

CURRENT AFFAIRS

WEEKLY

WEEK -3 SEPTEMBER, 2019

MAINS

ECONOMICS

Gig Economy Ⓢ

Market Intervention Scheme for Apples of J&K Ⓢ

ENVIRONMENT

2 New Ginger Species Found Ⓢ

Basel Ban Amendment Ⓢ

Bonn Challenge Ⓢ

National animal Disease Control Programme Ⓢ

Nilgiri Tahr Ⓢ

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Eurasian Economic Union Ⓢ

POLITY

Inner Line Permit Ⓢ

SCIENCE & TECH.

African Swine Fever (ASF) Ⓢ

K2 - 18b - A Potentially 'Habitable' Planet

eSIM Ⓢ

Avian Influenza (H5N1) Ⓢ

What is Cryodrakon Boreas? Ⓢ

SOCIAL ISSUES

Uyghur Community Ⓢ

MISCELLANEOUS

Logistics Index Chart Ⓢ

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⑦ Indian Economic Slowdown: A Long Term Problem, How to come out of it?

⑦ New White Revolution: The New Milky Way to Growth

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⑦ Krishna Water Dispute

⑦ Urbanflood Management to Tackle Frequent Floods

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

⑦ Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

POLITY

⑦ 15th Finance Commission

⑦ National Commission For Scheduled Tribes Recommends Tribal Area Status for Ladakh

SOCIAL ISSUES

⑦ Vector Borne Disease

SOCIAL ISSUES

⑦ Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY)

PRELIMS

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— Disclaimer —

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

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

CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYST

WEEK-3 (SEPTEMBER, 2019)

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**WEEKEND
BATCH**

29
SEPTEMBER

SECTION: A
(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

INDIAN ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN: A LONG TERM PROBLEM, HOW TO COME OUT OF IT?

CONTEXT

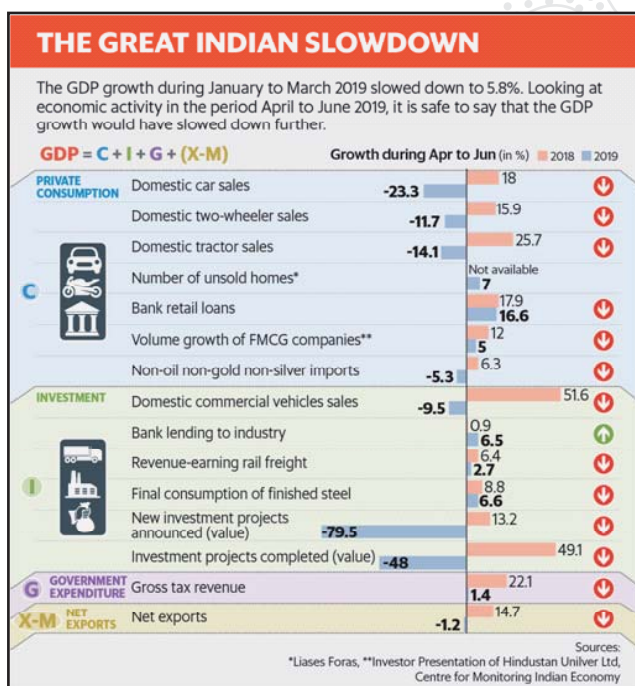
- According to GDP data released by National Statistical Office (NSO), India's economic slowdown is real as India had annual growth of 5.0 per cent in the April-June quarter, the slowest in more than 6 years, dragged down by weak consumer demand and private investments.

● BACKGROUND

- India has been **one of the fastest growing large economies in the world** and today is considered as **the world's seventh-largest economy by nominal GDP** and **the third-largest by purchasing power parity**.
- According to several studies, **India's growth rate should stabilise at 8% during** the next decades, ranking the country as the **world's fastest-growing economy**.
- However, **India's deepening slowdown has now** left the economy on the verge of stalling.

The great Indian Slowdown

- The figure below compares **a series of 15 economic indicators** and reflects how the economic activity during **the period April to June 2019 has slowed down**.



● ANALYSIS

Reasons for current economic slowdown in India

- Poor policy making** like **FPI surcharge, angel tax, penalising for non-compliance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** have deterred investments in the economy thereby affecting the GDP growth.
- Tightening monetary and fiscal policies** have left little room for the government to increase its spending to pump-prime the economy.
- NPAs of Banks and Too Much Debt on corporates affecting investment cycle-** NPAs have resulted **tightening of lending** leading to a **freeze on investment by industrial houses and corporates**. The **IL&FS crisis** also triggered the Non-Banking Financial Companies' (NBFC) credit crunch in 2018..
- Global Slowdown and Retreat of Globalization-**
 - India is a net commodity exporter** and thus there has been a **slump in the volumes of exports** due to global slowdown.
 - With rising retreat of globalization like **Brexit, Trump's protectionist policies** and the US-China trade war, global sentiments have remained poor making the prospects of an **export led growth bleak**.
- Structural Shift in the economy** - The slowdown is also part of a **longer-term structural shift** wherein the Economy is shifting gears from the **high investment era to a low investment era** as well as a transition from **being cash-driven economy to a digitally enabled economy**.
- Irregular monsoonal pattern causing droughts** in some parts and **floods in another** has severely affected the **agricultural output, transportation facilities** leading to imbalance in trade of commodities thereby affecting the economic growth
- Demonetisation and GST has led to a collapse in private consumption** as consumers suddenly prefer to **hoard cash or keep it in the bank** and **investments** have also been affected mainly by the **small and medium businesses (SMEs)** as they are forced to withhold inventories until they are compliant with the new rules and regulations.

Steps taken by the government over past years to uplift the economy

- **Promoting consumerism** – Policy corrections like increase in the tax base, simplification of GST slabs, removing taxes on cash withdrawal etc. have been taken to increase purchasing power of the people.
- **Agriculture** – Several initiatives like insurance schemes (PM Fasal Bima Yojana), Soil Health Card, Farm loan waivers, increase in MSPs, e-Nam have been taken to double the farmers income which was recommended by Ashok Dalwai Committee. Thus, more income in hands of farmers would help uplift the rural economy.
- **Banking Sector** –Steps such as recapitalisation and resolution of stressed assets, repo linked interest rates, merger of banks have been taken to promote liquidity in the market and ease monetary policy transmissions.
- **Employment Generation in various sectors** - The Government had taken key initiatives like Make in India, Startup India, Skill India, Bankruptcy Code, labour reforms and Mudra scheme to promote Ease of Doing Business to create employment opportunities.

◎ WAY FORWARD

- **Further simplification of the GST** -The **multiple rates, exceptions, cesses and surcharges** need to be eliminated and replaced with one single GST rate that would **help manufacturing and consumer goods sector resulting in reduced prices** to deal with the depressed demand.
- **Real reforms are needed instead of sectoral freebies** - Complete **end to the inspector raj system and a simplification of regulations, starting with labour and land market rules** is needed to end informality in the Indian economy and make formal business operations cheaper.
- Devise new ways to both, **revive the agriculture and boost rural consumption**.
- There is a need to **infuse liquidity** in the system for capital formation
- Recognise **new exports opportunities** emerging because of America-China trade war.

**Practice Question**

- Discuss the current economic slowdown being faced by the country. What are its major causes & suggest some measures to be taken to revive it?

NEW WHITE REVOLUTION: THE NEW MILKY WAY TO GROWTH

CONTEXT

- Increasing supply management hurdles due to growth in Milk production has outstripped population growth in India.

◎ BACKGROUND

What is white revolution?

- White revolution or Operation Flood, known as the 'billion liter idea,' as conceived by Dr Verghese Kurien is the world's largest agricultural dairy development programme.
- It aimed at making the dairy farming India's largest self-sustaining industry and the largest rural employment provider.
- Launched in 1970, Operation Flood gave dairy farmers autonomy over the milk production in the area. Over 700 towns and cities in India were linked by the National Milk Grid, bridging the gap between milk producers and consumer.
- This model was replicated nationwide with rigorous efforts by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) to give a boost to the co-operative sector in milk production.
- The Anand pattern experiment at Amul, a cooperative dairy, was the pioneer behind the success of the program.

Achievements of white revolution:

- The white revolution ended India's dependence on imported milk solids. India not only met its local dairy needs but also started exporting milk powder to many foreign nations.
- Genetic improvement of milking animals also increased due to cross breeding. As the dairy industry modernized and expanded, around 10 million farmers started earning their income from dairy farming.

Though the white revolution achieved most of the targets but due to changing consumption pattern and lifestyles of people there is need of new way to deal with the issues which could be fulfilled by the advent of new white revolution.

Why there is a need of New White Revolution?

- Surplus production in India:** From a chronic milk deficit country in 1950-51, with a production of 19 Million Ton per year (MMT), the production has increased to 176 MMT in 2017, and per capita availability of Milk has reached 375 grams per day. As Indian milk production has continued to grow rapidly, growth in Milk production has outstripped population growth.

- Negligence of development of recognized Indian breeds:** In White Revolution, the focus was on introduction of exotic cattle breeds like HF and jersey and producing their cross bred. Therefore the developments of recognized Indian breeds were largely neglected.

- Adulteration of milk and rising demand for organic milk:**

- About 68 per cent of the milk produced in India is found to have adulterants like detergent, starch, urea and white paint.
- Consumers are becoming more health conscious day by day which is fuelling growth for organic and natural milk products instead of milk from animals that are injected with growth hormones for more milk production and are full of antibiotics.

Therefore there is a need to have a re-look at the whole policy for Dairy sector and to take steps so that the interests of the Indian farmers and consumers are protected.

What is new in New white revolution?

As white revolution mainly focused on production aspect of milk, new white revolution focuses more on other ways and aspects which could increase farmer's income as well as the development of the related sectors:

- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):**
 - AI tagging of animals helps to keep track of health related issues of particular animal.
 - Tagged cows can be used as bank loan liabilities or used for insurance purposes.
- Generating income through quality cattle manure by changing traditional methods:** Unlike the dung collected from traditional sheds, in which the animals are kept tied, the manure from free-stall barns — a gated open area, where the cows can freely move around to eat, drink and rest — comes out as a fine manure. This quality manure can have good market value which would boost farmer's income.
- More focus on organic dairy products:**
 - To produce organic dairy products, new white revolution focuses on the following aspects:
 - Managing crop and pasture land without the use of synthetic fertilizers, genetically engineered (modified) organisms (GMOs), fungicides, herbicides or insecticides.

- Feeding 100% organic rations to cows and buffaloes.
- Avoiding the use of antibiotics or synthetic hormones.

But to achieve the new white revolution there are certain challenges that need to be addressed.

Major Challenges:

- **Demand management:**
 - ▶ Although, the average per capita milk consumption in the country at 376 gms is more than the world's average of 313 gms, it is much below the OECD levels.
 - ▶ Even within the country consumption is not homogeneous and the poor have lower availability of milk and milk products as compared to the middle class and the rich.
- **Hurdles in maintenance of cold chain** and quality levels by distributors.
- **Uneven spread of cooperative industry** in the northern and eastern parts of the country the cooperation movement in milk production has still not taken off.
- **The challenge of increasing productivity of Indian breed of bovines** rapidly still remains a major bottleneck. The average productivity of Indian cattle per year is 1719 kg per year while in Denmark its 9386, USA 10360, and Israel above 13000 kg.
- **The challenge of increasing the Artificial Insemination (AI) coverage** from a very low level of 30% to some 75% within 5 years.

Measures need to be taken:

- **Increasing thrust on organic dairy industry:** Currently, the organic dairy industry accounts for less than 1 per cent of the total dairy market in India. So more steps need to be taken for development of organic dairy industry.
- **Boost the productivity of the non-descript and indigenous cows** by focusing on programmes like comprehensive programme on AI covering 116 Aspirational districts covering their villages through semen of high yielding indigenous breeds (HYIB). This will help double their milk production in the next 2-3 years.

Government initiatives in the direction of New White Revolution:

- **Rashtriya Gokul Mission:** It aims to conserve and develop indigenous breeds in a scientific manner under National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development.
- **Animal Husbandry infrastructure development fund:** It will enable the small and poor farmers and entrepreneurs, especially women, self help groups, weaker sections to avail latest infrastructure facilities and to get better remuneration for their produce.
- **Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN):** It will manage and convert cattle dung and solid waste in farms to compost, bio-gas and bio-CNG.

- **For health of breeds:** The 12 digit UID along with the health card for bovine animals would help ensure their traceability and health concerns.
- **Providing processing infrastructure:** As there is increasing demand for value added products like Cheese and yogurt there is need to provide robust processing infrastructure.
- **Increasing production scale:** Indian dairies should go in for industrial-scale production of traditional milk products for selling in both domestic and export markets.
- **A constructive push for strengthening of cooperative structure** in deficient areas would not only increase the reach of the organized sector in the country but also increase the demand.
- **Strict enforcement of FSSAI act** by the enforcing agencies like States to achieve Safe Milk and Milk exports targets.
- **Explore frontiers of technology** like development of genomic chip through institutions like NDDDB and National Bovine Genomic Centre.
- **Supplement the nutritional levels of the poor** who constitute one-third of the population by providing supplementary nutrition through government schemes like Mid-Day Meal or Anganwadi Centers.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, the White Revolution has played an important role in improving the living standards of the people in India. There is a need to add quality through new white revolution which can help achieve the true motto of New India.



Practice Question

- India is now a surplus country in milk production. Does India need a new white revolution? Examining the achievements and drawbacks of white revolution, discuss the future of new white revolution.

New White Revolution



CONTEXT

Increasing supply management hurdles due to growth in Milk production has outstripped population growth in India

White Revolution (Operation Flood) is the world's largest agricultural dairy development programme

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Launched in 1970, it not only **made India self sufficient** in milk production but on the way also developed into **largest rural employment provider**

around 10 million farmers started earning their income from dairy farming

However, need for a new White Revolution is felt for several reasons

there is a **surplus** of milk production

there is heavy **adulteration** in most of the milk available to consumers

developments of recognized **Indian breeds** have been largely neglected so far

This has led to a rise in consumer **demand for organic and natural milk** products instead of milk from animals that are injected with growth hormones for more milk production and are full of antibiotics

The 'new' in the new white revolution

It would focus more on other ways and aspects which could increase farmer's income as well as the development of the related sectors

Use of Artificial Intelligence

AI tagging of animals to keep track of health related issues

Tagged cows can be used as bank loan liabilities or used for insurance purposes

Generating income through quality cattle manure by changing traditional methods

Dung from a 'gated open area, where the cows can freely move around' comes out as a fine manure

This quality manure can have good market value which would boost farmer's income

More focus on organic dairy products

Feeding 100% organic rations to cattle

minimal or no use of synthetic fertilizers, GMOs, antibiotics, etc

A constructive push for **strengthening of cooperative structure** in deficient areas

Indian dairies should go in for **industrial-scale production** of traditional milk products for selling in both domestic and export markets

scaling up

Boost the **productivity of the indigenous cows** by focusing on programmes like comprehensive programme on AI covering 116 Aspirational districts

Steps that need to be taken

better infrastructure

Increasing the **Artificial Insemination (AI) coverage** from a very low level of 30% to some 75% within 5 years

Addressing **hurdles in maintenance of cold chain** and quality levels by distributors

As there is increasing demand for value added products like Cheese and yogurt, there is need to provide robust **processing infrastructure**

Rashtriya Gokul Mission aims to conserve and develop indigenous breeds in a scientific manner

Some Govt initiatives that can help usher in the new white revolution

Animal Husbandry infrastructure development fund will enable the farmers and to avail latest infrastructure facilities

Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN) will manage and convert cattle dung and solid waste in farms to compost, bio-gas and bio-CNG

ZERO BUDGET NATURAL FARMING (ZBNF)

CONTEXT

- PM at Conference of Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification mentioned that India is focusing on ZBNF.

◎ ABOUT:

- Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices
- ZBNF movement **was first started in Karnataka and promoted by Maharashtrian agriculturist and Padma Shri recipient Subhash Palekar**, who developed it in the mid-1990s as **an alternative to the Green Revolution's methods driven by chemical fertilizers and pesticides and intensive irrigation**. Later it spread to other states.
- The rising cost of the **external inputs was a leading cause of indebtedness and suicide** among farmers, while the **impact of chemicals on the environment and on long-term fertility was devastating**.
- According to **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data, almost 70% of agricultural households spend more than they earn and more than half of all farmers are in debt**.
- To double farmers income by 2022, natural farming methods such as the ZBNF which reduce farmers' dependence on loans to purchase inputs is promising.
- Four pillars of ZBNF:**
 - **Jivamrita/jeevamrutha** is a fermented microbial culture. It provides nutrients, but most importantly, acts as a catalytic agent that promotes the activity of microorganisms in the soil, as well as increases earthworm activity.
 - **Bijamrita/beejamrutha** is a treatment used for seeds, seedlings or any planting material. Bijamrita is effective in protecting young roots from fungus as well as from soil-borne and seedborne diseases that commonly affect plants after the monsoon period.
 - **Acchadana (Mulching):** This protects topsoil during cultivation and does not destroy it by tilling. It promotes aeration and water retention in the soil.
 - **Whapasa (moisture):** Palekar challenges the idea that plant roots need a lot of water, thus countering the over reliance on irrigation in

green revolution farming. According to him, what roots need is water vapor.

- The ZBNF method also **promotes soil aeration, minimal watering, intercropping, bunds and topsoil mulching and discourages intensive irrigation and deep ploughing**.

Concerns about Natural Farming

- Unproven Technology:** National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), India's premier academic body of agricultural scientists maintained that Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), as an "unproven" technology bringing no incremental value gain to either farmers or consumers.
- Marketing:** A particular challenge is marketing. Many farmers sell their natural produce as if were chemically grown, to private traders or at government wholesale yards, with no price differential. Other farmers rely on their own local marketing networks, such as to some organic shops and individual customers.

Difference between Natural farming and Organic Farming

- Cost:** Organic farming is more expensive than natural farming because it requires using large amounts of organic fertilizers & manure.
- Effort:** Organic farming requires activities such as mixing of manures or compost, plowing, and tilting whereas there is no plowing or tilting or fertilizers in natural farming. In natural farming, decomposition of organic matter by microbes & earthworms is encouraged right on the soil surface itself, which slowly releases nutrients into the soil.
- Environmental impact:** Organic farming has an effect on the surrounding environment while natural farming does not & it conforms with local biodiversity.

◎ CONCLUSION

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is studying the ZBNF methods and evaluating their impact on productivity, economics and soil health.

KRISHNA WATER DISPUTE

CONTEXT

- Maharashtra, Karnataka to jointly oppose A.P. plea on water-sharing formula.

◎ ABOUT:

- A dispute over the sharing of Krishna waters has been ongoing for many decades, beginning with the erstwhile Hyderabad and Mysore states, and later continuing between successors Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- In 1969, the **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)** was set up **under the Inter-State River Water Dispute Act, 1956**, and presented its report in 1973.
- The Tribunal divided the 2060 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of Krishna water at 75 per cent dependability into three parts: 560 TMC for Maharashtra, 700 TMC for Karnataka and 800 TMC for Andhra Pradesh. (facts not important)
- The **second KWDT was instituted in 2004**.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Inter-State River Water Dispute:

Article 262 of the Constitution:

- Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-State river or river valley.
- Parliament may, **by law provide that** neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint as mentioned above.
- **Entry 56 of Union List:** The regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys to the extent declared by Parliament to be expedient in the public interest.

About Krishna River:

- The river rises in western **Maharashtra** state in the Western Ghats range near the town of **Mahabaleshwar**, not far from the coast of the Arabian Sea.
- The river ultimately **pours into the Bay of Bengal** in Andhra Pradesh.

- The most important tributary of the river is the **Tungabhadra River**, which is the result of the union between two rivers - the **Tunga River and Bhadra River**. Both these rivers have their sources in the Western Ghat Mountain Ranges.
- Rivers such as Koyna, Venna, Panchganga, Vasna, Ghataprabha, Dudhganga, Tungabhadra, and Malaprabha meet Krishna from the **right riverbanks**. At the same time, the Musi River, Yerala River, Bhima, and Maneru Rivers meet the river from the **river banks on the left**.

Causes of River Disputes:

- States have been fighting against each other for their **'rightful' share of water** since the first reorganisation of States after Independence.
- Harnessing river water being a State subject, the riparian States are expected to solve issues among themselves. But the states are **reluctant to share water** with any other states.
- Many **development projects** have become a cause of dispute between states like the Polavaram project became the bone of contention between the Telugu-speaking States.
- Excessive **release or blockage of water** sometimes created a situation of flood/drought in other state. For ex.-Odisha has repeatedly claimed that Chhattisgarh either blocks or excessively releases water from its Kalma barrage without prior intimation.

Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019

- The amendments in the Bill will speed up the adjudication of water disputes referred to it.
- A key feature of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Amendment Bill, 2019 is the constitution of a single tribunal with different benches, and the setting up of strict timelines for adjudication.
- Under the proposed law, a retired Supreme Court judge will head the tribunal.

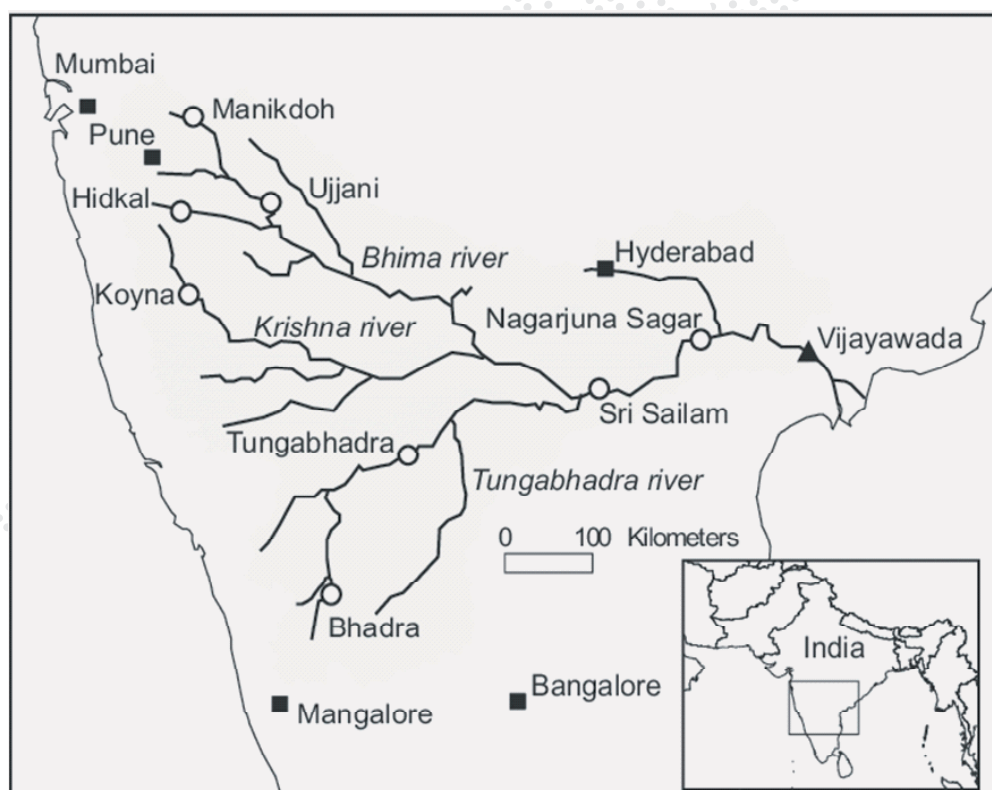
- The tribunal will be mandated to deliver final award in two years and it is proposed that whenever it gives an order, the verdict gets notified automatically.

◎ WAY FORWARD:

- Setting up a **National Water Commission** by subsuming Central Water Commission and Central Ground Board as recommended by Mihir Shah panel.
- **Inter-State River Water disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019** will help in faster adjudication of water disputes between the states.
- The **National Water Policy** must be followed for rational use of water and conservation of water sources must be followed by the states.
- Water disputes must be depoliticised and must not be made an emotional issue linked with regional pride.

Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956

- When any request under the said Act is received from any State Government in respect of any water dispute on the inter-State rivers and the Central Government is of the opinion that the water dispute cannot be settled by negotiations, the **Central Government constitutes a Water Disputes Tribunal for the adjudication of the water dispute.**
- Currently, 5 water disputes Tribunals are active.
- The Tribunal shall consist of a Chairman and two other members nominated in this behalf by the Chief Justice of India from among persons who at the time of such nomination are Judges of the Supreme Court or of a High Court.
- The Tribunal shall have the same **powers as are vested in a civil court** under the Code of Civil Procedure.
- The decision **shall be final and binding on the parties** to the dispute and shall be given effect to by them.



URBAN FLOOD MANAGEMENT TO TACKLE FREQUENT FLOODS

CONTEXT

- Mumbai once again struggled to stay afloat after the first heavy spell of rain this year, bringing back memories of the July 2005 flood. Each massive rainfall event is making it evident that the city is putting on a brave front and projecting resilience, but the failure of the Maharashtra government to upgrade its tattered infrastructure is taking a heavy toll and weighing down on the financial capital.

◎ BACKGROUND:

- Following flooding in Mumbai last month and the severe water crisis that the city of Chennai is still facing, the Kerala floods are yet another reminder of the vulnerabilities faced by coastal cities in India.
- India has a long coastline of 7,500 km and an estimated 14% of India's total population lives alongside it that traverses nine states, 77 towns and cities including some of the fastest-growing such as Mumbai, Chennai and Kochi making them more prone to flood due to adjacent sea and erratic monsoonal behavior.
- Aside from the present danger posed by extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall and cyclonic storms, more slow-onset impacts brought about by climate change also threaten the coastline. **A 2016 UN report estimated that 40 million people in India will be at risk from sea-level rise by 2050.**

Urban Flood:

- Flood is defined as "an overflow of a large body of water over areas not usually inundated". Thus, flooding in urban areas is caused by intense and/or prolonged rainfall, which overwhelms the capacity of the drainage system.
- The **coastal urban flooding** is a complex phenomenon which may occur in various forms such as: urban flooding due to **high intensity rainfall**; due to **inadequate drainage** and flooding caused by **overtopping in the channels or rivers**; flooding due to **high tides**, etc.
- For effective coastal urban flood management and mitigation plans, the possible flooding scenario is to be simulated for extreme rainfall events, or various return periods of rainfall and other design scenarios.

Major threats that Urban Floods poses:

- **Economic:** Urban areas are also **centers of economic activities** with vital infrastructure which needs to be protected 24x7. In most of the cities, damage to vital infrastructure has a bearing not only for the state and the country but it could even

have global implications. Therefore, management of urban flooding has to be accorded top priority.

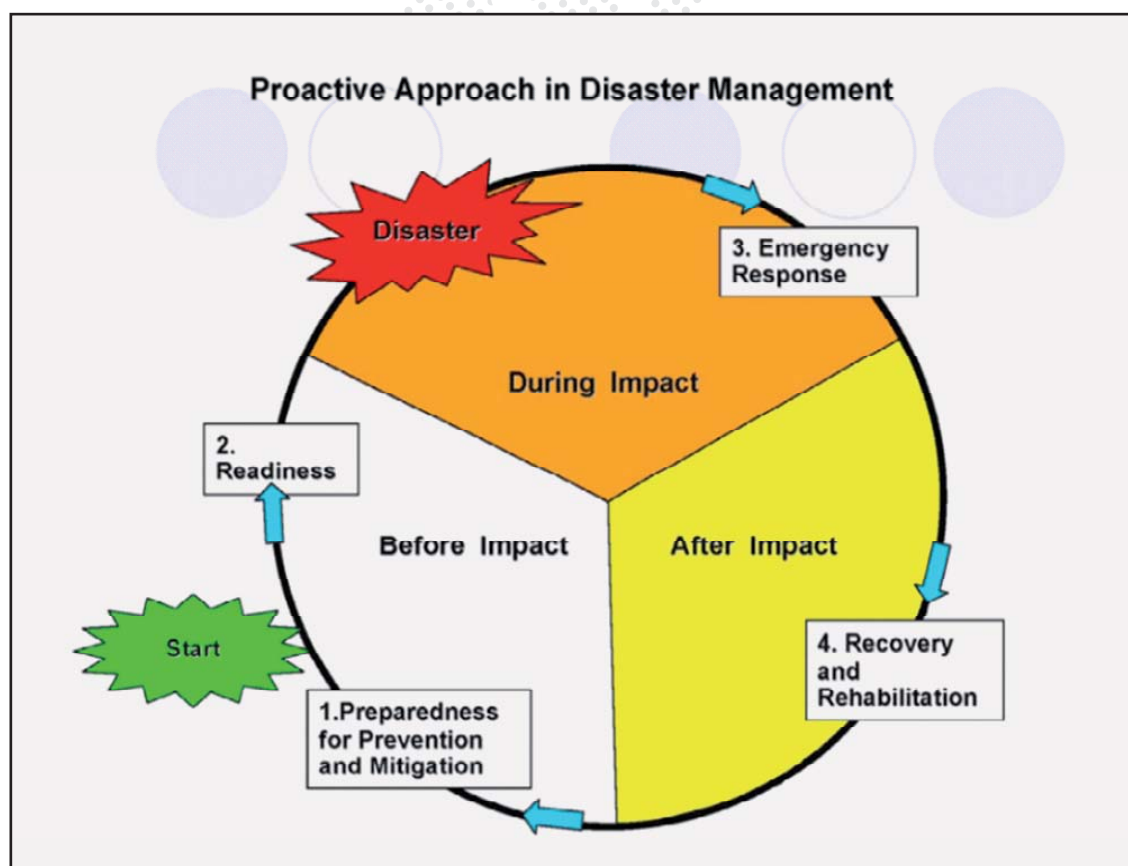
- **Urban Planning:** Increasing trend of urban flooding is a universal phenomenon and poses a great challenge to urban planners the world over. Problems associated with urban floods range from relatively localized incidents to major incidents, resulting in cities being inundated from hours to several days.

Reasons for Urban Flooding:

- Urban flooding is caused by three main factors – meteorological, hydrological and human factors.
 - ▶ **Meteorological factors** include heavy rainfall, cyclonic storms and thunderstorms.
 - ▶ **Hydrological factors** include presence or absence of overbank flow channel networks and occurrence of high tides impeding the drainage in coastal cities.
 - ▶ **Human factors** include land use changes, surface sealing due to urbanization (which increases run-off), occupation of flood plains and obstruction of flood flows, urban heat island effect (which has increased the rainfall in and around urban areas), etc.
- **Urbanisation:** Rapid urbanization combined with a **lack of efficient waste disposal systems** have left several water bodies in the cities in poor condition. **Blocked waterways and reduced width and depth** of canals, while the speed and scale of construction reduces the permeability of the ground.
- **Improper Drainage:** In Indian cities and towns, large habitations are coming up in low-lying areas, often **encroaching over drainage channels**. Encroachment in the immediate upper catchments of hilly urban area has also caused serious flooding in the flood plains of cities surrounded by hills.
- **Population Growth:** Most of our cities have now reached a **saturation point in terms of population growth** and accommodation, and the developmental activities have now shifted to low-lying areas and areas next to the riverbanks. So, whenever a city experiences a large amount of rainfall within a short time, there are chances it gets flooded.

Meteorological Factors	Hydrological Factors	Human Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainfall • Cyclonic storms • Small-scale storms • Temperature • Snowfall and snowmelt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil moisture level • Groundwater level prior to storm • Natural surface infiltration rate • Presence of impervious cover • Channel cross-sectional shape and roughness • Presence absence of over bank flow, channel network • Synchronization of runoffs various parts of watershed • High tide impeding drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use changes (e.g. surface sealing due to urbanization, deforestation) increase runoff and sedimentation • Occupation of the flood plain and thereby obstructing flows • Inefficiency of non-maintenance of infrastructure • Too efficient drainage of upstream areas increase flood peaks • Climate change effects, magnitude and frequency of precipitation and floods • Urban micro-climate may enforce precipitation events • Sudden release of water from dams located upstream of cities/towns • Failure to release water from dams resulting in backwater effect* • Indiscriminate disposal of solid waste

Source: Adapted from Urban Flood Risk Management: A Tool for Integrated Flood Management AFPM document, GWP and WMO, 2008



Measures to prevent Urban Flooding:

- **Early Warning System and Communication:** Dissemination of flood warnings must be carried out, using a wide range of latest technologies. This would help in giving real time data where traditional systems fail.
- **Design and Management of Urban Drainage System:** Proper management of drainage system is necessary to ensure that the water does not get stored in one place. Solid waste increases hydraulic roughness, causes blockage and generally reduces flow capacity. These **drains need to be cleaned on a regular basis** to permit free flow of water.
- **Rainwater Harvesting:** Due to urbanisation, groundwater recharge has decreased and the peak runoff from rainfall and consequent flooding has increased. It will serve the twin purposes of lowering the peak runoff and raising the ground water table. **Many municipal corporations in India have already made rainwater harvesting compulsory.**
- **Conservation of Water Bodies:** Urban water bodies like lakes, tanks and ponds also play a very important role in the management of urban flooding by reducing the stormwater run-off by capturing it.

Yokohama Strategy

- The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action adopted in 1994 provides landmark guidance on reducing disaster risk and the impacts of disasters.
- The review of progress made in implementing the Yokohama Strategy identifies major challenges for the coming years in ensuring more systematic action to address disaster risks in the context of sustainable development and in building resilience through enhanced national and local capabilities to manage and reduce risk.

Issues in Urban Flood Disaster Risk Management:

- **Improper Risk Assessment:** Risk assessment has not been done properly by the concerned departments.

- **Solution-** This can be achieved by improving institutional capacities and operational abilities based on local scale vulnerability analysis and risk assessment.
- **Improper designing of drainages:** Storm water drainage systems in the past were designed for rainfall intensity of 12 – 20 mm. These capacities have been getting very easily overwhelmed whenever rainfall of higher intensity has been experienced.
- **Encroachments:** Encroachments have led to the decrease in natural capacities of natural drains. This have led to the disturbance in the natural flow of the rivers, lakes, etc.
- **No Community Participation:** Flood control measures planned without participation of affected community are unsustainable as they do not meet the needs of relevant stakeholders.

◎ WAY FORWARD:

- **Mainstreaming Disaster Management into Development:** All existing and new developmental programmes and projects shall **incorporate disaster resilient specifications in design and construction.**
- **Role of Nodal Ministry:** The nodal ministry should evolve its disaster management plans for **holistic and coordinated management of urban flood emergency.** The Central Government needs to make arrangements for **implementing the National Plan on an inter-ministerial or inter-institutional basis.**
- **Implementing the Guidelines:** Implementing the Guidelines at the national level should begin with preparing the National Plan. NEC or the concerned ministries/ departments should identify appropriate agencies, institutions and specialists with expertise in relevant fields to include them in disaster management planning.
- **Financial Arrangements for Implementation:** According to WMO, US \$1 invested in disaster mitigation can prevent about US \$7-worth of disaster related economic losses. Thus, financial strategies should be worked out in such a way that necessary funds are in place and their flow for implementing the UFD plan is organised on a priority basis.

**Practice Question**

- Analyse the various causes of urban floods in India keeping in mind the recent events occurring & also discuss the measures that can be taken to prevent them?

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP)

CONTEXT

- Trade ministers from the 16-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) grouping to address contentious issues and clinch a deal this year, underscoring the fact that continuing uncertainties in trade and investment environment had dampened growth outlook.

◎ ABOUT:

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement is being negotiated among 10 ASEAN members and their six trade partners -- Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea and New Zealand
- This would create a free trade pact covering a third of the world's economy.
- This means a zero-customs duty zone in a geography that contributes 34% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 40% of world trade. The region is also home to almost half of the world's population.

Benefits of RCEP Agreement for India

- RCEP is expected to provide market access for India's goods and services exports and encourage greater investments and technology into India.
- It would also facilitate India's MSMEs to effectively integrate into the regional value and supply chains.
- India is not a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) which is a grouping of twenty-one countries in the Asia Pacific region with an aim to deepen and strengthen economic and technological cooperation amongst APEC member countries.
- India enjoys a comparative advantage in areas such as information and communication technology, IT-enabled services, professional services, healthcare, and education services.
- In addition to facilitating foreign direct investment, the RCEP will create opportunities for Indian companies to access new markets. This is because the structure of manufacturing in many of these countries is becoming more and more sophisticated, resulting in a "servicification" of manufacturing.
- RCEP would help India streamline the rules and regulations of doing trade, which will reduce trade costs. It will also help achieve its goal of greater

economic integration with countries East and South East of India through better access to a vast regional market ranging from Japan to Australia. The RCEP can be a stepping stone to India's "Act East Policy."

Why India is refraining from joining RCEP

- India is concerned over the unfair market access to Indian products and the "protectionist policies" of China that have created a significant trade deficit between the two nations.
- Enormous trade deficit with China has climbed to \$57.86 billion.
- Various sectors, including dairy, metals, electronics, chemicals, and textiles, have urged the government to not agree on duty cut in these segments as it won't be beneficial for Indian domestic producers.
- Several challenges in both goods and services sectors still persist.
- India wants commitment on free movement of professionals to RCEP countries, including China, as domestic information technology firms currently face challenges in entering the neighboring market.
- Biggest challenge in RCEP negotiations is to seek markets for global majors in such a way that it doesn't promote shifting the manufacturing base.
- Present structure of RCEP puts agriculture, horticulture, dairy and food processing in a vulnerable situation, especially from imports from New Zealand and Australia.
- RCEP will open backdoor negotiations and may lead to the country losing out on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreements. This may result in giving way to global majors in agriculture seed and pharmaceutical manufacturing.

15TH FINANCE COMMISSION

CONTEXT

- The ongoing 15th Finance commission consultations with states.

◎ ABOUT:

- Constituted in November 2017
- Composition: Nand Kishore Singh (Chairman), Ajay Narayan Jha, Ashok Lahiri, Anoop Singh and Ramesh Chand (part-time member). Shaktikanta Das resigned as a member of the commission after appointed as RBI Governor.
- After the passage of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003, some states still incur revenue deficits, so, the commission would have to either recommend the disbandment of revenue deficit grants, or, would have to recommend ways for further fiscal consolidation
- Commission's job was made harder because of the roll-out of goods and service tax (GST) regime in India, as, it had taken certain powers concerning taxation away from the union and the states, and, had given them to the newly formed GST Council.
- The commission was asked by some MPs to recommend a plan on compensating states which suffered revenue losses after the roll-out of GST. Some parliamentarians also asked the commission to reassess the criteria of classifying a state as 'backwards'. Some MPS also want Commission to create a financial buffer against oil prices
- Terms of Reference: To give recommendations
 - For devolution of taxes and other fiscal matters for five fiscal years, commencing 1 April 2020
 - On strengthen cooperative federalism, improve the quality of public spending and help protect fiscal stability.
 - To examine whether revenue deficit grants be provided at all
 - To consider the **impact of fiscal situation of the Union government of substantially enhanced devolution by the 14th Finance Commission**, coupled with continuing imperative of the national development programme including New India 2022.
 - The **demand on the resources of the State Governments**, particularly on account of financing socio-economic development and critical infrastructure, assets maintenance expenditure, balanced regional development and impact of the debt and liabilities of their public utilities;
- The **demand on the resources of the Central Government particularly on account of defence, internal security, infrastructure, railways, climate change, commitments towards administration of UTs without legislature, and other committed expenditure and liabilities;**
- The **impact of the GST, including payment of compensation for possible loss of revenues for 5 years**, and abolition of a number of cesses, earmarking thereof for compensation and other structural reforms programme, on the finances of Centre and States
- To consider proposing measurable performance-based incentives for States, at the appropriate level of government, in following areas:
 - **Efforts made by the States in expansion and deepening of tax net under GST;**
 - **Efforts and Progress made in moving towards replacement rate of population growth;**
 - **Achievements in implementation of flagship schemes of Government of India, disaster resilient infrastructure, sustainable development goals, and quality of expenditure;**
 - **Progress made in increasing capital expenditure**, eliminating losses of power sector, and improving the quality of such expenditure in generating future income streams;
 - **Progress made in increasing tax/non-tax revenues, promoting savings by adoption of Direct Benefit Transfers and Public Finance Management System**, promoting digital economy and removing layers between the government and the beneficiaries;
 - Progress made in **promoting ease of doing business by effecting related policy and regulatory changes** and promoting labour intensive growth;
 - Provision of **grants in aid to local bodies for basic services**, including quality human resources, and implementation of performance grant system in improving delivery of services;

- **Control or lack of it in incurring expenditure on populist measures;** and
 - Progress made in **sanitation, solid waste management and bringing in behavioural change** to end open defecation.
- ▶ The Commission shall **use the population data of 2011** while making its recommendations.
 - ▶ The Commission may review the present arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives, with reference to the funds constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (53 of 2005), and make appropriate recommendations thereon.
 - ▶ The Commission shall indicate the basis on which it has arrived at its findings and make available the State wise estimates of receipts and expenditure.

Background

- **Article 280** provides for a Finance Commission as a quasi-judicial body. It is constituted by the **President every fifth year or even earlier**. It is required to make **recommendations to the President** on the following matters:

- ▶ The **distribution of the net proceeds of taxes to be shared between the Centre and the states**, and the allocation between the states, the respective shares of such proceeds. The principles which should govern the grants-in-aid to the states by the Centre (i.e., out of the Consolidated Fund of India).
- ▶ The **measures needed to augment the consolidated fund of a state to supplement the resources of the panchayats and the municipalities in the state on the basis of the recommendations made by the State Finance Commission**.
- ▶ Any other matter referred to it by the President in the interests of sound finance.
- ▶ Till 1960, the Commission also suggested the amounts paid to the States of Assam, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal in lieu of assignment of any share of the net proceeds in each year of export duty on jute and jute products.
- ▶ The Constitution **envisages the Finance Commission as the balancing wheel of fiscal federalism in India**.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES RECOMMENDS TRIBAL AREA STATUS FOR LADAKH

CONTEXT

- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) recommended that, Ladakh should be declared as a tribal area under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution..

◎ BACKGROUND:

- On August 5, the Centre revoked Article 370 which provided special status to Jammu and Kashmir.
- The state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two Union territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, which will come into existence on October 31.

Why National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) recommended tribal area status for Ladakh?

- The newly created Union Territory of Ladakh is predominantly a tribal region in the country.
- The Scheduled Tribe population represent 66.8 percent in Leh, 73.35 percent in Nubra, 97.05 percent in Khalsti, 83.49 per cent in Kargil, 89.96 per cent in Sanku and 99.16 per cent in Zaskar areas of the Ladakh region.
- The official figures, however, does not include a number of communities including Sunni Muslims in the region, who are claiming for Scheduled Tribe status. Taking into account this, the total tribal population in Ladakh region is more than 97 percent.
- The Commission noted that prior to creation of Union Territory of Ladakh, people in Ladakh region had certain agrarian rights including right on land which restricted people from other parts of the country to purchase or acquire land in Ladakh.
- Similarly, the Ladakh region has several distinct cultural heritages by communities which need to be preserved and promoted.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST):

- It was established by amending Article 338 and inserting a new Article 338A in the Constitution through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003.
- By this amendment, the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was replaced by two separate Commissions namely- (i) the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), and (ii) the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) w.e.f. 19 February, 2004.

- The term of office of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and each member is three years from the date of assumption of charge.
- The Chairperson has been given the rank of Union Cabinet Minister, and the Vice-Chairperson that of a Minister of State and other Members have the ranks of a Secretary to the Government of India.

Which are the inhabiting scheduled tribes in the region?

- The region is inhabited by following Scheduled Tribes:
 - Balti
 - Beda
 - Bot, Boto
 - Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard, Shin
 - Changpa
 - Garra
 - Mon
 - Purigpa.

What are the benefits of declaring a region as a tribal area?

- Declaring an area as a tribal area will help in:
 - Democratic devolution of powers.
 - Preserve and promote distinct culture of the region.
 - Protect agrarian rights including rights on land.
 - Enhance transfer of funds for speedy development of the region.

What is in the sixth schedule of the constitution?

- The Sixth Schedule provides for the administration of tribal areas after setting up autonomous district and regional councils.
- Sixth Schedule empowers Parliament to amend any provisions of the schedule

- Sixth schedule contains special provisions for the administration of tribal areas in the four north-eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Tribal Areas included in schedule six at a Glance (2016)			
	States		Tribal Areas
1	Assam	1. 2. 3.	The North Cachar Hills District. The Karbi Anglong District. The Bodoland Territorial Areas District.
2.	Meghalaya	1. 2. 3.	Khasi Hills District. Jaintia Hills District. The Garo Hills District.

3.	Tripura		Tripura Tribal Areas District
4.	Mizoram	1. 2. 3.	The Chakma District. The Mara District. The Lai District.

Articles Related to Scheduled and Tribal Areas:

- **Article 244:** Administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas.
- **Article 244A:** Formation of an autonomous state comprising certain tribal areas in Assam and creation of local legislature or Council of Ministers or both therefore.
- **Article 339:** Control of the Union over the administration of Scheduled Areas and the welfare of Scheduled Tribes.

VECTOR BORNE DISEASES

CONTEXT

- Widespread of various vector borne diseases throughout India..

◎ ABOUT:

Meaning of vectors:

- Vectors are living organisms that can transmit infectious diseases between humans or from animals to humans.
- Many of these vectors are bloodsucking insects, which ingest disease-producing microorganisms during a blood meal from an infected host (human or animal) and later inject it into a new host during their subsequent blood meal.
- Mosquitoes are the best known disease vector.** Others include ticks, flies, sandflies, fleas, triatomine bugs and some freshwater aquatic snails.

Meaning of Vector-borne diseases:

- Vector-borne diseases are human illnesses **caused by parasites, viruses and bacteria** that are transmitted by vectors.
- The major vector-borne diseases, together, account for around **17% of all infectious diseases**. The burden of these diseases is **highest in tropical and subtropical areas** and they disproportionately affect the poorest populations.
- Since 2014, major outbreaks of dengue, malaria, chikungunya, yellow fever and Zika have afflicted populations, claimed lives and overwhelmed health systems in many countries.

Facts:

- Vector-borne diseases account for more than 17% of all infectious diseases, causing more than 700 000 deaths annually.
- Dengue fever, together with associated dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF), is the world's fastest growing vector borne disease.
- Malaria causes more than 400,000 deaths every year globally, most of them are children under 5 years of age.
- Other diseases such as Chagas disease, leishmaniasis and schistosomiasis affect hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

Factors responsible for the distribution of vector-borne diseases:

- These factors are determined by complex demographic, environmental and social factors.

- Global travel and trade, unplanned urbanization and environmental challenges** such as climate change can impact on pathogen transmission, making transmission season longer or more intense or causing diseases to emerge in countries where they were previously unknown.
- Changes in agricultural practices** due to variation in temperature and rainfall can affect the transmission of vector-borne diseases.
- The growth of urban slums**, lacking reliable piped water or adequate solid waste management, can render large populations in towns and cities at risk of viral diseases spread by mosquitoes.
- Together, such factors influence the reach of vector populations and the transmission patterns of disease-causing pathogens.

Main vectors and diseases they transmit:

Vector	Disease
Aedes mosquito	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chikungunya Dengue fever Lymphatic filariasis Rift Valley fever Yellow fever Zika
Anopheles mosquito	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malaria Lymphatic filariasis
Culex mosquito	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japanese encephalitis Lymphatic filariasis West Nile fever
Sandflies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leishmaniasis (Kala-Azar) Sandfly fever (phlebotomus fever)
Ticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever Lyme disease Relapsing fever (borreliosis) Tick-borne encephalitis Tularaemia
Triatomine bugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chagas disease (American trypanosomiasis)
Tsetse flies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeping sickness (African trypanosomiasis)

Fleas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plague (transmitted by fleas from rats to humans)• Rickettsiosis
Black flies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Onchocerciasis (river blindness)
Lice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typhus and louse-borne relapsing fever



PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN MAAN DHAN YOJANA (PM-KMY)

CONTEXT

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Why there is a need of such scheme?

- There is a felt need to create a social security net for the farmers as old age may result in loss of livelihood for many of them.
- Farming requires hard work in fields which becomes difficult at an advanced age.
- The problem is compounded in respect of small and marginal farmers as they have minimal or no savings to provide for old age.

Key features of the Scheme:

- The PM-KMY is a **Central Sector Scheme**, administered by **the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare**, Government of India in partnership with the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
- **The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) shall be the Pension Fund Manager** and responsible for Pension pay out.
- The PradhanMantriKisanMaan-DhanYojana (PM-KMY) provides for an **assured monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- to all land holding Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs)**, whether male or female, on their attaining the age of 60 years.
- The amount of the **monthly contribution ranges between Rs.55 to Rs.200 per month** depending upon the age of entry of the farmers into the Scheme.
- The **Central Government will also make an equal contribution** of the same amount in the pension fund.
- The spouse is also eligible to get a separate pension of Rs.3000/- upon making separate contributions to the Fund.
- In case of death of the farmer before retirement date, the spouse may continue in the scheme by paying the remaining contributions till the remaining age of the deceased farmer.

- If the farmer dies after the retirement date, the spouse will receive 50% of the pension as Family Pension.
- After the death of both the farmer and the spouse, the accumulated corpus shall be credited back to the Pension Fund.

Eligibility:

- All Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) in all States and Union Territories of the country, **who are of the age of 18 years and above and upto the age of 40 years**, and who do not fall within the purview of the exclusion criteria as mentioned in the guidelines, are eligible to avail the benefits of this Scheme by joining it.
- Farmers falling within the purview of the exclusion criteria are not eligible for the benefit.

Exclusion criteria:

- SMFs covered under any other statutory social security schemes such as National Pension Scheme (NPS), Employees' State Insurance Corporation scheme, Employees' Fund Organization Scheme etc.
- Farmers who have opted for PradhanMantriShram Yogi MaanDhanYojana (PMSYM) administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- Farmers who have opted for PradhanMantriLaghuVyapariMaan-dhanYojana (PM-LVM) administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

The following categories of beneficiaries of higher economic status are not eligible for benefits under the scheme:

- All Institutional Land holders.
- Former and present holders of constitutional posts
- Professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants, and Architects registered with Professional bodies and carrying out profession by undertaking practice.

SECTION: B
(PRELIMS)

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GIG ECONOMY

◎ CONTEXT:

- The struggle for gig workers' rights took a big step forward this week when the California legislature passed a law classifying many such workers — including Uber and Lyft drivers — as “employees.”

◎ ABOUT

Gig Economy

- In a gig economy, temporary, flexible jobs are commonplace and companies tend toward hiring independent contractors and freelancers instead of full-time employees.
- A gig economy undermines the traditional economy of full-time workers who rarely change positions and instead focus on a lifetime career.
- The gig economy can benefit workers, businesses, and consumers by making work more adaptable to the needs of the moment and demand for flexible lifestyles.
- At the same time, the gig economy can have downsides due to the erosion of traditional economic relationships between workers, businesses, and clients.

MARKET INTERVENTION SCHEME FOR APPLES OF J&K

◎ CONTEXT:

- Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Satya Pal Malik launched market intervention scheme for apples of J&K.

◎ ABOUT:

- Kashmir's apple is battling to get exported outside the State this year due to shutdown and suspected militants campaigning against the fruit's export.
- In the absence of MSP like scheme for apples J&K Govt. plans to **procure 12 lakh metric tonnes worth of 8,000 crores** under market intervention scheme with the help of the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED). **It makes 60% of the estimated annual apple production.**
- It has been approved by the **Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Union Ministry of Agriculture** under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs, for the current apple harvesting season.
- In J&K, the scheme will be **implemented by the Directorate of Planning and Marketing, supported by the Directorate of Horticulture (Kashmir) and Jammu and Kashmir Horticultural Produce, Marketing and Processing Corporation Ltd.**
- Kashmir produced **20 lakh metric tonnes of apple in 2018, contributing 73% to the total apple production of the country.**
- The period of **procurement would be for six months, starting September, at a cost of Rs. 8,000 crore.**
- **Apples to be bought from the doorsteps of the orchardists. Direct payment will be made to their account.** Transportation will be the job of the procurer only
- The government has set up mandis for the scheme at Srinagar's Parimpora, Baramulla's Sopore, Shopian and Anantnag's Botengu.

Significance

- It would **help stabilize the price of apples** and help **maintain a uniform rate in the open market** across the country, after India raised tariffs on apple imports from the United States earlier this year.

- It will **provide the much needed support to the fruit growers in Jammu and Kashmir**. Earlier, government failed to provide the required number of trucks for transportation of the apples.
- **Ease and convenience** for the farmers as apples will be procured and transported from the doorsteps of the farmers.
- It will help in **building the necessary forwards and backward linkage** in the apple industry in Jammu and Kashmir. The building of cold storages will also receive the necessary attention in the region.

NAFED

- **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) was established in 1958.**
- **NAFED is registered under the Multi State Co-operative Societies Act.**
- NAFED was setup with the object to promote Co-operative marketing of agricultural produce to benefit the farmers.
- Agricultural farmers are the main members of NAFED, who have the authority to say in the form of members of the General Body in the working of NAFED.
- **Objectives:** The objectives of the NAFED shall be to organize, promote and develop marketing, processing and storage of agricultural, horticultural and forest produce, distribution of agricultural machinery, implements and other inputs, undertake inter-state, import and export trade, wholesale or retail as the case may be and to act and assist for technical advice in agricultural, production for the promotion and the working of its members, partners, associates and cooperative marketing, processing and supply societies in India.

Challenges

- This trade was always in private hands and the government is procuring and transporting it for the first time. NAFED has not procured and transported a single kilogram of Apple till now and a very short preparation time is a big challenge. It leaves NAFED with hardly much time to undertake registration of growers, collecting their Aadhaar and bank account details for making direct benefit transfer payment. Ideally, this process should have happened at the time of flowering.
- Threat of militants to prevent the fruit growers from selling their harvest to the government.

2 NEW GINGER SPECIES FOUND

◎ CONTEXT:

- Scientists from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have discovered two new species of Zingiber, commonly referred to as ginger, from Nagaland.

◎ ABOUT

- **Zingiber perenense** -The lip of the flower (modified corolla) is white in colour, with dense dark- purplish red blotches. Its pollen is a creamy-white and ovato-ellipsoidal, whereas the fruit is an oblong 4.5 cm-5.5 cm long capsule. It has been discovered from the **Peren** district of **Nagaland**. For Zingiber dimapurens
- **Zingiber dimapurens** - The lip of the flower is white with purplish-red streaks throughout, and the pollen is ellipsoidal. It was found in the **Dimapur** district of the **Nagaland**.

BASEL BAN AMENDMENT

◎ CONTEXT:

- Croatia became the 97th country to ratify the ban, which was adopted by the parties to the Basel Convention in 1995.

◎ ABOUT:

- Croatia became the 97th country to ratify the ban, which was adopted by the parties to the Basel Convention in 1995, to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects of hazardous wastes. With Croatia's ratification, a necessary $\frac{3}{4}$ of the parties to the Basel Convention have ratified the agreement and has become an international law after Croatia ratified it on September 6, 2019.

Basel Convention:

- The Basel Convention on the **Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal** was adopted on 22 March 1989 by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries in **Basel, Switzerland**, in response to a public outcry following the discovery, in the 1980s, in Africa and other parts of the developing world of deposits of toxic wastes imported from abroad.
- To implement and restrict the trade of hazardous waste between more developed countries and less developed countries an organization is formed which is known as **Basel Action Network (BAN)**

About Basel Action Network (BAN):

- Founded in 1997, the Basel Action Network is a charitable organization of the United States, based in Seattle.
- BAN is the world's only organization focused on confronting the global environmental justice and economic inefficiency of toxic trade and its devastating impacts.
- Today, BAN serves as the information clearing house on the subject of waste trade for journalists, academics, and the general public. Through its investigations, BAN uncovered the tragedy of hazardous electronic waste dumping in developing countries.

The provisions of the Convention center around the following principal aims:

- The reduction of hazardous waste generation and the promotion of environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, wherever the place of disposal.
- The restriction of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes except where it is perceived to be in accordance with the principles of environmentally sound management.
- A regulatory system applying to cases where transboundary movements are permissible.

Some definitions:

• Hazardous waste:

- A waste falls under the scope of the Convention if it is within the category of wastes listed in Annex I of the Convention and it exhibits one of the hazardous characteristics contained in Annex III.
- It must both be listed and possess a characteristic such as being explosive, flammable, toxic, or corrosive.
- It does not address the movement of radioactive waste.
- 14th Conference of the Parties (COP14) of the Basel Convention adopted a resolution which is **legally binding** which restricted plastic scrap exports by requiring countries to obtain prior informed consent before exporting contaminated or mixed plastic scrap.

- The other way that a waste may fall under the scope of the Convention is if it is defined as or considered to be a hazardous waste under the laws of either the exporting country, the importing country, or any of the countries of transit
- **Transboundary movement:**
 - It means any movement of hazardous wastes or other wastes from an area under the national jurisdiction of one State to or through an area under the national jurisdiction of another State or to or through an area not under the national jurisdiction of any State, provided at least two States are involved in the movement.

The Basel Convention BAN Amendment:

- The Ban Amendment was originally adopted as a decision of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties in March 1994.
- The "Ban Amendment" provides for the prohibition by Parties listed in Annex VII (members of OECD, EU, Liechtenstein) of all transboundary movements of hazardous wastes including electronic wastes and obsolete ships which are destined for final disposal operations from OECD to non-OECD States.
- According to amendment, it was agreed that such "Annex VII Parties" prohibit and phase out all transboundary movements of hazardous wastes destined for recovery or recycling operations from OECD to non-OECD States by 31 December 1997.
- At COP-3 in 1995, Parties adopted the same as a further amendment to the Convention known as the "Ban Amendment".
- The Ban Amendment had been stalled for all these years till now due to uncertainty over how to interpret the Convention.

Ratification status of other major countries:

- According to BAN the United States, the world's most wasteful country per-capita, has not ratified the Basel Convention, nor the Ban Amendment.
- Other developed countries like Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, likewise, have e-waste export problems and they too have so far refused to ratify the Ban Amendment.
- South Korea, Russia, India, Brazil, and Mexico are yet to ratify the ban.

BONN CHALLENGE

◎ CONTEXT:

- India to rejuvenate 50,000 hectares of degraded land.

◎ ABOUT

- The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the **world's deforested and degraded land** into restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.
- It was **launched in 2011 by the Government of Germany and IUCN**, and later endorsed and extended by the **New York Declaration** on Forests at the 2014 UN Climate Summit.
- Bonn Challenge is the forest landscape restoration (FLR) approach, which **aims to restore ecological integrity** at the same time as improving human well-being through multifunctional landscapes.
- The Bonn Challenge is not a new global commitment but rather a practical means of realizing many existing international commitments, including the **CBD Aichi Target 15, the UNFCCC REDD+ goal, and the Rio+20 land degradation neutrality goal**.

NATIONAL ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAMME

◎ CONTEXT:

- Prime Minister has launched National Animal Disease Control Programme and National Artificial Insemination Programme.

◎ ABOUT

- **National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP)** has been launched for eradicating the **foot and mouth disease and brucellosis** in livestock.

- It aims to **control** the livestock diseases by 2025 and **eradicate** these by 2030.
- It aims at **vaccinating** over 500 million livestock including cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats and pigs against the FMD.
- It also aims at **vaccinating 36 million female bovine calves** annually in its fight against the brucellosis disease.

Funding: It is a 100% **centrally funded** programme for a period from 2019 to 2024.

Need:

- **Farmer's Income:** Animal Husbandry and other allied activities have a greater role to play in increasing farmers' income.
- **Affects Productivity:** Animal diseases impact livestock production through direct costs and indirect costs. In case of **Brucellosis, the milk output reduces by 30 per cent during** the entire life cycle of animal and also causes infertility among the animals.
- **Trade:** Brucellosis and FMD disease is common among cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats and pigs and it **has a direct negative impact on trade of milk and other livestock products.**

- **Affects Humans:** The infections can also be transmitted to the farm workers and livestock owners.

Related Information:

- India has achieved **eradication** of Rinderpest (RP), Contagious Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia (CBPP), AHS and Dourine.

About Brucellosis Disease:

- Brucellosis is a disease caused by a group of bacteria from the genus **Brucella**.
- These bacteria can infect **both humans and animals**.
- Brucellosis is often spread when people eat contaminated food, which can include raw meat and unpasteurized milk, **it can also be spread through the air** or contact with an open wound.
- Brucellosis is **preventable**. **Vaccine is available** for animals also.

About Foot and Mouth Disease:

- Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious virus disease of animals. It is one of the most serious livestock diseases.
- It affects cloven-hoofed animals (those with divided hoofs), including cattle, buffalo, camels, sheep, goats, deer and pigs.
- Human infections have been reported but they are very rare and do not result in serious disease.
- It is found in many parts of the world, and has been reported in countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and South America.
- The disease spreads most commonly through the movement of infected animals. But it can also be spread on wool, hair, grass or straw; by the wind; or by mud or manure etc.
- Vaccines can protect against the disease but do not necessarily prevent animals from being infected.
- Human FMD and FMD are different and caused by different organisms.

National Artificial Insemination Programme:

- The Prime Minister also launched the National Artificial Insemination Programme in all the **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)**.
- It is launched across the country for **vaccination and disease management, Artificial Insemination and Productivity**.

Other Government Initiatives:**National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development:**

It has three components:

- **National Programme for Bovine Breeding:**
 - To arrange quality Artificial Insemination services at farmers' doorstep.
 - To bring all breedable females under organized breeding through Artificial Insemination or natural service using germplasm of high genetic merits.
- **National Programme for Dairy Development:**
 - To create and strengthen infrastructure for production of quality milk including cold chain infrastructure linking the farmer to the consumer.
 - To strengthen dairy cooperative societies/Producers Companies at village level.
- **Rashtriya Gokul Mission:**
 - To undertake breed improvement programme for indigenous cattle breeds so as to improve the genetic makeup and increase the stock.
 - To distribute disease free high genetic merit bulls of indigenous breeds for natural service.
 - To upgrade nondescript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi.

National Animal Disease Referral Expert System (NADRES):

- It is an interactive, dynamic, relational online **animal disease forewarning system**.
- It has been developed with overall aim to **improve the early warning and response capacity** to animal disease threats in the country.
- **National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Informatics (NIVEDI)** has developed the NADRES.
- It will use Livestock disease data, Livestock population data, Meteorological data and Remote sensing data to take appropriate control measures.

PashuSakhis - community led livestock extension service:

- It is a community based approach.
- Women will be empowered through technical training and hand holding support to take lead in generating demand for inputs and provide services to livestock farmers.

Why previous Livestock Extension services failed:

- The trained rural youth were responsible to **cater only to 8-15 villages** often focused on treatment, mostly on large livestock, rather than preventive practices and awareness building.
- The trained youth who were men most of the time, had a **social and psychological barrier** in reaching women, who are the caretakers of livestock.
- **High travel costs** resulted in neglect of close monitoring and administering first aid.

NILGIRI TAHR

◎ CONTEXT:

- The population of Nilgiri Tahr in the Mukurthi National Park has risen from 568 in 2018 to 612 this year.

◎ ABOUT

- This is the second consecutive year that an increase in the population of the animal had been recorded in the park
- The almost 8% increase in the population of the iconic animal in 2019 follows a similarly significant increase in its population in 2018.

Nilgiri tahr

- Nilgiri tahrs are stocky goats with short, coarse fur and a bristly mane.
- Males are larger than the females, and have a darker colour when mature. Both sexes have curved horns, which are larger in the males, reaching up to 40 cm for males and 30 cm for females.
- Adult males develop a light grey area or "saddle" on their backs and are hence called "saddlebacks"
- **IUCN status - Endangered**



Conservation Issues

- The Nilgiri tahr symbolizes the conflicts inherent in conservation of threatened fauna and their habitat.
- Their number totals around 2200-2500 individuals in the wild.
- Nilgiri tahrs exist only in small, isolated populations due to extreme habitat fragmentation and illegal hunting. They are, as a result, vulnerable to local extinction.
- The reasons for the decline of tahr populations have not been fully understood.
- The species has always been under severe stress on account of the construction of numerous hydroelectric projects, timber felling and monoculture plantation of eucalyptus and wattles.
- All these development activities, especially the plantation activities affect the heart of the tahr habitat, which are the grasslands – sholas.

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO) AND EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION

- ◎ **CONTEXT:**
- India skipped a meeting of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which was organised by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) at Xi'an in China.
- ◎ **ABOUT**
- The main reason for skipping the meet is due to **India's strong opposition to BRI**
 - Since the **BRI's launch in 2017**, India has remained firm on not signing it off at the SCO's annual summits in 2018 and 2019.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- It was founded in June 2001 by China, Russia, and the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- It aimed to cooperate against non-traditional security challenges, in particular fighting the so-called "three evils" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
- The fact that the SCO also **strives to strengthen mutual trust and good neighbourly relations between its member states**.

The Belt and Road Initiative

- The BRI is a mammoth **infrastructure project unveiled by China in 2017**, which plans to connect the three continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa.
- The '**Belt**' part refers to the **Silk Road Economic Belt**, consisting of three overland routes. First, a link between China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe. Second, a link through Central Asia and West Asia linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. And third, a connection from China to Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Indian Ocean.
- The '**Road**' part refers to the **21st century Maritime Silk Road**, creating maritime trade channels from China through the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the South Pacific.
- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, an important part of the BRI, passes through Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The Eurasian Economic Union

- The Eurasian Economic Union is an international organization for regional economic integration. It has international legal personality and is established by the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union.
- The EAEU provides for free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, pursues coordinated, harmonized and single policy in the sectors determined by the Treaty and international agreements within the Union.
- The Member-States of the Eurasian Economic Union are the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation.
- The Union is being created to comprehensively upgrade, raise the competitiveness of and cooperation between the national economies, and to promote stable development in order to raise the living standards of the nations of the Member-States.

MUKURTHI NATIONAL PARK

- It is located on the high altitudes of the Nilgiris, comprising rolling downs interspersed with temperate sholas in depressions.

- The landscape is extremely picturesque and a seat of endemism in its relationship with Himalayan flora and fauna. This forms part of the **Nilgiris biosphere reserve**.
- **Forest Type** - Primarily grassland, characteristically interspersed with numerous isolated, compact, sharply defined montane wet temperate mixed forests locally termed 'Sholas', with beautiful brooks.

INNER LINE PERMIT

◎ CONTEXT:

- In Manipur protests are on to demand the implementation of the Inner Line Permit in the region.

◎ ABOUT

- ILP is an official travel document issued by the Government of India to grant inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period. Visitors are not allowed to purchase property in these regions.
- Validity of permit is generally 15-20 days.
- Prior to Manipur's merger with India, Manipur had become a state and nearly had the ILP system. However, it was only in **1951 when the then chief commissioner Himmat Singh lifted the rule and allowed unregulated entry of outsiders into the region**.
- According to **the 2011 census**, the population of Manipur is a **little over 27 lakh**. Of this, only **17 lakh (1.7 million) are indigenous people and 10 lakh (one million) are outsiders**.
- The ongoing agitation took an ugly turn when villagers torched the houses of MP and MLAs.

Background

- Currently, the **Inner Line Permit is operational in Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland**. In addition to these, **Meghalaya, Manipur, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Leh also require Indian citizens to have a permit before they enter**.
- It has been issued under the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873** and the conditions and restrictions vary from state to state.
- It can be **issued for travel purposes solely**.
- **Visitors are not allowed to purchase property in these regions**. However, there might be a different set of rules for long term visitors, though they are not valid for central government employees and security forces.

Purpose

- To regulate the movement of visitors into sensitive regions
- To strengthen security of the sensitive areas near to international borders
- To protect the cultural ethos of a specific region

Demands of Manipuris for ILP

- **Dominant Miete community of Manipur** who are largely Hindus are believed to be behind the violent protests. The tribal populations in Manipur have no role in protests. Meiteis demand the Scheduled Tribe status and the tribals are saying if Meiteis are given the ST status they will buy all their lands.
- **Demographic Imbalance:** The influx of foreign tourists and illegal immigration from Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar has contributed to the crisis. This has created fear among the locals over employment and availability of resources. Meiteis want strict imposition of ILP in Manipur to protect their culture and identity.

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER (ASF)

◎ CONTEXT:

- According to United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report ASF has caused the deaths of more than 3.7 million pigs across a vast swathe of Asia, primarily in its east and south-east, where pork is the primary meat staple.

◎ ABOUT:

What is African swine fever?

- Historically, outbreaks have been reported in Africa and parts of Europe, South America, and the Caribbean. More recently (since 2007) the disease has been reported in multiple countries across Africa, Asia and Europe, in both domestic and wild pigs.
- African swine fever (ASF) is a highly contagious haemorrhagic viral disease** (severe illness, sometimes associated with bleeding), of domestic and wild pigs.
- It is **caused by a large DNA virus of the *Asfarviridae* family**, which also infects ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*.
- Although signs of ASF and classical swine fever (CSF) may be similar, the **ASF virus is unrelated to the CSF virus**.

Transmission and spread:

- The epidemiology of ASF is complex and varies depending on the environment, types of pig production systems, the presence/absence of competent tick vectors, human behaviour, and the presence/absence of wild pigs.
- Direct contact with infected domestic or wild pigs:** This transboundary animal disease (TAD) can be spread by live or dead pigs, domestic or wild, and pork products.
- Indirect contact**, through ingestion of contaminated material (e.g. food waste, feed, or garbage). Contaminated fomites, or biological vectors (soft ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*) where present.

Clinical signs of ASF:

- Acute forms** of ASF are characterised by high fever, depression, anorexia and loss of appetite, haemorrhages in the skin (redness of skin on ears, abdomen and legs), abortion in pregnant sows, cyanosis, vomiting, diarrhoea and death within 6-13 days (or up to 20 days). Mortality rates may be as high as 100%.
- Different types of pig may have varying susceptibility to ASF virus infection. African wild suids may be infected without showing clinical signs allowing them to act as reservoirs.

Public health risk:

ASF is not a risk to human health as it is relatively harmless.

Prevention and control:

Currently there is no approved vaccine for ASF.

K2-18B — A POTENTIALLY 'HABITABLE' PLANET

◎ CONTEXT:

- Water vapour discovered on potentially 'habitable' planet. Using Hubble Space Telescope, scientists also detected the presence of hydrogen and helium in K2-18b's atmosphere.

◎ **ABOUT:**

- K2-18b an exoplanet that orbits around a small red dwarf star K2-18, nearly 110 light-years away in the constellation Leo.
- K2-18b was first discovered in 2015 by Nasa's now retired Kepler space telescope.
- It was found orbiting within the red dwarf star's habitable zone, making it an ideal candidate to have liquid surface water.
- Having a mass that is eight times greater than Earth's, K2-18b is also known as Super-Earth exoplanets with masses between those of Earth and Neptune.
- The Kepler satellite mission discovered nearly two-third of all known exoplanets. While the mission indicated that five to 20 per cent of these are located in the habitable zone of their stars.
- Water vapour has been detected on K2-18b a potentially 'habitable' planet by Nasa and the European space agency's Hubble Space Telescope.
- K2-18b could be the only exoplanet known to have both water and temperatures in its atmosphere to sustain liquid water on a rocky surface
- The new finding offers an 'unprecedented opportunity' to gain insight into the composition and climate of habitable-zone planets.
- K2-18b is not 'Earth 2.0' as it is significantly heavier and has a different atmospheric composition.
- This study contributes to our understanding of habitable worlds beyond our Solar System and marks a new era in exoplanet research.

What Is an Exoplanet?

- All of the planets in our solar system orbit around the Sun. Planets that orbit around other stars are called exoplanets.
- Exoplanets are very hard to see directly with telescopes. They are hidden by the bright glare of the stars they orbit.
- There are many methods of detecting exoplanets. Transit photometry and Doppler spectroscopy have found the most, but these methods suffer from a clear observational bias favoring the detection of planets near the star; thus, 85% of the exoplanets detected are inside the tidal locking zone.
- One way to search for exoplanets is to look for "wobbly" stars. A star that has planets doesn't orbit perfectly around its center. From far away, this off-center orbit makes the star look like its wobbling.
- The most massive planet listed on the NASA Exoplanet Archive is HR 2562 b, about 30 times the mass of Jupiter.

eSIM

◎ **CONTEXT:**

- The new technology which would remove the need to have a physical SIM card.

◎ **ABOUT:**

- An eSIM is exactly what it sounds like an **electronic, or embedded, SIM**. Instead of a physical card, SIM technology is built right into your phone. It's a small chip that's used to authenticate your identity with your carrier.
- One of the advantages of eSIM technology is that it makes it much **easier to switch carriers**. Instead of having to order a new SIM and wait around for it to arrive, you can switch to a new carrier straight from your phone.
- eSIM technology **supports multiple accounts** and switching between them is super easy.
- It will help make **devices smaller**.
- It could be extremely helpful for **wearables devices**.

AVIAN INFLUENZA (H5N1)

- ◎ **CONTEXT:**
 - India has declared itself free from Avian Influenza (H5N1), commonly called bird flu.
- ◎ **ABOUT:**
 - Avian Influenza was first reported from **Hongkong in 1997**. Nick named as '**miniature sun**', **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)** is the largest plasma based fusion reactor ever built.
 - H5N1 is a type of virus which is **highly infectious in birds**, and causes avian influenza or bird flu. Human cases of H5N1 are closely linked to **infections from live or dead birds that have H5N1**.
 - The symptoms of an H5N1 infection in humans **include mild upper respiratory tract infection (fever and cough), early sputum production and rapid progression to severe pneumonia**.
 - It can lead to sepsis with shock, acute respiratory **distress syndrome and even death**.

HIGHLIGHTS

- India has declared itself free from highly pathogenic Avian Influenza-H5N1 and H5N8
- Union agriculture ministry said it has been notified to the World Organisation for Animal Health.
- The move will help it resume export of poultry products to the countries which had banned trade in such items early this year.

WHAT IS CRYODRAKON BOREAS?

- ◎ **CONTEXT:**
 - Cryodrakon boreas, the largest flying animal was a plane-sized reptile.
- ◎ **ABOUT**
 - **New species of pterosaur**, the plane-sized **reptiles** that lorded over primeval skies above T-rex, Triceratops and other dinosaurs of the late Cretaceous.
 - With a wingspan of 10 m and weighing 250 kg, Cryodrakon boreas rivals another pterosaur as the largest flying animal of all time
 - Its remains were first **discovered more than 30 years ago in Alberta, Canada**, yet elicited scant excitement because of the misclassification.
 - Like other winged reptiles living at the same time, about 77 million years ago, **C. boreas was carnivorous** and probably fed on lizards, small mammals and even baby dinosaurs.
 - Despite their large size and wide distribution across North and South America, Asia, Africa and Europe only fragmentary remains have been unearthed, making the new find especially important.

UYGHUR COMMUNITY

- ◎ **CONTEXT:**
 - Who are the Uyghurs and why is the Chinese government detaining them?.
- ◎ **ABOUT:**
 - The **Uyghurs are Turkic-speaking Muslims** from the **Central Asian region**.
 - The largest population lives in China's autonomous **Xinjiang region**, in the country's north-west.

- The Uyghurs are one of a number of persecuted Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, including the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz and Hui.
- Many Uyghur communities also live in countries neighbouring **China, such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, Australia.**

LOGISTICS INDEX CHART

◎ **CONTEXT:**

- Gujarat has retained the top slot on the logistics index chart, an indicator of the efficiency of logistical services necessary for promoting exports and economic growth.

◎ **ABOUT**

- According to the report **by the Commerce Ministry - LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2019**, prepared with **the help of consultancy firm Deloitte**, the findings would help in identifying the problem areas in the sector and prepare policy responses to deal with them
- The index aims at enhancing the focus on improving logistics performance across states which is essential for improving the country's trade and reducing transactions cost.
- The index was based on **the analysis of perception with regard to nine parameters, including infrastructure, quality of logistics, services, and timeliness of cargo delivery, regulatory process and safety of cargo.**
- It is based on the **Logistics Performance Index** created by **World Bank**.
