

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

WEEKLY

WEEK - 3  
DECEMBER, 2019

## ECONOMY

- HDI 2019 Report

## ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

- Heavy Metals Contaminating India's Rivers
- National Clean Air Programme
- Ocean Deoxygenation

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- International Civil Aviation Day

## INTERNAL SECURITY

- RISAT-2BR1

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

- Anglo-Indians - Nomination Quota and History
- Creamy Layer Principle in SC, ST Quota for Promotion
- Data Protection Bill, 2019
- International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019
- Prime Minister Van Dhan Yojana

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- World Malaria Report, 2019

## SOCIAL ISSUE

- Gender related laws in India
- Status of unemployment of women in India

## MISCELLANEOUS

- 4<sup>th</sup> India Water Impact Summit
- AIM-SIRIUS Deep Technology Learning, Innovation Programme
- Constitution (126<sup>th</sup> amendment bill), 2019
- DUCHIFAT 3
- First Mega Food Park of Central India
- Head on Generation Technology
- International Solar Alliance

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- Why India Needs Labour Reforms?

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- Climate Change

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- India-China Diplomacy Stand-off in South Asia

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

- Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019
- Why Audit of Mid-Day Meal Scheme is needed?

## MISCELLANEOUS

- 'Iron Union 12'
- OPEC and its allies decide to cut oil production
- Sarai Sewage Treatment Plant
- Small Finance Banks
- White Island

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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 (DECEMBER, 2019)

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**SECTION: A**  
**(MAINS)**

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**CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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# WHY INDIA NEEDS LABOUR REFORMS?

## CONTEXT

- Recently, Industrial Relations Code was introduced in the Parliamentary by Minister of Labour.

### ◎ BACKGROUND

- Labour reforms essentially mean taking steps in increasing production, productivity, and employment opportunities in the economy in such a manner that the interests of the workers are not compromised.
- Essentially, it means skill development, retraining, redeployment, updating knowledge base of workers-teachers, promotion of leadership qualities, etc. Labour reforms also include labour law reforms.
- Labour laws are concerned with the trade union rights of the workers, industrial relations and job security and policies relating to wages, bonus and other incentive schemes.
- Labour reforms are of great important as the laws enacted in the labour market aim at regulating the market, protecting employment and ensuring social security of workers.

### ◎ ANALYSIS

#### Problems of Labour Market in India

- Indian labour market is characterised by a sharp dichotomy.
  - Organised sector is stringently regulated while the unorganized sector is virtually free from any outside control and regulation with little or no job security.
  - Wages are 'too high' in the organised sector and 'too low', even below the subsistence level in the unorganised sector. This dualistic set up suggests how far the Indian labour market is segmented.
- Poor Social Security:
  - Social security to organised labour force in India is provided through a variety of legislative measures.
  - Workers of small unorganised sector as well as informal sectors remain outside the purview of these arrangements.
- Multiplicity of Archaic Labour Laws
  - Labour Laws govern trade unions, industrial relations, and job security
  - Labour is a concurrent subject and more than 40 Central laws more than 100 state laws govern the subject.

#### Trade Union Issues:

- Trade Union Act, 1926 provide that any seven employees could form a union.
- During the freedom struggle, Indian trade union contributed handsomely. It is now better organized.
- Frequent Strikes:** Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 aims at promoting good relations between employers and workmen, protecting workers against retrenchment and settling disputes through conciliation, arbitration or adjudication. However, industrial relations climate were far from satisfactory when trade unions resorted to militancy in the 1960s and early 1970s. Between 1972 and 1981, the average number of work days lost per year per employee in the manufacturing sector stood at 4.070. This figure went up to 5.736 between 1982 and 1992—a very high figure compared to other countries in the contemporary period.
- Multiplicity of trade unions hamper dispute resolution.
- In ter-union rivalry and political rivalries are considered to be the major impediments to have a sound industrial relation system in India.
- Indian labour laws are highly protective of labour, and labour markets are relatively inflexible. As usual, these laws are applicable in the organised sector only.

#### Rigid Laws:

- India's labour laws for the workers in the organised sector give workers permanent employment, of course, after a probation period ranging from 6 months to 2 years.
- Job security in India is so rigid that workers of large private sector employing over 100 workers cannot be fired without government's permission.

#### Unskilled labour

- Lack of enough skilled workers is a common concern raised by the employers in defence of their inability to hire more.
- They resort to contract employment
- They adopt hire and fire policy.

#### Gender gap

- Low female labour force participation

- 71% of men above 15 years are a part of the workforce as compared to just 22 percent women (Labour Force Survey)
- Low labour Productivity:
  - Promotions are based on seniority and thus workers get fixed annual wage increments unrelated to work performance.
  - The labour market policies followed in India in the past have led to serious problems due to low labour productivity even in the context of an economy where the firms were shielded from both international competition (by the very high import tariffs) and domestic competition (by the licensing policies).
- This, in turn, created an inefficient and internationally uncompetitive industrial sector which eventually led to lower wages (for example, Indian wages in the manufacturing sector are only seventh the Singaporean wages), fewer jobs, and higher unemployment.
- Labour market regulations operating since 1947 have tended to discourage both the growth of employment and productivity. Further, it has pushed many activities into the unorganised sector. This is evident from the fact that annual growth rate of employment in the unorganised sector was much higher (2.73 p.c.) than the organised sector (1.58 p.c.) during 1981-91.

### **Agenda for labour Reforms**

- Consolidation and simplification of numerous States' and Centre labour laws
- Streamlining of Minimum Wages in the country and ensuring they reach the beneficiaries.
- Introduction of fixed term employment, to curb tendency for employing (socially insecure) contract labour.

### **Steps Taken by Government**

- Four Labour Codes aims at simplification, amalgamation and rationalisation of Central Labour Laws
- Child labour (prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016 provides complete ban on employment of children below 14 years of age.
- Maternity Benefit Amendment Act, 2017 has increased paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks
- The 2nd National Commission of labour had recommended simplification, amalgamation and rationalisation of Central Labour Laws. The central government is compressing of 44 central labour laws into four 'codes' or broad categories — wages, social security, industrial relations and occupational health and safety.

### **Labour Codes on wages Bill, 2019**

- Need
  - It arises in the absence of statutory National Minimum Wage for different regions, which impedes the economic prospect.
  - It seeks to consolidate laws relating to wages by replacing- Payment of Wages Act, 1936; Minimum Wages Act, 1948; Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- Key Features
  - The Code will apply to any industry, trade, business, manufacturing or occupation including government establishments.
  - Wages include salary, allowance, or any other component expressed in monetary terms. This will not include bonus payable to employees or any travelling allowance, among others.
  - It differentiates the central and State Jurisdiction in determining the wage related decision for establishment such as Railways Mines and oil fields.
  - A concept of statutory National Minimum Wage for different geographical areas has been introduced. It will ensure that no State Government fixes the minimum wage below the National Minimum Wages for that particular area as notified by the Central Government.
- Concerns
  - The definition of worker is not clear in the Wage Code Bill.
  - The calculation of the level of minimum wage by an expert committee is at variance with ILO parameters.
    - A 'national minimum wage' is a good idea, but its computation is cause for concern. Instead of a single national minimum wage, the bill proposes multiple minimum wage structure at different geographical zones.
    - The economic survey 2018-19 had also mentioned that a national mandatory minimum wage is a requirement.

### **Labour Code on Industrial relations, 2019**

- Need
  - It aims to create greater labour market flexibility and discipline in labour – to improve upon ease of doing business and also to encourage entrepreneurs to engage in labour-intensive sectors.
  - It would replace three laws i.e. Trade Unions Act, 1926; Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 and the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

- Key Features

- ▶ It seeks to allow companies to hire workers on fixed-term contract of any duration.
- ▶ The code has retained the threshold on the worker count at 100 for prior government approval before retrenchment, but it has a provision for changing 'such number of employees' through notification. This provision has been criticized sharply by the labour groups and trade unions as any notification may change it later.
- ▶ It also provides setting up of a two-member tribunal (in place of one member) wherein important cases will be adjudicated jointly and the rest by a single member, resulting speedier disposal of cases.
- ▶ It has vested powers with the government officers for adjudication of disputes involving penalty as fines.
- ▶ Introduces a feature of 'recognition of negotiating union' under which a trade union will be recognized as sole 'negotiating union' if it has the support of 75% or more of the workers on the rolls of an establishment.
- ▶ As several trade unions are active in companies, it will be tough for any one group to manage 75% support, hence taking away their negotiating rights. In such a case, a negotiating council will be constituted for negotiation.
- ▶ Underlines that fixed-term employees will get all statutory benefits on a par with the regular employees who are doing work of the same or similar nature.
- ▶ Under the code, termination of service of a worker on completion of tenure in a fixed-term employment will not be considered as retrenchment.
- ▶ Proposes setting up of a "re-skilling fund" for training of retrenched employees. The retrenched employee would be paid 15 days' wages from the fund within 45 days of retrenchment.
- ▶ While this means workers can be hired seasonally for six months or a year it also means that all workers will be treated at par with regular workers for benefits.

- Concerns

- ▶ The Industrial Relations Code of 2019 has evoked strong reactions, as the right to form unions and accord them powers of representation has been severely curtailed.
- ▶ It provided that a minimum of 10% of workers or 100 workers employed in an establishment or industry would be needed - from seven at present - to register a trade union.

## Labour Code on Social Security & Welfare, 2017

- Need

- ▶ Almost 90% of the current workers are not covered under any social security.
- ▶ The current thresholds for wage and number of workers employed for a labour law to be applicable creates tenacious incentives for the employers to avoid joining the system which results in exclusions and distortions in the labour market.

- Key Features

- Definition of employee and categorization of workers covers all kinds of employment including part-time workers, casual workers, fixed term workers, piece rate/ commission rated workers, informal workers, home-based workers, domestic workers and seasonal workers.
- A proper percentage-based structure for contribution, vis-à-vis socio economic category and minimum notified wage, has been put in place under the Code.
- It introduces new approaches to ensure a transparent and fair financial set up, such as,
  - ▶ Time bound preparation of Accounts within six months of the end of the financial year;
  - ▶ Provision for social audit of social security schemes by State Boards after every five years;
  - ▶ Accounts of Intermediate Agencies to be subject to CAG Audit on the same lines as that of Social Security Organizations.
- Wage Ceiling and Income Threshold: The term 'wage ceiling' is for the purpose of determining a maximum limit on contribution payable; whereas the term 'income threshold' is for the purpose of enabling the government to provide for two different kind of schemes (for same purpose) for two different class of workers.
- Contribution Augmentation Funds would be established through which governments could contribute to the social security in respect of workers who are unable to pay contribution.
- National Stabilization Fund will be used for harmonizing the Scheme Funds across the country and will be managed by the Central Boards.

## Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions, 2018

- Need

- ▶ The proposed code is the first single legislation prescribing standards for working conditions, health and safety of workers and it will apply on factories with at least 10 workers.



- It will amalgamate 13 labour laws including the Factories Act, 1948; the Mines Act, 1952; the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996; the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 etc.
- Key Features
  - Centre has been empowered to prescribe standards on occupational safety and health
  - Annual health check to be made mandatory in factories and its charge will be borne by the employers
  - Appointment letters for all workers (including those employed before this code), underlying their rights to statutory benefits
  - At least 50% of penalty levied on employers could go towards providing some relief to families of workers who die or are seriously injured while working
  - National Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Board at national level and similar bodies at state level, have been proposed to recommend standards on related matters.
  - Appointment of facilitators with prescribed jurisdiction for inspection, survey, measurement, examination or inquiry has been proposed
  - Mandatory license for every contractor who provides or intends to provide contract labour. Also, license is needed for industrial premises as well.

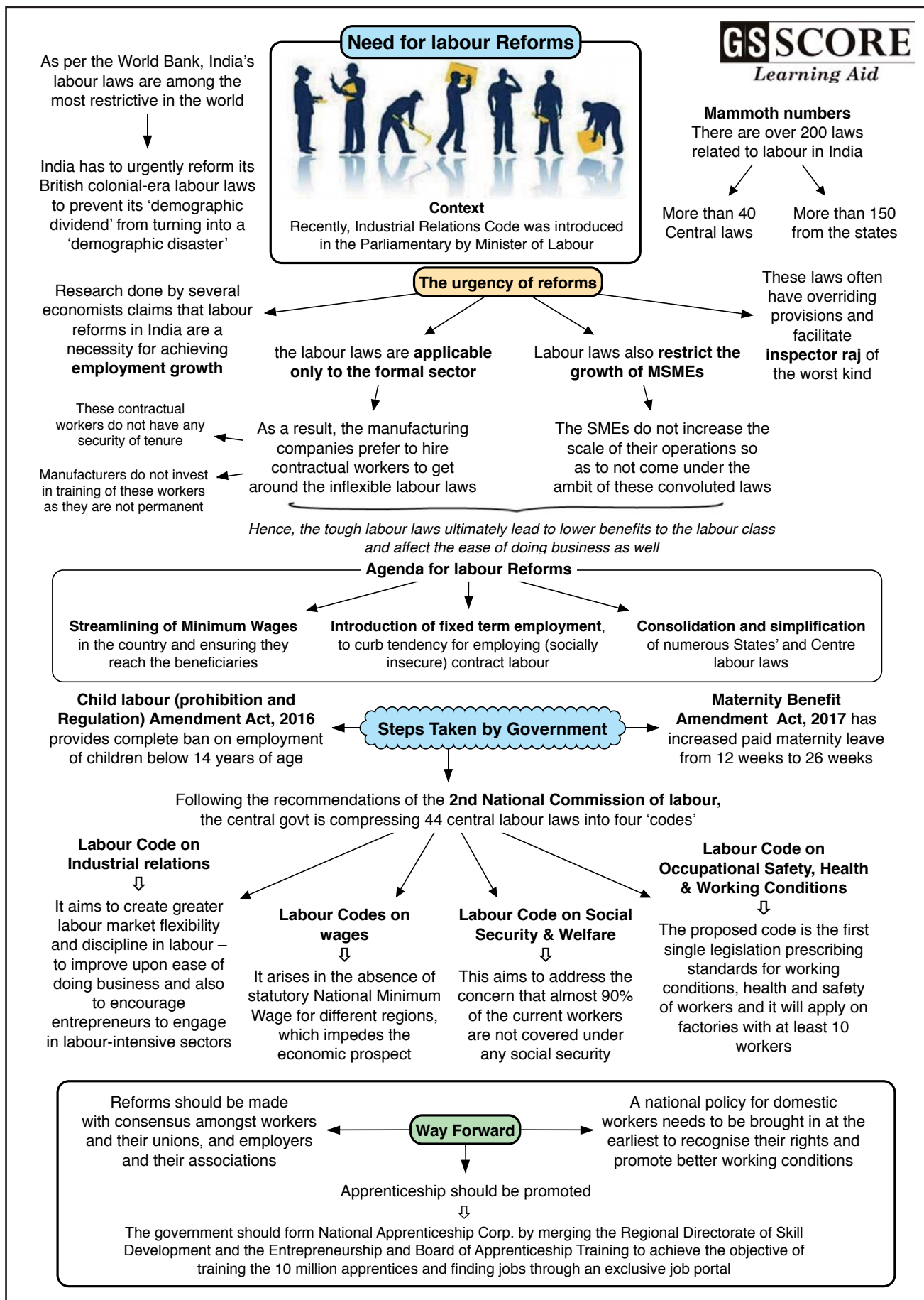
#### ◦ Concerns

- "The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019" is also being protested by trade unions for allegedly diluting workers' safety provisions instead of strengthening them.
- All the central trade unions have expressed their displeasure and have demanded thorough consultation and recasting of the Code. They want it to be reviewed by the department-related Standing Committee of Parliament in consultation with them.

#### Way Forward

- Reforms should be made with consensus amongst workers and their unions, and employers and their associations. Trust between workers and employers should be increased.
- A national policy for domestic workers needs to be brought in at the earliest to recognise their rights and promote better working conditions.
- Apprenticeship should be promoted. The government should form National Apprenticeship Corp. by merging the Regional Directorate of Skill Development and the Entrepreneurship and Board of Apprenticeship Training to achieve the objective of training the 10 million apprentices and finding jobs through an exclusive job portal.

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# CLIMATE CHANGE

## CONTEXT

- The 16 year old climate activist, Greta Thunberg, was declared 'person of the year' by Time magazine. CoP 25 summit was held in Madrid, Spain in December 2019.

### ◎ BACKGROUND:

- **Climate Activism:** With Greta Thunberg creating more consciousness in the world against risks of climate change, there is an attitudinal change about the issue and world's youth is leading the demand for action. Many youth climate activists have marched in streets across the world demanding their leaders to take action against climate.
- **Climate Conference 25 (Cop25):** CoP25 to UNFCCC was held in Madrid in December 2019 with the aim to finalise rules for the 2015 Paris climate accord, which required countries to limit global temperature rises to "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels, and even further to 1.5C.
- **UN 'emission gap' assessment:** The UNEP released annual "emissions gap" assessment, according to which, the world is on track to being 3.2C warmer, and needs to cut carbon emissions by 7.6% each year, every year, until 2030 to hit 1.5C limit.
- **Cost of climate change:** Climate change could directly cost the world economy \$7.9 trillion by 2050 (3% of world GDP). In general, developing countries are less resilient to climate change than richer ones.
- **Unusual Cyclonic conditions** in the Indian ocean and Bay of Bengal
- **Permanent ecological damages:** Apart from calamity occurrences, climate change is causing permanent ecological damages. The can have devastating consequences for the environment and sustainability of the planet.
  - ▶ Amazonian deforestation releasing carbon in atmosphere
  - ▶ Ice vanishing from both poles, especially West Atlantic ice sheet
  - ▶ Many rainforests turning to desert
  - ▶ Rising sea levels flooding into interior of continents
  - ▶ Irreversible loss of diversity among plants and animal
- **Ocean warming:** Healthy oceans absorb carbon and provide a buffer against climate chaos, so damage to them is damage to the climate, and vice versa. Oceans absorb 90% of additional heat in the atmosphere and they are heating up at an unprecedented scale.
  - ▶ Oceans have absorbed 20-30% of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub>, have undergone increased acidification, and loss of oxygen from the surface down to the depth.
  - ▶ According to studies, rapid warming in Indo-Pacific is behind the change in global rainfall patterns.
- **Displacement:** Disasters rooted in climate change have forced 20 million people to leave their homes annually over the past decade. Pacific nations, especially low-lying islands like Fiji, are particularly vulnerable to tropical storms and rising sea-level caused by climate change. Given the risk submergence, they must consider displacement of populations living close to the sea. People are three times more likely to be internally displaced because of climate change than conflict.

### ◎ ANALYSIS:

#### Evidence of climate change:

- **2010s hottest decade:** According to the UN, 2010s is the hottest decade in history as emissions are on the rise. Each of the last four decades has been hotter than the last. According to World Meteorological Organization (WMO), global temperatures are roughly 1C above pre-industrial average for 2019. WMO suggests an increase of 3-5C by the end of the century.
- **Climate related calamities:** Heat waves and floods which used to be 'once in a century' events are becoming more regular occurrences. Examples include:
  - ▶ Deadly heat waves and drought in southern Europe, Australia and Japan
  - ▶ Super storms in southeast Africa
  - ▶ Wildfires in Australia, California, South America and eastern Siberia

#### Causes of climate change

- **Co<sub>2</sub> emission on rise:** According to the Global Carbon Project, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are on rise by 0.6% in 2019 (2.1% in 2018). The reductions are not enough to stop global warming. Despite a significant decline in coal consumption in US and

Europe, the higher global emissions are attributed to growth in natural gas and oil usage.

- **Industrial heat:** Industrial products are essential to construction, infrastructure and manufacturing, but making them requires a lot of heat—heat that emits more carbon dioxide than all the world's cars and planes. Many industrial processes start with melting rocks by burning fossil fuels, and development of alternative technologies is far behind and expensive.
- **Land degradation:** Land degradation, mainly due to human activities like deforestation, mining/quarrying, construction, roads, other infrastructure for economic development, human settlements for increasing population, etc., is a contributing factor to climate change. Even agriculture and related activities are degrading land, including groundwater resources.
- **Meat consumption:** IPCC report 'Climate Change and Land' emphasises the ever-increasing global meat consumption and the resulting distorted land-use pattern to meet this requirement, as a cause contributing to climate change. The EAT-Lancet Commission report also supports this; it adds biodiversity loss, natural water depletion and carbon emission to the associated risks.
  - ▶ Creating pastures to feed cattle causes huge deforestation. Processing, preservation and packaging of cattle slaughtered is also highly GHG-generation intensive process.
  - ▶ Cattle itself is responsible for producing high quantities of methane, which has a far greater carbon footprint compared to carbon dioxide.
- **Disregard for ocean health:** Overfishing, plastic pollution, micro-plastics, flow of fertilisers and chemicals etc. is suffocating fish and damaging ocean health. More than 1 billion people depend on the oceans. Ocean health is vital to biodiversity, healthy fisheries and to regulate the climate.

### New-age measures adopted/suggestions to control climate damage

- **Carbon markets:** Creation of 'carbon markets' under the Paris Agreement allows countries, or industries, to earn carbon credits for emission reductions they make in excess of what is required of them. These credits can be traded to the highest bidder in exchange of money. The buyers of carbon credits can show the emission reductions as their own and use them to meet their own emission reduction targets.
- **Climate- Neutral Europe:** In a 'Green Deal', Europe has vowed to become the first 'climate-neutral' continent by 2050, as it aims to eliminate its net discharges of greenhouse gases. This will be done through creating single set of definitions, to determine what economic activities are

sustainable and should count as green, in areas ranging from finance to design of cities.

- ▶ Stricter emission limits for industries from cars to chemicals; revamped energy taxes; new rules on subsidies for companies; greener farming; and a possible environmental import tax.
- **Markets pricing carbon risks:** For long climate specialists warned about a "carbon bubble" in which markets ignore or massively undervalue the risks to companies from climate change. But latest studies suggest that especially since the Paris Agreement of 2015, financial markets have seriously started to factor in 'carbon risk premiums' in their price settings and valuation of stocks.
- **Carbon capture:** Carbon capture, use and storage (CCUS) is essential to reducing carbon emissions from heavy industry, especially cement and steel production. It is more affordable than most other option—far cheaper and more readily available than electrical heating or burning biomass.
  - ▶ CCUS also supports production of one of the most viable and versatile low-carbon fuels: hydrogen.
  - ▶ Low-carbon hydrogen is known as "blue" hydrogen.
  - ▶ CCUS can create future opportunities for "green" hydrogen, made from zero-carbon electricity and water.
- **Shift to vegetarianism:** While the entire process of agricultural production also generates significant GHG, but there is scientific evidence that its carbon footprint is much less compared to meat production. A much less area of land is needed globally to feed the population if we to shift to a plant-based diet.
- **New Climate Economy:** Studies suggest that shifting to a low-carbon economy represents USD 26 trillion growth opportunity that could create 65 million new jobs by 2030. Today, the fastest-growing job creators in several economies are those related to solar, wind and geothermal energy and related businesses.

### Kuznets Curve:

- Kuznets curve hypothesis postulates that climatic pressure increases up to a certain level as economic growth goes up, but after a threshold the relationship reverses. GDP is taken as a measure of growth.



**Alternate measures of growth:**

- It is argued that it is impossible to achieve sustainable decision-making aiming at sustainable progress and economic well-being if welfare is being considered from a purely financial point of view. Alternate measures, instead of GDP, as proxy measures for growth:
- Happy Planet Index by New Economics Foundation: based on factors such as life expectancy and ecological footprint per capita, and one subjective indicator 'life satisfaction'.
- Economic Freedom Index by Heritage Foundation and Fraser Institute.
- Genuine Progress Indicator (proposed in 1989) could be a superior measure to proxy the growth and well-being of individuals, primarily in the field of ecological economics. It is often debated that it

Japan are not on track to meet their NDC targets for 2030.

- Accumulated carbon credits: A carbon market already existed under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol (getting replaced by Paris Agreement in 2020). Several countries walked out of the Kyoto Protocol, resulting in lack of demand for carbon credits. Developing countries like India, China and Brazil had accumulated huge amounts of carbon credits, which are now in danger of getting redundant.
  - Some countries want the accumulated carbon credits to remain valid under the new carbon market to be instituted. But developed countries are resisting this suggestion claiming that weak verification mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol had allowed dubious projects to earn credits.

**Where does India stand in the fight against climate change?**

- India is also facing the brunt of climate change; with erratic monsoon, unusual rainfall, differing season patterns, drought conditions, cyclonic disturbances, flash floods, rise in average temperatures, etc. Electricity generation is the largest source of carbon emissions in India, with 72% of electricity being generated by burning coal. India launched the National Solar Mission in 2010 and set up the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in 2015. Its current commitment to set up non-fossil fuel power in the country is 450 GW. India must also consider becoming net carbon neutral.

**◎ CONCERNS**

- Europe's Climate-neutral stand requires scrutiny: Europe will create standards for green investments, which will require its banks to back sustainable assets. But any capital relief for green assets must be based on clear evidence that they are less risky than non-green assets.
- China's international activity: China is financing construction of many new coal plants in other countries. China's reliance on coal can undo the positive work being done to address the issue; hence Chinese involvement is critical in fighting climate change.
- Non-meaningful action by countries: US has threatened to walk out of the Paris Agreement. UN's Production Gap report estimates that the world is on track to produce 150% more coal in 2030 than compliance limit. Some other countries are suggesting a Paris walkout. Climate action by three major fossil fuel producers, the US, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, is estimated to be critically insufficient. Seven large economies—the US, Brazil, South Korea, South Africa, Australia, Canada and

**◎ CONCLUSION**

- Climate change is outpacing humanity's ability to adapt to it. Since steps needed to address climate change are costly in the short run, governments, businesses, and individuals often make climate change someone else's problem. Governments must fulfil their national commitments made under various global treaties, businesses must become more responsible, and individuals must become more conscious of their carbon footprint. This is the only way to avert the looming climate crisis.

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# INDIA-CHINA DIPLOMACY STAND-OFF IN SOUTH ASIA

## CONTEXT

- The global world order is changing, and increasing hinging on Asia as its axis. Both India and China want a share in it. In this context it is important to access the India-China diplomacy stand-off in South Asia.

### ◎ BACKGROUND

- India-China ties are not one-dimensional. There are structural problems in India-China ties — boundary dispute, Pakistan factor, and historical mistrust.
- A delicate balance: Even when Chinese and Indian militaries were in a standoff in Doklam at the India-China-Bhutan tri-junction in the Himalayas in 2017, both governments were careful enough not to let the situation spiral out of control.
  - ▶ The Doklam incident was followed by the first Prime Ministerial level informal summit in Wuhan in 2018. Mamallapuram summit should also be seen against this background.
- Four constituents in the multidimensional India-China partnership that can take their ties to the next level:
  1. **Economic aspect:** China is keen to make investments in India, especially in building infrastructure and fifth generation technology architecture. India, on the other side, wants greater market access in China, and action by Beijing to address the trade imbalance. At the Wuhan summit, leaders agreed to India-China cooperation in projects in third world countries.
  2. **Multilateralism:** China's influence in both established international organizations like the UN and in the new institutions China is setting up, such as AIIB may hamper Indian interests and goals in multilateral forums. Both India and China see the unilateral world order in decline, and are champions of multilateralism. Security and stability in Asia is the common interest of both countries.
  3. **Negotiable Pakistan stand:** Last year, China agreed to Pakistan being placed on the FATF grey list, after India offered support for China's vice-chair push at the FATF. China also removed its technical hold on the declaration of Masood Azhar as an international terrorist. This shows that China can take a U-turn on its iron-friend, Pakistan, given India's diplomacy on international stage.
  4. **South Asia stand-off:** India must have a clear foreign policy stand with respect to China, of which there are two way:
    - ▶ Competing with China for dominance of Asia.
    - ▶ Focussing on its own rise, of which competition with China is a part.

### ◎ ANALYSIS:

#### Foreign policy strategy

- Foreign policy must factor in three geopolitical constituents— immediate neighbourhood, extended neighbourhood and great powers.
  - ▶ An emerging power should stay focussed on building capacities while maintaining good ties with the neighbours, deep engagement with the extended neighbours and balancing between great powers.
- **Six potential strategic options with India towards China:** staying unaligned, hedging, building indigenous military power, forming regional partnerships, aligning with China, or aligning with the United States.

#### China in the neighbourhood

- **Defence outreach:** Back in 1980s and 1990s there was a Sino-Pak military axis; today even the defence forces of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives have Chinese equipment.
- **Friendlier approach:** China is off late changing its hostile relationships with some neighbours to becoming friendlier. For example, with Philippines, Myanmar, Singapore, Japan and South Korea.
- **Soft loans:** China has been extending soft-loans to neighbouring nations to help them develop state of infrastructure. The downside of this has been countries being caught in a debt-trap, like in Sri Lanka and Maldives.
- **Concerns about China involvement:** China has only two real friends in the world: Pakistan and North Korea. Big and small nations are increasingly wary about Chinese intensions.
  - ▶ Even in The Arctic Circle council, Greenland (Denmark) expressed deep distrust towards China's investment in its aviation sector.
- **Reorienting diplomacy:** China's 'major power diplomacy' consists of four aspects: economic expansion, political penetration, "friendship" creation, and core interest protection.

#### China's argument

- **China's concern:** China has argued that India is trying to undermine China's efforts to maintain close ties with Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and other South Asian neighbours. According to China India

is uneasy about China's growing influence in the region.

- **Bhutan example:** India is one of crucial reasons why China and Bhutan, controlled by India economically and diplomatically, have not yet established diplomatic relations.
- **Indian media hype:** Whenever a top leader from India's neighbouring countries visits China, Indian media hypes that India is losing them or "China's emerging weight in South Asia will be New Delhi's new threat".
- **Shared neighbours:** Most of India's peripheral countries are also China's neighbours. Promoting stable relations with surrounding nations plays a vital role in any country's own domestic development.
- **Aid to regional development:** Sri Lanka and Nepal are looking forward to joint projects with China, given their poor infrastructure. It is inevitable for China to boost defence collaboration with them to protect not only China's, but also the region's interest.
- **Dalai Lama factor:** India in intensifying its communication with the Dalai Lama tries to display its strength and leverage in order to put pressure on or counterbalance China.

### India's response

- **India is not concerned:** India is not worried over China's relation with its neighbours, and South Asian countries are free to have ties with any country including China.
  - ▶ India's relationships with these countries are very strong; they are historical, with people-to-people contacts. For example, India and Nepal have open borders.
  - ▶ India has no concerns about China's rise. In fact Bollywood films like Dangal become a huge hit in China, while Chinese phone maker Xiaomi became the largest mobile handset seller in India.
- **Sovereignty and territorial integrity:** India is willing to be part of projects, provided they are transparent, meet ecological and environmental standards, and do not violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a country.
  - ▶ India objects to CPEC, which is a flagship project of BRI, because it violates India's sovereignty and territory integrity as it passes through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- **China's Quad concerns:** China's has concerns over the US, India, Japan and Australia quadrilateral grouping. India has never been a part of any alliance. Both India and China are too big to be part of any alliance; both have very independent domestic and foreign policies.

- **India's presence in South Asia:** India has been supplying power to Bangladesh and Nepal, and is also working on prospects of a global electricity grid that may initially aim to link countries such as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam with the sub-continent.
  - ▶ India's energy diplomacy initiatives include, supplying petroleum products and setting up liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals.
  - ▶ It plans to develop power transmission links with Sri Lanka.
- **Economic independence:** An important reason why India backed off from the RCEP was due to apprehensions over entry of Chinese goods in India through ASEAN route.
- **China factor may wane in future:** China's economic engine has slowed to a 27-year low. Industrial output is below 2002 levels. Chinese economy is past its best growth years. China's working age population is also shrinking. In future, China may not be as big a contender in South Asia, leaving more space for India.

### What does MEA budget show?

- Most important component of MEA budget over the years has been an aid to its immediate neighbours.
  - ▶ Of these, Afghanistan and Bhutan consume a major chunk.
  - ▶ Chinese inroads into Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka require India to not only better its defence capabilities, but also developmental projects in these countries to ensure a higher level of Indian engagement and continued influence.
- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) budget in the Union Budget was 0.1% of India's GDP in 2012-13, and declined to 0.08% in 2018-19.
- Other details:
  - ▶ Allocation to BIMSTEC has increased, in the backdrop of a dysfunctional SAARC.
  - ▶ On the soft power front, allocation to Nalanda University increased.
  - ▶ Allocation to South Asian University fell.
  - ▶ Allocation to Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) also fell.
  - ▶ Chahbahar port and Seychelles were two areas of Indian aid of geo-strategic importance whose allocation declined.
  - ▶ Aid allocation to Maldives's friendly new government increased significantly.
- India's diplomacy, implemented through MEA, needs a higher budget outlay for carrying out its geo-strategic objectives.

## 70 years of China: Why China moved ahead of India and what can we learn?

- **Common starting point:** China became a communist republic in 1949, the same year when India adopted its constitution. Both countries began rebuilding in 1950 - China under Mao Zedong and India under Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru.
  - ▶ India adopted a socialist economic model where wealth creation and big private enterprise were not encouraged.
  - ▶ Indian economy grew at around 3.5 per cent rate through the 1960s and 1970s while population grew in excess of 2.5 per cent.
- **China is ahead:** China is ahead of India in respect of the economy, military power, and technological progress and even in pollution control, while India is still considered an emerging power. Technically, China was a "poorer" country than India in terms of GDP per capita till as late as 1990. Now, in 2019, the Chinese per capita GDP is 4.6 times of India's.
- **Market economy:** In 1978, after Mao Zedong's death, China's new leadership began opening its economy.
  - ▶ It invited foreign investment particularly in coastal areas making export-import easy.
  - ▶ It created SEZs marked with better infrastructure and access to cheap labour for investors.
  - ▶ The new regime started freeing agriculture from state control.
  - ▶ It enforced one-child policy in order to control population explosion and utilise the demographic dividend.
- **Infrastructure:** China laid an excessive emphasis on investment in infrastructure. This provided employment to millions of people and improved their economic status and purchasing power, which was an essential ingredient for industrial progress.
  - ▶ China still continues to invest heavily in infrastructure; as evident in its One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative.
  - ▶ Estimates suggest, India's average investment in infrastructure in the first 5 decade after Independence was 3% of GDP when it required 6.5%. While China invested nearly 9% of GDP in infrastructure when it could have done with 6.5%.
  - ▶ Economic Survey 2019 found that investment was 27% lower than required. It called for an infra investment of 7-8% of GDP to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2025.
- **Sectorial approach:** China has followed a 'sectoral approach' and took to building labour-intensive industries - like textile, light engineering and electronics - to rope in available cheap labour.
- **Military:** In 1962 India and China fought a war. China occupied Aksai Chin. Since then China has revamped and modernised its military while Indian forces are still organised on World War II model.
- **Energy:** Energy is the key to survival and progress of a country and conventional sources of energy - coal and oil - are limited. China is energy conscious, has made substantial shift to reduce its dependence on coal, and has emerged as the second-largest solar energy producer.
  - ▶ China has aggressively pushed for use of electric vehicles - a step India is following.
  - ▶ According to a WEF report, China has the largest number of electric vehicles and public charging points.
- **Access to sanitation:** 72.01% of the population had access to at least basic sanitation services in 2017. Compare this with the 77.49% of Chinese city dwellers with access to sanitation in 2000, or the 90.79% today.
- **Water:** India has about four times more freshwater than China, which is three times its size. But India is facing a bigger water problem today than China. India is the biggest puller of groundwater and the volume used surpasses that in China and USA combined.
  - ▶ To overcome its water scarcity, China has been successful in teaching its farming community to use less water without compromising on agricultural productivity.
  - ▶ China imposes hefty fines on industries and businesses which overuse groundwater or pollute rivers and ponds.
- **One flaw:** While China has made many strides in growth and development, its system of governance lacks appreciation of individual liberty as a human value and fundamental right. Current situation in Hong Kong is an example. India has fared much better in this aspect.

## Conclusion and Take-away

- Many centuries ago in the 1600 and 1700s, both China and India were very important economic powers in the world. Both China and India are ancient civilizations. Despite contrasting forms of government, India and China have many aspects of governance and economic growth in common. Following the US approach, India should focus on its own rise and building capacities, not on conflicts and rivalries. At the same time, India should deepen its tactical engagement with the powerful China and learn from areas in which China has excelled. India should not be the focus of political debate of neighbouring nations. Relationship with India should be of a distinct character so that business with neighbouring nations does not depend on the party in power. Indian diplomacy should ensure bipartisan support across political spectrum; and unlike a situation where Bangladesh's loyalty hinges on a particular party being in power.



### India-China diplomacy stand-off in South Asia

#### Context

The global world order is changing, and increasing hinging on Asia as its axis. Both India and China want a share in it and consequently involved in a diplomacy stand-off in South Asia



Most important component of MEA budget over the years has been an aid to its immediate neighbours of which, Afghanistan and Bhutan consume a major chunk

This has left other neighbours relatively neglected

China is off late changing its hostile relationships with some neighbours to becoming friendlier

Friendlier approach

#### China's Strategic Approach

Defence outreach

Today even the defence forces of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives have Chinese equipment

Soft loans

China has been extending soft-loans to neighbouring nations to help them develop state of infrastructure

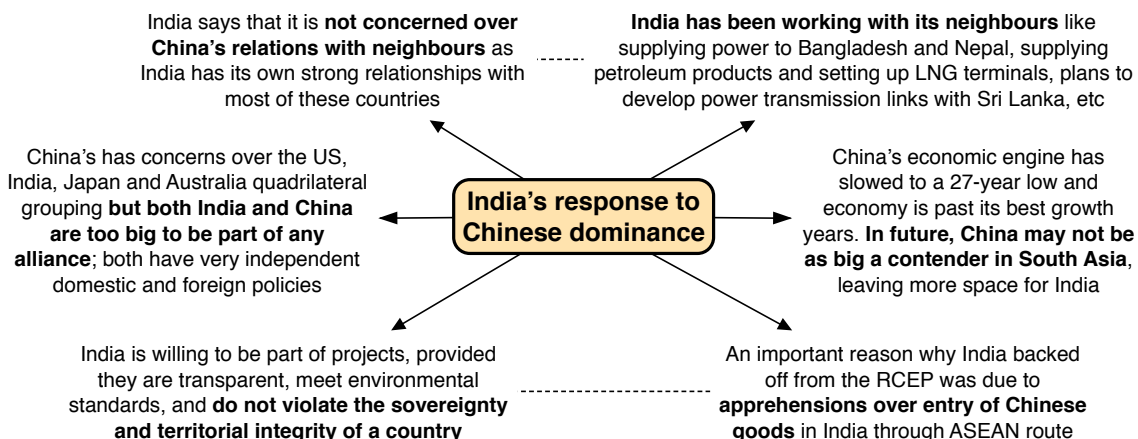
On the contrary, in India, MEA budget in the Union Budget was 0.1% of India's GDP in 2012-13, and declined to 0.08% in 2018-19

**Chinese inroads into Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka** require India to not only better its defence capabilities, but also focus on developmental projects in these countries to ensure a higher level of Indian engagement and continued influence

### GSSCORE Learning Aid

One belt one road initiative has strengthened Chinese strategic interests in many countries

OBOR



#### Economic Aspect

China is keen to make investments in India

India wants a greater market access in China and address trade imbalance

Negotiable Pakistan stand

#### Way ahead for India-China engagement

Multilateralism

China can take a U-turn on its iron-friend, Pakistan, given India's diplomacy on international stage (as seen from China's agreement to Pakistan being listed grey in FATF and declaration of Masood Azhar as international terrorist)

#### South Asia stand-off

India must have a clear foreign policy stand with respect to China, of which there are two ways

Competing with China for dominance of Asia

Focussing on its own rise, of which competition with China is a part

Both India and China see the unilateral world order in decline, and are champions of multilateralism → common grounds of cooperation need to be explored and acted upon

# CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL, 2019

## CONTEXT

- The Union Cabinet has cleared the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill that seeks to grant citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan if they faced religious persecution there.
- The Act amends the Citizenship Act, 1955, in order to grant Indian nationality to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who come to India after facing religious persecution in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

### ◎ ABOUT-

#### What is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act?

- The Act doesn't spell it out clearly, but the fact that it entitles Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians facing religious persecution in the three nations, to seek Indian citizenship, highlights the exclusion of Muslims.
- This amendment is of the Citizenship Act, 1955 which requires the applicant to have resided in India for 11 of the previous 14 years. The amendment relaxes this requirement from 11 years to six years, for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from the three nations.

#### How is citizenship acquired in India?

- In India, citizenship is regulated by the Citizenship Act, 1955. The Act specifies that citizenship may be acquired in India through five methods – by birth in India, by descent, through registration, by naturalisation (extended residence in India), and by incorporation of territory into India.

#### About Illegal Migrants-

- An illegal migrant is prohibited from acquiring Indian citizenship.
- An illegal immigrant is a foreigner who either enters India illegally, i.e., without valid travel documents, like a visa and passport, or enters India legally, but stays beyond the time period permitted in their travel documents.
- The Act provides that the following minority groups will not be treated as illegal migrants: Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. However, to get this benefit, they must have also been exempted from the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 by the central government.
- The Act says that on acquiring citizenship: (i) such persons shall be deemed to be citizens of India from the date of their entry into India, and (ii) all legal proceedings against them in respect of their illegal migration or citizenship will be closed.

- An illegal migrant can be prosecuted in India, and deported or imprisoned.

#### Provisions of the Act across the Country-

- The Act clarifies that the proposed amendments on citizenship to the specified class of illegal migrants will not apply to certain areas. These are:
  - (i) the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura, as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, and
  - (ii) the states regulated by the "Inner Line" permit under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations 1873.
- These Sixth Schedule tribal areas include Karbi Anglong (in Assam), Garo Hills (in Meghalaya), Chakma District (in Mizoram), and Tripura Tribal Areas District.
- Further, the Inner Line Permit regulates visit of all persons, including Indian citizens, to Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

#### Issues surrounding the Act-

- The Act makes only certain illegal migrants eligible for citizenship.
- These are persons belonging to the six specified religious communities, from the three specified countries, who entered India on or before December 31, 2014, and do not reside in the Sixth Schedule areas or in the states regulated by the Inner Line Permit states.
- This implies that all other illegal migrants will not be able to claim the benefit of citizenship conferred by the Act, and may continue to be prosecuted as illegal migrants.
- Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality to all persons, citizens and foreigners, thus differentiating between people on the grounds of religion would be in violation of the constitution.
- The Act provides differential treatment to illegal migrants on the basis of (a) their country of origin, (b) religion, (c) date of entry into India, and (d) place of residence in India.
- The Act classifies migrants based on their country of origin to include only Afghanistan, Pakistan and

Bangladesh. While the Statement of Objects and Reasons (SoR) in the Act reasons that millions of citizens of undivided India were living in Pakistan and Bangladesh, no reason has been provided to explain the inclusion of Afghanistan.

- The Act also creates further differentiation between the specified class of illegal migrants based on when they entered India (before or after December 31, 2014), and where they live in India (provisions not applicable to Sixth Schedule and Inner Line Permit areas). However, the reasons provided to explain the distinction is unclear.
- Assam has a major problem regarding infiltration of Bangladeshi illegal immigrants. This Act does not consider Bangladeshi Hindus as illegal immigrants.

#### **In context to Overseas Citizens of India-**

- The Act also amends the provisions on registration of Overseas Citizens of India (OCI).
- OCI cardholders are foreigners who are persons of Indian origin.
- For example, they may have been former Indian citizens, or children of current Indian citizens.
- An OCI enjoys benefits such as the right to travel to India without a visa, or to work and study here. At present, the government may cancel a person's

OCI registration on various grounds specified in the Act.

- In case of a cancellation, an OCI residing in India may be required to leave the country.
- The Act adds another ground for cancelling OCI registration — violation of any law notified by the central government. However, the Act does not provide any guidance on the nature of laws which the central government may notify.

#### **◎ CONCLUSION-**

- The Citizenship Amendment Act has not been sitting well with the Assamese as it contradicts the Assam Accord of 1985, according to which illegal migrants heading in from Bangladesh after March 25, 1971, would be deported. Also, the Act has introduced religion as a new concept into the citizenship law. Thus, the proposed legislation has polarised the Northeast and triggered a process of social and political realignment in the entire nation. This whole situation undermines the secularity of India. As the Constitution of India rejects discrimination on the grounds of religion, the proposed law makes religion a new basis of identification. Hence, there is an urgent need for India to undertake a balancing act here.

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# WHY AUDIT OF MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME IS NEEDED?

## CONTEXT

- The Union government is set to conduct an audit of mid-day meal programme across India, following the controversy surrounding the quality of food served in some schools in Uttar Pradesh.

## ◎ BACKGROUND

- The mid-day meal scheme is one of the largest school meal programmes in the world and caters to more than 91.2 million students across 1.13 million schools.
- A School in Uttar Pradesh served "roti and salt" to students. The district administration later filed a police complaint against journalist for reporting it in media and evoking wider criticism.
- However, it is not the first time that the mid-day meal scheme has got into controversy.
- It has been reported that various children have been hospitalized or died after consuming contaminated food. In July 2018, at least 30 students suffered food poisoning after having the mid-day meal in Delhi. In October last year, 45 children in Goa were hospitalized after having the mid-day meal. At least, 23 children had died in Bihar's Chhapra district in 2013 after consuming contaminated mid-day meal.
- In the wake of these issues the Union government is set to conduct an audit of mid-day meal programme across India.
- Malnutrition caused 69 per cent of deaths of children below the age of five in India, according to a UNICEF 2019 report. So Mid-Day Meal is of greater significance for India.

### Mid-Day Meal Scheme - Facts

- Scheme covers all children studying in class I to VIII.
- The programme supplies free lunches on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes in government, government aided, local body, Education Guarantee Scheme, and alternate innovative education centres, Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under SSA and National Child Labour Project schools run by the ministry of labour.
- MDM is covered by National Food Security Act, 2013.

- Ministry/Department :** Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development
- Objective:** To enhance, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children.

### Factual Information:

- Started in 1995 as National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education
- To achieve the above objectives, a cooked mid-day meal with the following nutritional content is provided to all eligible children.
- For Primary students:
  - Calories 450
  - Protein 12 gms
- For Upper Primary students:
  - Calories 700
  - Protein 20 gms
- Adequate quantities of micro-nutrients like Iron, Folic Acid and Vitamin-A.

## ◎ ANALYSIS

### Issues with Mid-Day Meal Scheme

- Aim:** The program aims to "enhance enrollment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improve nutritional levels among children." The program has the potential to end chronic malnutrition and starvation. However, the program has many issues which the government must immediately address.

### Organizational problems:

- There are too many layers of government involved in the scheme, resulting in poor information, coordination and monitoring.
- A few examples of poor monitoring and coordination show the issues this scheme encounters. In July, 2013, 23 children from the Indian state of Bihar died as a result of unsafe food preparation.



- No special structure is there to look after the quality of food served, hygienic conditions and other aspects of the scheme.

### **Corrupt practices**

- Rampant corrupt practices have been found from food procurement to distribution of hot cooked meals among children.
  - A video showed plain chapatis being served with salt in a school.
  - Another video revealed how a litre of milk was mixed with water so that it would suffice for the more than 80 children present that day in school.
  - As per the government norms, every child is entitled to receive 150 ml of milk as part of the mid-day meal.

### **Social Discrimination**

- Caste bias and discrimination continues in the implementation of the scheme
- It has been found in many schools that foods cooked by lower caste cooks were not eaten by children.
- Food is central to the caste system, so in many schools, children are made to sit separately according to their caste status.

### **Unhygienic issue**

- There have been multiple incidents of unhygienic mid-day meals.
- Dead rats, worms, lizards and insects have been spotted in mid-day meals served at schools across India.
- Recently, the CAG found that schools in Punjab were noted to have no water testing, no use of gloves, and violation of prescribed menus.
- Children were made to wash utensils, despite the school having hired staff to do so

### **Fortification Issue**

- Sub-standard food is served in many schools because there is not enough monitoring and accountability at the lower levels
- 85% of Indian children between the ages of 7 to 12 have high rates of micronutrients deficiencies (in iron, folic acid, Vitamin A). These can impair cognitive developments; impair concentration, cause school absenteeism and even illness. As successful pilot projects in Odisha have shown, staple essentials of Mid-Day meals like rice and wheat like can fortified with micronutrients. Micronutrient premixes can be added to cooked meals. These have shown success in reducing anaemia.

- However, fortification has only made its debut in some states like Karnataka instead of a pan-India rollout.

### **Irregular Food Supplies**

- Constant food and fuel supplies are not provided to the schools
- It is also a difficult challenge to deliver food to rural areas. Roads are not paved and the infrastructure is lacking. Even if food makes it to these remote areas, kitchens to cook the food in are not available within the schools.

### **Problems faced by Teachers**

- Teachers play a key role in the successful implementation of mid-day meal scheme at school level.
- Teachers face a number of problems such as problem of management of the mid-day meal, wastage of food by the students, insufficient and delayed receipt of funds, increased workload of teachers, procuring dry ration from the retail shops, lack of infrastructure for storage, cooking and serving food, lack of safety provisions, unhygienic surroundings, etc.

### **Lack of Documentation**

- A record of what students eat is not maintained.
- In some regions, one can see the daily menu painted on the school wall.
- Writing letters to authorities and documenting the gap between the painted menu and what is actually served might be a great activity.

### **Other issues**

- Other issues range from delayed payments, poor food quality, cooks not receiving pay and food being wasted. There is even embezzlement of the money by way of fake enrollments.
- The scheme is perceived as charity, not a civic responsibility. With the growing shift of the better-off parents to private schools, government schools are viewed as places for the poor. Therefore, the mid-day meal is associated with poverty both in public perception and state policies.

### **Achievements of Mid-day Meal Scheme**

- Increased Enrollment and Attendance: The meal scheme is generally a successful one as it has led to "increased enrollment in schools, increased attendance in schools, improved performance of students in class in terms of better attention span and academic progress.
- Improved nutritional status of students: Studies have found that the scheme reduced the daily

protein deficiency of a primary-school student by 100 percent, the calorie deficiency by almost 30 percent and the daily iron deficiency by nearly 10 percent.

- There is a dramatic fall in underweight and stunted children (from 48 % to 39 % (2005-6 and 2013-14).

#### UNICEF's Executive Director's Letter – Hope and Worry

- UNICEF's executive director Henrietta Fore recently wrote an open letter to the world's children.
- It marked 30 years since the promulgation of children's rights by global consensus.
- The letter listed eight reasons why she is worried and another eight why she is hopeful.
- Reading the two lists, one will feel that there is a lot more to worry about than to feel hopeful about.
- Coverage - The letter starts by acknowledging that poverty, inequality and discrimination still deny millions of children their rights.
- Food and education are among them.
- Then there are larger issues like the impact of conflicts, climate change, new technologies and their impact on the integrity of democratic procedures.
- The concluding part of the letter is about children's loss of trust in institutions.
- From fake news to divisive policy choices, the UNICEF chief's global letter evokes a wide range of local thoughts.
- A whole new industry backed by public institutions is now handling the supply side of public demand for moral training during the formative years of life.
- UNICEF must be aware that some of its sister agencies in the UN system are actively involved in the emerging neuroscience of ethics.
- One cannot charge fake news alone for waylaying the young.

#### Suggestions

- To minimize the layers in the governance of the Mid-Day Meal scheme for effective Implementation and effective accountability mechanisms.
  - Monitoring & Accountability Model: Committee of parents to audit food quality and other issues
  - Audit reports to be discussed in PRIs

- To institute automated monitoring systems for the midday meals supply, via apps, SMS, email or whatsapp.
- The civil society, government and concerned citizens should work in a coherent manner to produce tangible results.
- Instead of the school teachers being involved with every aspect of Mid Day Meal, from shopping to tasting, a separate person should be engaged as Mid Day Meal incharge at cluster level under the scheme for maintaining records and making purchases.
- Funds and food supply should be given at regular intervals to the schools to avoid discontinuation of Mid Day Meal Scheme or financial burden over teachers. Provision of advance payment should be made.
- Mechanism should be evolved to monitor the schools in far-flung and mountainous areas so that the benefits of the scheme can reach really to the needy population.
- Cook-cum-helpers should be given awareness about hygienic conditions. They should be paid well so that they work with motivation and commitment and should be trained for hygiene and desirable cooking practices.
- Storage and other hygiene facilities should be provided in the schools
- Provision of hand wash should be made available in each school for students so that they can learn hygiene.
- Seasonal fruits, milk, egg, green leafy vegetables and vitamin rich foods should be added to the menu to meet the nutritional needs of the students.

#### CONCLUSION

- Recent data released by UNICEF and the Global Health Database shows that in 2015 around 33 percent of Indian children were malnourished. India currently has more malnourished children than sub-saharan Africa and half of all child deaths are a result of malnutrition.
- Hopefully nonprofits and the government can work together to improve and perfect the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, as India's children definitely need it and can benefit from its proper implementation as the program has the potential to end chronic malnutrition and starvation.



## Mid Day Meal Scheme Audit

### Context

The Union govt is set to conduct an audit of mid-day meal programme across India, following the controversy surrounding the quality of food served in some schools in UP

The program aims to “enhance enrollment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improve nutritional levels among children.”

**GSSCORE**  
Learning Aid

### Achievements

Increased Enrollment and Attendance

Improved nutritional status of students

However, the program has many issues which the govt must immediately address:

There are too many layers of government involved in the scheme, resulting in poor information, coordination and monitoring

No special structure is there to look after the quality of food served, hygienic conditions and other aspects of the scheme

Other issues range from delayed payments, poor food quality, cooks not receiving pay and food being wasted. There is even embezzlement of the money by way of fake enrollment

### Organisational issues

### Administrative

**Irregular Food Supplies**  
Constant food and fuel supplies do not reach many schools, especially in rural areas

**Lack of Documentation**  
A record of what students eat is not maintained at many places, resulting in lack of accountability

### Issues with the scheme

**Rampant corrupt practices**  
have been found from food procurement to distribution of hot cooked meals among children

**Social Discrimination**  
Caste bias and discrimination continues in the implementation of the scheme

### Quality of Food

**Unhygienic Conditions**  
There have been multiple incidents of unhygienic mid-day meals

**Fortification**  
Sub-standard food is served in many schools because there is not enough monitoring and accountability at the lower levels. Proper fortification of food is sorely missing

### maintaining hygiene

Cook-cum-helpers should be made aware about hygienic conditions and given incentives

Provision for hand wash should be made available in every school

Storage and other hygiene facilities should be provided in the schools

Mechanism should be evolved to monitor the schools in far-flung and mountainous areas so that the benefits of the scheme can reach really to the needy population

### Suggestions

Seasonal fruits, milk, egg, green leafy vegetables and vitamin rich foods should be added to the menu to meet the nutritional needs of the students

### for effective implementation and accountability mechanisms

Committee of parents could audit food quality and other issues

Audit reports should be discussed in PRIs

Funds and food supply should be given at regular intervals

**SECTION: B**  
**(PRELIMS)**  

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**CURRENT AFFAIRS**  

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## HDI 2019 REPORT

### ◎ CONTEXT

- Recently, Human Development Report 2019 says that India is home to 28% of world's poor.

### ◎ ABOUT

- The annual HDI 2019 report, ranked India at the 129th position, one rank above last year's ranking, out of a total 189 countries.
- India remains the home to 28 percent of global poor. About 41 per cent of the world's poor live in South Asia.
- Between 1990 and 2018, India's HDI value increased by 50 per cent (from 0.431 to 0.647), which places it above the average for countries in the medium human development group (0.634) and above the average for other South Asian countries (0.642).
- This means that in the last three decades, life expectancy at birth in India increased by 11.6 years, whereas the average number of schooling years increased by 3.5 years. Per capita incomes increased 250 times.
- The report finds that despite progress, group-based inequalities persist on the Indian subcontinent, especially affecting women and girls.
- While Singapore has the region's lowest incidence of intimate partner violence against women, the report states that a staggering 31 per cent of women in South Asia have experienced intimate partner violence.
- India is only marginally better than the South Asian average on the Gender Development Index (0.829 vs 0.828), and ranks at a low 122 (of 162) countries on the 2018 Gender Inequality Index.
- The report states that as the number of people coming out of poverty is increasing, the world is veering towards another type of poverty. The old inequalities were based on access to health services and education whereas the next generation of poverty is based on technology, education and climate, according to the report.
- The report ranked countries after analysing reduction in absolute poverty, gains in life expectancy, education, and access to health care.
- India has both types of poverty. Even as Indians continue to face a lack of access to healthcare and education, many others are becoming poor based on the new criteria.

### What is HDI?

- The underlying principle of the HDI, considered path breaking in 1990, (created by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq) is elegantly simple: National development should be measured not only by income per capita, but also by health and education achievements.
- The HDI is the composite measure of every country's attainment in three basic dimensions:
  - Standard of living measured by the gross national income (GNI) per capita.
  - Health measured by the life expectancy at birth.
  - Education levels calculated by mean years of education among the adult population and the expected years of schooling for children.
- This index makes it possible to follow changes in development levels over time and to compare the development levels of different countries.
- Additional indices have been developed to capture other dimensions of human development to identify groups falling behind in human progress and to monitor the distribution of human development.
- In 2010 three indices were launched to monitor poverty, inequality and gender empowerment across multiple human development dimensions
  - The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI),

- The Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)
- The Gender Inequality Index (GII).

### Human Development Dashboard

#### Quality of human development

##### Quality of health

- India lost 13.9% in total life expectancy as health expectancy in 2016.
- There were only 7.6 physicians per 10,000 people in the period 2007-17 falling behind Pakistan who have a better physician to people ratio with 9.8 physicians for every 10,000 people.
- There are only 7 beds for every 10,000 people in India where a smaller nation like Nepal have 50 beds for every 10,000 people and has a lot to catch up with international standard.

##### Quality of education

- There is only one teacher in primary schools for every 35 pupil in India falling in the bottom tercile. International model standard comes up to somewhere 15-18 pupils per children.
- Only 70% teachers in primary schools are trained to teach in Indian schools.

##### Quality of standard of living

- 77.5% of the employed people are engaged as unpaid family workers and own account workers.
- 77.6% of the rural population had access to electricity in 2016.
- 87.6% of the total population was using improved drinking water sources in 2015, with only 44.2 % people having access to improved sanitation facilities in 2015.

## HEAVY METALS CONTAMINATING INDIA'S RIVERS

### ◎ CONTEXT

- Recently, the Central Water Commission (CWC) has reported that the samples from two-thirds of the water quality stations spanning India's major rivers have a heavy metal contamination problem.

### ◎ ABOUT

- According to the Report, samples taken from two-thirds of water quality stations on major rivers revealed the presence of a heavy metal (or in some cases more than one) beyond limits specified by the Bureau of Indian Standards.

#### Key Points-

- The Central Water Commission (CWC) has collected a total of 442 surface water samples, of which 287 were found to be polluted by heavy metals.
- The exercise was limited to surface water and did not cover groundwater contamination.
- The most common heavy metal found was iron, and above safe limits in 156 samples.
- Lead, nickel, chromium, cadmium and copper were the other metals.
- The CWC study covered 67 rivers in 20 river basins, and across three seasons.
- According to the report, Arsenic and zinc are the two toxic metals whose concentration was always obtained within the limits throughout the study period.
- For other metals, contamination levels changes with the season.

- For instance, iron contamination was persistent through most of the Ganga during monsoon but dipped significantly during the non-monsoon periods.

### Concerns-

- Over the last few decades, the concentration of these heavy metals in river water and sediments has increased rapidly.
- The report suggested increased monitoring of these levels.
- The report has held "population growth and rise in agricultural and industrial activities" responsible for the contamination.
- While some amount of metals in drinking water is normal and even required, if the level goes beyond the set limits it can lead to a range of diseases.
- Long-term exposure can lead to "progressing physical, muscular, and neurological degenerative processes that mimic Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis.
- India's 42 rivers have at least two toxic heavy metals beyond the permissible limit.
- This is worrying because a majority of Indians still use water directly from rivers for their domestic use.
- With an increase in population, the pressure on these rivers will only increase.
- According to the report, mining, milling, plating and surface finishing industries are the main sources of heavy metal pollution and the concentration of such toxic metals has increased rapidly over the past few decades.
- Consequently, concentrations of toxic metals in grains and vegetables grown in contaminated soils have increased at alarming rates.
- This poses a serious threat to humans and the environment because of its toxicity, non-biodegradability and bioaccumulation.

### Measures-

- Quality of water should be monitored at least four times a year.
- All the toxic metallic elements like chromium and its other associated heavy metals coming from the tanneries, mining and other industries should be treated chemically and biologically before such wastes find their way to River.

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## NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME

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### ◎ CONTEXT

- Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) as a long-term, time-bound, national-level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner.

### ◎ ABOUT

- The government is targeting to achieve 20 per cent to 30 per cent reduction in Particulate Matter PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations by 2024 keeping 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration.
- The government is targeting to achieve 20 per cent to 30 per cent reduction in Particulate Matter PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations by 2024 keeping 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration.
- Under NCAP, 102 non-attainment cities have been identified based on ambient air quality data for the period 2011 - 2015 and WHO report 2014 - 2018.
- The city-specific Action Plans have been prepared and approved for ground implementation for all 102 non-attainment cities.

### About National Clean Air Programme

- India is committed to clean environment and pollution free air and water. In fact, it is mandated in our constitution.
- The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, was enacted under Art. 253 of the Constitution to implement the decisions taken at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm in June 1972, in which India participated.
- In order to address the issue, Government has undertaken many significant steps which inter-alia includes:
  - Notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards and sector specific emission and effluent standards for industries;
  - Setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality;
  - Introduction of cleaner gaseous fuels like CNG, LPG etc and ethanol blending;
  - Launching of National Air Quality Index (AQI);
  - Universalization of BS- IV for vehicles by 2017;
  - Leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI standards for vehicles by 1st April, 2020;
  - Banning of burning of biomass;
  - Promotion of public transport network;
  - Pollution Under Control Certificate;
  - Issuance of directions under Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981;
  - Installation of on-line continuous (24x7) monitoring devices by 17 highly polluting industrial sectors.
  - Ban on bursting of sound emitting crackers between 10 PM to 6 AM.
  - Notification of Graded Response Action Plan for Delhi and NCR identifying source wise actions for various levels of air pollution, etc.

## OCEAN DEOXYGENATION

### ◎ CONTEXT

- **Marine life, fisheries increasingly threatened as the ocean loses oxygen – IUCN report**

### ◎ ABOUT

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has released a report titled "Ocean deoxygenation: Everyone's problem".
- The report is the largest peer-reviewed study so far into the causes, impacts and possible solutions to ocean deoxygenation; and was released by IUCN at COP25 to the UNFCCC.
- With this report, the scale of damage climate change is wreaking upon the ocean has come into stark focus. As the warming ocean loses oxygen, the delicate balance of marine life is thrown into disarray.
- Large areas of the open ocean are increasingly threatened with low levels of dissolved oxygen. It is harming marine ecosystems which were already under stress from ocean warming and acidification.
- The potentially dire effects on fisheries and vulnerable coastal communities make the decisions taken at the UN Climate Change Conference (CoP25) even more crucial.
- "To drive action towards restoring ocean health" is one of the key themes of IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille in 2010.

**What is the problem?**

- Ocean deoxygenation is one of the most pernicious, yet under-reported side-effects of human-induced climate change.
- Oxygen loss from warming of oceans has alarming consequences for global oceanic oxygen reserves, which have already reduced by 2% over a period of just 50-years (from 1960 to 2010).
- Ocean regions with low oxygen concentrations are expanding, with around 700 sites worldwide now affected by low oxygen conditions – up from only 45 in the 1960s.
  - In the same period, volume of anoxic waters – areas completely depleted of oxygen – in the global ocean has grown four times.
- If situation continues as is, the ocean is expected to lose 3–4% of its oxygen inventory globally by the year 2100.
  - But impact witnessed at the local level will be far more severe compared to that seen on average at the global level.
  - For example, impact will be more severe in mid to high latitudes.
  - Most of the losses are predicted to be concentrated in upper 1000m of the water column, which is the richest in marine biodiversity.

**What are the causes?**

- The primary causes of deoxygenation are:
  - Eutrophication (increased nutrient run-off from land and sewage pollution).
  - Nitrogen deposition from burning of fossil fuels.
  - Widespread impacts from ocean warming.
- Ocean oxygen loss is closely related to ocean warming and acidification caused by anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions and biogeochemical consequences related to anthropogenic fertilization of the ocean.
- As the ocean warms, its water hold less oxygen and become more buoyant, resulting in reduced mixing of oxygen-rich water near the surface with the ocean depths, which naturally contain less oxygen.
- Nutrient pollution causes oxygen loss in coastal waters. Fertiliser, sewage, animal and aquaculture waste cause excessive growth of algae, which in turn deplete oxygen as they decompose.

**What is the impact?**

- The loss of oxygen from world's ocean is increasingly threatening fish species and disrupting ecosystems.
- Deoxygenation is starting to alter the balance of marine life, favouring low-oxygen tolerant species (e.g. microbes, jellyfish and some squid) at the expense of low-oxygen sensitive ones (many marine species, including most fish).
- Some of the ocean's most productive biomes – which support one fifth of the world's wild marine fish harvest – are formed by ocean currents carrying nutrient-rich but oxygen-poor water to coasts that line the eastern edges of the world's ocean basins.
  - As naturally oxygen-poor systems, these areas are particularly vulnerable to even small changes in ocean oxygen.
  - Impacts here will ultimately ripple out and affect hundreds of millions of people.
- Species groups such as tuna, marlin and sharks are particularly sensitive to low oxygen because of their large size and energy demands.
  - These species are starting to be driven into increasingly shallow surface layers of oxygen-rich water, making them more vulnerable to overfishing.

- Very low ocean oxygen can also affect basic processes like the cycling of elements crucial for life on Earth, such as nitrogen and phosphorous.

#### What should be done?

- There is urgent need to dramatically raise our ambitions to tackle climate change, before human actions irreparably impact and change the conditions favourable for life on earth.
- To curb ocean oxygen loss alongside other disastrous impacts of climate change, world leaders must commit to immediate and substantial emission cuts.
- There is need to decisively curb greenhouse gas emissions as well as nutrient pollution from agriculture and other sources.

## INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY

### ◎ CONTEXT

- International Civil Aviation Day was established in 1994 as part of ICAO's 50th anniversary activities.

### ◎ ABOUT

- In 1996, pursuant to an ICAO initiative and with the assistance of the Canadian Government, the United Nations General Assembly officially recognized 7 December as International Civil Aviation Day in the UN system.
- The purpose of International Civil Aviation Day is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States, and of the unique role of ICAO in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind.
- For 2015-2018 inclusive the Council has selected the following theme: "Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind".

#### Chicago Convention:

- The Chicago Convention (also known as the Convention on International Civil Aviation), established the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations charged with coordinating and regulating international air travel.
- The Convention establishes rules of airspace, aircraft registration and safety, and details the rights of the signatories in relation to air travel; it also exempts air fuels from tax.
- The Convention was signed by 52 states on 7 December 1944 in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., and came into effect on 4 April 1947.
- The Convention provided for the sovereignty of airspace above the territory of each state, together with five freedoms (later expanded to nine by the addition of four unofficial freedoms) which govern the freedom of states to operate air transport flights (including the carriage of passengers, cargo and mail) across, into and within the airspace of other states.

Freedom	Description
1 <sup>st</sup>	Right to overfly a foreign country without landing
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Right to refuel or carry out maintenance in a foreign country
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Right to fly from one's own country to another
4 <sup>th</sup>	Right to fly from a foreign country to one's own
5 <sup>th</sup>	Right to fly between two foreign countries during flights which begin or end in one's own



6 <sup>th</sup>	Right to fly from one foreign country to another one while stopping in one's own country
7 <sup>th</sup>	Right to fly between two foreign countries while not offering flights to one's own country
8 <sup>th</sup>	Right to fly between two or more airports in a foreign country while continuing service to one's own country
9 <sup>th</sup>	Right to fly inside a foreign country without continuing service to one's own country

## **RISAT-2BR1**

### ◎ **CONTEXT**

- India placed a spy satellite, **RISAT-2BR1**, and nine customer satellites in orbit on **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle's (PSLV) 50th mission.**

### ◎ **ABOUT**

- RISAT-2BR1 is a synthetic-aperture radar (SAR) imaging satellite for reconnaissance built by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- It is part of India's RISAT series of SAR imaging space crafts and 4th satellite in the series.
- RISAT-2BR1 was launched in December 2019 aboard PSLV-C48 from First Launch Pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre.
- It was the 50th launch of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and 75th launch from Satish Dhawan Space Centre.
- RISAT-2BR1 usage: Apart from being used for military purposes, RISAT-2BR1 has applications in fields such as agriculture and disaster management support.

### **Technical details**

- The RISAT-2BR1 is follow on to RISAT-2B and has an X-band SAR with unfurl-able radial rib reflector antenna of 3.6 meter diameter.
- It can operate in different modes including Very High Resolution imaging modes of 1m x 0.5m resolution and 0.5m x 0.3m resolution with swath of 5 to 10 km.
- Mass: 628 kg
- Orbit: 557 km (circular) at inclination of 37°
- Mission life: 5 years

### **About the launch**

- RISAT-2BR1 was launched with nine other ride-sharing commercial satellites.
- Launch vehicle used was QL variant of PSLV with four PSOM-XL strap-ons, and employed a 195 kg Dual launch Adapter (DLA) to accommodate primary and secondary payloads.
- After flight of 16 minutes 27 seconds, RISAT-2BR was separated from PSLV fourth stage (PS4) and injected into 576 km circular orbit with 37° inclination.
- After primary payload, DLA-Upper and subsequently nine other co-passenger satellites were separated.
- RISAT-2BR1 deployed its solar panels within 3 minutes after separation.

### **About Secondary payloads**

- Nine commercial ridesharing satellites weighed 157.6 kg cumulatively. These customer satellites included six from United States, and one each from Japan, Italy and Israel:

- QPS SAR-1 "Izanagi" by iQPS.
- Four Lemur-2 cubesats by Spire Global.
- Duchifat-3 by Sha'ar Hanegav High School students built at Herzliya Science Center
- 1HOPSAT by Hera systems for Seguritech of Mexico.
- Tyvak-0129
- Tyvak-0092
- The international satellites on board PSLV-C48 were for a range of applications.
  - The US satellites were for earth imaging, multi-mission remote sensing platform, and technology demonstration;
  - Japan's was for radar imaging earth observation;
  - Italy's for search and rescue;
  - Israel's for remote sensing.

### About RISAT

- RISAT 2B, RISAT 2BR1 and RISAT 2BR2 (Radar Imaging Satellite) are satellite imaging missions of ISRO using an active SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) imager to provide continuity of service for RISAT-2.
- Objective of the RISAT mission is to use the all-weather and day-and-night SAR observation capability in applications such as agriculture, forestry, soil moisture, geology, sea ice, coastal monitoring, object identification, and flood monitoring, and also for military surveillance.

### Other significant PSLV launches

- Chandrayaan-1, the Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) and a record launch of 104 satellites in one go.
- In the last 26 years, PSLV has had five variants with the carrying capability increased to 1.9 tonnes from 850 kg. This vehicle has so far lifted a total of 52.7 tonnes of which 17% is customer satellites.
- The PSLV will soon be used in a mission to the sun.
- PSLV has proven its capability repeatedly with international clients queuing up to put their smaller satellites into orbit using the launch vehicle. PSLV trip is far more affordable than those on launch vehicles of other countries.
  - Between 1994 and 2019, the PSLV launched 50 Indian satellites and 222 foreign satellites for over 70 international customers from 20 countries.
- The first PSLV launch (PSLV-D1) back in 1993 had failed to place the IRS-1E satellite into orbit. After that, it's been a road to success.
- In November 2019, PSLV-C47 launched Cartosat-3 and 13 commercial nano-satellites.

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## ANGLO-INDIANS - NOMINATION QUOTA AND HISTORY

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### ◎ CONTEXT

- Recently, Parliament passed the Constitution (126th Amendment) Bill, extending reservation for SC/STs but doing away with the provision for nomination of Anglo Indians to Lok Sabha and some state Assemblies.



## ◎ ABOUT

- Article 331 of the Constitution Provides for nomination of two Anglo-Indians to Lok Sabha. It says: "Notwithstanding anything in Article 81, the President may, if he is of opinion that the Anglo-Indian community is not adequately represented in the House of the people, nominate not more than two members of that community to the House of the People." The 126th Amendment does away with this.
- The idea of such nominations is traced to Frank Anthony, who headed the All India Anglo-Indian Association. Article 331 was added in the Constitution following his suggestion to Jawaharlal Nehru.
- Article 333 deals with representation of the Anglo-Indian community in Legislative Assemblies. It says: "Notwithstanding anything in Article 170, the Governor of a State may, if he is of opinion that the Anglo-Indian community needs representation in the Legislative Assembly of the State and is not adequately represented therein, [nominate one member of that community to the Assembly]."
- Currently 14 Assemblies have one Anglo-Indian member each: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. The 126th Amendment does away with this as well.
- According to the 10th Schedule of the Constitution, Anglo-Indian members of Lok Sabha and state Assemblies can take the membership of any party within six months of their nomination. But, once they do so, they are bound by their party whip. The Anglo-Indian members enjoy the same powers as others, but they can not vote in the Presidential election because they are nominated by the President.

**Who are Anglo-Indians?**

- The Anglo-Indian community in India traces its origins to an official policy of the British East India Company to encourage marriages of its officers with local women.
- The term Anglo-Indian first appeared in the Government of India Act, 1935.
- In the present context, Article 366(2) of the Constitution Of India states: "An Anglo-Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only..."

**STATE-WISE ENUMERATION**

West Bengal	9
Odisha	4
Chhattisgarh	3
Maharashtra	16
Andhra Pradesh	62
Karnataka	9
Kerala	124
Tamil Nadu	69

(Source: All India Anglo Indian Association)

- According to 2011 Census there are only 296 people who identified themselves as belonging to the sect Anglo Indian. However, All India Anglo Indian Association contested the data and asserts that there are many more Anglo-Indians in the country.

**Who are the Anglo-Indians nominated to Lok Sabha over the years?**

- Henry Gidney made it to the Central Legislative Assembly under the Special Interests/ Anglo-Indian category in the 1920, 1923, 1926, 1930, and 1934 elections.
- Frank Anthony got nominated to Lok Sabha in 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1980, 1984 and 1991. A E T Barrow came close to him with seven tenures — in 1951-1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1977, 1980, 1984. Marjorie Godfrey was nominated in 1971. In 1977, Rudolph Rodrigues replaced Anthony.
- Joss Fernandez and Paul Mantosh were nominated by the Janata Dal government headed by V P Singh in 1989.

- The Congress government led by P V Narasimha Rao nominated Robert E Williams in 1991. Sheila F Irani had a brief stint from 1995 to 1996. Neil O'Brien and Hedwig Rego also had brief tenures of two years, from 1996 to 1998. Beatrix D'Souza and Neville Foley, both of the Samata Party, led by George Fernandes, were nominated in 1998. D'Souza continued in 1999 too, but Foley was dropped to make way for Denzil B Atkinson of the BJP.
- When the Congress-led UPA came to power, Ingrid McLeod got the nomination twice, in 2004 and 2009. Francis Fanthome came in to the Lok Sabha in 2004 and Charles Dias, a civil servant, in 2009. The BJP-led government of Narendra Modi brought in George Baker, an actor, and Richard Hay, a teacher from Kerala, in 2014.
- In 2014 the NDA government nominated George Baker, an actor, and Richard Hay, a teacher from Kerala. In the current Lok Sabha the two seats still empty.

### Conclusion

- The All India Anglo-Indian Association has contested the population figures given by 2011 census. 296 number is very low and how come there can be nominated members in Assemblies when the census shows no Anglo-Indians in those states. There is urgent need to relook into the issue and find out the actual population of the community. There was no need to end the nomination to the Lok Sabha and the state Assemblies of Anglo Indians if they were not fairly represented.

## CREAMY LAYER PRINCIPLE IN SC, ST QUOTA FOR PROMOTION

### ◎ CONTEXT

- Recently, government has sought review of SC judgment that creamy layer should be applied to SC/ST.

### ◎ ABOUT

- The union government has called upon the Supreme Court to form a seven judge Bench to reconsider the formulation in M. Nagaraj vs Union of India (2006) that creamy layer should be applied to the SC and ST communities.
- The Supreme Court in M. Nagaraj v. Union Of India 2006 case while upholding the constitutional validity of Art 16(4A) held that any such reservation policy in order to be constitutionally valid shall satisfy the following three constitutional requirements:
  - The SC and ST community should be socially and educationally backward.
  - The SC and ST communities are not adequately represented in Public employment.
  - Such reservation policy shall not affect the overall efficiency in the administration.
- In Jarnail Singh vs Lachhmi Narain Gupta case of 2018, Supreme Court holds that reservation in promotions does not require the state to collect quantifiable data on the backwardness of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
- The Court held that creamy layer exclusion extends to SC/STs and, hence the State cannot grant reservations in promotion to SC/ST individuals who belong to the creamy layer of their community.
- In May 2019 the Supreme Court upheld the Karnataka law that allows reservations in promotions for SCs and STs with consequential seniority.

### Centre's Arguments against the Extension of Creamy layer concept to SC and ST

- While the Centre has accepted that the 'creamy layer' norm is needed to ensure that only those genuinely backward get reservation benefits, it is justifiably upset that this principle has been extended to Dalits, who have been acknowledged to be the most

backward among the backward sections.

- Another problem is the question whether the exclusion of the advanced sections among SC/ST candidates can be disallowed only for promotions. Most of them may not fall under the 'creamy layer' category at the entry level, but after some years of service and promotions, they may reach an income level at which they fall under the 'creamy layer'. This may result in the defeat of the object of the Constitution amendments that the court itself had upheld to protect reservation in promotions as well as consequential seniority. Another landmark verdict in the history of affirmative action jurisprudence may be needed to settle these questions.

#### Historical background

- William Hunter and Jyotirao Phule in 1882 originally conceived the idea of caste-based reservation system.
- The reservation system that exists today, in its true sense, was introduced in 1933 when British Prime-Minister Ramsay Macdonald presented the 'Communal Award'.
- The award made provision for separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and the Dalits.
- After long negotiations, Gandhi and Ambedkar signed the 'Poona Pact', where it was decided that there would be a single Hindu electorate with certain reservations in it.
- After independence, initially reservations were provided only for SCs and STs.
- OBCs were included in the ambit of reservation in 1991 on the recommendations of the Mandal Commission.
- In the Indra Sawhney Case of 1992, the Supreme Court while upholding the 27 percent quota for backward classes, struck down the government notification reserving 10% government jobs for economically backward classes among the higher castes.
- Supreme Court in the same case also upheld the principle that the combined reservation beneficiaries should not exceed 50 percent of India's population.
- The concept of 'creamy layer' also gained currency through this judgment and provision that reservation for backward classes should be confined to initial appointments only and not extend to promotions.
- Recently, the Constitutional (103rd Amendment) Act of 2019 has provided 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the "economically backward" in the unreserved category.
- The Act amends Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution by adding clauses empowering the government to provide reservation on the basis of economic backwardness.
- This 10% economic reservation is over and above the 50% reservation cap.

#### Conclusion

- Reservation for SC, ST and OBC is a positive discrimination and is step towards inclusive development of the country. However, excluding the creamy layer from marginalized groups will be in favour of the principle of equality.

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## DATA PROTECTION BILL, 2019

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### ◎ CONTEXT

- The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 has been introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, on December 11, 2019.
- The Bill seeks to provide for protection of personal data of individuals, and establishes a Data Protection Authority for the same.

## ◎ ABOUT

- The Personal Data Protection bill, drafted by a panel headed by a former Supreme Court judge and submitted to the government last year, is key for how firms including global tech giants Amazon, Facebook, Alphabet's Google and others process, store and transfer Indian consumers' data.
- Broad guidelines on collection, storage and processing of personal data, consent of individuals, penalties and compensation, code of conduct and an enforcement model is likely to be a part of the law.
- Personal data is data which pertains to characteristics, traits or attributes of identity, which can be used to identify an individual.
- The Bill categorises certain personal data as sensitive personal data. This includes financial data, biometric data, caste, religious or political beliefs, or any other category of data specified by the government, in consultation with the Authority and the concerned sectoral regulator.

### Applicability:

- The Bill governs the processing of personal data by:
  - government,
  - companies incorporated in India, and
  - foreign companies dealing with personal data of individuals in India

### About data fiduciary-

- A data fiduciary is an entity or individual who decides the means and purpose of processing personal data. Such processing will be subject to certain purpose, collection and storage limitations.
- For instance, personal data can be processed only for specific, clear and lawful purpose. Additionally, all data fiduciaries must undertake certain transparency and accountability measures such as:
  - implementing security safeguards (such as data encryption and preventing misuse of data), and
  - instituting grievance redressal mechanisms to address complaints of individuals. They must also institute mechanisms for age verification and parental consent when processing sensitive personal data of children.

### About the Rights of the individual-

- The Bill sets out certain rights of the individual (or data principal). These include the right to: (i) obtain confirmation from the fiduciary on whether their personal data has been processed, (ii) seek correction of inaccurate, incomplete, or out-of-date personal data, (iii) have personal data transferred to any other data fiduciary in certain circumstances, and (iv) restrict continuing disclosure of their personal data by a fiduciary, if it is no longer necessary or consent is withdrawn.

### Why companies are worried?

- The proposed law may have a considerable impact on MNCs operating in India, whether with or without a physical presence, due to its data localisation requirements and cross-border data transfer restrictions.
- The Reserve Bank of India had, in April last year, issued a data localisation directive, mandating all authorised payment system operators and banks to store payment systems data only in India.
- This led to various ambiguities in the requirements as well as industry pushback on the strict requirements imposed, especially by global payment companies.

### Grounds for processing personal data-

- The Bill allows processing of data by fiduciaries only if consent is provided by the individual. However, in certain circumstances, personal data can be processed without consent.

- These include: (i) if required by the State for providing benefits to the individual, (ii) legal proceedings, (iii) to respond to a medical emergency.

### **Data Protection Authority-**

- The Bill sets up a Data Protection Authority which may:
  - take steps to protect interests of individuals,
  - prevent misuse of personal data, and
  - ensure compliance with the Bill.
- It will consist of a chairperson and six members, with at least 10 years' expertise in the field of data protection and information technology. Orders of the Authority can be appealed to an Appellate Tribunal. Appeals from the Tribunal will go to the Supreme Court.

### **Conclusion-**

- The Bill amends the Information Technology Act, 2000 to delete the provisions related to compensation payable by companies for failure to protect personal data. The central government may direct data fiduciaries to provide it with any: (i) non-personal data and (ii) anonymised personal data (where it is not possible to identify data principal) for better targeting of services.

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## **INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTRES AUTHORITY BILL, 2019**

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### **◎ CONTEXT**

- **International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha by Union Finance Minister.**

### **◎ ABOUT**

- The Bill provides for the establishment of an Authority to develop and regulate the financial services market in the International Financial Services Centres in India.
- Key features of the Bill include:
  - It will apply to all International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) set up under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005.
  - It sets up the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFFSCA)
  - Composition:
    - IFFSCA will consist of nine members, appointed by the central government.
    - Members of the Authority will include: (i) the Chairperson, (ii) one member each to be nominated from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), (iii) two members from among officials of the Ministry of Finance, and (iv) two members to be appointed on the recommendation of a Search Committee.
    - Members will have a term of three years, subject to reappointment.
- Functions of the Authority:
  - To regulate financial products (such as securities, deposits or contracts of insurance), financial services, and financial institutions which have been previously approved by any appropriate regulator (such as RBI or SEBI), in an IFSC.
  - It will follow all processes which are applicable to such financial products, financial services, and financial institutions under their respective laws.



- The appropriate regulators are listed in a Schedule to the Bill and include the RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, and PFRDA. The central government may amend this schedule through a notification.
- Regulating any other financial products, financial services, or financial institutions in an IFSC, which may be notified by the central government, and recommending any other financial products, financial services, or financial institutions to the central government, which may be permitted in an IFSC.
- The Bill sets up the International Financial Services Centres Authority Fund. The following items will be credited to the Fund: (i) all grants, fees and charges received by the Authority, and (ii) all sums received by the Authority from various sources, as decided by the central government. The Fund will be used for: (i) salaries, allowances and other remuneration of members and employees of the Authority, and (ii) expenses incurred by the Authority. Further, the central government may provide grants to the Authority for the regulation of IFSCs.
- The IFFSCA will constitute a Performance Review Committee to review its functioning. The Review Committee will consist of at least two members of the Authority. It will review whether: (i) the Authority has adhered to the provisions of the applicable laws while exercising powers or performing functions, (ii) the regulations made by the Authority promote transparency and best practices of governance, and (iii) the Authority is managing risks to its functioning in a reasonable manner. The Committee must submit a report of its findings to the Authority at least once every year.
- As per the Bill, all transactions of financial services in IFSCs will be in such foreign currency as specified by the Authority, in consultation with the central government.

#### **What is International Financial Services Centre?**

- An international financial services centre caters to customers outside the jurisdiction of domestic economy, dealing with flows of finance, financial products and services across borders.
- Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Co. Ltd is being developed as the country's first international financial services centre (IFSC)

#### **What are the services an IFSC can provide?**

- Fund-raising services for individuals, corporations and governments
- Asset management and global portfolio diversification undertaken by pension funds, insurance companies and mutual funds
- Wealth management
- Global tax management and cross-border tax liability optimization, which provides a business opportunity for financial intermediaries, accountants and law firms.
- Global and regional corporate treasury management operations that involve fund-raising, liquidity investment and management and asset-liability matching
- Risk management operations such as insurance and reinsurance
- Merger and acquisition activities among trans-national corporations

#### **What does an IFSC require?**

- IFSCs such as Dubai International Financial Centre and Shanghai International Financial Centre, which are located within SEZs, have six key building blocks:
- Rational legal regulatory framework
- Sustainable local economy
- Stable political environment
- Developed infrastructure
- Strategic location
- Good quality of life

**Should an IFSC be located within an SEZ?**

- Since India has many restrictions on the financial sector, such as partial capital account convertibility, high SLR (statutory liquidity ratio) requirements and foreign investment restrictions, an SEZ can serve as a testing ground for financial sector reforms before they are rolled out in the entire nation.
- Apart from SEZ-related incentives, as per the SEZ Act, there is an exemption from the securities transaction tax levied under Section 98 of the Finance Act, 2004, in case taxable securities transactions are entered into by a non-resident through an IFSC.

**Why are banks taking up space in the GIFT SEZ?**

- Commercial banks are allowed to open offshore banking units (OBUs) within SEZs, which are deemed as overseas branches. Such OBUs can trade in foreign currencies in overseas markets and also with Indian banks, raise funds in foreign currency as deposits and borrowings from non-resident sources and provide loans and liability products for clients. State Bank of India set up its first OBU at Santacruz Electronics Export Processing Zone in Mumbai, in 2003.

**Need for and the benefits of a unified authority**

- **Multiple regulators:** Currently, the banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSC are regulated by multiple regulators, i.e. RBI, SEBI and IRDAI.
- The dynamic nature of business in the IFSCs necessitates a high degree of inter-regulatory coordination. It also requires regular clarifications and frequent amendments in the existing regulations governing financial activities in IFSCs.
- The development of financial services and products in IFSCs would require focussed and dedicated regulatory interventions.

**Conclusion**

- Therefore, the bill providing a unified financial regulator for IFSCs in India would provide world class regulatory environment to financial market participants. This is also essential from an ease of doing business perspective.

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## PRIME MINISTER VAN DHAN YOJANA

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**◎ CONTEXT**

- Minister of State for Tribal Affairs will be announcing 100 Days achievements of 'Prime Minister Van Dhan Yojana'.

**◎ ABOUT**

- TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs is going to forge a partnership with Ritu Beri Designs to promote Indian tribal crafts and culture across the country and the world.
- Ms. Beri will be the Chief Design Consultant for Tribes India.
- Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY) is a Market Linked Tribal Entrepreneurship Development Program for forming clusters of tribal SHGs and strengthening them into Tribal Producer Companies has been launched with participation from all the 27 States from the Country.

**Additional information about Prime Minister Van Dhan Yojana**

- The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED.
- It was launched in 2018 and seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.
- The scheme will be implemented through Ministry of Tribal Affairs as Nodal Department at the Central Level and TRIFED as Nodal Agency at the National Level.

- At State level, the State Nodal Agency for MFPs and the District collectors are envisaged to play a pivot role in scheme implementation at grassroot level.
- Locally the Kendras are proposed to be managed by a Managing Committee (an SHG) consisting of representatives of Van Dhan SHGs in the cluster.

#### **The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED)**

- TRIFED is engaged in marketing development of tribal products and provides marketing support to the products made by tribals through a network of retail outlets.
- It is indulged in capacity building trainings of tribal handicraft artisans and tribal people engaged in the collection of Minor Forest Produce like Honey, Gum Karaya, Mahuwa Flower, Lac Cultivation and Dona Pattal making etc., with the ultimate objective of increasing their income and ensuring sustainable economic development.
- It has following four main activities
  - Retail Marketing Development Activity
  - MFP Marketing Development Activity
  - Vocation Training, Skill Upgradation and Capacity Building of ST Artisans and Minor Forest Produce (MFP) Gatherers
  - Research & Development/Intellectual Property Right (IPR) Activity.

## **WORLD MALARIA REPORT, 2019**

### ◎ **CONTEXT**

- Despite a dip in cases, India still one of the worst-hit countries.
- While Africa and India saw the maximum dip in malaria cases between 2017 and 2018, they still accounted for 85 per cent deaths.

### ◎ **ABOUT**

- The World malaria report 2019 provides a comprehensive update on global and regional malaria data and trends.
- The report tracks investments in malaria programmes and research as well as progress across all intervention areas: prevention, diagnosis, treatment, elimination and surveillance.
- It also includes dedicated chapters on the consequences of malaria on maternal, infant and child health, the "High Burden to High Impact" approach as well as biological threats to the fight against malaria.
- The 2019 report is based on information received from more than 80 countries and areas with ongoing malaria transmission.

#### **Findings in the report-**

- Nineteen countries in sub-Saharan Africa and India accounted for 85 per cent of the global malaria burden in 2018. Globally 228 million malaria cases were reported in 2018, which is marginally lower than the number of cases in 2017 (231 million), as per the World Malaria Report 2019 released by the World Health Organization.
- India registered a fall of 2.6 million malarial cases in 2018 as compared to previous year. The country also has one of the lowest funding per person at risk of being inflicted with malaria at just US\$0.2.
- Despite being the highest burden country in the South-East Asia region, India showed a reduction in reported cases of 51 per cent compared to 2017 and of 60 per cent compared to 2016.



- Although cases continue to decrease in the public sector, estimates indicate that there are still gaps in reporting from the private sector and those seeking treatment in India, as in Myanmar and Indonesia. The estimated burden of malaria, the WHO report says is 6.7 million while only 4 million cases were reported in 2018.
- India, Indonesia and Myanmar accounted for 58 per cent, 21 per cent and 12 per cent of the total reported deaths in the region, respectively.

### Major Challenges-

- In the South-East Asia region, the major challenges remain decreased funding, treatment failures and vector resistance to pyrethroids, the insecticides used against the vectors.
- The biggest region of concern for the WHO is the African region as it contributes 93 per cent cases to the global burden. This region also accounted for 94 per cent of all malarial deaths.
- Malaria is mostly caused by Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax parasites mainly. India accounted for a little less than half (47 per cent) of malaria caused by P vivax. Globally P. vivax, caused 7.5 million malarial cases. More than half (53 per cent) were found to be in South-East Asia.

### Way Ahead-

- WHO says more and more countries are on the verge of eliminating malaria. As many as 49 countries reported fewer than 10 000 such cases, up from 46 countries in 2017 and 40 countries in 2010.
- The number of countries with fewer than 100 indigenous cases—a strong indicator that elimination is within reach—increased from 17 countries in 2010 to 27 countries in 2018.
- South Africa had reported a five-fold increase in the number of malaria between 2016 and 2017. In 2018, the cases declined by 57 per cent. There are multiple reasons for the increase in cases: improved diagnosis and reporting, inadequate vector control and climatic factors (in African region).

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## GENDER RELATED LAWS IN INDIA

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### ◎ CONTEXT

- **In Hyderabad, a 25 year old woman veterinarian was raped and murdered recently. Violence against women continues to be rampant in India.**

### ◎ ABOUT

- **Types of crimes against women:** In 2017, according to NCRB report, majority of cases under crimes against women out of the total IPC crimes against women were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives' (33.2%), followed by 'Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty' (27.3%), 'Kidnapping & Abduction of Women' (21%) and 'Rape' (10.3%).
- **Types of crimes against women:** In 2017, according to NCRB report, majority of cases under crimes against women out of the total IPC crimes against women were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives' (33.2%), followed by 'Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty' (27.3%), 'Kidnapping & Abduction of Women' (21%) and 'Rape' (10.3%).
- **Accused is no stranger:** Rape by known persons constitutes a large percentage of all the cases reported. The accused are often reported to be friends, online friends, employers, neighbours, were friends, partners or separated husbands of the victims.
- **Domestic violence:** According to a National Family and Health Survey in 2005, total lifetime prevalence of domestic violence was 33.5% and 8.5% for sexual violence among women aged 15–49.
- **Extent of effect:** A 2014 study in The Lancet report 8.5% prevalence of sexual violence in the country affects 27.5 million women in India, given India's large population. A survey carried out by the Thomson Reuters Foundation ranked India as the most dangerous country in the world for women.

- **Conviction rates:** Conviction rate for rape cases in India was 44.3% in 1973 and 37.7% in 1983. It was 26.9% in 2009, and 32.2% in 2017. In metropolitan cities it was 27.2%.
- **Most unsafe places:** NCRB data reveals that Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal (in this order) is the most unsafe states for women in India, with the maximum number of crime against women.
- **Delhi:** Delhi is often called out for being unsafe for women. According to Delhi Police, in 2018, five women were raped and eight were molested everyday on an average.

### Constitutional Provisions for protection of women

- **Article 14:** The Constitution of India guarantees the "right to equality" to women and prohibits unreasonable discrimination between persons.
  - **Air India v. Nargesh Meerza case:** The Supreme Court struck down regulations of Air India and Indian Airlines that provided that an airhostess would retire on attaining the age of 35 years, or on the first pregnancy, whichever was earlier.
- **Article 15(1):** This article prohibits the state from discriminating on the basis of religion; race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Article 15(3) allows the state to make special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 16:** It provides equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.
  - **C. B. Muthamma v. Union of India case:** The Supreme Court held that provision of service rules requiring a female employee to obtain permission of the government in writing before getting married, and denying her the right to be promoted on the ground of her being married, was discriminatory.
- **Article 39 (a):** Urges the state to provide equal right to adequate means of livelihood to men and women. Article 39 (d) warrants equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 42:** In pursuance of Article 42, the Maternity Benefit Act was passed in 1961.
- **Article 44:** Requires the state to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.
- **Article 51 A (e):** States that it is the duty of the citizens to renounce practices that are derogatory to the dignity of women.

### Constitutional guarantees for participation in local government:

- **Article 243-D(3):** One-third of total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women.
- **Article 243-D(4):** One-third of total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women
- **Article 243-T(3):** One-third of total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall be reserved for women
- **Article 243-T(4):** Offices of chairpersons in Municipalities shall be reserved for women in such manner as the State Legislature may provide.

### Legal provisions for protection of women

- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) is a comprehensive legislation. It also covers women who have been/are in a relationship with the abuser and are subjected to violence of any kind—physical, sexual, mental, verbal or emotional.
- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1956) prevents trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution as an organised means of living.
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986) prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner.
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act (1987) provides for more effective prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification on women.

- Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) prohibits the giving or taking of dowry at or before or any time after the marriage from women.
- Maternity Benefit Act (1961) protects the employment of women during the time of her maternity and entitles her of a 'maternity benefit' – i.e. full paid absence from work – to take care for her child.
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1971) provides for the termination of certain pregnancies by registered medical practitioners on humanitarian and medical grounds.
- Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (1994) prohibits sex selection and prevents the misuse of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for sex determination leading to female foeticide.
- Equal Remuneration Act (1976) provides for payment of equal remuneration to both men and women workers for same work or work of a similar nature.
- Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act (1939) grants a Muslim wife the right to seek the dissolution of her marriage.
- Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act (1986) protects the rights of Muslim women who have been divorced by or have obtained divorce from their husbands. It makes all declaration of talaq, including in written or electronic form, to be void (i.e. not enforceable in law) and illegal.
- Family Courts Act (1984) provides for establishment of Family Courts for speedy settlement of family disputes.
- Indian Penal Code (1860) contains provisions to protect Indian women from dowry death, rape, kidnapping, cruelty and other offences.
- Code of Criminal Procedure (1973) has safeguards for women like obligation of a person to maintain his wife, arrest of woman by female police and so on.
- Indian Christian Marriage Act (1872) contain provisions relating to marriage and divorce among the Christian community.
- Legal Services Authorities Act (1987) provides for free legal services to Indian women.
- Hindu Marriage Act (1955) introduced monogamy and allowed divorce on certain specified grounds. It provided equal rights to Indian man and woman in respect of marriage and divorce.
- Hindu Succession Act (1956) recognizes the right of women to inherit parental property equally with men.
- Minimum Wages Act (1948) does not allow discrimination between male and female workers or different minimum wages for them.
- Mines Act (1952) and Factories Act (1948) prohibits the employment of women between 7 P.M. to 6 A.M. in mines and factories and provides for their safety and welfare.
- National Commission for Women Act (1990) provides for the establishment of a National Commission for Women to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal rights and safeguards of women.
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal). Act (2013) provides protection to women from sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organised or unorganized.
  - The Vishaka Guidelines were a set of procedural guidelines for use in India in cases of sexual harassment. They were promulgated by the Indian Supreme Court in 1997 and were superseded in 2013 by the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 This act defines child marriage as a marriage where the groom or the bride are underage, that is, the bride is under 18 years of age or the boy is younger than 21 years.
- Special Marriage Act, 1954 provides a special form of marriage in certain cases, provide for registration of certain marriages and, to provide for divorce. When people

from different faiths and caste chose to get married they do it under the Special Marriage Act.

- Indian Divorce Act, 1969 The Indian Divorce Act allows the dissolution of marriage, mutual consent, nullity of marriage, judicial separation and restitution of conjugal rights.

### **New legal provisions evolved to suit the changing nature of crimes**

- Information and Technology Act (2008)
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (2012)
- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act (2016)
- Decriminalization of Gay Sex (Section 377-2018)
- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act (Death penalty for raping a minor- 2018).

### **India is also party numerous international human rights instruments in this regard;**

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## **STATUS OF UNEMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA**

### **◎ CONTEXT**

- Recently the trends in Labour Force Participation Rate and unemployment in India were released through the Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS). Women fare poorly. Other studies, like OECD Economic Survey also suggest similar trends.

### **◎ ABOUT**

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** Labour is considered a primary factor of production. LFPR is the sum of all workers who are employed or actively seeking employment, divided by the total working-age population (age group of 16-64).
- Unemployment rate is defined as the share of labour force that is jobless, expressed as a percentage. Workers are considered unemployed if they currently do not work, despite the fact that they are able and willing to do so. 6.1% of India's labour force and 17.8% of young people (15-29 years) in the labour force are unemployed.
- **Unemployment trends for women in India:**
  - Only a quarter of the females in the country are either working or seeking jobs. Female LFPR is 23.3%.
  - Fall in LFPR was more for females than males.
  - The decline in LFPR for females was steeper in rural areas than urban.
  - Considerable wage gap between men and women; highest in Asia.
- OECD Economic Survey of India: The OECD survey found that India has the largest difference between employment rates of women and men among OECD nations at 52 percentage points.
  - Unemployment among young, educated women in urban areas is quite higher.
  - Employment gap between women and men is highest in the 15 to 29 years bracket.
  - Underemployment and poor job quality remain important issues.

- Status in other countries: In China, 43.5% women are in the workforce, in Sri Lanka 34.5%, Bangladesh 29.5% and in India 24.3%, according to World Bank data.
- Women in politics: India ranks 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in Parliament. Only 9% of MPs or MLAs are women. The 17th Lok Sabha has 14% women representation.

### **Educated unemployed women**

- According the recent NSSO survey, 2017-18, In India, more educated women are unemployed than before.
- In urban areas unemployment among educated women was twice their male counterparts.
  - The rate went up to 19.8% in 2017-18 from 10.3% in 2011-12.
- For rural educated women, unemployment stood at 17.3% in 2017-18 increasing sharply from 9.7 per cent in 2011-12.
- It is mostly uneducated women in dire straits and in desperate need of an income who go out to work in farms as daily wage workers even when their wages are lower than a man's.
- Parents on the other hand educate girls in order to find better matches for them in the marriage market.
- 'Gender Inclusion in Hiring in India' Report: 8.7% of working-age urban, educated women in the country are unemployed but only 4% of comparable men find themselves without a job.

### **Reasons to Low Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP)**

- Structural, social and cultural factors contribute to low FLFP.
- There is growing feminisation of agriculture tying women in this field due to socio-cultural restrictions, lack of alternate skills, and movement of men to cities away from agriculture.
- Unpaid care and domestic work hours of Women in India are second highest in world.
- Women in India do almost 10 times as much unpaid work as men.

### **Social barriers to women's mobility**

- There exist social barriers to women's mobility outside the house; it requires women to look for work with flexibility in timings and proximity to their households.
- Social constructs also prevent women from engaging in paid labour in certain employment opportunities like in gas stations, as plumbers, carpenters etc., where men can easily find work.
- Early age at marriage and child-birth is also a challenge to women joining the workforce.
- In case of most rural women, the lack of opportunity and information, patriarchy and lack of training in special skills are standing in the way of their finding remunerative wage employment outside the home.

### **Conclusion**

- Half of India's working-age population is not contributing to any economic activity. This is a serious cause of worry because it essentially means that India is not fully utilising its demographic dividend advantage. Studies suggest that increasing female participation in the labour force could increase the Indian GDP by 27 per cent.

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**MISCELLANEOUS**

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**CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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## **4<sup>th</sup> INDIA WATER IMPACT SUMMIT**

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- Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga) led by IIT Kanpur organised the 4th India Water Impact Summit from 5-7 December 2019 at the Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- The Summit this year will focus on integrated water resources management in urban and rural settings in order to achieve the Government's goal of providing water to every household in the next 5 years.
- The Summit will also host the 2nd "Water Finance Forum", a special event within an event that will bring together global financial institutions and investors keen on investing in the rejuvenation of the largest environmental programme.
- This year's theme shall focus on Financing of High Impact Projects in the water sector.
- The technology showcase track promises to showcase the very best of water related solutions from around the world.
- Additional Tracks in the 2019 Summit are:
  - Water impact in smart cities
  - Water impact in rural areas | delivering on Jal Jeewan mission

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## **AIM-SIRIUS DEEP TECHNOLOGY LEARNING, INNOVATION PROGRAMME**

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- The second phase of NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Russia's SIRIUS Deep Technology Learning and Innovation Programme 2019 in Sochi comes to an end as 25 Indian students returned today with best practices of contemporary innovation and entrepreneurship.
- SIRIUS hosted an eight-day project oriented educational program from 28 November to 8 December 2019. It was held in accordance with Memorandum of Understanding signed between AIM and SIRIUS last year.
- All 50 Russian and Indian students shared best contemporary innovation practices with each other under various categories: IT & Data Analysis, Clean Energy, Biotech, Remote Earth Sensing and Drones & Robotics.
- Under 'Clean Energy', students created a carbon free energy system/island where researchers from all over the world can lead research on tech advancement.
- Photo-biotechnology under 'Biotech' category was also designed for the production of bio antioxidants from microalgae. It overcomes the problems of food shortage and environment pollution by making better and safe food and absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> from the environment for photosynthesis.
- SIRIUS Innovation Festival held in India last year witnessed a delegation of 10 Russian student innovators and 10 Indian innovators from the best performing Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs).

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## **CONSTITUTION (126<sup>th</sup> AMENDMENT BILL), 2019**

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- Union Minister of Law and Justice introduced the Constitution (126th Amendment Bill) 2019, in the Lok Sabha, that provides to further amend Article 334 of the Constitution proposing to extend the reservation for these marginalised sections for another 10 years.
- The proposed amendment does away with the reservation provided to the Anglo-Indian community in the Lok Sabha and state legislatures.
- The need for bringing in the Bill was felt as the current reservation provision ends on January 26, 2020, and the government wants to get the approval of parliament ahead of the deadline.
- The Bill amends provisions related to reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- The Constitution provides for reservation of seats for SCs and STs and representation of the Anglo-Indian community by nomination, in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of states. This has been provided for a period of 70 years

since the enactment of the Constitution and will expire on January 25, 2020. The Bill seeks to extend the reservation for SCs and STs by another 10 years till January 25, 2030.

## DUCHIFAT 3

- Three youngsters from an Israeli school will travel to India next week to launch a satellite -- Duchifat 3 -- designed and built by them aboard PSLV C48 from ISRO's Sriharikota launch site.
- Duchifat 3 is the third in the series of Israeli student-made satellites. Jointly built by Herzliya Science Center and Sha'ar Hanegav High School students, the satellite is designed to serve children from across the country to "observe the Earth".
- It is a photo satellite used for ecological research of Earth from space. The size of the satellite is 10x10x30 cm (3U) and weighs 2.3 kg. The students worked for almost two and a half years to build it. The satellite will be of good help to agriculturists.

## FIRST MEGA FOOD PARK OF CENTRAL INDIA

- Avantee mega Food Park inaugurated in MP's Dewas.
- This first food park of central India is spread over 51 acres and has been constructed at a cost of about 150 crore rupees.
- Processing of soyabean, gram, wheat and other grains and vegetables will be done in the park. Warehouses will also be opened in Indore, Ujjain, Dhar and Agar in the next phase.

### Mega Food Park Scheme:

- The Scheme of Mega Food Park aims at providing a mechanism to link agricultural production to the market by bringing together farmers, processors and retailers so as to ensure maximizing value addition, minimizing wastage, increasing farmer's income and creating employment opportunities particularly in rural sector.
- The Mega Food Park Scheme is based on "Cluster" approach and envisages creation of state of art support infrastructure in a well-defined agri / horticultural zone for setting up of modern food processing units in the industrial plots provided in the park with well-established supply chain.
- The Mega Food Park project is implemented by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) which is a Body Corporate registered under the Companies Act. State Government, State Government entities and Cooperatives are not required to form a separate SPV for implementation of Mega Food Park project.

## HEAD ON GENERATION TECHNOLOGY

- In a bid to control the pollution, Indian Railways has developed an improvised converter, Head on Generation (HOG), in electric locomotives.
- Premium passenger trains of Indian Railways with AC coaches generally run on the End-on-Generation (EOG) system. This adds to both air and noise pollution.
- HOG system utilizes power from overhead catenary in order to feed auxiliaries in the coaches hauled by electric locomotives. According to the Railway Ministry, it saves up to 1 million litres of diesel per train annually.
- Over the years, the locomotives that have been manufactured by Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) are HOG compliant. Moreover, from April 2018 onwards, the pace of HOG conversion works for Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches have been increased to harness the benefits of this high-end technology.

### About:

- Some of the advantages of the HOG system are as follows:
  - With HOG system, the noise level reduces from 100 dB to noiseless

- Till now, there has been a significant reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> (over 2500 Ton) as well as NO<sub>x</sub> (over 10 Ton) emissions
- The HOG system reduced consumption of diesel, leading to huge savings in operational costs to the tune of over Rs 1,100 crore per annum
- Compared to EOG Power, which is Rs 22/unit, the HOG Power is economical at Rs 6/unit.

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## **INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE**

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- India called upon more countries to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to reduce dependence on fossil fuels to meet the growing energy requirement.
- Ministerial Plenary on "SOLAR AND THE SIDS – Making the Sun Shine Brighter" was held on the sidelines of the 25th session of Conference of Parties under the UN framework convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC COP25), in Madrid, Spain.

### **About International Solar Alliance:**

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former French President Francois Hollande had unveiled the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in 2015.
- The project was launched to combine the efforts of both countries to work against climate change and adopt renewable energy, replacing the use of fossil fuels.
- A total of 121 countries are prospective members of ISA, usually those located between the equator and the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.
- The ISA is the first international body to have a secretariat in India. Although it was founded in Paris, France, its headquarters is in Gurugram, India. The first assembly of ISA will be held in Delhi on 2nd October 2018.
- Two countries – Eritrea and St. Kittis and Nevis, signed the framework agreement of ISA on October 31, 2019. With this 83 countries have signed the ISA framework agreement.

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## **‘IRON UNION 12’**

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- Iron Union 12', a joint military exercise between the ground forces of the UAE and the United States, commenced.
- Spanning a few weeks, 'Iron Union 12' will see the two sides take part in joint military cooperation to enhance combat and tactical capabilities.
- The joint military exercises of the UAE Armed Forces with fraternal and friendly countries takes place in a manner consistent with latest developments, and reflects the UAE Armed Forces' determination to stand firmly against all threats and challenges facing the region.

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## **OPEC AND ITS ALLIES DECIDE TO CUT OIL PRODUCTION**

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- OPEC group of oil-producing countries and their allies, including Russia, have decided to cut oil production by 500,000 barrels per day.
- They agreed to reduce production to stem pressure on prices from abundant reserves and weak global economic growth.

### **About Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):**

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference on September 10–14, 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
- These countries were later joined by Qatar (1961), Indonesia (1962), Libya (1962), the United Arab Emirates (1967), Algeria (1969), Nigeria (1971), Ecuador (1973), Gabon (1975), Angola (2007), Equatorial Guinea (2017) and Congo (2018).

- Qatar terminated its membership on 1 January 2019.
- OPEC had its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, in the first five years of its existence. This was moved to Vienna, Austria, on September 1, 1965.

## SARAI SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT

- India's first hybrid annuity model (HAM) based 14 MLD sewage treatment plant (STP) has been inaugurated in Sarai, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.
- The project has been developed under the Namami Gange project of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
- In order to improve the quality of water in the river Ganga in Uttarakhand, 34 projects of sewerage infrastructure works have been taken up at a cost of approximately Rs 1,144.77 crore for creating treatment capacity of 165.50 MLD and laying sewerage network of 152 km.
- Once all these projects are commissioned, the entire sewage capacity of Uttarakhand will be met and there will be a substantial improvement in the quality of water of the river Ganga.
- Namami Gange – National Mission for Clean Ganga is an Integrated Conservation Mission (ICM) , approved as 'Flagship Programme' with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 Crore.

## SMALL FINANCE BANKS

- RBI releases guidelines for on-tap licensing of Small Finance Banks in the private sector.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had last issued guidelines for licensing of Small Finance Banks in the private sector on 27 November 2014.
- Major changes from the earlier Guidelines on Small Finance Banks dated 27 November 2014, are:
  - The licensing window will be open on-tap;
  - minimum paid-up voting equity capital / net worth requirement shall be Rs 200 crore;
  - for Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs), desirous of voluntarily transiting into Small Finance Banks (SFBs) initial requirement of net worth shall be at Rs 100 crore, which will have to be increased to Rs 200 crore within five years from the date of commencement of business;
  - SFBs will be given scheduled bank status immediately upon commencement of operations;
  - SFBs will have general permission to open banking outlets from the date of commencement of operations;
  - Payments Banks can apply for conversion into SFB after five years of operations, if they are otherwise eligible as per these guidelines.

## WHITE ISLAND

- Volcanic eruption in White Island of New Zealand.
- Whakaari/White Island (also known as just White Island) is an active andesite stratovolcano, situated 48 km (30 mi) from the east coast of the North Island of New Zealand, in the Bay of Plenty.
- Whakaari/White Island is New Zealand's most active cone volcano which has been built up by continuous volcanic activity over the past 150,000 years. About 70 percent of the volcano is under the sea, making this massive volcanic structure the largest in New Zealand.
- Previous Eruptions: On 27 April, 2016 a short-lived eruption occurred in the evening. It deposited material all over the crater floor onto some of the crater walls.

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