

# OFFICERS' Pulse

ISSUE NO. 35 | 2ND FEBRUARY TO 8TH FEBRUARY, 2020

## Coverage.

The Hindu  
PIB  
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## 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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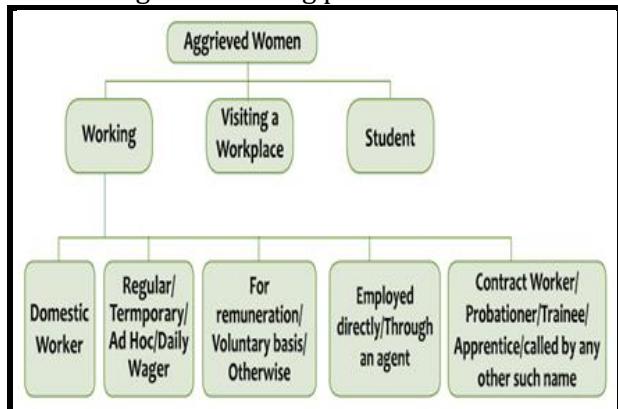
# News @ a glance

## **POLITY**

### **1) Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013**

#### **About:**

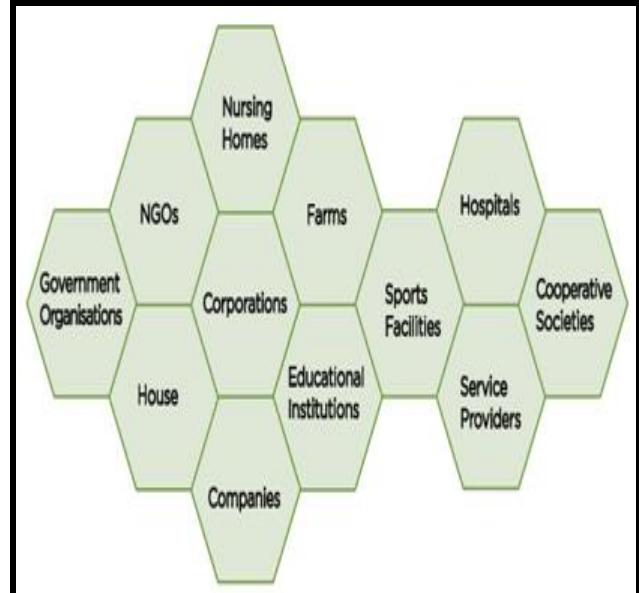
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 addresses the issue of workplace sexual harassment faced by women.
- Women covered under the Act
- The Act recognizes the right of every woman to a safe and secure workplace environment irrespective of her age or employment/work status. Hence, the right of all women working or visiting any workplace whether in the capacity of regular, temporary, ad hoc, or daily wages basis is protected under the Act.
- It includes all women whether engaged directly or through an agent including a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the principal employer. They may be working for remuneration, on a voluntary basis or otherwise.
- Further, she could be a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice, or called by any other such name.
- The Act also covers a woman, who is working in a dwelling place or house.



**What is a Workplace?**

- A workplace is defined as "any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such a journey." As per this definition, a workplace covers both the organised and unorganised sectors.
- It also includes all workplaces whether owned by Indian or foreign companies having a place of work in India.

#### **Examples of workplaces**



#### **Why in News?**

- In the recent Rajya Sabha Proceedings, the need to widen the scope of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act was discussed as there is **no legislation that explicitly prevents or helps redress gender bias, harassment and discrimination**.
- The recent Economic Survey pointed out that the **female labour force's participation had dropped from 33% in 2011-12 to 25.3% in 2017-18 in a sign of an acute problem**.

#### **What is Gender Bias?**

- Gender bias refers to **discriminatory acts against women that may not be of a sexual nature.**
- Gender bias can take the form of humiliation, exclusion from important tasks, removal of responsibilities and withholding of resources through which their promotions are prevented.

#### **Way Forward:**

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development should include a new provision in the Act to prevent of harassment and discrimination stemming from gender bias.
- The jurisdiction of internal complaints committees could be widened.
- NGO member and half of their total members should be women, and in the case of multinational companies, they should include members from the Indian branches.
- The companies should publish the number of complaints of gender bias in their annual reports and increase the awareness of the Act among their employees.

## **2) Gram Nyayalayas**

### **What are Gram Nyayalayas ?**

- Gram Nyayalayas were established for speedy and easy access to the justice system in the rural areas across the country. The Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 has been enacted to provide for the establishment of the Gram Nyayalayas at the grass roots level for the purpose of providing access to justice to the citizens at their door steps.

### **Need of Gram Nyayalayas**

- There are as many as 2.6 crores of arrears and the Gram Nyayalayas are likely to reduce around 50 % of the pendency of cases in subordinate courts and also to take care of the new litigations which will be disposed within six months. This measure will usher in a great revolution in disposal of cases and also to take justice to the doorsteps of the common man.

### **Salient features of the Gram Nyayalayas Act are :**

- Gram Nyayalayas are aimed at providing **inexpensive justice** to people in rural areas at their doorsteps;
- The Gram Nyayalaya shall be court of **Judicial Magistrate** of the first class and its presiding officer (**Nyayadhikari**) shall be

**appointed by the State Government** in consultation with the High Court;

- The Gram Nyayalaya shall be established for every Panchayat at intermediate level or a group of contiguous Panchayats at intermediate level in a district or where there is no Panchayat at intermediate level in any State, for a group of contiguous Panchayats;
- The Nyayadhikaris who will preside over these Gram Nyayalayas are strictly judicial officers and will be drawing the same salary, deriving the **same powers as First Class Magistrates working under High Courts;**
- The Gram Nyayalaya shall be a mobile court and shall exercise the powers of **both Criminal and Civil Courts.** The Gram Nyayalaya shall try criminal cases, civil suits, claims or disputes which are specified in the First Schedule and the Second Schedule to the Act;
- The seat of the Gram Nyayalaya will be located at the headquarters of the intermediate Panchayat, they will go to villages, work there and dispose of the cases;
- The Central as well as the State Governments have been given power to amend the First Schedule and the Second Schedule of the Act, as per their respective legislative competence
- The Gram Nyayalaya shall be guided by the **principles of natural justice** and subject to any rule made by the High Court;

### **Why in News?**

- The Central Government has decided that the provisions of the Gram Nyayalayas Act shall come into force in the areas to which this Act extends on October 2, 2009 i.e. the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

## **3) Maharashtra records highest number of missing women: NCRB**

### **About National Crime Records Bureau:**

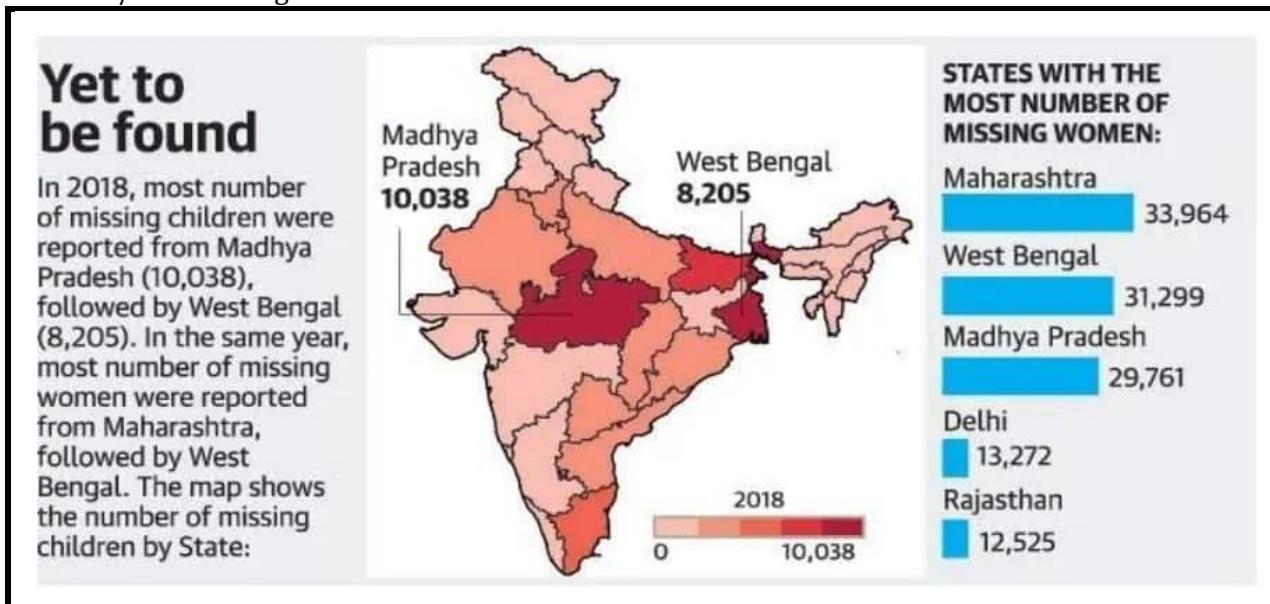
- It was set-up in 1986 to function as a **repository of information on crime and criminals.**
- It was established on the **recommendations of the Tandon Committee** to the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the MHA's Taskforce (1985).

- NCRB was entrusted with the responsibility for monitoring, coordinating and implementing the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) project in the year 2009.
- This project connects 15000+ police stations and 6000 higher offices of police in the country.
- The Bureau has also been entrusted to maintain the National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO) and share it with the States/UTs on a regular basis.

- NCRB has also designated as the Central Nodal Agency to manage technical and operational functions of the 'Online Cyber-Crime Reporting Portal.'

#### Why in News?

- The highest number of women and children who go missing in the country are from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh respectively, according to a study by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).



#### News in Detail:

- The NCRB study was based on the annual Crime in India Report compiled by the agency for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.
- According to the report, the States where the highest number of women went missing in the three years are Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. In 2016, as many as 28,316 women went missing in Maharashtra, followed by 29,279 in 2017, and 33,964 in 2018.
- In 2016-18, a total of 63,407, 63,349 and 67,134 children were reported missing across the country. The study said that in Madhya Pradesh, Indore reported the highest number of missing children, with 596 in 2017 and 823 in 2018.

#### 4) Panel suggests steps to curb child porn

#### Why in News?

- A parliamentary panel has recommended a code of conduct for Internet service providers (ISPs) and strengthening the

#### National Commission for Protection of Child Rights to curb child pornography.

#### News in Detail:

- The report, prepared by an ad hoc committee set up by the Rajya Sabha recommends a **multi-pronged strategy detailing technological, institutional, social and educational as well as State-level measures**.
- Among its key recommendations is a code of conduct or a set of guidelines for ensuring child safety online.
- It puts a greater onus on ISPs to identify and remove child sexual abuse material (CSAM) as well as report such content and those trying to access them to the authorities under the national cybercrime portal.
- It has also called for strengthening the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) so that it can serve as the nodal body for curbing child pornography.

- It is suggested that the capabilities required in the NCPCR should include technology, cyber policing and prosecution. The committee has delved into great detail in using technology to curb circulation of child porn such as:
- Breaking end-to-end encryption to trace its distributors of child pornography.
- Mandatory applications to monitor children's access to pornographic content
- Employing photo DNA to target profile pictures of groups with CSAM

**Concerns:**

- Some of the recommendations are expected to lead to concerns over privacy and misuse.
- It is believed that asking ISPs to report content in addition to blocking and filtering may not be practical.
- It is opined that the suggestion to break encryption could also just lead to traffic moving to different platforms.

**About National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)**

- The **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is an Indian governmental commission, established by an Act of Parliament, the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act in December 2005, thus is a statutory body. The commission works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI. The Commission may inquire into complaints and take suo motu notice of matters relating to-
  - Deprivation and violation of child rights;
  - Non-implementation of laws providing for protection and development of children;
  - Non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions aimed at mitigating hardships to and ensuring welfare of the children and to provide relief to such children;
  - Or take up the issues arising out of such matters with appropriate authorities.

# ENVIRONMENT

## 1) Flame-throated bulbul

### Why in news?

- The flame-throated bulbul, also called the **Rubigula**, was chosen as the mascot of the 36th National Games to be held in Goa because it is the State bird.



### About

- It is the state bird of Goa. IUCN has given **least concern** status to this species but their population is decreasing.
- This species has been put in **schedule IV** of Wildlife Protection Act 1972.
- This species is **endemic** to southern peninsular India where it is locally distributed in southern Andhra Pradesh, eastern Karnataka, Goa, Orissa, eastern Kerala and northern Tamil Nadu.

### About National Games:

- 36th National Games will be held between October 20 and November 4 2020.
- the launch of the 1st edition of the Indian Olympic Games at Lahore in an undivided Punjab in 1924. The first three editions were all held in the city of Lahore. After the eighth edition in 1938 in Calcutta, the event was christened as the National Games.
- The city of Lucknow hosted the National Games in its first post-independence avatar while the first National Games on the lines of the Olympics were held in 1985 in New Delhi.
- THe last national games were held in 2015 in Kerala.

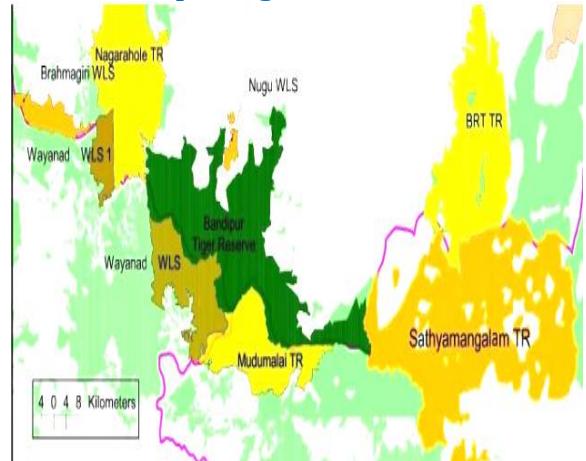


## 2) Waterholes in Bandipur

### Why in News?

- Prolonged monsoon and unseasonal rains have helped to rejuvenate the waterholes in **Bandipur Tiger Reserve**, Karnataka.
- There are 370 big and small waterholes (a depression in which water collects from where animals usually drink) in Bandipur and 85% of them are full.
- Last year Bandipur faced a severe water crisis. At Bandipur, the majority of waterholes dry up by February and March leading to severe water stress situations for animals. But this year, it is expected that the depletion of water levels will take a little longer.
- Also, in the areas of water stress, 37 solar-powered borewells have been arranged that will function to replenish the waterholes periodically to further minimise the water scarcity.

### About Bandipur Tiger Reserve



- This National Park was formed by including most of the forest areas of the

then Venugopala Wildlife Park established under Govt. Notification dated 19th February 1941 and the area was enlarged in 1985 extending over an area of 874.20 Sq.Km and named as Bandipur National Park.

- This reserve was brought under **Project Tiger in 1973**.
- **Moyer River** is the major water source for the wildlife and people living in and around the Reserve. On the western part of the Reserve bordering Wayanad of Kerala, a river by name Noolpuza enters Karnataka State, known as **Nugu hole**.
- The vegetation **changes from scrub type to moist deciduous type from east to west**. These forests are classified as under:
  1. The Scrub type.
  2. Southern Tropical Dry and Deciduous type.
  3. South Tropical Moist Deciduous type.
- The Bandipur along with Nagarhole, Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam & Wayanad constitutes the single largest Wild population of Tigers in the world. This Landscape is also home to the single largest Asian Elephant population in the world and is part of the Mysore Elephant Reserve (MER).

### **3) Coral restoration in Gulf of Kachchh**

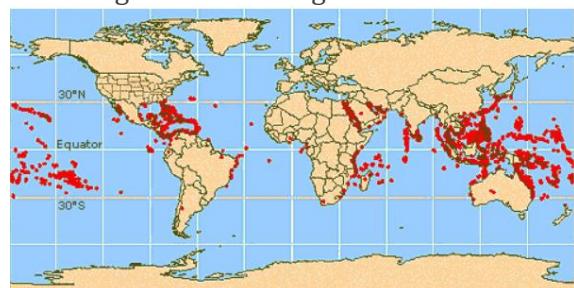
#### **What are corals?**

- Corals are invertebrate animals belonging to a large group of colourful and fascinating animals called Cnidaria.
- Each individual coral animal is called a polyp, and most live in groups of hundreds to thousands of genetically identical polyps that form a 'colony'.
- The colony is formed by a process called budding, which is where the original polyp literally grows copies of itself.
- Corals are generally classified as either "hard coral" or "soft coral". There are around 800 known species of hard coral, also known as the 'reef building' corals.
- Soft corals, which include sea fans, sea feathers and sea whips, don't have the rock-like calcareous skeleton like the others, instead they grow wood-like cores for support and fleshy rinds for protection.

- Hard corals extract abundant calcium from surrounding seawater and use this to create a hardened structure for protection and growth. **Coral reefs are therefore created by millions of tiny polyps forming large carbonate structures**, and are the basis of a framework and home for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of other species. Coral reefs are the largest living structure on the planet, and the only living structure to be visible from space.
- Corals are primitive animals, they have no heart or circulatory system. The water they live in must be clear so that sunlight penetrates. Corals have a photosynthetic algae which lives in their tissues, called **zooxanthellae**.
- The zooxanthellae supply the coral with food, produce oxygen and help it eliminate waste. In turn, the coral gives the algae a protected environment to live in and all the compounds they need for photosynthesis.

#### **Where are they found?**

- Coral reefs are found throughout the oceans, from deep, cold waters to shallow, tropical waters. Temperate and tropical reefs however are formed only in a zone extending at most from **30°N to 30°S of the equator**; the reef-building corals preferring to grow at depths shallower than 30 m (100 ft), or where the temperature range is between 16-32oc, and light levels are high.



#### **Threats to corals:**

- **Physical damage or destruction** from coastal development, dredging, quarrying, destructive fishing practices and gear, boat anchors and groundings, and recreational misuse (touching or removing corals).
- **Pollution** that originates on land but finds its way into coastal waters. There are many types and sources of pollution

- from land-based activities, for example:
- Sedimentation** from coastal development,
  - Nutrients** (nitrogen and phosphorous) from agricultural and residential fertilizer use, sewage discharges (including wastewater treatment plants and septic systems), and animal waste,
  - Pathogens** from inadequately treated sewage,
  - Toxic substances**, including metals, organic chemicals and pesticides found in industrial discharges, sunscreens, urban and agricultural runoff, mining activities, and runoff from landfills
  - Trash and micro-plastics** from improper disposal and stormwater runoff.
  - Overfishing** can alter food-web structure and cause cascading effects, such as reducing the numbers of grazing fish that keep corals clean of algal overgrowth.
  - Blast fishing** (i.e., using explosives to kill fish) can cause physical damage to corals as well.
  - Coral harvesting** for the aquarium trade, jewelry, and curios can lead to over-

harvesting of specific species, destruction of reef habitat, and reduced biodiversity.

- **Increased ocean temperatures** and changing ocean chemistry are the greatest global threats to coral reef ecosystems. These threats are caused by warmer atmospheric temperatures and increasing levels of carbon dioxide in seawater.

#### Coral reefs in India

- Coral reefs are present in the areas of Gulf of Kutch, Gulf of Mannar, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep Islands and Malvan.

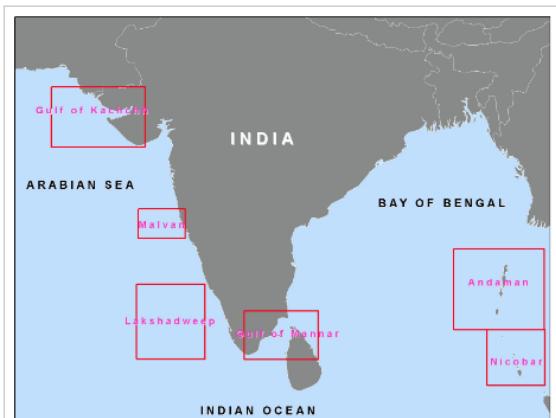
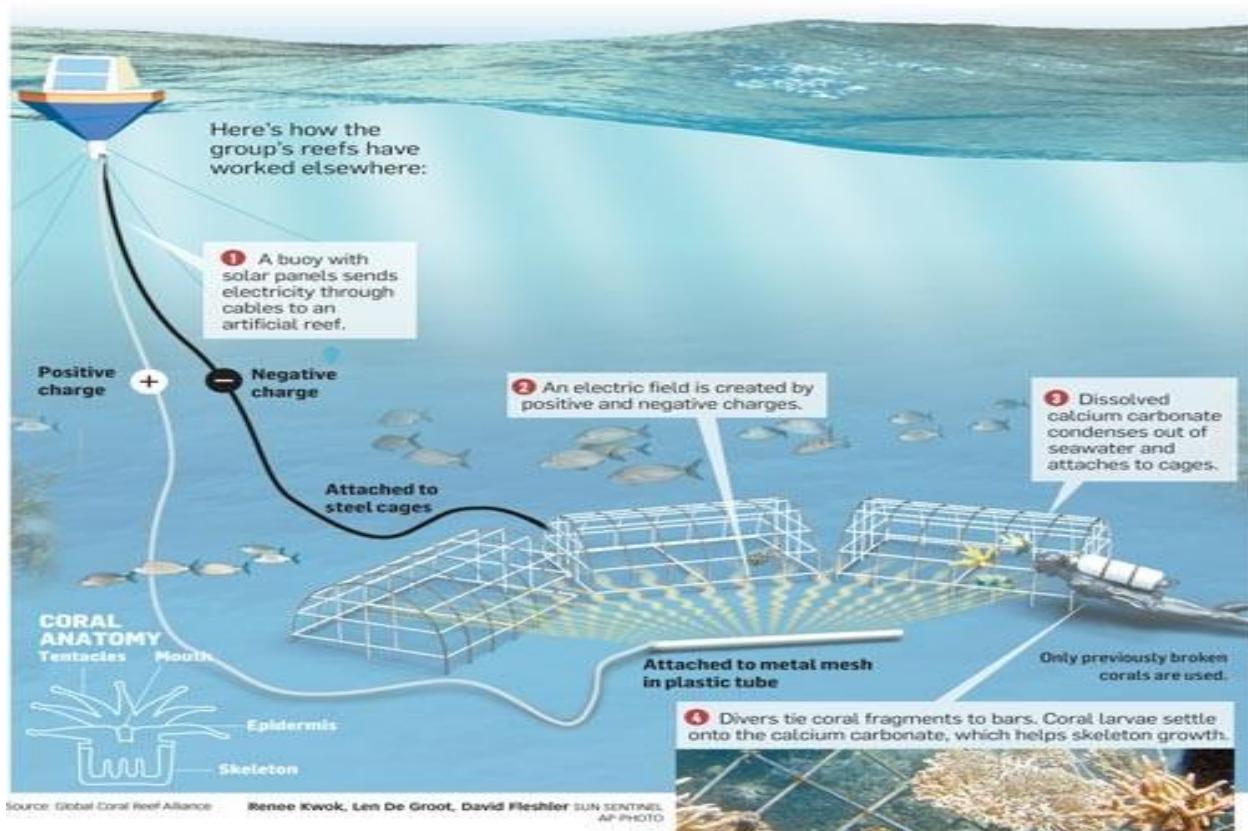


Figure: Distribution of Corals along the Indian Coast.



#### Biorock or mineral accretion technology:

- (Figure given above)

- The Biorock method is the only restoration method known that produces

- the natural limestone which corals need to grow on. It also accelerates coral growth, healing, and resistance to stress due to anthropological impacts and climate change.
- It uses electric or solar energy to directly increase coral growth, allowing it to survive conditions that would be fatal and allowing reefs to be restored where they cannot recover naturally.
  - The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), with help from Gujarat's forest department, is attempting for the first time a process to restore coral reefs **using biorock or mineral accretion technology**.
  - The location for installing the biorock had been chosen keeping in mind the high tidal amplitude in the Gulf of Kachchh. The low tide depth where the biorock has been installed is four metres, and at high tide it is about eight metres.

### Why in news?

# ECONOMY

## 1) Report of the 15th Finance Commission for FY 2020-21

### About

- The Finance Commission is a **constitutional body (Article 280)** formed by the President of India to give suggestions on **centre-state financial relations**.
- The **15th Finance Commission** (Chair: Mr N. K. Singh) was required to submit two reports.
- For more details, refer to Officers' *Pulse Issue No. 25*.

### Why in News?

- The **first report**, consisting of recommendations for the financial year **2020-21**, was tabled in Parliament on February 1, 2020.
- The **final report** with recommendations for the **2021-26 period** will be submitted by October 30, 2020.

### Key recommendations in the first report (2020-21 period)

#### Devolution of taxes to states:

- The share of states in the centre's taxes is recommended to be **decreased from 42%** during the 2015-20 period to **41%** for 2020-21.
- The 1% decrease is to provide for the newly formed union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh from the resources of the central government.

#### Criteria for devolution:

- The FC reintroduced **performance-based incentives** to states on two parameters — **demographic performance** and **taxation efforts**.

Criteria	14th FC 2015- 20	15th FC 2020- 21
Income Distance	50.0	45.0
Population (1971)	17.5	-
Population (2011)	10.0	15.0

Area	15.0	15.0
Forest Cover	7.5	-
Forest and Ecology	-	10.0
Demographic Performance	-	12.5
Tax Effort	-	2.5
Total	100	100

- Income distance** - is the distance of the state's income from the state with the highest income. States with lower per capita income would be given a higher share to maintain equity among states.
- The **Demographic Performance** criterion has been introduced to reward efforts made by states in controlling their population. States with a lower fertility ratio will be scored higher on this criterion.
- Forest and ecology** - share of dense forest of each state in the aggregate dense forest of all the states.
- Tax effort:** This criterion has been used to reward states with higher tax collection efficiency.

#### Grants-in-aid

- In 2020-21, the following grants will be provided to states: (i) revenue deficit grants, (ii) grants to local bodies, and (iii) disaster management grants.
- The Commission has also proposed a framework for **sector-specific** and **performance-based** grants.
- State-specific grants will be provided in the final report.
- Revenue deficit grants:** In 2020-21, 14 states are estimated to have an aggregate revenue deficit of Rs 74,340 crore post-devolution.
- Special grants:** In case of three states (Karnataka, Mizoram, and Telangana), the sum of devolution and revenue deficit grants is estimated to decline in 2020-21 as compared to 2019-20. The Commission has

recommended special grants to these states aggregating to Rs 6,764 crore.

- **Sector-specific grants:** The Commission has recommended a grant of Rs 7,375 crore for nutrition in 2020-21.
- **Performance-based grants-** will be provided in the final report.
- **Grants to local bodies:** The total grants to local bodies for 2020-21 has been fixed at Rs 90,000 crore (rural local bodies-67.5%; urban local bodies-32.5%). This allocation is **4.31% of the divisible pool (3.54% in 2019-20)**. The grants will be made available to all three tiers of Panchayat-village, block, and district.
- **Disaster risk management:** The Commission recommended setting up **National and State Disaster Management Funds (NDMF and SDMF)** for the promotion of local-level mitigation activities.

#### Recommendations on fiscal roadmap

- **Fiscal deficit and debt levels:** It recommended that both central and state governments **should focus on debt consolidation and comply with** the fiscal deficit and debt levels as per their respective Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (**FRBM**) Acts.
- **Off-budget borrowings:** It recommended that both the central and state governments should make full disclosure of **extra-budgetary borrowings**. The outstanding extra-budgetary liabilities should be clearly identified and eliminated in a time-bound manner.
- **Statutory framework for public financial management:** The Commission recommended forming an expert group to draft legislation to provide for a **statutory framework** for sound public financial management system.
- **Tax capacity:** In 2018-19, the tax revenue of state governments and central government together stood at around 17.5% of GDP. The Commission noted that tax revenue is far below the estimated tax capacity of the country. Further, India's tax capacity has largely remained unchanged since the early 1990s. In contrast, tax revenue has been rising in other emerging markets. The Commission recommended: (i) broadening the tax base, (ii) streamlining tax rates, (iii) and increasing

capacity and expertise of tax administration in all tiers of the government.

- **GST implementation:** The Commission highlighted some challenges with the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). These include: (i) large shortfall in collections as compared to original forecast, (ii) high volatility in collections, (iii) accumulation of large integrated GST credit, (iv) glitches in invoice and input tax matching, and (v) delay in refunds. The Commission observed that the continuing dependence of states on compensation from the central government (21 states out of 29 states in 2018-19) for making up for the shortfall in revenue is a concern. It suggested that the structural implications of GST for low consumption states need to be considered.

## 2) Cooperative banks to come under Reserve Bank regulation

#### Why in News?

- In the wake of the recent Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank crisis, the Union Cabinet approved amendments to the Banking Regulation Act to bring 1,540 cooperative banks under the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regulation.
- For details about cooperative banks, refer to *Officers' Pulse Issue No. 31*.

#### More in News

- Cooperative banks have 8.6 lakh account holders, with a total deposit of about ₹5 lakh crore.
- The administrative matters would continue to be under the **Registrar, Cooperative**.
- However, cooperative banks **would be regulated under the RBI's banking guidelines**.
- Their auditing would also be done as per its norms.
- Qualifications would be laid down for appointments, including that of Chief Executive Officers.
- Prior **permission** from the RBI would be required for the appointment of key positions.
- The regulator would deal with issues such as loan waivers.
- The RBI would also have **powers to supersede the board of any cooperative bank** in financial distress.

- These measures would be implemented in a phased manner.

### 3) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

#### About Monetary policy

- Monetary policy refers to the policy of the central bank with regard to the use of monetary instruments under its control to achieve the goals specified in the Act.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is vested with the responsibility of conducting monetary policy.
- This responsibility is explicitly mandated under the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**.
- The primary objective of monetary policy is to **maintain price stability** while keeping in mind the objective of growth.

#### About MPC

- The Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 (RBI Act) has been amended by the Finance Act, 2016, to provide for a statutory and institutionalised framework for a Monetary Policy Committee.
- The Monetary Policy Committee would be entrusted with the task of **fixing the benchmark policy rate (repo rate)** required to contain inflation within the specified target level.
- The meetings of the Monetary Policy Committee shall be held at least 4 times a year and it shall publish its decisions after each such meeting.
- As per the provisions of the RBI Act, out of the **six Members** of Monetary Policy Committee, **three Members will be from the RBI and the other three Members of MPC will be appointed by the Central Government**.
- The Members of the Monetary Policy Committee appointed by the Central Government shall hold office for a period of four years.

#### Inflation Targeting

- In May 2016, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934 was amended to provide a statutory basis for the implementation of the **flexible inflation targeting framework**.
- The amended RBI Act also provides for the inflation target to be set by the Government

of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank, **once every five years**.

- Accordingly, the Central Government has notified **4 per cent Consumer Price Index (CPI)** inflation as the target for the period from **August 5, 2016 to March 31, 2021** with a **tolerance limit of 2 per cent**.
- The Central Government notified the following as factors that constitute failure to achieve the inflation target:
- the average inflation is more than the upper tolerance level of the inflation target for any three consecutive quarters; or
- the average inflation is less than the lower tolerance level for any three consecutive quarters.

#### Why in News?

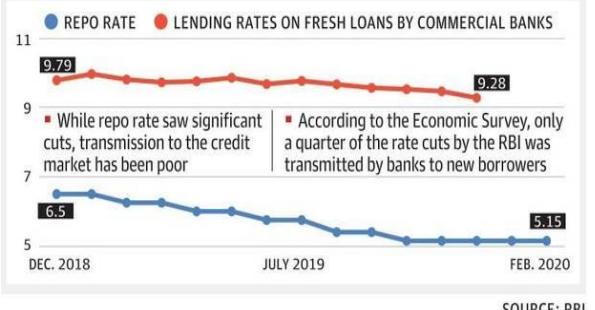
- Sixth Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement, 2019-20 was released recently.

#### News in Detail

- The MPC decided to keep the interest rates unchanged (**Repo rate kept unchanged at 5.15%**) in the wake of a rise in inflation, but emphasised that there would be space for rate reduction.
- The central bank took two measures that could ease lending rates further.
- One, it opened a window to extend ₹1 lakh crore to the commercial banks at the repo rate, which is 5.15%.
- Second, banks have been exempted from maintaining the cash reserve ratio — which is 4% of the net demand and time liabilities now — for home, auto and MSME loans that are extended from January 31 to July 31.

#### Status quo

The RBI on Thursday decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 5.15%. Repo rate is the rate at which RBI lends money to commercial banks. Graph shows the change in repo rate and lending rates on fresh loans by commercial banks:



# ART & CULTURE

## 1) Brihadeeswarar Temple

### About:

- Peruvudaiyar Kovil, well known as Brihadeeswarar Temple was built by Tamil King **Raja Raja Chola I** and completed in 1010 AD.
- It is a Hindu temple dedicated to **Lord Shiva**. The temple is part of the UNESCO

World Heritage Site known as the "Great Living Chola Temples", along with Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Airavatesvara temple.

- The Kumbam (the apex or the bulbous structure on the top) of the temple is carved out of a **single rock**.

**CHOLA ARCHITECTURE**  
**Brihadeeswara Temple Thanjavur – 1000 AD**

**Components of Vimana:**

The main Vimana is a huge solid block on the western end consisting of 3 parts:

1. Square vertical base
2. Tall tapering body
3. Domical finial

**Vertical base:**

Square of 82' rising to a ht. of 50'

The square vertical base rises for 2 stories to accommodate the Linga which was increased in ht.

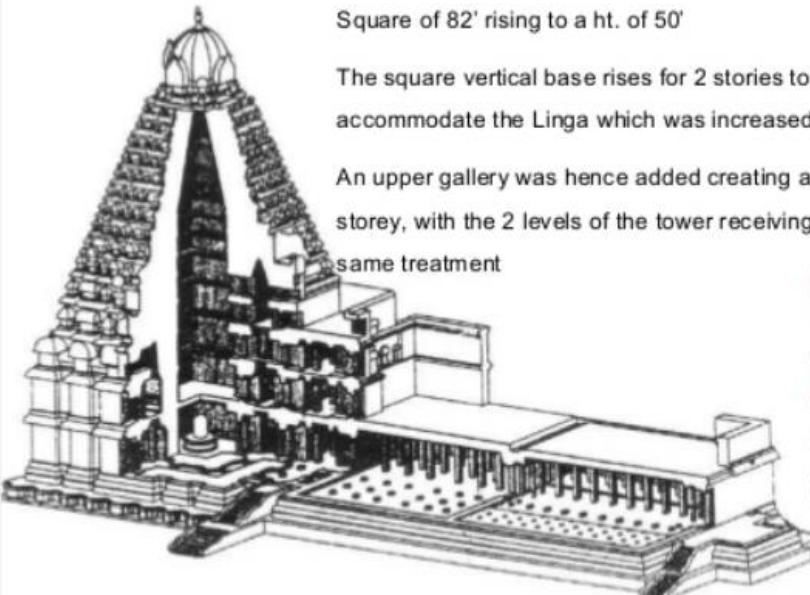
An upper gallery was hence added creating a 2<sup>nd</sup> storey, with the 2 levels of the tower receiving the same treatment

**Pyramidal portion:**

13 diminishing stories until the width of the apex is 1/3 base

**Cupola:**

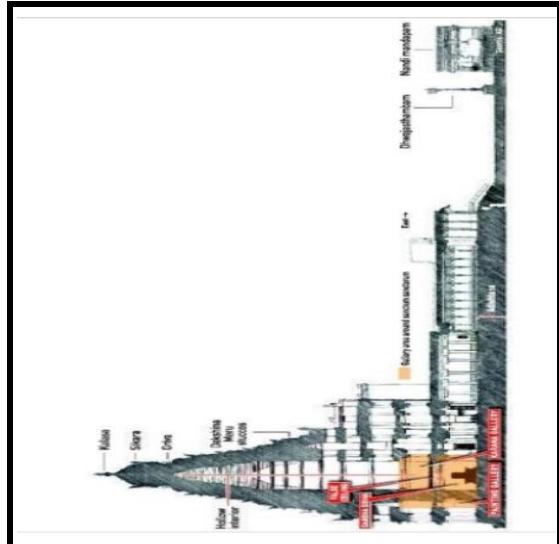
On the square platform stands the cupola, the inward curve of the neck breaking the rigid outlines of the composition



- It is located in South Bank of **Kaveri river** in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.
- The Brihadisvara temple at Tanjavur marks the greatest achievement of the Chola architects.
- A massive colonnaded **prakara** with sub-shrines dedicated to the **ashatadikpalas** and a main entrance with **gopura** (known as *Rajarajantiruvatal*) encompasses the massive temple.
- The sanctum itself occupies the centre of the rear half of the rectangular court. The **vimana** soars to a height of **59.82 meters over the ground**.

- This grand elevation is punctuated by a high *upapitha*, *adhishthana* with bold mouldings; the ground tier (*prastara*) is divided into two levels, carrying images of Siva.
- Over this rises the 13 *talas* and is surmounted by an octagonal **sikhara**.
- There is a circumambulatory path all around the sanctum housing a massive **linga(Lord Shiva)**.
- The temple walls are embellished with expansive and exquisite **mural**

paintings.



#### Why in News?

- The kumbhabhishekam (consecration) ceremony was held at the Sri Brihadeeswarar Temple

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## 1) Brexit: What happens now?

### About Brexit

- Brexit is an abbreviation for "British exit," referring to the U.K.'s decision in a June 23, 2016 referendum **to leave the European Union (EU)**.

### About European Union (EU)

- The European Union is a unique **economic and political union** between **27 countries** (after UK's exit) that together cover much of the Europe.



- The EU was created by the **Maastricht Treaty, 1993**.
- The treaty was designed to enhance European **political and economic integration** by creating a single currency (**the euro**), a unified foreign and security policy, and common citizenship rights and by advancing cooperation in the areas of immigration, asylum, and judicial affairs.
- In **2012**, the EU was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.

### Why in News?

- The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 and has now entered an 11-month transition period.

### More in News

- During this transition period the UK effectively remains in the EU's customs union and single market and continues to obey EU rules.

- However, it is no longer part of the political institutions. So, for example, there are no longer any British MEPs in the European Parliament.

### What needs to be agreed?

- The transition period is meant to give both sides some breathing space while a new free trade agreement is negotiated.
- If a new one cannot be agreed in time, then the UK faces the prospect of having to trade with no deal in place.
- That would mean tariffs (taxes) on UK goods travelling to the EU and other trade barriers.
- Aside from trade, many other aspects of the future UK-EU relationship will also need to be decided.

### What is the Brexit deal?

The transition period and other aspects of the UK's departure were agreed in a separate deal called the withdrawal agreement.

- Under the deal, a **customs border** will effectively be created between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

### How customs might work

What might happen when a firm in Northern Ireland orders goods from the rest of the UK deemed "at risk" of then entering the EU?



BBC

- Some goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain will be subject to checks

- and will have to pay EU import taxes (known as tariffs).
- These would be refunded if goods remain in Northern Ireland (ie are not moved to the Republic of Ireland).

## 2) Lucknow Declaration - First India- Africa Defence Ministers conclave

### Why in News?

- Lucknow Declaration - a joint declaration was adopted at the first India- Africa Defence Ministers conclave at the Defexpo 2020.

### News in Detail

- The dialogue was attended by 12 Defence Ministers and 38 countries were represented at the conclave.
- India offered offshore patrol vessels (OPVs), fast interceptor boats, body and vehicle armour, night vision goggles, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), Dornier aircraft, and arms and ammunition to the African countries.

### Lucknow Declaration

- The Declaration emphasised the need for stronger international partnership in countering terrorism and violent extremism, including through increased **sharing of information and intelligence**.
- The Declaration also called for **strengthening the UN Counter-Terrorism mechanisms** and to ensure strict compliance with the UN Security Council sanctions regime on terrorism.
- Maritime security**- the declaration seeks to increase cooperation in securing sea lines of communication, preventing maritime crimes, disaster, piracy, illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing through sharing of information and surveillance.

## 3) Maldives rejoins Commonwealth after over three years

### About Commonwealth or Commonwealth of Nations

- The Commonwealth is a **voluntary association of 54 independent and equal countries**.
- It is home to 2.4 billion people, and includes **both advanced economies and developing countries**.
- Member governments have agreed to shared goals like development, democracy and peace.
- The Commonwealth's roots go back to the British Empire.
- But today **any country can join** the modern Commonwealth.
- The last two countries to join the Commonwealth - **Rwanda (2009)** and **Mozambique (1995)** - have **no historical ties to the British Empire**.
- In 1965 the **Commonwealth Secretariat** was established in **London** to organize and coordinate Commonwealth activities.
- All members subscribe to the values and principles of **The Commonwealth Charter**.
- Leaders of member countries shape Commonwealth policies and priorities.
- Every 2 years**, they meet to discuss issues affecting the Commonwealth and the wider world at the **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)**.
- All members have an equal say** regardless of size or wealth. This makes sure even the smallest countries have a voice in shaping the Commonwealth.

### Why in News?

- The Maldives re-joined the Commonwealth, more than three years after the Indian Ocean island nation quit the association amid mounting criticism of its human rights record then.

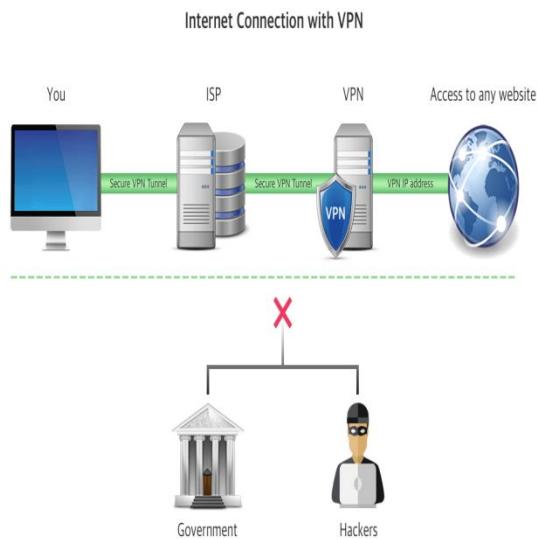
### Not a first time

- Other countries which withdrew from the Commonwealth were Ireland (1949), South Africa (1961), and Pakistan (1972).
- South Africa and Pakistan eventually rejoined (the former in 1994 and the latter in 1989).

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## 1) Virtual Private Network (VPN)

### What is a VPN?



- A VPN is a **private network that uses a public network** (usually the internet) to connect remote sites or users together.
- The VPN uses "virtual" connections routed through the internet from the user's private network or a third-party VPN service to the remote site or person.
- VPNs help ensure **security** and **privacy**—anyone intercepting the encrypted data can't read it.
- VPNs mask user's internet protocol (IP) address so their online actions are **virtually untraceable**.

### Why in News?

- Police have warned that virtual private networks (VPNs) were being misused by militants in Kashmir after the restoration of 2G mobile service.

## 2) India, Russia try to resolve impasse over Ka-226 helicopter deal

### About Ka-226T

- The Ka-226T is a **light, twin-engine multi-role helicopter** offered by **Russian Helicopters**, for military and civilian missions.
- The military version of Ka-226T is designed for operation in hard-to-reach upland conditions as well as hot and cold climates.

- It performs surveillance, reconnaissance, search and rescue (SAR), targeting, and transportation of cargo and troops.



- The helicopter also features a new transmission system and Kamov coaxial rotor system, including three upper rotor blades and a set of three lower rotor blades.
- The new rotor system **avoids the need for a tail rotor**, which ensures landings and take-offs from small sites.

### Why in News?

- At the **Defexpo 2020, Lucknow, Russian Helicopters (RH)** signed a road map with **Indo-Russian Helicopters Limited (IRHL)** for localisation of Ka-226T helicopter production in India.

### More in News

- The IRHL is a **joint venture between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Russian Helicopters (RH)**, which will assemble the Ka-226T helicopters in India.
- The helicopter is powered by a French engine and would have 74% Russian content and 26% European content.
- As per the localisations plan, it would be spread over four phases eventually to achieve 62.4% indigenisation in Phase 4 for the last 50 helicopters.



#### Background

- In 2015, India and Russia concluded an **Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)** for at least **200 Ka-226T** helicopters estimated to cost over \$1 billion.
- The Kamov-226T is meant to **replace** the ageing and obsolete **Cheetah** and **Chetak** fleets of the Indian Army and the Air Force.
- Of the 200, **60 helicopters will come directly** from the RH plant in **Ulan Ude** and remaining will be assembled in India from supply kits from RH.
- While the **Ka-226T is an India specific variant**, the Ka-226 is flown by the Russian border security and coast guard which come under the Federal Security Service (FSB).

### 3) Sharang - Upgraded M-46 artillery gun

#### About Sharang

- Sharang is the **130mm M-46 artillery gun 'up-gunned' to 155mm, 45 calibre** up-gunning based on the Army's tender.
- The gun's range has now gone from 27km to over **36km** with the upgrade.
- It also has **more explosive capability** and hence more damage potential.
- This step will reduce the logistic trail of the Army as it does away with the need to carry 130mm shells and support equipment as the mainstay of the Army's long range artillery is 155mm guns.



#### Background

- The contract, worth ₹200 crore, was signed in October 2018 by the **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)** and Army.
- In all, OFB will upgrade **300 130mm guns** to 155mm and the contract will be completed in four years.
- The **130 mm M-46 M1954** is a manually loaded 130 mm artillery towed gun, designed manufactured in **Russia** since the 1950s.

#### Why in News?

- The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) over Sharang, the first 130mm M-46 artillery gun upgraded to 155mm to the Indian Army.

#### Other artillery guns with India

- The Army inducted its first modern artillery guns system in November 2018.
- These include **M-777 Ultra Light Howitzers (ULH)** from the U.S. and **K9 Vajra-T self-propelled artillery guns** from South Korea.
- The Army has the older, battle-proven **Bofors 155mm guns (Swedish)** in service.
- The **155mm Dhanush towed gun system**, developed based on the Bofors guns by OFB, is under induction.
- In addition, the **Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)**, a 155mm, 52 calibre gun, being jointly developed by the **DRDO** in partnership with **Bharat Forge of Kalyani Group** and **Tata Power SED**, is in advanced stages of testing.
- In October 2019, the Army procured and inducted 155mm Excalibur precision guided ammunition from the U.S. which gives its 155mm artillery guns extended

range and also the ability to hit targets with very high accuracy.

- An artillery regiment of the Army consists of 18 guns.

#### 4) HAL Light Utility Helicopter (LUH)

##### About LUH

- HAL Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) is a new-generation rotorcraft being designed and developed by **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** for the Indian Armed Forces.
- The LUH is the latest helicopter to be designed and developed by the **rotary wing research and design centre (RWR&DC)** of HAL, after **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)** and **Light Combat Helicopter (LCH)**.
- The high-performance LUH, along with the Russian Ka-226T helicopters, will **replace the combat-proven Cheetah and Chetak** helicopters in service with the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army.
- HAL received orders for a total of **187 LUHs**, of which 126 will serve the Indian Army and 61 will enter service with the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- The **multi-role** helicopter is designed to meet **both military and civilian needs**.
- It will be capable of performing multiple missions such as surveillance, reconnaissance, rescue, medical evacuations, and cargo / troop transport.
- The LUH is powered by an **Ardiden 1U (Shakthi)** engine designed by **Safran**.

##### Why in News?

- The indigenous light utility helicopter (LUH) being developed by HAL crossed a milestone as it **received the initial operational clearance (IOC)** at the Defexpo 2020.

#### 5) Credit, debit card details of 4 lakh Indians up for sale on darknet

##### Joker's Stash



- Joker's Stash is a **Dark Web** destination that specializes in trading in payment-card data.
- Anyone purchasing the information can create cloned cards to physically use at ATMs or at in-store machines that aren't chip-enabled; or, they can simply use the information to buy things online.
- Joker's Stash poses an evolving and enduring threat to consumers and retailers affected by fraudsters populating the market.

BIN	Bank	Brand	Level	Credit?	Tracks	SCode	Country	State	City	ZIP	Ref?	Price
		Mastercard	World	Credit	TR2	206	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Rupay	Classic	Debit	TR2	620	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Platinum	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Platinum	Credit	TR2	206	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Gold	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Mastercard	Platinum	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Rupay	Classic	Debit	TR2	620	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Rupay	Classic	Debit	TR2	620	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Platinum	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Mastercard	Platinum	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Corporate T&E	Credit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Mastercard	Standard	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Platinum	Credit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Platinum	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Rupay	Platinum	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Global	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Classic	Debit	TR2	626	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Platinum	Credit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00
		Visa	Classic	Debit	TR2	226	IN	-	-	-	-	\$100.00

##### About DarkNet and Dark Web

- DarkNet is a network built over the **internet which is encrypted**.
- These are networks that are only available to a select group of people and not to the general internet public, and only accessible via authorization, specific software and configurations.
- Dark Web** is a website hosted on the DarkNet.

- It is not searchable by traditional means, such as a search engine, and it's **not visible through traditional web browsers**.
- It needs special browsers like **TOR (The Onion Router), Freenet or I2P**.
- Darknet provides **anonymity** to the users.

#### **JS-Sniffers**

- **JavaScript or JS-Sniffers** are **programmes used for stealing credit and debit card information** from e-commerce websites, and are among the latest concerns when it comes to cybersecurity and theft of sensitive card details.

#### **About CERT-In**

- CERT-In is a functional organisation of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, Government of India, with the objective of **securing Indian cyber space**.
- CERT-In provides Incident Prevention and Response services as well as Security Quality Management Services.

#### **Objectives of CERT-In**

- Preventing cyber attacks against the country's cyber space.
- Responding to cyber attacks and minimizing damage and recovery time Reducing 'national vulnerability to cyber attacks.'
- Enhancing security awareness among common citizens.

#### **Why in News?**

- A whopping 98% out of a large packet of sensitive credit and debit card details, that have been put up for sale on the darknet, are those of Indian customers, **Group-IB** —

a Singapore-based cybersecurity company — has revealed.

#### **More in News**

- The data is suspected to have been collected from **phishing** rackets, which are on the rise in India over the last few years.
- **Phishing** is a cybercrime in which a target or targets are contacted by email, telephone or text message by someone posing as a legitimate institution to lure individuals into providing sensitive data such as personally identifiable information, banking and credit card details, and passwords.
- **ATM skimming** is a theft of card information, where a small device, known as a **skimmer**, is used to steal the information during a legitimate ATM transaction. As the card is swiped at the machine, the skimmer device captures the information stored on the card's magnetic strip.
- The underground market value of the database is estimated at more than \$4.2 million.
- Group-IB's threat Intelligence Team has found that the details are comprehensive in nature, and include card numbers, expiration dates, CVV/CVC codes and, in this case, some additional information such as cardholders' full names, their emails, phone numbers and addresses.

# **PIB ANALYSIS**

## **1) Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR – 2020**

### **About Exercise Ajeya Warrior:**

- The aim of this exercise is to conduct company level joint training with emphasis on counter terrorists operation in urban and semi-urban areas. Training on modern weapon systems, equipment and simulator training have also been planned.
- The joint military exercise will comprise of 120 soldiers each from the Indian and United Kingdom Army who would be sharing their experiences gained during conduct of various counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in the past.
- The exercise is conducted alternatively in the United Kingdom and India.
- The first edition of the exercise was conducted in 2013 at Belgaum, Karnataka.

### **Why in News?**

- The fifth edition of the Joint Military Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR – 2020 between **India and the United Kingdom** will be conducted at Salisbury Plains, United Kingdom in February 2020.

## **2) Saakshar Bharat Mission**

### **About the Saakshar Bharat Mission:**

- Saakshar Bharat is the revamped version of the National Literacy Mission (which was launched in 1988).The Programme goes beyond '3' R's (i.e. Reading, Writing & Arithmetic) ; for it also seeks to create **awareness of social disparities** and a person's deprivation on the means for its amelioration and general well being.
- This programme was formulated in 2009 with the objective of achieving 80% literacy level at national level, by focusing on adult women literacy seeking – to reduce the gap between male and female literacy to not more than 10 percentage points . The four key elements of the programme are:
- Imparting functional literacy and numeracy to non-literates.
- Acquiring equivalency to formal educational system.

- Imparting relevant skill development programme.
- Promoting a learning society by providing opportunities for continuing education.
- The principal target of the programme is to impart functional literacy to 70 million non-literate adults in the age group of 15 years and beyond

### **Why in News?**

- Around 7.64 crore learners successfully passed the biannual Basic Assessment Test under Saakshar Bharat Mission.

## **3) Ease of Living Index and Municipal Performance Index 2019**

### **Municipal Performance Index 2019:**

- With the Municipal Performance Index, the Ministry has sought to assess the performance of municipalities based on **five enablers** namely **Service, Finance, Planning, Technology and Governance** which have been further divided into 20 sectors which will be evaluated across 100 indicators.
- This will help Municipalities in better planning and management, filling the gaps in city administration, and improving the liveability of cities for its citizens.

### **Ease of Living Index 2019:**

- Ease of Living Index is aimed at providing a holistic view of Indian cities – beginning from the services provided by local bodies, the effectiveness of the administration, the outcomes generated through these services in terms of the liveability within cities and, finally, the citizen perception of these outcomes.
- The key objectives of the Ease of Living Index are four-folds, viz.

  1. Generate information to guide evidence-based policy making.
  2. Catalyse action to achieve broader developmental outcomes including the SDG.
  3. Assess and compare the outcomes achieved from various urban policies and schemes.

4. Obtain the perception of citizens about their view of the services provided by the city administration.
- EoLI 2019 will facilitate the assessment of ease of living of citizens across **three pillars: Quality of Life, Economic Ability and Sustainability** which are further divided into 14 categories across 50 indicators.

**Note:**

- For the first time, as part of the **Ease of Living Index Assessment, a Citizen Perception Survey** is being conducted on behalf of the Ministry (which carries 30% of the marks of the Ease of Living Index). This is a very important component of the assessment exercise as it will help in **directly capturing perception of citizens**

with respect to **quality of life in their cities**.

**Why in News?**

- To help assess the progress made in cities through various initiatives and empower them to use evidence to plan, implement & monitor their performance, two Assessment Frameworks, viz. **Ease of Living Index (EoLI)** and **Municipal Performance Index (MPI)** 2019 have been launched by the **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs**. Both these indices are designed to assess quality of life of citizens in 100 Smart Cities and 14 other Million Plus Cities.

# News in Depth

## AIR NEWS

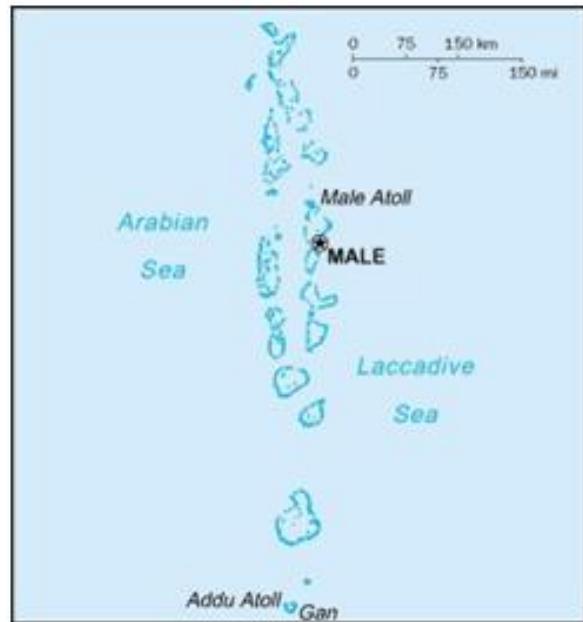
### 1) Addu Tourism Zone

#### About Addu Atoll:

- Addu Atoll, also known as Seenu Atoll, is the southernmost atoll of the Maldives.
- Administratively, Addu Atoll is the location of Addu City, one of the two cities of the Maldives. Addu City consists of the inhabited areas of Addu Atoll, namely the natural islands of Hulhudhoo, Meedhoo, Maradhoo, Feydhoo, and Hithadhoo.

#### Why in News?

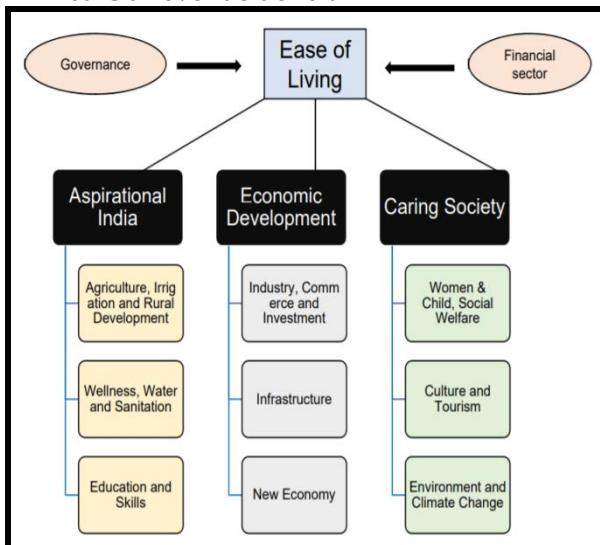
- India and Maldives signed five MoUs for establishing the Addu Tourism zone in five islands of Addu atoll at a cost of 2.49 million dollars. A 6th MoU to set up a bottled water plant in Hoarafushi was also signed.



# UNION BUDGET 2020-2021

## What is Union Budget?

- According to Article 112 of the Indian Constitution, the Union Budget of a year, also referred to as the annual financial statement, is a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the government for that particular year. Union Budget is classified into Revenue Budget and Capital Budget.
- Revenue budget includes the government's revenue receipts and expenditure. There are two kinds of revenue receipts - tax and non-tax revenue. Revenue expenditure is the expenditure incurred on day to day functioning of the government and on various services offered to citizens. If revenue expenditure exceeds revenue receipts, the government incurs a revenue deficit.



- Capital Budget includes capital receipts and payments of the government. Loans from public, foreign governments and RBI form a major part of the government's capital receipts. Capital expenditure is the expenditure on development of machinery, equipment, building, health facilities, education etc. Fiscal deficit is incurred when the government's total expenditure exceeds its total revenue.

## Key Highlights of Union Budget 2020-21

### Prominent themes of the Budget

- Aspirational India** - better standards of living with access to health, education and better jobs for all sections of the society
- Economic Development for all** - "Sabka Saath , Sabka Vikas , Sabka Vishwas".
- Caring Society** - both humane and compassionate; Antyodaya as an article of faith.

## Aspirational India

### Agriculture, Irrigation and Rural Development

- Agriculture credit:**
- Rs. 15 lakh crore target set for the year 2020-21.
- PM-KISAN** beneficiaries to be covered under the **KCC scheme**.
- NABARD Refinance Scheme** to be further expanded.
- Blue Economy:**

- 3477 **Sagar Mitras** and 500 **Fish Farmer Producer Organisations** to involve youth in fisheries extension.

- Growing of algae, sea-weed and cage culture to be promoted.
- Kisan Rail** to be setup by Indian Railways through PPP:

- To build a seamless national cold supply chain for perishables (milk, meat, fish, etc).
- Express and Freight trains to have refrigerated coaches.

- Krishi Udaan** to be launched by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**:

- Both international and national routes to be covered.
- North-East and tribal districts to realize Improved value of agri-products.

- One-Product One-District** for better marketing and export in the Horticulture sector.

- Measures for organic, natural, and integrated farming:

- Jaivik Kheti** Portal - online national organic products market to be strengthened.
- Zero-Budget Natural Farming** (mentioned in July 2019 Budget) to be included.
- Integrated Farming Systems** in rain-fed areas to be expanded.

4. **Multi-tier cropping**, bee-keeping, solar pumps, solar energy production in non-cropping season to be added.
- **PM-KUSUM** to be expanded - Scheme to enable farmers to set up solar power generation capacity on their fallow/barren lands and to sell it to the grid.
  - **Village Storage Scheme:**
    1. To be run by the SHGs to provide farmers a good holding capacity and reduce their logistics cost.
    2. Women, SHGs to regain their position as Dhaanya Lakshmi.
  - Warehousing in line with **Warehouse Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA)** norms:
    - **Viability Gap Funding** for setting up such efficient warehouses at the block/taluk level.
    - **Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC)** to undertake such warehouse building.
    - Financing on **Negotiable Warehousing Receipts (e-NWR)** to be integrated with e-NAM.
  - **Livestock - Foot and Mouth Disease, Brucellosis** in cattle and **Peste Des Petits ruminants (PPR)** in sheep and goat to be eliminated by 2025.
  - **Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)**
  - This is a highly **infectious viral disease** of farm animals.
  - The disease affects cattle, swine, sheep, goats and other cloven-hoofed ruminants.
  - This disease mostly manifests the lesions in the mouth, feet and mammary gland.
  - Milk yield drops dramatically in milking animals, suckling calf usually die and

pregnant animals may abort and infertility may ensue following abortion.

- It is caused by a **virus** **Aphous** of the family **Picornaviridae**.
- **Brucellosis**
- Brucellosis is a **bacterial** disease caused by various **Brucella** species, which mainly infect cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs.
- **Humans generally acquire the disease through direct contact** with infected animals, by eating or drinking contaminated animal products, or by inhaling airborne agents.
- The majority of cases are caused by ingesting unpasteurized milk or cheese from infected goats or sheep.
- Person-to-person transmission is rare.
- The disease causes flu-like symptoms, including fever, weakness, malaise and weight loss.
- **Peste Des Petits ruminants (PPR)**
- Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), also known as **sheep and goat plague**, is a **highly contagious** animal disease affecting small ruminants.
- Once introduced, the **virus** can infect up to 90 percent of an animal heard, and the disease kills anywhere from 30 to 70 percent of infected animals.
- The PPR virus **does not infect humans**.
- **Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana** – 0.5 crore households mobilized with 58 lakh SHGs for poverty alleviation.

#### **Wellness, Water and Sanitation**

- Rs. 6400 crore (out of Rs. 69,000 crore) for **PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)**:
- More than 20,000 hospitals already empanelled under PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).



# BUDGET AT A GLANCE



2018-19 (Actuals) 2019-20 (BE) 2019-20 (RE) 2020-21 (BE)

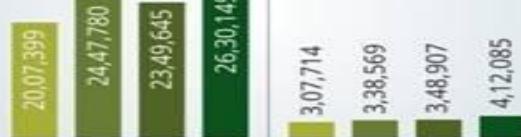
## RECEIPTS in ₹ crore

### Revenue Capital

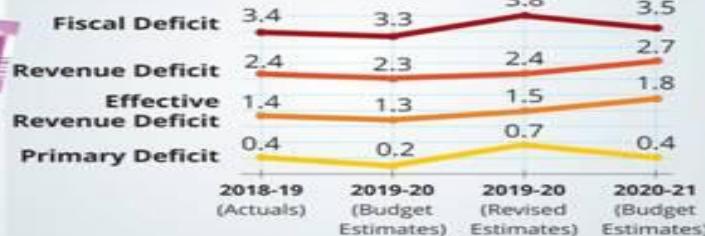


## EXPENDITURE in ₹ crore

### Revenue Capital



## DEFICIT TRENDS % of GDP



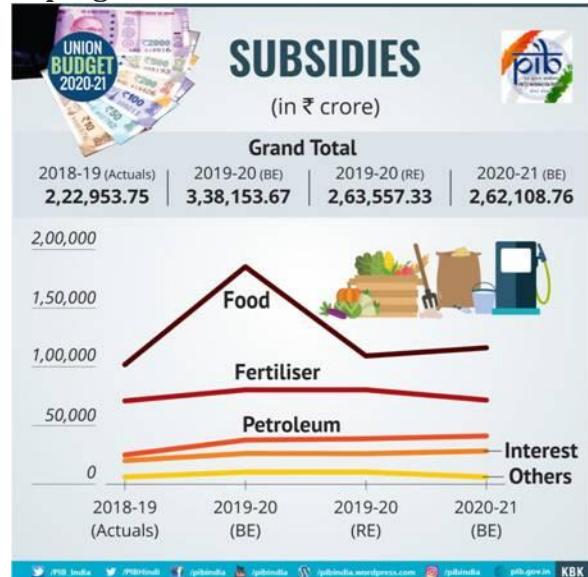
- **Viability Gap Funding** window proposed for setting up hospitals in the PPP mode.
- Aspirational Districts with no Ayushman empanelled hospitals to be covered in the first phase.
- Targeting diseases with an appropriately designed preventive regime using Machine Learning and AI.
- **Jan Aushadhi Kendra Scheme** to offer 2000 medicines and 300 surgicals in all districts by 2024.
- **TB Harega Desh Jeetega** campaign launched - commitment to end Tuberculosis by 2025.
- Rs. 3.60 lakh crore approved for Jal Jeevan Mission
- Rs.12, 300 crore allocation for Swachh Bharat Mission in 2020-21:
  - Commitment to ODF-Plus in order to sustain ODF behaviour.

### Education and Skills

- New Education Policy to be announced soon.
- National Police University and National Forensic Science University proposed for policing science, forensic science, and cyber-forensics.
- Degree level full-fledged online education program by Top-100

institutions in the National Institutional Ranking Framework.

- Up to 1-year internship to fresh engineers to be provided by Urban Local Bodies.
- Budget proposes to attach a medical college to an existing district hospital in PPP mode.
- External Commercial Borrowings and FDI to be enabled for the education sector.
- Ind-SAT proposed for Asian and African countries as a part of the Study in India program.



## Economic Development

### Industry, Commerce and Investment

- **Investment Clearance Cell** proposed to be set up:
- To provide “end to end” facilitation and support.
- To work through a portal.
- **Five new smart cities** proposed to be developed.
- **National Technical Textiles Mission** to be set up:
- With four-year implementation period from 2020-21 to 2023-24.
- To position India as a global leader in Technical Textiles.
- New scheme **NIRVIK** to be launched **to achieve higher export credit disbursement**, which provides for:
  - Higher insurance coverage
  - Reduction in premium for small exporters
  - Simplified procedure for claim settlements.
  - Turnover of **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** proposed to be taken to Rs 3 lakh crore.
- **Scheme for Revision of duties and taxes** on exported products to be launched.
  - Exporters to be digitally refunded duties and taxes levied at the Central, State and local levels, which are otherwise not exempted or refunded.
  - All Ministries to issue quality standard orders as per PM’s vision of “**Zero Defect-Zero Effect**” manufacturing.

### Infrastructure

- **National Infrastructure Pipeline** - Rs. 103 lakh crore worth projects; launched on 31st December 2019.
- **A National Logistics Policy** to be released soon
- **A single window e-logistics market** to be created
- **National Skill Development Agency** to give special thrust to infrastructure-focused skill development opportunities.

### Highways:

- **Delhi-Mumbai Expressway** and two other packages **to be completed by 2023**.
- **Chennai-Bengaluru Expressway** to be started.

### Indian Railways:

- Five measures:

1. Large solar power capacity to be set up alongside rail tracks, on land owned by railways.
2. Four station re-development projects and operation of **150 passenger trains through PPP**.
3. More **Tejas** type trains to connect iconic tourist destinations.
4. **High speed train between Mumbai and Ahmedabad** to be actively pursued.
5. **Bengaluru Suburban transport project** at a cost of Rs 18600 crore, to have fares on metro model.

### Ports & Water-ways:

- **Corporatizing at least one major port** and its listing on stock exchanges to be considered.
- Economic activity along river banks to be energised as per Prime Minister’s **Arth Ganga** concept.

### Airports:

- 100 more airports to be developed by 2024 to support the Udaan **scheme**.

### Electricity:

- “Smart” metering to be promoted.

### Power:

- Expansion of the **national gas grid** from the present 16200 km to 27000 km proposed.

### New Economy

- Policy to enable **private sector to build Data Centre parks** throughout the country to be brought out soon.
- **Fibre to the Home (FTTH)** connections **through Bharatnet** to link 100,000 gram panchayats this year.
- Measures proposed to benefit Start-ups:
- **Knowledge Translation Clusters** to be set up across different technology sectors including new and emerging areas.
- For designing, fabrication and validation of proof of concept, and further scaling up **Technology Clusters**, harbouring test beds and small scale manufacturing facilities to be established.
- Mapping of India’s genetic landscape- Two new national level Science Schemes to be initiated to create a comprehensive database.
- Rs.8000 crore proposed over five years for **National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications**.

## Caring Society

### Culture & Tourism

- An Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation under the Ministry of Culture proposed; with the status of a deemed University.
- 5 archaeological sites to be developed as iconic sites with on-site Museums:
  1. Rakhigarhi (Haryana)
  2. Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh)
  3. Shivasagar (Assam)
  4. Dholavira (Gujarat)
  5. Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu)
- Re-curation of the Indian Museum in Kolkata, announced by Prime Minister in January 2020.
- Museum on Numismatics and Trade to be located in the historic Old Mint building in Kolkata.
- Support for setting up of a Tribal Museum in Ranchi (Jharkhand).
- Maritime museum to be set up at Lothal—the Harrapan age maritime site near Ahmedabad, by the Ministry of Shipping.

### Environment & Climate Change

- PM launched Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) with Secretariat in Delhi. Second such international initiative after the International Solar Alliance.

### Governance

- Taxpayer Charter to be enshrined in the Statute will bring fairness and efficiency in tax administration.
- Major reforms in recruitment to Non-Gazetted posts in Government and Public sector banks:
  1. An independent, professional and specialist National Recruitment Agency (NRA) for conducting a computer-based online Common Eligibility Test for recruitment.
  2. A test-centre in every district, particularly in the Aspirational Districts.
- New National Policy on Official Statistics to:
  1. Promote use of latest technologies including AI.
  2. Lay down a road-map towards modernised data collection, integrated information portal and timely dissemination of information.

- A sum of Rs. 100 crore allocated to begin the preparations for G20 presidency to be hosted in India in the year 2022.

### Financial Sector

- Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) permitted to increase Deposit Insurance Coverage to Rs. 5 lakh from Rs.1 lakh per depositor.
- Private capital in Banking system:
  - Government to sell its balance holding in IDBI Bank to private, retail and institutional investors through the stock exchange.
- New scheme to provide subordinate debt for entrepreneurs of MSMEs by the banks
  - Would be counted as quasi-equity.
  - Would be fully guaranteed through the Credit Guarantee Trust for Medium and Small Entrepreneurs (CGTMSE).
  - The corpus of the CGTMSE would accordingly be augmented by the government.

### Financial Market

- Deepening Bond Market.
- Certain specified categories of Government securities to be opened fully for non-resident investors also.
- FPI limit in corporate bonds increased to 15% from 9% of its outstanding stock.
- Debt Based Exchange Traded Fund expanded by a new Debt-ETF consisting primarily of Government Securities - to give attractive access to retail investors, pension funds and long-term investors.
- A Partial Credit Guarantee scheme for the NBFCs formulated post the Union budget 2019-20 to address their liquidity constraints.

### Infrastructure Financing

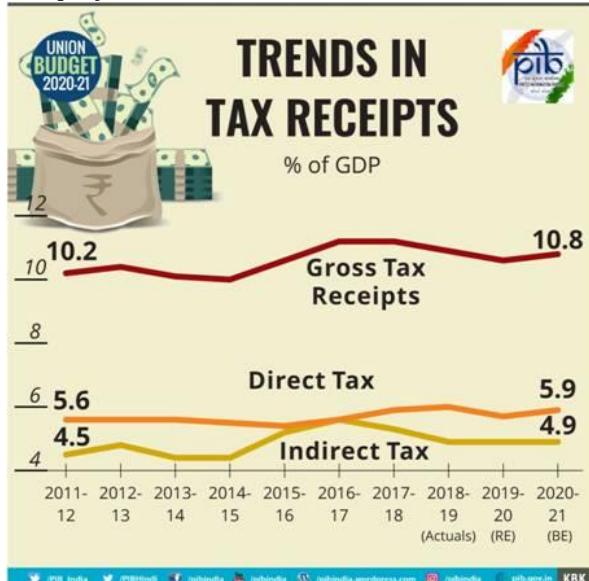
- Rs 22,000 crore to cater to the equity support to Infrastructure Finance Companies such as IIFCL and a subsidiary of NIIF.
- IFSC, GIFT city: full of potential to become a centre of international finance as well as a centre for high end data processing:
- An International Bullion exchange(s) to be set up as an additional option for trade by global market participants with the approval of the regulator.

### Disinvestment

- Government to sell a part of its holding in LIC by way of Initial Public Offer (IPO).

## Fiscal Management

- GST Compensation Fund:
- Balances due out of collection of the years 2016-17 and 2017-18 to be transferred to the Fund, in two instalments.
- Hereinafter, transfers to the fund to be limited only to collection by way of GST compensation cess.
- Fiscal deficit of 3.8% estimated in RE 2019-20 and 3.5% for BE 2020-21. It comprises two ingredients;
  1. 3.3% for year 2019-20 and 3% for the 2020-21 budget estimate.
  2. Deviation of 0.5%, consistent with Section 4(3) of FRBM Act, both for RE 2019-20 and BE 2020-21. (Section 4 (2) of the **FRBM Act** provides for a **trigger mechanism** for a deviation from the estimated fiscal deficit on account of structural reforms in the economy with unanticipated fiscal implications.)
- A good part of the borrowings for the financial year 2020-21 to go towards **Capital expenditure** that has been scaled up by **more than 21%**.



## Direct Tax

### Direct Tax Proposals

- **Personal Income Tax** - New and simplified personal income tax regime proposed:

Taxable Income Slab (Rs.)	Existing tax rates	New tax rates
0-2.5 Lakh	Exempt	Exempt
2.5-5 Lakh	5%	5%
5-7.5 Lakh	20%	10%
7.5-10 Lakh	20%	15%
10-12.5 Lakh	30%	20%
12.5-15 Lakh	30%	25%
Above 15 Lakh	30%	30%

- Around 70 of the existing exemptions and deductions (more than 100) to be removed in the new simplified regime.
- **New tax regime to be optional** - an individual may continue to pay tax as per the old regime and avail deductions and exemptions.

### Corporate Tax:

- Tax rate of 15% extended to new electricity generation companies.
- Indian corporate tax rates now amongst the lowest in the world.
- **Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) - DDT removed** making India a more attractive investment destination.

### Start-ups:

- Start-ups with turnover up to Rs. 100 crore to enjoy 100% deduction for 3 consecutive assessment years out of 10 years.
- Tax payment on ESOPs (Employee stock ownership plan) deferred.
- MSMEs to boost less-cash economy:- Turnover threshold for audit increased to Rs. 5 crore from Rs. 1 crore for businesses carrying out less than 5% business transactions in cash.
- Cooperatives:
- Parity brought between cooperatives and corporate sector.
- Option to cooperative societies to be taxed at 22% + 10% surcharge and 4% cess with no exemption/deductions.
- Cooperative societies **exempted from Alternate Minimum Tax (AMT)** just like

Companies are exempted from the Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT).

- Tax concession for foreign investments:- 100% tax exemption to the interest, dividend and capital gains income on investment made in infrastructure and priority sectors before 31st March, 2024 with a minimum lock-in period of 3 years by the Sovereign Wealth Fund of foreign governments.

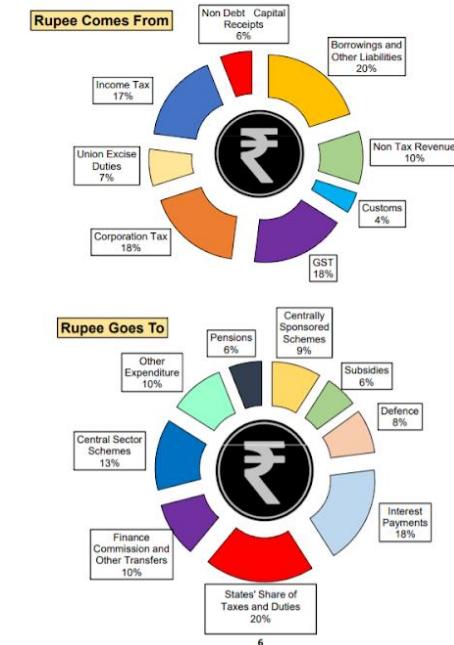
### Tax Facilitation Measures

- Instant PAN to be allotted online through Aadhaar.
- '**Vivad Se Vishwas' scheme**, with a deadline of 30th June, 2020, to reduce litigations in direct taxes:
- **Waiver of interest and penalty** - only disputed taxes to be paid for payments till 31st March, 2020.
- Benefits to taxpayers in whose cases appeals are pending at any level.

### Indirect Tax

#### GST:

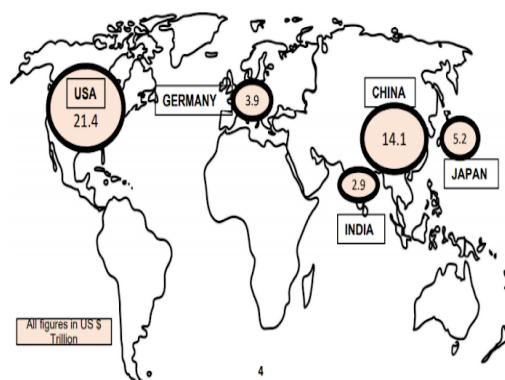
- Cash reward system envisaged to incentivise customers to seek invoice.
- Simplified return with features like **SMS based filing for nil return** and improved input tax credit flow to be implemented from 1st April, 2020 as a pilot run.
- Dynamic QR-code capturing GST parameters proposed for consumer invoices.
- Electronic invoice to capture critical information in a centralized system to be implemented in a phased manner.
- Aadhaar based verification of taxpayers being introduced to weed out dummy or non-existent units.
- GST rate structure being deliberated to address inverted duty structure.
- Anti-dumping duty on **PTA (Purified Terephthalic Acid)** abolished to benefit the textile sector.



### Unprecedented Milestones and Achievements of Indian Economy

- India is now the **fifth largest economy** of the world.
- 7.4% average growth clocked during 2014-19 with inflation averaging around 4.5%.
- **271 million people** raised out of poverty during 2006-16.
- **India's Foreign Direct Investment** elevated to **US\$ 284 billion** during 2014-19 from US\$ 190 billion during 2009-14.
- Central Government debt **reduced to 48.7% of GDP** (March 2019) from 52.2% (March 2014).

India is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world in terms of GDP at current US \$ Trillion.



# BUDGET 2020 IN DETAIL

## No more double taxation on dividends

### About Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT)

- It is a **direct tax** levied on dividends distributed by companies out of their profits among their shareholders.

### Existing pattern

- The Dividend Distribution Tax is **taxable at source** and is deducted at the time of the distribution.
- According to the law, DDT is levied **at the hands of the firm**, and the shareholder.
- Currently, companies are required to pay 15% tax plus applicable surcharge and cess on the dividends.
- Further, investors that receive more than ₹10 lakh as dividend in a financial year have to pay 10% tax on such income.

### Budget proposal

- The government fulfilled a long-standing demand of the capital markets when it proposed scrapping the dividend distribution tax (DDT) that is levied on companies.
- Dividend will now be **taxed only in the hands of the investors**.
- In place it was proposed to levy tax deducted at source (TDS) of 10 per cent on dividend/income paid by a company or mutual fund to its share/unit holder if the amount of such dividend/income exceeds Rs 5,000 in a year.

### Arguments for

- Companies and capital market participants are vouching for removal of DDT, which, they felt **led to double taxation** as such payouts are also taxed at the investor level.
- In order to increase the attractiveness of the Indian equity market and to provide relief to a large class of investors, especially in the low tax bracket.

### Arguments against

- Dividend income was tax-free in the hands of REIT and InvIT investors so far, making it attractive for high-networth investors to put money in these trusts. Now, the dividend income will be rendered taxable in the hands of the investors.

## Finance Minister proposes 'taxpayer's charter' to boost trust

### Details

- A new '**taxpayer's charter**' was proposed aimed at **boosting trust between the citizens and the authorities**, in order to **improve the efficiency of tax administration**.
- The charter, which would **enumerate taxpayer's rights**, would be incorporated in the **Income Tax Act** through suitable amendments.

### Other measures

- The Budget also proposed several other measures to smooth the administration of the IT regime including enhanced use of technology.
- A provision for **e-appeal** has also been included as part of the drive to impart greater efficiency, transparency and accountability to the assessment process.

## Deposit insurance cover raised to ₹5 lakh

### Details

- The government has decided to **increase the insurance cover for bank deposits to ₹5 lakh** from ₹1 lakh.
- This is the **first time since 1993** that the deposit insurance cover has been raised.
- The clamour for higher cover for bank deposits grew stronger following the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank crisis, where depositors are facing restrictions on deposit withdrawals.
- The **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act** will have to be amended to increase the deposit cover.
- The increase in deposit cover **will increase the cost for the banks** as the premium paid by the insured banks to the DICGC is required to be borne by the banks themselves and is not passed on to the depositors.

### About DICGC

- The DICGC insures **all bank deposits** such as savings, fixed, current and recurring.
- Deposits not covered by the Corporation include those of foreign governments and

- of Central/ State governments, deposits of State Land Development Banks with State cooperative banks, inter-bank deposits, deposits received outside India and those specifically exempted by the DICGC with the prior approval of the banking regulator.
- DICGC is a **wholly owned subsidiary of RBI**.
- For more details, please refer to the *Officers' Pulse Issue No. 18*.

## Govt to sell part of its holding in LIC through IPO

### Details

- The Government proposed to sell a part of its holding in **largest insurer** LIC via initial public offer (IPO).
- It was also proposed to sell the government's remaining stake in **IDBI Bank**.
- The government set a divestment target of Rs 2.1 lakh crore for FY21 compared with Rs 1.05 lakh crore target for the ongoing financial year.
- Amendments to the **Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956**, including changing the way it distributes its surpluses, will be key to the proposed public offer.

### About LIC

- Life Insurance Corporation of India (abbreviated as LIC) is an Indian **state-owned insurance group** and investment corporation owned by the Government of India.
- The Life insurance Corporation of India was founded in **1956** when the Parliament of India passed the **Life Insurance of India Act** that **nationalised the insurance industry** in India.
- Over 245 insurance companies and provident societies were merged to create the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India.

### About IDBI

- IDBI Bank Ltd. has inherited a rich legacy from its predecessor entity - Industrial Development Bank of India – which was an apex Development Financial Institution (DFI) in the realm of industry from July 1, 1964 to September 30, 2004.
- On October 1, 2004, the erstwhile IDBI was converted into a banking company – IDBI

Ltd. - to undertake the entire gamut of banking activities while continuing to play its secular DFI role.

- LIC of India completed acquisition of 51% controlling stake in IDBI Bank on January 21, 2019 making it the majority shareholder of the bank.

## International bullion exchange to be set up at IFSC

### What is an IFSC?

- Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Co. Ltd** is being developed as the country's first international financial services centre (IFSC).
- IFSC is a jurisdiction that provides **financial services to resident and non-resident Indians in foreign currencies**.
- GIFT IFSC will be a deemed foreign territory** dealing in foreign currency.
- The units in IFSC will be recognised as **non-resident entity** under the FEMA regulations of the Reserve Bank of India.
- Such centres deal with flows of finance, financial products and services across borders.
- London, New York and Singapore can be counted as global financial centres.

### Budget Details

- The government proposed **to set up an international bullion exchange** at IFSC in GIFT City, which will lead to better price discovery of gold, create more jobs and enhance India's position in such a market.

## Government moots cut in withholding tax

### What is Withholding Tax?

- Withholding tax is a tax that is **deducted by the payer of the income**.
- This withholding tax is also called **retention tax**.
- Under withholding tax, the **taxable amount is deducted at source** by the payer i.e. the payer of the income is liable to deduct the withholding tax before making payment to the payee.

### Details

- With an aim to boost listing of bonds at IFSC exchange, the government has proposed to **reduce the withholding tax rate to 4% from 5% on interest payment**

- on bonds listed on the bourse (stock exchange).
- The move will attract more international investors to the IFSC exchange.
- India's only International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) is in GIFT City, near Ahmedabad in Gujarat.**

#### About GIFT

- GIFT City is a **global financial and IT services hub**, a first-of-its-kind in India, designed to be at par with globally benchmarked business districts.
- It is supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure encompassing all basic urban infrastructure elements along with an excellent external connectivity.
- Companies from financial services, technology and all other services sector are targeted as potential occupants within the city.

### E-com platforms must deduct 1% TDS on transactions

#### Details

- A new tax levy was proposed on e-commerce transactions as part of measures to widen the tax base.
- It is proposed to provide that e-commerce operators shall deduct TDS on all payments or credits to e-commerce participants at the rate of 1% in PAN/Aadhaar cases and 5% in non-PAN/Aadhaar cases.
- According to the Memorandum that was part of the Budget documents placed before Parliament, an e-commerce operator is defined as any person who owns, operates or manages digital or electronic facility or platform for electronic commerce and is a person responsible for paying to e-commerce participant.
- An e-commerce participant is defined as a person resident in India selling goods or providing services or both, including digital products, through digital or electronic facility or platform for e-commerce.

#### Tax Deducted at Source (TDS)

- The concept of TDS was introduced with an aim to collect tax from the very source of income.
- As per this concept, a person (deductor) who is liable to make payment of specified nature to any other person (deductee) shall deduct tax at source and remit the same into the

account of the Central Government.

### Esop tax can deferred for five years

#### What is an Esop?

- An employee stock ownership plan (**ESOP**) is a type of employee benefit plan which is intended to encourage employees to acquire stocks or ownership in the company.
- Under these plans, the employer gives certain stocks of the company to the employee for negligible or less costs which remain in the ESOP trust fund, until the options vest and the employee exercises them or the employee leaves/retires from the company or institution.
- These plans are aimed at improving the performance of the company and increasing the value of the shares by involving stockholders who are also the employees, in the working of the company.
- The ESOPs help in minimizing problems related to incentives.

#### Budget detail

- Budget 2020 proposed deferring the tax payments on ESOPs by five years or till the employees leave the company or sell their shares, whichever is the earliest.
- It has been a long-standing demand from the startup community to change the rules for ESOPs, which meant employees had to pay tax at the time of allotment of securities.
- During their formative years, startups generally use ESOPs to attract and retain highly talented employees.
- ESOPs are a significant component for compensation of these employees. Currently, ESOPs are taxable.
- This leads to a cash flow problem for the employees who do not sell their shares immediately and continue to hold them for a long term

- In addition to this, the Finance Minister has also proposed a 100% deduction of profits for three consecutive assessment years out of seven for eligible startups having turnover of up to Rs 25 crore.
- Further, to help startups with higher valuation avail the above benefit, the government has proposed an increase in the turnover limit for tax exemption for startups from Rs 25 crore to Rs 100 crore.
- It was also proposed to increase the eligibility to claim this deduction from the existing 7 years to 10 years.

## **FM proposes a set of reforms to deepen bond market**

### **Details**

- As part of reforms for the financial markets, especially the bond market, the government has proposed **increasing the investment limit** for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in corporate bonds, opening certain government securities for non-resident investors and launching a new debt exchange traded fund (ETF) comprising primarily of government securities.

- **Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)** are mutual funds listed and traded on stock exchanges like shares. In an ETF, one can buy and sell units at prevailing market price on a real time basis during market hours.
- It was proposed that the limit for FPIs' purchases of corporate bonds, currently capped at 9% of outstanding stock, would be increased to 15% of the outstanding stock.
- It was also proposed to float a **new debt ETF consisting primarily of government securities**.
- This will give retail investors access to government securities as much as giving an attractive investment for pension funds and long-term investors.
- The Minister also proposed opening specified categories of government debt securities for non-resident investors.

## **National Logistics Policy to be released soon**

### **Details**

- A National Logistics Policy, which will clarify the roles of the Union Government, State governments and key regulators, will be released soon by the Union government.
- The policy would create a **single window e-logistics market** and focus on generation of employment, skills and make MSMEs competitive.
- India's logistics sector is highly fragmented and the **aim is to reduce the logistics cost** from the present 14% of the GDP **to less than 10% by 2022**.
- The logistics sector, with a market size of \$160 billion, is very complex, involving more than 20 government agencies, 37 export promotion councils, 500 certifications and 10,000 commodities.

## **Private players allowed to set up data parks**

### **Details**

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an allocation of ₹6,000 crore under the BharatNet programme to enhance broadband connectivity in rural areas, while also proposing a new policy to allow private players to set up data parks in the country.
- The Data Centre parks will enable the firms to skilfully incorporate data in every step of their value chains.

## **A boost for technical textiles**

### **Details**

- The Government announced a **National Technical Textiles Mission**, which is expected to give thrust to production of a wide variety of textiles used in sectors such as healthcare, infrastructure, automobiles, defence, and agriculture.
- The ₹1,480-crore Mission, to be implemented from 2020-2021 to 2023-2024, aims at positioning India as a global leader in technical textiles.
- At present India imports a significant quantity of technical textiles every year.

### **Abolition of duty**

- Another major announcement in the Budget, which is expected to give a thrust to the polyester fibre sector, is **abolition of anti-dumping duty on PTA (Purified Terephthalic Acid)**.
- This is the raw material for production of polyester fibre.

- It will bring polyester prices in India on a par with international price.

### About Technical textiles

- Technical Textiles are defined as materials and products manufactured primarily for their **technical and performance properties** rather than their aesthetic or decorative characteristics.
- Technical textiles are used in different forms in various industries like construction, transport, agriculture, medical, hygiene, and sporting.
- In industrial manufacturing operations technical textiles are used for filters,

machine clothing, conveyor belts, and abrasive substrates.

- They are also incorporated into industrial products such as electrical components and cables, flexible seals and diaphragms, and acoustic and thermal insulation for other domestic appliances.
  - It is a large and growing sector that supports a vast array of other industries.
- *Note: Remaining will be covered in Pulse 36.*

# RSTV BIG PICTURE

## 1) The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020

CABINET DECISIONS  
11 DECEMBER 2019

### ENSURING SAFETY OF AIR TRAVELLERS

Cabinet approves Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2019



my GOV  
मेरी सरकार

- Maximum limit of fine enhanced from the existing ₹10 lakhs to ₹1 Crore
- The Bill to include regulation of all areas of Air Navigation
- To enhance safety & security of aircraft operations in the country
- To enable effective functioning of civil aviation regulatory bodies

### Why in News?

- The government introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to amend the Aircraft Act whereby the fine amount for violations will be hiked from Rs 10 lakh to up to Rs 1 crore.
- The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020 also provides for keeping "aircraft belonging to any armed forces of the Union, other than naval, from military or air force outside the purview" of the Aircraft Act, 1934.

### What is the Background?

- Once the amendments are passed, the government would also have the power to issue directions to review, if necessary in public interest, any order passed by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau, as per the bill's Statement of Objects and Reasons.
- The bill was introduced by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal as Minister of State for Civil

Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri was not present in the House.

- The proposed amendments to the Act were approved by the Union Cabinet in December.
- The Act pertains to control of the manufacture, possession, use, operation, sale, import and export of aircraft.

### What are the salient features of the bill?

- According to the proposed amendment, the fine amount for violations will be hiked from Rs 10 lakh to up to Rs 1 crore.
- The bill also provides for keeping "aircraft belonging to any armed forces of the Union, other than naval, from military or air force outside the purview" of the Aircraft Act, 1934.
- The bill proposes that, the government would also have the power to issue directions to review, if necessary in public interest, any order passed by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau, as per the bill's Statement of Objects and Reasons.
- The proposed amendments would fulfil the safety requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
- Other proposals include empowering BCAS or any authorised officer to issue directions, having designated officers for adjudging penalties and introducing a provision for compounding of offences.

### What is the need for the amendment?

- Spike in the number of air safety violations or breaches in the Recent Past:**
  - Airbus A320neo planes fitted with Pratt and Whitney engines, could have had catastrophic consequences as many such aircraft have faced mid-air glitches.
  - DGCA had asked IndiGo and Go Air, who still use this version of the aircraft, to install modified engines or replace the entire fleet of such planes
  - There have also been many reports of planes facing other technical snags and could ultimately result in creating a sense of fear among passengers.
- Creating an Enabling Environment:**

- The bill seeks to empower the central government to constitute DGCA, BCAS and AAIB under the Act as well as specify their responsibilities.
  - It would also bring regulations of all areas of air navigation services under the Act.
  - This bill would enable the three regulatory bodies in the civil aviation sector in India, namely DGCA, BCAS and AAIB to become more effective.
- **Adopting the International Standards:**
- The bill has provisions for securing the safety of aircraft operations in India and carrying out civil aviation operations as per standards, procedures and practices laid down by ICAO.
  - As per the statement of ICAO audits, conducted in 2012 and 2015, have indicated a need to amend the Act to give proper recognition to the regulators under the Act.
  - The amendments would fulfil the requirements of ICAO.

#### **What is the prospectus of Indian Civil Aviation Sector?**

- Indian civil aviation sector has a high growth potential and at present, scheduled domestic carriers together have nearly 680 planes.
- The Economic Survey 2019-20, pointed out that, to continue with the high growth trajectory, the government has been providing a congenial environment so that the Indian carriers double their fleet from about 680 aircraft at the close of November 2019 to over 1,200 by FY 2023-24.
- ICAO had carried out the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme for India in November 2017 and in February 2018.
- The audit result showed that the country's score declined to 57.44% from 65.82% earlier, placing India below Pakistan and Nepal.

#### **Conclusion**

- An ICAO team had visited India in November 2018 as well, and assessed the action taken on issues related to three areas that were audited by the ICAO in November 2015.
- Those pertained to aerodromes and ground aids, air navigation services (ANS) and aircraft accident and incident investigation.
- Currently, India's score is lower than the world average of 65% on the ICAO's board.

## **2) Army: Women in Commanding Role**



#### **Why in News?**

- The Supreme Court has been informed that women may not be suitable for command posts in the Army.
- This is because the male troops are not yet prepared to accept women, the Centre told the Supreme Court.

#### **What is the Background?**

- The dangers of women being taken prisoner of war was also cited by the Centre.
- The Centre also said that the armed forces require sacrifices and commitment beyond the call of duty by the entire family of service personnel involving separation and frequent transfers, affecting the education of children and career prospects of the spouse.
- It is a challenge for women to meet these hazards of service owing to prolonged absence during pregnancy, motherhood and domestic obligations towards their children and families especially when both husband and wife happen to be service officers the centre also contended in the Supreme Court.
- Opposing the plea, the lawyers representing the women officers told the court that many of them displayed exceptional bravery in adverse situations and command posts should not be based on gender.

#### **What is the bearing on the employment of women?**

- The central government told the top court that “motherhood, childcare, psychological limitations” have a bearing on employment of women officers in the Army.
- Lower physical standards of women, composition of units that are entirely male mostly from rural background impact commander appointments.
- Combat roles and battlefield combats were the only fraction of role in the military where women are not inducted even if it is assumed that “women are less fit for combat roles”.
- The government further said it is also keeping in mind the “greater family demands and danger of them being taken as prisoners of war”.

#### **Why is there a need for mind-set change?**

- The top court bench, however, stated that if the government wants and changes its mindset then “women officers could be given command posts in the Army as there are many other services in addition to combat operations where women could be accommodated”.
- Justice Chandrachud said that “two things were required to rid any form of gender discrimination — administrative will and change in mindset”.

#### **What is the history of women in Indian Armed Forces?**

- In 1992, the Indian Army began inducting women officers in non-medical roles.
- In 2007, the United Nations first all-female peacekeeping force made up of 105 Indian policewomen was deployed to Liberia.
- All wings of the Indian Armed Forces allow women in combat roles (junior ranks) and combat supervisory roles (officers), except Indian Army (inducted for support roles only) and Special Forces of India (trainer role only).
- Females are not allowed to serve in combat units like the Infantry, the Armoured Corps and Mechanized infantry.
- Under the Short Service Commission (SSC) scheme, women are allowed to enter Army Service Corps, Ordnance, Education Corps, Judge Advocate General (JAG), Engineers, Signals, Intelligence and Electronics & Mechanical Engineering branches of the Army.
- Only in certain streams like the Judge Advocate General, Army Education Corps

(AEC) and the Military Police, women are given permanent commission at par with male officers.

- Unlike male officers who could have joined under the SSC scheme and could have opted for a permanent scheme at the end of ten years, women SSC officers did not have the same option.
- However, Prime Minister has announced on Independence Day in 2018 that permanent commission would be granted to serving women officers of the armed forces. It will change the career paths of more than 3,700 women officers in the three services.

#### **What are the issues related?**

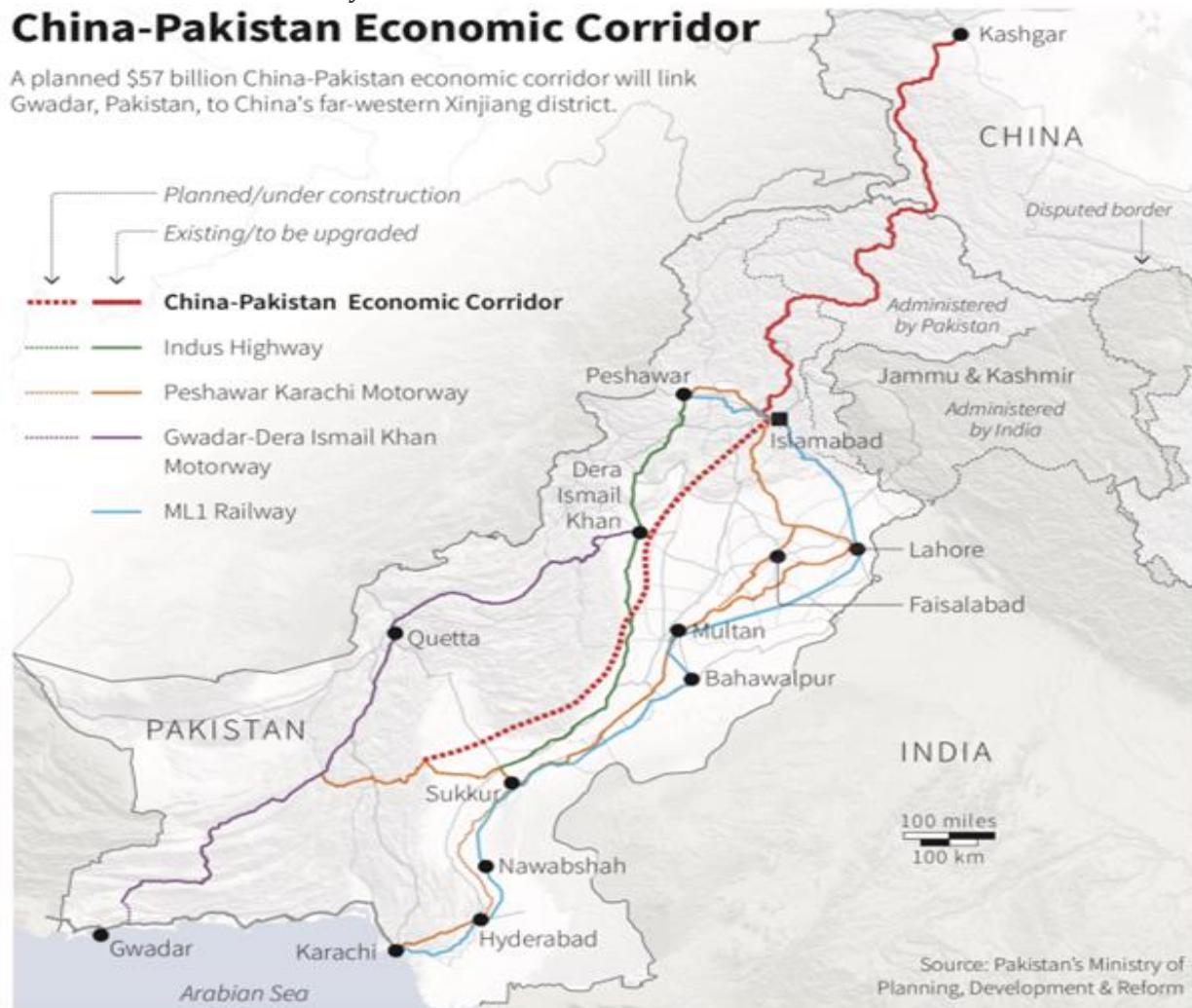
- The natural physical differences in stature, strength, and body composition between the sexes make women more vulnerable to certain types of injuries and medical problems.
- This is particularly so during vigorous and intensive training.
- Pre-entry physical fitness levels tend to be lower in most women recruits compared with men, and hence, when standards of training remain same for the two genders, there is a higher probability of injuries among the women.
- The natural processes of menstruation and pregnancy make women particularly vulnerable in combat situations.
- Lack of privacy and sanitation can result in an increased incidence of genitourinary infections.
- The effect of prolonged deployment in difficult terrains and grueling physical activity on the reproductive health of women is still unknown.
- Women tend to be more attached to their families, particularly their children.
- Cultural barriers in society may be the biggest impediment to induction of women in combat.
- The consequences of inserting a few women in an almost entirely male preserve, in cramped quarters, in inhospitable terrain, isolated from civilization, might raise conservative eyebrows of the society.
- Another major question that needs to be studied is the acceptance of orders of the women officers by the jawans.

#### **What is the way forward?**

- Creating history, the Indian Air Force, last year, had inducted three women as fighter pilots.
- A decision on having women as fighter pilots will be taken after evaluating the performance of the three women — Avani Chaturvedi, Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh who are now part of IAF's fighter squadron.
- Before inducting women in combat roles, first they can be trained as military police jawans, and gradually, they can be trained for combats.
- As for the concern of preserving female jawans modesty and dignity, there should be elaborate codes of conducts to ensure no untoward incident occurs.
- Administrative issues should not be cited as barriers to women entry.

## China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

A planned \$57 billion China-Pakistan economic corridor will link Gwadar, Pakistan, to China's far-western Xinjiang district.



### Why in News?

- The minister of state in the ministry of external affairs, V. Muraleedharan in the Lok Sabha said the government's position

- It is the responsibility of the government to create both administrative and social infrastructure for easy induction of women.
- Most importantly, a policy should be drawn wherein the framework for women's induction in the combat role is laid. Lack of a definite framework has delayed the decision-making process.

### Conclusion

- Society has to be ready to accept that women too can play the crucial role of confronting the enemies. Arguments such as that Indian society is not ready to see women in body bags are misleading and should not be encouraged as an argument to stall women entry in combat roles.

## 3) India calls CPEC illegal

on China's 'One Belt One Road' or 'Belt and Road Initiative' has been clear and consistent.

- Government's concerns arise in part from the fact that the inclusion of the so-called illegal 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' as a flagship project of 'OBOR/BRI', directly impinges on the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.

#### **What is the Background?**

- This so-called illegal 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' passes through parts of the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh which are under illegal occupation of Pakistan.
- Government has conveyed its concerns to the Chinese side about their activities in areas illegally occupied by Pakistan in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and has asked them to cease such activities.
- Further, the Government is of the firm belief that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms.
- They must follow principles of openness, transparency and financial responsibility and must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of other nations.

#### **What is CPEC?**

- **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor** is a whopping 46 billion dollar project which will connect **Kashgar** in Xinjiang province of China, with **Gwadar port** in Baluchistan which is the largest province in Pakistan.
- It is connected through a vast and complex network of roads as well as other infrastructure projects such as dams, hydropower projects, railways, and pipelines.

#### **Why is Pakistan's interest in CPEC?**

- Under the '**1+4**' cooperation framework of CPEC, '**1**' represents '**CPEC**' and the **4** includes **Energy, Gwadar Port, Transport Infrastructure and Industrial cooperation.**
- The Chinese investments are supposed to boost Pakistan's 274 billion dollar GDP by over 15 percent.
- Energy needs of Pakistan: The large scale energy production has been termed as the biggest breakthrough of the project.
- Energy projects such as Karot Hydropower project, Karachi Nuclear power plant and World's largest solar power plant in Pakistan's Punjab Province etc are part of

this initiative that can double Pakistan's energy capacity.

- Infrastructure development: Like any other developing country Pakistan is also suffering due to lack of basic infrastructure facilities.
- With CPEC, Pakistan expects infrastructural enhancement which includes construction of a 2,000 km road and rail network worth 10.63 billion dollars.
- Employment Opportunities: This corridor promises huge employment opportunities to all sections of the society.
- Away from Western Influence: CPEC provides Pakistan with an opportunity to work closely with a more reliable friend China independent of Western influence especially the US.

#### **What is China's interest in CPEC?**

- **Access to the Middle East and Europe:** By materialising the CPEC project, China can save millions of dollars every year by shortening its route by about 12,000 km which is critical for energy imports.
- **Gwadar Port:** A fully operational Gwadar port in Pakistan provides the following benefits.
  - It provides a link between Maritime Silk Road and the Arabian Sea.
  - The port at the mouth of the Persian Gulf provides China with the shortest route to the oil-rich Middle East, Africa, and most of the Western hemisphere.
  - Gwadar will have the estimated capacity to handle 19 million tonnes of crude oil per year, which will be sent to China after being refined at the port.
  - At present, China transports 80% of its oil through the Strait of Malacca.
  - Apart from these lucrative commercial benefits, China also has huge strategic and geopolitical advantages in the Indian Ocean region.

#### **What are the issues related?**

- The planned CPEC route passes through POK and Gilgit-Baltistan, which India claims to be its own integral and indispensable territory, illegally held by CPEC also somewhat legitimises Pakistan's ownership over disputed PoK and it may lead to the internationalisation of Kashmir Issue which India doesn't want.
- Apart from this India feels that the high economic stakes in the project will push

- China to ally with Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute.
- With the complete realisation of CPEC, China will get a free corridor to move its armour and mechanised weapons which are a threat to India in the plains of Punjab and Rajasthan.
- In the guise of securing CPEC, China can permanently position troops on Pakistan soil not too far from the Indian Land.
- Despite clarifications from China and Pakistan that the port at Gwadar will be used only for economic purposes, India fears that China may establish a naval base at Gwadar to ensure Chinese maritime hegemony in the Indian Ocean.
- India considers Gwadar Port as part of China's "String of Pearls" bases, that extends from its eastern coast to the Arabian Sea.

#### **What is the way forward?**

- In order to counter Chinese dominance in Gwadar Port, India has invested in Iran's Chabahar port which is very near to Gwadar.

- Also, India, Iran, and Afghanistan signed a trade corridor deal giving India the land access to Central Asia from Chabahar, bypassing Pakistan.
- India can work on improving the relationship with Pakistan as it can provide the shortest land route for us to access Central Asia.
- Therefore a good relationship with Pakistan can give a boost to our trade relations with central Asian countries.
- India should keep in mind that realisation of CPEC is important as a stable and economically strong Pakistan is necessary for the peace and prosperity in the region.

#### **Conclusion**

- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can act as a catalyst for economic connectivity and integration in Central Asia, South Asia, and West Asia. However, it should not jeopardise India's sovereignty through any channel.

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