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— NOTE —

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 (JULY, 2020)

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SECTION: A
(MAINS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

AGREEMENT FOR MSME EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAMME

CONTEXT

The World Bank and the Government of India signed the $750 million agreement for the MSME Emergency Response Programme to support the increased flow of finance into the hands of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

⦿ ABOUT

- The World Bank's MSME Emergency Response Programme will address the immediate liquidity and credit needs of some 1.5 million viable MSMEs to help them withstand the impact of the current shock and protect millions of jobs.

- This is the first step among a broader set of reforms that are needed to propel the MSME sector over time.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the MSME sector leading to loss of livelihoods and jobs. The Government of India is focused on ensuring that the abundant financial sector liquidity available flow to NBFCs, and that banks which have turned extremely risk-averse, continue taking exposures in the economy by lending to NBFCs.

- This project will support the Government in providing targeted guarantees to incentivize NBFCs and banks to continue lending to viable MSMEs to help sustain them through the crisis.

- The World Bank Group, including its private sector arm – the International Finance Corporation (IFC), will support the government's initiatives to protect the MSME sector by:

  ➤ **Unlocking liquidity:** This program will support the government's efforts to channel that liquidity to the MSME sector by de-risking lending from banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to MSMEs through a range of instruments, including credit guarantees.

  ➤ **Strengthening NBFCs and SFBs:** This will include supporting the government's refinance facility for NBFCs. In parallel, the IFC is also providing direct support to SFBs through loans and equity.

  ➤ **Enabling financial innovations:** Today, only about 8 percent of MSMEs are served by formal credit channels. The program will incentivize and mainstream the use of fintech and digital financial services in MSME lending and payments.

The Indian MSMEs Sector

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in the growth of India's economy. MSMEs are the drive force for the growth engine of the Indian economy.

51 million SMEs across the country	**Generate** employment for 120 million people	**Contribute 38%** of the GDP	**Account for 40%** of the Exports	**Registered a** growth of around 20% in 2015-16

Service Sector

Enterprises	Investment in Equipments
Micro Enterprises	Does not exceed 10 lakh rupees
Small Enterprises	More than 10 lakh rupees but does not exceed 2 crore rupees
Medium Enterprises	More than 2 crore rupees but does not exceed 5 crore rupees

Potential of MSME

Trend of SMEs in other countries

◉ China in the last 20 years has created more SMEs than the total number of SMEs in Europe and the US combined. There SMEs contribute to over 68% of the exports.

◉ In Japan, SMEs contribute 55% of the value-added and employ 70% of the wage earners

◉ In Thailand, SMEs contributes to 38 % to the GDP and employ 60.7% of the population

Challenges to MSME

◉ Despite the importance of MSMEs in Indian economic growth, the sector is facing challenges. The list of the problems that are faced by existing/new companies in the SME sector are:

➤ Absence of adequate and timely banking finance

➤ Limited capital and knowledge

➤ Non-availability of suitable technology

➤ Low production capacity

➤ Ineffective marketing strategy

➤ Constraints on modernization & expansions

➤ Non-availability of skilled labor at affordable cost

➤ Follow up with various government agencies to resolve problems due to lack of man-power and knowledge etc.

Some of the steps taken by the government to develop MSME

◉ The government has announced to revive the Indian economy amid the Covid-19 pandemic, an economic package under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. The main thrust of the announcements has been a massive ₹ 3-lakh crores collateral-free assistance or sovereign credit guarantee to the Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

◉ Trade-Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) was launched by the MSME ministry to promote women entrepreneurs by providing loans/credit.

◉ Zero Defect-Zero Effect (ZED) Scheme was launched to rate and handhold all MSMEs for producing top quality products by utilizing clean technology.

◉ Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme and Other Credit Support Schemes

➤ Credit Guarantee Trust Fund for Micro & Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)

➤ Interest Subsidy Eligibility Certificate (ISEC)

◉ Development of Khadi, Village and Coir Industries

➤ Science and Technology Scheme

➤ Market Promotion & Development Scheme (MPDA)

➤ Revamped Scheme Of Fund for Regeneration Of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)

➤ Coir Vikas Yojana (CVY)

◉ WAY FORWARD

◉ It is very important to empower the SME sector to utilize the limited resources (human & economic) they have in an optimum manner.

◉ SMEs need to be educated and informed of the latest developments taking place globally and help to acquire skills necessary to keep pace with global developments.

◉ Status and concessions are to be provided to emerging entrepreneurs so that they feel that they are on the right track.

◉ The potential women entrepreneurs should be identified and steps should be taken to commence viable units by female entrepreneurs.

◉ The registration procedure for MSME units may be simplified.

◉ Technology up-gradation should be periodically done in MSME units. Governments, MSME Department, Department of Industries and Commerce, District Industries Centre, Chamber of Industries and Commerce, etc. should help the MSMEs units to go in for up-gradation of technology in their units.

◉ Labor problems can be solved to the maximum extent by providing suitable training facilities and proper working conditions. Workers' participation in decision making will also reduce the problems in the MSME units.

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ZOONOTIC DISEASES

CONTEXT

According to a new report published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), about 60 percent of known infectious diseases in humans and 75 percent of all emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic.

⊙ ABOUT

Insights of the Report

- ◉ **Report Name:** Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission.

- ◉ **Released on:** 'World Zoonoses Day' (July 6).

- ◉ The report discussed the context and nature of potential future zoonotic disease outbreaks, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ◉ It identified **seven anthropogenic driving factors** leading to the emergence of zoonotic diseases:
  - ➤ Increased demand for animal protein
  - ➤ Rise in intense and unsustainable farming
  - ➤ The increased use and exploitation of wildlife
  - ➤ Unsustainable utilization of natural resources
  - ➤ Travel and transportation
  - ➤ Changes in food supply chains
  - ➤ The climate change crisis.

Zoonoses or Zoonotic Disease

- ● It is a disease that has passed into the human population from an animal source directly or through an intermediary species.

- ● Zoonotic infections can be bacterial, viral, or parasitic in nature, with animals playing a vital role in maintaining such infections.

- ● Examples of zoonoses include HIV-AIDS, Ebola, Lyme disease, malaria, rabies, West Nile fever, and the current novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) disease.

World Zoonoses Day

- ● It is held every year to commemorate the first vaccination against a zoonotic disease that was successfully administered by **Louis Pasteur, a French biologist, on July 6, 1885**.

- ● The day is also marked to raise awareness about the risk of zoonotic diseases.

Analysis of the factors

- ◉ **Increased demand for animal-derived food:** It has encouraged the intensification and industrialization of animal production (a large number of genetically similar animals are bred in for higher productivity and disease resistance).

- ◉ **Intensive farm settings** cause animals to be raised close to each other, in less ideal conditions characterized by limited biosecurity and animal husbandry, poor waste management, and use of antimicrobials as a substitute for these conditions.
  - ➤ High use of antimicrobials in such farm settings is also contributing to the burden of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which itself is a chronic pandemic of high cumulative damage threatening public global public health.

- ◉ **The loss of forest cover for agricultural purposes** is influencing the emergence of zoonotic diseases by increasing human access to wildlife.

- ◉ **Environment-Wildlife Interface:** The **increased use and exploitation of wildlife** can bring humans in closer contact with wild animals.

- ◉ **Utilization of natural resources** owing to urbanization, **changes in land-use patterns,** and **growing industrialization** can also cause destruction and fragmentation of wildlife habitats and increase contact between humans and wildlife.

Recommendations suggested by the report

- ◉ The UNEP and ILRI emphasized on the importance of a **'One-Health' approach** to manage and prevent zoonotic disease outbreaks and pandemics. The report made ten recommendations based on the One Health approach which includes:
  - ➤ Raising awareness of zoonotic diseases;
  - ➤ Investing in interdisciplinary approaches, including One Health;
  - ➤ Expanding scientific inquiry into zoonotic diseases;
  - ➤ Improving cost-benefit analyses of interventions to include full-cost accounting of societal impacts of disease;
  - ➤ Strengthening monitoring and regulation practices associated with zoonotic diseases, including food systems;

➤ Incentivizing sustainable land management practices and developing alternatives for food security and livelihoods that do not rely on the destruction of habitats and biodiversity;

➤ Improving biosecurity and control, identifying key drivers of emerging diseases in animal husbandry and encouraging proven management and zoonotic disease control measures;

➤ Supporting the sustainable management of landscapes and seascapes that enhance sustainable co-existence of agriculture and wildlife;

➤ Strengthening capacities among health stakeholders in all countries;

➤ Operationalising the One Health approach in land-use and sustainable development planning, implementation, and monitoring, among other fields.

◉ WAY FORWARD

◉ There is an immediate need to invest in an in-depth understanding of environmental linkages with zoonotic diseases, monitoring of such diseases in human-dominated environments, investigating how environmental change or degradation is impacting zoonotic disease emergence.

◉ We must follow sustainable methods of food production and reduce dependence on intensive systems to preserve health and ecosystems.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

• **Established:** 5 June, 1972

• **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya

• **Reports:** Global Environment Outlook, Actions on Air Quality, Emission Gap Report, Rise of Environmental Crime (by UNEP & Interpol).

International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

• **Established:** 21 September, 1994

• **Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya

• ILRI's mission is to improve food and nutritional security and to reduce poverty in developing countries through research for efficient, safe and sustainable use of livestock—ensuring better lives through livestock.

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ISRAEL – PALESTINE CONFLICT

CONTEXT

Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan warn Israel that annexing settlements in the occupied West Bank could have 'consequences' for relations.

⊙ ABOUT:

- ⊙ The government of Israel had set July 1 as the date when it could begin to annex Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, as well as in the strategic Jordan Valley.

- ⊙ The move was endorsed by a Middle East plan unveiled by US President Donald Trump in January.

- ⊙ After the joint video conference, the foreign ministers of four countries said in a statement that any annexation of Palestinian lands occupied by Israeli forces in 1967 would imperil the foundation of peace talks and a violation of international law.

- ⊙ The statement further added that the countries would not recognize any changes to the 1967 borders. It also warned that the Israeli plans would have serious consequences for the stability and security of the region.

- ⊙ The EU has also mounted a diplomatic campaign against the annexation, highlighted by a visit to Jerusalem by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas to raise concerns about the prospective plans.

Palestine-Israel Conflict	
1945	World War 2 ends. 6mn Jews killed and millions displaced. Many Jewish people seeking a safe land of their own
1947	UN recommends splitting Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab States.
1948-49	Israel declares independence. This leads to the first Arab-Israeli war. Israel seizes more land than agreed in armistices leaving 750k Palestinian Arabs displaced. The Gaza strip is created.
1949-60s	More than 1mn Jews including 250k Holocaust survivors arrive in Israel to settle
1967	6-day war. Israel takes control of many places including Gaza.

1993	Palestine and Israeli leaders sign a Declaration of Principles in Washington. Here the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) is recognized by Israel and given some powers in Gaza. The PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist. Violence is stopped.
2002	After a string of suicide bombings, Israel starts building the controversial West Bank barriers- a 440-mile wall separating it from Palestinian territories.
2005	Israel agrees to withdraw from Gaza but maintains control of airspace and some imports/exports while restricting some travel
2008	Israel invades Gaza in Operation Cast Lead after rockets were fired over the wall. The conflict lasts 1 month. 1391 Palestinians and 30 Israelis are killed.
2014	There is a 50-day conflict over the summer in Operation Protective Edge after more rockets are launched at Israel. Israel invades Gaza again. 2,014 Palestinians and 73 Israelis are killed.
2017	U.S. President Donald J. Trump announces his decision to relocate the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing the city as Israel's capital.
2018	The United States slashes bilateral aid to the Palestinians and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), closes the PLO office in Washington, DC, and opens its embassy in Jerusalem.

Two-state Solution

- ⊙ It is a proposed framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by establishing two states for two people: Israel for the Jewish people and Palestine for the Palestinian people.

- In 1993 the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) agreed on a plan to implement a two-state solution as part of the Oslo Accords, leading to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

India's stand on Palestine-Israel conflict

- India has consistently supported the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to a State and the consequent imperative need for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region based on United Nations Security Council resolution 242, 338 and 425, as well as the principle of "Land for Peace." India has also supported the Madrid Conference of October 1991.

- India favored UNHRC's resolution in 2014 to probe Israel's human rights violations in Gaza. Despite supporting probe, India abstained from voting against Israel in UNHRC in 2015.

- India has de-hyphenated its relationship with Israel and Palestine in 2018 as part of its West Asia policy to treat both the countries mutually independent and exclusive.

⦿ WAY FORWARD

The Middle East has gone through dramatic shifts since the beginning of this conflict. In confronting common threats and in pursuing common interests, previously unimaginable opportunities and alliances are emerging. If peace can be achieved, the economic and security cooperation between the State of Israel and its Arab neighbors can create the prosperous Middle East that is connected by a common desire for security and economic opportunity.

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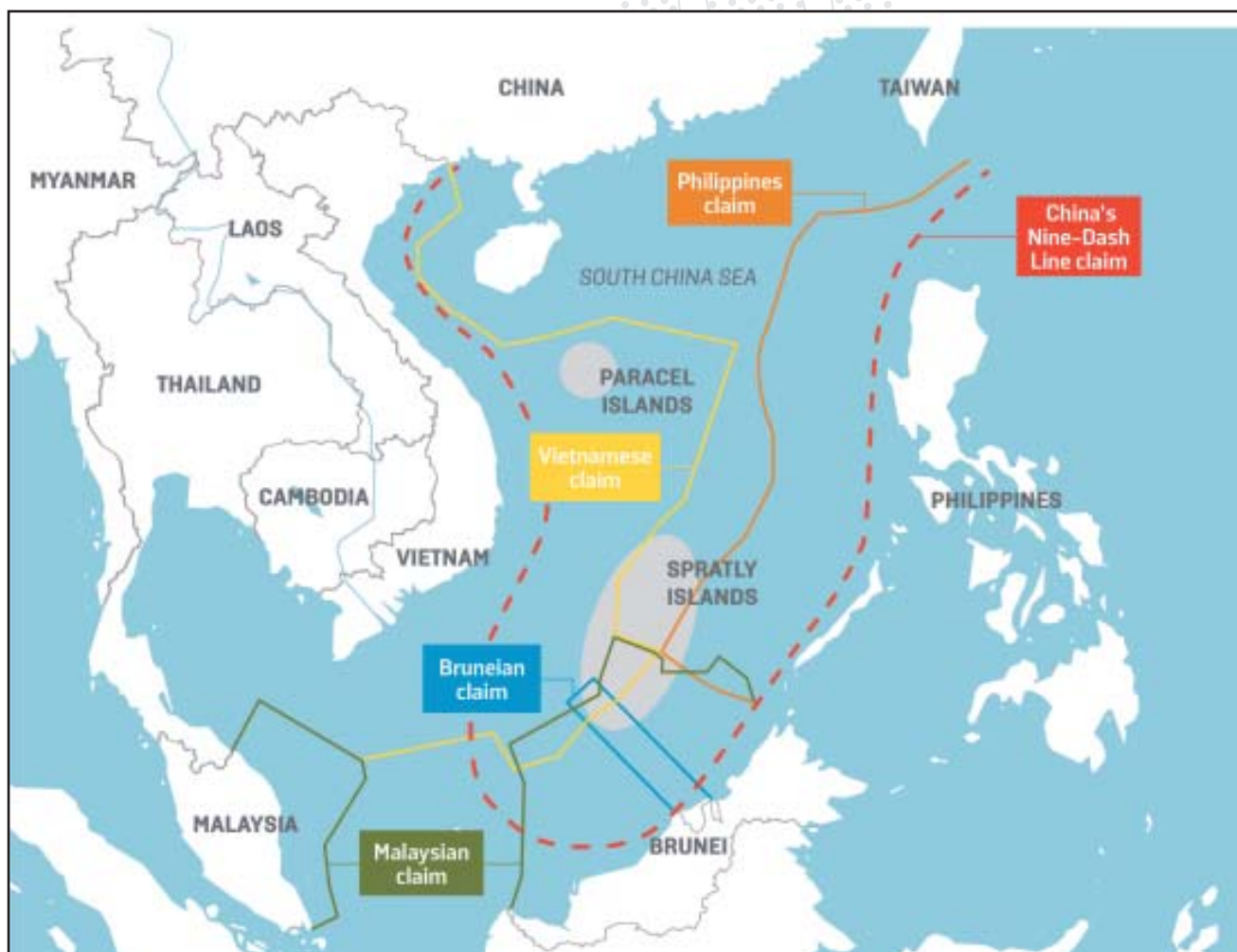**Visit:** 🌐 www.iasscore.in
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SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTE

CONTEXT

While the world is distracted by the coronavirus pandemic, China has been quietly taking paramilitary and political-legal actions in the South China Sea that could be game-changing for the region.

⊙ ABOUT

- Philippines decided not to suspend a defense pact with the U.S., avoiding a major blow to one of America's oldest alliances in Asia.

- The alliance is seen as having deterred aggressive Chinese actions in the disputed South China Sea, including the possible construction of structures in Scarborough Shoal, a disputed fishing area off the northwestern Philippines that China effectively seized after a tense standoff in 2012.

- Also, Beijing has been raising the stakes over the past year by threatening major offshore oil and gas projects inside Malaysia's and Vietnam's internationally recognized exclusive economic zones (EEZs).

- Recently, a Chinese survey ship escorted by the China Coast Guard harassed an exploration vessel operated by the Malaysian energy giant Petronas inside Malaysia's EEZ. The intimidation of the drillship followed similar standoffs last year.

- Before reaching Malaysia, the survey ship sailed through Vietnam's EEZ near the site of a previous incident.

- In 2019, Chinese and Vietnamese ships tried to block each other's exploration of five offshore oil blocs inside Vietnam's EEZ.

- This has raised worries in the region that China is trying to disrupt and gradually strangle Malaysian and Vietnamese oil and gas operations in the area and erase their territorial claims.

- The cost to Malaysia will be severe if Petronas has to pull the plug on important projects. Similarly, Hanoi fears that ExxonMobil and Rosneft might abandon projects in Vietnamese waters if Chinese harassment continues.

Significance of the South China Sea

- The sea carries tremendous strategic importance; one-third of the world's shipping passes through it, carrying over $3 trillion in trade each year, it contains lucrative fisheries, which are crucial for the food security of millions in Southeast Asia. Huge oil and gas reserves are believed to lie beneath its seabed.

- 80 percent of China's energy imports and 39.5 percent of China's total trade passes through the South China Sea.

The Dispute

- Territorial disputes in the South China Sea involve both island and maritime claims among several sovereign states within the region, namely Brunei, the People's Republic of China, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

- The disputes include the islands, reefs, banks, and other features of the South China Sea, including the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Scarborough Shoal, and various boundaries in the Gulf of Tonkin.

- China claims almost the entire South China Sea, reflected in a map created with a 9-dash line to show them as a part of China.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) verdict

- The PCA award undermined the Chinese claim. It held that none of the features of the Spratly's qualified them like islands, and there was no legal basis for China to claim historic rights and to the resources within the 'nine-dash line'.

- The UNCLOS provides that islands must sustain habitation and the capacity for non-extractive economic activity. Reefs and shoals that are unable to do so are considered low-tide elevations.

India's interest in the region

- India is seen as a vital player in the region, and Southeast Asian countries are keen to partner with India both economically and strategically.

- With India's maritime discourse expanding and 55% of India's trade passing through this region, India must pursue its interest in the region.

- India's "legitimate interests" are reflected in the energy contracts that its public sector giant Oil and Natural Gas Commission's Videshi Limited (OVL) had acquired through legal and global norms in the South China Sea.

- India has, on several occasions, called upon all parties to avoid unilateral action that leads to tensions in the region and called for peaceful resolution of disputes without the threat of use of force.

Importance of the South China Sea for the USA

- America's concern with the South China Sea is a result of China's effort to secure control over the maritime territory and the resources it contains.

- Washington argues that UNCLOS permits nations to exercise "high seas freedoms," which include, inter alia, peaceful military operations, in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of coastal states. China disagrees.

- For America, then, the future of the current regional order and the security of its allies are at stake. To maintain its geopolitical position in the western Pacific, the US is obliged to defend the regional alliance system and reassure local powers who are concerned about China's intentions.

⊙ WAY FORWARD

- Preventing the Western Pacific from turning into a China-owned lake requires working together to defend partners and international law.

- Maritime states like the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei should enhance cooperation by coordinating their coast guard operations, increasing their sharing of intelligence, and reaching an accord on how their overlapping South China Sea maritime boundaries should be demarcated.

- India must continue to actively pursue its defense diplomacy outreach in the Indo-Pacific region: increase military training and conduct exercises and exchanges at a higher level of complexity, extend Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief activities, share patrolling of the Malacca Strait with the littoral countries, etc.

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POSTAL BALLOT SYSTEM

CONTEXT

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has made it possible for senior citizens above the age of 65 to vote by postal ballot. Hitherto, this option was available only to disabled citizens and those above 80 years.

⦿ BACKGROUND

- The **Representation of the People Act, 1951** provides for any person to be given the **postal facility by the ECI in consultation with the government.**

- The ECI had recommended that three categories of electors be given the postal ballot facility:
  - ➤ Those 80 years and above
  - ➤ Persons with disabilities
  - ➤ Essential services workers

- This was notified by the government on October 22, 2019, and the ECI rolled it out as a pilot in seven constituencies in the Jharkhand Assembly elections last year.

- Subsequently, in the NCT of Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections in February 2020, this facility was extended in all 70 ACs.

- Due to COVID-19, the country is in lockdown since March 25, those above 65 years are categorized as vulnerable in COVID-19 pandemic, hence the ECI has decided to extend the postal ballot facility to them and those in-home or institutional quarantines to minimize their exposure in public and yet not deprive them of their voting rights.
  - ➤ A new category of "Covid-19 suspect or affected persons" has been added under **Rule 27A of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.**

Issues related to the recent extension of the Postal Ballot by the ECI

- The move will ensure to expand the voter base and remove obstacles to voters exercising their franchise.

- However, postal ballots may not minimize the risk of infection and it may be better instead to provide separate voting booths for senior citizens.

- Political parties argue that allowing those aged 65 and above to vote by postal ballot **violates secrecy in voting** as a large segment of the population is uneducated and they might seek assistance from others at numerous stages, ending up disclosing their preferred candidate.

- It also exposes a high percentage of voters to organized administrative influence or influence by the Government or the ruling party or their agents or any number of individuals who shall be able to identify these individuals in advance (with ease) and influence how they vote without the protection of the secret ballot.

- It will be doubly endangering not just the voters but those around them vis-à-vis exposure to the Covid-19 virus.
  - ➤ Form 13A along with the Postal Ballot Paper has to be duly attested and notarized for which the voter will have to personally meet an officer.
  - ➤ The voter shall have to utilize the services of a government postal office to send his or her postal ballot and therefore, will yet again risk either contracting or spreading Covid-19 infection.

Need of Extension of Postal Ballot for the Migrant Workers

- As per the **Economic Survey 2017, internal migrant workers constitute about 13.9 crores,** which is nearly a third of India's labor force. Often they work hard in exploitative low-wage jobs, lacking identity and proper living conditions, without access to welfare and unable to exercise their voting rights.

- Migrant workers become quasi-disenfranchised, forgotten voters because they cannot afford to return home on Election Day to choose their representatives.

- Internal migrant workers do not enroll as voters in their place of employment:
  - ➤ Since they find proof of residence hard to provide.
  - ➤ Many are seasonal migrants who would rather vote in their villages if they could afford to return home.

- Since they do not have a vote where they work, their concerns are easy to ignore in their host State.

Voting Scenario in India

- India currently has over 91.05 crore registered voters and in the 2019 general election, a record 67.4%, i.e., 61.36 crore voters, cast their vote. One-third, a substantial 29.68 crore did not cast their vote.

- **As per the National Election Study surveys** about 10% of registered voters refrain from voting due to a lack of interest in politics. That leaves approximately 20 crore voters who want to vote but are unable to do so.

  ➤ Of these, there are about three crores Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). Only about one lakh NRIs have registered to vote. Of them, about 25,000 voted in the 2019 elections.

Postal Ballot System

- Through this facility, a voter can cast her vote remotely by recording her preference on the ballot paper and sending it back to the election officer before counting.

- Currently, only the following voters are allowed to cast their votes through postal ballot:

  ➤ Service voters (government employees) posted away from home can vote through the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS).

  ➤ Classified service voters (e.g., military personnel) can do so through their proxies.

  ➤ Voters under preventive detention can also vote only by post.

- Recently, a new category of **'absentee voters'** was introduced; the voters can now also opt for postal voting. These are voters employed in essential services and unable to cast their votes due to their service conditions.

  ➤ Currently, officials of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, Northern Railway (Passenger and Freight) Services, and media persons are notified as absentee voters.

◉ WAY FORWARD

- The central mission of the ECI should be to ensure that every Indian who is eligible to vote can cast the vote.

- The ECI is testing an **Aadhaar-linked voter-ID based** solution to enable electors to cast their votes digitally from anywhere in the country. But, it must be ensured that the linkage with Aadhaar does not result in the exclusion of eligible individuals.

- To facilitate voting by migrant workers, the ECI could undertake substantial outreach measures using the network of District Collectorates.

- Migrants should be able to physically vote in their city of work based on the address on their existing voter IDs and the duration of their temporary stay.

- Voting must be viewed not just as a civic duty **but as a civic right**. We must demonstrate the political will to usher in 'One Nation One Voter ID,' to ensure native ballot portability and empower the forgotten migrant voter.

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COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND NATIONAL SECURITY

◉ **BACKGROUND**

◉ The past experiences show that pandemics not only destroy immune systems but also undermine the social, economic, and political systems that underpin entire nations and regions.

◉ There has been considerable debate regarding the linkage between the pandemic and the national security. As Coronavirus or the COVID-19 reaches over 200 countries infecting millions of people and killing over 250, 000 (and counting), it is time to examine the threat not just from health or medical point of view but a larger perspective of national security.

◉ Treating the Coronavirus crisis as a national security issue would make the battle against it more organized.

◉ **ABOUT**

Pandemic and National Security

◉ The growing COVID-19 pandemic and the outbreak of HIV/AIDS, Influenza H1N1 and SARS in recent past are just a few examples of diseases that can profoundly threaten the physical integrity of a state.

◉ The pandemic poses not only a greater level of severity in its threat to the highly afflicted states but also substantially endangers the security of the less affected states.

◉ The pandemic presents a range of challenges to the integrity of a state and may best be tackled by various states through different institutions, diplomatic instruments, economic schemes, and public health strategies.

◉ The inevitable connection of pandemics and security was best explained by the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He emphasized the increasing need for "**collective security**" and "**biological security.**"

◉ Looking at the present situation, national security needs to be redefined as conventional war is no longer the primary physical threat to a state; rather, the focus must shift to include threats from the disease that challenge the interests of states both internally as well as externally.

How national security of a state can be threatened by a pandemic?

● **Strains on Public Health**

  ➤ Increased rates of illness and mortality putting huge strains on public health and the nation's

workforce, leading to political instability, class strife, and economic recession. For example, HIV/AIDS has led to numerous problems in many African countries.

● **Vulnerability to biological warfare**

  ➤ The most direct threat posed by a pandemic to the international community arises from its **vulnerability to biological warfare**. It is important to note that the result of a naturally spreading disease and something **like bioterrorism** is the same.

  ➤ The failure to prevent the biological weapons' attack results in the same outcome – infection of the population – and requires the same solution. The preparation for the widespread disease should, therefore, be a key focus of national security.

● **Social, economic, and political stability**

  ➤ The pandemics pose more indirect threats to national security which include "the **health of the armed forces** and most significantly, to the social, economic, and political stability of certain key regions."

Coronavirus and Human Security

● **Recession & Unemployment**

  ➤ The scope of human security could be expanded to include **not only traditional, political, and military security but also economic, educational, food, and health security** among others. On the economic front, the Corona pandemic has plunged the world economy into a recession with the potential of deep consequences and historical levels of unemployment and deprivation.

● **Learning and Human Interaction**

  ➤ The closure of the education sector due to the spread of Coronavirus is adversely affecting the children and young people. It is **disrupting the process of learning and human interaction** which is essential to social and behavioral growth.

● **Global Health Security**

  ➤ In the absence of specific anti-viral therapy, Coronavirus has seriously **damaged the prospects of global health security**. Despite apparent decisive actions by the governments, it is evident that it has affected people from

all over the world -- rich as well as poor countries.

- **Food Security**
  - ➤ The food security, another important component of human security, is also seriously threatened because of the global pandemic of COVID-19. COVID-19 will have significant **negative effects on people along the food supply chain** involving producers to processors, marketers, transporters, and consumers.

Coronavirus and Migration

- ◉ The issue of migration and refugees poses a serious security threat to the affected countries. This is because **refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** often don't have fixed places to live, and authorities might not know how to contact them or have the capacity to coordinate a response. Given the condition in which the refugees live in the camps of Syria, Myanmar – Bangladesh border, it would be disastrous if the Coronavirus reaches there. The human rights approach critically comes within the **broad framework of national security as human rights and human security are inseparable components of national security**.

COVID-19: Violent Extremism

- ◉ One of the disturbing features of the ongoing Corona crisis is the **emerging pattern of the relationship between actors of political violence and the pandemic**. Violent extremists probably are seeking to exploit public fears associated with the spread of COVID-19 to incite violence, intimidate targets, and promote their ideologies.

- ◉ **Cyber terrorism** has grown into a major security threat in this era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Cybercriminals are taking advantage of the situation and already started new techniques to inflict more damages on states and the people. More and more hospitals, research hubs, and medical centers are being targeted for information, intelligence, and system accessibility.
  - ➤ **For Example**, a hacker group attacked the computer systems of the UK's Hammersmith Medicines Research (HMR), which is performing trails on COVID-19 vaccines; publishing personal data of thousands of former patients after the company failed to pay the extortion demand.

- ◉ COVID-19 brings in more challenges for the **Left-Wing or Right-Wing** infested countries. For example, India, where the Maoist Movement is considered to be the greatest internal security problem, faces the daunting task of tackling two invisible enemies (the Coronavirus and the Maoist insurgents) simultaneously.

◉ CONCLUSION

As the Coronavirus pandemic escalates, the task of rethinking the political, economic, diplomatic, and strategic fundamentals of a more coherent approach to national security becomes more urgent than ever. As the battle against COVID-19 is seemingly uncertain, one thing is clear that it is going to alter a whole lot of ethos of national security.

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SECTION: B
(PRELIMS)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

MONGOLIAN KANJUR

⊙ **CONTEXT:** **The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under the National Mission for Manus, NMM.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**
- The first set of five volumes of Mongolian Kanjur published under the NMM was presented to President Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of Guru Purnima, also known as Dharma Chakra Day, on 4th July.

- It is expected that all the 108 volumes of the Mongolian Kanjur will be published by March 2022.

Mongolian Kanjur

- It is a Buddhist canonical text in 108 volumes and it is considered to be the most important religious text in Mongolia.

- In the Mongolian language **'Kanjur' means 'Concise Orders'**- the words of Lord Buddha in particular. It is held in high esteem by the Mongolian Buddhists and they worship the Kanjur at temples and recite the lines of Kanjur in daily life as a sacred ritual. The Kanjur is kept almost in every monastery in Mongolia.

- Mongolian Kanjur has been translated from Tibetan. The language of the **Kanjur is Classical Mongolian.** The Mongolian Kanjur is a source of providing a cultural identity to Mongolia.

National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)

- It was launched in February 2003 by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

- The mandate is documenting, conserving, and disseminating the knowledge preserved in the manuscripts.

- One of the objectives of the mission is to publish rare and unpublished manuscripts so that the knowledge enshrined in them is spread to researchers, scholars, and the general public at large.

Cultural Relations between India and Mongolia

- Historical interaction between India and Mongolia goes back centuries. Buddhism was carried to Mongolia by Indian cultural and religious ambassadors during the early Christian era. As a result, today, Buddhists form the single largest religious denomination in Mongolia.

- India established formal diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1955. Since then, the overwhelming relationship between both countries has now reached a new height.

- Now, the publication of Mongolian Kanjur by the Government of India for the Government of Mongolia will act as a **symbol of cultural symphony between India and Mongolia** and will contribute to the furtherance of bilateral relations during the coming years.

> **Dharma Chakra Day**
> - This day commemorates **Gautam Buddha's First Sermon** to his first five ascetic disciples at the Deer Park, Rsipatana in the present day Sarnath near Varanasi, UP.
> - The day is also celebrated by Buddhists all over the world as the day of **Dharma Chakra Parvattana or "Turning of the Wheel of Dharma".**

IAF GETS APACHE ATTACK HELICOPTERS FROM BOEING

⊙ **CONTEXT:** **Boeing handed over the last of the five AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to the Indian Air Force (IAF), completing the contract for 22 Apaches.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**
- India contracted 22 Apache helicopters and 15 Chinook helicopters from Boeing through the Foreign Military Sales programme of the U.S. government in September 2015 under a $3 billion deal.

- The IAF inducted the first batch of Apaches in September 2019 and based them at Air Force Station, Pathankot, Punjab.
  - ⊙ While the last five Apaches arrived in India early this year, the handover was slightly delayed due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

- The Apaches were deployed at the Leh airbase as part of the forward movement of assets, amid the stand-off with China in Ladakh.

- Earlier, in March, Boeing handed over the last five of the 15 CH-47F (I) Chinook heavy-lift helicopters to the IAF.

AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter

- It will replace the Mi-35 fleet.

- Alongside the capability to shoot fire-and-forget anti-tank guided missiles, air-to-air missiles, rockets, and other ammunition, it also has **modern EW [electronic warfare] capabilities** to provide versatility to the helicopter in network-centric aerial warfare.

- The helicopter is capable of delivering a variety of weapons which include air to ground Hellfire missiles, 70 mm Hydra rockets, and air to air Stinger missiles.

- Apache also carries one 30 mm chain gun with 1200 rounds as part of the area weapon subsystem.

- To add to the lethality of the helicopter, it carries **fire control radar,** which has 360° coverage and nose-mounted sensor suite for target acquisition and night vision systems.

- It has an improved **Modernized Target Acquisition Designation System** that provides day, night, and all-weather target information, as well as night vision navigation capability.

- It can be sued for multi missions like for reconnaissance, security, peacekeeping operations, apart from attack operations.

CH-47F (I) Chinook Heavy-lift Helicopters

- It is a **heavy lift, tandem rotor helicopter** that serves armed forces of 19 countries. It will greatly enhance IAF's HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief) capability.

- The Chinook is an advanced multi-mission helicopter that will provide support to the Indian armed forces during disaster relief, medical evacuation, search and rescue missions, aircraft recovery, and parachute drops.

- Each Chinook can carry goods and cargo weighing up to 9.6 tonnes. This includes men and machines—like artillery guns and light armoured vehicles—to high altitudes.

- The Chinook contains a fully integrated, Digital Cockpit Management System, Common Aviation Architecture Cockpit, and advanced cargo-handling capabilities.

e-CROPPING

⊙ **CONTEXT:** **For the first time, Agriculture and Revenue Departments of Andhra Pradesh has jointly taken up e-Cropping, which will be useful to farmers.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

- It is an Android application launched with a local name called **e-Panta**, which is designed to know the ground reality of the crop details and to analyze the crop pattern across the state and to capture the standing crop in the state.

- Photographs as evidence in the case of crop damage and insurance are also available as the arable land in the state has been captured in latitude and longitude along with subdivision and occupancy.

- All field officers are trained to capture the crop details in the existing agricultural fields using tabs and to upload the crop details to the server for every crop season.

- The features include an online transfer of crop details to **Webland (Land record management website),** evidence in the case of crop damage for insurance, evidence for crop loans by banks, crop pattern and water tax demand analysis, and GPS location of each land parcel across the state. The mobile app covers land use and the entire Pattadar's history of land cover.

Objectives of e-cropping:

- Sharing of agricultural information with the farmers through digitalization.

- To eradicate corruption.

- To maintain accuracy through photographs with Geo-tagging

- To create Biometric authentication for genuine users.

- To create a robust MIS system through Data analytics and Powerful Business Intelligence for various analysis reports.

E-Technology in the Aid of Farmers by the Government of India

- **Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC):** SFAC is an exclusive Society focused on increasing incomes of small and marginal farmers through aggregation and development of agribusiness. SFAC offers Schemes like Equity Grant and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme to FPCs to improve the availability of working capital and the development of business activities.

- **Kisan Sabha App:** The primary objective of Kisan Sabha is to connect farmers to the supply chain and freight transportation management system.

- **Kisan Rath Mobile App:** It will facilitate farmers and traders to identify suitable transport facilities for the movement of farm produce during coronavirus lockdown. The App will allow transportation of farm produce from farm gate to mandi and from one to another mandi. It will ensure seamless supply linkages between farmers, FPOs, APMC mandis, and intra-state and inter-state buyers.

- **National Agriculture Market (eNAM)**: It is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.

INDIA'S SECOND VNR REPORT

⊙ **CONTEXT:** NITI Aayog Presented India's 2nd Voluntary National Review at UN's High-Level Political Forum.

⊙ **ABOUT:**

- India presented its VNR along with other second time presenters like Bangladesh, Georgia, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, and Uganda.

- India's VNR this year has undertaken a paradigm shift in terms of embodying a "whole-of-society" approach.

- The process of preparation of a country's VNR provides a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of various relevant stakeholders.
- NITI Aayog prepared and presented India's first VNR in 2017.
- The VNRs presented by the Member States at the HLPF are a critical component of the review of the progress and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)

- The establishment of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was mandated in 2012 by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The Future We Want".
- The Forum meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment and every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly for two days.
- The Forum's first meeting was held on 24 September 2013. It replaced the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had met annually since 1993.
- The HLPF has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level.
- The Forum adopts inter-governmentally negotiated political declarations.
- These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the HLPF.

INDIA'S TIGER CENSUS OF 2018 SETS A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

⊙ **CONTEXT:** **The fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018 has entered the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**
- The citation at the Guinness World Record website says the fourth iteration of the survey - conducted in 2018-19 - was the most comprehensive to date, in terms of both resource and data amassed.
- The All India Tiger Estimation done quadrennially is steered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority with technical backstopping from the Wildlife Institute of India and implemented by State Forest Departments and partners.
- India is home to nearly 75 percent of the global tiger population and has already fulfilled its resolve of doubling tiger numbers; made at St. Petersburg in 2010, well ahead of the target year of 2022.

All India Tiger Estimation 2018

- The tiger numbers stood at **2,967 at last count in 2018, a 33 percent jump** from 2,226 in 2014.
- **Top 5 Performing States:** Madhya Pradesh saw the highest number at 526, followed by Karnataka (524), Uttarakhand (442), Maharashtra (312), and Tamil Nadu (264).
- **States with a decline in tiger population:** Chhattisgarh and Mizoram. While all other States saw a Positive increase.
- **Madhya Pradesh's Pench Sanctuary and Kerala's Periyar sanctuary** emerged as the best-managed tiger reserves in the country.
- **Maximum improvement** in the tiger population since 2014 recorded in **Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu.**

- The Dampa and Rajaji reserves, in Mizoram and Uttarakhand respectively, were left at the bottom of the ladder with a score of 42.97% and 44.53%.
- No tiger has been found in the Buxa (West Bengal), Palamau (Jharkhand), and Dampa (Mizoram) reserves.

Project Tiger

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** of Government of India which was launched on the 1st of April, 1973 for in-situ conservation of wild tigers in designated tiger reserves.
- **Strategy:** The strategy involves exclusive tiger agenda in the core/critical tiger habitat, inclusive people-wildlife agenda in the outer buffer, besides fostering the latter agenda in the corridors. This strategy / roadmap are reflected in a tiger reserve specific Tiger Conservation Plan for each reserve prepared under section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- The is a statutory body of the Ministry, with an overarching supervisory / coordination role, performing functions as provided in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

VIRTUAL MINISTERIAL ON CLIMATE ACTION

⊙ **CONTEXT:** **Recently the fourth edition of the Virtual Ministerial on Climate Action was held to advance discussions on the full implementation of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to demonstrate continued political commitment to global climate action.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

- The meeting was co-chaired by the European Union, China, and Canada.
- It witnessed countries exchanging views on how countries are aligning economic recovery plans with the Paris Agreement and the critical enabling conditions to ensure continued climate action.
- India highlighted its steps taken for combating climate change.
- India also called upon developed country parties, once again, to do their part as envisaged under UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, for extending financial and technological support to developing countries.
  - ⊙ The promise of **USD 1 trillion by 2020** has not been fulfilled so far **by the developed countries.**
  - ⊙ India hopes that the promised amount is mobilized and delivered in the remaining 5 months of 2020, for further strengthening climate actions in developing countries.

COP 25 to the UNFCCC

- Held in December **2019 in Madrid, Spain.**
- **The key deliverables were two-fold:**
  - ➤ Rules under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which deals with carbon trading or carbon markets.
  - ➤ The creation of a financial mechanism dedicated to loss and damage.
- CoP 25 failed to deliver on these requirements. Reasons for this were:
  - ➤ No Consensus on Rules on carbon market.
  - ➤ Lack of Clarity on Loss and Damage.
- The **COP 26 is to be held in Glasgow in 2020** to address the gaps that were undermined at COP 25 and also harmed the reputation of COP 25.

Paris Climate Agreement – COP 21

- It aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

- It was opened for signature on 22 April 2016 – Earth Day – at UN Headquarters in New York. It entered into force on 4 November 2016. To this date, 189 Parties have ratified of 197 Parties to the Convention.

India's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)

- India has pledged to improve the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 per cent by 2030 below 2005 levels.

- It has also pledged to increase the share of non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40 per cent by 2030.

- It has agreed to enhance its forest cover which will absorb 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO_2, the main gas responsible for global warming) by 2030.

Steps taken by India for combating Climate Change

- The Indian government has provided **80 million LPG connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) in rural areas,** providing them with clean cooking fuel and a healthy environment.

- More than **360 million LED bulbs have been distributed under Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) scheme,** which has led to an energy saving of about 47 billion units of electricity per year and reduction of 38 million tonnes of CO_2 per year.

- India has also leapfrogged from **Bharat Stage-IV (BS-IV) to Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI)** emission norms by **April 1, 2020,** which was earlier to be adopted by 2024.

- India had **levied a coal cess of INR 400/-** as part of one of the most explicit green initiatives & this is now **subsumed under Goods and Services Tax (GST).**

- Under **Smart Cities Mission**, first-of-its-kind initiative – **Climate-Smart Cities Assessment Framework 2019** has been launched which intends to provide a clear roadmap for cities and urban India towards combating climate change through the adoption of both mitigation and adaptation measures.

Achievements of India in combating Climate Change

- India has achieved a **reduction of 21% in the emission intensity of its GDP between 2005 and 2014**, thereby achieving its pre-2020 voluntary target.

- India's **renewable energy installed capacity has increased by 226% in the last 5 years** and stands more than 87 Gigawatt.

  - The share of **non-fossil sources in installed capacity of electricity generation** increased from 30.5% in March 2015 to **37.7% in May 2020**.

  - The Indian government has also further announced the aspirational target of increasing our renewable energy capacity to 450 GW.

- India's total forest and tree cover is 8, 07,276 sq. km. which is 24.56% of the total geographical area of the country.

e-LOK ADALATS

⊙ **CONTEXT:**   **Chhattisgarh becomes the first state to start e-Lok Adalats.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**

- Chhattisgarh has set a new milestone at the time of ongoing Covid-19 pandemic with the state high court organizing nation's first state-level e-Lok Adalat and disposing nearly of 2270 cases by resolving cases through mutual agreement through video conferencing.

- Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority (CGSLSA) confirmed that over 5,067 cases were heard in the e-Lok Adalat and a settlement amount of about Rs 43.72 crore was made.

- As many as 195 benches, including two benches of the High Court, were set up in 23 districts to resolve matters in e-Lok Adalat.

- In e-Lok Adalat, the parties and lawyers will be able to sit in their respective homes and connect to the court by video conferencing through the given link. If the parties and lawyers have difficulty in connecting through video conferencing, then they have also been given the facility to present their case by making a WhatsApp video call.

Lok Adalat

- NALSA along with other Legal Services Institutions conducts Lok Adalats. Lok Adalat is one of the alternative dispute redressal mechanisms, it is a forum where disputes/cases pending in the court of law or at the pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably.

- Lok Adalats have been given statutory status under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Under the said Act, the award (decision) made by the Lok Adalats is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is final and binding on all parties and no appeal against such an award lies before any court of law.

- If the parties are not satisfied with the award of the Lok Adalat though there is no provision for an appeal against such an award, but they are free to initiate litigation by approaching the court of appropriate jurisdiction by filing a case by following the required procedure, in the exercise of their right to litigate.

- There is no court fee payable when a matter is filed in a Lok Adalat.

- The Lok Adalat shall not decide the matter so referred at its instance, instead the same would be decided based on the compromise or settlement between the parties.

- The members shall assist the parties independently and impartially in their attempt to reach an amicable settlement of their dispute.

The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

- The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to monitor and evaluate the implementation of legal aid programmes and to lay down policies and principles for making legal services available under the Act.

- NALSA was formed on 9 November 1995 under the authority of the **Legal Services Authorities Act 1987.**

- Its purpose is to provide free legal services to eligible candidates (defined in Sec. 12 of the Act) and to organize Lok Adalats for the speedy resolution of cases.

- The Chief Justice of India is patron-in-chief of NALSA while the second senior-most judge of the Supreme Court of India is the Executive-Chairman.

- There is a provision for similar mechanisms at state and district levels also headed by

Chief Justice of High Courts and Chief Judges of District courts respectively.

- The prime objective of NALSA is speedy disposal of cases and reducing the burden of the judiciary.

GUJARAT GOVT CONSTITUTES A FIVE-MEMBER COMMISSION TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF TRIBAL

⊙ **CONTEXT:**   **Gujarat government constituted a five-member commission to decide rightful beneficiaries of Rabari, Bharwad, and Charan castes residing in the Ness areas of Gir, Barda, and Aalech forests.**

⊙ **ABOUT:**   ### Background

- The central government had, through a notification dated October 29, 1956, conferred ST status on people from Rabari, Bharvad, and Charan communities living in the nesses of Gir, Barda, and Alech in Gujarat.

- Many tribal community leaders have been protesting for quite some time alleging that several people who do not live in nesses have managed to get ST certificates and are enjoying undue reservation benefits, mainly in government jobs.

- To resolve this issue and decide the legitimate beneficiaries of ST status among the members of the three communities, the commission has been formed.

Composition:

- The Five-member commission would consist of a retired High Court Judge, two retired District Court Judges, a retired Forest Department official, and a retired Additional Collector.

Objective:

- To resolve the long-pending issue about the Scheduled Tribes Certificate for the tribal living in the region.

- To protect the Constitutional rights of rightful tribal and to prevent the wrong person from taking benefits of the tribal.

About the Tribes

- **Bharwad**

  ⊙ The term Bharwad is reported to be a modified form of the word **'Badawad' and 'bada' means sheep and 'Wada' in Gujarati refer to compound or enclosure**.

    ➤ The person who possesses compounds or pens in this caste of shepherds was known as Badawad which in course of time came to be known as Gadarieas. In Sough Gujarat they are referred to as Ahirs.

  ⊙ They communicate in Gujarati. They use the Gujarati script.

  ⊙ Clan exogamy is the norm. They practice monogamy. Ghargenu (remarriage) is permitted in case of the death of either spouse.

  ⊙ Bharwad women have no right to property inheritance. Bharwad women enjoy low status.

  ⊙ The Bharwads are pastorals who are permitted to graze their sheep and cattle in certain demarcated areas of the reserved forest. Some Bharwads possess dry agricultural land under the Satharnal scheme (1968).

  ⊙ The Bharwads profess Hindusim. **Lord Krishna is** considered the supreme God. Each

clan has its deity. Their chief deity is Masai Mata.

- **Charan**
  - They are also called **Gadhvi.** The name Charan is derived from the word **char which means grazing.**
  - They speak Gujarati and use Gujarati script. The Charan are strictly vegetarian.
  - There are four endogamous groups among the Charans known as Prajia, Seva, Agarvacha, and Tumbel. Hierarchical order does exist between these groups
  - The Charans marry within their community.
  - The Charans are traditionally cattle breeders. They have also adopted agriculture as their secondary occupation.
  - They profess Hinduism. The main deity of the Charan is **Pithorai Mata located at Pathrama village in Mendarda taluka of Junagadh**. She is their chief as well as a regional deity.

- **Rabari**
  - **Bhopa** is the short name used for a group of Rabaris who are referred to **as Bhopa Rabari**.
  - They had migrated from Rajasthan via Kutch to Okhamandal and now most of the Bhopa Rabaris are, distributed in the Okhamandal region of Jamnagar district.
  - They speak a language which is a mixture of Gujarati, Kachchi, and Marwari words and Pharasi; it is popularly known as a language, by the community name, i.e. Bhopa. They use the Gujarati script.
  - Women do not have the right to parental property.
  - The main economic activity of the Bhopas is sheep breeding and selling of milk.
  - The Bhopas profess Hinduism and **are Shiva and Shakti, followers.**

Constitutional Provisions related to Schedule Tribes

- **Article 366(25) provides the definition of Scheduled Tribes:** Scheduled Tribes means such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution;
- **Article 342 (1):** The President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be.
- **Article 342 (2):** Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification Part XVII Official Language Chapter I Language of the Union.

Educational, Economic and Public Employment-related Safeguards

- Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
- Article 16: Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment

- Article 19: Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc
- Article 46: Promotion of Educational and Economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections
- Article 335: Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts

Political Safeguards

- Article 243D provides reservation of Seats for Scheduled Tribes in Panchayats.
- Article 330 provides reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People.
- Article 332 provides reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in Legislative Assemblies of the States.
- Article 334 provides that reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and the State Vidhan Sabhas the representation of the Ang would continue up to January, 2020.

Agency for Monitoring Safeguards

- Article 338 A: National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).

BHUBANESWAR LAND USE INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM (BLUIS)

◉ **CONTEXT:** **Odisha becomes the first state in India to use Space Technology and Artificial Intelligence for safeguarding government lands.**

◉ **ABOUT:**
- The objective behind this launch was the lack of adequate transparency and accountability in the current manual mode of mechanism which was being used for decades for the detection of encroachments in government land.
- BLUIS is a geo-tagged repository of all the government lands in Bhubaneswar, created through high-resolution satellite imagery to detect all changes taking place on government lands.
- A mobile application would alert the enforcement authorities of any new construction on government lands.
- The GPS on the application guides the enforcement staff to the exact location. Evidence of enforcement is uploaded on the application as geo-tagged images and videos.

The Litigation Management System

- It is an online application to record information of legal cases and enables end-to-end communication between government officials and advocates during different stages of a case, was also launched.
- It provides a smart technology solution to monitor court cases from initiation, online appointment scheduling, and allotment of the case to government advocate for preparation and submission of counter-affidavit.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions. The term may also be applied to any machine that exhibits traits associated with a human mind such as learning and problem-solving.

- The ideal characteristic of artificial intelligence is its ability to rationalize and take actions that have the best chance of achieving a specific goal.

INFANT MORTALITY RATE IN MADHYA PRADESH INCREASES

⊙ **CONTEXT:**

The Sample Registration System (SRS) 2018 released by the office of Registrar General of India (RGI) shows that the Infant Mortality Rate in Madhya Pradesh has increased.

⊙ **ABOUT:**

- The SRS 2018 puts the IMR of Madhya Pradesh at 48 per 1,000 live births, highest in the country and a point higher than the IMR of 2017, which was at 47 per 1,000 live births.

- Assam pulled down the next highest rate of 44 a year before to 41, Odisha by one count to 40 and Kerala by three points to seven, the lowest among the bigger States.

- The **country's average rate** has dropped single-point to **32** but the rate climbed to 43 in Uttar Pradesh, making it the second-highest.

- The country's average stands at 36 deaths for rural and 23 for urban areas.

Infant Mortality Rate	2017	2018
National average	33	32
Madhya Pradesh	47	48
Assam	44	41
Chhattisgarh	38	41
Odisha	41	40
Kerala	10	7

Madhya Pradesh

- In rural Madhya Pradesh, 52 children below one died per 1,000 live births (Infant mortality rate) and 36 in urban areas.

- The IMR for boys in the State stood at 51, while for girls it was 46 in 2018.

- As many as 26 infants of 1,000 live births in Madhya Pradesh died within the first seven days constituting more than half the infant deaths.

- In **2015-2017,** Madhya Pradesh registered a Maternal Mortality ratio of 188 per 1 lakh live births, against the country's average of 122.

- **Causes:** Increasing premature deliveries, infections, birth asphyxiation, and delay in securing treatment leading to complicated deliveries.

- **Concerns:**

  ⊚ A major concern is birth spacing as in most cases two children were born within one-one and a half years against the advised gap of around three years. This may result in premature deliveries of low birth weight babies.

  ⊚ High malnutrition levels in pregnant as well as lactating mothers.

NOTE:

- **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)** is defined as the 'number of deaths of children under the age of 1 year per 1000 live births for a given year.'

- **Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR):** It is defined as the 'number of deaths during the first 28 completed days of life per 1,000 live births in a given year or period'.

- **Maternal Mortality Rate** is the annual number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

- **Measures:**
  - ◉ Antenatal and postnatal care is important aspects of bringing down infant mortalities.
    - ➤ Only 11.4% of mothers received full antenatal care, according to the National Family Health Survey -4 (2015-16).
  - ◉ The primary health system needs to be ramped up.
  - ◉ To bring down the IMR, more number of pediatric intensive care units should be set up, to take care of the in-born child.
  - ◉ Enhancement of manpower.
  - ◉ Encouraging community referrals and ensuring timely treatment:
- ASHA worker during referral enters details of patients on online software that can be accessed by the facility. If the patient doesn't reach there within 24 hours, it is the facility's responsibility to follow-up.

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INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEM: IMPROVING URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN MYSORE

In its effort to support the overall public transport system, Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) introduced the Intelligent Transport System (ITS) to deliver high-quality services and make the system more passenger-friendly through the appropriate use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs).

⊙ OBJECTIVES

- It was conceptualized to manage the **entire public transport system in the city to make it safe, more efficient, and environment friendly.**

- By introducing real-time data and facilitating commuters with accurate information the project aims **to reduce the commuter's dependence on personal automobiles.**

- The initiative also **promotes state-wide use of sustainable urban public transport** by monitoring accidents and traffic congestion through the effective diversion of traffic in case of emergency.

Key Stakeholders

- The major stakeholders are Sustainable Urban Transport Project (SUTP); Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC); Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD); Global Environment Facility (GEF); the World Bank; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC); IBI Group and CMC Limited.

Implementation Strategy & Components of Mysore ITS

It includes core systems like the Vehicle Tracking System, Real-Time Passenger Information System, and Central Control Station and technologies including Global Positioning System (GPS), Electronic Display Systems, and other ICT tools. A digital display unit is used for displaying details of arrival and departure of buses, in both Kannada and English.

- Location information is updated by the **Vehicle Mounted Unit (VMU)** to the central server via General Packet Radio Service (GPRS). In this manner, the ITS has provided a **sustainable solution to the problem of traffic congestion**.

- Based on the information collected through the VMU, bus stop information on current and forthcoming arrivals is displayed as well as announced inside buses.

- For better operationalization and monitoring of the bus transport system, it is supported by a **two-way communication voice facility for the driver and the Central Control Station** to contact each other in case of emergencies or accidents.

- In the end, daily reports about the number of bus stop skipped, delays in the arrival of buses, performance of the drivers, etc are generated through this system.

Implementation Strategy

- **Online Tracking of KSRTC buses using GIS maps by officials**
- **Online tracking of KSRTC buses by the commuters**
- **Provision of commuter portal for the commuters**
- **Bus announcements and text display in both English and regional language**
- **Expected time of arrival of buses**
- **SMS and IVRS faciity for tracking the bus by commuter**
- **Two way communication between driver and central control station**

Source: *OnwWorld Foundation India, 2014*

Impact of the Project

- **Greater safety, convenience, and commuter satisfaction:**
  - ➤ It has resulted in safer travel, lesser traffic congestion, and delays leading to greater commuter satisfaction.
  - ➤ The display of ETA and ETD helps commuters to calculate the total time that will be taken to travel to any destination and accordingly help them plan their journey.

- **Positive environmental impact:**
  - ➤ As the initiative does not demand any widening of roads, construction work, or cutting of trees, it has not inconvenienced residents of the city, and not harmed the environment in terms of air/water/noise pollution or vegetation or land degradation.
  - ➤ It has resulted in a favourable impact on the city's environment by way of ensuring an efficient flow of traffic and reducing pollution.

- **Increased use of public transport, lesser traffic, and pollution:**

  ➤ It has led to increased use of public transport as it has become more convenient and reliable.

  ➤ The reduction in the use of personal vehicles has also contributed to reduced traffic and pollution.

⊙ KEY CHALLENGES

- **The integration of VMU and the weak connectivity of GPRS** posed a challenge to the technical team at KSRTC during the implementation of the ITS initiative in Mysore.

- Since the system works to provide time-bound and real-time delivery of services, it faces challenges in the prediction of the expected time of arrival for all the bus stops **with accuracy.**

- As it was not previously implemented anywhere else in the country there was a **lack of in-house domain knowledge and the consequent dependence on consultants** in addition to multi-level monitoring and coordination posed its own set of challenges.

- Due to the **funding from various sources**, it has brought along its share of complexities in the system.

- Another major obstacle was related to the **taking of the drivers into confidence** as most of them feel this system puts them under scrutiny.

- The **large scale of operations and consolidation of information networks** was also found to be challenging. The other key challenge was to address the customer service through this unique technology.

- Post-deployment, KSRTC faces the **challenge to ensure security and maintenance of in-bus equipment and display boards and ensure uninterrupted power supply** at bus shelters, which are not owned by KSRTC.

⊙ CONCLUSION

The Mysore-ITS initiative envisions building citizen-centric urban transport solutions instead of focusing on improving the conditions for private vehicles. Real-time information is the most important application of its implementation in Mysore. A well designed and planned ITS system in buses will make a significant improvement in the urban transport scenario in Indian cities, especially as it puts the needs of the majority who use public transport at the forefront.

Overview of Indian Urban Transport

- By 2031, some 600 million people are expected to live in India's cities. However, only about 20 Indian cities with populations over 500,000 have any kind of organized public transport systems.

- In fact, the share of public transport in large Indian cities actually **declined from some 70% in 1994 to almost 40% in 2007.**

- India's public transport systems are largely run by **public sector monopolies.** They typically suffer from poor service, inefficient operations, and deteriorating finances, resulting in dramatically declining mode shares. On the other hand, private transportation is often very expensive, extracting a huge cost from the urban population, especially from the very poor.

- To redress this imbalance, **India's National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP)** emphasizes the development of public transport systems and plans to increase their share to at least 50 percent of all motorized trips.

Other Initiatives:

Ahmedabad Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS)

➤ Based on the concept of **redesigning the city's infrastructure and making the existing transport system accessible, efficient, and environment friendly**, Ahmedabad's BRTS has deployed the intelligent transport system since 2009.

➤ Officially known as **'Janmarg'**, aims to dedicate separate lanes to buses, pedestrians, and non-motorized vehicles.

➤ **Features:** Automatic Vehicle Tracking System; Electronic Fare Collection and Real-time Passenger Information System

➤ **Challenges**: Narrow carriageway, high instances of encroachment, and requirement of additional land acquisition for construction of corridors, stations, etc.

➤ This project has been awarded as **the Best Sustainable Transport Award, 2010,** and was adjudged the **Best Mass Rapid Transit System by the Government of India, 2009.**

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