use in sample surveys in urban areas.
>
> - **Central Statistics Office (**CSO**):** It coordinates the statistical activities in the country and evolves statistical standards.

HANGUL

⊙ **CONTEXT:**
- **A massive decline in the population of Kashmir's iconic wildlife species, the Hangul (Cervus hanglu hanglu), also known as the Kashmir stag, continues to be a big concern as conservation efforts for it, going on for years, have not yielded any significant results so far.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

Hanguls in India

- Today, Hangul, the state animal of Jammu & Kashmir, is restricted to the Dachigam National Park some 15 km north-west of Jammu & Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar.
- From a population of 5,000 in the early 1900s, the Hangul's numbers have constantly declined over the decades.
- According to the latest survey in 2017, the population of Hangul is 182 in Dachigam and adjoining areas.
- Earlier population estimates suggest that there were 197 Hanguls in 2004 and 186 in 2015.
- Small isolated Hangul herds of five to ten have been reported from adjoining areas of Dachigam which include Shikargah-Tral and the Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary in south Kashmir.
- It was once widely distributed in the mountains of Kashmir and parts of Chamba district in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh.
- The IUCN's Red List has classified it as Critically Endangered and it is placed under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the J&K Wildlife Protection Act, 1978.

Why is Hangul's population declining?

- The biggest challenges in the way of conservation and population growth of Hangul are habitat fragmentation, predation and very low fawn-female ratio.
- Another challenge is the male-female and fawn-adult disparity in the Hangul population. There is a female-biased ratio of 23 males to every 100 females. The female-biased ratio and the fawn to female ratio of 30:100 are the two main reasons for the declining numbers of Kashmir's Hangul.
- Fawns are also predated upon by the dogs of security forces deployed in forests and the dogs of nomads who graze their herds in areas which are Hangul habitats.

Conservation efforts:

- An important part of the conservation project for Hangul is to study the food habits, breeding patterns and movements of the species in and out of its habitat and tagging the animals with satellite collars.

- There was a 66-hectare sheep farm in the lower part of the Dachigam National Park. Since 2002, the wildlife department had been consistently pleading with the sheep husbandry officials that the farm is acting as a huge disturbance to the habitat of the Hangul. Now the farm is removed helping in conservation of Hanguls.

- Another conservation measure taken by the wildlife department in recent years is a project for improving the population of the Hangul through ex-situ breeding. The breeding centre, along with some infrastructure over a five-acre forested area in south Kashmir's Shikargah-Tral was started a few years ago.

AIR SPACE RESTRICTION

⊙ **CONTEXT:**
- **Pakistan has extended the ban on use of its airspace till June 15.**

- **A notice to airmen (NOTAM) informed airlines about the extension of the ban.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**
- In the wake of escalating tension following an airstrike by Indian Air Force in Balakot in February 2019, Pakistan had restricted its airspace for airlines to and from India.

- Several Central Asian airlines as well as those providing connectivity to Europe and the United States from Southeast Asia were forced to cancel their flights due to the ban.

- The ban is contributing to financial losses owing to longer routes, demand of passengers on these routes, increased crew presence and increased fuel costs.

- In a case of Air space violation, a Delhi-bound Georgian aircraft that took off from Karachi was recently intercepted over Gujarat.

- However, on the up side, recently, India granted permission for Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's aircraft to fly over the country for his visit to Male and Colombo. Pakistan too exempted External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to fly directly through Pakistani airspace to attend the SCO meet in Bishkek.

Airspace: In international law, the space above a particular nation's territory is owned by the government controlling the territory.

- The upper limit of national airspace is not defined by international law. However, under the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, airspace ends where outer space begins, as outer space is declared to be free and not subject to national appropriation

- The treaty, however, did not define the altitude at which outer space begins and air space ends.

Air sovereignty: It is the fundamental right of a sovereign state to regulate the use of its airspace and enforce its own aviation law. State controls the entry of foreign aircraft into its territory and that persons within its territory are subject to its laws

- The principle of airspace sovereignty is established through the Paris Convention on the Regulation of Aerial Navigation (1919) and subsequently by other multilateral treaties.

- Commercial air transport is divided into scheduled air services and nonscheduled flights. Charter flights fall mostly, but not invariably, into the latter category.

- Under the 1994 Chicago Convention, contracting states agree to permit aircraft registered in the other contracting states and engaged in commercial nonscheduled flights to fly into their territory without prior diplomatic permission and, moreover, to pick up and discharge passengers, cargo, and mail, but in practice this provision has become a dead letter.

Prohibited airspace: It refers to an area of airspace within which flight of aircraft is not allowed, usually due to security concerns. It is one of many types of special use airspace designations and is depicted on aeronautical charts with the letter "P" followed by a serial number.

Restricted airspace: Different from prohibited airspace, in it the entry is typically forbidden at all times from all aircraft and is not subject to clearance from ATC or the airspace's controlling body.

How closure of Airspace affects airlines?

- Globally, commercial airlines generally fly from east to west. All airlines seek to fly a straight route so as to save fuel. This is possible only when the airspace over a country, which is the sovereign right of that country, is open and be safe to fly over.

- Every country marks out several entry and exit points for various airlines to use. When these entry and exit points are shut, airlines need to consider alternative routes, which involve flying longer or stopping at an intermediate point before reaching their final destinations.

USA TO OPT OUT OF ATT

⊙ **CONTEXT:**

- **Continuing US's drift from multilateralism, President Donald Trump has announced that the US will withdraw from the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

- Advancing his America First policy, this the third major arms-related agreement from which the United States has withdrawn since he took office in January 2017.

- The US has already withdrawn from UNESCO, the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INFT), which bans nuclear-tipped missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 km, and the agreement on denuclearising Iran that was made by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany and Tehran.

- The US is the world's top arms exporter. Its weapons sales are 58% higher than those of Russia, the world's second largest exporter.

Reasons for withdrawal from ATT

- **Affects US's sovereignty:** The US believes that the treaty amounts to international gun control, and is a threat to America's second amendment right to bear arms.
  - During the treaty negotiation, it was made clear that the pact would not threaten the right to bear arms afforded by the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It has no authority over national gun control laws.
  - Nevertheless, U.S. gun-rights organizations, led by the NRA, have alleged that the treaty would impose limits on U.S. domestic gun sales.

- **Important players are non-signatories:** The US alleges that the treaty fails to truly address the problem of irresponsible arms transfers because other top arms exporters - including Russia and China - have not signed up to it. India too is not a signatory.

- **Continued contentious arm sales**: The US also claims that some groups try to use the treaty to overturn "sovereign national decisions" on arms sales, specifically pointing to attempts to block the UK's sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia.
  - The sale of arms to Saudi Arabia by western countries has been highly contentious because of the use of those weapons in air strikes in Yemen that have killed and injured thousands of civilians.

Arms Trade Treaty

- The treaty is the first global accord to regulate the sale of a broad array of conventional weapons between countries.

- It was signed by 130 nations in 2013, and officially came into law the following year.

- It requires states to monitor their arms exports, and to ensure their weapons sales do not break existing arms embargoes.

- Nations also need to ensure the weapons they export do not end up being used for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or terrorist acts. If they do find out the arms will be used for any of these, they need to stop the transfer.

- The pact has been signed and ratified by 101 countries so far - including Germany, France and the UK. The US is among another 29 nations that signed the treaty but have not ratified it to make it law.

INDIA AN OBSERVER IN CTBTO

⊙ **CONTEXT:**
- **The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) has invited India to become an "Observer" with access to International Monitoring System data, so it can take an informed decision on ratifying a much-debated nuclear disarmament treaty.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**
- Stating its reservations with the treaty, India has not signed CTBT till date.

- With changing nature of the organization, renewed efforts are made to get India onboard.

Benefits of being an observer:

- **Informed decision:** It will allow India to attend CTBTO meeting, observe how the organization works, and accordingly take the time needed to make the decision.

- **Access to information:** The CTBTO runs the International Monitoring System (IMS), which can detect nuclear tests anywhere across the world. Being an observer, India would get access to data from the IMS. When complete,

  ◉ IMS will consist of 337 facilities (321 monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide labs) located in 89 countries.

  ◉ It can detect even small nuclear explosions using seismology, hydroacoustics, infrasound and radionuclide technology.

  ◉ The IMS also helps in warning of earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic ash, and identifies plane crash sites.

- **Symbolism:** Being an observer will not change India's status with respect to the CTBT. It only gives the advantage of following what's happening, learning what China is doing in the organization, and where the US comes in. Among the non-signatory, Pakistan too is an observer.

India's apprehensions with CTBT

- **Discrimination:** India claims that the CTBT is discriminatory because it favours "five nuclear weapon states"- the United States, United Kingdom, China, France and Russia - when it comes to fulfilling obligations for eliminating nuclear weapons.

- India wants the CTBT to have a clause on complete nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner because there are technological differences between the 'have' and 'have not' countries.

- India is concerned about the likelihood of those already possessing nuclear weapons upgrading their arsenals through sub-critical and laboratory simulated testing.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

- It is a global treaty that aims to ban all nuclear explosions across the world. Upon entering into force, it provides a legally binding norm against nuclear testing.

- The Treaty's entry into force depends on 44 specific States that must have signed and ratified the Treaty. These States had nuclear facilities at the time the Treaty was negotiated and adopted. 35 of these States have ratified the Treaty.

- Nine States still need to do so: China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States. India, North Korea and Pakistan have not yet signed the Treaty.

- Between 1945 and 1996, over 2,000 nuclear tests were carried out all over the world. Ten nuclear tests have been conducted ever since the CTBT opened for signature in 1996.

- The signature to a treaty indicates that the country accepts the treaty and is signed by a senior representative of a country such as the president or the foreign minister.

- The ratification of a treaty may require the adjustment of a country's legislation, reflecting its commitments under the treaty.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)

- It was founded in 1996 to promote the Treaty so that it can enter into force.

- It also establishes a verification regime to monitor adherence to the Treaty.

- The CTBT verification includes

  ➤ International Monitoring System (IMS),

  ➤ International Data Centre (IDC)

  ➤ On-site inspections (OSI).

- It constantly monitors the planet for nuclear explosions and shares its findings with Member States.

FORFEITURE OF SECURITY DEPOSIT IN ELECTIONS IN INDIA

⊙ **CONTEXT:**

- **Recently held Lok Sabha (L.S.) elections of 2019 brought ignominy among Left Front candidates in West Bengal, a state which it had ruled continuously for 34 years till 2011, of losing their security deposit.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

Bail Amount:

- As per **Section 34 1 (a)** of the **Representation of the People Act,1951**; it is mandatory for general candidates to deposit security of Rs.**25,000** in case of Parliamentary constituency and for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates, the amounts are Rs **12,500** and Rs **5,000** respectively.

- When a candidate fails to get **1/6th of the total valid votes** casted in that constituency then the amount deposited by candidate is seized by the **Election Commission of India**.

- In fact, the deposits that candidates forfeit are the only income for the Commission, which otherwise depends on an annual budgetary allocation from the central government to run the organisation and also conduct elections.

- Apart from the fact that who is winner and who is runner-up, another fact which interests people in elections is that how many contesting candidates could save their security deposits.

- It is also a matter of pride for the candidates if they save their deposits, whereas forfeiture of deposit is often seen as humiliating.

Security Deposit is returned in the following Circumstances:

- If the name of the candidate not shown in the list of contesting candidates it means either his/her name is being rejected by the Election Commission or he/she has withdrawn candidature.

- If the candidate dies before voting starts

- If the candidate won the election

- If candidate do not wins but he/she secures more than 1/6th of the total valid votes casted in the constituency.

- If the candidate wins the election but does not get 1/6th of the total valid votes, then his security deposit is returned.

A relic from the past

- The law on forfeiting deposits exists in all or most Commonwealth nations and comes to us as a gift from England.

- In First L.S. Elections in 1951-52, almost 745 out of 1874 candidates forfeited their deposits. Since then, almost all L.S. Elections witnessed northward trend of lost deposits.

- In 2001, a Union law ministry panel on electoral reforms recommended that the security deposit be doubled progressively at every attempt for those Independent candidates who fail to win and still keep contesting every election.

  - According to panel, 'If any Independent candidate has failed to get at least 5 % of the total number of votes cast in his/her constituency, he/she should not be allowed to contest as an independent candidate for the same office again at least for six years'.

  - It also recommended that any Independent candidate who loses an election to the same office thrice successively should be permanently debarred from that office.

  - Moreover, the panel suggested that an Independent candidate should be nominated by at least 20 elected members of panchayats, municipalities or other local bodies spread out in a majority of the electoral districts in his constituency.

- It shows that forfeiture of deposit has not been a deterrent for not contesting elections.

Disadvantages of forfeiting deposits:

- Forfeiture of deposit discourages people from contesting, especially those who are not from the major political parties.

- The very idea of forfeiture seems to suggest some sort of failure on the part of those who do not get more than 16% of the vote, which is harsh, particularly in a large nation like India.

- It also punishes small groups and small interests and small coalitions.

Way Ahead:

- Encourage all Indians to participate in democracy by contesting their votes.

- Laws that prevent or deter individuals and parties should be relooked at.

- It is the need of the hour that the Election Commission should increase the amount of security deposit to scrutinise the serious candidates.

STRESS BUSTER SEROTONIN MAY HELP TREAT NEUROLOGICAL DECLINE

⊙ **CONTEXT:**
- **Recently, researchers at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai, have found a new function for Serotonin.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

What is Serotonin?

- It is a chemical that signals between neurons.

- It is believed to help regulate mood and social behaviour, appetite and digestion, sleep, memory, and sexual desire and function.

- There may be a link between serotonin and depression. If so, it is unclear whether low serotonin levels contribute to depression, or if depression causes a fall in serotonin levels.

- At the level of an organism, serotonin is known to be involved in coping with stress. However, the underlying mechanism of its neuro-protective role was unknown.

Mechanism of Serotonin for coping with stress

- Serotonin is involved in the generation of new mitochondria (the powerhouse of the cell) in neurons, increased cellular respiration and fuel (ATP) in the cell.

- As it generates more mitochondria, thereby giving neurons the capacity to produce more energy and the ability to cope with stress better.

- It can impact the manner in which neurons grapple with stress and affect the trajectory of ageing.

Recent Discovery

- It reduces reactive oxygen species, thus providing neuroprotection against cellular stress.

- Serotonin signalling could be used to prevent mitochondrial abnormalities and neuronal loss

- This newly identified function of serotonin has been studied in mice and rats. If found to be true in humans, which is likely to be the case, it may have important medical implications.

- Neuronal loss is a major cause of neurodegenerative diseases such as in Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Abnormal mitochondrial functions are known to cause or contribute to neuronal death.

- Unlike other cells. Neurons are not generated continuously and so identifying factors that increase mitochondrial health is key to prevent ageing-associated neurological diseases.

Experimental Proof

- Neurons exposed to Serotonin not only produced more fuel (ATP), even the efficiency of mitochondrial output in these neurons was higher. This was seen in experiments done both in tissue culture and rats/mice.

- This study paves way for further research into designing therapeutic interventions by combined activation of Serotonin.

- This may help tackle mood disorders and age-associated neurological decline.

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