

OFFICERS'

Pulse

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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 and SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Nagaland to initiate its own version of NRC from July 10

What is National Register of Citizens (NRC)?

- It is the list of genuine citizens of the country. As north east bearing influx of migrants from the nearby places, it is difficult for the government to extend the socio-economic benefits to real beneficiaries. It also poses a threat to the security of the country. Hence states are in the route to update this register.

Why in News?

- As we all know that Assam is updating its NRC list, Nagaland has come forward to release **Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN)**.
- RIIN shall be a master list of all indigenous peoples and shall check the issuance of fake indigenous inhabitant certificates.
- The collection of data will be done at village and ward levels, extracting everybody's permanent and temporary address. The aadhar number will be taken wherever necessary.
- This process shall start from July 10 2019 and is expected to finish in 60 days.
- By December 2018, the list will be finalised and once list is published no fresh indigenous inhabitant certificate will be issued except for new born children.
- Inner Line Permit (ILP) which is permit for non-inhabitants to travel in Nagaland shall be associated with RIIN.

2. Non-Communicable Diseases In India

Why in News ?

- "India: Health of the Nation's States", Contribution of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) report was released by Indian Council of Medical Research recently.

- According to the report, total death in the country due to NCDs was 61.8% in 2016, as compared to 37.9% in 1990.

About Non-communicable diseases

- These are a group of diseases that affect individuals over an extended period of time causing socio-economic burden to the nation.
- There are five types of Non-communicable diseases -
 - Cancer
 - Chronic respiratory disease
 - Stroke
 - Cardiovascular diseases
 - Diabetes

Non-Communicable Diseases In India

- Diabetes is responsible for a majority of morbidity and mortality in the country.
- Mental health and injuries also have a considerable burden.
- NCDs cause 61% of deaths in India states WHO report.
- Cardiovascular diseases are at the top, in 2016 a staggering 28.1% of all deaths in India were caused by heart conditions.

Government initiatives to curb Non-communicable disease

- India has taken some steps towards preventing Non-communicable Diseases, some of them are:

NPCDCS

- The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) under the National Health Mission (NHM) is an effort by the Central Government which supplements State Government's effort.
- The objectives of the programme include health promotion activities and opportunistic screening for common NCDs including cancer.

AMRIT STORE

- Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) Deendayal outlets have been opened different Institutions/Hospitals.
- Its objective is to make available Cancer and Cardiovascular Diseases drugs and implants at discounted prices to the patients.

3. Nirbhaya Fund

What is it?

- In 2018 Budget the then government announced Rs 1,000 crore corpus in Nirbhaya Fund which was to be utilised for upholding safety and dignity of women.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is authorised to work out the details of structure, scope and application of this fund. But the fund is **administered** by the **Department of Economic Affairs** of the finance ministry.
- One stop Centre (Sakhi centers), Universal Helpline for women, safe city programme (facilitating the amenities in the city for safety of women) etc are being developed under Nirbhaya Fund

Why in News?

- According to official data of ministry of women and child development, between 2015-2018, only 20% of the Nirbhaya Fund was used by the states and UTs.
- Chandigarh (59.83%) used maximum and other two states, Mizoram (56.32%), Uttarakhand (51.68%), used more than 50% of the allotted state funds.
- The least performing five States include Manipur, Maharashtra, Lakshadweep (which didn't spend even a single penny) and were followed by West Bengal (0.76%) and Delhi (0.84%).

4. 'Greying India must delay retirement'

Total fertility rate (TFR)

- Total fertility rate (TFR) in simple terms refers to the total number of children born or likely to be born to a woman in her lifetime if she was subject to the prevailing rate of age-specific fertility in the population. TFR of about 2.1 children per woman is called **Replacement-level fertility**.
- The value replacement level 2.1 represents the average number of children

a woman would need to have to reproduce herself by bearing a daughter who survives to childbearing age. If replacement level fertility is sustained over a sufficiently long period, each generation will exactly replace itself without any need for the country to balance the population by international migration.

- If the replacement rate is falling below 2.1 then population starts to decline, if migration isn't considered.

Age and pension

- As the population started declining, in the meantime we have more people getting aged and retired. They need better lifestyle and pension must be provided appropriately. If the aged population is in excess than the working population, then the burden over the government resources increases.

Why in news?

- According to Economic Survey 2018-19, it is the forecast that the population rate will grow less than 1% from 2021 to 2031 and under 0.5% from 2031 to 2041. This is because the TFR is at decline.
- By 2021 the TFR is about to come at 1.8 which is far below the replacement level fertility. Out of the 22 major states, 14 states have already TFR below the replacement level fertility.
- All southern States along with West Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh will see TFR decline to 1.5-1.6 by 2021. By 2031, it is forecasted that all States are likely to see below replacement level fertility.
- India is expected to reach the peak of **demographic dividend** (highest working population (20-59) contributing best for the economy) at 2041.
- With this the size of the elderly population, **60 years and above**, is expected to nearly double from 8.6% in 2011 to 16% by 2041, whereas the population size of those between 0-19 years, which is on the decline, is likely to drop from as high as 41% in 2011 to 25% by 2041.
- India must evolve in its healthcare and social security schemes to manage aging population.
- In India The retirement age of government employees is fixed at **60 years**. The judges

retire at the age of 65 years. There is no fixed retirement age for people working in the private sector. However, as per Employees Provident Fund (EPF), on attaining 58 years of age, an EPF member ceases to be a member of PF automatically.

- Many countries like US, Germany & France have increased their retirement age to reduce burden on pension funding.
- Considering that, the economic survey 2018-19 is suggesting to increase retirement age for both men and women.

5. Mahua Moitra moves privilege motion

What is a motion?

- It is a formal proposal moved by any member and approved by the presiding officer to discuss any important matter in the house.
- No discussion on a matter of general public importance can take place except on a motion made with the consent of the presiding officer.
- The house adopts the motion if they agree or rejects the motion if they disagree.
- There are different motions moved in the parliament like closure motion, privilege motion, adjournment motion, etc.

What are the parliamentary privileges?

- Every parliamentarian (including state legislature members) has some privileges and immunities which are important to protect the independence and authority of the house.
- There are 2 types of privileges, 1) individual privileges 2) collective privileges.

Individual privileges:

- In **civil cases**, an MP/MLA **cannot** be arrested before 40 days of the session of the house, during the session and after 40 days of the end of session. It is not applicable in criminal and preventive detention cases.
- Nobody can question his vote and what he spoke in the parliament during the proceedings of the house. He has freedom of speech
- They can refuse to appear in front of the court as evidence or witness when the house is in session.

Collective privileges:

- The house collectively can have secret sitting and no media has authority to publish about the secret sitting without the house permission.
- The house can make its own rules regarding the proceedings of the house.
- The house collectively can punish an outsider when he breaches the privileges. They can suspend if any member does it.
- The courts of India inquire what is said in the parliament or its committees.
- Presiding officer is the authority of the area and space of the house. No person can be arrested or no legal process can be held without his permission.
- Some offices like Attorney General of India too have these privileges. President who is an integral part of the house **doesn't** have these powers

What is privilege motion?

- It is concerned with the breach of parliamentary privileges by a minister.
- It is moved by a member when he feels that his privileges are breached or it can be also moved when minister has committed a breach of privilege of the House or one or more of its members by withholding facts of a case or by giving wrong or distorted facts. Its purpose is to censure the concerned minister

What are the sources of these privileges?

- Constitutional provisions (article 105, freedom of speech in the house and right to publication of the proceedings)
- Various laws made by Parliament,
- Rules of both the Houses,
- Parliamentary conventions, and
- Judicial interpretations.

Why in the news?

- Mahua Moitra, a first time MP of Trinamool congress moved privilege motion when her maiden speech in parliament was criticised by a news channel as plagiaristic (copied) one.

6. Lok Sabha clears fresh Medical Council Bill

About Medical Council of India (MCI)

- MCI is a **statutory body** for establishing uniform and high standards of medical education in India. It was established in 1934 under the Indian Medical Council Act

1933 act, but later reconstituted under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956.

Objectives of MCI

- Maintenance of uniform standards of medical education, for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
- Recommendation for recognition/de-recognition of medical qualifications of medical institutions of India or foreign countries.
- Permanent registration/provisional registration of doctors with recognized medical qualifications.
- Reciprocity with foreign countries in the matter of mutual recognition of medical qualifications.

Issues of MCI

- **Separation of regulatory powers:** The council regulates both **medical education** as well as **medical practice** leading to the centralization of all regulatory functions in one single body. There is a demand to separate these to stop corruption and malpractices.
- **Ranjit Roy committee in 2014** recommended structural re-configuration of the council by separation of power.
- **Composition of MCI :** As most of the members of the MCI are elected, a **NITI Aayog Committee (2016)** recommended the appointment of regulators through an independent selection process than elections, because the committee said that elections inhibit the entry of skilled professionals and regulation becomes ineffective.
- **Fee Regulation :** MCI also regulates the fees of the medical colleges. The above referred NITI Aayog committee held this aspect a threat to accountability and acts as a barrier to private colleges. This thus restricts the expansion of private players in the medical education.
- **Professional conduct:** In 2016 a standing committee on Health held that MCI is not involved in enforcement of **medical ethics**. It is working only in regards of licensing new colleges. Committee recommended that the areas of medical education and medical practice should be separated in terms of enforcement of the appropriate ethics for each of these stages.
- Thus, now MCI has evolved into a body that has become a powerful rationing

authority, controlled by those who it is supposed to be regulating, that is powerful medical colleges and medical professionals.

- But the controversy over corruption plagued the institution as it was dissolved by the President of India in 2010 following the arrest of MCI's president Ketan Desai under the Prevention of Corruption Act.
- It was then reconstituted in 2013. After several committee reports and court orders, the government introduced National Medical Council bill in 2018 which lapsed as it didn't get support from rajya sabha .

Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill 2019

- Now after 17th lok sabha formation, Indian Medical Council (amendment) Bill 2019 was introduced in 2019 budget session. The following are the key points of the bill.
- The Bill amends the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and replaces the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 2019 which was promulgated on February 21, 2019.
- It seeks to supersede (take over) the Medical Council of India (MCI) for a period of two years with effect from 26 September, 2018, during which the board of governors will run it.
- According to the 1956 IMC Act, the MCI can be supersessioned and should be reconstituted within **3 years**. But the new amendment bring the duration to **2 years** which comes into effect from 26th Sept, 2018.
- When MCI is supersessioned, its powers are governed by Board of GOVERNORS. The number of members was 7 & these members belonged to medical education according to the 1956 act.
- Now IMC Amendment bill made the strength to 12 members and also provides space to appoint persons with proven administrative capacity an experience to be selected in the Board.
- The Bill provides for the Board of Governors to be assisted by a Secretary General appointed by the central government.

- The government is trying to convert all the ordinances into acts which were promulgated in february 2019. In the meantime government is thinking to bring another bill which will replace the MCI with National Medical Commission.

Why in News?

- IMC amendment bill 2019 was passed by lok sabha and rajya sabha.

7. The Central Education Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Bill, 2019

- The Bill provides for reservation of teaching positions in central educational institutions for persons belonging to: (i) Scheduled Castes, (ii) Scheduled Tribes, (iii) socially and educationally backward classes, and (iv) Economically weaker sections.

Why was it necessary?

- **Reservation of posts:** Presently the institutions give reservations to the above sections considering every department as one unit. This restricted the no. of people for the reservation as well as the number of teachers in each department was small to accommodate all sections through reservation. This bill makes the whole institution as one single unit and determines the posts for everybody.
- This implies that the allocation of teaching posts for reserved categories would be done on the basis of all positions of the same level (such as assistant professor) across departments.

Coverage and exceptions:

- The Bill will apply to 'central educational institutions' which include universities set up by Acts of Parliament, institutions deemed to be a university, institutions of national importance, and institutions receiving aid from the central government.
- However, it **excludes** certain institutions of excellence, research institutions, and institutions of national and strategic importance which have been specified in the Schedule to the Bill. It also **excludes minority education institutions.**

Why in News?

- The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha have passed the Central Education Institutions

(Reservations in Teacher's Cadre) Bill, 2019.

8. 'One nation, one ration card' from July 1, 2020

What is Public Distribution System?

- The Public Distribution System (PDS) evolved as a system of management of scarcity through distribution of food grains at affordable prices. It is an important part of Government's policy for the management of **food economy** in the country.
- According to the **National Food Security Act 2013**, the government is obliged to cover up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population under Targeted PDS, with uniform entitlement of 5 kg per person per month.
- PDS is operated under the **joint responsibility** of the Central and the State Governments.
- The Central Government, through **Food Corporation of India (FCI)**, has assumed the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of food grains to the State Governments.
- The **operational responsibilities** including allocation within the State, identification of eligible families, issue of Ration Cards and supervision of the functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) etc., rests with the State Governments.
- Under the PDS, presently the commodities namely wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene are being allocated to the States/UTs for distribution. Some States/UTs also distribute additional items of mass consumption through the PDS outlets such as pulses, edible oils, iodized salt, spices, etc.

What is ration card?

- Ration card means a document issued under an order or authority of the State Government for the purchase of essential commodities from the fair price shops under the Public Distribution System (PDS) / Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- Essentially it is a card / document that enable rationing of scarce commodities given to a family. The eldest woman who is not less than eighteen years of age, in every eligible household, would function as the

head of the household for the purpose of issue of ration cards.

- State Governments issue distinctive Ration Cards to **Above Poverty Line (APL)**, **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** and **Antyodaya families** means those poorest families from amongst Below Poverty Line (BPL) families identified by the State Governments, which are revised periodically. State Governments even issue temporary ration cards for particular schemes.
- In the present day context, ration card may not be necessarily for the distribution of scarce commodities; rather, it is a **general tool** for implementing welfare measures. However, under Order, 2015.pdf TPDS (Control) Order, 2015 it is stipulated that Ration card **shall not** be used as a document of identity or proof of residence.
- the eldest woman who is not less than eighteen years of age, in every eligible household, would function as the head of the household for the purpose of issue of ration cards.

Why in News ?

- The central government is working on a plan to launch a “One Nation One Ration Card” scheme for beneficiaries, especially migrant workers, to access the Public Distribution System from any PDS shop across the country.

About

- The scheme is aimed at providing freedom to beneficiaries, as they will not be tied to one PDS shop, reduce their dependence on shop owners and curtail corruption.
- While Aadhaar linkage is not necessary to access NFSA benefits in a beneficiary's local registered ration shop, located closest to her home address, it will be necessary to access the **portability scheme**.
- The biggest beneficiaries will be **migrant workers** who move to other states to seek better job opportunities.
- The ration shops/ fair price shops must use point of sale (PoS) machines which allows the one nation, one ration card scheme.
- Govt. also plans to fortify the rice with iron, folic acid, Vitamin A and Vitamin B12 to provide essential nutrients to the people.

Present status:

- Integrated Management of PDS (IMPDS) is a system that is already operational in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura wherein a beneficiary can avail his share of food grain from any district in the State.
- In the recent meeting, other states also assured that IMPDS will be implemented at the earliest.
- There will also be creation of a **Central Repository** of all Ration Cards to help national level deduplication.

9. Private funds needed for Swachh Bharat

About Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

- Swachh Bharat Mission is a massive mass movement that seeks to create a Clean India by 2019. It has 2 components - urban and rural.
- The urban component of the mission will be implemented by the Ministry of Urban Development, and the rural component by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- **SBM Urban** aims for the elimination of open defecation, conversion of unsanitary toilets to pour flush toilets, eradication of manual scavenging, municipal solid waste management and bringing about a behavioural change in people regarding healthy sanitation practices.
- **SBM Rural** aims to make India an open defecation free country in Five Years. It seeks to improve the levels of cleanliness in rural areas through Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities and making Gram Panchayats Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitised.

Why in News?

- The Economic Survey 2018-19 mentioned that after the success of SBM which turned 99.2% of rural India open defecation free (ODF), the next big goal on the Swachh Bharat journey is 100% safe and scientific disposal of solid and liquid waste.
- Solid and Liquid waste management is a hard endeavour to achieve, but if achieved, it will have a positive effect on the health, economy and environment. But the major

challenge is resources to achieve. Economic Survey suggested the entry of private players.

- As waste management needs scientific approach and techniques, private entities can put better research and innovation to fill up the gaps.

10. Rajya Sabha to debate poll reforms tomorrow

What is EVM?

- Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) is an electronic device for recording votes. It consists of two Units – a Control Unit and a Balloting Unit – joined by a five-meter cable.
- The Control Unit is placed with the Presiding Officer or a Polling Officer and the Balloting Unit is placed inside the voting compartment. Polling Officer in-charge of the Control Unit will release a ballot by pressing the Ballot Button on the Control Unit. This will enable the voter to cast a vote by pressing the blue button on the Balloting Unit against the candidate and symbol of choice.
- An EVM can handle upto 64 candidates at a time and can record 3840 votes. The machines are manufactured by two Central government undertakings -- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) (Ministry of Defence) and Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) (under the Department of Atomic Energy).

What are VVPATs?

- Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail or VVPAT machine is used during the polling process to confirm that the vote cast by any voter goes to the correct candidate/symbol.
- It is an independent system attached with an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) that allows the voters to verify that their votes are cast as intended.
- They too are manufactured by BEL and ECIL

Why in News?

- After the 17th Lok Sabha elections, the opposition in Rajya Sabha has brought up debate for election reforms in India.
- Some of the following suggestions are given by the opposition parties in Rajya Sabha:
 - At least 50% VVPAT verification by tallying with EVM counts must be done in each constituency. (now only 5 random VVPAT verification in a constituency)
 - State funding on the expenditure of elections than party/candidate spending on the election as recommended by Indrajit Gupta Committee 1998. This is to stop corruption and malpractices during elections.
 - Reforms to be brought in using social media like facebook as medium of campaign and canvass during polls.
 - Some parties even asked to replace EVM with paper ballot (putting paper in the box) system as they believed that EVMs are susceptible to tampering.

ENVIRONMENT

1. Plastic Crust- a new kind of sea pollution

Why in News?

- Marine and Environmental Sciences Centre's scientists have discovered a new type of plastic pollution which has been dubbed as "plasticrusts".

About Plasticrust

- It is a layer of polyethene/Polyethylene encrusted onto ocean rocks.. Polyethene (It is a thermoplastic (melts when heated) polymer with variable crystalline structure and an extremely large range of applications depending on the particular type) is the world's most widely used plastic.
- In 2016, researchers first observed blue and grey plastic patches on **Madeira**, a volcanic **Portuguese island** off northwest Africa. After sampling rocks along the coastline, researchers found that by 2019 the plasticrusts covered 9.46% of the rocky surface.
- According to researchers, the potential impact of plasticrusts is still relatively unknown but had the potential to affect the island's animals.



2. Commercial whaling is back in Japan

- Hunting of whales is called whaling. Japan in 1986 stopped commercial whaling after joining International Whaling Commission (IWC).
- But all these years it hunted a 1000 whales a year in the name of scientific research.
- Japanese believe that whale meat is an important part of their traditional diet hence they don't want to forgo.

- After all these years lobbying with IWC finally in December 2018 quit the IWC. Japan has reintroduced commercial whaling.

International Whaling Commission:

- The IWC is the global body charged with the conservation of whales and the management of whaling. It was set up in 1946 under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW).
- The IWC currently has 88 member (India Joined in 1981) governments from countries all over the world.
- The IWC allows non-zero whaling quotas for aboriginal subsistence and also member nations may issue 'Scientific Permits' to their citizens.
- The main duty of the IWC is to keep under review and revise as necessary the measures laid down in the Schedule to the Convention which governs the conduct of whaling throughout the world.

3. Tamil Yeomen

What is it?

- They are the butterfly species endemic (not seen other than this place) to Western Ghats.
- The scientific name of the butterfly is *Cirrochroa thais*.
- Mainly found in moist evergreen and deciduous forests near streams.

Why in the news?

- The butterfly species is declared as the state butterfly of Tamil Nadu.



4. Rhino protection force deployed in Kaziranga

Indian Rhinoceros

- The Indian rhinoceros also called the greater one-horned rhinoceros and great Indian rhinoceros is a rhinoceros native to the Indian subcontinent.
- It is listed as **Vulnerable** on the IUCN Red List, as populations are fragmented and restricted to less than 20,000 sq. km. It once ranged across the entire northern part of the Indian Subcontinent, along the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra River basins, from Pakistan to the Indian-Myanmar border.
- **Poaching for rhinoceros horn** is the largest threat to the rhino species.

Kaziranga National Park

- It is a national park in the Golaghat and Nagaon districts of the state of Assam, India.
- The sanctuary hosts two-thirds of the world's great one-horned rhinoceros. Rhinos are listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species.

- It is a World Heritage Site, it was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006. The park is home to large breeding populations of elephants, wild water buffalo, and swamp deer
- Located on the edge of the Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot, the park combines high species diversity and visibility. The 430 sq.km. KNP encompasses eight ranges under two wildlife divisions — Eastern Assam and Biswanath.
- The park celebrated its centennial in 2005 after its establishment in 1905 as a reserve forest

Why in News?

- A Special Reserve Police Force (SRPF) is formed to combat poachers and understand animal behaviour was deployed in the Kaziranga National Park (KNP).
- 82 personnel along with eight women are in the Special Rhino Protection Force (SRPF).

Art and Culture

1. Marathi as a classical language

What are classical Languages?

- In 2004, the Government of India declared that languages that met certain requirements could be accorded the status of a “Classical Language in India”.
- Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Odia are the six languages so far considered as the classical language.

The Criteria

- The language must have high antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500–2000 years.
- A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
- The literary tradition should be original and not borrowed from another speech community.
- The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

Benefits being as a classical language

- There shall be a **Centre of Excellence for Studies** in Classical Languages declared.
- The UGC can be requested to create a certain number of **professional chairs** for classical languages, for **scholars of eminence** in the concerned language in Central Universities.
- Two major **annual international awards** for scholars of eminence in the classical language.

About Marathi Language

- It is the official language of Maharashtra and co-official language in Goa. Marathi is descended from the ‘Mahārāṣṭrī Prākṛit, Marāṭhī literature can be written in **Devanāgarī script** or cursive form of Devanāgarī called **Modi script**.
- Marathi gained prominence with the rise of the Maratha Empire beginning with the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji (1674–1680).

Why in News?

- Union Minister of State (independent charge) Culture and Tourism said that the proposal for granting Marathi the status of a classical language was under “active consideration.”

2. Jagannath Rath Yatra

Why in News ?

- Rath Yatra festival in honour of Puri’s Lord Jagannath was celebrated in Puri, Odisha. It is also known as the ‘Festival of Chariots’.



About:

- The presiding deities of the temple, Sri Mandira, Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra, with the celestial wheel Sudarshana are taken out from the temple precincts in an elaborate ritual procession to their respective chariots.
- The chariots are called of Lord Jagannatha, Balbhadra and Goddess Subhadra are called **Nandighosha, Taladhwaja, and Devadalana** respectively.
- The huge, colourfully decorated chariots, are drawn by hundreds and thousands of devotees on the bada danda, the grand avenue to the Gundicha temple, some two miles away to the North. After a stay for seven days, the deities return to their abode in Srimandira in Puri.
- New chariots for all the three deities are constructed every year using wood even if the architect of the chariots remains similar. Four wooden horses are attached to each chariot.

1. Mission on Natural Language Translation

What is a natural language?

- Natural language means a human language. For example, Hindi, Tamil, English, French, Chinese, etc., are natural languages.
- Computer languages, such as FORTRAN and C, are artificial languages (Command languages).

Natural Language processing

- Natural language processing (NLP) is a branch of artificial intelligence that helps computers understand, interpret and manipulate human language.
- The single most challenging problem in computer science is to develop computers that can understand natural languages.

Why in news?

- The Ministry of Electronics and IT will soon place before the Union Cabinet a Rs. 450 crore proposal for Natural Language Translation (Mission on natural language translation)
- This project is one of the key missions identified by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)

National mission on natural language translation

- It aims to make science and technology accessible to all by facilitating access to teaching and researching material bilingually — in English and in one's native Indian language.

PM STIAC

- The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (PSA's Office) was set-up in November 1999.
- Its objectives are to:
 - a. Evolve policies, strategies and missions for generation of innovations and support systems for multiple applications,
 - b. Generate science and technology tasks in critical infrastructure, economic and social sectors in partnership with Government departments, institutions and industry, and
 - c. Function as the Secretariat to the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet, with the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India as its Chairman.

d. The PM-STIAC has identified **nine national missions** to address major scientific challenges to ensure India's sustainable development.

1. Quantum Frontier,
2. Artificial Intelligence,
3. National Bio-diversity mission,
4. Electric vehicles,
5. Bioscience for Human Health
6. deep ocean exploration.
7. Natural Language Translation
8. Waste to Wealth
9. Agni

Lead Agencies:

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)
- Department of Science and Technology (DST)

2. Apollo Moon Missions

What is Apollo Mission?

- The Apollo 11 mission was the eleventh in a series of flights using Apollo flight hardware and was the first lunar landing of the Apollo Program.
- The purpose of the mission was to perform a manned lunar landing and return safely to Earth.

The launch

- The 363-foot-tall Apollo 11 space vehicle was launched from Pad A, Launch Complex 39, Kennedy Space Centre, on July 16, 1969.

Sample collection

- Apollo 11 carried the first geologic samples from the Moon back to Earth.
- In all, astronauts collected 22 kilograms of material, including 50 rocks, samples of the fine-grained lunar "soil," and two core tubes that included material from up to 13 centimeters below the Moon's surface.
- These samples contain no water and provide no evidence for living organisms at any time in the Moon's history.
- Two main types of rocks, basalts and breccias, were found at the Apollo 11 landing site.
- Basalts are rocks solidified from molten lava.

- On Earth, basalts are a common type of volcanic rock and are generally dark gray in color; when one looks at the Moon in the night sky, the dark areas are basalt.
- One difference is that the Apollo 11 basalts contain much more of the element titanium than is usually found in basalts on Earth.
- Breccias are rocks that are composed of fragments of older rocks.
- Over its long history, the Moon has been bombarded by countless meteorites.
- These impacts have broken many rocks up into small fragments.
- The heat and pressure of such impacts sometimes fuses small rock fragments into new rocks, called breccias.

Why in news?

- Moon rock samples collected by various Apollo astronauts during different missions and subsequently locked away by for several decades are to be examined by researchers.
- The locked vault is located in the Johnson Space Centre in Houston
- The restricted lab is home to hundreds of kilos of moon rocks collected by Apollo astronauts close to a half-century ago.

Elaboration

- 12 moonwalkers brought back from 1969 through 1972 lunar samples totalling 382 kg
- Some of the soil and bits of rock were vacuum-packed on the moon and never exposed to Earth's atmosphere or frozen or stored in gaseous helium following splashdown and then left untouched.
- By studying these precious lunar samples for the first time, a new generation of scientists will help advance our understanding of our lunar neighbor and prepare for the next era of exploration of the Moon and beyond

Significance of the timings

- 2019 marks 50 years since the first manned lunar space mission.
- Also, due to technological improvements over the past 50 years, the space agency was smart to wait to analyze the lunar samples.

3. Space weather

What does space weather mean?

- The term space weather generally refers to conditions on the sun, in the solar wind, and within Earth's magnetosphere, ionosphere and thermosphere that can influence the performance and reliability of space-borne and ground-based technological systems and can endanger human life or health.

Magnetic storms produce many noticeable effects on and near Earth

- Aurora borealis, the northern lights, and aurora australis, the southern lights
- Communication disruptions
- Radiation hazards to orbiting astronauts and spacecraft
- Current surges in power lines
- Orbital degradation
- Corrosion in oil pipelines

Forecasting space weather

- Space weather forecasts are important because radiation from particles from the sun associated with large solar flares can be hazardous to unprotected astronauts, airplane occupants and satellites.
- Scientists recently reported improved methods of forecasting periods of low flare probability.

Sun's Corona

- The Sun's corona, which is like the Sun's atmosphere, although hotter than its interior, is less dense and therefore emits fewer photons.
- Therefore, in normal times, the Sun's surface shines so brightly that it obscures the corona.
- Only when there is a total solar eclipse does the solar disc get 'occulted' by the moon, exposing the corona to our view, albeit using instruments for photographing it.
- The Sun's magnetic field lines stretch out from the surface and permeate the corona.
- Solar plasma wind and storms including flares and coronal mass ejections are born in coronal magnetic field.
- Emergence of magnetic field from below the Sun's surface and dynamic restructuring in the outer layers changes the shape of the corona.

Imaging the corona is a major step in space weather forecasting

- Detecting phenomena occurring on the surface of the sun allows us to monitor

solar activity, but knowing that something is heading towards Earth is a key measurement.

- Images of eruptions in the solar corona from NASA's SOHO spacecraft have provided invaluable monitoring capabilities of approaching coronal mass ejections - energetic eruptions on the sun and primary cause of major geomagnetic storms.

Why in news?

- On 2nd July, 2019, parts of South America will be experiencing total solar eclipse.
- A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata has given out a computer model-based prediction of the shape of the Sun's atmosphere that the eclipse will reveal.
- The team has found a way to predict the shape of the corona well in advance.

Significance

- If the Indian prediction works, it will help us forecast how the Sun's temperament can affect space weather.
- This, in turn, can help monitor the safety of the electronic sensors in satellites, astronauts' well-being and even the impact on Earth.

4. Heart Attack

What is a heart attack?

- A heart attack occurs when a blocked artery prevents oxygen-rich blood from reaching a section of the heart.
- If the blocked artery is not reopened quickly, the part of the heart normally nourished by that artery begins to die.
- The longer a person goes without treatment, the greater the damage.

What is cardiac arrest?

- Sudden cardiac arrest occurs suddenly and often without warning.
- It is triggered by an electrical malfunction in the heart that causes an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia).
- With its pumping action disrupted, the heart cannot pump blood to the brain, lungs and other organs.
- Seconds later, a person loses consciousness and has no pulse.
- Death occurs within minutes if the victim does not receive treatment.

Is a heart attack the same as cardiac arrest?

- No. The term "heart attack" is often mistakenly used to describe cardiac arrest.
- While a heart attack may cause cardiac arrest, the two terms don't mean the same thing.
- Heart attacks are caused by a blockage that stops blood flow to the heart.
- A heart attack (or myocardial infarction) refers to death of heart muscle tissue due to the loss of blood supply.
- Heart attack can be understood as a "circulation" problem.
- By contrast, cardiac arrest is caused when the heart's electrical system malfunctions.
- The heart stops beating properly. Hence the name: The heart's pumping function is "arrested," or stopped.
- In cardiac arrest, death can result quickly if proper steps aren't taken immediately.
- Cardiac arrest may be reversed if CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is performed and a defibrillator is used to shock the heart and restore a normal heart rhythm within a few minutes.

What is the link?

- These two distinct heart conditions are linked.
- Sudden cardiac arrest can occur after a heart attack, or during recovery.
- Heart attacks increase the risk for sudden cardiac arrest.
- Most heart attacks do not lead to sudden cardiac arrest.
- But when sudden cardiac arrest occurs, heart attack is a common cause.
- Other heart conditions may also disrupt the heart's rhythm and lead to sudden cardiac arrest.

Cardiac troponin I

- Troponins are a group of proteins found in skeletal and heart (cardiac) muscle fibers that regulate muscular contraction.
- Troponin tests measure the level of cardiac-specific troponin in the blood to help detect heart injury.
- There are three types of troponin proteins: troponin C, troponin T, and troponin I.
- Measuring the amount of cardiac-specific troponin T or troponin I in the blood can help identify individuals who have experienced damage to their heart.

Mechanism

- Normally, troponin is present in very small to undetectable quantities in the blood.
- When there is damage to heart muscle cells, troponin is released into the blood.
- The more damage there is, the greater the concentration in the blood.
- When a person has a heart attack, levels of cardiac-specific troponins I and T can become elevated in the blood within 3 or 4 hours after injury and may remain elevated for 10 to 14 days.

Why in news?

- The cardiac biomarker — cardiac troponin I — that is widely used for early diagnosis of acute heart attack can now be detected in about three minutes and even when present at very low concentration.
- Moreover, this detection can be done at bedside.
- This has become possible with the development of a microfluidic device by a team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad.

Significance

- Commercially available assays have limitations in terms of both sensitivity and time taken for detection.
- These assays cannot detect when the biomarker is present at concentrations below 0.02 nanogram per ml and take a long time for detection.
- In contrast, the microfluidic device developed by the team in IIT Hyderabad, can detect the biomarker even when the concentration is as low as 0.005 nanogram per ml.

5. Gigafactory

What is a Gigafactory?

- It is a massive battery factory which is a part of the plan to help transition the world onto renewable sources.
- The company Tesla is already at the forefront of the installation of such gigafactories.
- Today, the Tesla Gigafactory produces Model 3 electric motors and battery packs, in addition to Tesla's energy storage products, Powerwall and Powerpack.

Why in news?

- To push the adoption of electric mobility in the country, NITI Aayog has proposed the

establishment of giga factories in India for the manufacture of lithium-ion batteries in the next couple of years.

The new proposal

- NITI Aayog has proposed that only electric (lithium-ion or other advanced battery chemistry only) three-wheelers would be sold in the country after March 31, 2023, and all new sales of two-wheelers below 150cc would be electric post March 31, 2025.

Reasoning

- NITI Aayog argues that this is a sunrise industry and India needed to start building capabilities to become a globally competitive player in this area.
- "The lack of domestic capability will result in massive imports as is the case in electronics,"

Opposition to the plan

- The two-wheeler industry had strongly opposed the Aayog's proposal to stop selling ICE (internal combustion engine) 150cc two-wheelers, cautioning that the move would disrupt the industry that was already reeling under stress.
- Terming the proposal impractical, the industry had also pointed out that batteries, which were a crucial part of electric vehicles, were expensive and not made in India.
- Additionally, they had said that India would be importing lithium-ion batteries from China for its electric vehicles.

6. Launch-abort test

What is Launch Escape System?

- A launch escape system (LES) or launch abort system (LAS) is a crew safety system connected to a space capsule, used to quickly separate the capsule from its launch vehicle rocket in case of a launch abort emergency, such as an impending explosion.

About NASA's Orion Spacecraft.

- The Orion spacecraft is a major component of NASA's newly-named Artemis program, which aims to return U.S. astronauts to the lunar surface in 2024
- This is the vehicle that will take astronauts to the Moon and hopefully, facilitate missions to Mars by the 2030s.
- NASA says astronauts will ride on the Orion spacecraft and Space Launch System

for the first time in the 2022 timeframe on a flight around the moon and back to Earth.

- That mission is named Artemis 2, and will be a precursor to a lunar landing attempt in 2024 on the Artemis 3 mission, according to NASA officials.

Why in news?

- NASA carried out a successful test on 2nd July 2019, of a launch-abort system for the Orion capsule
- It was tested recently for ensuring the functioning of the Launch Abort System

Elaboration

- The entire event lasted 3 minutes and 13 seconds, during which time the crew module was released with a splashdown in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Also, the 12 ejectable data recorders were retrieved during the test capsule's descent.
- In the test, an unmanned Orion capsule was launched by a mini-rocket — a repurposed first stage of an intercontinental ballistic missile.
- The test was intended to verify that the LAS can steer the crew module and astronauts to safety when experiencing the highest aerodynamic stress that occurs during a rapid ascent into space.

7. Schizophrenia

What is Schizophrenia?

- Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness that interferes with a person's ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions and relate to others
- When schizophrenia is active, symptoms can include delusions, hallucinations, trouble with thinking and concentration, and lack of motivation.

Symptoms

- Symptoms of schizophrenia usually start between ages 16 and 30.
- The symptoms of schizophrenia fall into three categories: positive, negative, and cognitive.
- Positive symptoms: "Positive" symptoms are psychotic behaviours not generally seen in healthy people. People with positive symptoms may "lose touch" with some aspects of reality.
- Negative symptoms: "Negative" symptoms are associated with disruptions to normal emotions and behaviours

- Cognitive symptoms: For some patients, the cognitive symptoms of schizophrenia are subtle, but for others, they are more severe and patients may notice changes in their memory or other aspects of thinking.

Causes

- There are several factors that contribute to the risk of developing schizophrenia:
- Genes
- Different brain chemistry and structure
- Environment:
 - 1.Exposure to viruses
 - 2.Malnutrition before birth
 - 3.Problems during birth
 - 4.Psychosocial factors
 - 5.Drug induced

Treatment

- Though there is no cure for schizophrenia, many patients do well with minimal symptoms.
- Because the causes of schizophrenia are still unclear, treatments focus on eliminating the symptoms of the disease.
- Treatments include:
 - Antipsychotics
 - Psychosocial Treatments
 - Coordinated specialty care (CSC)

Why in news?

- After 18 years of research, Indian and Australian scientists have identified a new gene directly linked to schizophrenia.

Elaboration

- Scientists from the University of Queensland in Australia and a team of Indian researchers searched the genomes of over 3,000 individuals and found those with schizophrenia were more likely to have a particular genetic variation.
- This study identified a gene called NAPRT1 that encodes an enzyme involved in vitamin B3 metabolism — we were also able to find this gene in a large genomic dataset of schizophrenia patients with European ancestry
- When they knocked out the NAPRT1 gene in zebrafish, brain development of the fish was impaired
- They are now working to understand more deeply how this gene functions in the brain.

8. Self-care

What is self-care?

- The World Health Organization defines self-care as the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote, maintain health, prevent disease and to cope with illness with or without the support of a health care provider.

What does it entail?

- Self-care encompasses several issues including hygiene, nutrition, lifestyle, environmental and socio-economic factors.
- Promotion of self-care is a means to empower individuals, families and communities for informed health decision-making.
- It has the potential of improving the efficiency of health systems and contributing towards health equity.

Benefits of self-care for an individual

- Better productivity
- Improved resistance to disease
- Better physical health
- Enhanced self-esteem
- Increased self-knowledge

Why self-care?

- Worldwide, an estimated shortage of 18 million health workers is anticipated by 2030.
- A record 130 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, and disease outbreaks are a constant global threat.

- At least 400 million people worldwide lack access to the most essential health services, and every year 100 million people are plunged into poverty because they have to pay for health care out of their own pockets.

- There is an urgent need to find innovative strategies that go beyond the conventional health sector response.

Why in news?

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched its first guidelines on self-care interventions for health

Key features of the guidelines

- In its first volume, the guidelines focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Some of the interventions include self-sampling for human papillomavirus (HPV) and sexually transmitted infections, self-injectable contraceptives, home-based ovulation predictor kits, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) self-testing and self-management of medical abortion.

Self-care vs. Conventional healthcare system

- These guidelines look at the scientific evidence for health benefits of certain interventions that can be done outside the conventional sector, although sometimes with the support of a health-care provider.
- They do not replace high-quality health services nor are they a shortcut to achieve universal health coverage.

Economy

1. Core sector growth slows to 5.1%

About Index of Eight Core Industries

- The monthly Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is a production volume index. The objective of the ICI is to provide an advance indication on production performance of selected eight core industries (Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Petroleum Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement and Electricity) before the release of Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- These industries are likely to impact on general economic activities as well as industrial activities.
- The Index is compiled and released by the Office of the Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 per cent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- The base year for ICI is 2011-2012.

About IIP

- Index of Industrial Production details out the growth of various sectors in an economy such as mineral mining, electricity and manufacturing.
- It is compiled and published every month by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- The current base year is 2011-2012.

Why in News?

- According to the latest Index of Eight Core Industries, the growth in the core sectors slowed down to 5.1% in May 2019 from 6.3% registered in April.

2. Manufacturing PMI dips to 52.1

What is PMI?

- Purchasing Managers' Index is an economic indicator which indicates the business activity & economic health of both the **manufacturing and service sectors**.

- PMI of India is published by Japanese firm Nikkei.
- Unlike the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) which indicates the changes in production volume or output, the PMI is an investor sentiment tracking index and is more dynamic in nature.

How is it calculated?

- They are derived from monthly surveys of about 400 private companies.
- Variables used for calculating the PMI are: Output, New Orders, Employment, Input Costs, Output Prices, Backlogs of Work, Export Orders, Quantity of Purchases, Suppliers' Delivery Times, Stocks of Purchases and Stocks of Finished Goods.

How to read PMI?

- While PMI >50 implies an expansion of business and economic activity, PMI <50 means contraction.

Why in News?

- According to the latest PMI data, India's manufacturing sector performance slowed to 52.1 in June, down from the three-month high of 52.7 in May.

3. Centre ratifies convention to curb company profit shifting

What is BEPS?

- Typically, a company needs to pay tax for the income or profits they earn.
- Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) is a tax avoidance strategy by which firms make profits in one country, and shift them across borders by exploiting gaps and mismatches in tax rules, to take advantage of lower tax rates.
- It results in not paying taxes in the country where the profit is made (*known as Base erosion*).

Why in News?

- India has ratified the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting, which was signed in 2017.
- The convention is a result of collaborative work by the G20 countries and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation

and Development (OECD) to tackle the issue of base erosion and profit shifting.

- The convention will modify India's tax treaties to curb revenue loss through treaty abuse and BEPS strategies by ensuring that profits are taxed where substantive economic activities generating the profits are carried out.

4. India pitches strongly for fight against fugitive economic offenders

About G20

- The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier forum for its members' international economic cooperation and decision-making.
- Its membership comprises 19 countries (including India) plus the European Union accounting for 85% of the world's nominal GDP.

Why in News?

- Japan has recently hosted the G20 summit in which global leaders participated and discussed a wide range of issues.
- During the summit, India asked the member countries to come together to deal with fugitive economic offenders.

Who are fugitive economic offenders?

- According to the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018, a fugitive economic offender is an individual who has committed specified economic offences involving an amount of Rs 100 crore or more and has absconded from India or refused to come back to India to avoid criminal prosecution.
- As per the act, a special court can order the confiscation of the offender's properties and bar him from filing or defending civil claims.

5. Economic Survey 2019

What is Economic survey?

- The Economic Survey is an annual document prepared by advisers to the finance minister and tabled in the Parliament a day before the Union budget. The Survey is essentially a summary of the performance on major development programmes, and highlights the policy initiatives of the government and the prospects of the economy in the short to medium term.

- The Economic Division of the Department of Economic Affairs in the Finance Ministry prepares the Economic Survey under the overall guidance of the Chief Economic Adviser.

Highlights of the survey:

India needs 8% growth to be \$5-trillion economy by FY25

- The Survey projected that the country's GDP would grow at 7% in 2019-20, against 6.8% the previous year.
- India would need to grow at 8% annually to become a \$5-trillion economy by FY25.

Data "Of the People, By the People, For the People"

- Data must be viewed as a "public good" and used in a concerted way to deliver welfare services without compromising individual privacy.
- Much of the data is dispersed across different registries maintained by different ministries, and the government can improve the delivery of services to the citizens by bringing together disparate datasets scattered across various ministries.

Nourishing Dwarfs to become Giants

- The job creation in India has suffered because of the policies' focus on fostering "dwarfs" MSMEs (i.e. small firms that never grow) instead of "infant firms" that can become giants rapidly.
- While dwarfs, i.e., firms with less than 100 workers despite being over 10-years old, account for 50% of all organised firms by number, their contribution to jobs is only 14%. In contrast, large firms (i.e. those with over 100 employees) account for 75% of total job creation and close to 90% of productivity despite accounting for about 15 per cent by number.
- To unshackle the real potential of the MSME sector, the government needs to recalibrate its policies towards supporting "infant firms", rather than older MSMEs, as it acts as a disincentive for firms to grow.
- There should be a **sunset clause** for a period of five-seven years for policy incentives beyond which a small firm should be able to sustain itself. Once small firms know that they would receive no benefit from continuing to remain small despite ageing, they would be pushed to

grow. This will generate economic growth and employment.

- *(A sunset clause in a statute or a regulation provides for an automatic repeal of the entire or sections of law once a specific date is reached)*

Redesigning a Minimum Wage System for Inclusive Growth

- Over the last 70 years, the minimum wage system in India has expanded and become complex leading to major variations not only across states but also within states.
- One in every three wage workers in India is not protected by the minimum wage law.
- Minimum wages should be fixed for four categories namely, unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled based on the geographical region and should cover all workers, irrespective of any wage ceilings.
- A mechanism should be developed to adjust minimum wages regularly and more frequently.
- A well-designed minimum wage system would decrease wage inequality, alleviate poverty and bring inclusive growth especially at lower levels.

Retirement age should rise

- The number of Indians aged between 0-19 has started to decline and the proportion of the population in that age group is projected to fall to 25 percent by 2041 from 41 per cent in 2011. National Total Fertility Rate is expected to be below the **replacement rate** by 2021.
- *(Replacement level fertility is the total fertility rate at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next, without migration. This rate is roughly 2.1 children per woman for most countries, although it may modestly vary with mortality rates)*
- Estimating that there will be 239.4 million Indians over the age of 60 in 2041 against 104.2 million in 2011, the Survey noted that policymakers need to prepare for ageing by investing in health care and by increasing the retirement age in a phased manner.

Infrastructure over incentive to promote electric vehicles

- More than incentives offered to manufacturers and users, good charging infrastructure is key to mass adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) as the driving range

of batteries in electric vehicles is less, compared to those which run on fossil fuel.

- However, electric vehicles will be the future in India and the country can become the “Detroit of EVs” with appropriate policy measures to lower the overall lifetime ownership costs of EVs and make them an attractive alternative to conventional vehicles for all consumers.

Coordinating body for resource efficiency

- India, like several countries such as the United Kingdom and Iceland, should invest in resource efficiency through recycling, reusing, minimising consumption and reducing wastage.
- Effective waste management policies can generate 1.4 million jobs and nearly \$2.7 billion opportunities can be created from the extraction of 8 million tonne of steel from the end of life vehicles.
- A national coordinating body — the Bureau of Resource Efficiency (BRE) between various ministries should be set up to address sustainability concerns.

Deregulate labour laws to create jobs

- The government should deregulate labour laws to create more jobs in the country.
- For example, significantly more number of jobs were created in Rajasthan as compared to the rest of the states, following deregulation of labour law restrictions. Flexibility in labour laws created a more conducive environment for the growth of industry and employment generation.
- Those states which were rigid in respect of their labour laws have not only suffered in all dimensions but have also been unable to create enough employment. These states have also failed to attract adequate capital investment which is necessary for job creation.

Behavioural economics nudge for socio-economic goals

- The principles of **behavioural economics** can be applied to bring behavioural change to several issues including gender equality, a healthy and beautiful India, savings, tax compliance and credit quality.
- *(Behavioural Economics attempts to understand the effect of individual psychological processes, including emotions, norms, and habits on individual*

decision-making in a variety of economic contexts)

- In India, where social and religious norms play such a dominant role in influencing behaviour, behavioural economics can provide a valuable instrument for change. The government had already deployed the concepts and principles of behavioural economics to get better results out of some of its social schemes, such as *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*.
- The national sanitation coverage in rural areas went up to 93 per cent in 2018-19 from around 40 per cent in 2014-15 as the campaign emphasized a behavioural change against open defecation. Appealing to people's emotions, for example by attaching a sense of disgust to open defecation has played a crucial role in moving people towards change.

Reward top taxpayers, shame defaulters

- Top 10 highest taxpayers within a district can be accorded due recognition. This may take the form of expedited boarding privileges at airports, fast-lane privileges

on roads and toll booths, special diplomatic type lanes at immigration counters, etc.

- The highest taxpayers over a decade could be recognised by naming important buildings, monuments, roads, trains, initiatives, schools and universities, hospitals and airports in their name. Such steps can also help propagate the social norm that "paying taxes honestly is honourable".
- Behavioural principles can also be used in public shaming of individuals who don't pay taxes to reduce non-compliance.

Economy moved to a low level of inflation in last 5 fiscals

- The country witnessed a gradual transition from a period of high and variable inflation to a more stable and low level of inflation in the last five years.
- Retail inflation based on consumer price index (CPI) fell to 3.4 per cent in 2018-19 from 3.6 per cent in 2017-18, 4.5 per cent in 2016-17, 4.9 per cent 2015-16 and 5.9 per cent in 2014-15.

International Relations

1. Hong Kong protests undermine rule of law, social order: China

What's in the news?

- China has condemned the ongoing violent protests against the proposed extradition bill in Hong Kong.

Reason for the protests

- The proposed extradition bill would allow Hong Kong to detain and transfer people wanted in countries and territories with which it has no formal extradition agreements, including Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.
- Lawyers and rights groups say China's justice system is marked by torture, forced confessions and arbitrary detention.

Hong Kong and China relationship

- Hong Kong, a former British colony, was returned to China in 1997 under a policy known as “**one country, two systems,**” which promised the territory a high degree of autonomy. Hong Kong allows freedoms not enjoyed in mainland China, including freedom to protest and an independent judiciary.
- But that autonomy, guaranteed under a mini-constitution known as the **Basic Law**, expires in 2047. The joint signed declaration does not state what will happen in 2047 after that agreement officially ends.

Britain warns China

- Britain has warned China that there would be serious consequences if the Sino-British agreement on Hong Kong was not honoured. However, China has dismissed Britain's concerns, saying Hong Kong was none of its business.

2. Iran says it has breached stockpile limit under nuclear deal

What is the Iran nuclear deal?

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, was reached between Iran and six world powers known as the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the

United Kingdom, and the United States) in July 2015.

What did Iran have to do to meet the requirements of the deal?

- According to this framework, Iran would redesign, convert, and reduce its nuclear facilities in order to lift all nuclear-related economic sanctions.
- The deal also allowed for the tracking of nuclear activities with robust transparency and inspections.
- International inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitor every element of Iran's declared nuclear programme.

U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA

- The US President Donald Trump abandoned the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018, claiming it did not address Iran's ballistic missile programme or its roles in Middle Eastern conflicts.
- The US is the only country to have withdrawn from the agreement. Iran, China, France, Russia, the UK and Germany are still parties.
- Mr. Trump re-imposed tough economic sanctions against Iran in August 2018, deeply cutting its sale of crude oil abroad. Europe has so far been unable to offer Iran a way around the U.S. sanctions.

Why in News?

- Iran has announced that it has broken the limit set on its stockpile of low-enriched uranium by the 2015 nuclear deal.
- The announcement comes as tensions remain high between Iran and the U.S.
- Under terms of the nuclear deal, Iran agreed to have less than 300 kilograms of uranium enriched to a maximum of 3.67%. Previously, Iran enriched as high as 20%, which is a short technical step away from reaching weapons-grade levels. It also held up to 10,000 kg of the higher-enriched uranium.

3. Bangladesh seeks to synergise ties with India

Who are Rohingya?

- Rohingya are an ethnic group, largely comprising Muslims, who predominantly

live in the Western Myanmar province of Rakhine. They speak a dialect of Bengali, as opposed to the commonly spoken Burmese language.

- Though they have been living in the country for generations, Myanmar considers them as persons who migrated to their land during the Colonial rule. So, it has not granted Rohingyas full citizenship.
- Since they are not citizens, their movements are restricted within the Rakhine state.

2017 attack

- In 2017, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), a Rohingya insurgent group, attacked police posts and an army base in Rakhine state.
- The response by the Myanmar security forces has sent over 7,00,000 Rohingyas fleeing into Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries including India. Reports of villages being torched and civilian deaths have followed the militant attack.
- The UN has termed the Rohingya's situation as the "world's fastest growing refugee crisis".

Why is Bangladesh having a problem with the Rohingyas?

- The country has opened its border for Rohingyas upon United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' request and continues to shelter about five lakh Rohingyas in refugee camps.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the International community to put pressure on Myanmar to stop the exodus of Rohingyas.

What about Rohingyas in India?

- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, there are approximately 40,000 Rohingyas living in India. They have reached India from Bangladesh through the land route over the years.
- The government had previously informed that all the Rohingyas in India were "**illegal immigrants**" and they will be deported soon.
- *(A foreigner is considered to be an illegal immigrant under two circumstances. One, if they come into India without valid travel documents, or two, having come in legally, they stay beyond the time period permitted to them under their travel documents.*

Illegal migrants may be imprisoned or deported.)

Why in News?

- Bangladesh high commissioner to India Syed Muezzin Ali called for continuous support of India and the international community to put pressure on Myanmar for dignified return of the Rohingya refugees from camps in Bangladesh to Myanmar.

4. U.S. and China seal trade war truce

What is a Trade War?

- A trade war is an economic conflict in which countries raise tariffs or other trade barriers against each other in response to trade barriers created by the other party.
- A tariff is a tax or duty imposed on the goods imported into a nation.
- In a global economy, a trade war can become very damaging to consumers and businesses of both nations.

When did the Trade war between U.S. and China start?

- It all started in January 2018 when the U.S. raised tariffs on washing machine and solar cell imports targeting China and the subsequent retaliatory tariffs by China on U.S. imports.

Why the U.S. started trade war?

- U.S. justified duties on Chinese imports by accusing China's unfair trade practices like **devaluing** currency (*deliberate downward adjustment of the value of a country's currency relative to another currency*) to push its exports.
- It also accused that the Chinese government deploys unfair ways to force U.S. firms to share technology with Chinese companies to gain access to China's market.

Why in News?

- U.S. and China have agreed to pause new tariffs on each other and resume negotiations to solve their trade disputes.

Relief to Huawei

- U.S. President Donald Trump announced that he would allow U.S. companies to sell their products to Huawei.
- Earlier the Trump administration barred the Chinese firm on national security

grounds from accessing crucial American technology or operating in the U.S. market.

- The U.S. also tried to get the support of other nations including India to block Huawei from their upcoming 5G systems.

5.Trump visits N.Korea, n-talks to resume

What's in the News?

- U.S. President Donald Trump has visited North Korea and met its leader, Kim Jong-un in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).
- DMZ separates the two Koreas since the end of the Korean War (1950-53).
- The two leaders agreed to resume nuclear talks that were stalled since the last summit in Vietnam (February 2019) which ended without any agreements.

PIB Analysis

1. High Powered Committee for 'Transformation of Indian Agriculture'

Objectives of the Committee:

- To discuss measures for transformation of agriculture and raising farmers' income.
- To suggest modalities for adoption and time bound implementation of agriculture sector reforms by States/UTs.
- To suggest changes in the Essential Commodity Act (ECA), 1955 to attract private investments in agricultural marketing and infrastructure.
- To suggest mechanism for linking of market reforms with e-NAM, GRAM and other relevant Centrally Sponsored Schemes.
- To suggest measures to upgrade agri-technology to global standards and improve access of farmers to quality seed, plant propagation material and farm machinery in agriculturally advanced countries.
- The committee will submit its report within two months of the date of notification of the Committee. The High Powered Committee of Chief Ministers for 'Transformation of Indian Agriculture' will be serviced by NITI Aayog.

Why in News?

- Prime Minister constituted a 'high powered' panel of CMs for 'transformation' of Indian agriculture.

2. STRIDE

What is STRIDE?

- 'Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy' (STRIDE) will provide support to research projects that are socially relevant, locally need-based, nationally important and globally significant.
- It supports research capacity building as well as basic, applied and transformational action research that can contribute to national priorities with focus on inclusive human development and creation, development and integration of new ideas, concepts and practices for public good and strengthening civil society.

- An advisory Committee has been set up by the UGC under the chairmanship of Prof Bhushan Patwardhan, Vice Chairman to oversee the entire scheme.

Objectives:

- To identify young talent, strengthen research culture, build capacity, and promote innovation and support trans-disciplinary research for India's developing economy and national development.
- To fund multi institutional network high-impact research projects in humanities and human sciences.

STRIDE components:

Component-1:

- It will endeavour to identify the motivated young talents with research and innovation aptitude in universities and colleges. This component is open to all disciplines for grant up to 1 crore.

Component-2:

- It will encourage collaboration between universities, government, voluntary organizations and industries. This component is open to all disciplines for grant upto 50 lakh – 1 crore.

Component-3:

- It will fund high impact research projects in humanities through national network of eminent scientists from leading institutions. Grant available for this component is upto 1 crore for one Higher Educational Institution and upto 5 crores for multi institutional network.

Why in News?

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved a new scheme - 'Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy' (STRIDE).

3. Promotion of Regional Languages in Higher Education

Measures to promote the use of Regional language

- The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) is providing publication grant towards the publications of University Level Books in regional languages

- The National Translation Mission (NTM) is being implemented through the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore under which they are being translated in all Languages.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) also promotes regional languages in higher education courses in the country and supports nine Central Universities under the scheme "Establishment of Centre for Endangered Languages in Central Universities".



- **Measures to promote the use of Sanskrit language in India:**
- Providing financial assistance to Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalayas/Shodha Sansthans.
- Financial assistance to NGOs/Higher Educational Institutions of Sanskrit for various Research Projects/Programmes.
- Sanskrit is also taught through Non-formal Sanskrit Education (NFSE) programme, by setting up Non Formal Sanskrit learning centres, in reputed institutions like Indian Institute of Technology, Ayurveda institutions, Modern Colleges and Universities.
- Presidential awards for Sanskrit Language are awarded annually to 16 senior scholars and to 5 young scholars
- Financial Assistance for Publication, Reprint of rare Sanskrit books

Why in News?

- Various steps have been taken to promote Regional Languages in Higher Education. The university level textbooks are being translated and published in all the 22 languages of Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India under various schemes of Government of India.

4. One Nation One Card

What is the need?

- Public Transport is extensively used across India as the economical and

convenient mode of commuting for all classes of society. Cash continues to be the most preferred mode of fare payments across the public transport. However, there are multiple challenges associated with the cash payment e.g. cash handling, revenue leakages, cash reconciliation etc.

- In order to ensure a seamless travel across metros and other transport systems in addition to retail shopping and purchases, the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) came out with the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) Program.

About National Common Mobility Card

- The NCMC card has 2 instruments on it – a regular debit card which can be used at an ATM, and a local wallet (stored value account), which can be used for contactless payments, without the need to go back to the server or additional authentication.
- It is envisioned that a single card will be usable for all local travel needs across the country.
- This is aimed at low value payments for various segments e.g. Transit, Smart cities, Toll, Parking and other low value merchant payments, in addition to the normal day to day retail payments.
- The vision behind the introduction of this card is to have interoperability, based on open standards. The wallet where money is stored is referred as Global/Card wallet.
- Also, any refund pertaining to the transactions done using global/card wallet will be credited in the replica of the wallet maintained at bank's end, which further can be added to Global/Card Wallet by the customer.

Why in News?

- The National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) has been launched with the tagline of 'One Nation One Card'

5. Asset Monetization of Public Sector Enterprises

Objective of the initiative

- The objective of the asset monetization programme of the Government of India is to unlock the value of investment made in public assets which have not yielded appropriate or potential returns so far.

About DIPAM

- The Department of Disinvestment is one of the Departments under the Ministry of Finance. The Department of Disinvestment has been renamed as Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) from 14th April, 2016.
- Mandate of the Department is
- All matters relating to the management of Central Government investments in equity including disinvestment of equity in Central Public Sector Undertakings.
- All matters relating to the sale of Central Government equity through offer for sale or private placement or any other mode in the erstwhile Central Public Sector Undertakings.

Institutional framework for monetization

- Identified non-core assets of CPSEs under strategic disinvestment;
- Immovable Enemy Property under the custody of Custodian of Enemy Property (CEPI), MHA as per sub section 6 of section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, 1968;
- This framework is also available for use to monetize assets of other CPSEs/PSUs/other Government Organizations with the approval of the Competent Authority;
- Sick/Loss making CPSEs under closure normally follow the DPE closure guidelines dated 14.06.2018 in this regard. However, any sick/loss making CPSE can also adopt this framework with the approval of Competent Authority.

Why in News?

- The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) is working on restructuring and asset monetization of public sector enterprises for better management and competitiveness in the present world

6. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)

About NPPA

- National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) was constituted via Government of India Resolution dated 29th August, 1997 as an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.

- NPPA is an independent Regulator for pricing of drugs and to ensure the availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices.

Functions and Responsibilities

- To implement and enforce the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order in accordance with the powers delegated to it.
- To deal with all legal matters arising out of the decisions of the Authority.
- To monitor the availability of drugs, identify shortages, if any, and to take remedial steps.
- To collect/ maintain data on production, exports and imports, market share of individual companies, profitability of companies etc, for bulk drugs and formulations.
- To undertake and/ or sponsor relevant studies in respect of pricing of drugs/ pharmaceuticals.
- To recruit/ appoint the officers and other staff members of the Authority, as per rules and procedures laid down by the Government.
- To render advice to the Central Government on changes/ revisions in the drug policy.
- To render assistance to the Central Government in the parliamentary matters relating to the drug pricing.

Why in News?

- The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has taken important measures to check the prices of drugs, under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO).

7. mKisan SMS Portal

About:

- mKisan SMS Portal has been conceptualized to give a quantum leap in coverage of farmers and geographical area in a timely, specific, holistic and need based knowledge dissemination among the farmers by leveraging the power of mobile telephony in such a way that all sectors use this platform to not only reach out to the farmers but also to address their concerns and queries.



mKisan

- mKisan SMS Portal for farmers enables all Central and State government organizations in agriculture and allied sectors to give information/services/advisories to farmers by SMS in their language, preference of agricultural practices and location.
- SMS Portal for Farmers has empowered all Central and State Government Organizations in Agriculture & Allied sectors to give information/services/advisories to farmers
- USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data), IVRS and Pull SMS are value added services which have enabled farmers and other stakeholders not only to receive broadcast messages but also to get web based services on their mobile without having internet.
- Advisories to the farmers registered on this portal, can be sent in 12 languages viz., Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and English.

Why such mechanism?

- As per TRAI data of May, 2014, though there are about 38 crore mobile telephone connections in rural areas, internet penetration in the countryside is still abysmally low (in single digit percentage). Therefore, mobile messaging is the most effective tool so far having pervasive outreach to nearly 8.93 crore farm families.

8. Credit Cards for Fishermen

About

- The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) facility will help fisheries and animal husbandry farmers to meet their short term credit requirements of rearing of animals, poultry birds, fish, shrimp, other aquatic organisms and capture of fish.
- The criteria for eligible beneficiaries under KCC for Animal Husbandry and Fisheries is as follows:

Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture:

- Fishers, Fish Farmers (individual & groups/partners/sharecroppers/tenant farmers), Self Help Groups, Joint Liability Groups and Woman groups.
- The beneficiaries must own or lease any of the fisheries related activities such as pond, tank, open water bodies, raceway, hatchery, rearing unit, possess necessary license for fish farming and fishing related activities, and any other State specific fisheries and allied activities.

Marine Fisheries :

- Beneficiaries as listed at 1.1 above who own or lease registered fishing vessel, boat, possess necessary fishing license/permission for fishing in estuary and sea, fish farming/ mariculture activities in estuaries and open sea and any other State specific fisheries and allied activities

Poultry and small ruminant:

- Farmers, poultry farmers either individuals or joint borrower, Joint Liability Groups or Self Help Groups including tenant farmers of sheep/goats/pigs/poultry/birds/rabbit and having owned/rented/leased sheds.

Dairy:

- Farmers and Dairy farmers either individuals or joint borrower, Joint Liability Groups or Self Help Groups including tenant farmers having owned/rented/leased sheds.

Why in News?

- The Government of India has extended the facility of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) to fisheries and animal husbandry farmers to help them meet their working capital needs.

9. India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (ICTF)

What are Cooperatives?

- A cooperative is "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise".

About:

- The Trade Fair is aimed at promoting cooperative to cooperative trade within India and abroad leading to enhanced rural and farm prosperity. It will be held from 11th till 13th October, 2019 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
- Steered by National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), the Fair is being conducted with the support of one international organization (NEDAC), three Ministries, four State Governments and several apex level Indian cooperative organizations.

What is the need?

- The Cooperative sector has a big role to play in doubling agriculture exports from present US \$ 30 billion+ to US\$ 60 billion+ by 2022 as envisaged in the Agriculture Export Policy 2018.

Why in News?

- First Ever India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (ICTF) will be held in New Delhi later this year.

10. Connecting Kochi with Maldives

About:

- The MoU will pave way for ferry services between Maldives and Kerala by Connecting Kochi with Male & Kulhudhuffushi in Maldives by Sea route.
- While Male – the capital and most populous city – is situated at a distance of 708 Kms from Kochi, Kulhudhuffushi – the third most populous city of Maldives – is 509 Km away.

Significance:

- Present connectivity involves flights to Male and seaplanes to the resorts, which is an expensive option.

- On the other hand, connectivity with Kochi through sea could promote inbound tourism, particularly health and wellness tourism for India. A large number of Maldivians also travel to Kerala and other South Indian cities for educational purposes.

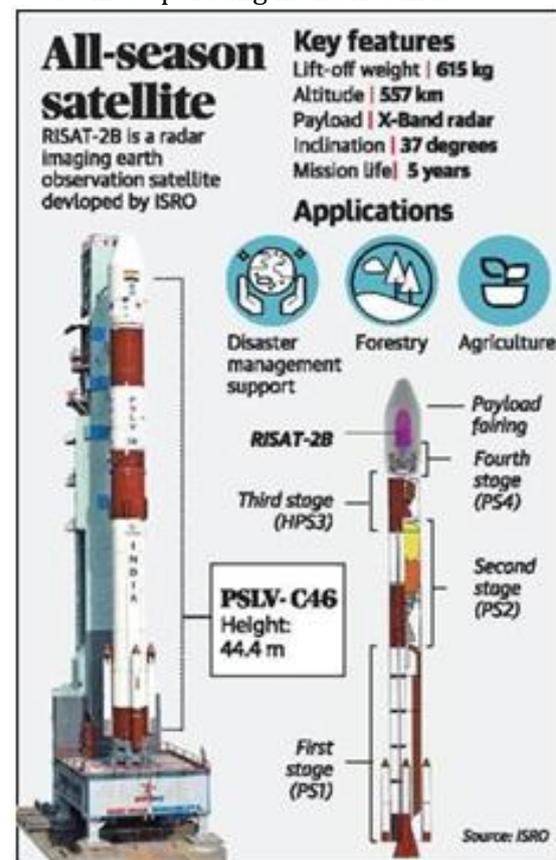
Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval for the MoU between India and Maldives for the establishment of passenger and cargo services by sea.

11. RISAT-2B

What is RISAT-2B?

- RISAT-2B is an indigenously developed Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) Imaging Satellite operating in the X-band.



About the satellite

- RISAT-2B is a Radar Imaging satellite; it can be operated effectively during day / night / all weather conditions.
- The satellite is capable of operating in different modes including Very High-Resolution RADAR imaging modes of 1m x 0.5m resolution and 0.5m x 0.3m resolution.

- The Satellite will be used for high resolution spot imaging of locations of interest. Apart from this, data from RISAT-2B will also be utilized for agriculture applications and disaster management support.
- Applications of X-Band SAR imagery include Hydrology, Crops, Forestry, Geosciences and Cryosphere. During the time of exigencies, very high resolution, day/night/all-weather imaging capabilities of RISAT-2B could be utilized for Disaster Management Support.

12. Digital learning

Why in News?

- Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development is administering a programme 'National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology' (NMEICT) to leverage the potential of ICT to make the best quality content accessible to all learners in the country, free of cost.

Programs under the initiative NMEICT

SWAYAM

- The 'Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds' (SWAYAM) is an integrated platform for offering online courses and covering school (9th to 12th) to Post Graduate Level.
- The online courses are being used not only by the students but also by the teachers and non-student learners, in the form of lifelong learning.

SWAYAM Prabha

- SWAYAM Prabha is an initiative to provide 32 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH (Direct to Home) across the length and breadth of the country on 24X7 basis.
- It has curriculum-based course content covering diverse disciplines. This is primarily aimed at making quality learning resources accessible to remote areas where internet availability is still a challenge.

National Digital Library (NDL):

- The National Digital Library of India (NDL) is a project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility. There are more than 3 crore digital resources available through the NDL

- The contents cover almost all major domains of education and all major levels of learners including life-long learners.

Spoken Tutorial:

- They are 10-minute long, audio-video tutorial, on open source software, to improve employment potential of students. It is created for self-learning, audio dubbed into all 22 languages and with the availability of online version.
- The Spoken Tutorial courses are effectively designed to train a novice user, without the support of a physical teacher.

Free and Open Source Software for Education (FOSSEE):

- FOSSEE is a project promoting the use of open source software in educational institutions
- It does through instructional material, such as spoken tutorials, documentation, such as textbook companions, awareness programmes, such as conferences, training workshops, and Internships.
- Textbook Companion (TBC) is a collection of code for solved examples of standard textbooks.

Virtual Lab:

- The Virtual Labs Project is to develop a fully interactive simulation environment to perform experiments, collect data, and answer questions to assess the understanding of the knowledge acquired.
- In order to achieve the objectives of such an ambitious project, it is essential to develop virtual laboratories with state-of-the-art computer simulation technology to create real world environments and problem handling capabilities.

E-Yantra

- e-Yantra is a project for enabling effective education across engineering colleges in India on embedded systems and Robotics.
- The training for teachers and students is imparted through workshops where participants are taught the basics of embedded systems and programming.

13. Implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing two Centrally Sponsored Umbrella schemes –

Umbrella ICDS and Mission for Empowerment and Protection for Women across the country.

Umbrella ICDS:

- The Anganwadi Services Scheme is a unique programme for early childhood care and development. It offers a package of six services, viz. Supplementary Nutrition, Pre-School Non-Formal Education, Nutrition and Health Education, Immunization, Health Check-Up and Referral Services. The beneficiaries under the Scheme are children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- **Poshan Abhiyaan** (National Nutrition Mission) targets to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies by reducing malnutrition/undernutrition, anemia among young children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** scheme provides cash incentive amounting to Rs.5,000/- in three installments directly to the Bank/Post Office Account of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mother.
- **Scheme for Adolescent Girls** aims at out of school girls in the age group 11-14, to empower and improve their social status through nutrition, life skills and home skills. The scheme has nutritional and non-nutritional components which include nutrition; iron and folic acid supplementation; health check-up and referral service;
- **National Crèche Scheme** provides day care facilities to children of age group of 6 months to 6 years of working women. The facilities are provided for seven and a half hours a day for 26 days in a month.
- **Child Protection Services Scheme** aims to contribute to the improvement and the well-being of children in difficult circumstances, as well as, reduction of

vulnerabilities to situation and actions that leads to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children from parent.

Mission for Empowerment and Protection for Women:

- **Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme** empowers rural women through community participation by involvement of Student Volunteers. The scheme is envisaged to work at various levels and at the national and state level technical support to the respective government on issues related to women is provided.
- **Swadhar Greh scheme** targets the women victims of unfortunate circumstances who are in need of institutional support for rehabilitation so that they could lead their life with dignity.
- **Ujjawala** is a comprehensive scheme to combat trafficking with the objective to prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation, to facilitate rescue victims and placing them in safe custody.
- **Working Women Hostel** aims at providing safe and affordable accommodation to working women. These hostels have Day care facility for the children of inmates too. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme is a tri-ministerial initiative of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource
- Focus on awareness and advocacy campaign for changing mind-sets, multi-sectoral action in select districts, enabling girls' education and effective enforcement of Pre-Conception & Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC & PNDT) Act.
- **One Stop Centre (OSC)** facilitates access to an integrated range of services including police, medical, legal, psychological support and temporary shelter to women affected by violence. The Scheme is funded through Nirbhaya Fund.

News In-Depth

News on Air

1. ISALEX19

(GS PAPER 2-India and its neighbourhood- relations)

What is ISALEX19?

- Representatives of 50 law enforcement agencies of the International Security Alliance are taking part in the first joint security exercise in Abu Dhabi.
- The participants include representatives from tactical teams, rapid intervention units, communications, civil defence, and explosive ordnance disposal, teams.



About International Security Alliance

- The International Security Alliance (ISA) is an international working group to confront organized, transnational and extremist crimes.
- It was launched in 2017 in Abu Dhabi. The alliance now comprises nine countries, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, France, Italy, Spain, Senegal, Singapore, and the Slovak Republic.
- The mission of the Alliance is to promote internal security cooperation among its member ministers, in particular with regards to the following strategic priorities:
 - Preventing and combating transnational organized crime;
 - Preventing and combating forms of radicalization and violent extremism;
 - The management of borders

Why in News?

- Abu Dhabi is hosting International Security Alliance (ISAs) first joint security exercise named ISALEX19.

2) ITBP DIG to summit Mount Denali

(GS PAPER 1- features of world's physical geography)

About Mount Denali

- Mount Denali was once called Mount McKinley. It was officially named Denali after protests by the native Koyukon Athabascan people who call the mountain Denali, which is usually translated as "The Great One." It is located in south-central Alaska. The mountain's peak is 20,310 feet (6,190 meters) above sea level, thus making it the -tallest mountain in North America.

About ITBP

- Indo-Tibetan Border Police was raised on October 24, 1962 for reorganizing the frontier intelligence and security set up along the Indo-Tibetan border.
- Presently ITBP has been guarding India-China border in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh states from the Karakoram pass in Jammu & Kashmir to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The altitude of ITBP BOPs ranges from 9,000 ft to 18,750 ft where temperature dips to (-) 45 degree Celsius.

Why in News?

- Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Aparna Kumar has become the first civil servant to scale Mount Denali, the highest peak in North America. She also became the first woman IPS DIG and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) officer to successfully complete the South Pole expedition.

3) Dastak Campaign

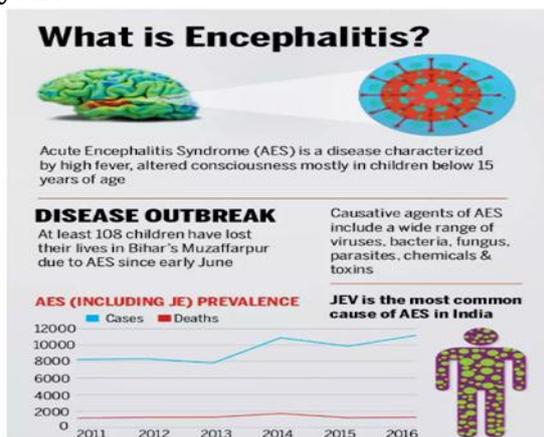
(GS PAPER 2 -Issues relating to development and management of Services relating to Health)

What is it?

- A state-wide campaign teams will go door to door in every village of the 75 districts of the state to create awareness about communicable diseases as well as Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE).
- Districts sensitive for the vector-borne diseases are marked. In this massive campaign, many departments of the state especially health, rural development, primary education will work together to spread awareness about the diseases through mass media communication and will ensure availability of clean drinking water, initiate sanitation drive, ensure vaccination and early treatment so that disease should be nipped in the bud.

About JE and AES

- Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) is a flavivirus related to dengue, yellow fever and West Nile viruses, and is spread by mosquitoes. JEV is the main cause of viral encephalitis in many countries of Asia with an estimated 68 000 clinical cases every year.



- Acute encephalitis syndrome is a severe case of encephalitis transmitted by mosquitoes and is characterized by high fever and inflammation of the brain. The disease most commonly affects children and young adults and can lead to considerable morbidity and mortality.

Why in News?

- In Uttar Pradesh, a large scale campaign to eradicate deadly Acute Encephalitis Syndrome and Japanese Encephalitis disease will be launched.
- Several children have died in the Muzaffarpur district of north Bihar, due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES), which is locally known as Chamki bukhar (brain fever).
- Similar campaign launched last year also has improved the health conditions and the government claimed that fatality rate due to AES and JE dropped.

4) Working on a Warmer Planet

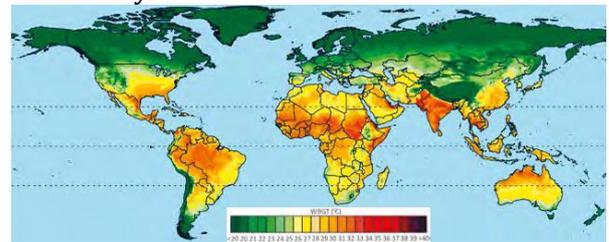
(GS PAPER 3- IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AND DEGRADATION)

About:

- Working on a Warmer Planet - The Impact of Heat Stress on Labour Productivity and Decent Work is released by The International Labour Organization.
- The Projections are based on a global temperature rise of 1.5 degree Celsius by the end of the twenty-first century, and labour force trends.

What is Heat Stress?

- Heat stress is defined as generally above 35 degrees Celsius, in places with high humidity.



Highlights of the Report:

- India will be the most affected country because of its large population.
- India is projected to lose 5.8 percent of working hours in 2030 due to global warming, particularly impacting agriculture and construction sectors.
- In absolute terms, India is expected to lose the equivalent of 34 million full-time jobs in 2030 in productivity.
- Working hours will be lost because it is too hot to work or because workers work at a slower pace.
- The report noted that Ahmedabad incorporated a cool roofs initiative into its 2017 Heat Action Plan, notably by

providing access to affordable cool roofs for the city's slum residents and urban poor.

Why in News?

- A UN reports say India is projected to lose 5.8 percent of working hours in 2030 due to global warming, particularly impacting agriculture and construction sectors.

5) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

(GS PAPER 3-Variou Security forces and agencies and their mandate)

What is NDAA?

- The National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) is the name for each of a series of United States federal laws specifying the annual budget and expenditures of the U.S. Department of Defense.

- The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for the fiscal year 2020 was passed by the United States Senate.

Significance to India:

- This legislative provision of United States give India NATO ally-like status; it brings India at par with America's NATO allies and countries like Israel and South Korea for increasing defence cooperation.
- The amendment provides for increased US-India defence cooperation in the Indian Ocean in areas of humanitarian assistance, counter-terrorism, counter-piracy and maritime security.

Why in News?

- The United States Senate has passed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to give India NATO ally-like status.

Hindu Editorial Analysis

1. On New framework

GS Paper 3 (Economy)

Context:

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India came up with more stringent regulations to govern the management of mutual funds.

What are Mutual funds?

- [Mutual funds are open-ended investment companies that pool investors' money into a fund operated by a portfolio manager. This manager then turns around and invests this large pool of shareholder money in a portfolio of various assets, or combinations of assets.]

How do Mutual Funds work?

- Mutual funds may include investments in stocks, bonds, options, **futures**, currencies, treasuries and money market securities. Depending on the stated objective of the fund, each will vary in regard to content and risk.
- Funds **issue** and redeem **shares** on demand at the fund's **NAV**, or **net asset value**. Mutual fund management fees typically range between 0.5% and 2% of assets per year, exchange fees and other administrative charges also apply

What are the regulations?

- According to the new SEBI regulations, liquid mutual fund schemes will have to invest at least 20% of their funds in liquid assets like government securities. They will be barred from investing more than 20% of their total assets in any one sector; the current cap is 25%. When it comes to sectors like housing finance, the limit is down to 10%.
- Here, while the mandated investment in government securities will ensure a modicum of liquidity, the reduction in sectoral concentration will discipline funds and force them to diversify their risks.

Significance:

- When HDFC Mutual Fund and Kotak Mutual Fund came to grief and had to roll over or proportionately reduce redemption of their Fixed Maturity Plans (FMPs) recently after some Essel group

companies failed to redeem their non-convertible debentures where the funds had invested, the regulations are imposed.

What are Fixed Maturity Plans?

- Fixed Maturity Plan (FMP) is a fixed tenure mutual fund scheme that invests its corpus in debt instruments maturing in line with the tenure of the scheme.

Purpose of the new regulations.

- These measures are aimed to prevent situations such as the one being witnessed now. While the mandated investment in government securities will ensure a modicum of liquidity, the reduction in sectoral concentration will discipline funds. Thus, basically it has done to diversify their risks.
- Also, some mutual funds entered into standstill agreements with companies in whose debt instruments the funds had invested. This is not a welcome practice and goes against the interests of investors in the mutual fund. SEBI has done the right thing by banning funds from entering into such standstill agreements.
- Again, mutual funds be valued on a mark-to-market basis in order to better reflect the value of their investments, says SEBI Rules.

Any down side?

- One of the new regulations introduced by SEBI is to increase the exit load on short-term investments in liquid mutual funds to discourage sudden demands for redemption. This could possibly hinder fund flow into the bond market, which in India is already quite undeveloped when compared to the rest of the world.
- While SEBI is doing a commendable job in disciplining the markets and intermediaries, the larger question is whether the regulator can really protect investors beyond a certain point. Market investments involve risk, and investors seeking high returns may in fact be willing to assume the increased risk that comes with such investment

2. On a thumbs down to unilateralism.

GS Paper 2 and 3 (Economy, IR)

Context:

- Indo-US trade relations are not going smooth. There are tensions in this regard as the world economy in general is concerned and the Indian economy in particular.
- The US had increased the tariffs on certain imports from India. Also, US took back the GSP from India. In retaliation, India had increased import tariffs of 28 products from US.
- [The Generalized System of Preferences, or GSP, is a preferential tariff system which provides tariff reduction on various products. The concept of GSP is very different from the concept of MFN. MFN status provides equal treatment in the case of tariff being imposed by a nation but in case of GSP differential tariff could be imposed by a nation on various country whether it is a developed country or a developing country. Both the rules comes under the purview of WTO. GSP provides tariff reduction for least developed countries but MFN is only for not discriminating among WTO members.]
- Also, the US accuses India of the following
 1. India has “put very high tariffs against the United States”.
 2. Eg-India imposes 50-60% duties on motorcycles and cars and 150% duties on American
 3. liquor
- Here, the US’s actions can be considered as unilateralism.
- [**Unilateralism** is any doctrine or agenda that supports one-sided action. Such action may be in disregard for other parties, or as an expression of a commitment toward a direction which other parties may find disagreeable.]

Significance:

- Here, India and the USA need to make a more determined attempt to sort out issues, starting from scratch if required, with tariffs.
- **USA's stand:**
- Need negotiation and correction from Indian side.
- Indian should open market for the US’s Dairy products.
- Intellectual property Rights concerned to be addressed

- In the past, U.S. agencies — in particular, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and the United States International Trade Commission (USITC) — have “investigated” India’s trade policies, the conclusions of which have been used by the administration to demand changes in policies that would benefit American businesses.
- However, the report has some flaws on propriety, procedure and substance.
- On Propriety
- They considered American laws on understanding the defects or gaps in Indian economy rather than looking at it from Indian scenario and market.

On Procedure

- Here, the dispute resolution procedure should come within the ambit of WTO. But, the USA and China defy this rule.
- [The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization that is concerned with the regulation of international trade between nations. The WTO officially commenced on 1 January 1995 under the Marrakesh Agreement, signed by 123 nations on 15 April 1994, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which commenced in 1948. It is the largest international economic organization in the world.]

India’s Stand:

- The tariff barriers imposed by India need a second look as average tariffs imposed by India is 13.8% and are not much higher than those levied by economies such as South Korea and Brazil.
- India is ready to open the market for USA’s dairy products, however, they need to take care of india’s cultural sentiments in this regard.
- Here, the fodder that USA feeds to the cows such as bovine extracts and blood
 - Meals are the cultural concerns of India.
- USA’s companies should store the data locally in India and need to obey the laws related to those.
- E-commerce concerns should be resolved.

India can consider the following while negotiating.

- India has lowered tariffs on many agricultural and industrial products. Contrast this with the U.S.'s position wherein it continues to defend its high levels of agricultural subsidies which are used for lowering commodity prices to levels at which no other country can have access to its domestic market.
- Thus, the U.S. does not need tariffs to protect its agriculture; it uses subsidies, instead. The WTO also informs us that the U.S. also uses very high tariffs on tobacco (350%), peanut (164%) and some dairy products (118%).
- **Altogether, India's tariffs are within the negotiations of WTO and the USA has imposed unwarranted trade barriers on Indian products. Here, while negotiating both of the countries should consider the above-mentioned points.**

3. On Lessons from Bhutan.

GS Paper-2 (society)

Context:

- Bhutan's teachers, doctors and other medical staff will earn more than civil servants of corresponding grades, if a policy recently announced by the country's government is implemented.
- The new salary scales will benefit about 13,000 teachers and doctors. This is a novel move. No other country has accorded teachers and doctors such pride of place in its government service, both in terms of remuneration and symbolism.

What is the education policy of Bhutan?

- The policy's tonal reference is to be found in Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan (2018-23), published by its Gross National Happiness Commission, the country's highest policy-making body.
- The commission's strategy to achieve desired national outcomes through education opens with the notation, "making teaching a profession of choice".
- The proposal then is evidently at the core of a larger governmental strategy to achieve the country's human developmental objectives.
- Here, again, intuiting the correlation, as Bhutan has, between attracting the best talent to a profession and the

remuneration it potentially offers is easy. But, more importantly, is it possible to demonstrate that improving the status of the teaching profession positively influences educational outcomes or not.

- Further, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a worldwide study that measures and compares student ability in reading, mathematics, science and global competence, with financial literacy an option. Here, PISA suggests high wages to improve teacher status.
- Going forward, the results of Bhutan's policy, if implemented, will take a few years to emerge for critical evaluation. It is, however, based on credible research.

What are the fiscal implications of such a policy?

- Bhutan already spends about 7.5% of its GDP on education. The fiscal implications of the new salary structure are unclear now. Generally, teachers constitute a considerable portion of government employees.
- Therefore, governments looking to emulate Bhutan's lead will inevitably be asked questions about the financial viability of such a momentous administrative decision.

So, can India afford a similar policy?

- India currently spends about 3% of its GDP on education, accounting for about 10% of the Centre's and States' budgetary expenses. Salaries constitute a large portion of this expenditure.
- The NITI Aayog in its report last year recommended that India raise this to 6% of GDP by 2022. Paying teachers (and doctors) significantly higher salaries may seem like a tall order, but the Central and State governments could consider rationalising both teacher recruitment and allocation of funds to existing programmes.
- Some programmes may have outlived their purpose, while others could be pared down or better directed. In fact, improving accountability in the system could free up huge savings.
- A World Bank study found that teacher absenteeism in India was nearly 24%,

which costs the country about \$1.5 billion annually

- Hence, adopting the policy is an appreciable one provided finances be managed to suit the interest of economy in general and education sector in particular.

4. On teachers and Quota.

GS paper2(Judiciary, Constitution)

Context:

- In 2017 judgment of the Allahabad High Court striking down University Grants Commission regulations that treated the institution as the unit for determining the roster, and directing that each department be the relevant unit.
- In short, reservation should be department-wise, and not institution-wise, the court ruled. The Supreme Court rejected the Centre's appeal against the order.
- Here, for recruiting professors the departments should be considered as one unit and not universities as a whole.
- Now, when the High courts order come into force, the rule of reservation as such 45.5% is general category and 27% for OBC, 15% for SC and 7% ST will be critically affected.

Then, why such judgement?

- If universities are considered as one unit in recruiting professors then in some departments there will only be open category professors and in some only reserve category professors remain. Thus, department should be treated as one unit and reservation rule should be applicable to each department.
- But, counter point is that: If department is the unit then lesser number of professors from reserve category would be recruited.
- After that, the central government had come with ordinance to replace the Court's order on the matter. And, again, a bill, "The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' cadre) bill, 2019 passed by the Loksabha, which will replace the ordinance. Here, the bill has a provision that treat universities as one unit for the recruitment.
- Thus, altogether, the bill is considered as a right move to protect the interest of reserved category.

5. On Trump in North Korea.

GS Paper 2(IR)

Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Context:

- U.S. President Donald Trump made history when he stepped on to North Korean soil from the demilitarised zone (DMZ) that separates the two Koreas.
- The U.S. President appears committed to diplomacy in dealing with North Korea.

Significance:

- Stability in Korean peninsula and containing the threat of North-Korea's Nuclear ventures are the two things that makes the president's visit significant
- Further, he is the only American President to have visited North Korea, the isolated, nuclear-armed dictatorship that is historically seen as an enemy in Washington's policy establishment
- North Korea seized the opportunity, and both leaders met at the DMZ, held talks for nearly an hour and decided to resume parleys that have stalled since the two leaders' failed summit in Hanoi.
- Both Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim have met and decided to set up teams on both sides to hold negotiations, the impasse is broken. But key challenges remain.
- Pyongyang, though often cryptic in its responses, has also shown interest in staying engaged with the U.S. Mr. Kim has, in principle, agreed to denuclearize the peninsula, which is the goal of the U.S. as well

US-North Korea Negotiations

- North Korea had agreed to close down the Yongbyon facility, its main nuclear fuel production site.
- But, the U.S. rejected the offer, saying the North's nuclear capability is now much more diversified and goes beyond that one plant.
- When they resume talks, the question of how much the North should compromise to get at least a partial reprieve from sanctions will be back. If the U.S. sticks to its maximalist demands such as complete denuclearisation, the talks are likely to run into trouble again.

- Here, nuclear weapons are its insurance against potential external aggression, and it would accede to total denuclearisation only if its security concerns are ensured and sanctions are fully withdrawn. Both sides should learn from their failure in Hanoi. They can take small steps towards the final goal.
- **In sum, The U.S. could demand a total freeze on North Korea's nuclear activities, besides shutting down Yongbyon, which the North has already agreed to, in return for providing partial reprieve from sanctions. Constructive and reciprocal confidence-building measures can make sure that the efforts will not go waste.**

6. On Mumbai Marooned.

GS Paper -1(Geography)

Context:

- Mumbai has experienced worst flood like situation due to heavy downpour in one day. As Mumbai got paralysed due to it, the question arises that why the government had not learned anything from the past?
- In the past, 14 years ago the city had received 94cm of rain which was too much for the city infrastructure to afford and had paralysed it.
- It could not manage 37 cm in 24 hours, that too after incurring a massive expenditure on management projects, shows a lack of resolve among political leaders, rampant inefficiency and lack of integrity in the administrative machinery.
- Further, the reasons why the situation is uncontrollable are the following:
 - 1.The Comptroller and Auditor General identified prolonged delays in the upgrading of storm water drain infrastructure in Mumbai.
 - 2.After the deluge of 2005, the consensus was for the flood-carrying capacity of the Mithi river in the city to be increased. But the choked and polluted river was again overflowing this year.
- Added to it are the erratic monsoon and climate change.
- Thus, managing these things calls for a new approach that is ecological, and makes restoration of existing urban

wetlands and creation of reservoirs and water channels a high priority.

- Also, the water question is the biggest challenge for Indian cities today, as both drought and flood are common. State governments should give it priority and address it by making urban planning people-centric.

So, what can be the possible resolutions that the government can take? And, those are the following.

- To restore rivers and canals to manage floods,
- Green infrastructure building, etc.

7. On Hurdles, ideas and silver lines.

GS paper3 (Economy)

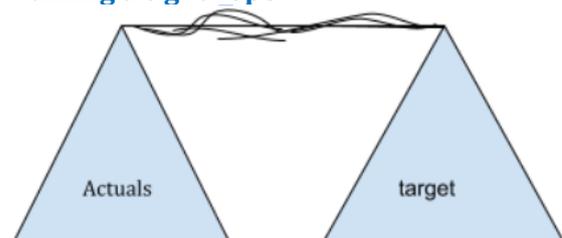
Context:

- In the backdrop of preparing budget, faltering GDP growth, a consumption slowdown, a truant monsoon that has already hit kharif sowing, global trade tensions and a freeze in the credit market that has set alarm bells ringing across the financial system.

Perspectives discussed

- Walking a tightrope.
- Ground realities.
- Pros and cons of options.
- On stimulus.

Walking a tight rope



- 1.Push for growth.
- 2.Fiscal deficit glide path.
- 3.Stimulus measures.
- 4.Attracting Investment

Ground Realities (Actuals)

- GDP growth fell to 5.8% in the fourth quarter of 2018-19, with important industry segments reporting a fall in growth.
- Real estate and construction, one of the biggest job creators in the economy, have been in stupor for several months and are

a direct cause of the credit freeze in the markets now.

- It is clear that the bottom has fallen off consumption demand, something reflected in the annual results of a host of companies in the consumer sector.
- Direct tax revenue growth failed to meet budgeted levels in 2018-19, falling short by Rs. 82,000 crore from the target of Rs. 12 lakh crore. Goods and Services tax collections, though rising, are still not stabilising at the required level of between Rs. 1,00,000 and Rs. 1,10,000 crore a month.

- It is impossible for the government to meet its over-ambitious tax estimates in the interim Budget for 2019-20. And, then there are the bills to pay from last year to the Food Corporation of India and a couple of other public sector undertakings which helped the government 'achieve' the fiscal deficit target last year.

- Pros and Cons of options:

Process/ actions	Pros	Cons
▪ off-balance sheet financing	▪ Disinvestment and revenue generation	▪ Not suitable for long term
▪ a one-time transfer from the Reserve Bank of India's reserves,	▪ Fund generation	▪ It may be futile for the government to hope for a major windfall here.
▪ 5G spectrum auctions.	▪ Growth of AI and Innovation	▪ As telecom companies have been already ailing, their appetite, as it is, is poor for any more spectrums. So pushing through a 5G auction now would be disastrous.

On Stimulus

- There is a serious slowdown in consumer-facing sectors; the better option may be to put more money in the hands of consumers. So, consumption slowdown can be dealt with.
- And, then, for boosting consumer confidence
- A good option to consider would be adjusting income tax slabs and increasing deductions under Section 80C which is a measly Rs. 2 lakh now.
- Further, better still would be to increase the interest deduction for housing loans which would also give a boost to the real estate market. These measures would run counter to the reform objective of easing out all exemptions and lowering rates.
- But, then that is under examination by the Direct Tax Code (DTC) panel; the concessions given now will automatically

become a temporary measure assuming that the DTC is soon implemented.

- **Altogether, the policy measures projected sound great and the implementation may need a little more well-thought out structure that should consider the Fiscal deficit commitment while devising a plan to boost the economy, when going unconventional to achieve the targeted growth.**

8. On the Primacy of Elected. GS Paper 2(Federalism, constitution)

Context:

- The return of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance government in 2019 with a majority in the 17th Lok Sabha raises relevant questions about the future of federalism in India
- Thus, the concern is on federal nature of our constitution, and a question arises on it is the following:

- Will a “strong” Union government which does not require the support of “regional” allies be detrimental to the interests of States?

Significance:

- While the Prime Minister has often invoked the need for “cooperative federalism”, the actions of his government in its first term sometimes went against this stated ideal.
- The provisions of such sorts are the following:
 1. Dismantling the Planning Commission and transferring its power to make state grants to the Finance Ministry.
 2. Introducing terms of reference to the Finance Commission which threaten to lower the revenue share of the southern States; and
 3. The partisan use of the Governor’s office to appoint Chief Ministers in cases of hung Assemblies.
- [What is Cooperative Federalism? Cooperative federalism is a concept of federalism in which federal, state, and local governments interact cooperatively and collectively to solve common problems, rather than making policies separately but more or less equally.]
- Further, there are other cases where Indian federalism was challenged, and they are
 - The imposition of President’s Rule in Opposition-ruled Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, decisions the Supreme Court subsequently held as unconstitutional.
 - The Lieutenant Governor (LG), the Centre ran a protracted war with the Delhi government which brought its administration to a stalemate until the Supreme Court affirmed the primacy of the elected government.
 - Long-running battle between the LG and Chief Minister of Puducherry has now reached the Supreme Court.
 - Here, the question is whether state actions should respect the underlying principles of democracy and federalism.

Perspectives discussed

- Distinct provisions
- Respecting Federalism.

Distinct Provisions

- Since the appointment of Kiran Bedi as the LG and protested her continual interference in the daily affairs of the Puducherry government, the Union Government’s issued clarification on the same further escalated the case of the LG.
- When this was legally challenged, the Madras High Court quashed the clarifications issued by the Union government and ruled that the LG must work on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers and not interfere in the day-to-day affairs of the government.
- The Union government challenged decision and the Supreme Court passed interim orders recently restricting the Puducherry cabinet from taking key decisions until further hearing.
- The Madras High Court had relied on the 2018 decision of the Supreme Court regarding the power of the National Capital Territory (NCT) government of Delhi.
- In that, a five-judge Bench unanimously held that the Chief Minister and not the Lieutenant Governor is the executive head of the NCT government, and that the LG is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.
- And, the executive power of the NCT government is co-extensive with the legislative power of Delhi’s Legislative Assembly and the LG must follow the decisions of the cabinet on all matters where the Assembly has the power to make laws.
- Puducherry, like Delhi, is a Union Territory with an elected legislative Assembly and the executive constituted by the Lieutenant Governor and Council of Ministers.
- However, Puducherry and Delhi derive their powers from distinct constitutional provisions.
- While Article 239AA lays out the scope and limits of the powers of the legislative assembly and council of ministers for Delhi, Article 239A is merely an enabling provision which

allows Parliament to create a law for Puducherry.

- While Article 239AA restricts Delhi from creating laws in subjects such as police, public order and land, no such restriction exists for Puducherry under Article 239A.
- The Supreme Court, in the NCT Delhi case, rightly employed a purposive interpretation of the Constitution to hold that since representative government is a basic feature of the Constitution, the elected government must have primacy.
- Given this precedent and the fact that Puducherry has lesser legal restrictions on its powers, the Supreme Court should uphold the Madras High Court judgment and ensure that the LG acts only as per the aid and advice of the elected government.
- The Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 which governs Puducherry vests the legislative assembly with the power to make laws on “any of the matters enumerated in the State List or the Concurrent List”.
- Hence, the legislative and executive powers of Puducherry are actually broader than that of Delhi.

- **Thus, it’s more of centralized way of delivering governance than states having autonomy to act according to their specific needs and interests.**

Respecting Federalism

- The Supreme Court, in the NCT Delhi case, rightly employed a purposive interpretation of the Constitution to hold that since representative government is a basic feature of the Constitution, the elected government must have primacy.
- Given this precedent and the fact that Puducherry has lesser legal restrictions on its powers, the Supreme Court should uphold the Madras High Court judgment and ensure that the LG acts only as per the aid and advice of the elected government.
- **And, here, again, as more centralising measures such as simultaneous elections to Parliament and State Assemblies are being proposed by the Centre, it is important to reaffirm the values of federalism at every forum.**

Big Picture

1. On Take Away from G20.

GS paper-3 (Economy, IR)

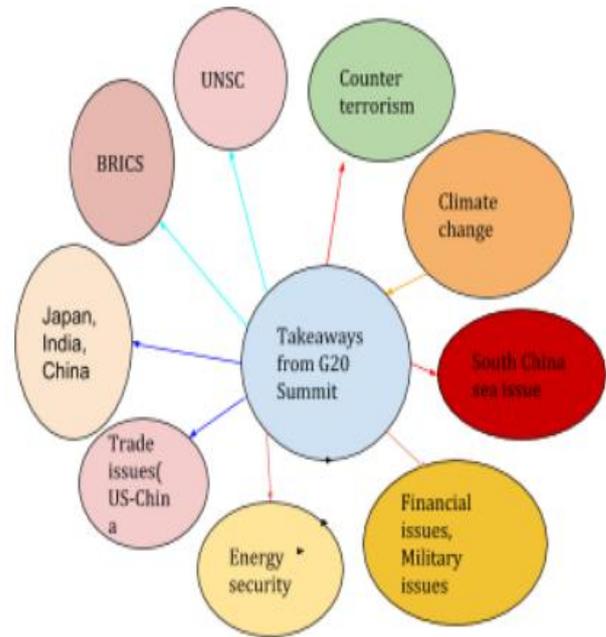
Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held separate bilateral meetings with leaders of Indonesia, Brazil, Turkey, Australia, Singapore and Chile, and discussed a host of key issues including trade, counter-terrorism, defence, maritime security and sports.
- PM Modi's three-day visit to Japan where he attended the G20 Summit and met with world leaders including US President Donald Trump. During his stay in Osaka, Modi took part in a series of summit sessions, bilateral and multilateral meetings.
- This was Prime Minister Modi's sixth G20 Summit which was held on June 28-29. Overall, Prime Minister Modi, held nine bilateral meetings with the leaders of Japan, the US, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Germany, Indonesia, Brazil, Turkey and Australia; eight pull-aside meetings with Thailand, Vietnam, the World Bank, the UNSG, France, Italy, Singapore and Chile; two plurilaterals -- JAI and RIC; one multilateral meeting of BRICS and four G20 sessions and a community event.

G20 nations

- [The G20 (or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union (EU). Founded in 1999 with the aim to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability, the G20 has expanded its agenda since 2008 and heads of government or heads of state, as well as finance ministers and foreign ministers, have periodically conferred at summits ever since. It seeks to address issues that go beyond the responsibilities of any one organization]

The figure depicts the dimensions of take away from G20 summit.



Issues discussed

- **South China Sea dispute:** [The South China Sea disputes involve both island and maritime claims among several sovereign states within the region, namely Brunei, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan), Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. An estimated US\$3, 37 trillion worth of global trade passes through the South China Sea annually, which accounts for a third of the global maritime trade. 80 percent of China's energy imports and 39.5 percent of China's total trade passes through the South China Sea.
- Military issues as China try to be leader of the region, maritime security and cooperation of other countries in this regard.
- Trade- war and global economy.
- Counter-Terrorism measures.
- Climate Change and energy security.
- Iran-India concern and stability of the Gulf Area

Best way forward for India as far as foreign policy is concerned.

- It should continue as India first policy, India strong and India Autonomous.
- Strategic balancing should be made between China and the world as dialogue with China should be made separately.

- We have able to clear the air on lot of things
- For instance: Iran concerns addressed and differences are almost settled except some dialogues that left with USA in this regard.

2. On World Economic Forum-Summer Davos Meet 2019.

GS Paper-3(Economy)

Context:

- An effort to promote and strengthen globalization is the focus of the World Economic Forum's 13th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, which took place on July 1-3 in the city of Dalian in north-eastern China.
- Also known as the Summer Davos, the meeting has become synonymous with China, being held alternately on an annual basis in Dalian or Tianjin. It is basically the World Economic Forum's global meet to promote innovation, science and technology.
- The theme of the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2019 is "Leadership 4.0: Succeeding in a New Era of Globalization." It sums up the main focus of the gathering, which will attract more than 1,800 leaders of diverse fields from around the globe.
- The participants represent politics, business, trade, civil society, academia and media. According to the organizers, 70% of the guests will come from outside China, representing 120 countries covering more than half the world.
- Last year, the Tianjin Summer Davos drew some 2,500 business leaders, policy makers and experts from over 111 countries for a global discourse focusing on the theme of "Shaping Innovative Societies in the Fourth Industrial Revolution."

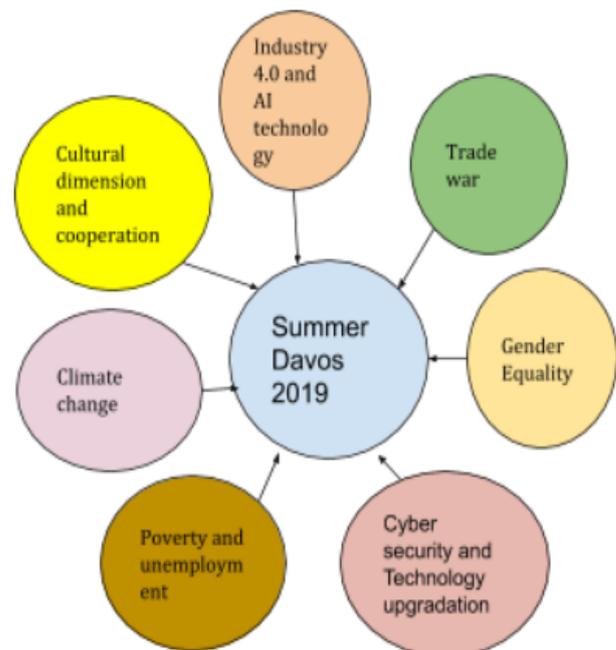
What are the summer Davos meet all about?

- Started with globalization 2.0 and now, moving on to globalization 4.0.
- This year's theme was Globalization 4.0, which includes a strong cultural dimension. Obviously, this goes to the heart of what 'globalization' really means.
- The days when globalization was about "exporting the West to the rest" are well and truly behind us—given what is now

apparent in the US and Europe, and also the direction that India, China and countries in Africa are taking.

- Whether the interplay among regions creates a new, yet positive normal or it ends in tears, made for some lively dialogue at a small group discussion of thought leaders. Even in a session on The New Space Age, a discussion on regulating the burgeoning activities by new actors, sovereign and private, grappled with the question of how to ensure new regulations do not create a difficult playing field for new entrants or implicitly favour those who were in space first.

The figure depicts the aspects that are taken up in the meet.



- The focus is on "Leadership 4.0: Succeeding in a New Era of Globalization."

Best way forward

- India has already begun the journey towards Artificial intelligence, and we should not miss out the technology upgradation. Also, we need to put further and more efforts towards utilizing AI opportunities in the world. And, prepare for technological warfare where India is placed well.
- Have Emphasis on start-up culture.
- There should have a balanced approach towards market vis-a-vis capital and labour, private and public. In international

terms, India should engage with everyone but alliance with none.

3. On the 5G Debate

GS Paper 3(S&T, Economy)

Context:

- The debate about Huawei’s role in the 5G network rollout in India continues. This comes at a time when the government has made its intentions clear to start with the 5G trials soon.
- A leading newspaper reported that a high-level committee on 5G is opposed to including Chinese vendors including Huawei in the 5G trials.
- There is a persistent fear that equipment being sold by Chinese vendors includes a backdoor which can allow the Chinese government to access data from 5G networks. Principal scientific adviser K Vijay Raghavan, who heads a high-level committee on 5G, believes India should “go for trials immediately with all, except for Chinese vendors”.
- The committee includes officials from the Intelligence Bureau, ministry of external affairs, home ministry, telecom and IT ministry and the department of science & technology. This report comes just days after the US president Donald Trump lifted the trade ban on Huawei, and has asked US based companies to continue working with Huawei.
- In India, Huawei still doesn’t have the permissions for the 5G trials, and getting these will be crucial. The company has already made repeated assurances that it does not share any data with any entity. And, here, we analyse the 5G saga.

Two questions are to be answered.

1. Why is it important?
2. What can 5G do for us, our business?

Why is it important?

- **What is 5G?** 5G is generally seen as the fifth generation cellular network technology that provides broadband access. The industry association 3GPP defines any system using "5G NR" (5G New Radio) software as "5G", a definition that came into general use by late 2018. Others may reserve the term for systems that meet the requirements of the ITU IMT-2020. 3GPP will submit their 5G NR to the ITU. It follows 1G, 2G, 3G and 4G and their respective associated technologies (such as NMT, GSM, UMTS, LTE, LTE Advanced Pro, etc.
- 3GPP- third generation Partnership project
- India is far behind when it comes to use of technology and innovations are concerned. However, the telecom companies are still licking their wounds from the combined effect of past excesses and bruising competition in the market. Their appetite, as it is, is poor for any more spectrum. So, pushing through a 5G auction now would be disastrous.
- Nevertheless, we should analyse how 5G can impact our economy, and what are the challenges to welcome 5G into our system.

Best way forward

- **Assessing at the first place to know whether we need it now or later?.**
- **To take every stakeholder together.**
- **To allay concerns regarding Data leakage and geo-political headwinds through dialogues.**
- **Habitat of private operators should be such that it attracts them to this cause.**
- **Wherewithal in India must be ensured before inviting 5G to the country.**
- **We need experts around the table more than bureaucrats to take the cause of 5G.**
- **We need to focus on our interest to boost cyber space to make the sector function as best as space sector does in the country.**

▪ Opportunities	▪ Challenges
▪ 5G trials and it can make an all-encompassing change in the socio-economic aspects of society.	▪ In India, Huawei still doesn’t have the permissions for the 5G trials.
▪ A Big Push for economy	▪ Not devoid of geopolitical pressure.

▪ Innovation boost as Huawei is ready to provide the 5G trails.

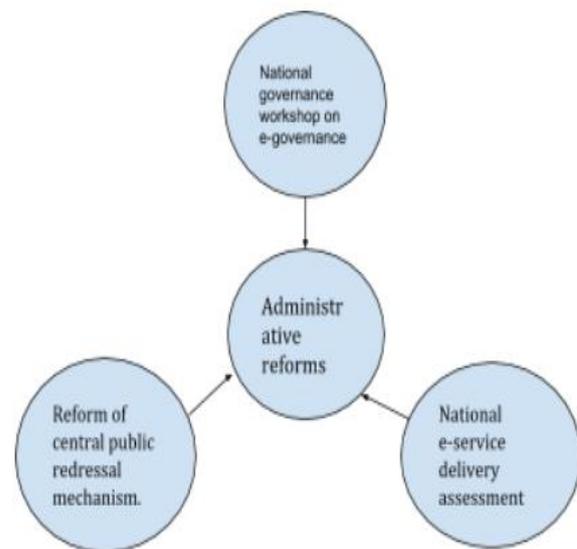
▪ Concern of Chinese vendors leaking data

4. On Administrative Reforms

GS Paper-2 (Administrative reforms, governance)

Context:

- Acting strictly on the policy of 'zero tolerance', the Yogi Adityanath government warned over 400 corrupt officials of severe punishment and decided to give early retirement to around 200 employees. According to government officials, the state government has asked 200 officials to take voluntary retirement as they were found guilty in corruption cases.
- At the same time, more than 400 corrupt officers and employees have been warned of severe punishments. Adityanath had reviewed the work of the Secretariat Administration department at Lok Bhawan and said that there was no place for corrupt officers and staff in the Government. He had said that corrupt officers could be shown the door by giving them compulsory retirement.
- The Chief Minister had directed the officials to prepare a list of corrupt officers and advised firm action against them. Recently the Modi government had "forcibly retired" 15 senior IT officials on similar grounds. We will analyse what administrative reforms need to be undertaken while going forward.
- The first hundred days of government agenda and reforms happens in these areas.
 1. National conference workshop on e-governance
 2. Reform of central Public grievances redressal mechanism bottom to top level approach
 3. National e-service delivery.
 4. E-Services delivery in all the states and UTs and major Departments.
 5. Chosen in consonance with the UN Visa.
- Further, the diagram depicts the areas of Administrative reforms the government now aiming at.



- Reform that are very effective for last 7 to 8 years
- MGNREGS-Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
- Direct benefit transfer

And, the scope of reforms are in the following areas:

- Criminal Justice System
- All India judicial service.
- Prison reforms.
- Judicial reforms.

Challenges in administration and its reforms.

- In the states where we spend 60% of funds and the bureaucracy should be changed right from the ground level, put in reforms to efficiently utilize the money.
- Systemic reform should be looked at. And, we need to have reform groups at the centre with the Prime minister. And, the states with the chief minister. And, the reform groups must be there to analyse all the systemic changes that are required. Here, what they need to check is the proper implementation of the programmes.
- Probity in the system is required.
- Police Reforms.
- Questions on Environmental concerns and related governance reforms part.

To strengthen administration the measures taken are:

- Personnel Administration

- Central secretariat manual of office procedure is also being updated after a long period.
- It is e-office procedure.
- Chapters that are important are: digitization process.
- Knowledge Management.
- Record Management practices.
- Integrated Mission mode project.

Best way forward

- Governance reforms at the ground level, probity and systemic changes are key factors.

- Long term goals- Stressing upon e-governance, both at the center and the states.
- PM wards are to be promoted - as Innovations from all service sector.
- Long term approach
- 15 Themes from Administrative reforms commission are taken.
- Best brains and new ideas should be incorporated and promoted.