

# OFFICERS' Pulse

ISSUE NO. 23 | 10TH NOVEMBER TO 16TH NOVEMBER, 2019

## Coverage.

The Hindu  
PIB  
Yojana  
Rajya Sabha TV  
All India Radio

## At a Glance & In Depth.

Polity and Social Issues  
Economy  
International Relations  
Environment  
Science and Tech  
Culture



**CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**WEEKLY**  
THE PULSE OF UPSC AT  
YOUR FINGER TIPS.

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# News @ a glance

## POLITY

### 1) Maharashtra placed under President's Rule

#### What is President's Rule?

- President's Rule implies the suspension of a state government and the imposition of direct rule of the Centre

#### The Constitutional Provisions

- Provisions regarding the President's Rule finds its mention in the Part XVIII of the Indian Constitutions:
- **Article 355** imposes a duty on the Centre to ensure that the government of every state is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.
- **Article 356** of the Constitution of India gives President of India the power to suspend state government and impose President's rule of any state in the country if "if he is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution".

#### Parliamentary Approval

- A proclamation imposing President's Rule must be approved by **both the Houses of Parliament within two months** from the date of its issue.
- The approval takes place through **simple majority in either House**, i.e, a majority of the members of the House present and voting.
- Initially valid for six months, the President's Rule can be extended for a maximum period of three years with the approval of the Parliament, every six months.

#### Limit on the power of Parliament

- The **44th Amendment Act of 1978** introduced a new provision to put restraint on the power of Parliament to extend a proclamation of President's Rule beyond

one year. Thus, it provided that, beyond one year, the President's Rule can be extended by six months at a time only when the following two conditions are fulfilled:

- A proclamation of **National Emergency** should be in operation in the whole of India, or in the whole or any part of the state; and
- The Election Commission must certify that the general elections to the legislative assembly of the concerned state cannot be held on account of difficulties.

#### How long can the President's Rule last?

- A proclamation of President's Rule can be revoked through a subsequent proclamation in case the leader of a party produces letters of support from a majority of members of the Assembly, and stakes his claim to form a government. The **revocation does not need the approval of Parliament.**
- Any proclamation under Article 356 — which stands for six months — has to be approved by both Houses in the Parliament session following it. This six-month time-frame can be extended in phases, up to three years.

#### The S.R. Bommai vs. Union of India Case

- S.R. Bommai vs. Union of India (1994) was a landmark judgment of the Supreme Court of India, where the Court discussed at length provisions of Article 356 of the Constitution of India and related issues. They were:
- The presidential proclamation imposing President's Rule is **subject to judicial review.**
- The satisfaction of the President must be based on relevant material. The **action of the president can be struck down by the court** if it is based on irrelevant or extraneous grounds or if it was found to be malafide.

- Burden lies on the Centre to prove that relevant material exist to justify the imposition of the President's Rule.
- The court cannot go into the correctness of the material or its adequacy but it can see whether it is relevant to the action.
- If the court holds the presidential proclamation to be unconstitutional and invalid, it has power to restore the dismissed state government and revive the state legislative assembly if it was suspended or dissolved.

#### Similar precedents of President's Rule

- This is not the first time President's Rule has been imposed following an election that did not lead to government formation.
- For instance, no party could mobilise a majority in the Bihar Assembly following elections in February 2005.
- President's Rule, which was imposed on March 7, 2005, lasted 262 days until November 24. It was lifted after fresh elections in October-November.
- A hung verdict in the J&K elections of 2002 led to the imposition of President's Rule for 15 days, from October 18 to November 2 that year.
- In the UP Assembly elections of 2002, no party could secure a majority. This led to the imposition of President's Rule for 56 days, from March 3 to May 2, 2002.

#### What is the case of Maharashtra?

- In the recent elections to the 288-member Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, No single party got a majority in the House, and no alliance could be formed claiming a majority. Hence the governor of the state recommended President's Rule, which was imposed.

#### Why is the governor being criticised?

- When the governor of Maharashtra could not find any party or combination of parties that appeared to have a majority in the Assembly, before recommending imposition of President's Rule, he should have sent a message to the House under **Article 175(2)**, after summoning it under **Article 174(1)**, asking the House to assemble, deliberate and then inform him within a reasonable period of time in whom it has confidence, so that he could be appointed chief minister.

#### Way Forward:

- The R.K. Sarkaria Commission, which was formed in 1983 to examine the balance of power between the states and the Centre, recommends that in case of a hung assembly, the governor should follow the following order.
- First, she or he should call either the single largest party or the biggest pre-poll alliance.
- If that is exhausted, she should call a post-poll alliance that has the required numbers to prove its majority on the floor of the house.
- The third option is to ask a post-poll alliance in which partners are willing to extend outside support.
- In the Bommai case, it was held that imposition of president's rule was a very serious step, and is the last option, to be resorted to only when all other recourses have failed. Hence, without resorting to it, recommending imposition of president's rule straightaway was clearly unconstitutional.

## 2) Kerala will not allow women to visit Sabarimala shrine

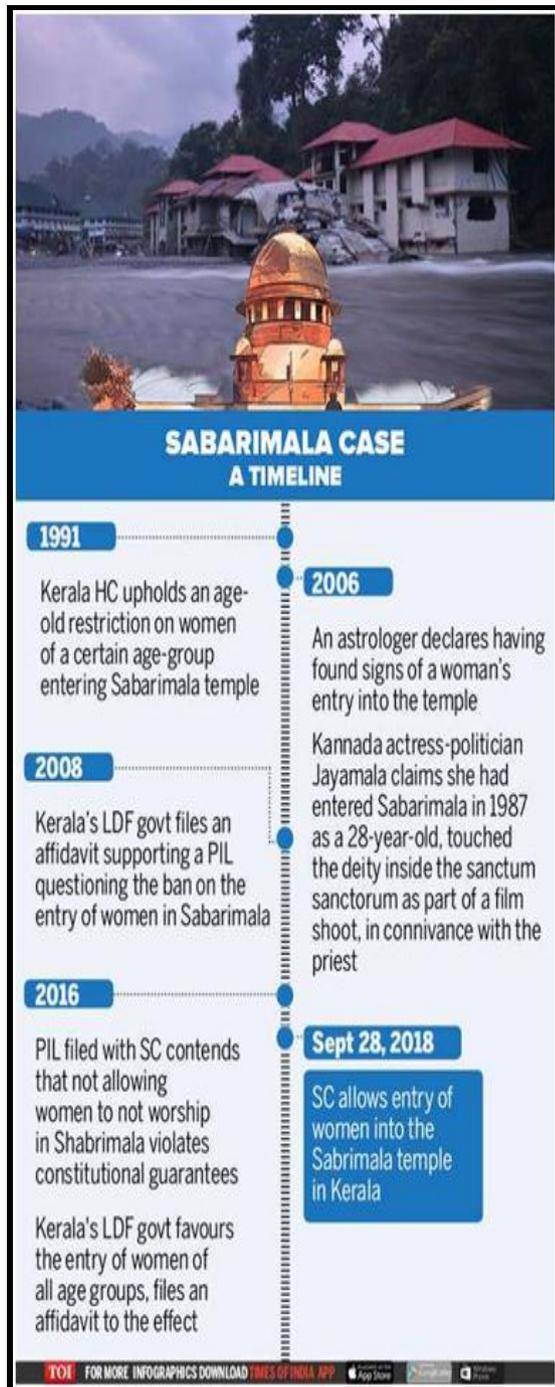
#### Background:

- A group of five women lawyers challenged Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965, which authorises restriction on entry of women "of menstruating age" to the shrine.
- They moved to the apex court after the Kerala High Court upheld the centuries-old restriction, and ruled that only "tantri (priest)" is empowered to take decision on traditions.
- The temple management has argued in court that they should be allowed to frame rules for the shrine without the state's interference. They also said that the practice isn't discriminatory as the tradition was born from the belief that the deity is a '**Naishtika Brahmachari**' (eternal celibate).

#### The petitioners argued that the restrictions are against :

- Article 14 (Equality before law),
- Article 15 (Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth) and

- Article 17 (Abolition of Untouchability) of the Indian Constitution.



#### Recent Judgement given by Supreme Court:

- The Supreme Court has referred to a 7 judge- bench a clutch of review petitions challenging its September 2018 verdict allowing entry of women of all age groups into the Sabarimala temple. Chief Justice Gogoi, delivering the majority opinion along with Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and

Indu Malhotra, framed a series of questions for the larger Bench. These are:

- Whether a court can probe if a practice is essential to a religion or should the question be left to the respective religious head?
- Should “essential religious practices” be afforded constitutional protection under Article 26 (freedom to manage religious affairs)?
- What is the “permissible extent” of judicial recognition a court should give to PILs filed by people who do not belong to the religion of which practices are under the scanner?
- The verdict delivered by CJI has revived the debate whether an individual’s right to worship can outweigh a religious group’s right to manage the affairs of its religion.

#### Article 25

- Article 25 guarantees to every person freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion.

#### Article 26

- Article 26 gives special protection to religious denomination. Article 26 mentions that every religious denomination or any section thereof has the right –
- To establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes
- To manage its own affairs in matters of religion
- To own and acquire movable and immovable property
- To administer such property in accordance with law.
- However, this right is subject to public order, morality and health.

- While **Article 25 confers the particular rights on all persons**, Article 26 is confined to religious denominations or any section of denominations. So, we can say that **Article 26 guarantees collective freedom of religion**. The term religious denomination in Article 26 means a religious sect having a common faith and organisation and designated by a distinctive name.

#### Why is the women’s entry to the temple discriminatory in nature?

- Preventing women’s entry to the Sabarimala temple with an irrational and

obsolete notion of “purity” clearly offends **the equality clauses in the Constitution**. In any civilised society, gender equality is to be treated as one of the core values.

- It denotes a patriarchal and partisan approach. The entry prohibition takes away the woman’s right against discrimination guaranteed under Article 15(1) of the Constitution.
- It curtails her religious freedom assured by Article 25(1).
- Prohibition of women’s entry to the shrine solely on the basis of womanhood and the biological features associated with womanhood is derogatory to women, which Article 51A (e) aims to renounce.
- The classification based on age is an act of discrimination based on sex.

#### Way Forward:

- The decision of a larger Bench would put at rest recurring issues touching upon the rights flowing from Articles 25 [freedom of religion] and 26 [right of administration of property of religious endowments] of the Constitution”.
- “Prejudice against women based on notions of impurity and pollution associated with menstruation is a symbol of exclusion.
- The social exclusion of women based on menstrual status is a form of untouchability which is an anathema to constitutional values.” Therefore, it is time to evolve a judicial policy to do substantial and complete justice.

### 3) Updation of National Water Policy

#### About NWP:

- National Water Policy was formulated by the Ministry of Water Resources of the Government of India to govern the planning and development of water resources and their optimum utilization.
- The first National Water Policy was adopted in September 1987. It was reviewed and updated in 2002 and later in 2012.
- Among the major policy innovations in the 2012 policy was the concept of an Integrated Water Resources Management approach that took the “river basin/ sub-basin” as a unit for planning, development and management of water resources.

#### News in Detail

- The Union Water Resources Ministry has finalised a committee to draft a new National Water Policy (NWP). The committee is expected to produce a report within six months. It will be chaired by Mihir Shah, who is a former Planning Commission member and a water expert.
- The committee has 10 principal members, including Shashi Shekhar, a former Secretary of Water Resources, and A.B. Pandya, former chairman of the Central Ground Water Board.

#### Key Focus Areas:

- It also proposed that a portion of river flows ought to be kept aside to meet **ecological needs**.
- Such an approach led to the government, in 2018, requiring minimum water levels to be maintained in the Ganga all through the year and hydropower projects, therefore, to refrain from hoarding water beyond a point.
- That policy also **stressed for a minimum quantity of potable water for essential health and hygiene to all its citizens** to be made available within easy reach of households.
- **Inter-basin transfers** are not merely for increasing production but also for meeting basic human needs and achieving equity and social justice.
- Inter-basin transfers of water should be considered on the basis of merits of each case after evaluating the environmental, economic and social impacts of such transfers.

#### Why in News?

- The government is planning to come out with an updated version of the National Water Policy (NWP) with key changes in water governance structure and regulatory framework.

### 4) Ayodhya Verdict

#### Why in News?

- The Supreme Court paved the way for construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya, thus bringing to an end more than a century-long dispute over the title of the land. A unanimous judgment was given by five-judge Supreme Court bench led by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi .

#### Background:

- The belief among sections of Hindus was that the Babri Masjid, **named after Mughal emperor Babur**, was built in Ayodhya after destroying a Ram Temple that marked the birthplace of the deity.
- The **Hindu parties** wanted the land to themselves, contending that **Lord Ram was born at a spot on which later the central dome of the mosque was built**.
- The Muslim parties, however, contended that the mosque was constructed in **1528 by Mir Baqi, a commander of Babur's army**, without demolishing any place of worship and since the land rights had not been transferred to any other party, the space was rightfully theirs.

#### Events that happened over years:

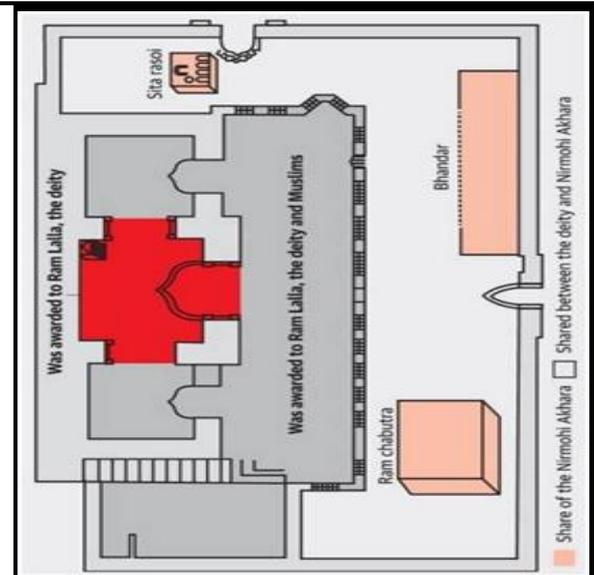
- The Ayodhya dispute involving Hindus and Muslims dates back to 1800s. It relates to differences over rights to worship in Chabutra, an uncovered open platform adjoining the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, UP.
- In 1822, an official of the Faizabad court claimed that the mosques stood on the site of a temple. The court dismissed the suit.
- In December **1949, some Hindu activists placed idols of Ram** inside the disputed structure, leading to communal tension. The mosque was seized by authorities.
- Court orders restrained people from removing the idols, and the structure's use as a mosque effectively ceased from that point. In the years that followed, Hindu and Muslim groups filed separate claims over the site and the structure.
- In 1986, a Faizabad district judge ordered the gates of the Babri Masjid to be opened after 37 years, in favour of Hindu parties, and allowed worship.
- The Rajiv Gandhi government allowed shilanyas at the site. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) laid the foundation of a Ram temple on land next to the Babri Masjid.
- In 1990-91, LK Advani began his 'rath yatra' for a Ram temple, and kar sevaks arrived in Ayodhya leading to clashes.
- On Dec 6, 1992, the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid structure was demolished.
- In Sep 2010, the Allahabad HC in a 2:1 majority, ruled three-way division of disputed area between Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara (religious denomination established by Ramananda,

one of the litigants in the Ayodhya case) and Ram Lalla. All parties approached SC and got it stayed.

#### Allahabad High Court Judgment

- The Allahabad High Court directed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct excavations at the disputed site.
- In August 2003, the ASI submitted the report stating that remains of a large structure existed before the Babri Masjid.
- Then in 2010 High Court delivered a majority judgment for three-way partition of the disputed property among Hindus, Muslims and Nirmohi Akhara.

- The inner courtyard, where the dome once stood, went to the deity. The Ram Chabutra and Sita Rasoi nearby went to the Akhara. The Muslim side was left to take their one third after partition and adjustments from the extra land in and around, acquired by the govt. Each side was expected to give entry and exit rights to the other. The 3 parties moved the Supreme Court.



#### The 2019 Ayodhya Verdict

- **Temple on disputed site and an Alternative land for mosque**
- The Supreme Court granted the entire disputed land in Ayodhya for temple construction.
- SC directed Centre and UP govt to allot 5 acres of land to Muslims at a prominent place in Ayodhya for building a mosque.
- **A trust to be set up**
- SC directed Centre to formulate a scheme for forming a trust within 3 months for

construction of a temple at the site.

- The land must be handed over to the trust. Till the Trust is formed, the ownership of the site will rest with the Centre.
- **'Mosque wasn't abandoned'**
- The court upheld the belief of Hindus that Lord Ram was born at the disputed site in Ayodhya. It also upheld that the mosque was neither abandoned nor seceded by the Muslims.
- "Iron railing was set up at site in 1856-1857, it suggests Hindus kept worshipping at the site. Evidence suggested Hindus were in possession of outer courtyard."
- **ASI had not established whether temple was demolished**
- "The fact that there lied a structure beneath the destroyed structure has been established by the ASI. ASI had not established whether temple was demolished to build the mosque."
- **Shia Wakf Board's claim was dismissed and 'Muslims were not able to establish ownership of the land'**
- **6) The suit filed by Nirmohi Akhara** for sherbaiti rights has been time barred and hence **dismissed**. The court said the Akhara might be made a part of the Trust.

- **The court held that "Babri mosque was not built on vacant land. The underlying structure was not an Islamic structure." But the "Damage to Babri mosque was violation of law," it added. The Supreme Court, implicitly referring to the demolition of the Babri Masjid at the disputed site, said that it was invoking Article 142 "to ensure that a wrong committed must be remedied".**

#### **Article 142(1):**

- "The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it, and any decree so passed or order so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India in such manner as may be prescribed by or under

any law made by Parliament and, until provision in that behalf is so made, in such manner as the President may by order prescribe".

- Accordingly taking note of the injustice done to Muslims through dispossession of the mosque, the SC has provided for an alternative site of 5 acre for construction of mosque.
- Thus the Court by admitting to the wrong committed it reiterated that the beliefs of one citizen does not interfere with or dominate the freedoms and beliefs of another which is in accordance with the spirit of Secular ethos of our constitution.

#### **How did the dispute affect the people of Ayodhya?**

- The people of Ayodhya-Faizabad have been waiting for an end to the dispute. Opinions in the town mirror communal and ideological divisions; but what most residents agree upon is the stagnation or lack of development, despite the town being located just 125 km from the State capital.
- Lack of jobs and investment, poor infrastructure and an underdeveloped tourism economy have kept Ayodhya far behind other important Hindu religious centres like Mathura and Varanasi.
- Over the past years, especially since the RSS-VHP led movement swept much of north India, Ayodhya became the centrestage for communal politics and a tool for polarisation before elections. The high-pitched events not only disrupted daily life and business, but also endangered communal harmony in the region.

#### **Conclusion:**

- As a result by adjudicating the case purely on the basis of law and evidence and correcting the historical wrong the Court has reaffirmed that it is the values of tolerance and mutual co-existence that nourish the secularism which is not only a part of the basic structure of our constitution but also an inseparable feature of pluralistic society we live in.

# ENVIRONMENT

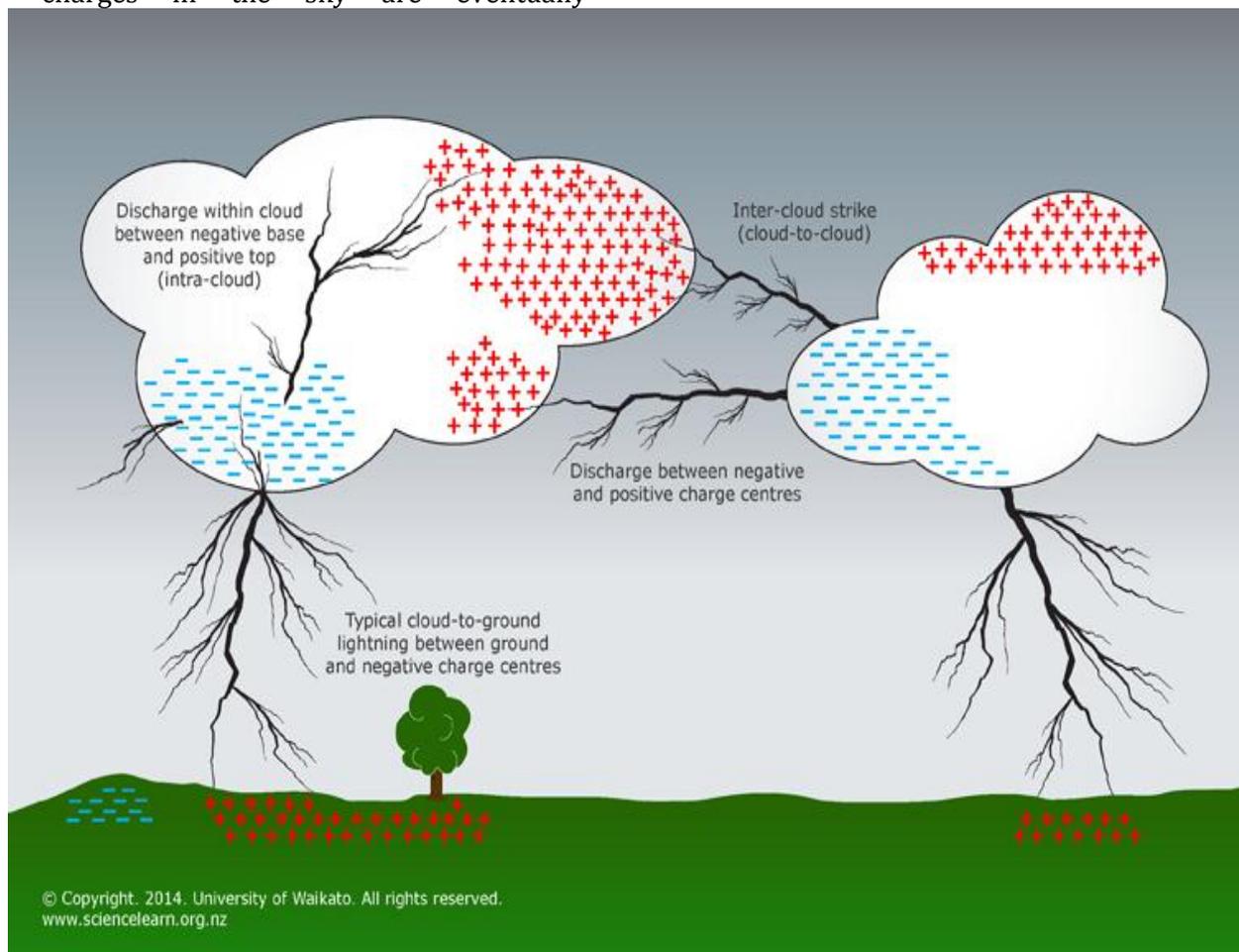
## 1) Odisha hit by over nine lakh lightning strikes this year

### What is lightning? How it is formed?

- Lightning is a large-scale natural spark discharge that occurs within the atmosphere or between the atmosphere and the Earth's surface.
- On discharge, a highly electrically conductive plasma channel is created within the air, and when current flows within this channel, it rapidly heats the air up to about 25,000°C.
- The sky is filled with electric charges. In a calm sky, the positive (+) and negative (-) charges are evenly spaced throughout the atmosphere. Therefore, a calm sky has a neutral charge.
- During storms, the positive and negative charges in the sky are eventually

segregated, negative charges move towards earth (which is positively charged).

- Once the negative charge at the bottom of the cloud gets large enough, a flow of negative charge rushes toward the Earth. This is known as a **stepped leader**.
- The positive charges of the Earth are attracted to this stepped leader, so a flow of positive charge moves into the air. When the stepped leader and the positive charge from the earth meet, a strong electric current carries positive charge up into the cloud. This electric current is known as the return stroke and humans can see it as lightning.
- Incloud (within clouds) lightning may also occur, but only cloud to earth become serious causing deaths.



### Why in news?

- A recent report by Skymet on the lightning strikes in India from January to August 2019 have been published.
- Skymet makes its assessment based on 1,700 sensors spread across the country and claims that it sends alerts 45 minutes before “dangerous lightning” strikes an area.

#### Key findings

- There were 20 million lightning strikes in Jan-August period, with 72% of them being instances of ‘in-cloud’ lightning.
- Five States accounted for half of the lightning strikes in India in 2019, led by **Odisha** with 9,37,462 or about 16% of the cloud-to-ground strikes. The second-placed **West Bengal**, though it had only 3,50,000 more of the cloud-to-ground strikes. **Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh** accounted for the rest.
- **June** saw the most lightning flashes — 56,04,214 — during the first eight months of 2019, which is when the monsoon sets in.

#### Killer lightning

- According to the **National Crime Records Bureau**, there were **8,684 deaths** in the country due to causes “**attributable to forces of nature**” during 2016. Of them, **38.2% of deaths were due to lightning**, 15.4% due to heat and sunstroke and 8.9% due to floods.
- **With 224 deaths UTTAR PRADESH** had more casualties due to lightning, followed by Bihar (170), Odisha (129), and Jharkhand (118).
- Varied **coping mechanisms and grades of infrastructure determine the level of the casualty** from lightning in the States. For instance, the CROPC report says, Odisha had the highest number of strikes — 9 lakh-plus — and 129 deaths. But Uttar Pradesh had 300 strikes and 200 deaths.

## 2 )Meghalayan rainforests similar to equatorial ones

#### About Meghalaya and its forests

- Meghalaya (the Abode of clouds) located in the hills of Eastern Sub-Himalayas was carved out of Assam as autonomous State on 2nd April, 1970 and was declared as full-fledged State on 21st January, 1972.
- It is bounded on the Northern and Eastern sides by the State of Assam. On South and

Western side, it shares a 423 Kms long international boundary with Bangladesh.

- Meghalaya is among the few States in the country which can be proud of its abundance of natural forest wealth spanning across a large part of its geographical area, much higher than the national average.
- The altitudinal variation range from 50 meters to 1950 meters with the Shillong plateau at the crest.
- The climate is monsoonal with distinct warm-wet and cold-dry periods. The towns of Sohra (Cherrapunjee) and Mawsynram, which are located on the Southern part of the State, receive very heavy rainfall and amongst the wettest spots in the world.
- considered as ‘Botanist Paradieses’. This region was described by Hooker as “**Cradle of Angiosperms**”(plants which produce flowers and seeds within the flower).
- Forests of the State shelters more than 3500 flowering plants, 352 orchids, 40 bamboo species and about 800 medicinal plants resources. The state is part of the **Indo Burma Biodiversity Hotspot of the world**.
- There are about 40 endemic plant species and 75 Threatened plant species found in Meghalaya. Amongst its rare species are the insect eating **Pitcher plant (Nepenthes khasiana)**, **Wild citrus (Citrus indica)** and **Pygmy Lily (Nymphaea tetragona)**.
- The **Rhododendron Forest at Shillong Peak** is a major attraction for tourist during blooming period (February to April).

#### Why in news?

- A new study discovers that MEGHALAYAN rainforest, the northernmost in the world, is **similar in structure and diversity to the other rainforests found near the Equator**.

#### Tropical rainforests forests and equatorial rainforests correlation

- Tropical rainforests are the terrestrial areas on the earth with abundant diversity of trees and other life-forms which **make the largest sink of carbon (absorb carbon from the atmosphere)**.
- They are home to **four-fifths of the world's documented species** can be found in tropical rainforests.

- Tropical rainforests occur in “**hot and humid**” habitats where all months receive precipitation and **there is no dry season**.
- Rainforests which usually occur near the Equator and about five degrees North and South latitudes from the Equator are **considered the real home of the lowland tropical rainforest**.
- The extreme spread of tropical rainforests in northern limits in the world has been found in the northeastern region of India where high rainfall-receiving habitats with hot and humid climate, especially in **Meghalaya and Namdapha in Arunachal Pradesh are now known to boast species-rich rainforests**.

#### Findings of the study

- Although Meghalayan rainforests had fewer species and individuals of liana or woody climbing plants, the levels of **beta diversity (ratio between regional and local species diversity)** were high compared to the equatorial rainforests.
- Meghalayan rainforests had a **higher proportion of rare species** and good representation of the members of families of Fagaceae (oak family) and Theaceae (a type of flower family) in the Meghalayan rainforests.
- Though the species diversity was similar to the other rainforests, **the Meghalayan rainforest trees showed short stature**.
- While the trees in the Equatorial region are known to grow from 45 to 60 m in height, the highest ones in Meghalaya could reach only up to about 30 m
- Meghalayan Rainforests have **lesser density compared to equatorial one**.

### 3) India's efforts towards mitigating climate change

#### India's ambitions to restrict Climate change

- India has promised to cut its emission intensity by 33-35% by the year 2030, as compared to 2015 levels.
- India hopes to produce 40% of its energy from such non-coal sources.
- India has planned to create additional ‘carbon sinks’ through forestation and tree plantation, so as to bring down 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

#### Challenges for India

- Most of India's emissions come from energy (largely coal-based) production (68%), industry (20%), agriculture, food and land use (10%).
- The minimum support price, subsidies, free 24-hour electric power supply, and water-intensive crops are pushing for more agriculture, land-use and extinguishing water resources. These are contributing to climate change.
- We are unable to bring down atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels **through natural means**.
- The warmer climate has increased the water-borne diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, as well as malaria, dengue and chikungunya in numbers and have spread across hilly, cold as well as warm deserts and sea coastal areas.

### 4) They save people from cyclones, but who is saving the Sundarbans mangroves?

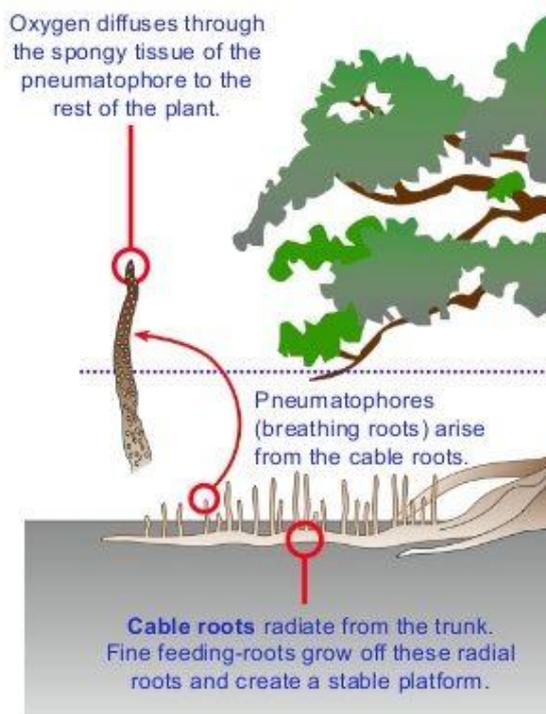
#### Why in news?

- Sundarbans mangroves have helped to reduce the effects of Cyclone Bulbul

#### What is Mangrove?

- Mangrove, any of certain shrubs and trees that belong primarily to the families Rhizophoraceae, Acanthaceae, Lythraceae, Combretaceae, and Arecaceae; that grow in dense thickets or forests **along tidal estuaries, salt marshes, and on muddy coasts**; and that characteristically have **prop roots**—i.e., exposed supporting roots.
- Because mangroves create dense foliage (plant waste) and the close proximity (nearness in space) of trees, the roots hold soil and mangrove vegetation becomes shields from cyclones.

# Mangrove



## About Sundarbans:

- The Sundarbans mangrove forest, one of the largest such forests in the world (140,000 ha), lies on the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers on the Bay of Bengal.
- The Sundarbans provides a significant example of on-going ecological processes as it represents the process of delta formation and the subsequent colonization of the newly formed deltaic islands and associated mangrove communities.
- One of the largest remaining areas of mangroves in the world, the Sundarbans supports an exceptional level of biodiversity in both the terrestrial and marine environments, including significant populations of globally endangered cat species, such as the Royal Bengal Tiger.
- Population census of **Royal Bengal Tigers** estimated a population of between 400 to 450 individuals, a higher density than any other population of tigers in the world.
- In February 2019, it was designated as a **Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance**. (for more info about Ramsar, refer pulse 21)

- It is also a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#)
- To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria.
- (i) to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v) to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);
- (vii) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix) to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- (x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ

conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

#### Recent issues with sundarbans

- Mangroves have been cut not only for aquaculture, but also for building embankments and for human settlements.
- Indian Space Research Organisation pointed to a **loss of 3.71% mangrove** and non-mangrove forest cover along with massive erosion of this archipelago's landmass.
- Mangroves are being cut for making roads, building embankments, and for fisheries.

### 5) Climate change is harming the health of children, says Lancet report

#### The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change

- It is a comprehensive yearly analysis tracking progress across 41 key indicators, demonstrating what action to meet Paris Agreement targets — or business as usual — means for human health.
- The project is a collaboration between 120 experts from 35 institutions, including the **World Health Organisation, the World Bank, University College London, and Tsinghua University in Beijing.**

#### Findings of the report

- Children are particularly vulnerable to the health risks of a changing climate. Their bodies and immune systems are still developing, leaving them more susceptible to disease and environmental pollutants,
- The report also notes that as **temperatures rise, harvests will shrink** — threatening food security and driving up food prices. This will **hit infants hardest**. Temperatures rise, infants will bear the greatest burden of malnutrition and rising food prices — average yield potential of maize and rice has declined almost 2% in India since the 1960s, with malnutrition already responsible for two-thirds of under-5 deaths.
- Children will suffer most from the rise in infectious diseases — with climatic suitability for the *Vibrio* bacteria that cause cholera rising 3% a year in India since the early 1980s, the study warns.

- Diarrhoeal infections, a major cause of child mortality, will spread into new areas, whilst deadly heat waves, similar to the one in 2015 that killed thousands of people in India, could soon become the norm.
- If the world follows a business-as-usual pathway, with high carbon emissions and climate change continues at the current rate, **a child born today will face a world on average over 4°C warmer by their 71st birthday**, threatening their health at every stage of their lives.

#### Can something be done?

- Nothing short of a 7.4% year-on-year cut in fossil CO2 emissions from 2019 to 2050 will limit global warming to the more ambitious goal of 1.5°C.
- The report offers that the world should think of shifting toward using more renewable resources.

### 6) Activists call for action to curb avian deaths in Rajasthan

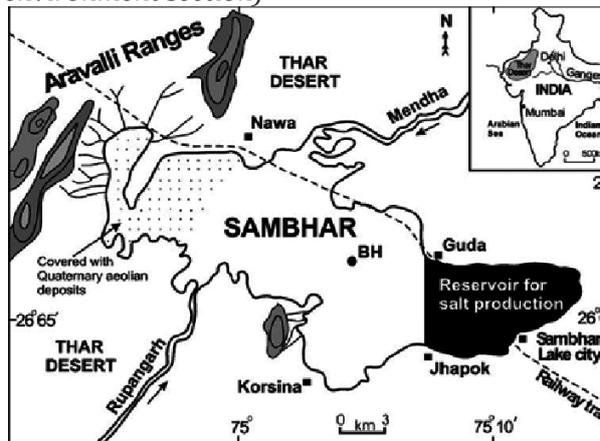
#### Why in News?

- Hundreds of **migratory birds** are found dead in the Sambhar Lake, Rajasthan.
- The dead birds belonged to about 10 species, which migrate annually to water bodies in India from the cold northern regions of Central Asia.
- The cause of death isn't found yet. (it may be due to pollutants in the lake or some infectious diseases carried by birds)

#### About Sambhar Lake:

- Sambhar Salt Lake- located 60km south west of Jaipur city- has 5,700-sq km catchment area spreads across the districts of Nagaur, Jaipur, Ajmer and Sikar of Rajasthan.
- It is **India's largest saline lake**, it has a record of salt production that goes back 1,500 years.
- This lake is fed by five (Medtha, Samaod, Mantha, Roopangarh, Khari and Khandela) streams set in a shallow wetland and subject to seasonal fluctuations.
- The site is important for a variety of wintering waterbirds, including large numbers of flamingos. Human activities consist of salt production and livestock grazing.
- It is a Ramsar Site.(recognized wetland of international importance) (*For more details*

about Ramsar sites, refer Pulse 22nd edition, environment section)



## 7) Rare deer rediscovered after nearly 30 years



### Why in news?

- A deer-like species, silver-backed chevrotain, thought lost to science for almost three decades has been discovered living in Vietnam, according to a new study in Nature, Ecology and Evolution.
- The silver-backed chevrotain is the **world's smallest ungulate-hoofed mammal** and is around the size of a rabbit.
- This is an endemic (can be found only in that place) species of Việt Nam
- It was last seen in 1990.

# ECONOMY

## 1) Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

### About IIP

- IIP is an index that **tracks manufacturing activity in different sectors** of an economy.
- The IIP number **measures the industrial production** for the period under review, usually a month, as against the reference period.
- IIP is a key economic indicator of the manufacturing sector of the economy.
- There is a **lag of six weeks in the publication** of the IIP index data after the reference month ends.
- IIP index is currently calculated using **2011-2012 as the base year** (changed from 2004-05 in the year 2017).
- **Electricity, crude oil, coal, cement, steel, refinery products, natural gas, and fertilisers** are the **eight core industries** that comprise about **40 percent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production.**
- IIP is a composite indicator that measures the growth rate of industry groups classified under,
  - **Broad sectors**, namely, **Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity**
  - **Use-based sectors**, namely **Basic Goods, Capital Goods and Intermediate Goods.**
- In the case of Index of Industrial Production India, IIP data is compiled and **published by CSO** every month. CSO or Central Statistical Organisation operates under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).**

### IIP vs ASI

- While the IIP is a monthly indicator, the **Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)** is the prime source of **long-term industrial statistics.**
- The ASI is used to track the health of the industrial activity in the economy over a longer period.
- The index is compiled out of a **much larger sample of industries** compared to IIP.

### Why in News?

- Industrial activity (measured by IIP) in September 2019 **contracted sharply by 4.3%**, a historical low (lowest in 8 years), driven by major slowdowns in the capital goods, mining, and manufacturing sectors.

## 2) Centre wants States to ditch APMC for e-NAM

### About Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC)

- Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) is a **statutory market committee** constituted by a **State Government** in respect of trade in certain notified agricultural or horticultural or livestock products, under the Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act issued by that state government.
  - APMCs are intended to be responsible for:
    - **ensuring transparency** in pricing system and transactions;
    - providing market-led extension services to farmers;
    - ensuring payment for agricultural produce sold by farmers on the same day;
    - promoting agricultural processing including activities for value addition in agricultural produce;
  - Publicizing data on arrivals and rates of agricultural produce brought into the market area for sale; and
  - Setup and **promote public private partnership** in the management of agricultural markets
  - The APMC system was introduced to **prevent distress sale by farmers** to their creditors, to protect farmers from the exploitation of intermediaries and traders and to ensure better prices and timely payment for their produce through the auctions in the APMC area.

### Issues with APMC

- APMC Acts restrict the farmer from entering into a direct contract with any processor/ manufacturer/ bulk processor as the produce is required to be routed through these regulated markets.
- Over a period of time, these markets have acquired the status of **restrictive and Monopolistic markets**, harming the

farmers rather than helping them to realise remunerative prices.

- Exporters, processors and retail chain operators cannot procure directly from the farmers as the produce is required to be channelised through regulated markets and licensed traders.
- Monopolistic practices and modalities of the state-controlled markets have prevented private investment in the sector.
- APMCs play dual role of regulator and Market. Consequently, their role as regulator is undermined by vested interest in lucrative trade.

#### **Model APMC Act of 2003**

- **Ministry of Agriculture** formulated a model law on agricultural marketing - **State Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2003**.
- The centre has requested the state governments to suitably amend their respective APMC Acts for
  - **deregulation** of the marketing system in India,
  - to **promote investment in marketing infrastructure**, thereby motivating the corporate sector to undertake direct marketing and
  - to facilitate a national market.
- The Model APMC Act, 2003 provided for the freedom of farmers to sell their produce.
- The farmers could sell their produce directly to the contract-sponsors or in the market set up by private individuals, consumers or producers.
- The Model Act also **increases the competitiveness** of the market of agricultural produce by allowing common registration of market intermediaries.

#### **National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)**

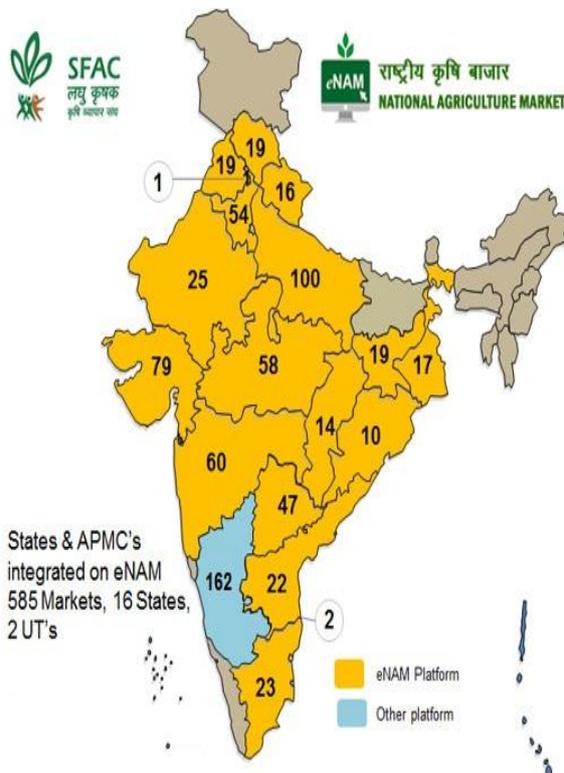
- National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) is a **pan-India electronic trading portal** which networks the existing Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) mandis to **create a unified national market for agricultural commodities**.
- The NAM Portal provides a **single window service for all APMC related information and services**.
- This includes commodity arrivals & prices, buy & sell trade offers, provision to

respond to trade offers, among other services.

- While material flow (agriculture produce) continue to happen through mandis, an online market reduces transaction costs and information asymmetry.
- **Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)** is the **lead agency for implementing eNAM** under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.
- NAM provides a number of benefits to various stakeholders of the system.
  - 1) For farmers, NAM promises more options for selling their produce and competitive returns.
  - 2) For bulk buyers, processors, exporters, NAM will enable direct participation in the local mandi trade, reducing intermediation cost. Stable prices and availability to consumers.

#### **How can APMCs join e-NAM?**

- States (State Agriculture Marketing Boards) interested to integrate their APMCs /mandis with NAM are required to carry out following reforms in their APMC Act.
  - 1) Single trading license (Unified) to be valid across the state
  - 2) Single point levy of market fee across the state; and
  - 3) Provision for e-auction/ e-trading as a mode of price discovery
- Currently there are 585 APMCs that are linked to the eNAM network from 16 states and 2 UT's.



### Benefits from eNAM for an APMC

- Free Software for System integration/ Automation of recording transactions
- Complete information on trade
- Real time arrival recording
- Analyze price trends, arrival and trading activities
- Automated record of financial information
- Reduction in man-power requirement

### Why in News?

- Centre has been persuading states to reject APMCs and join e-NAM. So far, the Centre had been focussed on reforming APMCs, allocating funds to upgrade them, and persuading States to adopt a model APMC Act.

### Concerns

- While the Centre has been promoting e-NAM since its introduction in 2016, it is not clear if the online portal is ready to bear the entire burden of agricultural trade.
- Only 1.6 crore farmers have registered on the portal so far, from among the almost 12 crore cultivators in the country.
- According to data presented in the Lok Sabha in June 2019, only about half of those registered have benefited from the platform.

## 3) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

### About NABARD

- NABARD was established on the recommendations of **B.Sivaraman Committee**, (by Act 61, 1981 of Parliament) on 12 July 1982 to implement the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1981**.
- It replaced the **Agricultural Credit Department (ACD)** and **Rural Planning and Credit Cell (RPCC)** of the Reserve Bank of India, and **Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC)**.
- It is one of the premier agencies providing developmental credit in rural areas.
- NABARD is India's **specialised bank for Agriculture and Rural Development** in India.
- NABARD has its head office in **Mumbai, India**.
- NABARD supervises **State Cooperative Banks (StCBs)**, **District Cooperative Central Banks (DCCBs)**, and **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** and conducts statutory inspections of these banks.
- NABARD is set up as an apex Development Bank by the Government of India with a mandate for facilitating **credit flow** for promotion and development of **agriculture, cottage and village industries**.
- After RBI gave up its entire stake in NABARD in February, it is now fully owned by the Government of India.

### Why in News?

- NABARD is now ready to operationalise a Rs. 2,000 crore Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF) aimed at upgrading 585 APMCs and 10,000 gramin agricultural markets.

### Background

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in February, 2019, gave its approval for the creation of a corpus of Rs. 2000 crore for Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF) to be created with NABARD for development and up-gradation of agricultural marketing infrastructure in Gramin Agricultural Markets and Regulated Wholesale Markets.

- AMIF will provide the **State/UT Governments subsidized loan** for their proposal for developing **marketing infrastructure** in 585 **APMCs** and 10,000 **Grameen Agricultural Markets (GrAMs)**.
- States may also access AMIF for **innovative integrated market infrastructure** projects including **Hub and Spoke mode** and in **Public Private Partnership mode**.
- In these GrAMs, physical and basic infrastructure will be strengthened using MGNREGA and other Government Schemes.

- A hub and spoke network is a centralized, integrated logistics system designed to keep costs down.
- Hub and spoke distribution centers receive products from many different origins, consolidate the products, and send them directly to destinations.

#### 4) Consumer Price Index (CPI)

##### About CPI

- Consumer Price Index is a measure of **change in retail prices of goods and services** consumed by defined population group in a given area with reference to a base year.
- This basket of goods and services represents the level of living or the utility derived by the consumers at given levels of their income, prices and tastes.
- This index is an important economic indicator and is widely considered as a **barometer of inflation**, a tool for monitoring price stability and as a deflator in national accounts.
- The dearness allowance of Government employees and wage contracts between labour and employer is based on this index.
- CPI in India is published monthly by the **Central Statistical Organization (CSO)**.
- In 2013, the consumer price index replaced the wholesale price index (WPI) as a main measure of inflation.

##### Presently the consumer price indices compiled in India are

- CPI for Industrial workers CPI(IW),
- CPI for Agricultural Labourers CPI(AL) and;
- CPI for Rural Labourers CPI(RL) and
- CPI(Urban) and CPI(Rural).

- Consumer Price Index for Urban Non Manual Employees (UNME) was earlier computed by Central Statistical Organisation. However this index has been discontinued since April 2008.
- The CPI(IW) and CPI(AL& RL) compiled are occupation specific and centre specific and are compiled by Labour Bureau.
- **CPI(Urban)** and **CPI(Rural)** are new indices in the group of Consumer price index and has a wider coverage of population with base year 2011-12..
- This index compiled by CSO tries to encompass the entire population and is likely to replace all the other indices presently compiled.
- In addition to this, Consumer Food Price Indices (CFPI) for all India for rural, urban and combined separately are also released w.e.f May, 2014.
- Price data are collected from selected towns by the Field Operations Division of NSSO and from selected villages by the Department of Posts.
- Price data are received through web portals being maintained by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has started using CPI-combined as the sole inflation measure for the **purpose of monetary policy**.

##### Why in News?

- Retail inflation climbed to a 16-month high of 4.62% in October, driven by food inflation, which hit its highest level since August 2016.

##### News in Detail

- The inflation level in October breached the 4% benchmark, set by the RBI and the Finance Ministry till 2021.
- It, however, still remains within the upper limit of 6%.

#### 5) Wholesale Price Index (WPI)

##### About WPI

- WPI measures the changes in the prices of **goods sold and traded in bulk** by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- The WPI tracks **prices at the factory gate** before the retail level.
- It is released by the Economic Advisor in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- The quantum of rise in the WPI month-after-month is used to measure the level of wholesale inflation in the economy.
- WPI has a sub-index called **WPI Food Index**, which is a combination of the Food Articles from the Primary Articles basket, and the food products from the Manufactured Products basket.

#### Major components of WPI

- The index basket of the WPI covers commodities falling under the **three major groups** namely Primary Articles, Fuel and Power and Manufactured products.
- The index basket of the present **2011-12 series** has a total of **697 items** including 117 items for Primary Articles, 16 items for Fuel & Power and 564 items for Manufactured Products.
- The prices tracked are ex- factory price for manufactured products, mandi price for agricultural commodities and ex-mines prices for minerals.
- WPI basket does not cover services.
- Primary articles (22.62% weightage) are a major component of WPI, further subdivided into Food Articles and Non-Food Articles.
- Food Articles include items such as Cereals, Paddy, Wheat, Pulses, Vegetables, Fruits, Milk, Eggs, Meat & Fish, etc.
- Non-Food Articles include Oil Seeds, Minerals and Crude Petroleum
- The next major basket in WPI is **Fuel & Power (13.15%)**, which tracks price movements in Petrol, Diesel and LPG.
- The biggest basket is **Manufactured Goods (64.23%)**. It spans across a variety of manufactured products such as Textiles, Apparels, Paper, Chemicals, Plastic, Cement, Metals, and more.
- Manufactured Goods basket also includes manufactured food products such as Sugar, Tobacco Products, Vegetable and Animal Oils, and Fats.

#### Why in News?

- India's wholesale inflation eased to 0.16% in October, its lowest in more than three years, on the back of a fall in the prices of fuel and manufactured goods.

#### Concerns

- With retail inflation firming up and wholesale inflation easing, economists said RBI policymakers are facing a complicated situation as they consider the course of

monetary policy, especially when India's growth is slowing.

- The central bank has been on a policy rate cut spree, having already cut the repo rate five times in 2019, to help revive demand and investment.
- But high food prices may reduce its room for further easing up.
- The gap between CPI and WPI will remain as long as commodity prices are weak and the central bank may have to revise its retail inflation forecast, economists said.

## 6) Retail Gold Insights 2019 - by World Gold Council

### About World Gold Council

- The World Gold Council (WGC) is a **nonprofit association** of the **world's leading gold producers**.
- As market development organization for the gold industry, the Council includes **25 members** and many members are gold mining companies.
- The WGC was established to promote the use of and demand for gold through marketing, research and lobbying.
- Headquartered in **London**, the WGC covers the markets which comprise about three-quarters of the world's annual gold consumption.
- The WGC is an **advocate for gold consumption**. The WGC aims to maximize the industry's potential growth by monitoring and defending existing gold consumption.
- It also **co-sponsors research** in the development of **new uses of gold**, or of new products containing gold.
- For example, successful projects supported by the gold industry have led to the development of jewelry containing 99% gold.
- The organization's specific purpose is to **stimulate and sustain the demand for gold**.
- It releases **Retail Gold Insights report** annually.

### Why in News?

- As per the Retail Gold Insights 2019 report, Gold is the third-most consistently bought investment — 46% of global retail investors have chosen gold products,

behind savings accounts (78%) and life insurance (54%).

## 7) New IBC rules to cover financial service providers

### Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016

- It provides for a **time-bound process to resolve insolvency**.
- Insolvency is a situation where individuals or companies are **unable to repay their outstanding debt**.
- When a default in repayment occurs, creditors gain control over debtor's assets and must take decisions to resolve insolvency within a 180-day period (extendable upto 90 days).
- To ensure an uninterrupted resolution process, the Code also provides **immunity to debtors from resolution claims of creditors during this period**.

### Facilitators the insolvency resolution under the Code

The Code creates various institutions to facilitate resolution of insolvency. These are as follows:

- Insolvency Professionals** - a specialised cadre of **licensed professionals** - will administer the resolution process, manage the assets of the debtor, and provide information for creditors to assist them in decision making.
- Insolvency Professional Agencies:** The insolvency professionals will be registered with insolvency professional agencies. The agencies conduct examinations to certify the insolvency professionals and enforce a code of conduct for their performance.
- Information Utilities** - to which creditors will report financial information of the debt owed to them by the debtor. Such information will include **records of debt, liabilities and defaults**.
- Adjudicating authorities:** The proceedings of the resolution process will be adjudicated by the **National Companies Law Tribunal (NCLT)**, for **companies**; and the **Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT)**, for **individuals**. The duties of the authorities will include approval to initiate the resolution process, appoint the insolvency professional, and approve the final decision of creditors.

- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board:** The Board will **regulate insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies and information utilities** set up under the Code. The Board will consist of representatives of Reserve Bank of India, and the Ministries of Finance, Corporate Affairs and Law.

### Procedure to resolve insolvency in the Code

- The Code proposes the following steps to resolve insolvency:

#### i) Initiation:

- When a default occurs, the resolution process may be initiated by the debtor or creditor.
- A financial creditor may file an application before the NCLT for initiating the insolvency resolution process.
- The NCLT must find the existence of default within 14 days.

#### ii) Decision to resolve insolvency:

- A committee consisting of the financial creditors (**Committee of Creditors (CoC)**) who lent money to the debtor will be formed by the insolvency professional.
- The CoC may choose to revive the debt owed to them by changing the repayment schedule, or sell (liquidate) the assets of the debtor to repay the debts owed to them.
- If a decision is not taken in 180 days, the debtor's assets go into liquidation.
- This may be extended by a period of up to 90 days if the extension is approved by NCLT.
- The 2019 Amendment provides that the resolution process must be completed within **330 days**. This includes time for any extension granted and the time taken in legal proceedings in relation to the process.

#### iii) Liquidation:

- If the debtor goes into liquidation, an insolvency professional administers the liquidation process.
- Proceeds from the sale of the debtor's assets are distributed in the following order of precedence: i) insolvency resolution costs, including the remuneration to the insolvency professional, ii) secured creditors, whose loans are backed by collateral, dues to workers, other employees, iii) unsecured

creditors, iv) dues to government, v) priority shareholders and vi) equity shareholders.

- In a 2018 Amendment, home-buyers who paid advances to a developer were to be considered as financial creditors. They would be represented by an insolvency professional appointed by NCLT.

#### Why in News?

- Government issued rules that provide a framework for bringing 'systemically important financial service providers' under the purview of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

#### News in Detail

- Section 227 of the [Insolvency and Bankruptcy] Code enables the Central government to notify, in consultation with the financial sector regulators, financial service providers (FSPs) or categories of FSPs for the purpose of insolvency and liquidation proceedings, in such manner as may be prescribed.

- Accordingly, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has notified the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Insolvency and Liquidation Proceedings of Financial Service Providers and Application to Adjudicating Authority) Rules, 2019 to provide a generic framework for insolvency and liquidation proceedings of systemically important FSPs other than banks.

- A systemically important financial institution (SIFI) or systemically important bank (SIB) is a bank, insurance company, or other financial institution **whose failure might trigger a financial crisis**. They are colloquially referred to as "**too big to fail**".
- The **Financial Stability Board** published a list of global systemically important financial institutions (**G-SIFIs**).
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) named State Bank of India (**SBI**), **ICICI Bank** and **HDFC Bank** as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs).

# International Relations

## 1) Hong Kong protests

### What is Hong Kong's status with China?

- Hong Kong is a **former British colony** was **handed** back to China in **1997**.
- Under the "**one country, two systems**" arrangement, it has **more autonomy** than the mainland, and its people more rights.
- It has its **own judiciary and a separate legal system** from mainland China.
- Those rights include freedom of assembly and freedom of speech.
- But those freedoms - the **Basic Law** - expire in 2047 and it is not clear what Hong Kong's status will then be.



### Background

- The 2019 Hong Kong protests (also known as the **Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (or Anti-ELAB) movement**) were triggered by the introduction of the Fugitive Offenders amendment bill by the Hong Kong government.
- The extradition bill which triggered the first protest was introduced in April which would have allowed for criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China under certain circumstances.
- Critics feared this could undermine judicial independence and endanger dissidents.
- The bill was withdrawn in September but demonstrations continue and now demand

full democracy and an inquiry into police actions.



### About the protests

- Clashes between police and activists have become increasingly violent, with police firing live bullets and protesters attacking officers and throwing petrol bombs.

### What do the protesters want?

- Some protesters have adopted the motto: "Five demands, not one less!" These are:
  1. For the protests not to be characterised as a "riot"
  2. Amnesty for arrested protesters
  3. An independent inquiry into alleged police brutality
  4. Implementation of complete universal suffrage
  5. The fifth demand, the withdrawal of the bill, has already been met.
- Some also want the resignation of Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, whom they view as Beijing's puppet.
- Protests supporting the Hong Kong movement have spread across the globe, with rallies taking place in the UK, France, US, Canada and Australia.
- In many cases, people supporting the demonstrators were confronted by pro-Beijing rallies.
- Chinese president Xi Jinping has warned against separatism, saying any attempt to

divide China would end in "bodies smashed and bones ground to powder".

#### Why in News?

- Violence spreads across Hong Kong's New Territories on 24th weekend of unrest.

## 2) H1-B visa by the USA

#### About H1-B and H-4 Visa

- The **H-1B** visa is a **non-immigrant visa** that allows U.S. companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations.
- A **H4 visa (Dependent Visa)** is issued to **dependent family members (spouse and children) of H1 visa holders** who would like to accompany the H1B visa holder to the U.S. during their stay.

#### Background

- A **2015** rule issued by U.S. President Donald Trump's predecessor Barack Obama **allowed work permits for certain categories of H-4 visa holders**, primarily spouses of those having H-1B work visas waiting for their Green Card, to work in the US.
- Indians, particularly women, were the greatest beneficiary of this rule.
- This has been challenged by several U.S. workers with the current Trump administration supporting their cause, saying that it wants to rescind the rule.

#### Why in News?

- In a temporary relief to thousands of Indians living in America, a U.S. court has refused to strike down, for the time being, an Obama-era rule that allowed spouses of H-1B visa holders to work in America.

## 3) Jordan to retake lands leased by Israel

#### Why in News?

- Jordan has pulled out of a 25-year-old landmark agreement that allowed Israeli farmers to cultivate in two pieces of agricultural land that was leased by Israel.

#### Background

- Under the deal, part of the **1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty**, two territories- **Ghamr** and **Baqoura**, straddling the border were **recognised as under Jordanian sovereignty** but with **special provisions allowing Israeli farmers to work the land** and visitors to tour the **Isle of Peace park** in the area.
- But in 2018, Jordan said it did not want to continue the arrangement, in what was

widely seen as a sign of increasingly strained diplomatic relations.



#### About Jordan-Israel peace treaty 1994

- The treaty is sometimes referred to as **Wadi Araba Treaty**.
- **Jordan** was the **second Arab country, after Egypt**, to sign a **peace accord with Israel**.
- The treaty settled relations between the two countries, adjusted land and water disputes, and provided for broad cooperation in tourism and trade.
- It included a pledge that neither Jordan nor Israel would allow its territory to become a staging ground for military strikes by a third country.

## 4) Capacity-building programme for Afghan diplomats begins

#### Why in News?

- Indian and Chinese officials began a course to train diplomats from Afghanistan at the **Foreign Service Institute (FSI), New Delhi**, run by the **Ministry of External Affairs**.

#### Other Details

- The **two-week intensive programme** is designed to give the visiting diplomats an exposure to Indian diplomatic practices and traditions.

- Foreign Service Institute had emerged as an important centre of training of diplomats in South Asia.
- 179 Afghan diplomats** had been trained at the FSI till date, the **largest number of diplomats to be trained from any country** at the institute.

### Background

- The joint training of Afghan diplomats is **part of the outcome of the Wuhan Summit** between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping.
- Accordingly, the **first joint training programme was held from October 15 to 26 in 2018.**

### About Foreign Service Institute

- Foreign Service Institute (FSI) was established in **1986** by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, primarily to cater to the **professional training needs of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officers** inducted via UPSC every year.
- Over the years, FSI diversified its activities which include courses for foreign diplomats as a way to build bridges of friendship and cooperation with countries around the world.
- The **Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD)**, which is FSI's flagship programme for foreign diplomats, was launched in **1992**.
- The Courses and Programmes for foreign diplomats are fully funded by the Government of India and organised in the spirit of South-South Cooperation.

## 5) Places/Countries in News - Bolivia

### Geographical features

- Located in South America in **Southern Hemisphere**, above the Tropic of Capricorn.
- It is a **landlocked** country.
- 
- Deep and cold, **Lake Titicaca** (shared with **Peru**), 3,810 meters above sea level, is the **highest navigable body of water** in the world.

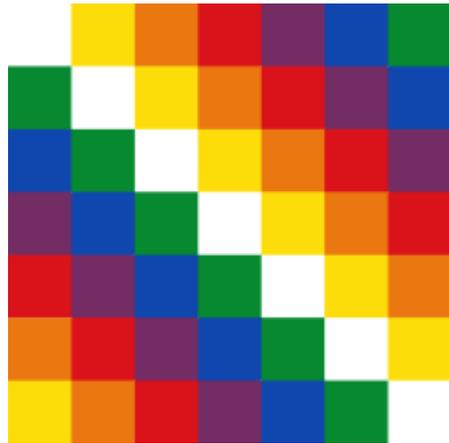
- Bolivia's western half is covered by the **Andes ranges.**



### Why in News?

- The integrity of the recent Presidential election in Bolivia was called into question by the **Organization of American States**, a regional body, which had found "clear manipulation" and called for the result to be annulled.
- There were widespread protests forcing the incumbent President Evo Morales (first President from the indigenous community) to resign and seek asylum in Mexico.

### Additional information



- The **Wiphala** is a **square emblem**, commonly used as a flag, representing some native peoples of the Andes that include today's Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and parts of Argentina, Chile and Colombia.
- In 2009, under the presidency of Evo Morales, Bolivian constitution established the Wiphala as the **dual flag of Bolivia**, along with their old flag.
- In the recent protests, some people desecrated the Whiphala emblems.

## 6) Organization of American States

### About Organization of American States (OAS)

- OAS consists of **35 independent states of the Americas** who seek to establish and maintain peace and justice, promote solidarity, strengthen collaboration, and defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.
- It was formed to promote **economic, military, and cultural cooperation** among its members, which **include almost all of the independent states of the Western Hemisphere**.
- It was formed in **1948** by through the **Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS)**, signed by 21 countries (founding members) in **Bogotá, Colombia**.
- Since then, the OAS has expanded to include the nations of the Caribbean, as well as Canada.

### History of OAS

- The founding of the OAS was based on the general acceptance of the principles of the **U.S. Monroe Doctrine** (Dec. 2, 1823) by the countries of the Western Hemisphere, especially the principle that **an attack**

**upon one American state would be considered as an attack upon all.**

- It is the **world's oldest regional organization**, dating back to the **First International Conference of American States**, held in **Washington, D.C.**, from October **1889** to April 1890, which approved the establishment of the **International Union of American Republics**.
- The OAS grew out of an earlier U.S.-sponsored international organization for the Western Hemisphere, the **Pan-American Union**, which held a series of **nine Pan-American conferences from 1889-90 to 1948** to reach agreement on various commercial and juridical problems common to the United States and Latin America.
- After World War II, all 21 independent nations of the Western Hemisphere signed the **Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance**, known as the **Rio Treaty**, which established a **defensive military alliance in the region**.

### Membership



- **21 original OAS members (1948):** **Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia**, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, **Mexico**, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, **United States**, Uruguay, and **Venezuela**.
- 14 subsequent members: Barbados (1967); Trinidad and Tobago (1967); Jamaica

(1969); Grenada (1975); Suriname (1977); Dominica (1979); Saint Lucia (1979); Antigua and Barbuda (1981); Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (1981); The Bahamas (1982); St. Kitts and Nevis (1984); **Canada (1990)**; Belize (1991); Guyana (1991).

- **All 35 independent countries of the Americas** have ratified the OAS Charter and belong to the organization.
- There are also **69 states with OAS permanent observer status (including India)**.
- French Guiana, an overseas territory of France, situated in South America is a non-member.

#### Why in News?

- The integrity of the recent Presidential election in Bolivia was called into question by the **Organization of American States**, a regional body, which had found "clear manipulation" and called for the result to be annulled.

## 7) BRICS

### History of BRICS

- BRICS is an acronym for the combined economies of **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa**.
- Economists at Goldman Sachs originally coined the term BRIC (without South Africa) in 2003.
- Analysts speculated that, by 2050, these four economies would be the most dominant - China and India will become the world's dominant suppliers of manufactured goods and services; Brazil and Russia would be similarly dominant as suppliers of raw materials.
- South Africa was added to the list on April 13, 2011 creating "BRICS".
- As a formal grouping, BRIC started after the meeting of the leaders of Russia, India and China in **St Petersburg** on the margins of the G8-Outreach Summit in July **2006**.
- The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the margins of the UNGA in New York in September 2006.
- The **first BRIC Summit** was held in **Yekaterinburg, Russia**, on June 16, **2009**.

### About BRICS

- BRICS accounts for **26.46% of the world's territory** and **42.58% of the world population**.
- BRICS cooperation is aimed at complementing and strengthening existing bilateral and multilateral relations among member countries.

### Significance of BRICS to India

- From the Indian perspective, BRICS has emerged the voice of developing countries, or the global south.
- As these countries face an aggressive club of developed countries, raising challenges on issues from WTO to climate change, New Delhi believes BRICS has to protect the rights of the developing countries.
- The **five BRICS countries are also members of G-20**.

### Why in News?

- The **11th BRICS Summit** was held in **Brasília**, Brazil. The 2019 Brazilian Presidency focuses on the theme, '**BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future**'.



### News in Detail

- The new areas of BRICS cooperation spearheaded by Brazil, are: strengthening of cooperation on science, technology and innovation; enhancement of cooperation on digital economy; invigoration of cooperation on the fight against transnational crime, especially against organized crime, money laundering and drug trafficking; and encouragement to the

rapprochement between the New Development Bank (NDB) and the BRICS Business Council.

- The joint working group on counter-terrorism has decided to constitute sub-working groups in five areas: terrorist financing; use of Internet for terrorist purposes; countering radicalisation; the issue of foreign terrorist fighters; and capacity-building.
- It is expected that India will chair the subgroup on use of Internet for terrorist purposes.
- According to the BRICS joint statement, the five countries look forward to the opening of the two remaining New Development Bank (NDB) Regional Offices in Russia and India in 2020.

### About New Development Bank

#### History

- During the sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014), the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB).
- The Bank formally came into existence as a legal entity at the Ufa Summit (Russia) on 7 July 2015.

#### Objectives and functions

- The NDB is a multilateral development bank established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa with the objective of **financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects** in BRICS and **other emerging economies and developing countries**, complementing the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions toward global growth and development.

- The Bank will also **provide technical assistance** for projects to be supported by the NDB and engage in **information, cultural and personnel exchanges** with the purpose of contributing to the achievement of **environmental and social sustainability**.
- The Bank will **support public or private projects** through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.
- In 2018, the NDB received observer status in the UN General Assembly, establishing a firm basis for active and fruitful cooperation with the United Nations.

#### Membership and shareholding

- Bank's **Articles of Agreement** specify that **all members of the United Nations could be members** of the bank, however the share of the **BRICS nations** can never be less than **55% of voting power**.
- The New Development Bank shall have an initial subscribed capital of US\$ 50 billion and an initial authorized capital of US\$ 100 billion.
- The initial subscribed capital shall be equally distributed amongst the founding members.
- The voting power of each member shall equal its subscribed shares in the capital stock of the Bank.

#### NDB projects in India

- Some of the Approved projects are: Mumbai Metro Rail Project, Assam Bridge Project, Andhra Pradesh Road Sector Project, Bihar Rural Roads Project.
- Proposed project - Manipur Water Supply Project.

# SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY

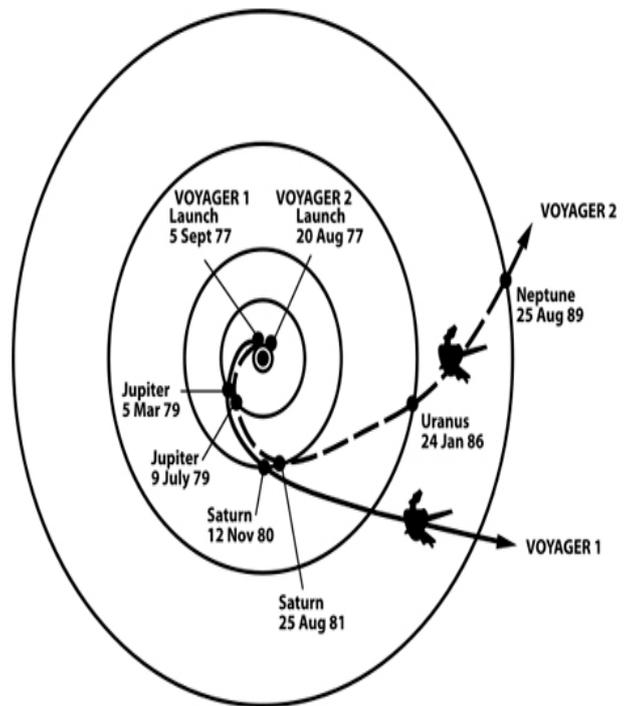
## 1) Voyager Mission

### About Voyager primary Mission

- NASA's Voyager Mission consists of two twin spacecraft named **Voyager 1** and **Voyager 2** which are identical in construction.
- NASA planned for the Voyager spacecraft to take advantage of a **rare alignment among the outer four planets** (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune) that would not take place for another 175 years.
- The alignment would allow both probes to swing from one planet to the next, with a **gravity boost** to help them along the way.
- **Voyager 2** was launched on **Aug. 20, 1977**, and **Voyager 1** launched about two weeks later, on **Sept. 5** to explore the outer planets of our solar system.
- Since then, the spacecraft have been traveling along **different flight paths** and at different speeds.
- While Voyager 1 focused on Jupiter and Saturn, Voyager 2 took close-up pictures of those planets as well as Uranus and Neptune.
- The primary five-year mission of the Voyagers included the close-up exploration of Jupiter and Saturn, Saturn's rings and the larger moons of the two planets.
- The mission was extended after a succession of discoveries.

### Voyager Interstellar Mission (VIM)

- The VIM is an **extension of the Voyager primary mission** that was completed in 1989 with the close flyby of Neptune by the Voyager 2 spacecraft.
- Interstellar space means the **region of space between star systems within a galaxy**.
- The mission objective of the Voyager Interstellar Mission (VIM) is to extend the NASA exploration of the solar system beyond the neighborhood of the outer planets to the outer limits of the Sun's sphere of influence, and possibly beyond.

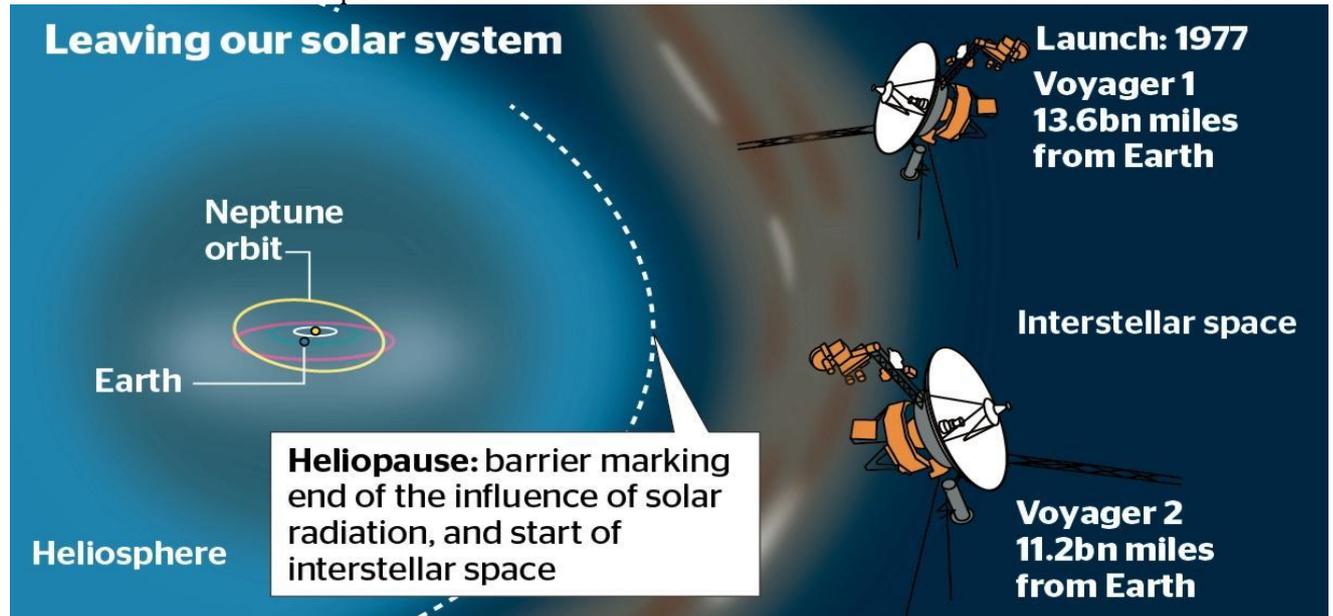


### Voyager Mission

- This extended mission is continuing to characterize the outer solar system environment and **search for the heliopause boundary**, the outer limits of the Sun's magnetic field and outward flow of the solar wind.
- On Aug. 13, 2011, **Voyager 2** became NASA's **longest-operating mission** when it broke the previous record of 12,758 days of operation set by the Pioneer 6 probe, which launched on Dec. 16, 1965, and sent its last signal home on Dec. 8, 2000.
- On Aug. 25, 2012, **Voyager 1** flew beyond the heliopause and **entered interstellar space**, making it the first human-made object to explore this new territory.
- **Voyager 2**, which is traveling in a different direction from Voyager 1, **crossed the heliopause into interstellar space on November 5, 2018**.
- This kind of interstellar exploration is the ultimate goal of the Voyager Interstellar Mission.
- The Voyagers have enough electrical power (powered by steadily decaying plutonium)

and thruster fuel to keep its current suite of

science instruments on until at least 2020.



### Quick facts

- Voyager Mission is the **longest continuously operating space mission**.
- At a distance of 22 billion kilometres from Earth, Voyager 1 is the farthest human-made object in space. Voyager 2 is at a distance of 18 billion kilometres.
- Voyager 1 became the first ever spacecraft to travel beyond the limits of interstellar space in 2012.
- This space probe travels at a **speed of over 60,000 kilometres per hour** which makes it the fastest moving man-made object in outer space.
- These spacecrafts carry a greeting in a phonograph record for any possible life form on any other planet that could possibly encounter it in the future.
- Voyager 1 has also recorded images of a volcano called Pele. This volcano is located on a moon of Saturn.
- The two spacecraft have explored all the giant outer planets of our solar system as well as 49 moons, and the systems of rings and magnetic fields those planets possess.
- The two Voyagers will be in their own orbits around the galaxy for 5 billion years (may outlive Earth itself!) or longer as the probability of them running into anything is almost zero.

### Why in News?

- Voyager 2 has sent back its first message from interstellar space.

### News in Detail

- It was once thought that the solar wind faded away gradually with distance, but Voyager 1 confirmed there was a boundary (heliopause), defined by a sudden drop in temperature and an increase in the density of charged particles, known as plasma.
- The set of measurements, by Voyager 2, give **new insights into the nature of the heliosphere's limits** because on Voyager 1 a crucial instrument designed to directly measure the properties of plasma had broken in 1980.
- It gives some insight into the **shape of the hemisphere**, tracing out a leading edge something like a blunt bullet.
- Voyager 2 also gives **additional clues to the thickness of the heliosheath**, the outer region of the hemisphere and the point where the solar wind piles up against the approaching wind in interstellar space.

## 2) Tenofovir - the HIV drug

### About HIV

- **Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)** is a virus that **attacks immune cells called CD4 cells**, which are a **type of T cell**.
- These are **white blood cells** that move around the body, detecting faults and anomalies in cells as well as infections.
- When HIV targets and infiltrates these cells, it reduces the body's ability to combat other diseases.
- This increases the risk and impact of opportunistic infections and cancers.

- However, a person can carry HIV without experiencing symptoms for a long time.
- HIV is a **lifelong infection** as no effective HIV cure exists.
- However, by taking HIV medicine (called **antiretroviral therapy or ART**), people with HIV can live long and healthy lives and reduce the risk of a person passing on the virus.
- In addition, there are effective methods to prevent getting HIV, including **pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)** and **post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)**.

#### What is AIDS?

- AIDS is the most **advanced stage of HIV infection**. Once HIV infection develops into AIDS, infections and cancer pose a greater risk.
- Without treatment, HIV infection is likely to develop into AIDS as the immune system gradually wears down.
- A person with HIV is considered to have progressed to AIDS when:
  - the number of their **CD4 cells falls below 200 cells per cubic millimeter of blood (200 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>)**. OR
  - they develop one or more opportunistic infections regardless of their CD4 count.

#### About Tenofovir

- Tenofovir (**Viread**) is an **antiviral drug** that is approved for the treatment of HIV infection.
- It is able to reduce the amount of HIV in the blood, help prevent or reverse damage to the immune system and reduce the risk of AIDS-related illnesses.
- It is also an **experimental treatment for hepatitis B**.
- Tenofovir is made by Gilead Sciences Inc. and is marketed as Viread.
- Tenofovir belongs to the **nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NtRTI)** class of drugs. NtRTIs **inhibit an enzyme called reverse transcriptase**, which is essential to the process of viral replication.
- Despite the absence of long-term safety data, tenofovir is an **attractive first-line option for HIV-positive patients** as an effective antiviral agent that can reduce HIV viral load.

#### Why in News?

- A team from Chennai has extracted a sulphated polysaccharide known as fucoidan from two seaweed species which

inhibits the functioning of the HIV-1 strain of the human immunodeficiency virus to a degree that is comparable to the drug tenofovir that is presently in vogue for antiretroviral action.

### 3) Artificial ripening of fruits

#### Ripening of fruits

- Ripening, in general, is a physiological process which makes the fruit edible, palatable and nutritious.
- In nature fruits ripen after attainment of proper maturity by a sequence of physiological and biochemical events and the process is irreversible.
- Whether fruits ripen on the plant or after harvest, the general changes associated with ripening process is softening of fruit, change in colour and development of characteristic aroma and flavour.
- There is also reduction in sourness and increase in Sweetness of the fruit.
- Usually fruits produce **ethylene gas**, a plant hormone, naturally that ripens the fruits.

#### Artificial ripening

- Artificial ripening is done to achieve faster and more uniform ripening characteristics.
- Unsaturated hydrocarbons such as **acetylene, ethylene** etc. can promote ripening and induce colour changes effectively.
- The most commonly used chemical for artificial ripening is **Calcium Carbide (CaC<sub>2</sub>)** and is popularly known as "Masala", though banned under the **Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Rules, 1955** and also under **Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011** made thereunder.
- When it reacts with water, it produces **acetylene gas** (popularly referred to as **carbide gas**) which is an analogue to ethylene and quickens the ripening process.
- Examples of fruits and vegetables where artificial ripening by use of Calcium Carbide is generally practised - Mango, Banana, Papaya and sometimes for Sapota (Chiku), dates and tomatoes.
- The other commonly used chemical is called **ethephon (2-chloroethyl**

**phosphonic acid**). It penetrates the fruit and decomposes **ethylene**.

- Potential Health Effects associated with Calcium Carbide
- Calcium Carbide is a dangerous and corrosive chemical.
- Carbide ripened fruits on consumption cause several harmful effects to human health.
- CaC<sub>2</sub> has cancer causing properties and contains traces of **arsenic** and **phosphorous hydride**.
- The early symptoms of arsenic or phosphorous poisoning include vomiting, diarrhoea, burning sensation of chest and abdomen, irritation or burning in the eyes and skin, sore throat, cough and shortness of breath.
- It may affect the neurological system by inducing prolonged hypoxia which causes headache, dizziness, sleepiness, memory loss and cerebral oedema (swelling in the brain caused by excessive fluids).
- CaC<sub>2</sub> is banned in many countries because it has carcinogenic properties and hazardous effects.

#### 4) Maternal deaths on the decline: report

##### What is maternal death?

- According to **World Health Organisation(WHO)** Maternal death is the **death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy**, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy.
- This may arise from **any cause** related to or aggravated by the **pregnancy** or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.

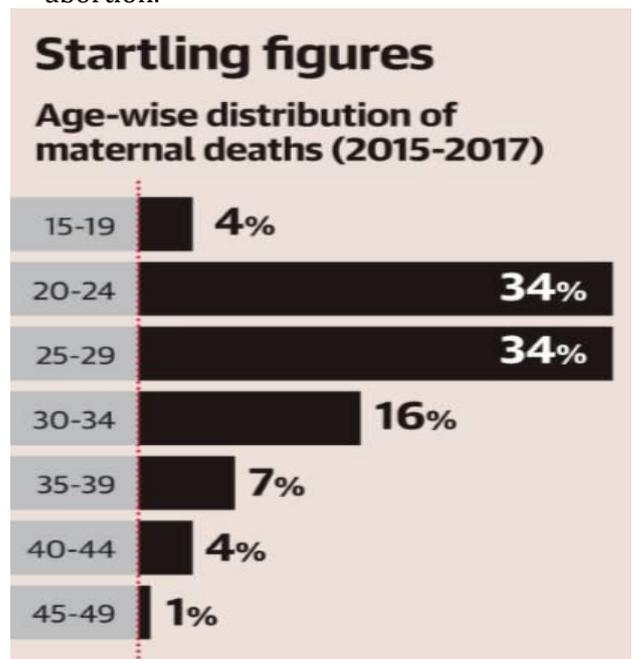
##### Where do maternal deaths occur?

- The MMR in **low income countries** in 2017 is 462 per 100 000 live births versus 11 per 100 000 live births in high income countries which reflects **inequalities in access to quality health services** and highlights the gap between rich and poor.

##### Why do women die?

- -Women die as a result of **complications** during and **following pregnancy and childbirth**. -Most of these complications develop during pregnancy and most are preventable or treatable.

- -Other complications may exist before pregnancy but are worsened during pregnancy, especially if not managed as part of the woman's care.
- -The major complications that account for nearly 75% of all maternal deaths are:
  1. severe bleeding (mostly bleeding after childbirth),
  2. infections (usually after childbirth),
  3. high blood pressure during pregnancy (pre-eclampsia and eclampsia),
  4. complications from delivery and unsafe abortion.



##### Factors that prevent women from receiving or seeking care during pregnancy and childbirth:

1. poverty
  2. distance to facilities
  3. lack of information
  4. inadequate and poor quality services
  5. cultural beliefs and practices
- The WHO says the MMR dropped by 38% worldwide between 2000 and 2017.

##### Why in news?

- A report by Sample Registration Survey found that MMR in India has declined in 2015-2017 compared to 2014-2016.

##### Highlights of the report:

- MMR of India has declined from 130 in 2014-2016 to 122 in 2015-17.
- The report shows 68% of deaths were among women in the age group of 20-29.
- The SRS had categorised the States into three groups —

1. the Empowered Action Group(EAG) States comprise Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Assam;
2. Southern States consist of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu; and
3. Other States cover the remaining States and Union Territories.
  - The drop has been most significant in empowered action group (EAG) States from 188 to 175
  - Karnataka has shown the highest percentage decline in MMR.
  - Independent MMR data of Jharkhand Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand has been released for the first time in the SRS 2015-2017 bulletin.
  - Kerala retains its first position with 42 (down from 46)
  - Maharashtra retained its second position with 55 (down from 61) and Tamil Nadu its third position with 63 (down from 66).

#### Significance:

- The decline is important for India as 11 States have achieved the National Health Policy target of MMR 100 per lakh live births well ahead of 2020.

#### Possible reasons for such decline:

- institutional deliveries and focused approach towards aspirational districts and inter-sectoral action to reach the most marginalised and vulnerable mothers
- Focus on quality and coverage of health services through public health initiatives under the National Health Mission such as LaQshya, Poshan Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, Janani Suraksha Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana have contributed to this decline.
- India is now committed to ensuring that not a single mother or newborn dies due to a preventable cause and move towards zero preventable maternal and newborn deaths through the recently launched Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan Initiative (SUMAN).

#### MMR and sustainable development goals:

- The sustainable development goals set by the United Nations target reducing the global MMR to less than 70 per one lakh live births by 2030.

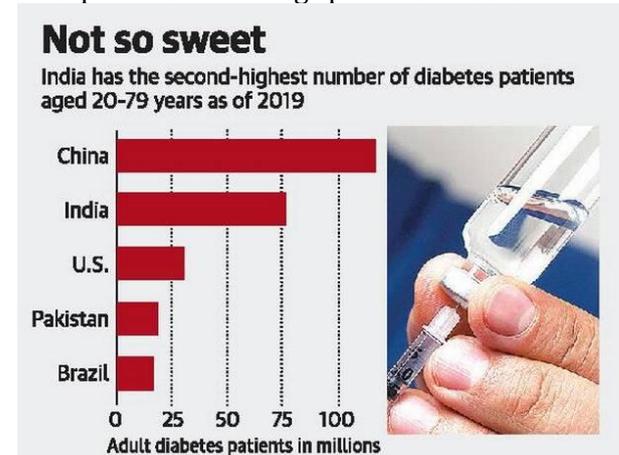
## 5) India is home to 77 million diabetics, second highest in the world

#### Context:

- On International Diabetes Day, the International Diabetes Foundation Diabetes Atlas makes it clear that India becomes home to 77 million diabetics which is second highest in the world

#### Highlights of the Diabetes Atlas report:

- The ninth edition of the IDF Diabetes Atlas offers projections that continue to put India at the second slot right up to 2045.
- One in six people with diabetes in the world is from India.
- Over 134 million Indians will be diabetics in the next 25 years.
- India is on the top of the table of a clutch of countries in from Southeast Asia — Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Mauritius. Bangladesh is the second in this table with only 8.4 million diabetics.
- The IDF estimates that 10% of global health expenditure is being spent on diabetes.



#### About diabetes:

- Diabetes mellitus, commonly known as diabetes, is a metabolic disease that causes high blood sugar.

#### What happens in diabetes?

- The hormone insulin moves sugar from the blood into your cells to be stored or used for energy. With diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't effectively use the insulin it does make.

#### Types of diabetes:

- **Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease.** The immune system attacks and destroys cells in the pancreas, where insulin is made.

- **Type 2 diabetes** occurs when your body becomes **resistant to insulin**, and sugar builds up in your blood.

#### Symptoms:

- increased hunger
- increased thirst
- weight loss
- frequent urination
- blurry vision
- extreme fatigue
- sores that don't heal

#### Complications:

1. heart disease, heart attack, and stroke
2. neuropathy
3. nephropathy
4. retinopathy and vision loss
5. hearing loss
6. foot damage such as infections and sores that don't heal
7. skin conditions such as bacterial and fungal infections
8. depression
9. dementia

#### Treatment:

- Insulin becomes the treatment for type 1 diabetes whereas Antidiabetic drugs along with lifestyle modification is the treatment option for type 2 diabetes.

#### Way forward:

- There is urgency to develop and implement multi-sectoral strategies to combat the growing epidemic.
- India needs a more effective national diabetes prevention programme which will require cooperation from several quarters, including medical education, health awareness in schools, and urban planning
- Targeting pre diabetics people with information on the right lifestyle options to help keep blood sugar, lipids and blood pressure under control, at least a third of people from developing diabetes can be prevented.
- The country should also be ready to offer treatment options, at least basic care for all who are living with diabetes, and provide for the treatment of various complications.

### 6)Progress on childhood pneumonia, diarrhoea falling short, finds global study

- (India saw 2nd-highest number of pneumonia deaths of children under age five: UN)

#### Context:

- India had the second-highest number of deaths of children under the age of five in 2018 due to pneumonia, a curable and preventable disease according to UNICEF report.

#### Highlights of the report:

- Pneumonia claimed the life of one child every 39 seconds globally, according to a new report by the UN.

- The report said just five countries were responsible for more than half of child pneumonia deaths:

1. Nigeria, India, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia.

- Pneumonia is responsible for 15% of deaths in children under the age of five.

#### What is Pneumonia?

- Pneumonia is an infection that inflames the air sacs in one or both lungs. The air sacs may fill with fluid or pus (purulent material), causing cough with phlegm or pus, fever, chills, and difficulty breathing.

- **Risk group:** children whose immune systems is weakened by other infections like HIV or by malnutrition, and those living in areas with high levels of air pollution and unsafe water, are at far greater risk.

- Can be treated with antibiotics and prevented with immunisation.

#### What next?

- Governments in the worst-affected countries should develop and implement **pneumonia control and prevention strategies** and call on richer nations and donors to **boost immunisation coverage by lowering the cost of vaccines**.

- An estimated 18 million more health workers are needed by 2030 to prevent, diagnose and treat pneumonia as well as to reach the Sustainable Development Goals targets for **Universal Health Coverage**.

#### World Pneumonia Day:

- Every year, November 12 is observed as World Pneumonia Day to raise awareness and to advocate for global action to protect against, help prevent, and effectively treat this deadly illness.

#### SAANS aims to reduce child mortality:

- SAANS 'Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully' a campaign aimed at reducing child mortality due to pneumonia, which contributes to

around 15% deaths annually of children under the age of five was launched by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare in Gujarat.

▪ **Objective of the campaign:**

- to mobilise people to protect children from pneumonia, and
- Train health personnel and other stakeholders to provide prioritised treatment to control the disease.
- The HMIS data for 2018-19 ranked Gujarat second in the number of child deaths due to pneumonia, after Madhya Pradesh.

▪ **Significance of the campaign:**

- Under the campaign, a child suffering from pneumonia can be treated with pre-referral dose of antibiotic amoxicillin by ASHA workers, and health and wellness centres can use pulse oximeter (device to monitor oxygen saturation) to identify low oxygen levels in the blood of a child, and if required, treat him by use of oxygen cylinders.
- A mass awareness campaign will also be launched about the effective solutions for pneumonia prevention like breast feeding, and age appropriate complementary feeding.

# ART & CULTURE

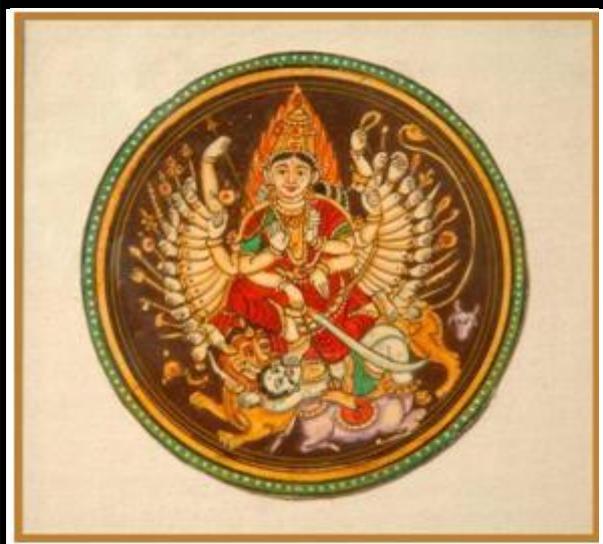
## 1) Ganjifa Art

### About Ganjifa Art:

- Ganjifa, an ancient card game, is believed to have been brought to India during the Moghul period. The Persian word, **Ganjifeh**, means **playing cards**.
- Beautifully painted, these mainly circular cards (there were some square decks too) were used by kings and noblemen across the country. The colours and iconography differed across regions.

### Details of the Art:

- In the 19th Century, the Maharaja of Mysore, Mummudi Krishnaraja Wadiyar III (1794-1868) created a niche for the game and the art of Ganjifa.
- “**Kouthuka Nidhi**, the last chapter of **Sritatvanidhi**, the monumental work of the Maharaja, has details of the card game of Mysore, known as the Mysore Chada Ganjifa.



- It mentions the names of the card games devised by the Maharaja, number of cards used in each game, details of iconography, colour combinations and the corresponding shlokas,”
- “Thin, fine line miniature paintings with decorations were mounted on cardboard. Later, some artists were also inspired by the Vijayanagar style.
- Ganjifa cards were known as **kreeda patras** and were made on **sandalwood and ivory, etched with silver and gold**. The complexity of the game and the dominance of Western-printed 52-leaf playing cards later silenced the art, craft and the game.”

## 2) Parliament Building

### Why in News?

- The government is considering suggestions to build a new Parliament House or renovate the existing one with improved facilities by 2022, just in time to celebrate 75 years of Independence.

### History and architecture

- Parliament House was designed by the British architect **Sir Edwin Lutyens** and **Sir Herbert Baker** in 1912-1913.
- Construction of the building began in 1921 and was completed in 1927.
- It is popularly **believed that the circular structure of the 11th-century Chausath Yogini Temple** in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh may have inspired the design of Parliament House.
- The Chausath Yogini Temple, also known as the Ekattarso Mahadeva Temple, is one of the few such Yogini temples in the country which is in good condition.

### Features of Parliament House:

- The Parliament House has a hybrid architectural style. It has **Hindu, Saracenic and Roman features**.
- It drew stylistic and decorative elements from native **Indo-Islamic architecture**, especially Mughal architecture, which the British regarded as the classic Indian style, and less often, Hindu temple architecture.
- There are 30 statues and busts in the Parliament House precincts including the

sculptures of Chandragupta Maurya, Motilal Nehru, and Indira Gandhi.

- There are more than 20 portraits. Thus, the building represents the composite culture and social pluralism of India.
- Inscriptions from the Upanishadas, Mahabharata, Manu Smriti and other texts



**Chausath Yogini Temple**



**Indian Parliament**

are indicative of the spirit with which parliamentarians should conduct business.

- A dome over the passage to the Central Hall also has a Quranic inscription which says, "God will not change the condition of the people unless they bring about a change themselves."

- These features demonstrate the secular nature of the Republic of which the Parliament House is the nucleus.
- What is the need for Renovation?
- The buildings constructed over 100 years ago such as the North and South blocks are not earthquake-resistant.
- There is a shortage of working and parking space, amenities and services. The building doesn't support the demands of space and security.
- There are no chambers for MPs. The situation will further worsen if there is an increase in the number of seats.
- Example around the World

- The Capitol Building of the U.S., built in 1800, was subsequently expanded. A massive dome and more chambers for the House of Representatives and the Senate were added. But during expansion, the original plan was maintained despite the tumultuous passing of two centuries. This approach of maintaining and renovating the existing Parliament House building would be a wiser option.
- Conclusion:
- The Parliament House building has remarkable symbolic value. It embodies the spirit of Indian democracy. Hence, it would be advisable to maintain and renovate the present building rather than build a new one.

# PIB ANALYSIS

## 1) 11<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit at BRAZIL:

### About BRICS:

- BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- It started as a formal grouping in 2006 on the margins of G8 outreach summit.
- BRICS brings together five major emerging economies comprising 42 percent of the world's population, having 23 percent of the global GDP and around 17 percent of the share and world trade.
- BRICS cooperation has two pillars including consultations on issues of mutual interest through meeting of leaders and ministers as well as cooperation through meeting of senior officials in a number of areas including trade, finance, health, education, science and technology, agriculture, communications IT etc.



### About 11th BRICS Summit:

- The theme of the BRICS Summit this year is “Economic Growth for an Innovative Future”.
- A large business delegation from India is also expected to be present during the visit especially to attend the BRICS Business Forum where the business community of all five countries are represented.
- The discussions are expected to be focused on challenges and opportunities for the exercise of national sovereignty in the contemporary world.

### Why in News?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Brasilia, Brazil on 13th - 14th November 2019 to attend the 11th BRICS summit.

## 2) India-ASEAN Business Summit:

### About India- ASEAN Business Summit:

- The Theme of the India- ASEAN Summit is – “Today, Tomorrow, Together”.
- Objective of the conference is to enhance the trade trajectory between India and ASEAN Nations to new highs.
- The first day session discusses on Infrastructure and Tourism sectors, IT/ITES, E-Commerce and Fin tech and Education & Skill Development, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals and Agriculture & Food processing.
- On the second day of the summit, the B2B meetings will be organized along with session on Focus Vietnam – Growing Trade & Commerce between India & Vietnam.
- Contribution to the North-east states can also not be underestimated in it, new engine of the ASEAN collaboration has been spearheaded by the north eastern region.

### About ASEAN:

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is an intergovernmental organization aimed primarily at promoting economic growth and regional stability among its members.
- ASEAN was established on 8th August 1967 in **Bangkok, Thailand** with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration.



Image: ASEAN

- **Members of ASEAN** are Brunei , Cambodia , Indonesia , Laos, Malaysia ,Myanmar , Philippines, Singapore , Thailand , Vietnam .

#### Why in News?

- Union Minister of State (I/C) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Dr Jitendra Singh addressed the inaugural session of India- ASEAN Business Summit.

### 3) Swachh - Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan:

#### About the Drive:

- The Ministry of Environment forest and Climate change are undertaking a mass cleanliness-cum-awareness drive in 50 identified beaches under the “Swachh – Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan”.
- The beaches are identified to be in 10 coastal States/Union Territories, namely Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha.
- The cleaning drive will be undertaken, involving school/college students of Eco-clubs, district administration, institutions, volunteers, local communities and other stakeholders.
- For beach cleaning activities which will be duration of two hours on a daily basis, a minimum of one Kilometer stretch of the beach shall be identified.

#### About Swachh -Nirmal Tat Abhiyan:

- It is launched by Ministry of Environment forest and Climate change
- To **make beaches clean and create awareness among citizens about the importance of coastal ecosystem.**
- Environment Education Division of the Ministry and Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) under the Environment Ministry will be responsible for its implementation.
- At the end of the drive, the best three beaches will be suitably awarded along with a certificate of appreciation for all the participating eco-clubs.

#### Why in News?

- Week- long intensive Beach Cleaning Drive in 50 identified beaches of India had started under Swachh- Nirmal Tat Abhiyan.

### 4) HADR Exercise TIGER Triumph:

#### About HADR:

- HADR is Indian Navy’s large scale exercise to test its readiness for handling a tsunami

like disasters in order to provide immediate succour and relief to the affected people.

- It involved the participation of more than 20 Indian Naval Ships from the Western and Eastern Fleet along with various aircraft of the Indian Navy.

#### About the Exercise:

- The first India US joint Tri services Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise named ‘TIGER TRIUMPH’ is scheduled on the Eastern seaboard.
- Indian Naval ships Jalashwa, Airavat and Sandhayak, Indian Army troops from 19 Madras and 7 Guards, and Indian Air Force MI-17 helicopters and Rapid Action Medical Team (RAMT) would be participating in the exercise.
- Aim: The Exercise is aimed to developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations.
- At the HADR Exercise Area, a Joint Command and Control Centre, would be established jointly by the Indian Army and US Marines.
- The Exercise would culminate with a Closing Ceremony onboard US Naval Ship Germantown.

#### Why in News?

- The maiden India US joint Tri services Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise named “TIGER TRIUMPH” is scheduled on the Eastern seaboard.

### 5) Exercise Dustlik- 2019

#### About Exercise Dustlik:

- It is a Joint Field Training Exercise conducted between Indo- Uzbekistan.
- 10 days of joint training with Uzbekistan Army, was conducted at Chirchiq Training Area, Uzbekistan.
- It focused on counter insurgency and counter terrorism operation in urban scenario as well as sharing of expertise on skills at arms, both combat shooting and experiences in counter insurgency and counter terrorism.

#### Why in News?

- Indo-Uzbekistan Joint Field Training exercise (FTX) - 2019 Exercise Dustlik was conducted at Chirchiq Training Area, Uzbekistan.

## 6) Exercise SHAKTI- 2019

### About Exercise Shakti:

- It is a Joint military Exercise between India and French Army.
- It was focused to achieve interoperability, combat drills and understand the functioning in such a situation.
- The Exercise also included newly inducted “RUDRA” helicopter – it is weaponized version of the Advanced Light Helicopter Dhruv- produced indigenously by India.

### About RUDRA:

- It is India’s 1<sup>st</sup> weaponized chopper inducted into Army.
- It is armed version of the ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter) Dhruv.
- It is built in the country by HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited).
- It will be powered by the Shakti engines, an Indo- French collaborative effort between HAL and Turbomeca. It will help to fly at 20,000 feet altitude so that it will be suitable to fly over the icy Himalayas.

### Why in News?

- Recently, closing ceremony of Indo- French Joint Training Exercise Shakti – 2019 at Mahajan Field Firing Range.

## 7) Global Cooling Prize:

### About Global Cooling Prize:

- It is a competition to develop a climate friendly residential cooling solution that can provide access to cooling to people around the world without warming the planet.
- The Global Cooling Challenge aims to achieve a win-win-win solution, transforming the global air-conditioning market and providing affordable access to billions of people around the world, all while avoiding contributing to runaway climate change.
- The objective of this competition would develop a cooling technology that requires radically less energy to operate ,utilizes refrigerants within ozone depletion potential and low global warming potential and has the potential to be cost effective at scale.

### Need for such an award

- Air conditioning already accounts for 40–60 percent of summer peak load in large Indian cities and is on track to contribute 140 GW to peak demand (~30 percent of

total peak demand) in 2030 and between 300 and 500 GW by 2050.

- Developing countries will see a fivefold increase in demand over this same period. India already contributes 7% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and future increases in cooling demand will not only exacerbate this impact, but also place an undue burden on India’s electricity sector.
- The desired technology could prevent up to 100 gigatons (GT) of CO<sub>2</sub>- equivalent emissions by 2050.

### Highlights of the event:

- Under the **Mission Innovation Programme** by the Department of Science and Technology will announce the Global Cooling Prize Award.
- **Mission Innovation (MI)** is a global initiative of 24 countries and the European Union to accelerate global clean energy innovation.
- MI identified “Affordable Heating and Cooling of Building Innovation Challenge” as one of the seven innovation challenges. India agreed to its engagement as MI Member for Mission Innovation Challenge #7.
- Objective of MI Challenge #7 is to make low carbon heating and cooling affordable for everyone.
- India has proposed to support this innovation prize with a grant up to \$2 million, which would fund the India-based teams in developing working prototypes of their innovative cooling technology designs including model energy efficient building.

### Why in News?

- Finalist of the “Global Cooling Prize” will be announced by the Union Minister of Science and technology.

## 8) MELPL -Largest FDI Project:

### About MELPL:

- Madhepura Electric Locomotive Factory is a joint venture of Alstom SA of France with Indian Railways for the production of 800 high-power locomotives over a period of 11 years designed to run on Indian tracks at 120 km per hour.
- The manufacturing of locomotives has started on 11 October 2017.

- The factory is scheduled to manufacture and supply 800 electric locomotives of 12000 HP within a period of 11 years.
- The high HP locomotives are planned to be used in the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor and for PAN India operations for hauling freight trains of 6000 tonnes.

#### Benefits:

- This locomotive will be game changer for further movement of coal trains for Dedicated Freight Corridor.
- By the success of this project it will boost the “Make in India” programme of the Government of India.
- The project will allow faster and safer movement of heavier freight trains. It will haul 6000T trains at maximum speed of 100 kmph.
- With 100% electrification the new locomotive helps in bringing down the operational cost, and will be used to haul heavier trains such as coal and iron ore.

#### Why in News?

- Indian Railways has entered into Procurement cum Maintenance Agreement with Madhepura Electric Locomotive Pvt. Ltd. (MELPL) Collaboration with French.

### 9) Maitree Diwas

#### About Maitree Diwas:

- Maitree diwas symbolizes the patriotism of the people and their relationship with the Armed Forces.
- Maitree Diwas (Civil Military Friendship) will be celebrated for two days in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh.
- This will be the 11th edition of maitree diwas.

#### About the Event:

- The Corridor will act as a land bridge between India and SouthEast Asia that will provide employment opportunities and give a fillip to trade and tourism.
- The special emphasis has been added that “India is marching forward on the path of all-round progress under the leadership of PM”.
- “Road to ‘New India’ runs through ‘New North-East India.’”
- The project will provide all-weather connectivity to the local population, facilitate the movement of the Armed Forces and give a boost to tourism.

- **Theme of the Event** : Know Your Army’ is the theme of the event that is enlightening the youth about the Armed Forces and motivating them to adorn the uniform one day and serve the motherland.

#### Why in News?

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh attends “Maitree Diwas” in Arunachal Pradesh.

### 10) Tobacco Board Receives Golden Leaf Award:

#### About Tobacco Board of India:

- The Tobacco Board Act, 1975 aims at planned development of the Tobacco Industry in the country. It is headquartered in Guntur in Andhra Pradesh.
- Tobacco Board is a statutory body established under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The Board introduced natural farming techniques for production of organic and residue-free tobaccos. Tobacco Board has promoted green manuring to improve soil health.

#### Functions of Tobacco Board of India

- The primary function of the Board is export promotion of all varieties of tobacco and its allied products, its functions extend to production, distribution (for domestic consumption and exports) and regulation of **Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco**.
- The Board also include regulating the production and curing of Virginia tobacco in India, implementation of extension and developmental activities for improving the yields and quality of tobacco, facilitating the sale of tobacco through e-auctions on the auction floors of the Board, undertaking various grower welfare measures and export promotion of tobacco and tobacco products.

#### About FCV Tobaccos:

- FCV stands for Flue Cured Virginia tobacco.
- India is the world's fourth largest producer of FCV tobacco.
- About 88,000 FCV tobacco farmers and their families in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are dependent on this crop for their livelihood.

#### About Golden Leaf Award:

- The Golden Leaf Awards were created to recognize professional excellence and dedication in the tobacco industry by

Tobacco Reporter, an international magazine in the year 2006.

- Awards are granted on an annual basis to companies that have achieved outstanding performance in five categories -
  1. Most impressive public service initiative,
  2. Most promising new product introduction,
  3. Most exciting newcomer to the industry,
  4. Most outstanding service to the industry and
  5. The BMJ most committed to quality award.

#### Why in News?

- Tobacco Board of India has been awarded the Golden Leaf Award in the Most Impressive Public Service Initiative category for the year 2019, for its efforts to initiate various sustainability (green) initiatives in Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco cultivation in India.

### 11) APEDA

#### About APEDA (The Agricultural and processed Food products Exports Development Authority):

- The APEDA was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the parliament in December, 1985.
- The functions of the APEDA is to develop the industries relating to the scheduled products for export by way of providing financial assistance, registration of persons as exporters of the scheduled products on payment of such fees, fixing of standard and specifications of the scheduled products etc.
- It replaced the Processed Food Export Promotion Council. (PFEPCC).

#### About International Buyer- Seller Meet:

- The APEDA under the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, held the 1<sup>st</sup> ever international buyer seller meet on Agriculture and Horticulture produce in Arunachal Pradesh.
- 10 International buyers from seven countries of Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, UAE, Greece and the Sultanate of Oman have participated in the meet.
- This platform help to provide a platform for B2B and B2G meetings of international buyers with the exporters and importers and growers from North East Region (NER).

#### Why in News?

- Under the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry – 1<sup>st</sup> ever international buyer seller meet on Agriculture & Horticulture produce in Arunachal Pradesh was conducted.

### 12) Sisseri River Bridge

#### About Sisseri river Bridge:

- The **200- metre long bridge** between **Jonai- Pasighat- Ranaghat - Roing road** will provide connectivity between **Dibang valley and Siang** to meet the long pending demand of the people of Arunachal Pradesh.
- It would cut down the travel time from Pasighat to Roing by five hours.
- The Government adopted the Border Area Development programme in its plan keeping in view the security of the people residing in the border areas.



#### What is Border Area Development Program?

- Department of Border Management, **Ministry of Home Affairs** has been implementing the Border Area Development Program through State Government as part of a comprehensive approach to Border Management.
- The programme aims to meet the special development needs of the people living in **remote and inaccessible areas situated near the international border** and to saturate the border areas with the essential infrastructure through convergence of Central/State/BADP/Local schemes and participatory approach.
- It is a **“Centrally Sponsored scheme” and implemented by State Government.**
- It was initiated in the border area of the western region during that **Seventh Five**

**Year plan** period for ensuring balanced development of border area through development of infrastructure and promotion of a sense of security among the border population.

#### Why in News?

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurates Sisseri River bridge connecting Dibang Valley and Siang in Arunachal Pradesh.

### 13) Atal Tinkering Lab Marathon:

#### About Atal Tinkering Lab Marathon :

- Atal Tinkering Lab Marathon is an effort to identify India's best student innovators.
- It is an initiative under Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, where the marathon will be opened to all ATL Schools across the country who aspires to make a difference and contribute to the school's success in becoming an Innovation Hub.
- The marathon mainly focus in identifying a problem and developing innovative solutions, i.e. focus on 6 areas i.e.



#### About Atal Innovation Mission:

- It is a flagship initiative set up by the NITI Aayog to promote innovation and entrepreneurship across the country.
- Its objective is to serve as a platform for the promotion of world class Innovation hubs, Start-up business and other self-employment activities, mainly in technology driven areas.
- It has two core functions:
  1. Entrepreneurship promotion

2. Innovation promotion

#### About Atal Tinkering Lab:

- Atal Innovation Mission established Atal Tinkering lab in the school across India as a vision to "Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators".
- Objective of this scheme is to foster curiosity, creativity and imagination in young minds.
- It is a work space where young minds can share their ideas and learn innovative skills. They get a chance to work with the tools and understand the concept of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths).

#### Why in News?

- President addressed the student innovators of the Atal Tinkering Lab Marathon.

### 14) NITI Aayog's report on Health System for a New India: Building Blocks-Potential Pathways to Reform:

#### About the Report:

- It is a report on **India's health system** as a story of multiple fragmentations at the level of payers and risk pools, healthcare services and at digital backbone running it.
- It shows the viewpoints on the **required efforts to strengthening the existing health system**. It further helps to find the valuable and to implement for the better healthcare system in India.
- It is released by **NITI Aayog**.

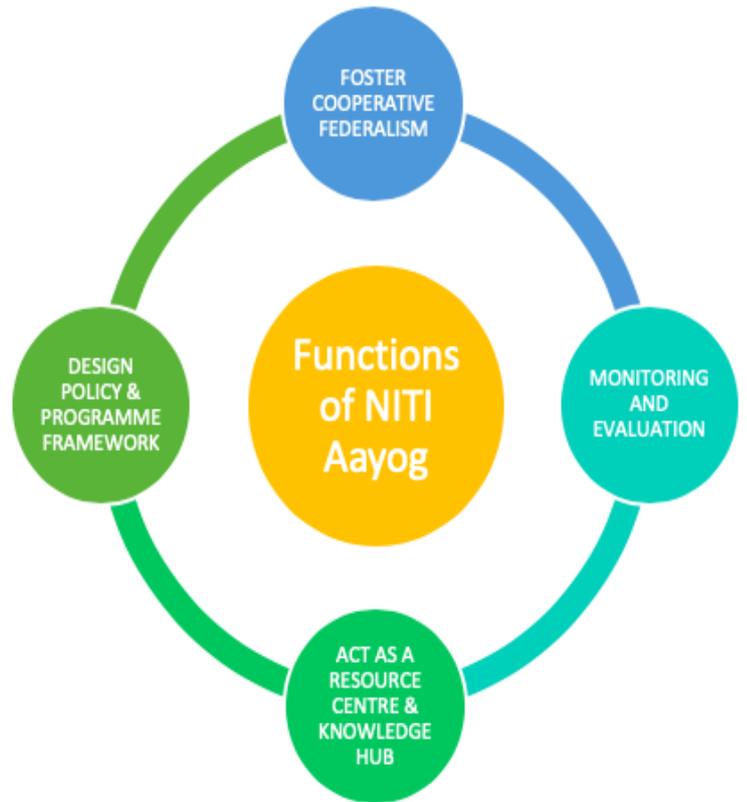
#### About NITI Aayog:

- National Institution for Transforming India **replaced Planning commission** in January, 2015.
- Its aim is to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and to enhance cooperative federalism by involving of state government of India in the economic policy- making process using a bottom-up approach.

- It gives strategic and technical advice to the policy, act as a **“THINK TANK”**.

**Why in News?**

- NITI Aayog has released the Health System for a New India: Building Blocks-Potential Pathways to Reform Report.



# News in Depth

## AIR NEWS

### 1) Agni- II:

#### About Agni- II

- It is surface - to - surface medium range nuclear capable missile, developed by DRDO. (Defense Research and Development Organisation)
- It is a two- stage missile and it is capable of striking range of 2000km and it can carry a payload of 1000 kg.

#### News in Detail:

- India has successfully conducted the first night trial of surface-to- surface medium range missile Agni-II.
- It was conducted from Dr Abdul Kalam off Odisha coast .It was the first time a missile was test fired at night.
- The entire trajectory of the trial was tracked by radars, telemetry observation stations, electro- optic instruments and two naval ships which is located near the impact point of Bay of Bengal.Strategic Forces Command of the Army with Logistic support from the DRDO carried out the Night Trial.

#### Why in news?

- The first night trial of Agni-II was conducted successfully from Dr Abdul Kalam Island.

### 2) Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Unit

#### About OCSAE:

- CBI set up unit to counter growing menace of child porn prevention and Investigation unit at its headquarters in New Delhi to counter the growing menace of child porn on the internet.
- OCSAE – Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Unit is under the Special Crime Investigation Wing of the agency will collect the information i.e. who are creating and transmitting such videos, pictures on the internet.

- They are booked under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act, 2012 and the Information Technology Act, 2000.

#### About Central Bureau of Investigation:

- It is India's premium investigation agency and anti-corruption body of India.
- It comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- The function of CBI is to investigate Cases of corruption and fraud committed by public servant of all Central governments, Departments, Central Public Sector Undertakings and Central Financial Institutions.

#### Why in news?

- CBI has set up an online portal to stop growing menace of Child porn.

### 3) International Criminal Court (ICC)

#### About ICC

- ICC is an intergovernmental international tribunal for Criminal prosecution of individuals for four main crimes namely –
  1. Genocide,
  2. War crimes,
  3. Crimes against humanity and
  4. Crime of aggression.
- **It was established in 2002** by Rome statue and its headquarters is at The Hague, Netherlands.
- It can exercise its jurisdiction **only when national courts are unwilling or unable to investigate or prosecute such crimes.** The Court can generally exercise jurisdiction only in three cases, viz.
  1. if the accused is a national of a state party,
  2. if the alleged crime took place on the territory of a state party or

3. if a situation is referred to the Court by the United Nations Security Council.

**Why in News?**

- International Criminal Court (ICC) Judges have approved a request from prosecutors to open an investigation into crimes

committed against Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority.

- ICC said that it has jurisdiction over crimes partially committed in Bangladesh, which is a member state of the court.

# Hindu Editorial Analysis

## 1) Back from the brink

### US retaining Measles elimination status:

- The USA was about to lose but retained its measles elimination status which it was holding for twenty long years, due to an outbreak which started in October 2018 and continued for almost a year.

### When does a country lose its measles elimination status?

- Country loses the measles elimination status if a chain of transmission from a given outbreak is sustained for more than 12 months.

### Reasons for such outbreak:

- Possibility of a sustained spread of measles in small pockets of an **under-immunised community** even when vaccine coverage with two doses nationally is high.
- **Inequities in vaccine coverage**, or gaps in vaccine coverage between communities, age groups and geographic areas in countries with high coverage at the national level, provide a fertile ground for outbreaks and for prolonged spread in such under-immunised groups.
- **Delay in vaccination.**
- **Vaccine hesitancy:** Parents had refused to vaccinate their children fearing that the vaccine might cause autism. Low protection in children of this community meant that they ran a high risk of getting infected by unvaccinated people returning from countries with ongoing measles transmission.

### Problem in India

- Huge pockets of **under-immunised children.**
- The **immunisation coverage** with two doses at the national level is **far below the World Health Organization level of 95%** needed for protection and elimination.
- While India intends to **eliminate measles by 2020**, the vaccination coverage has nowhere reached the 95% threshold for two doses.
- According to the June 2019 WHO and UNICEF estimate for national immunisation coverage, measles vaccine coverage in India in 2018 for the first dose was **90%**

**and 80%** for the second dose. However, it's likely to be an overestimation.

- Protection offered by **maternal antibodies** last for only **four-five months**, while the first dose of measles immunisation is at nine-12 months of age. Thus there is a **huge window** during which infants are vulnerable to measles infection.
- About 15% of children in India fail to develop immunity from the first dose of measles vaccine, hence infants will remain vulnerable till older children are fully protected with two doses.

### About Measles:

- Measles is a highly **contagious viral disease** caused by **Rubeola virus**.
- The virus is an **exclusive human pathogen** and has no animal reservoirs or vectors.
- **Transmission** is by respiratory droplets or direct contact
- **Prevalence:** In areas with tropical climates, most cases of measles occur during the dry season and in areas with temperate climates, the peak occurs during late winter and early spring
- **Symptoms and signs**
- **Prodromal symptoms:**
  1. fatigue,
  2. fever,
  3. loss of appetite, and
  4. malaise
- **Classical symptoms**
  1. dry cough,
  2. conjunctivitis,
  3. runny nose, and
  4. high fever
- Generalized rash that lasts greater than 3 days.(The average interval from exposure to onset of rash is 14 days (range 7–18 days). Patients are contagious from 4 days before the onset of rash till 4 days after the onset of the rash. )
- Patients normally improve by the third day of rash and recover fully 7–10 days from the onset of the disease.
- **Measles complications** include ear infections, pneumonia, and encephalitis.

- Measles in pregnant women can cause miscarriages or premature delivery.
- **Treatment:**
- There is no specific treatment for measles.
- Measles is a vaccine-preventable disease, hence each person not immunized against measles is at risk for measles and puts others at risk.

#### Measles Rubella vaccine:

- The Measles-rubella (MR) vaccine used in immunization programme is **live attenuated vaccine**.
- Measles vaccines are available either as single antigen vaccines or in combination with either rubella (MR) or mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccines and with mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccine. When MR / MMR / MMRV vaccines are used, the protective immune response to each of the components remains unchanged.
- MR vaccine will be administered in two doses, replacing the currently given measles vaccine- The **first dose** is given to children between **9 and 12 months** of age and a **second dose** is given at **16-24 months of age**.

## 2) BRICS strategic partnership for global stability, shared security and innovative growth

- **Five in one on BRICS summit**
- **BRICS on the ball**

#### Context;

- The 11th summit of the BRICS grouping comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa was held in Brasilia last week.
- For more details about BRICS refer International Relations section of Pulse 23.

#### Significance of BRICS:

- The BRICS countries are firmly committed to
- **Democratisation of international life** and its development under the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the principles of respect for cultural and civilisation diversity of the world, and the **right of peoples to forge their destiny themselves**.
- BRICS, being one of the **pillars of the emerging fairer polycentric world order**, plays an important **stabilising role**

**in global affairs**, for which it has all the necessary capacity.

- The BRICS group accounts for almost a **third of global GDP at purchasing power parity**. Last year, it even outperformed the G7 on this indicator.
- BRICS is becoming a magnet for many emerging economies because the group protects values of **multilateralism**, supports transparent, non-discriminatory, open, free and **inclusive international trade**, and **rejects unilateral economic restrictions and protectionist measures** in developing international economic ties.
- Their combined population accounting for **40% of humanity**, intra-BRICS trade still makes up just **15% of world trade**.
- The **contribution of BRICS** to project the perspectives of developing economies is **laudable**.
- Systematically **increased density of humanitarian exchanges** — cooperation in the areas of culture, education, sport and youth policy is gaining momentum and people-to-people contacts are developing.

#### Key takeaways of Brasilia declaration:

- The current Brazilian BRICS Chairmanship managed to achieve serious progress in all main pillars of cooperation — **political, economic and humanitarian**.
- The “urgent need” to **reform the UN, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund** and other international organisations was stressed once again.
- Interest in **open and free trade** was reiterated, despite growing protectionist tendencies.
- On **expansion of the UN Security Council**, BRICS exposed its disunity again by sticking to the formulation that refuses to go beyond China and Russia supporting the “aspiration” of Brazil, India and South Africa “to play a greater role in the UN”.
- The commitment of BRICS to **counterterrorism** seems to be getting strengthened. Its working group on countering terrorism has expanded its activities through five thematic subgroups that deal with terrorist financing, use of Internet for terrorist purposes, countering radicalisation, issue of foreign terrorist fighters, and capacity building.

#### Significant developments of BRICS:

- **1) New Development Bank**
- The New Development Bank (NDB) created by the BRICS countries — one of the promising **multilateral development institutions** has 44 projects with its lending touching \$12.4 billion, in just five years.
- NDB has opened its **regional centres** in South Africa and Brazil, and will do so in Russia and India in 2020.
- **2) Contingency Reserve**
- With a successful Contingent Reserve Arrangement BRICS governments are set to establish a local **currency Bond Fund**. Its total capital of \$100 billion is to be a **guarantor of the BRICS financial stability** in case of crisis.
- **3) BRICS Business Council**
- The BRICS Business Council held a substantive dialogue to foster cooperation in areas ranging from **infrastructure and energy to financial services, regional aviation and digital economy**. Its cooperation with the NDB is being encouraged.
- The national trade promotion agencies signed an MoU on cooperation among themselves.
- A BRICS **Women Business Alliance** was created, both as a women empowerment measure and as a tool to bring “a distinctive perspective on issues of interest for the business community.
- **4) Operationalisation of the Partnership**
- Operationalisation of the Partnership on New Industrial Revolution is underway which is focused on cooperation in **digitalisation, industrialisation, innovation, inclusiveness and investment**.
- This partnership will be concretised by establishing industrial and science parks, innovation centres and business incubators.
- **5) People to People exchange**
- The stress on developing **people-to-people interaction** remains unchanged, with each chair-country drawing up activities to strengthen links of culture, arts, sports, media and academic exchange.

#### Concerns with BRICS forum:

- Though the BRICS shows signs of advancing in the economic domain, there

exist some concerns which need to be addressed.

- **New Development bank** needs to grow as “a global development finance institution”.
- It needs to start extending loans for projects in non-BRICS countries to create a solid constituency of supporters.
- 2) The earlier proposal to launch a **credit rating agency** remains shelved due to internal differences.
- 3) Idea behind BRICS has been dimmed by **sluggish growth in Brazil and South Africa**, and Russia’s sanction-laden slowdown.

#### Way forward:

- BRICS should needs to focus on fulfilling existing commitments instead of taking on new ones.

#### Russia’s turn next

- Russia will chair the **12th BRICS summit** in 2020. In that summit, Russia has committed to do the following
- Russia will continue the policy of progressive and comprehensive enhancement of the **strategic partnership** of the BRICS countries.
- They are interested in increasing **financial and economic cooperation** among the participating countries, effective industrial interaction and practical cooperation in developing and implementing new joint energy, telecommunications and high-tech projects.
- Their priorities include enhanced **foreign policy coordination** within leading multilateral fora, primarily in the UN, which will turn 75 next year.
- BRICS represents the world’s top emerging economies and claims to serve as a bridge between the developed and developing world.
- The BRICS ‘ship’ will steer a steady course and further contribute significantly to maintaining international stability and ensuring global economic growth. The Brasilia Summit is aimed to be another important milestone in pentilateral cooperation and on its way to new prospects.

### 3) Revoking citizenship

#### Who is an OCI card holder?

- A person registered as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholder under section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955

#### **Purpose of OCI card:**

- OCI card was Launched in 2005 which was conceptualised to give a foreign citizen of Indian origin almost a citizen-like status.
- The card strengthens the bond that the holder feels for India.

#### **Which Nationals are eligible?**

- Any person who's Parents or grandparents or great grandparents who are not or had not been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may specify by notification shall be eligible for registration as an Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder.
- The card is particularly useful for professionals, businesspersons, and even politicians of Indian origin who live in the U.S., the Caribbeans, Europe, Southeast Asia, Africa, Canada, Latin America and the Pacific Islands.

#### **What benefits an OCI card holder is entitled to?**

- Multiple entry lifelong visas for visiting India for any purpose (However OCI Cardholders will require a special permission to undertake research work in India for which they may submit the application to the Indian Mission/ Post/ FRRO concerned).
- Exemption from registration with Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) for any length of stay in India.
- Parity with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in respect of all facilities available to them in economic, financial, and educational fields except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.
- Registered Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder shall be treated at par with NonResident-Indians in the matter of inter-country adoption of Indian children.

#### **What activities can be undertaken in India?**

- All activities except research work for which special permission is required from the Indian Mission/Post/FRRO concerned.

#### **How can one acquire Indian Citizenship?**

- As per section 5(1)(g) of the Citizenship Act,1955, a person registered as an OCI cardholder for 5 years and who is

ordinarily resident in India for twelve months before making an application for registration is eligible for grant of Indian citizenship.

- However this twelve months may be relaxed upto a maximum of thirty days if central government is satisfied that special circumstances exist.

#### **Why in news?**

- The government by using Section 7D of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2005 cancelled the OCI card of a writer named Aatish Taseer.
  - The rules prohibit any person with Pakistani or Bangladeshi line age from obtaining this status. Since the accused person concealed the information that his father is of Pakistani origin, his OCI status has been cancelled off as per the government.

#### **What is Section 7D of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2005?**

- Cancellation of registration as overseas citizen of India.—The Central Government may, by order, cancel the registration granted under sub-section
  - (1) of section 7A if it is satisfied that—
    - (a) the registration as an overseas citizen of India was obtained by means of fraud, false representation or the concealment of any material fact; or
    - (b) the overseas citizen of India has shown disaffection towards the Constitution of India as by law established; or
    - (c) the overseas citizen of India has, during any war in which India may be engaged, unlawfully traded or communicated with an enemy or been engaged in, or associated with, any business or commercial activity that was to his knowledge carried on in such manner as to assist an enemy in that war; or
    - (d) the overseas citizen of India has, within five years after registration under sub-section (1) of section 7A has been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years; or
    - (e) it is necessary so to do in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of India, friendly relations of India with any foreign country, or in the interests of the general public.

#### 4) Superbug crisis: Are doctors to blame?

##### Antimicrobial resistance/ Superbug crisis:

- Antibiotics are medicine used to treat infections caused by bacteria.
- Antibiotic Resistance refers to resistance developed by bacteria against antibiotics or the ability of bacteria to mutate or change so as to resist the effects of antibiotics. The more we use them, and the more we abuse them, the less effective they become.
- Antibiotics are unquestionably useful against bacterial infections. However, indiscriminate use has resulted in the development of resistance in patients with bacterial infections thereby leading to long lasting illnesses.
- A **superbug** is usually defined as a **microorganism that's resistant to commonly used antibiotics**.
- Antibiotic resistance can be alternatively referred to as superbug crisis.

##### Causes

- **Irrational antibiotic usage**
- Common public purchases more than half of the available antibiotics for human ailments without a doctor's prescription, according to the WHO.
- Misuse by doctors which accounts for 10percent of global antibiotic misuse.
- Lack of infrastructure and inadequate diagnostic facilities in our health-care sector is one of the major triggers of the irrational antibiotic use by doctors and the public.
- **Excessive usage of antibiotics**
- Over two-thirds of the antibiotics manufactured by the pharmaceutical industry are used as growth promoters for poultry and cattle.

##### Antibiotic stewardship:

- Antibiotic stewardship is considered to be the most important intervention to tackle superbug crisis.
- Antibiotic stewardship among doctors to rationalise antibiotic use can correct only one-tenth of the global antibiotic misuse.
- Antibiotic stewardship refers to a set of coordinated strategies to improve the use of antimicrobial medications with the goal of enhancing patient health outcomes, reducing resistance to antibiotics, and decreasing unnecessary costs.

##### Criticism of antibiotic stewardship:

- Improving cleanliness in hospitals and sanitation in the community is much more important than antibiotic stewardship.
- Rational antibiotic use, unless it is comprehensive, in countries with high existing superbug rate and sanitation issues, may not help reverse the rate or halt its progression.
- There is no conclusive evidence to support antibiotic stewardship as an effective measure to reduce the Gram-negative superbug bacteria, such as E. coli and Klebsiella, the most prevalent group in South Asia.

##### Are doctors to blame?

- Doctors being the most enlightened ones on superbug crisis, its imperative for them to come out of the erroneous impression that they created the superbug crisis, else they will be blamed by future generations for self deception.
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#### 5) The problem with re-basing GDP estimates

##### Context:

- **Central Statistics Office (CSO)** under **Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation** proposes to replace the gross domestic product (GDP) series of **2011-12 base year** with a new set of National Accounts using **2017-18** as the base-year.

##### What is base year?

- A base year is the **first of a series of years** in an economic or financial index.
- up-to-date base years are periodically introduced to keep **data current in a particular index**.
- It is used for comparison in the measure of a business activity or economic index.
- Rebasing is a routine administrative decision of any national statistics office.

##### Base year change and growth rates:

- Periodic rebasing of GDP series **every seven to 10 years** is carried out to account for the changing economic structure and relative prices.
- Such re-basing usually led to a **marginal rise in the absolute GDP size** on account

of better capturing of domestic production using improved methods and new databases.

- However, the underlying growth rates rarely change, which means that the **rebasings does not alter the underlying pace of economic expansion.**

#### **Distrust in the official GDP figures**

- There has been a raging controversy over the current GDP figures on account of questionable methodologies and databases used for the past four years. The author gives different reasons for this distrust in the official GDP figure which are as follows,
- **Contradicting growth rate and other economic indicators:**
- When the base year was revised from 2004-2005 to 2011-2012, the absolute GDP size contracted by 2.3% but the annual GDP growth rate witnessed a sharp increase from 4.8% to 6.2%.
- These large variations in growth rate although can be justified if material condition of production warrants, this **higher growth rate** recorded by new GDP series **did not correlate with related economic indicators** such as bank credit growth, industrial capacity utilisation or fixed investment growth.

#### **Demonetisation as shock**

- Demonetisation of high valued currency notes in November 2016 and a surprising hike in official GDP of the year 2016-2017 intensified the suspicion of official output estimates.
- Eg: On one hand, Ministry of Finance's Report on Income Tax Reforms for Building New India shows that the fixed investment to GDP ratio in the private corporate sector fell sharply from 7.5% in 2015-16 to 2.8% in 2016-17, on the other hand, the ratio in the national accounts went up from 11.7% in 2015-16 to 12% in 2016-17.
- Another example includes, a research paper published by National Bureau of Economic Research in the U.S. in May 2019 showed an **adverse effect of demonetisation on growth rate** but surprisingly **official GDP** for the year 2016-17 **grew at 8.2%**, which was the **highest in a decade.**

#### **Problems of methodologies for GDP calculation**

- **Value addition method** of GDP Calculation replaces Product method since GDP 2011-2012 series which was subjected to various criticisms.
- **Unreliable and overestimation of Private corporate sectors.**
- For example, Ministry of Corporate Affairs' database on "active" companies — that is companies claiming to have submitted audited financial results regularly for three years — seems to contain many actually inactive companies.(not producing output on a regular basis).
- The methodological changes made in the 2011-12 base-year revision have adversely impacted the **quality of SDP estimates** on two counts.
- **Unavailability of State-specific labour productivity estimates** for estimating value-added in the informal or unorganised sector.
- Ministry of corporate affairs, by taking into account only the **company head office location** and not the **location of the production unit** distorts distribution of the SDP estimates across States.

#### **Counter argument that methodology is not flawed:**

- The official response is that the 2011-12 GDP series follows **global best practices** (meaning, following the latest **United Nations System of National Accounts guidelines**) and applies better methods using much larger datasets; hence the official estimates are flawless.

#### **Need for a review:**

- The proposed change over to a new base year 2017-2018, poses a question that what rebasing would potentially accomplish if the methodological disputes and data related questions relating to the current national accounts series remains unaltered.
- Setting up an **independent commission** of national and international experts to review the GDP methodology would help resolve the existing problem.

# RSTV Big Picture

## 1) Dairy Industry and FTA

### DECODING IMPACT



#### Context:

- A few days ago India decided against joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership - RCEP which is a free trade agreement between more than dozen countries. In the run up to the RCEP meet, the domestic Dairy Industry has been vocal about its apprehensions regarding this FTA.

#### What is the background?

- India has been the leading producer and consumer of dairy products with a sustained growth over the years .
- Estimated production of milk in 2018-19 was 187 million tonnes.
- Milk is equally important to both farmers and consumers.
- Milk is a source of liquidity for the farmers as it provides them a steady income comparatively to the crops which fetch them income only 2-3 times a year.

#### What are the concerns of the Industry?

- The FTA especially the RCEP can lead to nearly 50 million rurals lose out on their jobs as the dairy industry is a major source of livelihood and has provided them employment at various levels from production to value addition.
- The FTA will open up the market for cheap imports and will have direct hit on milk and milk products prices affecting the farmers the most.

- It also will impact on the health of people who would tend to buy cheap imported milk and milk products.
- If the prices and income for the farmers are hit, the cattle will be deserted by their owners.
- The Agriculture sector which is hit by natural disasters and failure of monsoons these years will lose out their stable and major chunk of income.

#### Why is New Zealand eyeing Indian Market?

- With less population and high production, it has huge amounts of export ready milk products which gives it an advantage over India.
- Per animal milk production is comparatively very low in India than in Australia and New Zealand.
- The milk yield of New Zealand is 13 litres per day whereas in India it is 3.5 litres per day.

#### What are the measures to be taken?

- Centre and state should support the sector with more focus and funds to double the farmers income.
- This also should centre the interests of the consumers as it is a win - win situation for the farmers as well as the consumers and has a roller effect on social security schemes of the government.
- There needs to be a balance between free trade and import restrictions.

- Under National Food Security Act, the government can procure milk directly from the farmers and provide to the BPL families at subsidized rates which has dual benefits i.e, solving the problem of food security and malnutrition and also providing a market for milk.
- The dairy industry should be given a subsidy of around 8-10% in order to boost up our exports.
- Working out on the pricing mechanism of dairy and dairy products.

### What are the steps taken by the government?

- The Rashtriya Gokul Mission was launched by the centre for the improvement and conservation of our indigenous breeds.
- The centre is also seeking a huge potential in the A2 milk market - which is a variety of cow's milk that mostly lacks a form of B-casein proteins called A1.
- Export subsidies on skimmed milk powder has been provided.
- Artificial Insemination has been improved to a larger extent to increase the yield of milk production.
- Mechanising and modernising the dairy industry to achieve sustainability and making competitive.

### Conclusion

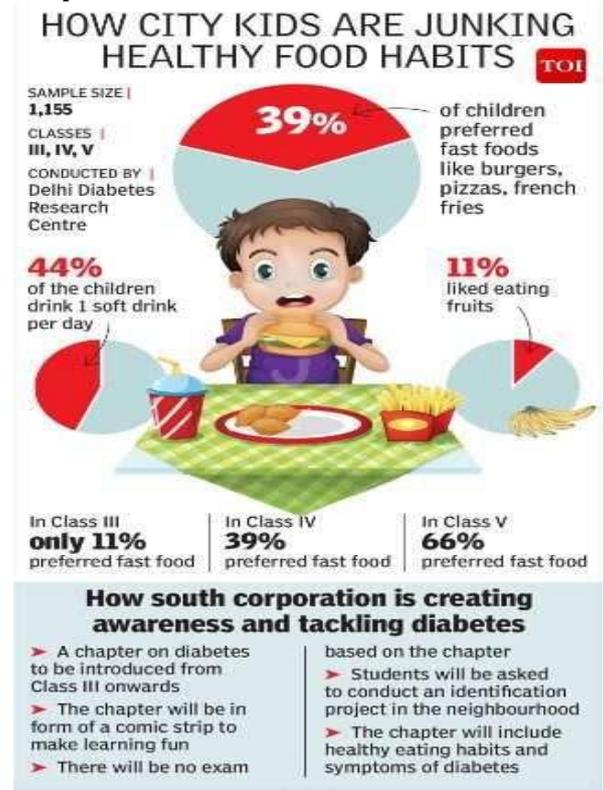
- India is the biggest producer and consumer of the dairy industry and the solution for its problems lies in the ecosystem. Indian market for dairy and dairy products is vast and the industry should exploit this opportunity. The objectives of doubling farmers Income and eradicating malnutrition or Kuposhan Mukht Bharat can be combined by integrating it to dairy industry.

## 2) Junking Junk Food

### Context:

- The food safety and standards authority of India - FSSAI has recently released draft regulations for ensuring healthy food for children titled as Food Safety and Standards ( Safe food and healthy diets for school children ) Regulation, 2019.
- One of the important regulations proposed in this draft is that foods which are high fat, salt or sugar cannot be sold to children in school canteens, mess, premises, hostel kitchens or within 50 meter of the school

campus.



### What do we understand by 'Junk Food'?

- Generally, a food is classified as junk food if it doesn't offer any or has in it very little nutritional benefits with high sugar / fat in it.
- These foods are also very low in fibre and have high to very high calories.
- Junks are also high in their salt content which upon regular consumption can have debilitating health effects.

### What are the adverse effects of Junk food on Human health?

- These foods usually do not have essential nutrients and with regular consumption will deprive the body of essential nutrients such as minerals, vitamins, healthy fats and proteins.
- Since they are highly processed, they are high in sugar, salt and fat which results in a higher risk of obesity.
- Regular consumption of junk food can result in unhealthy fat getting deposited in the body, leading to plaque build-up, lowering the metabolism of the body and resulting in obesity and cardiovascular diseases.
- The junk foods contain high salts with preservatives and stabilizers which

increases the blood pressure causing strokes, heart problems and hypertensions.

- This salt also results in a shift of water from the cells to body fluid causing seizures.
- It also has adverse effects on the cognitive development in children and are a potential cause of cancer due to the presence of carcinogens.
- Obesity can lead to psychological issues such as depression, social stigma and loss of self confidence.

#### **What are the laws to regulate Junk Food in India?**

- The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 ensures prevention of adulteration of food products.
- The Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006 formulates the standards and guidelines wrt food and enforcing agencies.
- The Fruit Products Order, 1955 ensures to maintain sanitary and hygienic conditions during its production.
- Vegetable oil production has been regulated by Vegetable Oil Products (Regulation) Order, 1998.
- The Meat Food Products Order, 1973 has laid the limits for the heavy metals, insecticides residues, preservatives and hormones present in the meat products.
- The sanitary standards for various meat products are propagated by the provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
- The Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011 requires the labelling of every ingredient which is responsible for characterising the food product.

#### **What are the problems in implementation?**

- The norms are not strictly enforced and are violated easily.
- Junk foods are tasty and attractive especially for the kids and it takes time to completely ban.
- Only the centre regulations will not be enough but there should be equal participation from schools and parents.
- Parents need to be educated on the impacts of junk food through parents teachers meetings, conferences, TV debates etc.
- Nutritional talks are not happening in schools to create awareness about its impacts.
- Fast food and online orders have made it more difficult to regulate these junk habits.

#### **What are the steps to be taken?**

- Implementation of the existing laws should be strictly enforced like in the Nestle Maggi case.
- Phase wise banning of the Junk Foods.
- Awareness workshops for parents as well as kids.
- Social media messages and debates to know the impacts of Junk Foods.
- Inculcating healthy lifestyle and dietary habits.
- Innovative measures like community breakfasts, lunch etc like langars in Gurudwaras at certain occasions.
- Appointing a nutritionist at schools.

#### **Conclusion**

- Regular consumption of junk foods will lead to improper cognitive development in children and also make them susceptible to harmful health impacts developing obesity, hypertension, etc at a very young age. Therefore the government should focus on the entire draft of the bill to make sure the citizens of tomorrow are healthy.

### **3) CJI under RTI**

#### **Context:**

- Supreme Court has upheld the 2010 Delhi High Court Verdict and ruled that the office of Chief Justice of India is a public authority under the right to information Act .
- The five judge bench led by Chief Justice of India highlighted the importance of transparency in the judiciary and said right to privacy and confidentiality is an important aspect . Apex court also held that judicial independence has to be kept in mind while dealing with transparency .

#### **What are the highlights of the ruling?**

- The judgement said that the Supreme Court is a public authority and the CJI office is part of it.
- The judiciary cannot function in isolation or insulation as the judges enjoy constitutional post and through which they discharge public duty.
- The RTI in the case of CJI cannot be used as a tool of surveillance and also should keep in mind the judicial independence while ensuring transparency.
- The names of the judges recommended by the collegium for appointment can be disclosed and not the reasons.

#### **What is the impact of the judgement?**

- The CJI office now can entertain RTI applications.
- This ruling is an example for other bodies such as political parties, schools, trusts etc who resist being under RTI.
- This allows transparency in its working by winning the faith of public again.

#### **What are the functions of CJI?**

- **As 'Master of the Roster':**
- As head of the supreme court, the chief justice is responsible for the allocation of cases and appointment of constitutional benches which deal with important matters of law.
- The CJI allocates all work to the other judges who are bound to refer the matter back to him or her (for re-allocation) in any case where they require it to be looked into by a larger bench of more judges.
- **As Administrator:**
- The CJI is responsible for the maintenance of the roster
- appointment of court officials
- general and miscellaneous matters relating to the supervision and functioning of the Supreme Court

#### **What are the functions of CJI?**

- Article 127 gives the CJI power to appoint ad hoc Supreme Court judges
- Article 128 the power to sit retired Supreme Court judges
- Article 130 the power to sit the Court outside of Delhi (with the President's approval)
- Article 146 the power to appoint officers and servants of the Court

- Article 222 the power to move high court judges to another high court
- Articles 257, 258, and 290 which gives the CJI the ability to appoint an arbitrator to resolve certain financial disputes between the centre and the states

#### **What do we understand by RTI?**

- Under the RTI Act, 2005, Public Authorities are required to make suo moto disclosures on various aspects of their structure and functioning. This includes:
  - The disclosure on their organisation, functions, and structure.
  - The powers and duties of its officers and employees.
  - The financial information.
  - The intent of such disclosures is that the public should need minimum recourse through the Act to obtain such information.
  - If such information is not made available, citizens have the right to request for it from the Authorities.
  - This may include information in the form of documents, files, or electronic records under the control of the Public Authority.
  - The intent behind the enactment of the Act is to promote transparency and accountability in the working of Public Authorities.

#### **Conclusion**

- Through this judgement the Supreme court has taken the first step in ensuring transparency as Democracy has its power in the hands of the people and should be used as a powerful tool to ensure efficiency in functioning.

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